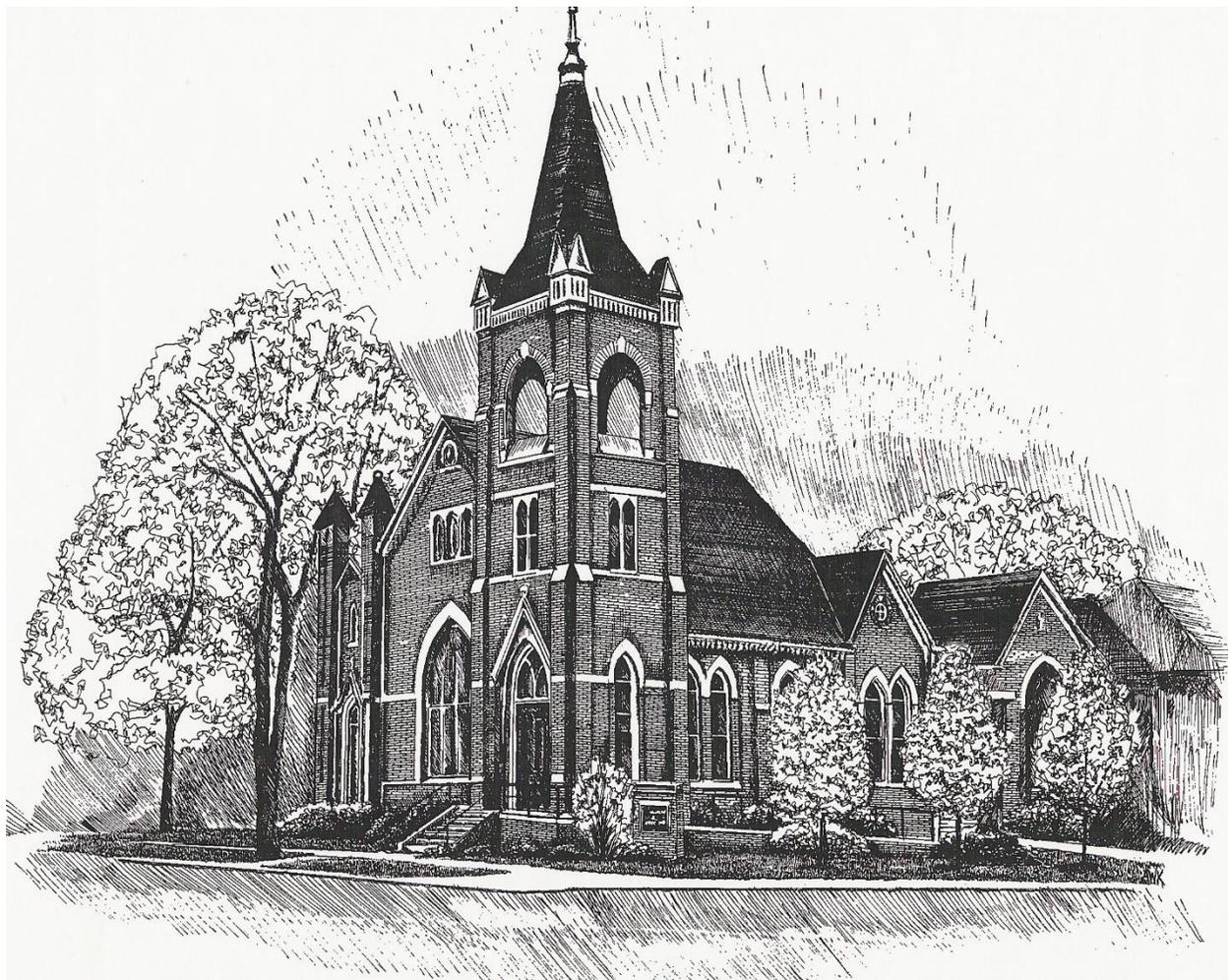


From Then to Now: An Historical Sketch of the Ada Presbyterian Church; 1841-2016



*“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.
(Acts 20:28)*

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Acknowledgments

The setting was a local restaurant in mid-Spring earlier this year. Rev. Patrick Allen and I were exchanging small talk between bites of our lunch. Amidst his comments was a statement close to “I wish someone would volunteer to write the church’s history for this year’s anniversary celebration.” Not knowing whether his comment was directed at me specifically or was simply shared as wishful thinking on his part, I queried him to elaborate further. By the time the luncheon check arrived I had told him I would be interested in being that “someone” who would accept the challenge. It was good timing on his part because I had recently completed all other commitments on my time and was actually contemplating what project to tackle next. While I am not a professional historian, I enjoy digging through dusty files and books in search of answers to questions. Thinking about the church’s history meant possibly discovering answers to questions on many issues I had heard about through the years but knew little to nothing about. For bringing up the subject during that luncheon visit (intentionally or otherwise) and then for volunteering to review the manuscript critically as I went along, I therefore thank Patrick sincerely. My task for the summer was a true joy.

I also owe a tremendous debt to my good friend Albert Suniga. My computer went on strike during the summer forcing me to replace it, and replacement came only with the latest software that I knew nothing about. I could handle the easy tasks such as turning the machine on, and I could turn it off. Knowing how to format text clearly, and adding figures and pictures were tasks I had no idea how to proceed. Albert came to my rescue on so many occasions and went out of his way each time to assure I was on the right track.

Then there were many other friends who helped me piece together information relative to the early days of the church. My many phone calls and visits to solicit information likely made me appear as a pest, but these kindhearted individuals put up with my continued prying and thus, helped me more than they could possibly imagine. I cannot name them all, but I am grateful to each person and I thank them sincerely for all their valuable assistance.

