

Northern Kentucky Views Presents:

Bedford Christian Church

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From prior work by Dennis Martin

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BEDFORD CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Rev. Dennis Martin, in his history of the Bedford Christian Church, states, "The Bedford Christian Church had its official beginning sometime in 1845." The church was worshipping in a schoolhouse which stood beside the property where the church now stands. In later years, this schoolhouse was torn down, and the Dr. Wilbur Hancock home stood there until recently purchased by the Bedford Christian Church for a parking lot. In December 1845, Eleanor Young deeded the property to the Bedford Christian Church.

In this deed to the Trustees of the Bedford Christian Church, Deed Book C, Page 225-226, Eleanor Young stated that the ground was to be the property of the Christian Church as long as it was used for religious purposes. The trustees were: John E. Farley, Thomas Yeager, William Campbell, Seth Duncan, John Brent, and Thomas W. South. This parcel of land was known on the plat of the town of Bedford as Lot 67.

Soon after this transaction, the building of a brick church was begun and completed in early 1846. Mrs. Betty Bell, the grandmother of Dr. W. P. Bell who was a dentist and an elder of the church, contributed most of the labor. The labor was done by her slaves, with her overseer in charge.

At this time Bedford was a small settlement, yet the church flourished. Then as the older members died and others moved away, the church roll decreased and services were discontinued. Of course, the Civil War contributed to the decline.

In the late sixties, a college was started in the church by a Mr. Price. Mr. Fallis Mahoney, an active member of the church after it reopened, along with Carrie Hardin and her sisters Mary, Martha, and Lula, attended this school. This school was in operation for a time, and church services were not resumed until 1874. In that year Madison Mayfield, a grandson of Dr. Zibe Trout, a local physician and church member, made an earnest and successful effort to revive the church. He visited homes all over the county and a new membership was started from people who had no other church relationship or whose churches were at a distance. Robert T. Matthews, a young man from Transylvania was the pastor. The church membership was increased, and the church began to prosper after two revivals held in subsequent years in the late 1890s by Bro. Will Maddox, native of Trimble County, and the one held the following year by Br. J. B. Yager, native of Henry County.

By 1907 the church had so grown that the church board felt that there was a need for a more modern structure. A committee composed of E. W. Tandy, C. W. Hood, W. B. Gilles, J. W. McMahan and A. J. Giddens was appointed to move the old church and erect a new building on the old foundation, adding foundations for the tower and alcove. The contract for the construction was given to W. R. Jackson of Trimble County, and the building completed in 1909 for a sum of \$1,650. Mrs. Lydia Adams, wife of F. A. Adams, contributed generously toward its construction, as did other members. Today the Adams Memorial windows and the Gilles Memorial windows are still admired and appreciated.

The church was fortunate to escape the fire of July 30, 1930, in which the Baptist Church and Trimble Banner Office were totally destroyed. Sparks did fall on the shingle roof, but were extinguished by the Carrollton Fire Department as they entered Bedford to help fight the raging flames. The only damage was to the church roof, which was soon replaced by a metal one. The church will be forever grateful to Carrollton for saving the church. Bedford had no fire department at that time.

In 1940 more space was needed, especially for Sunday School. The building committee for this project was composed of John Rand, Wallace Wright, W. O.

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Combs, Joe Frost, James McMahan, and Orville Swisher. The contract for the building was given to Iva McClure of Madison, Indiana, also a native of Trimble County. Four rooms and a hall, with basement, were added at a cost of \$1,500. Soon a furnace was installed to heat the building, replacing the old stoves.

On February 22, 1942, the church was saddened by the death of Elder William E. Snyder, native of the Milton area. He was well educated, a graduate of Hanover College, and a Bible Scholar, and loved and respected by all who knew him. He entered the ministry in 1906 as the pastor of Mt. Byrd Christian Church. For a number of years he pastored churches in Missouri, but in 1919 he came back to the county, residing in Milton, and was pastor of all the Christian Churches in the county for a score of years. He faithfully served those churches, Mt. Byrd, Bedford, Milton, Wises Ldg., Beech Grove, and Union Grove, as long as he was physically able. The funeral services were held at Mt. Byrd February 24, 1942, prior to which the body lay in state at the Bedford Church for several hours.

