Records of religious organizations are an excellent substitute for vital records. Unfortunately, not all religious organizations kept records and the records of those organizations that did keep records are often difficult to find. In some denominations, the records were the personal property of the pastor and were taken with him when he moved on. A search through many years of records may be needed unless the date of the event is known. All religious records are chronological and very few have an index. One source for locating religious records for a family in both New York and Monroe County is Guide to Vital Statistics Records of Churches in New York State by the Historical Records Survey, (1942). This guide describes the kind of records in the church and their location at the time of the project in 1942. This two volume set is available at Rochester Public Library and many other libraries throughout the US. See all locations of this title on WorldCat.

Each edition of the Rochester City Directory (see chapter on directories) has a list of religious organizations that existed during that year. Most of those directory listings are by denomination. Town and village histories usually list religious organizations located in the community over the years. Some churches have changed denominations or affiliations over the years as new denominations have been created and older ones merged. It may take further research to find if a church has changed denomination. A good source for the history of all denominations is Handbook of Denominations in the United States, by Frank S. Mead (various editions). For Rochester churches in the 19th century, you may also want to check out Churches of Rochester by Rev. Ferdinand DeWilton Ward, (1871). The author of this guide tried to compile a list of religious organization in Rochester in the 1800s. This web page has a list of organizations and gives approximate date of formation, the names of the organization over time and addresses.

Religious organizations that did maintain records for the most part still have them in their buildings. Some finesse with the clerk or pastor may be needed in order to access old records. If the genealogist is gracious, others may be allowed to see the records in the future. Also, bear in mind that some records may not be in English. One Catholic Church in Rochester with a German congregation has records in Latin, German and English; sometimes mixed on one page. A foreign dictionary or at a list of common terms, which can be found on the internet, will be helpful.

A project began in 1978 at Ithaca College to collect copies of religious records of western New York, including Monroe County. The collection, which is mostly comprised of microfilms, was moved to Cornell University in 1981. The records are housed in the Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections in the Kroch Library on the Cornell campus. Records in this collection are listed under the appropriate town in the listing below.

In 1986, the group now known as FamilySearch, filmed all Catholic Church records for the Diocese of Rochester. Records filmed were from the beginning of the church up to an arbitrary cut-off date of Dec. 31, 1910. These films have been digitized and links are included. Those digital films can only be viewed at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, UT, a local Family History Center, or while connected through WiFi at any of the Family History Centers.

FamilySearch has also filmed original records of Lutheran, Evangelical and a few other churches through the years. Most of those records have also been digitized. A good share of those records also can only be viewed at a Family History Center. There are some records that are still only on microfilm. Those are now only available at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City but may be digitized in the next couple of years.
The Rochester Public Library has a small collection of church records. Some are in bound volumes while some of the records are located in a file cabinet that was donated by the Genealogical Roundtable of Rochester (abbreviated below as RPL GRT). The records are filed in that cabinet under "Church Records." Ask at the information desk located in the Local History division for those records.

In the New York State Library are over 650 volumes called Unpublished Cemetery, Church and Town Records that contain church records of Monroe County and other counties. These records were collected by local chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). FamilySearch has digitized more than 300 of those volumes and put them online. Links to those transcribed church records are listed below as “FS online images” with the beginning and ending image numbers.

Rochester Genealogical Society has two church record projects that will be of help. The first project is the Church Records Preservation Committee which was formed in 2005 for the purpose of assisting churches and their archives with conservation of their non–replaceable records. The records were digitized and put on the RGS website and also the church would receive a copy of their record as DVD data discs. Links to those records are included below in the listing (abbreviated in listing as CRPC).

The second church project, Rochester Church Indexing Project (abbreviated in listing as RCIP) was started by a few RGS members and then later was adopted as an RGS membership project. On that website you can search for birth, marriage and death records of at least 47 Monroe County churches and over 200,000 records. Additional features are that you can add comments and also suggest alternate spellings.

The following list of church records are listed by Town and then for the City of Rochester, there are separate listing by denomination. Then within those lists the churches are by the church began.

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**Brighton**

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**Chili**
Chili Presbyterian Church – session records, 1838 – 1846 (FS digital film 505947, item 4).
St. Pius Tenth Church (formerly St. Feehan's Church) – baptisms and marriages 1869 – 1910, deaths 1882 – 1910 (FS digital film 1420500, items 9 – 11).

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**Clarkson**
First Congregational Society of Clarkson (FS online images 496 – 531) – transcriptions with 4p. baptisms, 3p. deaths and 28p. of members. All approx. 1816 – 1898.
First Freewill Baptist Church of Murray and Clarkson – records 1832 – 1878 (film #6202 at Cornell University).
First Presbyterian Church – records 1816 – 1903 (film #6206 at Cornell University).
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East Rochester


Gates

First Presbyterian Church – records 1828 – 1902 (film #6219 at Cornell University).


Greece

Methodist Protestant Church – records 1841 – 1881 (film #6210 at Cornell University).


