**HISTORY OF THE DYER METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH**

Written by Lorena Moss in 1920 (14 years old)

The first Methodist Sunday School was organized about 1883 by Mr. George Dyer in this community.

The meeting place was in a one room log school house, daubed with clay and known as the "Old Valley School." It was located north of town where the Dave Morse house now stands. This Sunday School with all its drawbacks was carried on there until the first public school building in Dyer was built in 1885 on a site not far from where the Baptist Church now stands.

Then it was moved to the new school house with George Dyer still its superintendent. Then Charles H Moss was elected assistant superintendent and who has been a mainstay through the years. The Sunday School was carried on by these two leaders in the school house until the Conference sent to the Dyer Church, Reverend D. N. Weaver as pastor, a man of power and wisdom who has given his life to the work of the Master, and, now because of age, has been superannuated.

He and others who were interested got busy, built the Church which houses us today. In 1883 Floyd Loomis oversaw the building since it was built with free labor. Mr. Loomis since then has passed on to his reward.

The Sunday School was then moved to this Church with Mr. Dyer and Mr. Moss still its leaders until in 1904 the Good Master in his wisdom saw fit to call Mr. Dyer to his reward. Then Mr. Moss was elected as superintendent and served a number of years with the co-operation of others and a staff of faithful teachers. Among them were Miss Kate Rogers, Mrs. Gussie Ayres, Miss Mae Dyer, Thomas William Moss, and John H. Warrick.

After serving until he felt that others should take his place, Mr. Moss stepped out of office and filled any other need in the Sunday School. Mr. Wiley Chitwood then served as superintendent for several years. During the meantime a good faithful Methodist family moved into our community to make this their home, Mr. and Mrs. Thad Johnson. Finding that Mr. Johnson was qualified to act as leader of the Sunday School, he was elected and also served many years, with his wife serving as the teacher of the youth. Then Mr. Johnson steps back to give the office to Mr. E. H. Floyd, another newcomer to our little town. He served us well until he moved too far out of town for his convenience.

Again Mr. Johnson resumed the office. Feeling that a younger man should have his responsibility he again steps out of office in favor of Mr. Lark Cowart, who was at that time Superintendent of the Dyer Public School. He and his wife, Neva, and little daughter Loretta, were an inspiration to all of us. As assistants Ernest Cottrell and Charles G. Moss aided for several years.

During the years I have given you the history of our Sunday School, we have had some outstanding characters go out from it. Two Methodist Ministers: Reverend Elisha Dyer and Reverend Julius Faust. Elisha and Lena Moss Dyer have a daughter Nellie, who is a missionary to Korea. Nellie was born in Dyer.

I give credit to some of these facts to my father, Thomas William Moss, Mr. Thurman Hurd, a member of the Baptist Church who also attended our Sunday school, Charles H. Moss, and Mrs. John Jordon.

**CHURCHES**

The churches have greatly influenced the people of this community. No dates have been found when the first church service was held in Dyer, but we do know they started very early, perhaps as early as 1845 or 1850. There were no church buildings but the first services were held in the Old Valley School which was a one room log building located on what we know as the Dave Morse farm. All denominations met together in fellowship with whatever minister was available. Reports that the first teacher was a Methodist minister so he served in both capacities. The first Sunday School was organized by Mr. George Dyer. Then when the second school building was built near where the Baptist church stands today, the church continued to meet in the school building until 1893 when the Methodist Episcopal Church, South was built by Floyd Loomis on South Washington Street. Shelton Chastain gave the lot for the Church and the Church of Christ also held services in the church for many years. Sunday School was still held as a union service.

According to records early Methodist ministers were J. J. Turlton; Frank Naylor; H. S. Story; John N. Clayton; W. H. Metheny; J. E. Martin.

In 1893, D. Norman Weaver was the first pastor in the new church, serving two years. He returned in 1906 and served two more years. Data given states that the Methodist Parsonage was across the street from the Church and also the house south of church. The preachers lived in Dyer because at that time Mulberry did not have a parsonage, and, when they did decide to build one, Dyer sold their parsonage and gave the money to Mulberry church to add to their building fund.

The first stewards were: Robert Anderson; John William Moss; Floyd Loomis; and Thomas J. Davidson.