During the Church Revival of April, 1942, a Memorial Service was held at the church on Sunday to pay tribute to Bro. Snyder, their former pastor and friend. The church received a beautiful spray of flowers from the Snyder family which fit into the occasion, it being Easter Sunday when Christ arose from the dead.

On October 28, 1945, a dedication service was held for the new Bulletin Board which had been presented to the church by Mr. and Mrs. Johnny Perkinson and Mr. and Mrs. Wallace Wright. Later this bulletin board was replaced by a brick one, and in 1950 the Wedding Ring Class gave an automatic timer for the bulletin board.

In December, 1945, the church celebrated the one hundredth anniversary of its organization with a Centennial Program consisting of services under Rev. Glenn L. Murdock, pastor. The various church organizations, pastors, and others closely related to the work of the church were remembered. At this time, there was also the dedication of the new electrically operated church organ. An attractive eight-page booklet, containing a historical sketch of the church since its organization December 1, 1845, was compiled by Mrs. Gail Ransdell and Mrs. Drew Newman. Some of the material in this history was taken from that bulletin.

Rev. Paul Richardson came to Bedford as pastor in 1947, and at a time when housing was very scarce in Bedford. The church had no parsonage. Mrs. Maggie B. Morgan, a long-time member of the church, offered and gave the ground upon which a parsonage was soon afterward built. Deed Book 37, Pages 55-56. If a parsonage could not be built upon this ground, the lot was to be reconveyed to Mrs. Maggie Morgan. At this time Macedonia Christian Church was having problems. Their membership had declined due to deaths and moving of members, and vandalism made it impossible to keep the building locked and in repair. For these reasons, the building was given to the Bedford Christian Church for the building of their parsonage. The actual cost of the parsonage was \$11,625.01. Voluntary labor and discounts held the costs down. In addition to the discounts of some businesses, John Harmon did all the bull-dozer work, Ike Hardin some hauling, Farmers Supply and the Farm Equipment Company.

Under the leadership of Paul Richardson, Minister 1947-1952, a number of new programs were initiated. Among the first was a Transportation Committee, having the responsibility of getting those needing transportation to church. This was set up by Glenford Hood, Chairman of the Membership Development Committee. Harold Bryan was chosen chairman of this committee.

The official board members for 1951 were: H. L. Wright, chairman; W. P. Bell; Wallace Wright; W. O. Combs; John Rand; Keith Hood; Assoc. chairman,

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Harold Bryan; Flournoy C. Callis; T. L. Gossman, Alfred Jones; James W. McMahan; J. C. Cantrell; Earl Campbell; James Carder; Glenford Hood; Clifton Liler; and Robert Waits. By this time, 1951, the church had decided that they would need additional space. The plan was the building of Sunday School rooms and restrooms, but it was some time before their plans materialized due to lack of support and funds. However, by March 1952, specifications for the building were given to Joe Frost, the architect. Later these plans were submitted to the congregation for approval, and the work was soon started. By June 21, 1953, the Sunday School rooms had been completed and a Dedication Service was held. Tom Giltner, minister of the Douglas Boulevard Christian Church, Louisville, gave the Dedicatory Message.

By 1957 there was a parking problem. In order to alleviate this problem, the church purchased the front of the T. L. Gossman property across and to the north of the church. There was a one-story brick building on this property which at one time served as the Catholic Parsonage. The ladies of the church redecorated it, and it was used for Sunday School Rooms and church social activities. This building was demolished in 1959, and a new brick building was built there and leased to the Post Office Department, who began using it November 11, 1959. The committee members named to supervise the construction of this building were: Joe Frost, Harold Bryan, Dr. Carl Cooper, Wallace Wright, John Rand, Roger Cone, Keith Hood. The contractor was Sam Adams.

The upper story of the post office building had been left unfinished. In 1960 Charles Edward Persell headed a group that finished the big room across the front, which can be used for youth activities and other church functions. Other rooms were gradually added, one of which serves as the church office and study for the pastor. About this time participation in the worship service was improved by the installation of a Public Address System. W. C. Slocum was responsible for the installation.

