

Centennial

1866 = 1966



Rockfield United
Presbyterian Church

Rockfield, Indiana



ROCKFIELD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HISTORY

On February 17, 1866, a meeting was held in Rockfield for the purpose of organizing a Presbyterian Church which was to be connected with the Logansport Presbytery. Those who conducted this meeting were Rev. Amos Jones, who was then holding the pastorate at the Rock Creek Church, known to us as the Brown Church, and three elders from the Delphi Church: Lewis Martin, Aaron Gregg, and James King. Also present was Rev. M. M. Post of the Logansport church.

The following members of the Delphi church decided to place their membership at Rockfield: Charles Gregg, Lucy Gregg, John Stauffer, Elizabeth Stauffer, John Q. Wasson, Sara Wasson, John Gregg, Carrie M. Gregg, Elizabeth Hewitt, and Marietta Thompson.

Those in this community who had made their plans for membership in the new church were: Hiram Kirkpatrick, Amelia Kirkpatrick, Stephen Bruce, Jane Ann Bruce, Lydia Bruce, Alfred Roop, Milton Thompson, William Thompson, Laura Crabbs, Susan Newell, Mary E. Shuey, Nancy Foster, Hannah Tucker, Mary Ann Leary and Minerva Thompson.

John Q. Wasson and Charles Gregg were elected to the office of Ruling Elders.

The new church was to be known as the Rockfield Presbyterian Church and was approved by the Logansport Presbytery April 13, 1866.

A year later they decided they should have another Elder and elected Joshua Hunt-singer.

The church went along for several years with the Elders taking care of all financial and other responsibilities. Then in 1880 they decided to elect five Deacons. Those elected were James Montgomery, George Montgomery, John Kessler, Milton Thompson, and Joseph Montgomery.

The Elders at that time were: J. C. Gregg, John Gregg, Levi Turner, H. K. Stauffer, and Charles Gregg.

During the first forty-five years of its existence, the church was served by twelve ministers, each of them serving the Rock Creek (Brown) Church. They were: Amos Jones, John Hawks, Gilbert Small, S. J. Brownson, John M. Bishop, Joseph Mann, W. P. Kouts, A. E. Ewers, David Burr, Charles Lownie, F. M. Tyrell, and W. L. Breckenridge.

It was during the pastorate of W. L. Breckenridge that the members of the Rock Creek (Brown) Church abandoned that church and built a new one in Burrows in 1909. Rev. Breckenridge continued to serve the Burrows and Rockfield churches as pastor until June 30, 1911. Then the two churches decided to separate and each have their own pastor.

Rev. Edward Gilchrist began to serve the Rockfield Church September 1, 1912. Following him were F. M. Davis, Ernest Harris, and Cecil Atkinson.

It was during the pastorate of Rev. F. M. Davis that they decided the original frame building had become inadequate. It was torn down and the present building erected in 1916, just fifty years after its organization.

A few years later a modern manse replaced the old one.

In 1926, the two churches united again in calling a minister. They were served by H. D. Trickey, L. Dewey Burham, Herbert Hugö, Wm. Jacoby, Campbell Long, and Floyd Bowerman.

Again each church had their own minister and the Rockfield Church has been served by Rev. Lloyd Dalquist, E. E. Coleman, Garth Salmon, and Arthur Jones. In 1965 the churches were united again and are being served by Arthur Tennes.

The longest pastorates have been those of the first pastor Amos Jones and Herbert Hugo, each serving nine years, then W. L. Breckenridge with seven years and Cecil Atkinson with five years.

MINISTERS OF THE ROCKFIELD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rockfield and Brown Church

Rev. Amos Jones	1866-1875
Rev. John Hawks	1876-1878
Rev. Gilbert Small	1879-1880
Rev. S. J. Brownson	1881-1882
Rev. John M. Bishop	1883-1887
Rev. Joseph W. Mann	1888-1890
Rev. W. P. Koutz	1890-1892
Rev. A. E. Ewers	1893-1897
Rev. David R. Burr	1898-1899
Rev. Charles E. Lownie	1900-1902
Rev. F. M. Tyrell	1902-1903

Rockfield and Burrows

Rev. W. L. Breckenridge	1904-1911
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Rockfield

Rev. Edward P. Gilchrist	1912-1914
Rev. F. M. Davis	1915-1917
Rev. Ernest Harris	1919-1920
Rev. Cecil Atkinson	1920-1925