George Dyer, John William Moss served as Sunday School Superintendent. In about 1900, Charles H. Moss as a young man became the Superintendent and filled this office for many years.

Some of the early members of the Church were:

John William Moss and wife Ursula Whittington Moss

James Chastain and wife, and also served as a teacher

Robert Anderson and wife

John Jordon and wife Sarah. Also served as steward

Robert Lester and wife Ann

Thomas J. Davidson and wife Julia

Brother O'Rear and wife

Louis Wells and wife Frances

George Dyer and wife Virginia

Jane Morse, wife of Percevial Morse

Joe and Lula Minyard

Kathe Rogers and taught a class for many years

Mae Dyer as a teacher

Warren Loomis, Lucy Loomis, Lena and Lucy Moss, Thomas W. & Charles H. Moss, Florence and Lou Earl Selby, Addie and Belle Davidson.

Dr. Joseph Ayrea and wife Gussie who taught a class of boys

Tim Selby and wife.

Most of the children joined the church as they became adults. The first choir was composed of youth: Joe Wells; John Chitwood; Wiley Chitwood; Marvin Selby; Charley Moss; Oma, Florence, and Lou Earl Selby; Lena and Lucy Moss; Lucy Loomis.

Elisha Dyer, Julius Faust, and Charlie G. Moss were licensed to preach from the Dyer pulpit.

In 1887 Rev. H. S. Story lived in Dyer and served as pastor when he was a young man. He first preached in the one room school located near the Baptist Church.

Floyd Loomis built the house East of the Church that we know as the home of Grandmother Bennett, and this is where Rev. Story resided. Later the Church was built across the street in 1892. At this time Rev. Story lived at Alma and served both Churches. He rode a red horse and came down to Dyer on Saturday evening and spent the weekend with members of the Church. Then there were services on Saturday night as well as both services on Sunday.

The years saw pastors and members come and go. Babies dedicated and funerals for many people. In those days the church bell tolled the age of the deceased as the cortege left the Church on the way to the cemetery. In 1906 when the bell was tolling for Willie Dew Burkhead, his daughter was being born and she was named for him.

The first Church wedding in Dyer was for W. L. Gillenwater of Ozark and Sarah Ann Haydon of Marshall, Missouri, in 1903. She was a sister to Dora Belle Haydon Moss, wife of Thomas William Moss.

Records show that in 1909, Joseph Clifton Ayres was the first baby dedicated but I believe there were others first. Such as: Thomas James Moss, Frances Moss, Nellie Dyer, Lucy Moss, Garland Ayres, and many more.

There were Thanksgiving suppers, pie and Box suppers, Children Day programs, and Christmas trees for the community.

Protracted or Brush-Arbor meetings behind the Church. One night, Rev. J. W. Moore was a young minister and he was preaching at the time, when down the aisle came several members of the K.K.K. Bro. Moore was scared and he stopped preaching. One of the K.K.K. laid an envelope on the pulpit and walked back down the aisle. He opened it and there was money in the letter. One person recalled that there was a little boy who would never come under the tent but roamed around outside, but this night he ran under the tent and got in his mother's lap.

About 1939 the Church was in need of repair and the Trustees had met on Sunday night to discuss what to do and decided that they must raze the building and rebuild the Church. Next morning two members got up on the roof and started to pulling off shingles. So a rock Church replaced the old one and it was built with free labor. Building Committee was Jewel Chitwood, Sebe Tomlinson, and H. A. Bennett. Florence and Floyd Loomis secured the doors and Windows that were donated by Long Bell Lumber Company. And collected $25.00 on purchase of pews.

In 1958 the women of the Church started a drive with bake sales, etc, to raise monies to build an educational building, and it was built in 1968. So today we have a lovely rock sanctuary and three class rooms, two restrooms, and a Fellowship Hall.

In 1970 carpeting was laid on the sanctuary floor. 1973 central heating and air conditioning was installed. This year ***[1976]*** memorials were given as follows: Lights for Layton Moss, lectern for Rev. Raymond Brooks, Communion Table for Hilda Moss Gregory, Baptismal Font for Dora Belle Haydon Moss.

Donated: Pulpit by Jewell and Martha Chitwood; Pulpit Chair by Lois Chitwood William, another by Kamm Family; in 1974 the Communion Rail was given in honor of our pastor Rev. Dorothy Colliers.

