

RECORD

Historical 1794.
Permanant Record
of the Jessie Lee Memorial Church
East Readfield

1831-34.	D. Hutchinson	1884	J. L. Hoyle
1833	D. Greeley	1885	Chas. Manger
1834.	D. Fuller	1886+87	C. K. Jenness
1835-36	C. H. Lovejoy	88+89	Wm Wood.
1835-38-43- 60-63	H. Nickerson	1890	J. R. Renick
1887	Jr. S. Rice	1891	Wm Wood.
1839-42	E. Streeter	1892-96	Supplied by Pastor at ^{Kento Hill} or a Student.
1840	A. Alton	1897+98	" " J. R. Masterman
1841-43-44	J. Milliken	1899, 1900+1901-	F. C. Norcross.
1845	S. Ambrose	1902-3-4-5-6	T. N. Kewley.
1846 {	S. P. French	1907+8+9	R. A. Rich.
	J. Lull.	1910+11	H. A. Clifford
		1912	Albert Belyea.
1849	J. Hill	1913+14	No work Reported ^{N.W. Lindsay}
1851	J. Cumner	1915	John Kriston
1852-55	D. B. Randall	1916-17-18+19.	N. R. Pearson
1853	R. J. Ayer	1920-21-22-23	P. J. Clifford
1854	C. Muggford.	1924-25-26-27-28-29.	H. F. Aldrich
1855	W. H. Foster	1930-35	J. H. Lidstone
1856-59	J. Young	1936-37-38.	F. F. Fowle.
1860-61	H. M. Blake	1939-40	Edward J. Webber
1861-62.	J. Gibson	1940-42-43-44-45	Alfred H. Ives
1864-66	A. Landerson	1947-48-49	Dwight H. McMahon
1868	Jr. W. Simpson	1949-1958	Gordon W. H. Buzza
1870-71	P. Masterman	1958	Alfred H. Ives
1871-74	J. Colby (EK French)	1959-1961	David W. Bell
1875-76	W. F. Berry.	1961-1964	Peter S. Bridge
1877-78	J. W. Rich	1964-1970	Peter L. Miesner
1879-84	Supplied by Pastor at Kento Hill or one of Students	1970-1973	Stanley Tanner

1973-

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Historical Record of the East Readfield Methodist Episcopal Church

From an Article in the Lewiston Weekly Journal, April 19, 1894 written by C. A. Mace.

We learn from the history of Kennebec County that the New England Conference of August 1, 1793, appointed Jesse Lee to the Province of Maine, which consisted at that time of fifteen or twenty thousand square miles of forest dotted with settlements, connected by roads, and inhabited by 97,000 souls with not a single member of the Methodist

Lee set foot on the unexplored territory on the sixth of September and on the tenth preached his first sermon in Maine at Saco. Passing from settlement to settlement he reached Readfield on the nineteenth and preached the first Methodist sermon ever heard in that town. Before the month was out he had completed the first circuit, he returned and met the class in Readfield Sunday November 16th 1794, the second class was formed, the first being formed in Monmouth

December 12, 1794, he preached again in Readfield, but the most memorable event occurred June 21, 1795, when he came and preached the dedicatory sermon of the East Readfield Meeting House, the first Methodist Church

dedicated in Maine.

In 1798 The New England Conference held its session here. Bishop Ashbury who presided made this entry in his diary. "Sat Aug 25 we had to beat through the woods between Winthrop and Readfield which was as bad as the Alleghany mountains and the shade of death." From 1000 to 1800 attended public worship and ordination.

The church at that time stood on the crown of the hill which was indeed an exalted spot.

After it had been on this spot for thirty years, and had been in constant use, it was necessary to repair the church, and it was decided to move it some thirty rods to the south thus bringing to the country road leading from Readfield to Augusta. It is said that fifty yoke of oxen were attached and with a strong pull all together, Jesse Lee's first Church was hauled to the position, it occupies today and was repaired and rededicated the same year. The church at that day was two stories in height standing with its side to the road. A porch was built on the side next the main road and contained a hallway and two piers

of stairs leading to the galleries.

The latter were on three sides of the house, the front being furnished with seats for the singers, while back of these were the old pews taken from the body of the old house, while new pews of more modern form were erected below.

In those days the ministers preached two good long sermons every Sunday, while the Sunday school came between meetings and the prayer meeting in the evening.

This middle period of the old church's existence, as it may be appropriately termed, lasted for thirty-two years. Then it was found necessary to again reconstruct the building. The last public exercise held within its walls was a very appropriate one, being the funeral services of Mr. Samuel Melvin, one of its oldest and most valued members.

The trustees of the church were chosen as a building committee and consisted of J. A. Sanborn, B. H. Thomas, and W. H. Hopkins. The contract was awarded to George E. Dudley, and Charles E. Mace, two local carpenters. In accordance with the plan, the porch was removed, and the interior

was taken out the building was lowered, and turned so the end faced the main road, a steeple was added and a fine toned bell put in place. The singers gallery is situated between the doors and is on the level with the pulpit. The church has always been kept in good repair, and the interior was recently painted and the walls and ceiling papered, so presents a neat appearance. The new carpet was put down and was the gift of Mr. C. C. Vosmus.

The church is fortunate at the present day in its limited membership. Many of the old and influential members have died or moved away. One of the first to move away was Mr. S. M. Hunt, Besides being an active church officer, Mr. Hunt was leader of the choir for many years. His son, C. C. Hunt, esq. who is an accomplished musician and a member of the famous Winthrop Street Quartet of Augusta, began his performance on the organ in this church when but a mere boy.

Mr. B. H. Thomas another reliable member and church officer moved to the west. His family of children were active workers in this church.

W. H. Hopkins died and his family moved to the West. The venerable and well remembered form of Henry Greeley for a life time a faithful member passed away.

The church and neighborhood sustained a severe loss in the removal of the Sanborn families to Kallondell, although their interest and aid was never wholly withdrawn from its support. The daughters of the late P. F. Sanborn recently gave a valuable organ to the church inscribed to the memory of their father and mother, and they have made many contributions of good books to the library.

But what seems the hardest blow of all to the church's support and prosperity is the death of Mr. C. C. Vosmyer who for many years had been the leading spirit in its welfare and work. His home has always been open to those who labored here as pastors, and he has contributed largely to their support and as his wife remarked, he never felt happier than when entertaining a minister of the gospel. Mr. Vosmyer remembered the old church in his will and the income from \$1000 is to be expended for the support of preaching.