Rockfield and Burrows

Rev. H. D. Trickey	1926-1928
Rev. L. Dewey Burham	1929-1930
Rev. Herbert H. Hugo	1931-1940
Rev. William Jacoby	1941-1943
Rev. Campbell G. Long	1944-1946
Rev. Floyd Bowerman	1947-1951

Rockfield

Rev. Lloyd Dalquist	1953-1955
Rev. E. E. Coleman	1956-1959
Rev. Garth Salmon	1960-1962
Rev. Arthur Jones	1962-1964

Rockfield and Burrows

Rev. Arthur Tennes	1965-
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Members and friends of the church during these five score years have many fond memories of the accomplishments, leadership, and messages of inspiration from the pastors who have so faithfully served our church.

LAYING OF CORNERSTONE



The cornerstone in the new church was laid early in the spring of 1916. Rev. Francis Davis, pastor, was in charge of this service.

No records are found that contain information, but Rev. Francis Davis, now a retired Presbyterian minister and recently turned ninety years of age, gives us the valuable statistics we need. Rev. Davis remembers that the following items were placed in the cornerstone: a copy of the Holy Bible; a copy of the Confession of Faith; a copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Session when the decision was made to build the new church; and a list of the membership of the church at the time of the laying of the cornerstone. Mr. L. J. Deel who was present at this event, remembers that an ear of corn was also placed in the cornerstone by J. W. Kerlin.

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It is also noteworthy that the church bell was given for the new building by Mrs. Fred Miller. The bell had been removed from the razed church at Beard of which she had formerly been a member. The bell from the old Rockfield Church was found to be cracked, so the church was glad to accept her gift.

CHURCH DEDICATION

The new church building was dedicated on December 17, 1916 with an all day service. Rev. O. L. Prentice of Romney gave the dedicatory sermon and also made the appeal for pledges on the indebtedness. Thirty-six hundred dollars (\$3600) was raised at this service to pay off the balance of indebtedness on the new church building. Also assisting in the service was Rev. E. P. Day of Delphi and Rev. J. D. Davenport of Flora.

Serving on the building committee were:

Rev. F. M. Davis, Chairman and Pastor
Everett Flora, Secretary
C. L. Million
Warner Bowman
Fred Miller
John W. Kerlin

Elders:

F. C. Sanderson
A. B. Snoeberger
John Gregg
A. M. Rankin
Frank Kerlin
C. L. Million
Walter Coble
Harley Landis

Board of Trustees:

A. B. Snoeberger
Thomas Robison
C. W. Clark
Fred Miller
Wm. F. Kerlin
J. W. Moore

GIFTS

Many gifts have been given to our church in memory of deceased members. Mr. P. M. Byrum gave the Wurlitzer organ in memory of his wife, Maggie Byrum. (1948)

The offering plates were given by the Add-a-Couple S. S. Class in memory of their teacher, Everett Flora. (1955)

The palms were the gift of the Senior High S. S. Class in memory of their teacher, Effie Snoeberger. (1955)

The Sunday School song books were also given in memory of Mrs. Snoeberger by her husband, Roy Snoeberger. (1956)

A gift of the three pulpit chairs and collection plates were given by W. H. Bowman in memory of his wife, Mary. (1957)

The impressive lighted Sallman picture of Christ at the front of the church was given in memory of Gerald Fry by the U. and I. S. S. Class. (1960)

The new modern front doors to our church were given in memory of Gerald Fry by his wife, Donna and daughter Dorinda. (1960)

A donation from Mr. and Mrs. Roy Fry in memory of their son Gerald provided funds for the front steps and new railing for our church. (1960)

Another gift, which was given by the U. and I. S. S. Class, is the beautiful brass altar set consisting of a cross, two candlesticks, and two vases. This gift has added a note of reverence to our worship services. (1965)

Mrs. Fred Miller donated the Christian flag.

Mr. W. H. Bowman gave a generous donation which was used for materials in the sidewalk and curbing project in 1959.

Rev. E. E. Coleman made and gave us the book stand which holds the large open Bible on the front table. (1958)

MUSIC

We are grateful for the volunteer Adult Choir and Carol Choir. The Carol Choir was organized for our youth — grades four through eight. The choirs meet regularly each week and alternate with special music at our church services. At Christmas and Easter the choirs join together in special musical arrangements. The congregation appreciates the faithfulness and the service given by the members of the choirs, the director, and the organist.