In 1974 we welcomed our first woman minister to our church, Reverend Dorothy Colliers.

February 1976, some of the stained glass windows are ready for installation, and we hope the others will be ready for local Bicentennial. These are given in memory of:

Thomas William Moss and Dora Belle Haydon Moss.

Asa Dyer and Mary Lee Dyer.

Charles Haydon Moss and Mattie Moss.

Martha Sue Moss.

Sebe Tomlinson and Susie Tomlinson.

Martin Kamm and Stella Kamm (not memorial).

John H. Warrick and Emma B. Warrick.

Jewel Chitwood and Martha Chitwood.

Frank Porter Morse and Myrtle Morse.

At the morning service in the United Methodist Church on May 16, 1975, the memorial windows will be dedicated as our part in the local observance. There are plans to place a Methodist minister marker on the graves in the Dyer cemetery of the five Methodist ministers interred there:

Reverend W. G. Davis, born 1821, died 1890.

Reverend Andrew Thresher, born 1854, died 1903.

Reverend James E. Martin, born 1852, died 1895.

Reverend Elisha Dyer, born 1873, died 1935.

Reverend Walter Julius Faust, born 1875, died 1949.

And Martha Chitwood has compiled data for history of our church which will be given to members and visitors on that day.

**THE CHURCH OF CHRIST**

by

Mary Lou Kelly

One of the first congregations in Arkansas consisted of John T. Johnson and his family. After being baptized by a visiting preacher, they formed a Congregation at Great Crossing in Scott County, Arkansas.

Thus many more were to follow this teaching, and in 1847 John T. Johnson and Robert Graham held a meeting at Fayetteville and a congregation was started. Several ministers of the Gospel were traveling around the state preaching the "Good News". Many believed what they heard and were baptized.

Among the first in the Town of Dyer was A. M. Lipscomb and Shelton Chastain, prominent land owners. In 1893 Shelton Chastain gave land to the Methodist Church, located on South Washington Street, with the understanding that any Church of Christ preacher could preach there. Either in the building or under the brush arbor behind the Church. Shelton's wife, Sophie, became a member of the Church of Christ and remained a strong member until her death on November 5, 1964.

In about 1900, Columbia Lipscomb, daughter of A. M. Lipscomb, removed her membership from the Baptist Church and became a faithful member of the Church of Christ. She continued to keep the Baptist preachers in her home.

The members of this Congregation hungered for the day when they could have a regular meeting place. They had many preachers coming into the Community, preaching in several places. Those who came most frequently were: Brother Lowery, Brother Fuquay, and Brother Wade Ruby.

In 1927 the Evans family moved to Dyer and the Church meetings were held often in their home. Mrs. Lottie Evans gave of herself to the growth of the Church, even though her husband was ill and she had several children at home. She prepared the Communion trays each week and prepared the unleavened bread and canned the fruit of the vine for this service.

In fall of 1927 the Church started meeting in an old empty store building in the heart of town. The Elders and Deacons were: Milton Chastain, Jess Cash, John England, Thell Henson, Ezra Wright, and Jim Hall. The Pastor was Brother Frank England.

After Mrs. Evans moved to Michigan, Mrs. John England took care of the Communion trays. She made the unleavened bread by heating two flat irons and pressing the dough between them until done. Also canned the grape juice in small jars for the Communion Services.

After the Englands moved to Alma, Madge Chastain Cottrell cared for the trays and after her, Castle Winfrey, wife of Basil Winfrey. Today the task is shared by all members.

In 1938 the Church purchased the Dan Chitwood house at the end of Washington Street in Dyer from Bill Cole. The Church met for many years in this old house until they could save money to build the present Church building, located on the same piece of property.

Mr. Sophshire made the seats for the Church, and they are still in use today.

In 1943 Brother Tillman B. Pope became the preacher for the Dyer Congregation. In 1951 Brother Oral Brown became the preacher. From the beginning of this Church organization, the members from Mulberry met with this Congregation as they did not have a Church at that time. Harvey O'Rear was made an Elder and he led the singing for us.

