**CHURCHES**

The Town of Worcester is currently served by seven active church organizations, four in the Worcester hamlet and three in East Worcester.

Worcester’s historic “First Church,” the Congregational Church Society of Christ, formed on May 11, 1792. This group, which became Presbyterian in 1917, is now in its second structure at 176 Main Street in Worcester.

A group of Baptists gathered on West Hill in 1797, and organized as the First Baptist Church of Worcester two years later. The original church building, just west of the intersection of West Hill Road and the present State Highway 7, was succeeded in 1856 by the church now on North Road (108 County Highway 38) in East Worcester.

The first Methodists met in Tusculum’s red schoolhouse in the early 1800s, and their charge mainly included East Worcester by the 1830s. By 1837 the Methodists had built a meeting house at 132 Main Street in Worcester, and moved to their present site at 111 Main Street in 1871.

The first Methodist Society in East Worcester formed in 1823 and met at the schoolhouse. The group moved into its present building at 4 South Hill Road before 1839.

Another Methodist Church was organized in South Worcester in the 1830s. This congregation dissolved in 1963, and its building at 470 Charlotte Valley Road, dating to 1868, is now a private residence.

South Worcester also had an Evangelical Lutheran Church, whose structure was built in 1834. The group disbanded in 1933 and its former sanctuary at 457 Charlotte Valley Road later became a home.

Growth of the First Baptist Church enabled an offshoot, or “western,” group to form in the hamlet of Worcester in 1841 as the Second Baptist Church. It had earlier purchased the Methodist property at 132 Main Street and in 1872 rebuilt the structure there into the present church with its landmark tall steeple.

St. Joseph’s Roman Catholic Church was organized in 1874 as a mission church served by priests from Cobleskill. The original parish church at 205 Main Street in Worcester has seen a number of renovations. Although the Congregationalists, Baptists and Methodists at one time maintained burying grounds, St. Joseph’s now retains the only active church cemetery in town.

The Pilgrim Holiness Church began in 1949 and gathered in the “old dance hall” near the Oak Street intersection in East Worcester. In 1968 the congregation moved into its present church structure at 10575 State Highway 7.

Smaller, transient religious groups have appeared in town from time to time, but are now defunct. These have included an early Baptist organization in 1798, the South Worcester Free Methodists about 1895, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Worcester from 1936 to about 1962, the Becker Memorial Community Church in South Worcester from 1967 to 1969, and the Community Bible Church in Worcester and Brighton from 1982 to 1996.