To my wife, Phyllis, I give special thanks. It was she who overlooked the many household chores I was able to shun throughout the summer. She graciously allowed me to hide away throughout the days and many times well into the nights as I worked away. And she never criticized me for having to cancel our European river cruise vacation or the African safari or the many weekends in Las Vegas we had previously planned for the summer! She tolerated it all and even read the manuscript repeatedly to check for accuracy of my statements. Her thirty years as church secretary meant she was well versed on what should be included and what should be left out of the story. I thank her dearly for her commitment to this church and its rich history.

Finally, I am grateful to Lord Jesus for organizing the Ada Presbyterian Church so many years ago and for giving it true purpose for existence in this village. This church belongs to the Lord and I am extremely grateful to have been a part of it for the past forty-four years. Thank you Lord.

Thomas A. Gossel
September, 2016

Foreword

In the year 1841, when a small group of Christians came together to establish what would eventually become the Ada Presbyterian Church, the country was a different place. The U.S. flag had twenty-six stars on it, Edgar Allan Poe was writing in his prime, and the U.S. Postal Service was still six years away from issuing its first stamp. It's a world that would feel slower and more stable were we somehow able to visit it today.

In the intervening 175 years, the church has witnessed unrelenting change. The nation has moved from civil war to terror wars; from the telegraph to the internet; from horse and carriage to automobiles and spacecraft. We've also watched as the church has increasingly moved from the center of village life to its edges. We once knew a time when people joined the church as a matter of course; we now meet young people who've never even been inside a church building.

Given the deep changes that have occurred, it is no small wonder that our church still stands, and still remains very much viable. Yes, much has changed, but our God has not. The Bible reminds us that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." (Heb. 13:8) The world changes, but God's unchangeable purpose for the world does not. Each day of every year, God calls men and women to himself as the gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed in this and all Christian churches.

Over the years, our church has developed its own unique way of proclaiming the gospel here in the community of Ada. Our strength is in our people, and our witness is mostly a quiet but forceful demonstration of Christ-like love. From staffing the food pantry to providing a home-cooked meal for a member facing an illness, loving service is in our DNA. Over the past near-20 years of which I have been the pastor of the church, my family has been on the receiving end of such love more times than I can count.