Probably no church in the

state has been more fortunate in its preachers, who have labored for the people's good. In its early history the congregations were very large, coming from miles of surrounding territory, and able men presented Bible truths to eager listeners.

One of the earliest recollections is the picture of Rev. J. Hull as he ascended to the high pulpit on a cold winter day, clad in his overcoat, and wearing his mittens through the exercises. Heated as the old house was, by only one stove, situated on one side of the room, with the cold air coming down from the galleries on extreme cold days the church was far from comfortable.

Rev. S. Ambrose, and C. Musford are kindly remembered by old residents of long ago as resident pastors. Rev. John Allen lived in the parsonage for several years. His son taught the winter school and his daughter Miss Clementina, taught the summer term. The family were fine singers and their music contributed largely to the interest of the meetings. Rev. D. B. Randall also labored here.

Protracted meetings were sometimes held, the services lasting for three

weeks with preaching every afternoon and evening. The minister usually was assisted by preachers from other places. There were seasons of great interest and great good resulted from these meetings. Rev. W. H. Foster was the last pastor to live in the parsonage.

Dr. Stephen Allen after he retired from more active work supplied this church for two years. The people greatly enjoyed the ministrations of Dr. Allen, and he was beloved by all.

On account of its nearness to Kents Hill, the old in more recent years has been able to secure better preaching service than it could otherwise have enjoyed in its present condition. Many of the teachers at the seminary who are preachers have been willing to supply the pulpit on the Sabbath. Dr. Torrey in his day always had an interest in the church and preached for several seasons. President Smith, while studying at the seminary, preached for one season and after coming back to Kents Hill often supplied the pulpit during his vacation. The late Prof. F. A. Robinson for several years was pastor here,

while A. T. Chace, J. L. Morse, and J. V. Rich are remembered as successful laborers in this church. Of the young men, who as students at Kents Hill preparing for the ministry and have supplied the pulpit very successfully, and with much success may be mentioned Rev. W. F. Berry of Waterville, Rev. C. K. Jenness Rev. W. B. Dakeshine, of Brunswick, Rev. William Wood of Cornish, and Rev. J. L. Hoyle of Madison.

Because the people and pastors kept the record which can be read in the notes of the Quarterly Conference in 1879, when the District Superintendent asked, "Are the records properly kept" and the answer is, "They are not," it is impossible to find but few records.

The following are clippings from the newspapers of Historical Events that have happened.

MAINE METHODISTS MARK FIRST CHURCH

Put Tablet Near Old East
Readfield Structure

1929

Special Dispatch to the Globe

READFIELD, Me., Sept 2—A bronze tablet which marks the site of the first Methodist Church erected in Maine was dedicated this afternoon at East Readfield. The tablet, which has been placed on a boulder near the old East Readfield Methodist Church, also marks the spot where the first church was dedicated.

Here also was held the first annual conference to be held in the "Province of Maine." The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was first observed by the Methodists of Maine here, and the first quarterly meeting ever held in the State was held at East Readfield.

At the exercises today Rev. David B. Holt compared the past with the present, and Rev. Henry E. Dunnack, State Librarian, spoke of the debt that the Methodists of today owe their fathers. Rev. Ralph F. Lowe, superintendent of the Augusta District, officially dedicated the tablet.

The spot where the first Methodist Church of Maine was built was selected by Jesse Lee, who was sent from the New England Conference held in Lynn, Mass., to establish a Methodist circuit in the Province of Maine. This he did in 1793. Not long after he started a move to build a meeting house and on June 21, 1795, preached the dedicatory sermon of the church, which was then finished.

Half a century later the building was moved several rods to a better position, the roof was raised and a bell installed. This building has been kept in excellent repair, and, with the exception of the changes mentioned, is practically the same building which was started by the circuit rider, Jesse Lee.

Marker for Site of First Methodist Church in Maine

Dedicated at East Readfield—Church More Than
130 Years Old—Rev. D. B. Holt and Rev.
H. E. Dunnack Speakers

READFIELD, Sept. 2. (Special).—A bronze tablet marking the site of the first Methodist church in Maine was formally dedicated at the East Readfield Methodist church this afternoon.

For more than 130 years this little white church has called the community to come, and learn of God, and find comfort and strength for the daily cares of life. In the early days of its service, it was the center of a thriving and busy little village now reduced to a few farm homes, for the industries which it supported have long since vanished.

The tablet was made possible by gifts from Methodist preachers, friends and former residents, as well as those who now reside in East Readfield. It proclaims to all who pass, that at this place, Methodism has a shrine. At this place, the first annual conference written "the province of Maine" was held and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was observed for the first time by the Methodists of Maine. Here also was the scene of the first quarterly meeting ever held in the State.

The tablet is mounted on a large boulder, and set in a cement foundation, facing the road.

The following program was carried out:

Hymn; responsive reading; prayer, Rev. A. I. Oliver; solo, Mrs. Myles Atherton of Winthrop; address, "The Past and Present, A Comparison," Rev. David B. Holt; poem, "The Little White Church," by Rev. William Wood of Wilton; read by Mrs. Lottie York of Winthrop; address "Our Debt To Our Fathers" Rev. Henry E. Dunnack; poem, "The Vanishing Village," by Rev. William



REV. H. F. ALDRICH
Pastor of Church

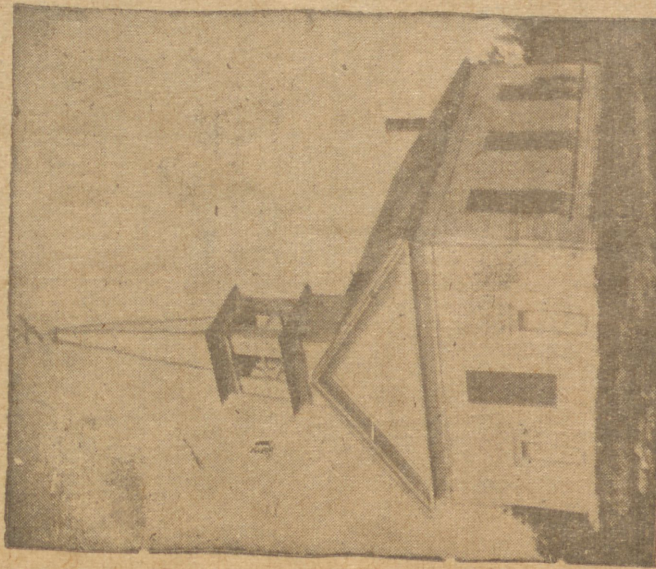
Wood, read by Mrs. York; solos, Mrs. Atherton; Historical Statement, prepared and read by Rev. H. F. Aldrich; unveiling of bronze tablet, Rev. Ralph F. Lowe.

