

CHURCH HISTORY
OF
FAIRVIEW EVANGELICAL UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH
ON
THE KINGMAN CHARGE

1821 - 1952

COMPILED BY PASTOR

Charles R. Lane

TYPED BY

Mrs. Howard Rowings

The history of Fairview United Brethren Church goes back more than one-hundred years to the days of the pioneer; to the days when the Indians roamed the forests and wild game and fowl were plentiful, and our own beautiful state was yet in its infancy. The people lived in log cabins and modern improvements and conveniences were unknown. Hard realities of life endowed the sturdy men and women with courage to push on and blaze the trail for those yet to come, to acquire land by settlement and grants from the government and build homes with faith and trust in their God, who had preserved them through every trial.

In 1821, a son of the State of Ohio, came to Indiana possessing the religious zeal, which later came to be the religious creed and beginning of this Fairview Class. Jacob Bowsher and his family, after a journey of many days in a covered wagon, arrived in Parke County and made their first stop on Sugar Creek, to which they were attracted by the fine water and beautiful scenery. The first to welcome them were the friendly Indians, followed by the white settlers. Their new found friends made them comfortable in their own homes and aided them in finding a desirable place to settle. They located and entered the land which is now known as the William Wolf farm. The family then consisted of Jacob and wife Margaret, and their children, John, Jacob, Joseph, and Margaret or Polly who later became the wife of Johnny Heath, an early minister of this church.

After their location was established, with the help of their neighbors, they began at once to build for that day, a very large log house. When it was completed, their first concern was for religious affairs and all the neighbors were invited to prayer meetings. Afterward the largest room was much used as a meeting house for all who were religiously inclined. These meetings began the same year the first county election was held, the same year that Parke County was

organized, and continued regularly in the homes of the settlers for several years. Circuit riders sometimes came through and preached for them.

In the winter of 1827 and 1828, it was definitely decided to have an organized class, and to give their support as far as possible to a regularly appointed minister. This same Jacob Bowsher, in a talk before a meeting proposed that they send to the Wabash Mission for a missionary. He said in effect, "We have been friends since we came here, far from other relatives. We have been more like brothers. Back home in Ohio they have a church called the United Brethren in Christ. Rev. Otterbein who organized that denomination gave it this name as they were brothers in Christ." It was agreed by all present to send to the United Brethren Conference at Miami for a minister. Conrad Farner proposed that Brother Bowsher attend to that matter and all would stand behind him to which all assented. They likewise agreed to begin a camp meeting and be getting ready for the minister. Toward that end they begin making seats from logs before the spring work should begin.

The conference assigned the Rev Jacob Mahan to them in April. He set out on horseback on his two weeks journey. After leaving Indianapolis, he struck an Indian trail and headed west. Some miles below Crawfordsville, in attempting to swim across Sugar Creek swollen from heavy rains, he was swept from his horse. He lodged in a tree top, and after repeated calls was rescued, as was his horse also. A cold developed into lung trouble which later caused his death. He was able, however, to fill his mission and the class was organized. Camp meeting had been in progress several days when the Rev. Mahan arrived. After prayer he addressed the people as a missionary under the direction of the Miami conference and read to them from the ritual, how a class should be organized. He called on them to publicly bear

witness to their agreement and their covenant to walk together in a church relation by rising and singing the Doxology. All desiring to join this church were asked to come forward, of whom there were eleven as follows: Jacob Bowsher and his wife Margaret; Jacob Bowsher Jr and his wife Melissa; John Bowsher and his wife Peggy; Joseph Bowsher and his wife Miranda; and George Sherby, and Conrad Farner and his wife. Rev. Mahan extended to them the hand of fellowship. Jacob Bowsher, Conrad Farner, and George Shorby were elected trustees. They were duly accepted by asking them the usual questions and administering appropriate charges to both the trustees and membership.