I remember the day we moved to Ada in May of 1997. Members of the church were lined up from the moving truck to the manse, helping unload our belongings. The fridge was already stocked so we didn't have to shop for groceries – a detail that Deb and I talk about to this day. Many years ago, when one of our sons was hospitalized, we were given additional funds and extra time off. More recently, after feeling depleted following an intense season of ministry, I was graciously given a last minute sabbatical. Support and care have always been at the core of this church's nature.

Over the past couple of years, we have built on this identity and witness by learning to be even more visible in our proclamation of the gospel. We have served as missionaries as far away as Romania, and we have sent missionaries to the field from among our own membership. We have extended personal invitations to our friends to worship with us and are growing more comfortable in letting others know that we are Christians. We are a determined church, not content to be pushed out to the margins of the community; instead, by God's grace we are becoming more active and alive with outreach.

In the pages that follow, you will read about the ups and downs of our church's life in its long 175-year history. You will read details about the building, vignettes about its pastors and people, and moments of great significance for our very identity. And behind it, underneath it, upholding it, and propelling it forward, is the unchanging hand of our God. We will continue the work of proclamation God has given us – speaking and serving in the name of Jesus Christ – all the while, looking to the Lord as our strength, trusting that our future can and will be a strong one.

By Rev. Patrick D. Allen
September 6, 2016

Preface

The Ada Presbyterian Church is the oldest religious organization in the village, dating back 175 years. The church building also is the oldest house of worship in Ada. In a sense, it is a mother to many of the other churches, they being formed and organized within the walls of the Presbyterian church building.

This manuscript is divided into six parts. Chapter One describes the founding of the Presbyterian religious society in 1841 in the tiny village of Huntersville, Ohio. It would be fourteen more years before these Presbyterians transferred as a group to Johnstown (name later changed to Ada) and another six years before the congregation began construction of a church building. Chapter Two focuses largely on the congregation of believers throughout the first 150 years. In Chapter Three, discussion concentrates on the most recent 25 years (1991-2016). The text elaborates events and activities ongoing during this period and deals with them in greater depth than in Chapters One and Two. The reason for this transition in style is based on specific events during this period that ultimately led the church congregation to disaffiliate from its membership in the Presbyterian Church (USA) or (PCUSA) denomination to its present alignment with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) denomination. This change, perhaps more than any other activity within the church's recent history, resulted in an entirely new mindset for its members and pastor along with renewed desire to love our Lord Jesus all the more along with increased energy for outreach and evangelism.

Chapter Four contains personal reflections and testimonies of its members and friends as they share their thoughts and feelings about the church and what it means to them. Chapter Five offers a brief synopsis of the church today. An epilogue provides concluding commentary that

discusses what an observer who reads an historical review of events during the previous twenty-five years at the Ada Presbyterian Church's bicentennial celebration in 2041 could very well encounter.

In addition to events that directly relate to the history of the Ada Presbyterian Church, additional commentary is included when appropriate to help the reader grasp a more comprehensive view of what was going on during that period in time. For example, descriptions of the villages of Huntersville and Johnstown are presented in Chapter One.

Preparing a Factual, Interesting and Readable Historical Manuscript

As is likely true for many older church groups that originated many years ago, complete and accurate records that describe important historical detail are not available. Minutes for Session and various committee meetings, annual congregational and trustees reports, and I believe I read darn near every one of them, are often limited to listing the outcome of official business but fail to provide meaningful descriptions of what was happening to cause the event to be recorded. For example, day-by-day goings-on within the church, especially comments about the spiritual lives of its members are largely absent from the minutes. Furthermore, when periodic reports summarizing business over a previous era were written to describe the church's heritage during specified periods, there is a good chance that in order to describe activities for that time, each report relied heavily on the previous one for content, which had relied on the one previous to it, and so forth.