Through 1954-1955 Johnny Mahan preached part time. When the Congregation was without a preacher, the ministerial student at Harding College at Searcy would hold the service for us. When no preacher was available, Thell Henson, a local member, would read the Scripture for the Congregation.

In 1957 the Mulberry group decided to find their own meeting place and withdrew from the Dyer Congregation. In 1958 Brother Oral Brown left the Dyer Church and went to the Mulberry Church.

At this time Brother Tillman B. Pope came to serve the Dyer Church again. He stayed with the Church until 1964; during his ministry he baptized John Chastain, aged 97, which was the oldest member he had baptized. Basil Winfrey became the song leader and teacher of the adult class.

In 1964 Monte Ray became the preacher and is still serving the Dyer Congregation

The years of this Church have seen many events, some are happy, ones and some are sad. One of the happy ones happen each Thanksgiving Day. Brother Ray and his family invite the Dyer Congregation to their home in Fort Smith for dinner. And there is the fellowship when they clean the Church house and grounds. At Christmas the members enjoy the Holidays in one of the member's home.

Since some rain must fall in the lives of us all, this Church also has the sad times come to them when one of their members exchanges his life here for an eternal one. They have lost several members the last few years and all are missed. Basil Winfrey is missed by the Church since he held important offices within the Church. Basil died in March 1973.

The Church in Dyer has been the setting for three weddings: Zeke Richards and Virginia Anderson, married on August 18, 1954, with Brother Tillman Pope performing the ceremony. Cindy Kelly and Gerald Jones were married 27th of June 1975, with Brother Ray performing the

ceremony. Brother Ray had also baptized Cindy.

There have been four young men who have answered the call to the ministry from this Church. They are: Haskel and Idus England, sons of Mr. and Mrs. Frank England; J. D. Cash, son of Mr. and Mrs. Buck Cash; Kenneth Wayne England, son of the late Mr. and Mrs. John England.

**FUNERAL SERVICES FROM THE CHURCH**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Mrs. Jim Hall  Berkley Hall  Mrs. Lettie Evan's mother  Al Evans  Betty Harrison  Maude Bowlin  Shelton J. Chastain  Jewel Chastain  Kenneth Chastain  Sophia Chastain  John Chastain  Bill Garrett  Hattie Porter  Claude Pusher | Dick Wells  Oliver Thomas  Alice Meadors  ?edus Winfrey (Bedus?)  Claude Winfrey  Basil Winfrey  Sybil Cranford  Thell Henson  Cora Henson  Mr. Nix (Opal Henson's husband)  Ezra Wright  Lizzie Davis  Jim Davis  Oral Rhodes  John England |

**BAPTIST CHURCH**

The Dyer Baptist Church was set in order April 23, 1893. The people of Dyer had been meeting jointly in the school house. It was decided by some that a Baptist Church be organized. Mr. Steve Dyer donated the land and Mr. Floyd Loomis built the building.

The first building was a wood frame building that set on the lot where the present church is now located. The Baptist and Methodist churches were built alike, except the pulpit was in the east end of the Church house of the Baptist Church, and the west end of the Methodist Church.

The first pastor that was called to the Baptist Church was Rev. Thomas Hudson. He preached once a month and his salary was whatever donations that the people could give. They not only gave money, some would give food, and chickens, etc. Other pastors are as follows: 1895, J. N. Box; 1895, T. E. Cox; 1899, O. W. White; 1901, B. F. Brothers; 1902, M. A. Pillars; 1907, W. A. Dodd; 1909, W. B. Walls, 1910, J. M. Hughes; 1912, J. E. Cox; 1913, J. E. Taylor; 1918, W. A. McEwens; 1920, Chester Rhodes: 1921, Murrill; 1922, J. K. Smith; 1926, A. N. Stanfield, 1930, John Baysinger; 1931, Clarence Brown; 1934, G. E. Snider: 1936, Claude Hill; 1939. Load (?) Harwell, 1943, Floyde Rye; 1944, Vandiver; 1945, Turner Rogers; 1949, George Lonsbuny; 1951, Claude Smith; 1952, Jewell Morris; 1966, Bill Whitledge; 1968, Jewell Morris; 1969, Leonard Lester; and presently ***[1976]*** the pastor is Eddie Smith. There were others that filled in from time to time, but those names were unavailable at the time. One well remembered was Bro. Crawford from Kibler.