Hamlin

First Baptist Church – records 1854 – 1922 (FS digital film 1432352, item 1; also film #6201 at Cornell University.)

First Freewill Baptist Church – records 1886 – 1928 (FS digital film 1432352, item 3).

Union Church (Baptist) of West Hamlin – records 1831 – 1926 (film #6204 at Cornell University).

Henrietta

Congregational Church – records 1833 – 1868 (film #6216 at Cornell University).

Manville Religious Society (Congregational) – records 1818 – 1880 (film #6229 at Cornell University).


Irondequoit


Mendon

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**Presbyterian Church of West Mendon**, Honeoye Falls ([FS online images 183–184](#)) – members in 1831. Also records 1831 – 1926 ([film #6205](#) at Cornell University).

**St. Paul of the Cross Church** – baptisms, marriages and confirmations; 1875 – 1910 ([FS digital film 1420498](#), items 49A – 50).

**St. Joseph’s Church** – baptisms, marriages, and confirmations; 1875 – 1910 ([FS digital film 1420498](#), items 51 & 52).

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**Ogden**

**Baptist Church of Ogden** – ([FS online images 532–557](#)) transcriptions of members (25p.); 1819 – 1888.


**Methodist Episcopal Church** – records 1850 – 1937 ([film #6266](#) at Cornell University)


**Ogden Presbyterian Church** ([FS online images 578–639](#)) – transcriptions with 15p. baptisms, 4p. marriages and 37p. Admissions; 1811 – 1893.

**Ogden Presbyterian Church** – records 1811 – 1880 ([film #6215](#) at Cornell University).

**St. John the Evangelist Church** (Roman Catholic) – baptisms, marriages and confirmations; 1875 – 1910 ([FS digital film 1420500](#), items 4 – 6).

**St. Mary’s Episcopal Church**, Spencerport, NY – baptisms 1931 – 1934; confirmations 1960 – 1968 and marriages 1941 ([RGS CRPC](#)).

**Union Society of Ogden and Sweden** (non–denominational) – records 1830 – 1878 ([film #6217](#) at Cornell University).

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**Parma**

**First Baptist Church** – records 1809 – 1920 ([FS digital film #1432352](#), item 2).

**Congregational Church of Parma and Greece** ([FS online images 640–666](#)) – transcriptions; 8p. of baptisms and 17p. of members; 1819 – 1874. **Note:** This church sat on the town line of Parma and Greece in is what is known as West Greece.

**First Congregational Church of Parma and Greece** – records 1819 – 1867 ([film #6209](#) at Cornell University).

**Methodist Episcopal Church**, Parma Center – records 1862 – 1892 ([film #6225](#) at Cornell University).


**Parma Circuit** (Methodist Episcopal) – records 1834 – 1880 ([film #6228](#) at Cornell University).

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**Penfield**

**Penfield Baptist Church** ([FS online images 666–672](#)) – transcriptions with 3p. of members and 4p. of various records; 1860 – 1865.

**First Presbyterian Church** ([FS online image 679](#)) – transcription of original members in 1806 (one page).


**Penfield United Methodist Church** – baptisms 1867 – 1942; marriages 1843 – 1942 and funerals 1915 – 1942 ([RGS CRPC](#)). Indexed marriages 1843 – 1881 ([RCIP](#)).
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Perinton
First Congregational Church – records 1824 – 1910 (film #6212 at Cornell University).
South Perinton Methodist Episcopal Church – records, 1865 – 1887 (film #6198 at Cornell University).

Pittsford
Pittsford Congregational Church (FS online images 186 – 206) – transcription of members up to 1833.
Second Congregational Church – baptisms 1806–1825, marriages 1819–1825, deaths 1818–1839 and memberships (FS microfilm 1853172, item 1)
Methodist Episcopal Church – records –1830 – 1886 (film #6223 at Cornell University)
First Presbyterian Church – records –1830 – 1886 (film #6233 at Cornell University).

Riga
First Congregational Church – records 1830 – 1965 (film #6231 at Cornell University).
Union Congregational Church, Churchville – records 1852 – 1893 (film #6222 at Cornell University).
Methodist Episcopal Church – miscellaneous records 1835 – 1917 (film #6257 at Cornell University).

Rochester – Baptist
First Baptist Church – (FS online images 362 – 408) transcriptions with 42p. of members; approx. 1818 – 1854.
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Rochester – Episcopal


Church of the Epiphany – baptisms, 1876 – 1921; confirmations, 1877 – 1920; communicants, 1876 – 1904; marriages, 1904 – 1921; and burials, 1876 – 1921 (FS digital film 1420003, item 14).


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Church of the Ascension Episcopal Church – parish records 1887 – 1925 (FS digital film 1420003, items 7 – 8).


Rochester – Evangelical


Rochester – Jewish

Temple B’rith Kodesh – Minutes and ledger 1865 – 1936 are at American Jewish Archives.