For 20 years this class held services in the homes of the members during the winter and in a large threshing barn during the summer. This barn has since been remodeled and stands on the farm of Ward Bowsher. The first church was erected in 1849 (with Jacob Bowsher, Joseph Bowsher, and George Shorby as trustees). It was usually spoken of as the "old Depot Church" but on the conference records was known as Rush Creek Chapel. In addition to the regular Sunday services, prayer meetings were held every Thursday afternoon. Joseph Bowsher never failed to attend, and likewise required the attendance of the employees in his sawmill.

As time passed, the waters of Rush Creek almost undermined the church building and plans began to form for a new church. The new board of trustees was elected, consisting of John Nelson Bowsher, Zimri Hunt, Alexander Armstrong, Thomas Causey, Isaac Weaver, and John Shoup. Zimri Hunt donated the land on which to build. Some donated timber, others labor and money. **Isaac Weaver made the brick and was the master mason who laid them. Bloomer Clark hauled bricks for the new church.* Finally, a brick building was completed and this

class which had worshipped among the hills for sixty years, was moved upon the level and placed in a beautiful new building.

To Oliver Jonas Tibbett went the honor of naming the church. He had been employed to dig a well by the following committee, Isaac Weaver, Zimri Hunt, Asa Angelemeyre, John Nelson Bowsher, Alexander Armstrong, and Dave Stevers. Simpson Gilkerson and John Shoup were also present. Their discussion centered upon a name for the church and Jonas remarked, "You have a nice, fair view here. It ought not be hard to find a name". The remark appealed to these men, and "Fairview was accepted as the name. At the suggestion of Alexander Armstrong, prayer was offered in thanksgiving that all had agreed upon a name for the church and a place for the well. On January 1, 1888, Fairview United Brethren Church was dedicated to the service of God by Bishop Castle, A. M. Snider, Presiding Elder and Perry Cooper, Pastor.

Of the 61 members transferred from the "old Depot Church", only seven still had their names on the roll, July 11, 1936. They are Lizzie Harvey Bowsher, Margaret Armstrong Swaim, Katie Causey Manwaring, Rinnie Bowsher Gerrard, Hannah Causey Gerrard, John Sherrill, and Erastus Garrard. All of the pastors of that period have passed to the great beyond except perhaps Perry Cooper.

Fairview U. B. Church bares the distinction of being numbered among the five churches yet existing of those organized under the Miami Conference, and now forming a part of the White River Conference of 170 churches. The other four are Franklin, Castle, New Century, and Veedersburg.

Not only have some of the best ministers of the conference been sent to this charge, but this class has produced many who have preached the word of God, and some attained a high

standing in the conference. Among them are John Sherrill, James Sherrill, Sam Sines, Frances Hunt, Ab Carney, Elias P Thorn, Minnie Thorn, Ross Thorn, Marion Sherrill, Kenneth Millikan and Win Sherrill. The last named has held some of the best charges in the St. Joseph Conference.

Little record has been found of the ministers who served during the period 1827-28 to 1849. A few of them are Jacob Mahan, John Hoobler, Aleck Hunt, Rev. Mass and Johnny Heath.

A better record is to be had of the "Old Depot Church" but it is not complete. Many of the ministers who served during the period 1849 to 1888 are Andy Winsett, Peter Flynn, William Sherrill, Elias Thorn, Minnie Thorn, Father Griffith, Ben Dungan, Fletcher Sherrill, Doss Teague, O.P. Cooper, the Rev. Miller, Kaufman, Evans, Shumaker, Engle, Jones, Muncie, Ben Kennedy, Hugh Russell, Mary Ann Rollings, Forbes, Garrigus, Johns, Kelly, Rice, Aikman, Garrison, and Anderson.

The Presiding Elders who served during this period are Rev. W.N. Nye, Tom Hamilton, Rev Cowgill, Ira Mater, Jacob Knoyer, and A.M. Snyder.