| **The members whose names are on the first church roll are as follows:** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| J. N. Ration  Mattie Moss  J. H. Manuel  M. L. Manuel  Mary Chitwood  Ben M. Key  Savilla Harris  Nancy Wilson  Amanda Carter  Dave Cottrell  Mary Heard  Frank Johnson  Mamie Chastain  Ellen Harris  Martha Coates  Albert N. Jeans  Emma Kimbrell  Mrs. J. A. Morse  Mrs. Mary Crowder  Callie Patton  Milt B. Chastain  Rushie Rhodes  Rosa Malone  Horatio H. Dyer  Columbia Nelson  Pharis Jeans  xxx Robinson  Hattie Spriggs  Bettie Coats  Georgia Coats  Eddie Drake  Dr. W. H. Murphy  Florence Murphy | S. C. Love  Sallie Love  Eulena Love  Ora Love  Sarah Pinnion  Susie James  Walter D. Patton  R. S. Parker  Lavena Chitwood  John Love, Jr  Sallie Davidson  Lovitt Harris  Mary Elizabeth Dyer  James Moore  J. E. Jeans  Will M. Mason  Prissilla Mason  Emma Dyer  Emma Sleeper  Avella Fuller  Maggie Coats  Rebecca Morse  Alta Fuller  Wm. (Bill) James  Milton Cates  Mary Taylor  xxx Malone  Sally Morse  Jas W. Taylor  Wilford Pigg  Robert Davidson  T. Carnes  Maude Chastain | Ellen Robertson  Lucinda Roe  M. E. Malone  Mary Spriggs  Patton Lawson  Ed Chastain  Emma Chastain  Emma Lawson  Emely S. Formby  Terrell Rhodes  Isaac Blevins  Georgia Wells  Mary L. Flanigan  Julia Morgan  Lula Malone  A. J. Kimbrell  Mrs. S. W. Smith  Dora Carter  Addie Dyer  Bell Coats  Della Chitwood  Robertie Hurd  T. J. James  Liddie Key  Thurman Hurd  Ruth Hurd  xxx Robinson  Sam Parker  Maggie Broyles  Mary Ascue  Wallace Ascue  Annie Cravens  Lena Patton |

Church clerks have been Ed Chastain the first one and others as follows: J. E. Jeans, Horatio H. Dyer, Terrell Rhodes, A. N. Jeans, D.C. Cottrell, Fred Patton, Delphia Morse, A. N. Jeans, Mrs. Callie James, Mrs. Bonnie Rhodes, Mrs. Karen Swafford, and presently Mrs, Claudette House.

Deacons who have been ordained into the church are: J. N. Patton, Ben M. Key, D. C. Cottrell, Ed Chastain, Wm. M. Mason, Horatio H. Dyer, Walter Patton, Terrell Rhodes, Fred Patton, T. J. James, L. D. Porter, Bill Cress, Hugh Coble, Fred Wyatt, Howard Thompson, Bob Jones, Frank Rhodes, Ada Burrow, Carson Morse, Thurman Hurd, Johnny Swafford, Dean Smith, Price Pipkins, Morris Herring, and Kenneth Cagle.

The District Baptist meeting was held at Dyer the 5th Sunday in March, 1901. Mr. Ed Chastain and Sister Chitwood were to help find places for the people who attended it to stay.

A bell was purchased and a belfry was built in 1903. The committee who was to see that this was done was T. J. James, T. H. Hurd, J. N. Patton, and W. M. Mason.

A ladies Society was organized in March, 1906. They worked and purchased an organ for $69.35 in 1911. The ladies also made up money in 1913 and bought new kerosene lamps for the church. These lamps hung on the wall.

On May 27, 1922, a storm wrecked the old wood church building. A committee of T. J. James, Irvin Morse, T. H. Hurd, Dave Cottrell, Ben Rhodes, and Vilus Manuel, was elected to clean up and finish tearing down the building and stacking the lumber. Mr. Sanders of Mulberry was hired to build a new church building. It was decided that the new church would be rock, and the rocks were hauled from off the mountain from a place owned by Mr. Thurman Hurd. They were hauled by wagon and teams of mules. Each man who belonged to the church donated time to do this. There were other interested people who also helped in their spare time. The new church was finished in the spring of 1925, and the property of the church was valued at $5,000 at that time. The Sunday School membership was at that time 52.