That was the case for the two reports prepared after the centennial celebration, years 1941-1966, and 1967-1991. In other words, the church's historical overview prepared for its 125-year anniversary was remarkably similar in content to the centennial report. The sesquicentennial (150-year) report was very similar in content to the previous two reports. The bottom line is that

we have two reports written subsequent to the centennial report that, while interesting and certainly important to the overall life of the church, are incomplete in that they fail to provide full accounting that details in-depth events and activities during those time periods. The reader is advised that these two reports, as well as the centennial story, in Chapter Two of this manuscript are retained out of respect and Christian love for the individual authors whose dedication to the Ada Presbyterian Church and hard work remain in high esteem amongst all who have labored hard and long to celebrate our Lord's church. The three reports contained in Chapter Two of this volume are complete in detail other than having been edited to remove a few glitches that might obscure the accuracy or completeness of earlier statements and to minimize overlap of material. Duplicate citations for the three history reports have been consolidated when appropriate. Additionally, supplemental readings have been added to each Period to complement each authors' report. These supplements, plus information in Chapters One, and Three through Five, along with the epilogue, are my own doing and they are humbly offered herein.

Historical “facts.” One point that needs to be noted is that historical “facts” often differ from each other depending on their source. Instead of reading and then believing that a particular event in the past occurred in a specific year, it can be justified, in most cases, to imagine the noted time as an era rather than absolute year. The same reasoning holds for the spelling of individuals' names. There are numerous persons identified in all earlier church reports whose names are spelled differently depending on who reported them. I have made every attempt to correct such errors but admit some, notably those from the earliest years, are beyond my ability to do so. This is particularly true for persons cited outside the membership rosters of the Ada Presbyterian Church where there are no means to confirm spellings, and for others who are mentioned only once with no further references to check spelling against.

Then there is the very real issue of trying to accurately decipher the handwriting that was characteristic of the mid-to-late 1800s and into the 1900s. Though thoroughly enjoyable to view, a sizeable amount of the material available for reference to prepare this manuscript, specifically the material that was handwritten during that time period, was all but impossible to interpret with absolute certainty. It will require a modern day cryptologist to define many phrases or segments of handwritten prose left behind from the early days (as well as some that were handwritten in the recent past). Use of typewriters for recording Session or committee reports generally did not come into vogue until the 1920s and of course, computers followed much later than that. Handwritten reports of the 1930s and forward are for the most part tolerable to read.

No matter how many times this manuscript was read and re-read throughout the months of its preparation, and I long ago lost count of that number, I am confident that some gremlins have likely snuck into the text. I apologize for them in advance and beg your forgiveness for my oversight in identifying and correcting them. This also holds for typographical errors. I ask for your assistance in bringing errors to my attention so church historians of the future will be better equipped to report historical facts accurately.

The church Versus the Church

While reading this manuscript it should be understood that there is a significant difference in meaning for the terms church (small “c”) and Church (capital “C”). A church is a building for public Christian worship, whereas the Church refers to the whole body (i.e., all the people) of Christian believers. The word is always capitalized when used as a proper noun or as part of a title (e.g., The Ada Presbyterian Church). Throughout this text, to minimize readers’ confusion, the word is not capitalized except when used as a proper noun, or in a boldfaced heading that describes a specific text topic.

A Personal Reflection

Finally, I wish to share a personal reflection, one that has affected me greatly. As I read through successive copies of church Session minutes beginning with the early years of record keeping to the present, one feature hit me again and again. I would read the name of an individual I knew by reputation, or in many cases personally, who I knew was a strong Christian and very active within the church. While reading the person's name repeatedly my heart was filled with pure joy; that is, until the point was reached when no further mention was made other than perhaps a note that the person had died or moved away. For every one of them, their death helped me realize once again just how brief our life upon this earth is.

After going through this experience repeatedly for a number of individuals and reflecting on each of their lives, I began thinking more and more about faithful worship of our Lord in a church setting, followed later by the individuals' death. My joy began to turn to remorse based on what I was interpreting as a tragedy that these worshippers had left this earth, some at a very young age, leading me sometimes almost to the point of depression. I was thus faced with an issue I needed to deal with. Why was I reflecting so negatively about the death of Christians who had been baptized into Christ and active in church?