As we reminisce, we realize that our church has always been blessed with outstanding choirs, quartets, trios, duos, and soloists. We have had many talented pianists and organists who have given years of service.

No worship service would be complete without good special music and inspired congregational singing of the old familiar hymns.

Our church has participated for the past twenty years in the program of Week-Day Bible classes sponsored by the County Council of Churches.

Our pastors of recent years have participated from time to time in the giving of Morning Devotions during the Carroll County Hour over WSAL radio station in Logansport.

This schedule is arranged by the County Ministerial Association of which our minister is a member.

Our church sponsored the Boy Scout Organization in 1956-59 with Rev. E. E. Coleman as Scoutmaster. In 1957 the Boy Scouts, Rev. Coleman and interested citizens of the Rockfield community joined forces and succeeded in rejuvenating French Post Park on the Banks of the Wabash.

We have a Dart Ball Team which provides a few nights of fun and fellowship for our men. They visit other churches in the county and are hosts to Church Dart Ball Teams. They have won a couple of trophies for the team having the most fun at games.

The men also have an opportunity for fellowship by attending the two meetings each year of the Carroll County Presbyterian Men's Brotherhood.

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

Within every church there is a need for organizations to serve in various capacities. The women in our church organized the "Ladies Aid" and later changed the name to the "Social Union". In recent years the group has been known as the "Friendship Circle", and they meet regularly on the first Tuesday evening of each month. The purpose of this organization is to promote Christian friendship among the church women and to support the activities of the church.

Many of the physical improvements in and about the church have been made possible through the use of the money raised by these ladies at their church suppers and bazaars. A few of their accomplishments have been the furnishing of the kitchen and dining room in its entirety, generous donations each year to the church for maintenance, redecorating the manse as needed, bought the adult choir robes, communion linens, guest register and stand as well as numerous other things needed.

They have also had clothing drives, adopted a Korean boy, a hospital patient, and have sponsored a variety of very fine programs. Probably the most outstanding contribution was in 1961 when they had a very attractive and serviceable bulletin board erected outside the church.

Another very active group of ladies in the church is the United Presbyterian Women's Circles. In former years they were known as the Guild and Missionary Society but more recently have been known as the Ruth Circle. This Circle meets on the second Friday afternoon of each month. This year a second circle was formed which meets on the third Monday evening of the month and is known as the Hope Circle.

These U. P. W. Circles study the work of the church in broader aspects, particularly the mission field, and contribute to the support of our missionaries through the raising of an annual quota for this purpose. In addition to financial aid, the ladies do sewing, and roll bandages to be used in the mission fields.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Through the years our Sunday School has been quite active and instructive. Our average attendance is around 85 at present time. There are three adult classes, a young peoples class and five classes for our children. The Sunday School pays a part of summer camp expenses for church campers, and it contributes to the County Council of Churches week-day Bible Classes. The birthday offerings are sent to a leper mission. The Sunday School has it's own officers that are elected each year and it is self supported.

Many of the Sunday School classes have been organized, especially the young married couples and they have contributed to the many needs of the church. Some of these groups have been Class No. 4, Class No. 3, Add a-Couple Class and the U. and I. Class. Some of the class projects have been lights for basement, rewiring of church, outside lights, balcony fluorescent lights, coat racks in vestibule, plastering, completely furnishing a nursery, Carol Choir robes, and numerous other things. Back in 1916, a S. S. Class of boys found the need for class room chairs and at the suggestion of their teacher, each member bought a chair. The chairs are the caned bottom chairs used today in the balcony and several of these boys are men in our church today.

IMPROVEMENTS

Time and use have caused a need for replacements and improvements of the physical objects in and around the church. The building has been rewired, an oil furnace installed, basement floor tiled, floors refinished in auditorium, new sewage system, sidewalks and curbing, and front steps with wrought iron railing. Most all of the labor was done by men of the church.

The U. and I. Class planted the evergreens in front of the church which adds to its beauty.

In the erection of the unique bulletin board by the Friendship Circle (1961) it is noteworthy that J. E. Brothers Memorials furnished the limestone and did the designing and lettering as a donation to our church. Men of the church did the remainder of work required.

Late in 1965, an office was built in the church basement for the pastor's use.