Rochester – LDS

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter–Day Saints – members 1895 – 1941 (FS microfilm 0001961, items 8 – 10).
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**Rochester – Lutheran**

First German Lutheran Church (later called Zion Lutheran Church) – baptisms, marriages, deaths and members; in German; 1833 – 1960 (RPL microfilm Rr284.1747 Z79c; FS digital film 2026698, items 1 – 8 and FS microfilm 2026699, item 1). Also the same records but better images (RGS CRPC). Indexed baptisms 1856 – 1863; marriages 1835 – 1880 and deaths 1833 – 1874 (RCIP).


Christ Lutheran Church – baptisms, confirmations, marriages and burials 1892 – 1945 (RGS CRPC).


**Rochester – Methodist**

First Methodist Church, Rochester – (FS online images 409 – 414) transcriptions with 6p. Marriages; approx. 1854 – 1870.


Alexander Street Methodist Church, Rochester (now called Monroe Ave. Methodist Epis. Church) – 4p. members and 17p. of marriages approx. 1854 – 1890 (RPL GRT).


Wesley United Methodist Church – members 1907 – 1954 (RGS CRPC).

**Rochester – Presbyterian**

History of First Presbyterian Church, Rochester, N.Y., 1815 – 1915 – baptisms, marriages, deaths, admissions and dismissions (RPL book Rfr285.1 R676f)

First Presbyterian Church (FS online images 170 – 343) – transcriptions of admissions,
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dismissions, adult baptisms, marriages and deaths; 1815 – approx. 1880. **Note:** This may or may not be the same as above.

**Second Presbyterian Church, Rochester** (later called **Brick Presbyterian Church**, now called **Downtown United Presbyterian**) *(FS online images 207 – 210)* – 4p. members, 1825 – 1827 and 1p. Baptisms. *Brick Church Life*, a monthly magazine which has marriages and deaths; Nov. 1893 – June 1932 *(RPL series: Rr285.1 R676b)*

*Records of the Central Presbyterian Church, Rochester, N.Y.* by Lois Badger, 1948 – includes the records of Bethel Free Church and Washington Street Church; two volumes; Volume 1 has baptisms, marriages, deaths, etc 1836 – 1907; Volume 2 is a complete index *(RPL book Rr285.1 R676cr* and **FS digital film 0532975**, item 1). Also available on Ancestry.com.

**First United Presbyterian Church** (in 1953 moved the Town of Chili and the name was changed to **Parkminster Presbyterian Church**) – baptisms 1848 – 1935; marriages 1864 – 1958; and deaths 1864 – 1958 *(RGS CRPC)*.

**Third Presbyterian Church** – baptisms, marriages, deaths and members 1827 – about 1965 *(RGS CRPC)*.

**Fifth Presbyterian Church** (became **Fourth Presbyterian** in 1844) – session records 1838 – 1846 *(FS digital film 0505947*, item 1)

**Mt. Hor Presbyterian Church** – session records 1893 – 1919 *(FS digital film 0505946*, item 7).

**Lakeside Presbyterian Church** – baptisms and marriages 1895 – 1919 and also members 1895 – 1944 *(RGS CRPC)*. Index marriages 1895 – 1919 *(RCIP)*.

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**Rochester – Roman Catholic**


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Corpus Christi Church – baptisms and marriages; 1888 – 1910 (FS digital film 1420499, items 12 and 13)


Church of the Blessed Sacrament – baptisms, confirmations and communions; 1903 – 1910 (FS digital film 1432353, items 14 – 16); also (FS digital film 1543907, item 1).


St. George’s Church – baptisms, marriages and deaths; 1907 – 1910 (FS digital film 1420500, item 34). Indexed marriages 1908 – 1910 (RCIP).

Rochester – Society of Friends

The Friends of Rochester (FS online images 211 – 219) transcription by Anah B. Yates – 8p. of members in 1825 with birth dates. Also transcripts of records from 1740 to 1920 (film #6199 at Cornell University).


Rochester – Universalist

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Rush

Sweden
Sweden Circuit (Methodist Episcopal) – records 1820 – 1834 (film #6227 at Cornell University).
First Baptist Church – church records 1830 – 1894 (FS digital film 1432352, item 4) also church records 1830 – 1895 (film #6220 at Cornell University).
Second Baptist Church (FS online images 415 – 422) transcriptions with members 1819 – 1861. Also records 1828 – 1938 (film #6213 at Cornell University).
Evangelical Association – baptisms 1871 – 1908, marriages 1872 – 1908 and deaths 1886 – 1907 (FS microfilm 1764710, item 3).

Webster
Presbyterian Church – records 1820 – 1929 (film #6214 at Cornell University).
Methodist Episcopal Church – records 1864 – 1874 (film #6218 at Cornell University).

Wheatland
Belcoda Baptist Church (FS online images 1262 – 1273) – transcriptions with members approx. 1829 – 1860.
First Presbyterian Church of Wheatland – records 1832 – 1905 (film #6203 at Cornell University).
St. Mary's of the Assumption Church, Scottsville, NY – baptisms, marriages, confirmations, & burials; 1848 – 1910 (FS digital film 1432353, items 6 – 13).