

Results indicated that opinions for and against union with the United Church were divided; the matter was tabled. This meant, then, that the Canada Conference of the Evangelical Church and the Northwest Canada Conference went along with the Evangelical Denomination into the Union of 1946 with the United Brethren in Christ (New Constitution) to form the Evangelical United Brethren (EUB) Church. Into this new denomination each Church brought 400,000 members.

The EUB Church and The United Church of Canada

It was not long after the formation of the EUB Church that talks of Union with the Methodist Church in the U. S. were taking place. By the early 1960's, it appeared that negotiations were moving fairly rapidly toward this larger Union. At this time the Canada Conference of the EUB Church began to consider their situation if such a merger took place. A growing number felt it would be to their advantage to be part of a strong national church in Canada rather than a small part of the large Methodist Church in the U. S. So steps were taken by the EUB to begin negotiations with the United Church.

A Plan of Union was approved in 1967 by both denominations. The Union of the Canada Conference (EUB) with the United Church of Canada took place at Zion EUB Church, Kitchener on January 10th, 1968. In the same year in Dallas, Texas, the EUB joined with the Methodist Church to form The United Methodist Church in the United States and in other parts of the world.

Enduring EUB Roots – Locally and at Port Nelson

In addition to the connections of Chuck Faist and the Brox Family, of particular interest to us today are three local congregations with EUB roots: Linden Park United Church in Hamilton, Morriston United Church on Highway 6 just south of Guelph, and Sheffield United Church (referenced earlier) where Rev. Louise Hart – a candidate for ministry from Port Nelson – currently serves as pastor. Rev. Michael Brooks' great-grandfather – William Scott Daniels – also served as pastor of Sheffield United Church in the early 1930s.

The Evangelical United Brethren Church

A Brief History

This year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the union of the Evangelical United Brethren (EUB) Church and The United Church of Canada. The following are some excerpts, adapted and updated from a history written by The Rev'd Emerson Hallman in 1975:

Name and Purpose

The name "Evangelical United Brethren Church" is a composite name taken when the Evangelical Church and the United Brethren in Christ Church united in 1946. Both denominations were born out of the Revivalism Period of the 1800's in the eastern United States. Both churches felt called to minister to the large numbers of German-speaking people migrating from Europe and settling chiefly in Pennsylvania and the eastern States.

The Evangelical Church

The Evangelical Church came into being through the efforts of Jacob Albright, a humble but devout tile-maker who resided near Pottstown, Pennsylvania. Albright believed that the Methodist Church of the day should engage in a ministry in the German language to the throngs of settlers who could not understand or use English. He did so, and was well received. The movement developed to such an extent that, by 1807 these groups and their leaders were formed into what is called "The Newly Formed Methodist Conference." Albright was appointed a Minister, and later became Bishop of the new church.

At first there was no intention of separating from the Methodist Church, but as the movement developed, separate Conferences (regional gatherings) were held in the German language and, eventually in 1816 the new denomination came into being.

The United Brethren in Christ Church

A memorable preaching event took place one day in 1767 in a barn in Pennsylvania. Peter Boehm – a Mennonite – was the preacher. At the conclusion of the sermon, Philip Otterbein – a German Reformed pastor (not Lutheran, but another reformed group) – was so moved that he ran up to Boehm and said, “Wir sind broeder” which means, “We are brothers!” Such was the beginning of the Brethren in Christ movement. The logo of the EUB Church (as seen on the cover of this morning’s bulletin) is of two hands joined in Christ.

Early Days of both Churches in the United States

Both Albright and Otterbein had been greatly influenced by many great Methodist leaders of their day. Neither intended to form new churches, but they shared the calling to minister in the German language to the many German settlers surrounding them. They also continued to be organized according to Methodist structure, and their Articles of Faith were taken almost verbatim from the Doctrines of the Methodist Church.

Since both denominations were ministering to German people in their native language they were often moving into the similar areas. Accordingly, in their early days of expansion they moved almost simultaneously westward from the eastern states into Ohio, New York, Indiana, Illinois and Michigan. In the early 1800’s both denominations also moved into Upper Canada to establish congregations in Ontario. In both instances these congregations were, at first, part of Conferences in New York State.

The Evangelical Church – Early Days in Canada

In 1837 a stirring Camp Meeting was held in a woods near Waterloo, Ontario (there is a National Historic Site marker in current day Springer Park to mark this meeting). Following this Camp meeting, two Classes were formed, one in Berlin (present day Kitchener) and the other in Waterloo. Thus, the first congregation of the Evangelical Church in Canada was established in Berlin, Ontario in 1839. Eventually, this congregation built a large edifice on Weber Street and became known as Zion Church – the “cathedral” church for the Evangelical and later the EUB Church.

It remained open as Zion United Church of Canada until just a few years ago.

Other early Evangelical Churches were built as the church expanded throughout the counties of Waterloo, Huron, Bruce and Grey, in Hamilton and Niagara, along Lake Erie, in the Ottawa Valley, and in the Parry Sound District. Again, wherever there were settlements of German-speaking people the Church moved to minister to them.

The United Brethren in Christ – Early Days in Canada

The United Brethren in Christ Church moved into Ontario as early as 1825 with Missionary Preachers coming from the United Brethren New York and Pennsylvania Conferences. These missionaries established congregations in the Niagara area, the Sheffield-Beverley area, and eventually in Berlin (Kitchener). The first Ontario Conference was held in 1856 in the village of Sheffield.

In 1889 a division occurred in the United Brethren denomination due to a revision of the Constitution of the Church. A small group withdrew to form “The United Brethren in Christ Church” (Old Constitution). This division affected the congregations in Ontario only. In 1907 the ten Ontario New Constitution United Brethren Churches (including what is now Sheffield United Church) joined the Congregational Union of Canada and accordingly came into the United Church of Canada in 1925. The United Brethren Church (Old Constitution) still continues in Ontario with churches in Kitchener (Stanley Park), Roseville, New Dundee, and in Niagara.

The Formation of the EUB Church

Over the years the Evangelical Church and the remaining New Constitution United Brethren Church outside Ontario gave consideration to a union of the two denominations. In the early 1940’s, talks intensified. It seemed desirable to join the United Church of Canada rather than becoming a small part of a much larger denomination in the United States a poll of clergy and officials of local churches was taken.