Several improvements have been made to the building since it was built in 1925, some of them have been in 1950 natural, gas. This was a very much needed improvement. Before then there was a big coal stove that set in the middle of the building. Many times on Sunday morning when we would gather for church, we would have a mess to clean up from a chicken roast that the town boys had held there the night before. Carson Morse, Ada Burrow, and Nita Dyer were appointed to purchase a new gas heater for the church. Rosella Morse volunteered to go over to the church on Saturday afternoons and light the stoves so we would have a warm building to go into on Sunday morning.

In 1953 and 1954 several improvements were made and a new pulpit and chairs were purchased. New pews were bought in 1954. In 1955 central heat was installed. Classrooms were partitioned off in 1957.

In 1959 John Paul Kelly was awarded contract to build a new concrete block building. This building was to be used as a kitchen, educational building, and also to be used for Sunday school classes, The building is connected to the Main Church building by a covered porch

Bro. Jewel Morris donated to the church land and a building that he privately owned at Baptist Vista for the youth of our church to use when attending Baptist Vista. We built a new building on this piece of property in 1974. The first year to use the new building we have had several youths from our church attending Baptist Vista, We have been represented there for 24 years.

We are a member of Clear Creek Baptist Association of Arkansas. With a present membership of 100, Sunday School enrollment of 90, and training union enrollment of 24.

Marriages that have been performed at the Baptist Church that we know of are:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Deanna Kay Davis  Alta Jean Hurd  Loetta Morse  Reba Morse  Doris J. Blevins  Gayla Ann Cottrell  Jennifer Jones  Karen Morse  Jaynee Rhodes  Sherry House  Nelda Kay Morse | to  to  to  to  to  to  to  to  to  to  to | Ronald Burnett  Hamilton  Jack White  Freddy Howard  Lloyd Landers  Ronnie Millsap  Charles David McNeal  Johnny Swafford  Kenny Edwards  Eddie Ray Phillips  Kenny Glover | June 20, 1957  July 27, 1962  June 1968  March 15, 1968  August 19, 1967  March 1, 1968  April 18, 1975  June 16, 1975 |

The church property is 150 Sq. St. Deed recorded in book # Page #

| **Funerals that have been held in the church:** | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ada Burrow  A. N. Jean  Avery Morse  Bell Rhodes  Ben Rhodes  Bertha Davis  Bertie Wagner  Beverly Jan Whitlock  Brenda Morse  Clyde Penson  David C. Cottrell  Elizabeth Rhodes  Ernest Bell  Flossie Morse  Fred Hurd  Gladys Cottrell  Glenn Wilson  Guy Blasingame  Hallie Acord  Infant Collier  James A. Wagner  Jimmy Blevins  Joe Hurd  John H. Winfrey  Joyce Jones  Julia Wilson | Apr 1972  1956  Feb 1968  1948  1933  Dec 1968  Aug 1969  1961  1954  Mar 1971  Jan 1941  Apr 1974  Mar 1963  Apr 1966  1953  Jul 1969  1968  Nov 1973  Nov 1962  Sep 1965  Oct 1942  Jun 1967  Jul 1941  Nov 1937  Jun 1967  Dec 1968 | Kate Cottrell  Leonard Davis  Lula Garrett  Mack Hurd  Mary Jean  May Davis  Mitch Hurd  Mrs. Lilly Morse  Mrs. Mandy Renfroe  Mrs. W. F. Flanagan  Ned Rhodes  Quince Wells  Richard Hurd  Ruth Burrow  Ruth Hurd  Sally Davidson  Sally Hearn  Silas Morse  Susie James  Tom James  Truman Hurd  Virgil Rhodes  Vivian Chitwood Chastain  William "Bill" James  William Lee Morse  Willie W. Wilson | Jun 1967  Dec 1973  Dec 1970  Feb 1952  1949  Aug 1972  May 1957  1936  1957  1968  Apr 1927  Oct 1947  1928  Mar 1968  Jan 1935  1955  Oct 1962  Mar 1973  Sep 1963  Apr 1954  Mar 1940  Nov 1960  Dec 1965  Mar 1963 |

**A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE**

**ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH**

The following is a copy of a letter written by the secretary of the General Council of the Assemblies of God:

New Bethel

Assembly of God

Dyer, Arkansas

**GREETINGS IN JESUS's NAME!!!**

In view of the action taken by your assembly at the meeting held October 5, 1935, copy of minutes have been received in this office, we hereby officially recognize the Assembly of God at Dyer, Arkansas, as one of the local assemblies in cooperative fellowship with the General Council of the Assemblies of God.