The ministers who have served the Fairview U.B. Church since its beginning January 1, 1888 are:

Perry Cooper -----	1888	B. Taylor -----	1904
William Pastor -----	1889	Z. Dixon -----	1905
E.J. Jenkins-----	1890	John McHargue -----	1906
F.E. Penny-----	1891	B. Manuel -----	1907
R.B. Van Allen -----	1892	Joshua Lewis-----	1908
B.B. Phelps-----	1893-1894	John Newnum-----	1909
F.E. Penny-----	1895	Taylor B. Kelsey -----	1910-1912
Elmer Fowler-----	1897	Alexander Edrington-----	1913
J.H. Elder -----	1896	Julian C. Shrigley-----	1914-1916
W.H. Jones-----	1898	J.M. Tuggle -----	1918-1920
J.F. Miller-----	1899	T.A. Garriot -----	1921-1923
E.J. Jenkins-----	1900	Herbert Lashbrook ----	1924-1927
Levi Bird -----	1901	Win Sherrill -----	1928-1929
John McHargue-----	1902-1903	Frank Egnew-----	1930-1931

R.E. Laswell ----- 1931
H.W. Robbins ----- 1932

Mrs. Lucy Sharp----- 1933-1936
Rev. L.L. Rapp ----- 1937-40

PRESIDING ELDERS beginning January 1, 1888

Rev. A.M. Snyder
Rev. A.J. Nugent
F.M. Hamilton
J.S. Cooper
R.M. Zuck
F.E. Penny
J.W. Nye
Wm. E. Stanley
E.A. Goodwin

Elmer Mater
J.A. Hawkins
J.A. Roberts
J.E. Shannon
J.B. Parsons --- August 1921-1936
W.H. Todd-----August 1936
Virgil Hunt-----August 1938
Virgil Hunt-----August 1938

LATER MINISTERS

Mrs. Eastbury -----1940-41
Rev. B.H. Spratt----- 1941-1943
Rev. Leslie Smith ----- 1043-1946
Rev. Saylor----- 1947
Rev. James Dilly ----- 1948
Rev. Robert Pearman ----- 1949
Rev. I.C. Alderton ----- 1950-1951
Rev. Charles R Lane--- 1952-1953

**Additional Information Added by Mildred Weaver*
Rev. Howard Pearson 1954-1956
Rev. Paul Rubais ----- 1957-1958
Rev Eugene Rajson ---- 1959-1960
Rev. Robert Carey ----- 1961-1963
Rev. Bedwell ----- 1963-1964
Rev. Yung Chen ----- 1964-1965
Rev. Kolmeyer -----1965
Mrs. Lucy Sharp----- 1933-1936

The new church has thrived through the passing years; some mighty revivals have been held; it has had struggles and conflicts common to all churches. But the old church and the spot where so many received the light are still dear to the hearts of many who find their way to our home comings to meet old friends and make new one who are rich in the blessings of lives well lived.

Although we are proud of the past record of this church, this work of more than a century is but a beginning of all that may be accomplished. Let us ever be mindful of the spirit of the "Old Church" and the cause of Jesus Christ, our Lord. May we ever seek new fields of

labor for the Kingdom as did our forefathers who left their homes and took the long journey to become our pioneers.

The church of the United Brethren in Christ was founded on brotherly love, and steadily grown for more than a century and a half. Today it is recognized as a power in Christendom.

After thanking God for the things we now enjoy, we should give thanks for our church fathers who were not inspired by denominational ambitions or church pride. They asked only for simple breed. They used the Bible and were guided by the Holy Spirit. They gave themselves, expecting nothing in return. They gave the world a church, made sacred to us by their prayers and tears and sacrificing toil. Thanks to the venerable prophets who trod the wilderness on Indian trails, following the blazed trees through pathless woods, guided by compass and led by an invincible purpose, the Gospel of Jesus Christ has been carried over mountains and rivers, through unbroken forests, to the most distant valleys and the deepest solitudes.

Like a dream old things pass away, and seemingly we are awakened to new life, new thoughts, new faith and new love. If our lives could but radiate this joy, this faith, this love to those about us, the aspirations of our fathers would indeed be realized.

**The original document was passed down by Mildred Foncannon Weaver. She added these notes after Rev. Lane's message in 1952.*

****The original document was retyped in August 2021 by Pamela Cory Rager as it was originally written with only minor edits. One exception was to change the spelling of "Brethern" to "Brethren".**