CHURCH HOMECOMINGS

On August 30, 1959 the first Homecoming of the Rockfield Presbyterian Church began with Sunday School at 9:30 a.m. Church services followed at 10:30 with the usual program. The sermon was given by Rev. Herbert Hugo, a former pastor, who served this church from 1931 to 1940. Some 250 people were present. At the noon hour, a bountiful basket dinner was enjoyed.

At 1:30 the guests and members again assembled in the church auditorium. Rev. Coleman had charge of the program. All joined in singing several old familiar hymns. Mrs. Clara Montgomery had prepared a history of the church which she read.

Letters from former pastors and members were read. The sermon of the afternoon was given by Rev. Cecil Atkinson, former pastor. Rev. Coleman gave a few remarks. The service closed by singing "God Be With You Till We Meet Again" and the Benediction.

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The second Homecoming was held on October 16, 1950 with Sunday School and Church services as usual, followed by a basket dinner at noon.

At the afternoon service, Rev. E. E. Coleman, former pastor, gave one of his usual good sermons. There was special music and several communications were read from former pastors and members.

DATA

In December 1963 the Session made a resolution which became effective in 1964. It resolved that the Rockfield Presbyterian Church lodge all of the administrative responsibilities, both spiritual and corporate, in one body which shall be the "Session" as provided in Presbyterian law for the local church. A board of three Trustees will continue to be elected as heretofore but that these Trustees must be members of the Session and that they serve only for the duration of their elected term. The unified Board of Elders and Trustees are to be twelve in number. The responsibilities formerly lodged in the Board of Deacons will be handled by a Finance Committee and an usher committee which shall be appointed.

Another change was announced at the January 3, 1965 congregational meeting. The church name was to be known officially as the Rockfield United Presbyterian Church.

At the present time there are around two hundred names of active and inactive members on the church roll.

The Session meets on the first Sunday evening of each month with Rev. Tennes as moderator.

The Present Board of Elders:

Name	Term of Office
Thomas Appleton	1964 - 1966
Lewis Funkhouser	1964 - 1966
Harold Nipple	1964 - 1966
Junior Snider	1964 - 1966
Melvin Dawson	1965 - 1967
Ren Groninger	1965 - 1967
Richard McLeland	1965 - 1967
Philip Smith	1965 - 1967
Miss Margaret Bowman	1966 - 1968
Mrs. Marjorie Been	1966 - 1968
Robert Ferrier	1966 - 1968
Roy Fry	1966 - 1968

In June 1965, the Session started with plans to observe in 1966 the Centennial or 100th anniversary of the organization of the church and the 50th anniversary of the present church building. Mr. L. J. Deel was chosen as General Chairman. In January 1966 the date of April 24 was set for the Centennial observance. Mr. Deel appointed the following men to head committees:

Invitations	L. J. Deel
History	Ernest Flora
Program	Junior Snider
Dinner	Carl Coble
Publicity	Roy Fry

It would be impossible to name all of the faithful people who have given us the rich heritage we have received. We as present members and friends who worship here, are grateful for the devotion, prayers, time and talents, money and sacrifices that have gone into the perpetuation of this church.

Over the years the Rockfield Church has weathered many storms but has also enjoyed much of God's Sunshine. We trust that she has been of service to Him. We hope and pray that God will continue to need this instrument of service.

This History of the Rockfield United Presbyterian Church from 1866 to 1966, was compiled by the committee and written by Mrs. Clara Montgomery and Mrs. Margaret H. Flora from recorded data and memory thoughts of many people. Thanks to everyone who cared enough to remember and shared it. The poem published in this booklet was sent to us by Rev. F. M. Davis with information we asked for. We feel he will be happy that we chose to share it with you on this memorable occasion.



THE SECRET

I met God in the morning
When my day was at its best,
And His presence came like sunrise,
Like a glory in my breast.

All day long the Presence lingered,
All day long He stayed with me,
And we sailed in perfect calmness
O'er a very troubled sea.

Other ships were blown and battered,
Other ships were sore distressed,
But the winds that seemed to drive them
Brought to us a peace and rest.

Then I thought of other mornings,
With a keen remorse of mind,
When I too had loosed the moorings,
With the Presence left behind.

So I think I know the secret,
Learned from many a troubled way:
You must seek Him in the morning
If you want Him through the day!

— Ralph S. Cushman