As Christians we should think positively about death. It is a natural component of life and we need to rejoice – **yes rejoice** – at the time of another Christian's death. With life comes death, no doubt about that! But more importantly to the topic, with death comes life – life eternal for all who believe in the One who gives us life in the first place. We must all die before we can live life to its fullest. I know in my own heart that these Christian sisters and brothers who have passed now enjoy life anew, an experience that goes well beyond any sensation or emotion anyone could ever imagine before they left this earth to be with the Lord.

To put this in perspective of an individual having a personal history of church worship experience, some might argue that active worship within a church setting is not necessary to his or her full spiritual life. But I look at the situation differently. Being actively involved in a church worship experience keeps us in close fellowship with other Christians who can encourage and teach us, just as we in turn can encourage and teach them in spiritual matters.

This has been my experience as a member of this church for longer than forty-four years. Yes, I can worship my Lord in private and I often do between formal worship periods. But Jesus himself regularly attended and participated in worship services within the local synagogue regardless of how busy he was or where he was at the moment, thereby setting his action as a model for each of us to follow. And it was Jesus who, while fully alive, had to die before he would arise as a fully living entity to live throughout eternity with his Heavenly Father.

I will continue to think about all those fellow Presbyterian Christians who have gone before me. I will continue to reassure myself that their love for our Lord, and thus strong commitment to their church, was well worth it. In my humanness however, I will continue to miss them and even mourn for them because of their departure. At the same time, I will also thank God that he kept me at the Ada Presbyterian Church during all those times in past years when the urge to leave was so strong. I explain in more detail in Chapter 4 what precipitated this urge to leave and even stronger motivation to remain. Please see my personal reflection there.

TAG
September, 2016



Chapter One

The Church and its Property

*O Lord our God, as for all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name, it comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you.
(1 Chronicles 29:16)*

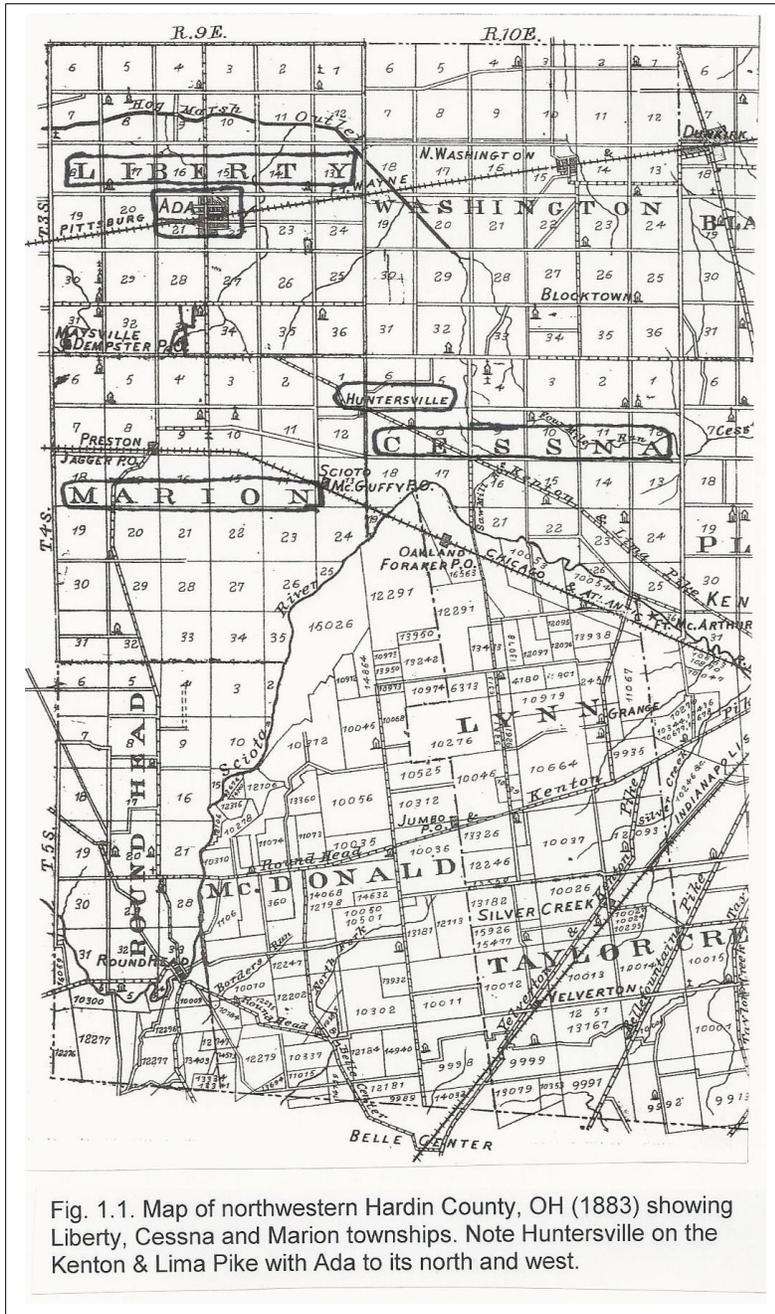
In the Beginning ...