It is to be understood that this action on the part of the assembly with the official accompanying recognition, gives to the local assembly the right of representation, in all General Council meetings, and it is urged that the assembly send their pastor and one delegate to such General Council meetings to represent the local assembly

May the Lord bless and prosper you in Him.

**The meeting of October 5, 1935**, which was referred to in the latter was called together by G. W. Hardcastle, and Eula Johnson was elected to act as Secretary of the meeting. Those who were interested in joining the church then proceeded to the signing of the roster. The charter members of the church include the following: Tlitha Shaver, Francis Cottrell, Jennie Rhodes, Alice Julian, Ethel Morse, Nora Weaver, Lucy Stevens, Rebecca Cupp, Vernon Furr, Nellie Hankins, Lura Weaver, John Leakey, Ellis Kincy, H. C. Furr, Olin Kincy, Truman Stevens, J. E. Beckham.

These seventeen members then proceeded to the election of officers. P. H. Flurry was elected as pastor. Ellis Kincy was elected as secretary. J. E. Beckham, H. C. Furr, and Ellis Kincy were elected as Trustees.

Events leading up to the organizational step go back only a few years earlier. In the early 1930s, several Pentecostal evangelists held revivals in the area. Some of the meetings were held in buildings that local people had arranged for and some were conducted under brush arbors which were also erected by interested residents. Among the first to bring the Pentecostal message to Dyer was P. H. Flurry, who was elected pastor when the Assembly of God Church was organized o Other evangelists whose influence and inspiration has lingered on in the minds and hearts of the people include Annie Hartman, Dora Winn, Walter Brown, Lelah Smith, Sister'- Virgie, and others.

Soon there were local people who were not willing to let the revival spirit move out when the evangelists moved on. New converts blessed and eager to maintain this soul-stirring move of the Holy Ghost set up a schedule of regular services.

Among the first to receive Pentecost in the town were Mrs. Tlitha Shaver and Mrs. Francis Cottrell, They did visitation work in an effort to get a Sunday School started. Wynona Stephens Porter remembers a visit these two ladies made to her parents home with an Invitation to Sunday School and church. The services at that time were conducted in a blacksmith shop which was owned by Joe Wells who lived southwest of the shop in the approximate location of the Nita Dyer residence.

Alice Julian said of those days: In September, Brother Flurry held a revival under a brush arbor at the north end of Frankie's store. I remember it as well as if it were yesterday. It was there that I was converted. We had services there until it got too cold—then we moved into the blacksmith shop, there behind the arbor. We were meeting there when the church was set in order, October 5, 1935.

With 1935 about to close, it should be noticed that the newly organized church did not own a building in which to worship, thus the meeting places were a significant factor in the continuation and growth of the young organization.

According to reports, prayer meetings were held in the homes of the members whenever invitations were extended. One member recalls that Thurman and Jennie Rhodes removed the furniture from a room in their home and moved in the necessary furnishings for the temporary services. The Moss Store building which was located across the street from Leonard Davis is remembered as a meeting place for Pentecostals, and the brush arbor locations are often a topic of conversation among townspeople.

Although no records of meetings have been found before the fall of 1935, there are members and residents who can give first-hand reports. Often we find a difference in the recollections concerning places and events but let us conclude that these things are indeed secondary to the great mission and unity in purpose of the young organization.

There are records, however, from October 5, 1935, which are significant as to the influence and direction of the infant organization. On July 12, 1936, offerings were given and pledges were made to a building fund for a church. The following week, construction plans were discussed at a business meeting which was held at the home of Francis Cottrell. A. J. Henson, Henry Furr, and David Mackey moved away, and Olin Kincy was appointed by the building committee to succeed Brother Mackey, which was satisfactory to the church.

