

HISTORY OF THE UNION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LOGAN COUNTY RFD EMDEN, ILLINOIS

The Union Church began with a successful revival conducted by Rev. Thornton K. Hedges in 1856. A number of public spirited individuals in the community organized and built the "Union Church" which was composed of several protestant denominations, for the purpose of giving each group opportunity to use the building for their worship according to the custom and doctrine of their Church.

Many of the prominent families of the community united with this first organization. Among the charter members were the following: Mr. and Mrs. Joshua Howser, Mr. and Mrs. I. H. Chenoweth, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Chenoweth, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Gilchrist, Mr. and Mrs. James Gilchrist, Mr. and Mrs. David Gilchrist, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Quisenberry, Mr. and Mrs. James Cunningham, Mr. and Mrs. James Hitchell, and Mr. and Mrs. James W. Adams.

The original building was erected by James Hewitt, a contractor, who was assisted by neighbors who helped hew logs for the beams and plates for the framework.

In 1859 the members of the Methodist, Baptist and other denominations, sold their interest in the Union Church to the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and on April 5, 1859, the following Trustees were elected: I. S. Chenoweth, T. H. Quisenberry, and S. C. Hays.

On December 24, 1886, a new board of Trustees was elected consisting of Richard P. Chenoweth, Arthur Quisenberry and William Houston. This group of Trustees held office until the re-organization of the Church on December 6, 1889.

For a time there was lack of interest and services were neglected at the Union Church. This was due largely to removal or the death of many of the original members. During this time a Sunday School was continued through the consecrated efforts of Mr. William Houston and Mrs. Charlotte Quisenberry.

In late November and early December of 1889, Rev. J. F. Lackey, pastor of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church of Bethany, Illinois, conducted a vigorous and successful evangelistic campaign at Union. A number of persons united with the Church at this time, and it was reorganized on December 6, 1889.

James McLellan, Sr., James Gilchrist, Charles S. Graham and William Powers were elected as elders. Jacob J. Wilmert and Herbert F. Smith were elected deacons.

During this period the Church was served by the faculty and students of Lincoln University. One of these students was John Luther Clark, who became a strong preacher, later going to the Congregational Church of New York.

Another was Rev. Franklin L. Gould who is now retired and living at Greenview, Illinois. While a student at Lincoln University, he was invited to candidate and preached his first sermon at Union on March 13, 1892. He was licensed to preach the gospel by Mackinaw Presbytery on March 25, 1892. He served the Union Church as Student Supply until August 26, 1894 at which time he was ordained and appointed as Stated Supply. He continued to serve the Union Church until March, 1895.

In March, 1944, he returned as Stated Supply, being at that time officially retired. He served the Church until December, 1948. In August, 1954, he returned to Union and preached a sermon on the sixtieth anniversary of his ordination.

Then came Rev. Mr. Bell and Rev. J. W. Derr, who perhaps did the most effective work at Union, during the years of 1900 to 1905, and under whose leadership full time services were had with large congregations being present at all the services.

In 1906, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church united with the Old School Presbyterian Church to form the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. The Union Church then became known as the "Presbyterian Church of Union" located in the boundaries of Springfield Presbytery.

Three ministers of the gospel went out from the Union Presbyterian Church, namely John Houston, William Wilson and Joseph Huber. All of the above were persons of limited income and worked their way through college to obtain their education and attain their goal.

In 1925, the frame church was remodeled, the present brick finish and the basement being part of the work. It was dedicated July 7, 1925. The contractor was H. J. Stockford of Lincoln, Illinois.

A brief history prepared and given at that time by Jacob J. Wilmert, lists the elders as: James Gilchrist, I. J. Gale, Andrew Kerr, George V. Wilmert and John Martine. The deacons were: Herbert B. Mowrey, Jacob Humber, David G. Gilchrist and Robert Gaddis. The board of Trustees was: H. C. Quisenberry, I. J. Gale and H. T. Gale.

The rebuilding in 1925 cost approximately \$6,000.00. Listed among the principal donors in the paper given at that time were: James Gilchrist, an elder and then the oldest living member of the Church, his sons, David G., Logan and Roland; and his daughters and their husbands, Mr. and Mrs. H. B. Mowrey, Mr. and Mrs. Reed Quisenberry, Mr. and Mrs. George Short.

The Quisenberry family was represented by Henry C. Quisenberry and family, and S. Lee Quisenberry and family. Others named were: Mr. and Mrs. L.W. Layman, Miss Josie Gaddis, Robert Gaddis, Clifford Gaddis, George Gilchrist, Val Gilchrist, I. J. Gale and family, George V. Wilmert, Mrs. Marian McGuffie and her family, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Kerr, Mr. and Mrs. John Martine, Jacob Huber and family.

Among those who served the Church as Student Supply or Stated Supply are the following: Rev. J. B. Muir, Rev. Cockrom, Prof. A. L. Rickart, Rev. Ray, Rev. Fred Stroud, Malcolm Gwaltney, John Perry Waters, Arthur Gard, and Wayne Arthur. Unfortunately the dates of their service are not available.

During most of its history, the Union Church has maintained a Sunday School. This has been done by the devoted and consecrated efforts of its membership, and their recognition of its importance in the life of their children.

In 1965 when the Reverend John T. Burns resigned as minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Lincoln, Ill., to accept another ministry at Malboro, New York, it left the Union Church without a stated supply.

Conditions at the Union Church were explained to the Springfield Presbytery that would warrant a merger with the First Presbyterian church in Lincoln, Ill.

The session consisting of David G. Gilchrist, Mrs. Ollie Quisenberry, Mrs. Logan Gilchrist, Mrs. Roberta Shirley and Mrs. Val Gilchrist met with the Reverend Richard Clausen of Springfield acting as moderator and voted to merge the Union Presbyterian with the First Presbyterian Church of Lincoln, Ill.