The words of the closing hymns were written especially for this service by Mrs. Lowe. Owing to lack of space in today's issue the historical statement will not appear until Saturday.

The summer school of theology being in session at Cobbosseecontee, a large representation of Maine Methodist preachers were present.

Rev. A. D. Parker on Evening Program at M. E. Observance

Many Highlights to Annual Conference of Augusta
District and Sesqui-Centennial Program at
Winthrop and Readfield Churches



East Readfield Methodist Church

WINTHROP, Oct. 26—A very fine program was carried thru at the closing session here, of the conference of the Augusta district of Methodist Episcopal churches held Thursday at Winthrop and Readfield, and at which the sesqui-centennial of the induction of Methodism into the United States was observed. The East Readfield church was the first Maine church established by the Methodists, and a splendid program was held there in the afternoon, when Dr. Henry E. Dunnack, State Librarian, gave an address entitled "The Message of the Founders."

tion would fail, he urged careful study of prevailing conditions, and a conscientious effort to bring about an understanding between Labor and Capital which should be beneficial to all.

That there were 1500 followers of Wesley at the time of the famous Christmas conference in 1784, and that there are now more than 10 millions, was the basis of Dr. Dunnack's theory that Methodism is decidedly on the increase in this country.

Devotions at the afternoon ses-

The Evening's Program
In the evening Mrs. Leah Bell presided at the organ and played for the prelude, offertory and postlude. The quartet from the United Baptist church, Lewiston, composed of Mrs. Charlotte Martin, soprano, Mrs. Lila R. Atherton, alto, Marsters E. York, tenor, and Harold B. Libby, bass, sang, "I Will Lift Mine Eyes Unto the Hills," by Baldwin and "Rock of Ages," by Buck.

Rev. M. Gerry Plummer of Monmouth conducted the devotional period beginning with the hymn, "How Firm a Foundation." Thomas Peaslee of Monmouth, president of the Asbury Federation of Epworth Leagues led the Scripture reading. Prayer was offered by Rev. Charles E. Brooks of Rockland. This was followed by the hymn, "Faith of Our Fathers."

The address of the evening was given by Rev. Albert D. Parker, D. D., pastor of the Chestnut St. M. E. church, Portland. He took for his theme, "Good Master what good thing can I do to have eternal life?" or a life worth while? He gave two warnings—life that is centered in self and substance is wasted. Service for others is the secret of a life most worth while, of help put the world together is to find a life worth while." He illustrated his talk with various stories. It was an extremely interesting talk and a fitting climax for a worth while day in observing the 141st anniversary of the founding of Methodism in Winthrop and the surrounding territory.

Dr. Dunnacks Address

Tracing the history of the church from the first visit of Jesse Lee to Readfield in 1788, to the present, Dr. Dunnack praised the pioneer who organized the church and urged present day churchmen to continue the teachings of the church on the same high level on which they were started. Assuring his hearers that unless the Christian church returned to the principle laid down by Christ and applied His tenets to the present-day economic conditions, the institu-

Rev. Henry E. Dunnack

sion were conducted by Mrs. Annie M. Nichols, and M. M. Clark sang two solos. Greetings from the Bangor District were brought to the meeting by Rev. Lewis Staples of the First church, Bangor. In place of District Superintendent John M. Arters, who was unable to be present, Rev. Carl N. Garland spoke for the Portland district and Merle J. Harriman for the State Grange. It was hoped that Gov. Brann would attend, but he was unable to be present and sent his greetings to the conference.

Committee on Meals

The committee in charge of the two meals was: Mrs. Martha French, general chairman, Mrs. Mabel Laughlin, Mrs. Ruth Webb, Mrs. Allen Eustis, Mrs. Lida Smith, Mrs. Edith Dudley, Mrs. Nellie Briggs, Mrs. Ella Peck, Mrs. Ida Adams, Mrs. Louise Goodwin, waitresses and hostesses, Mrs. Dora Bishop, Mrs. Alice Lee, Mrs. Maude Canton, Miss Helen Smith, Evelyn Godfrey, Ruth Dow, Helen Bonney, Ruth Stevens, Mrs. Louisa Morton, Mrs. Ida Winnie Brawn, Mrs. Laura Pooler, Mrs. Hattie Bailey, Arline Knight, Mrs. E. B. Wales, Mrs. Rita Healey, Edith Carlton, Ethel Frazee, Mrs. Abbie Edwards, Mrs. Ralph Oakes, tickets, Roy Curtis and Bert Pinkham.

Words used in presenting a gavel
to Bishop Burns by Rev. F. F. Fowle
pastor, April 23, 1937.

"Bishop Burns and Brothers and
sisters of the conference I hold in
my hand a copy of the minutes of
the conference held in 1793, at which
time Jesse Lee was appointed to the
Province of Maine. Under the direction
of Jesse Lee the first M. E. Church built
in the state, was erected at East
Readfield in 1794, and dedicated
in June 26, 1795. This was the first
place where the Methodists of Maine
held a communion service with
eight folks participating. As pastor
and in behalf of this historic Church
I present this gavel made from
the wood, taken from one of the
girders, and the back of one of the pews.
It is my desire and the desire of my
people, whose loyalty cannot be called,
that someday we may have the
privilege of hearing you bringing us
a message in our beloved church.

On May 30, 1937 the District Superintendent
was present at the morning service and the
pastor, Rev. F. F. Fowle presented him
with a gavel made from the same piece
of wood as the Bishop's.

At the Methodist Church Oct 3, 1937 at East Readfield, this historic old church was filled when the tolling bell announced the opening hour, many coming from long distances to witness the rededication and to listen to the cheerful message brought by Bishop Charles Wesley Burns.

The church, the oldest Methodist church in Maine, and possibly the oldest Methodist Church still active in New England, has been redecorated and presented a light pleasing appearance, glistening with new paint and varnish, decorated with flowers, and autumn foliage, ready for rededication after 144 years of service. Here Bishop Asbury spoke in 1792, and on this occasion again the church was honored by the attendance of a Bishop.