In 1963 a remodeling of the sanctuary included the painting of the walls and ceiling, refinishing the pews, drapes for the pulpit and choir area, and the installation of the raised choir area. Carroll Brumley, Lyle Wood, and Wilbur Slocum were the craftsmen of the latter project. On Sunday, April 19, 1964, the church dedicated their newly-decorated sanctuary to the worship and service of God. Those participating in the service were Rev. W. C. McCallum, who delivered the message; Rev. Earl Turner, who spoke of Love's Labor; Wilbur C. Slocum, chairman of the board; and John Rand, Vice Chairman.

The completion of plans that the church had been making for years were finished in 1970, and the remodeling was started. The remodeling consisted of new brick veneer on the outside, a new roof, remodeled tower and vestibule with a new spire, the sanctuary carpeted, redecorated and air conditioned. A bulletin board, given by Silas and LaVaughn McKinney was also erected. The cost of this was twenty-four thousand dollars, which was financed through the Bedford Loan and Deposit Bank.

There were, and still are, a number of active organizations within the church. The Ladies Aid Society was active in helping the needy and in assisting with the spiritual programs. This society was organized in 1890 under the leadership of Mrs. Carrie L. Hood with Mrs. Amy Hancock as its treasurer throughout the life of the society. In August, 1945, the women's council replaced the Ladies Aid Society. Mrs. Love Carder was president, Mrs. John Rand, Secretary, and Mrs. Amy Hancock, Treasurer. This organization has since been replaced by the C.W.F.

Twenty-nine boys and two girls, members of the Bedford Christian Church, served their Country in World War II. They were: John Allen Ball, Barrymore

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Bell, John Russell Bowman, Maurice Bowman, J. C. Cantrell, Jr., Buell Callis, Darrell Colbert, Harold Combs, James E. Carder, Joe Frost, Bryan Gatewood, James Gatewood, Everett Hancock, Kenneth Harmon, David W. Hawkins, Glen L. Hutchinson, Alfred Jones, Chester D. Leach, Ranzle McClure, Leland Morgan, Johnny Perkinson, Charles Edward Persell, Leonard A. Spillman, Albert Tyra, Carl Williamson, Raymond T. Wright, Alton Yager, Lucy Davis and Wilma C. Johnson.

The pastors who served the church through its first one hundred years (1845-1945) were: R. T. Matthews, B. H. Cox, I. E. Taylor, William Tharp, Will Maddox, Henry Baker, William T. Meavers, W. J. Gambo, W. L. Buchanan, J. B. Yager, G. W. Nutter, Virgil Glass, R. S. Wilson, W. H. Law, J. H. Norman, W. B. Snyder, Jackson H. Hampton, Edgar McLean, George H. McLain, and Glenn B. Murdock.

Rev. Martin states as his source of later ministers: "The following was compiled from the yearbook reports in the Yearbook of the Christian Church."

1888	F. A. Adams	1947-1952	Paul Richardson
(correspondent)		1953-1956	Myron J. Dick
1913	R. S. Wilson	1957-1961	Roger Cone
1916-1918	William Law	1962	W. C. McCallum
1921	P. V. Glass	1963-1965	Earl Turner
1922-1939	W. B. Snyder	1966-1967	W. C. McCallum
1941	James Rowlett	1968-1975	Charles Hightower
1944-1945	Glen Murdock	1976-1980	Dennis Martin

The names and dates of the recent ministers were contributed by Mrs. Bernice Liter from the Church Bulletins.

1981	Douglas Pool	1985-1987	Mark Metz
	Barry Morgan	1988-1989	Gary Crowe
1982-1985	Orville Skeen		

Throughout its history, the Bedford Christian Church has endeavored to support those institutions and organizations dedicated to spreading the word of God. One institution being the College of the Bible, the oldest seminary of the Christian Churches, which was formally changed to the Lexington Theological Seminary on August 1, 1965. On that date it celebrated 100 years of service to the Christian Churches of Kentucky and the nation. It has always striven to cooperate with other churches in Bedford for the betterment of the community and to the leading of men and women to the way of salvation. Due to the lack of space, many of the fruitful revivals and the labors of devoted ministers have not been mentioned.

The Bedford Christian Church will long be indebted to Dennis Martin for the history of the church. Many hours were spent searching for and compiling the facts into an interesting book. His history provided most of the information in this article, compiled by Christine Mullikin.

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