

Northern Kentucky Views Presents:

A History of the First
Christian Church –
Orangeburg, Kentucky

by

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As early as 1838 a circuit rider by the name of O. H. Carr, a native Kentuckian who had just returned from a mission in Australia, led a "meeting" in a log cabin near the place where the Stonelick Baptist Church now stands. Brother Carr, as our history points out, was an evangelist of "soul stirring" qualities and many people made confessions of their faith during the meeting. These converts were baptized in the waters of North Fork near the building then known as "Phillip's Mill." After a while it was decided to move the place of meeting to the school house in Orangeburg. The services continued and many more confessions were made.

Then in 1867 Brother Paugburn, then the state evangelist, organized the "Christian Church" of Orangeburg, Mason County, Kentucky. The board of officers consisted of Archie Hull and John P. Campbell, elders. Alex Wyburn and Selvin Applegate were the deacons. The names of the 101 charter members of the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Orangeburg, Kentucky, are preserved in their original form.

A building committee was appointed which purchased a site for the church building from Jefferson Howard for \$100. Necessary arrangements were made for a house of worship to be constructed. The store and house now used by Frank Morant's family was the first church, erected in the year 1868. The building was dedicated by Brother Paugburn in the spring of that year.

Many consecrated pastors served the Oranoburn Christian Church in the following years. Most of their names are recorded in the history of the church. The Sunday School was organized during the ministry of Brother William Morrison, who served the congregation for nine years. The School numbered 15 to 20 and was discontinued during the winter months. In 1892, the average attendance at Sunday School was 78. The church supported the C.M.B.M. and responded liberally to the mission fields of the world. In the year 1905, "Our house of worship is out of repairs and out of date, so if forty people raised \$1500, 38 years ago, 200 members should easily raise sufficient funds for repairs - so new stoves were purchased and the pulpit was moved from the front of the building to the rear." And so the institution grew with a religious influence that began along the shores of the Stonelick River and spread throughout the hills of Northern Kentucky.

The congregation of the Oranoburn Christian Church once more became restless and envisioned the present house of worship. In the year 1906, the dream began to take shape. Immediately pledges were made by the congregation present at a meeting in September. The building committee was appointed and consisted of: Dr. W. W. Word, A. B. Layhugh, D. M. Halfhill, D. F. Campbell, E. W. Collis, Richard Applegate, George Grant, and John Grant. Miss Lucy Mason was selected treasurer.

The plot of ground which was known as "Johns McCoy" lot, and on which had stood a large hotel operated by Charlie Varian and which burned, leaving a rock under-structure and

rock stable thereon, was purchased at a purchase price of \$250.00. This contracted was left, and work began with free labor. The rock was crushed, the basement dug and concrete poured. Immediately the framework began to rise with the ^{quite capable} ~~xxxxxxx~~ assistance of the contractor, Mr. Joseph Mitchel. The financial problems were many, but all were met in due time with the help from the Master, and the good management of the church officers and members. Mrs. Ida Mayhugh was thoughtful enough to leave these accounts among her cherished papers.

On July 9, 1911, the church building was dedicated as an instrument to serve the community and mankind for Christian worship and service. The speaker for the dedication was the Rev. W. E. Brooks of Ladoga, Indiana. Rev. C. L. Wiley lived in Elizaville and was minister of the church during these years.

A number of the these beautiful, stained-glass windows are memorials donated by faithfuls of the congregation. The "Christ the Good Shepherd" window over the pulpit is in memory of the Doctor W. H. Wood family. "Jesus in the Garden of Gethsema" above the steps in the rear of the sanctuary is a memorial given by Emma Gravel. The smaller windows were donated by different Bible school classes, with significant Christian symbols for each.

Not in present use is the large Bible presented by W. W. Ball of Jaysville. The pulpit, with the two upholstered chairs, the communion table and chairs, the bookcase, and the

refinished table on which sits the first silver pitcher and goblets used by the first congregation, all were used in the first church "meeting-house." In the belfry, sits an "Estey organ", the first one used in and around the Orangeburg community, and is now considered a rare antique.

The approximate cost for the construction of this building was \$9,000.00. It took five years to materialize the dreams of a few spiritually zealous people building for future generations. We have been the recipients and may the service rendered now lay stronger foundations for those who follow us.

Most of the ministers who have served the church were called from the College of the Bible, Lexington, Kentucky. We are indebted to Dr. George Moore, always a great help and advisor to this church and community.

The Orangeburg Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has a record of its history filed with the Disciples Historical Society in Nashville, Tenn. There is also a ministerial list at the College of the Bible.

The women of the church have played an important role in the development of the church. The women's group was first called the C.W.M. (Christian Women's Board of Missions), next, the Aid Society, the "Auxiliary" and now The Christian Women's Fellowship.

Hand in hand with the officers and laymen of the church, many necessary improvements have been accomplished through the years. Some of the major ones are: 1948, a-

aluminum roof replaced the asphalt shingle roof; 1952, a new furnace was installed; 1955, two electric stoves were installed in the remodeled kitchen. New Sunday School rooms were also added in the basement; 1956, the interior was repainted. The following year the floors of the sanctuary were refinished and the vestibule reworked. Last year new wiring and lighting were installed; an organ was purchased also. The basement ceiling was finished, the walls painted, and tables and chairs were purchased for the Fellowship hall.