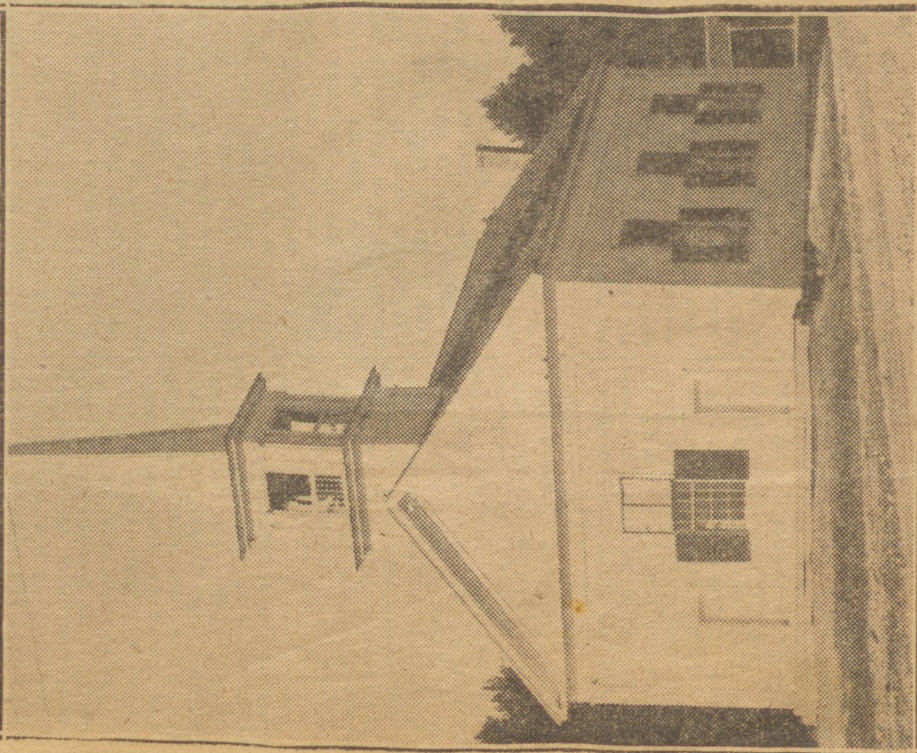
Mr. Fowler the pastor presided assisted by Rev. A. A. Callaghan, solos were "Open the Gates of the Temple" by Earl Achorn of Rockport, and "The Lord is My Shepherd" by Miss Agnes Ledstone of Winthrop. Mrs. Leah Bell presided at the organ. Maine Conference Historian Rev. C. W. Lowell of Hallowell, gave a brief historical statement of the church's history.

Bishop Burns held the closest attention of his audience for a full hour, with his dramatic address upon the words, "Why this waste?" This ointment might have been sold the words of the cynic deriding the gift of love, as cynics of every generation have done.

The building was presented for rededication by the pastor to the district superintendent, and by him in turn to the Bishop, the audience joining in the service of rededication which closed with the singing of the hymn, "Faith of Our Fathers Living Still."

Ushers for the service were George Fowle, Clifton Cotton, Everett Mace, Rex Luce, and Burton Gay. The offering was received upon new collection plates presented to the church at this time. Mrs. Harry Gay, Mrs. Willie Bourne, and Mrs. Alice Mace had charge of the decorations.

1927 Maine's First Methodist Church Renamed at Readfield



The first Methodist church built in Maine, recently rededicated and named the Jesse Lee Memorial.

READFIELD — Maine's first Methodist church, erected 143 years ago, which for many years has been known as the East Readfield Methodist church, was rededicated Sunday and named the Jesse Lee Memorial church in honor of the Rev. Jesse Lee who preached the first sermon in the church.

This church edifice is located in East Readfield on State highway 17. It is upon one of the high hills of that section and its white spire can be seen for miles around. The story of Methodism in Maine begins with this church; and yet, it is a question if one of the many members of that faith who ride by it each year give more than passing thought to the modest little white church on the hill.

A bronze plaque set in a small stone, near the road, in front of the church gives this brief history of the church:

"First Methodist Meeting House in Maine.

Built in 1794
Dedicated by Jesse Lee, June 21, 1795.

Francis Asbury held the N. E. Conference

Aug. 29, 1798."

Had Been a Class

Those who have attended the New England Conference of today, after reading that inscription, can readily understand how Methodism has grown in Maine and all New England. The little church would nowhere near accommodate those in attendance, while it takes a week to attend to all the matters of the conference in these times.

This is the first church edifice of the faith in the State, but it does not necessarily follow that at that time there were no believers in Methodism in the State other than in Readfield. There probably were.

From early records it appears that the first appearance of the Methodist faith here was in the form of a small class in East Readfield, which grew in numbers until

it was deemed advisable to erect a church home. This class, as nearly as can be determined started about 1793, for the records show that on Sept. 19, of that year, Jesse Lee preached the first Methodist sermon in the town. By some it is claimed that this was the first sermon of the faith to be preached in the State. This may be true. Whether that was the start of the class is not quite clear; neither does it appear that Lee was an ordained minister. None of the references to him which are now available carry the prefix "Rev." but that does not prove he was not a regular clergyman. *The fact of Lee's early ministry in Maine is confirmed by the fact that the original site until 1825, when it was moved 30 rods to its present site where it was rededicated. In 1851 the building was remodeled, but from that time to the present, except for necessary repairs and upkeep, it has remained unchanged.*

Important Center

At the time this church was erected and dedicated Readfield had been an incorporated town only three years and a settled place for only about a score of years. East Readfield was an important part of the town and it remained so for a great many years. There, at the time, was located a saw mill, grist mill, carding mill and in the course of years other industries such as flourished in most Maine towns in those years.

It was in East Readfield that the oil cloth factories, now located in Winthrop, were first established. They flourished for years. The Baileys, who built them to the present size, were not the original owners of the business. When the mills were destroyed by fire the Baileys moved them to that part of Winthrop known as Baileyville, where they flourished for years. Destroyed by fire there the business was again moved to the present location in the town of Winthrop.

*One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary
of
The Dedication
of the
First Methodist Meeting House in Maine*



June 24, 1945

**Jesse Lee Memorial Church
East Readfield, Maine**

One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary
The Dedication
We, of the Jesse Lee Memorial Church at East Readfield, invite you
to unite with us for the One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the dedi-
cation of Maine's first Methodist meeting house.



In order that we all may enjoy the inspiration and fellowship of the
occasion, we ask you to bring your own lunch. We will serve coffee or a
cold drink.