Then on July 23, according to the records, $30 was checked out of the building funds to make the first payment on the property where the church now stands. The property was purchased from Thurman Hurd. There was an old house on the land in which the church met before it was torn down and replaced by a church building.

Finally we conclude with another important date in the history of the church—Saturday night, November 14, 1936. It was on this date that the first service was held in the new church building. It seemed appropriate that the first sermon was preached by the pastor who had stood by the group from the beginning, a mighty preacher and exponent of the Pentecostal message Brother Phil Flurry. Although he left the pastorate after another year, he made many return trips. The pulpit was always open to him by succeeding pastors and the bond of love that endeared him to the earlier Christians remains still.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **PASTORS WHO SERVED THE ASSEMBY OF GOD CHURCH** | | | |
| 1935  1937-1938  1939-1940  1941  1941-1943  1944-1954 | P.H. Flurry  Ervin Medlock  Fred Bowden  Walter Martin  Claude Wallace  Lester Nye | 1954-1968  1968-1370  1970-1972  1972-1973  1973-1974  1974-1975 | James Edwards  Johnny Floyd  William Huggart  Lowell Snitker  John Stevens  Kenneth Turner |

| **TRUSTEES OF THE CHURCH** | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1935  1936  1937-1938  1939-1940  1941  1942  1943  1944  1945  1946  1947  1948  1949  1950  1951  1952  1953 | J. E. Beckham  H. E. Furr  Ellis Kincy  Ellis Kincy  A. J. Henson  David Mackey  H. C. Furr  A. J. Henson  Ellis Kincy  P. L. Jean  Jim Moore  Charlie Adkins  George Weese  Claude Wallace  Sidney Swafford  Jim Moore  Charlie Adkins  Henry Furr  Sidney Swafford  P. L. Jeans  Charlie Adkins  P. L. Jean  H. C. Furr  Henry Furr  George Weese  Charlie Adkins  Henry Furr  George Weese  Sidney Swafford  Alvie Morse  Lloyd Davis  A. J. Henson  George Weese  Henry Furr  Alvie Morse  Henry Furr  George Weese  Sidney Swafford  George Weese  Henry Furr  George Moore  George Weese  Henry Furr  Ellis Kincy .  George Weese  Ellis Kincy  Henry Furr  Sidney Swafford  Hermon Porter  Henry Furr  Ellis Kincy  Hermon Porter  Orville Coulter | 1954  1955  1956  1957  1958  1959  1960-1965  1966  1967  1968  1969  1970  1971-1975 | George Weese  Ellis Kincy  Sidney Swafford  Loy Cottrell  Vester Belt  Henry Furr  Vester Belt  A. J. Henson  Orville Coulter  Ellis Kincy  Jess Julian  Sidney Swafford  George Weese  George Weese  Ellis Kincy  Sidney Swafford  Odis Powell  Roy Porter  Vester Belt  Earl Morse  Vernie Harris  Orville Coulter  A. J. Henson  George Weese  Ellis Kincy  A. J. Henson  Orville Coulter  Loy Cottrell  Vester Belt  Odis Powell  George Weese  Ferrell Dickens  Idus Swafford  George Weese  Orville Coulter  Odis Powell  Jack Harmon  Sidney Swafford  Idus Swafford  George Weese  Ferrell Dickens  Joe Hurd  Orville Coulter  Vester Belt  Idus Swafford  Frank Huckey  Jim Moore  Idus Swafford  George Weese  Idus Swafford  George Weese  Idus Swafford  George Weese  Jim Moore |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SECRETARY-TREASURER** | | | |
| 1935-1936  1936-1937  1937-1939  1939-1942  1942-1943  1943-1944  1944-1947  1947-1948 | Ellis Kincy  Floy Tune  A. J. Henson  Mellie Lakey  Vera Wells  Mellie Lakey  A. J. Henson  Georgia Cottrell | 1948-1951  1951-1952  1952-1956  1956-1960  1960-1965  1965-1969  1969-1975  1975- | Virgie Davis  Bonnie Weese  Geraldine Belt  Goldia Coulter  Idus Swafford  Betty Dickens  Linda Morse  Jane Turner |

***Filename: LookingBackAtDyer 1838-1976 Book 01, 087-099 ~ Dyer churches***