Hardin County, Ohio. Ponder how Northwestern Ohio must have appeared in its terrain and early settlements. The written history prepared from this time is refreshingly alive with interesting and observant information.

In the early 1800s, for example, Northwestern Ohio was an almost unbroken wilderness,¹ with but few widely scattered and feeble settlements where the first pioneers struggled to establish homes for themselves and their families. As more and more settlements appeared in the area the deep woods were kept singularly free from underbrush so that pioneers could clearly see a long distance amongst and beyond the trees. It is supposed that this arose from a habit of the Indians of annually burning the underbrush to facilitate the capture of game.²

Hardin County was formed in April, 1820 from an old Indian territory. An area of about 440 square miles was included in its boundaries,³ with subdivision into fifteen townships. Three

of these, Cessna, Liberty and Marion define the geographic areas of interest for this manuscript (Fig. 1.1). The county had been attached to Logan County since February, 1830 for government



purposes, during which period early settlers were compelled to go to Bellefontaine to attend to such legal and official business as the necessity of the times demanded. By the year 1832 settlers were beginning to think about organization of a new county government. Finally, in January, 1833, the General Assembly of Ohio passed an act for establishment of Hardin County as a separate and distinct unit of government.⁴

One of the principal drawbacks to the early settlement of Hardin County was the high prevalence of disease,

especially malaria and “milk sickness.” These maladies were the dreaded enemies of pioneers, and no doubt contributed greatly to the slow colonization of the area. Additionally, the county, while having considerable acreage adaptable to agriculture, also had various low-lying swampy

regions that did not attract people and were difficult to cross.⁵ Owing to the heavy timber and lack of navigable streams and rivers or other means of travel the county settled slowly, so that as late as 1840 it had but nine inhabitants to the square mile.¹

A New Church is Founded

What would become the Ada Presbyterian Church was organized as a religious society on August 21, 1841 at Huntersville, Ohio under authority and care of the Sidney Presbytery. The Presbytery of Sidney was organized in 1836. At that time churches had been founded in Urbana, Bellefontaine, Findlay, Kenton, Lima and other regions that were centers of population. At a meeting of the Presbytery in 1841, the issue of sending a delegation of one or two men through the northwestern areas of the state to visit settlements where no regular church groups had been established to preach the Gospel and organize churches where the way was open was discussed.⁶ These trips would be made on horseback. It made good sense to include a visit to the small village of Huntersville since it was located on a primary road, the Kenton-Lima Pike. The makeup of this delegation including its size is not recorded, but the outcome of its activity was that a new Presbyterian society was founded.