Plan to come for the day. You will receive inspiration both from the
beauty of God's world and from the services conducted in honor of those
who have served our Lord in Maine since the beginning of Methodism in
this state.

Reverend Alfred H. Ives

June 24, 1942
Jesse Lee Memorial Church
East Readfield, Maine

A FEW HISTORICAL NOTES *Program*

Morning Worship

10:30 A.M.

Worship

Rev. Alfred H. Ives

Sermon

Rev. Herbert F. Aldrich

Special Music

Readfield's Young People

Afternoon Service

2:00 P. M.

Worship

Rev. Cymbrid Hughes

Historical Address

Rev. Elwin L. Wilson

Sermon

Bishop Lewis O. Hartman

Special Music

Green Street Choir

Evening Service

7:00 P. M.

Worship

Rev. Louis S. Staples

Communion Meditation

Rev. G. Vaughn Shedd

Communion Service

Special Music

Winthrop Choir

A FEW HISTORICAL NOTES

On September 10, 1793 Jesse Lee preached the first Methodist sermon to be given in the province of Maine, in "a little village called Saco".

Lee says, "Although I was a perfect stranger and had to make my own appointments, I preached almost every day and had crowded assemblies to hear. After viewing the country I thought the most proper place to form a circuit would be on the west side of the Kennebec river. This circuit was accordingly formed, extending from Hallowell to Sandy river and called the Readfield circuit."

Jesse Lee met "the recently formed class" at Monmouth on Nov. 13, 1794. This was the first Methodist class in the State and was made up of about fifteen members.

On Saturday, Nov. 15, 1794 he arrived in Readfield and preached four times on Sunday, staying over until Monday when he "went to look at our meeting house", finding that, "it was almost covered in". "Through my influence the people began the house last summer", he said, "and now it is nearly ready to preach in. It is the first Methodist meeting house ever built in Maine".

On Dec. 12, 1794, Lee was again in Readfield, where he stayed for a few days and on Sunday, Dec. 14th he administered the Sacrament of Communion for the first time in Maine, to eight persons.

Early the next summer Lee was again in Readfield, arriving in season to preach the dedicatory sermon of the Readfield meeting house, on the twenty-first of June, 1795, this being the first Methodist Church dedicated in Maine.

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June 24, 1945
Jesse Lee Memorial Church
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In order that we all may enjoy the inspiration and fellowship of the occasion, we ask you to bring your own lunch. We will serve coffee or a cold drink.



Plan to come for the day. You will receive inspiration both from the beauty of God's world and from the services conducted in honor of those who have served our Lord in Maine since the beginning of Methodism in this state.

Reverend Alfred H. Ives

June 24, 1943
Jesse Lee Memorial Church
East Readfield, Maine

Program

Morning Worship

10:30 A.M.

Worship
Sermon
Special Music

Rev. Alfred H. Ives
Rev. Herbert F. Aldrich
Readfield's Young People

Afternoon Service

2:00 P. M.

Worship
Historical Address
Sermon
Special Music

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Bishop Lewis O. Hartman
Green Street Choir

Evening Service

7:00 P. M.

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"Forest F. Fowle" and Edward Webber

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Early the next summer Lee was again in Readfield, arriving in season to preach the dedicatory sermon of the Readfield meeting house, on the twenty-first of June, 1795, this being the first Methodist Church dedicated in Maine.

June 24 1945

The Jesse Lee Memorial Church of East Readfield celebrated its One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of The Dedication of the First Methodist Meeting House in Maine

Rev Alfred H Ives called us to worship

Prayer by Bishop Luver O Hartman
Virginia Welch Marilyn Owens
Marion Luce and Priscilla Gordon
passed the offering plates

Music by young folks of East Readfield sang "In my Heart Rings a Melody. Mrs Mayorie Cloven organist and Mrs Audrey Gray Chorus Leader. The young folks were

Robert Welch

Priscilla Gordon

Burham Ragon Jr

Marilyn Owens

Burleigh Lucas

Pollyanna Owens

Chester Weymouth

Marion Luce

Maynard Gordon

Virginia Welch

Kenneth Lucas

Barbara Bruen

Charles Sands

Clara Rose

Joan Gray

Mary Weymouth

Faye Luce

Rev Alfred H Ives read greetings from former pastor Rev Forest F Fowle and Rev Edward Webber

Rev Hubert F Adrich sermon was

"Enduring Temples". He said the Jesus Lie Memorial Church had endured he declared because through the years there have been men and women who have carried the spirit of God in their hearts.

There were 94 present for the morning service

Coffee and soft drinks were served at noon by Lila Goy, Alice Mace, Alice Dudley and Mildred Gordon. We ate our picnic luncheon in the parsonage back of church.

Folke kept coming after dinner. There were around 200 people in the afternoon service.

Rev Cymbrid Hughes called us to worship in afternoon.

Musici for afternoon was 12 members of choir from Winthrop with Leah Bell at the organ.

Historical address given by Rev Edwin L. Wilson.

A solo by Rita Gamage from Green Street Methodist "My Task".

Bishop Lewis O. Hartman delivered the sermon. "I must work the work of him that sent me while it is day. The night cometh when no man worketh

The Evening Service called to order
by Rev Louis S. Staples.

The Winthrop choir furnished the
music.

Rev G. Vaughn Shedd had the
Communion. Service

Winthrop Choir

Jacklyn Godfrey

Dorothy Godfrey

Doris Dow

Clara Yeaton

Mr Tillam

Rita Haune

Flora Mitchell

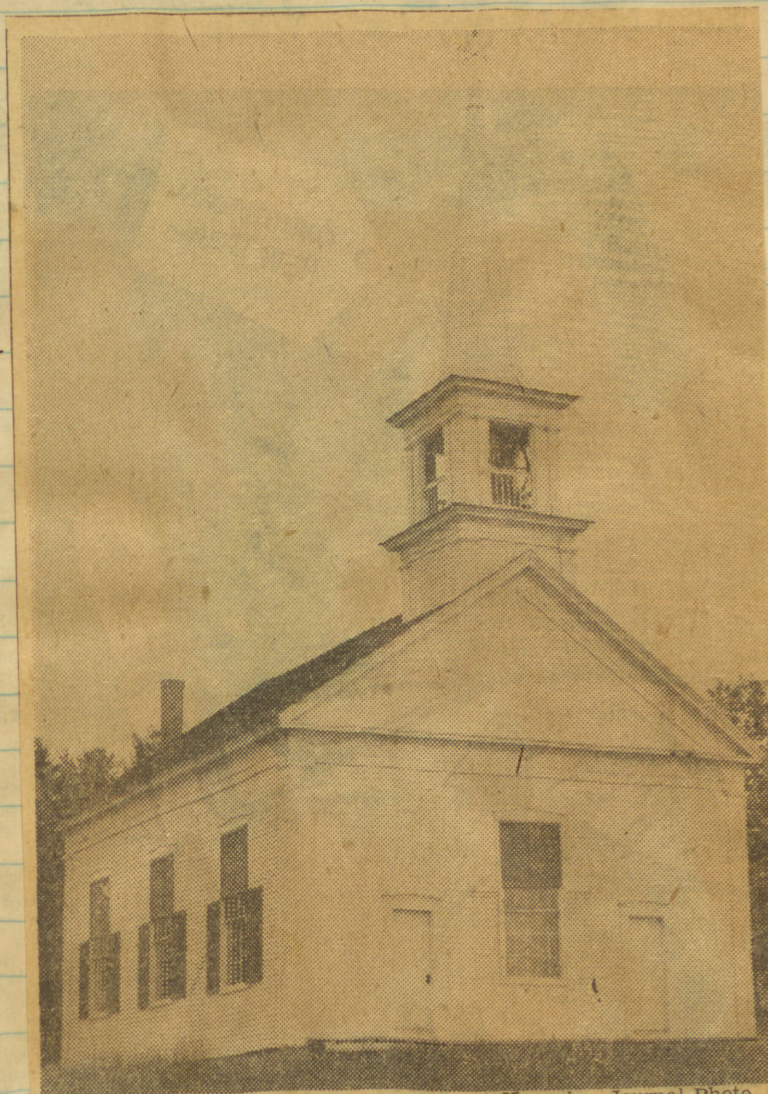
Ethel Hunt

Ruth Stevens

Arlene Harris

Dorothy Pear

Thelma Godfrey



—Kennebec Journal Photo
FIRST METHODIST MEETING HOUSE IN MAINE—Bishop Lewis O. Hartman, resident bishop of the Boston area, will speak at the Jesse Lee Memorial Church at East Readfield next Sunday when the 150th anniversary of the dedication of Maine's first Methodist meeting house will be observed.

Bishop Hartman at 150th Ann'y Maine's 1st Methodist Church Sun.

East Readfield, June 19.— Bishop will give the communion meditation Lewis O. Hartman, resident Meth- odist bishop of the Boston area, will speak at commemorative serv- ices at the Jesse Lee Memorial Church at East Readfield June 24 when the 150th anniversary of the dedication of Maine's first Meth- odist meeting house will be ob- served.

The Rev. Herbert F. Alritch, su- perintendent of the Augusta Dis- trict, will deliver the sermon at 10:30 o'clock. Bishop Hartman will speak at the afternoon service at two o'clock when the Rev. Elwin L. Wilson, Portland District Superintendent, will give an historical address.

The Rev. O. Vaughan Shedd, su- perintendent of the Bangor District,

Jesse Lee, an itinerant preacher from Virginia and founder of the first class of Methodism in Maine at Monmouth 150 years ago, preached the first dedicatory sermon at the Readfield meeting house June 21, 1795. The 150th anniversary of Maine Methodism was celebrated at Monmouth May 13 in the 100-year-old Monmouth United Church.

Lee, who had a great passion for the spiritual welfare of the pioneer peoples of the New England section of the new country, was appointed to the province of Maine in 1793 and soon set off on a tour of his new parish. He arrived in Saco on the 10th of September and preached the first Methodist ser- mon in Maine.

His itinerary took him along the coast and up the western slope of the Maine mountains. He turned for a brief stop at Readfield, then south again coming down through Unity to Hallowell. He swung in- land and went to Farmington, then came down through New Sharon, Mt. Vernon, Readfield and Winthrop and reached Monmouth on the 22nd of October.

Readfield Best Spot

As Lee looked over the terri- tory he decided the best place to form a circuit was in the vicinity of Readfield, taking in the com- munities within a radius of 25 or 30 miles. Monmouth became a part of Readfield Circuit.

Lee says in his journal, "After viewing the country, I thought the most proper place to form a circuit would be the site of the Kennebec River. This place was accordingly formed extending from Hallowell to the Sandy River, and called Readfield Circuit." Readfield Circuit thus became a far outpost of Methodism, being at least 200 miles "beyond any other circuit that we had in New England."

No class was formed at this time nor was any created for another year. In 1798, Jesse Lee was ap- pointed to the parish of the Lynn District and the Province of Maine. Lee left Lynn on the 3rd of November, arriving in Monmouth November 12.

The next day he met the first Methodist Class ever formed in Maine, under the leadership of Philip Waeger, who was appointed

to the Readfield Circuit at the same time Lee was appointed pre- siding elder. On November 15 he came to Readfield and there met the second class formed in Maine, consisting of 17 persons.

Lee records on that occasion, preaching twice on Sunday, the 16th, "the people were much melted under the word. The next day, the 17th, he remained in town all day and went to look at our meeting house. Through my influence the people began the house last summer and now it is nearly ready to preach in. It is the first Methodist meeting house ever built in Maine."

Jesse Lee came to Readfield again on December 12, 1794, and re- mained over the Sabbath, at which time he administered the Lord's Supper to eight persons. This was the first celebration of the Lord's Supper by the Methodists of Maine.

The fourth visit of Jesse Lee to Maine began in April of 1795. He visited many of the stations along the way and even went into New Brunswick where he visited St. John and crossed the Bay of Fundy. But he returned to Readfield to preach the dedicatory sermon June 21, 1795, at the Readfield church dedicated in Maine.

Three Circuits in 1795

At the session of the New Eng- land Conference in July, 1795, three circuits were reported in Maine. Portland had a membership of 36; Passamaquoddy of 50; and Readfield of 232.

Old East Readfield, as it has been called for many years, and now of- ficially known as Readfield, has for 150 years been the meeting place of Methodists. It probably has more "first events" than any other place. The first Methodist Quarterly Meeting was held here in October, 1795. The pre- siding elder received \$217 as his quarterly salary, and each of the circuit preachers on the circuit re- ceived their quarterly salary in full —\$16 apiece.

At the session of the New Eng- land Conference in 1797 plans were made for holding one of the 1793 sessions at Readfield. Accordingly the conference convened in Read- field August 29, 1798, with Bishop Asbury presiding. Bishop Asbury records in his journal that, coming from Winthrop to Readfield, he "as bed as the Allegheny mountains and the shades of death."

Eleven preachers were in atten- dance, including Asbury and Lee. A two day session was held with the second day's proceedings open to the public. At nine o'clock the doors of the church were open "only to Methodists to sit at the love-feasts, and at one o'clock came a hundred persons were present, and 200 partook of the Communion.

For 25 years the work went on with the East Readfield Church the center of activity for the region. But one by one circuits were formed within the great circuit until the day came when the Readfield Cir- cuit had only a local significance. The building has of course in- creased several folds and in 1900 the road leading toward Belgrade. It was moved to its present loca- tion with 30 yokes of oxen furnish- ing the power. In its first state it was a very plain and rough struc- ture, low-posted and without either steeple or bell.

Field Sale of Pews

Records show that in 1857 a meeting was called to sell the con- sent of the pew-holders to sell the pews. A private sale was order- ed and a committee chosen to ap- praise the pews. Three classes were made with 10 pews valued at \$4.00 each, 16 at \$3.00, and 12 at \$2.00. These were appraised in value ac- cording to location, and the names of the new owners are preserved, with the price each pew brought by them at that time.

James A. Sanborn, then a lead- ing member of the Society, was the prime mover in changing the lo- cation of the building and its re- construction. Through his personal generosity and effort, the roof was raised and the steeple and bell ad- ded. Probably the sale of the pews was a part of the plan to secure funds for a new meeting house. From a thriving little village, out with numerous homes and a fac- tory, East Readfield has become a purely agricultural community. As if the loss of industry and village were not enough, the demands of the larger communities have en- croached upon the peace and future of the smaller. Today the city of Augusta contains a part of its water supply from the Readfield Reser- voir. In recent years Readfield has been the scene of the destruc- tion of farms have been relinquish- ed to the Augusta Water District and a dozen homes torn down and hauled away.

Big Social Task Faces Youth, Says Bishop at Readfield Church Ann'y

East Readfield, June 24.— Chos- ting as the basis of his sermon a passage from John 9:4 Bishop Lewis O. Hartman spoke on "The Social Task of Youth." His work was an art and a means of self-expression Sunday at commemora- tive services at the Jesse Lee Memo- rial Church at East Readfield.

Sunday marked the 150th anni- versary of the dedication of Maine's first Methodist meeting house. Jes- se Lee, founder of the first class of Methodism in Maine at Monmouth 150 years ago, preached the dedica- tory sermon June 21, 1795.

He passed from John 9:4 that Bishop Hartman chose for his ser- mon theme was "I must work the work of Him that sent me while it is day. The night cometh when no man worketh."

Denying that work is a curse, Bishop Hartman said that "we are facing an age when there will be a new social system. Work is a blessing and a means of self-ex- pression in material form of unseen reality."

"Art," he continued, "depends up- on our attitude toward a task. Art of work gives one an opportunity for self-expression and creativeness. Express your personality upon the task and find a thrill in work by pioneering a new way."

Expressing the belief that the op- portunity for adventure was never greater than it is now Bishop Hart- man declared, "So, youth, do not be something with the work. Work is an adventure for creativeness and adventure."

"Work can give new insight, un- derstanding and sympathy, and through the stress and strain of work the human will is made stronger. Get yourself a cause," he added, "and devote yourself to it." Addressing himself to the youth of the congregation, Bishop Hart- man pointed out that youth can spread good will throughout the world, make a permanent world peace, al- lenate pain and suffering and secure economic justice.

"The world, Bishop Hartman said, "needs helpers, reformers, crusaders and social helpers to bring about social righteousness in the world. An historical address prepared by the Rev. Herbert F. Alritch, superin- tendent of the Augusta District, was presented by the Rev. Elwin L. Wilson, Portland District superin- tendent, at the afternoon service.

Since the Green Street Methodist Choir of Augusta was unable to appear the Winthrop choir sang at both afternoon and evening sessions with the choir singing How Beau- tiful Upon the Mountain in the at- tention and The Heart of God by the choir and the choir known by the choir in the evening. Mrs. Leah Bell was organist.

The remainder of the afternoon program included a solo, My Task by Miss Rowena Gamage of Au- gusta and worship by the Rev. Cy- brid Hughes, pastor of the Green Street Methodist Church of Au- gusta.

Using, as his subject Enduring Temples, the Rev. Herbert F. Al- trich delivered the sermon at the morning services. He quoted the passage from the first verse of Psalm 127 which appears on the stone marker in front of the church. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." Quoting from Stephen, the mar- tyr who said God does not dwell in temples made by hand, he said that the church should be a place for the indwelling spirit of God in the hu- man breast.

The Jesse Lee Memorial Church had endured, he declared, because through the years there have been men and women who have carried the spirit of God in their hearts.

The Rev. Alfred Ives of Winthrop gave the morning worship and Bis- hop Hartman offered prayer with a group of Readfield young people singing in My Heart There Rings a Melody, under the direction of Mrs. Stanley Gray. Mrs. Charles Elvin was organist.

At a communion service in the evening the Rev. O. Vaughan Shedd, superintendent of the Bangor Dis- trict, gave the dedication and the Rev. Louis S. Staples of Gardiner the worship.



BISHOP LEWIS O. HARTMAN

Oct 9, 1947

A Fourth Quarterly Conference was held at the Church.

Rev E. D. Wentworth D. S. had charge of meeting. Pastor Rev Dwight McMahon

At this meeting Charles Elvin and Herman Gordon gave report of the condition of church roof.

A motion was made & seconded we shingle it.

Herman Gordon, Charles Elvin and Roy Mace committee to get the shingles. money to be taken from treasury.

Oct 16 & 17 The men of the community got together and shingled the roof in 2 days.

Volunteer labor has made a very valuable contribution to the welfare of the Methodist Church at East Readfield in putting a new roof on its church building. The oldest church in the town and reported to be the oldest Methodist Church in the state, the contribution which volunteers in the town actually made becomes the more impressive. It is known as the Mother Church of Methodism in Maine, the Rev. Jesse Lee, famed as the home missionary of the Methodist Episcopal Church of early days, having gathered together a group on his first visit to Maine the latter part of the 18th century. He had been assigned to the Maine area at the annual session of the New England Conference in Lynn, Mass., and after making his way on horseback through wilderness area named Readfield as the headquarters for the first Methodist preaching circuit in the Maine territory. This he named the Readfield Circuit, and after placing a younger preacher, the Rev. Philip Wager in charge, Elder Lee pushed eastward into the wilderness.

1794?

The two pioneer ministers lived in the saddle, as was said of many pioneers in various lines of work in those days. They gathered together a small group of people who formed the Methodist Church at East Readfield, Elder Wager returned frequently to encourage the members, while Elder Lee was able to look in upon the group at longer intervals. The frame church was built of hewn timbers in the Winter from logs contributed by citizens and hauled on the snow to the site on the road to Mt. Vernon. The structure was raised at a bee in the Spring of 1795, this being an event in which residents of the town joined in a notable festivity for the little village. Of simple type, the building was ready for the dedication in early Summer, in fact, this took place on the first day of the Summer, June 21, 1795

Elder Lee preached the sermon of dedication, a notable occasion, not only for the members of the small parent church but to others, and within three years the Methodist organization in Maine comprised nine ministers of circuits serving under a presiding elder and with a membership of 936. On Aug. 29 and 30, 1798, the East Readfield Church was host to the New England Methodist Conference, the business sessions being held in the church building and the preaching services in an open field. Bishop Francis Asbury, the first Methodist bishop in America and then just past his 53rd birthday, preached to an estimated 1,800 people in a mowing field. The occasion reflected the work of Jesse Lee, in his leading in the spread of Methodism in New England.

In Lynn, Mass., Lee Hall, a business block owned by the late Edwin H. Johnson and situated opposite the City Hall, has stood for many years as a memorial to Elder Lee, founder of the First Methodist Church in the Shoe City, of which Mr. Johnson was a leading layman until his death half a century ago. The Readfield church has been known many years as the Jesse Lee Memorial Church. Bishop Lewis O. Hartman of the New England Area spoke at the 150th anniversary of the East Readfield Church in 1945.

July 21 1948

At a Offical Board meeting of
the church. Decided to have the inside
of the church redonated

Motion made & seconded we have
Coney Welch do the work.

We are making plans for the
150th Anniversary of New England Conference
held in the Jesse Lee Memorial Church.

Sunday August 29, 1948

August 29 1948

The 150th anniversary of New England Conference opened at 2 o'clock.

Mrs Elizabeth Pindleton played the organ.

Rev Dwight McMahon gave prayer

We all sang "Blest Be The Tie That Binds" all 4 verse

Responsive Reading Commemoration Service

Solo by Mrs Marnia Stanley accompanied by Mrs Mildred Wheeler at the organ. She sang "Teach me To Pray"

A brief historical sketch given by Rev Forest F Toole.

Scripture Reading by Rev Dwight McMahon

Solo by Mrs Marnia Stanley. "The King of Love my Shepherd is" with Mrs Mildred Wheeler at organ

Greeting from Bishop John Wesley Lord and former pastor Rev Edward Webber

The Offering taken by Joan Owens and Robert Pindleton Jr.

Hymn sang by all "A God Beneath Thy Guiding all" all 4 verse

Our District Supt Chauncey Wentworth gave the sermon using the text as Bishop Francis Asbury used. Therefore engage in mercy of God we do not lose heart.

The D. S. C. D. Wentworth spoke how nice our church looked since it was painted inside. The first time walls were painted instead of papered.

Rev Alfred Ives came in late

There were 60 present at their gathering

Hymn Take The Name of Jesus
Benediction given by George Berry
Supt Christian Anti League.

Mr George Berry had a record
player that made a record of the
happenings

Methodist Church, Readfield, to Have 150th Anniversary

Readfield, Aug. 26 — The East Readfield Methodist Church, oldest Methodist Church in the State, will hold a 150th anniversary program at 2 p. m. Sunday, Aug. 29.

Exactly 150 years ago Sunday, the Bishop Francis Asbury presided over the New England Methodist Conference in the same church building now used for worship every Sunday.

The people of East Readfield have had their historic church redeccorated inside. Ceiling, walls, and pews in their new finish will be seen for the first time at the anniversary service.

The Rev. C. D. Wentworth, district superintendent, will preach the sermon. Mrs. Marnia Stanley will sing two solos and Miss Mildred Wheeler will be the accompanist. The East Readfield girls choir will sing, with Mrs. Betty Pendleton as organist and director.



Kennebec Journal Photo

THE EAST READFIELD METHODIST CHURCH—held special services Sunday, observing its one hundred and fiftieth anniversary. The interior of the church has recently been completely redecorated.

Readfield Methodist Church Observes 150th Anniversary

Readfield, Aug. 30—Sunday, Aug. 29, at 2 p.m., the East Readfield Methodist Church held a special service, observing the one hundred fiftieth anniversary of the New England Methodist Conference under Bishop Francis Asbury, held in the same church building that is now used for Sunday worship. The interior was completely redecorated at a cost of \$550 for this anniversary.

The pastor, the Rev. Dwight H. McMahon, opened the service with the invocation. The congregation sang *Blest Be The Tie That Binds*, with Mrs. Betty Pendleton as organist. Mrs. Marnia Stanley of Winthrop sang two solos, accompanied by Miss Mildred Wheeler of Reading, Mass. The solos were *Teach Me To Pray*, and *The King Of Love My Shepherd Is*.

The Rev. Forrest F. Fowle, Wilton, who was pastor at East Readfield from 1936 to 1939, gave an historical sketch of the conference under Bishop Asbury in 1798, and of some significant gatherings in the church in modern times.

District Superintendent, Rev. C.

D. Wentworth, Augusta District of the Methodist Church, gave a sermon, with the same text as used by Bishop Asbury from the same pulpit 150 years before. The text was II Corin., 4: "Seeing we have this ministry, we faint not."

Greetings from Bishop John Wesley Lord, of Boston, were conveyed by the pastor to the people. Bishop Lord wrote in his letter:

"It is a high honor for me as Resident Bishop of the Boston Area, to extend Episcopal Greetings to a church of the area that stands in the historic Methodist tradition of service and sacrifice. To bridge the past with the present over a period of 150 years, is to span changing social tides and currents with an Eternal Evangel. Amid the changes of time, the Church stands with its proclamation of faith and works in the name of her Lord Christ. It is my hope and prayer that such a witness shall continue undiminished in the years that lie ahead, years fraught with promise and peril for all mankind. May Christ dwell in your hearts by faith."