There is likewise no reference to indicate that this fact-finding meeting in Huntersville included citizens of nearby Johnstown or any other settlement along the way. This is not surprising though, because Johnstown was located off the main road. Johnstown and Huntersville also were relatively close to each other, a distance less than four miles as the crow flies, so it may have been assumed that people living in Johnstown could journey the short distance to Huntersville without significant hardship to worship. Or, it might have been supposed that the Huntersville congregation would one day move the organization the short distance to Johnstown, an event that eventually materialized. At the same time, it is possible that the delegation did visit

Johnstown but found its citizens unresponsive to the idea of a new church being founded in the village. Regardless of the reason, the delegation figured Huntersville was a more suitable choice for establishment of a church, and no further mention was made of this fact in the records of the Sidney Presbytery.

The first supply minister for the new congregation was Rev. Thomas B. Clark (Appendix 1), who served the Kenton Presbyterian Church and most likely other congregations in a circuit completed on horseback. He is believed to have lived in northern Logan County.

Members of the early society included seven men and two women: Isaac Mathews, Nancy Mathews, James M. Nelson, Susanna Nelson, and James Hamilton, who were received from the Kenton church; and Thomas Irvin, John McClure, Robert Hyndman, and Jackson Mathews, who were received by confession of faith. Isaac Mathews and James Nelson were chosen as elders.

Regular services were held at stated periods, perhaps not more often than once a month since, as noted above, the pastor also served other congregations, all widely separated owing to the sparsely settled condition of this region.^{7,8} As in most other backwoods districts, worshippers met in private homes, or in the groves when the weather permitted.⁹ A “grove” is a common term that defines a small thicket of trees with minimal or no undergrowth.

Huntersville. The village of Huntersville had been established and platted in June, 1836 by Thomas Hitchcock, a resident of the area.¹⁰ Hitchcock conceived the idea of laying out a town in much similar fashion to most other towns following a plan that was very much in vogue in that day. Of course, all the villages were laid out and platted with the ardent hope that someday they would become great cities.

With these thoughts in mind Hitchcock acquired a tract of land in Marion Township that extended into neighboring Cessna Township, and securing the services of a surveyor laid out and platted the village of Huntersville, naming the village in honor of his friend, Jabez Hunter, a pioneer settler.¹¹ At that time the Harding Highway, which passed through the village, was a mere north-south Indian trail leading from Solomon's Town near the present village of Belle Center in Logan County to old Fort Jennings on the Auglaize River in Putnam County. Travelers moving east-west could avail themselves of the popular Kenton-Lima Pike, as noted above. The land where the town was to be located was covered with a heavy growth of native forest trees that included ash, cherry, elm, beech, maple, hickory, sycamore, basswood or lyme, walnut and oak. As the land was cleared for growing crops, these trees were cut down and used to build crude log cabins and other buildings, or simply rolled into heaps to be burned.^{2,4}

For many years Huntersville contained but a few scattered log cabins, but after Johnstown was established in neighboring Liberty Township in the early 1850s there was increased travel on the Kenton-Lima Pike and Huntersville became a prosperous village. A post office served surrounding areas including Johnstown. There were also reported to be two or three general stores, along with a grist and sawmill that used ox-power, but later substituted steam as a power source, and a blacksmith shop.⁴ A small log cabin that served as a meeting place for a local Methodist congregation is reported to have been there.¹¹ At different times, four doctors took care of the sick people of Huntersville and its immediate area, with perhaps some others whose names have long been forgotten. All that remains of Huntersville today, beside sweet memories of days gone by, is a small cemetery on Hardin T.R. 74 that sports many sandstone tombstones that are largely unreadable due to the ravages of years of wind and storms, and probably the unmarked graves of other earlier villagers. Today there are remnants of a few

houses or outbuildings constructed long ago. There is also a small, modern church building that would have stood within the village of Huntersville. It is located approximately one mile east of S.R. 195 on S.R. 309 with a roadside sign identifying it as the Mt. Zion Church of Jesus Christ, and a sign over the building's door that identifies it as the Sovereign Grace Association. But nevermind the building because this manuscript is about the Ada Presbyterian Church, not the Mt. Zion Church of Jesus Christ!

The original plat of Huntersville contained thirty-two lots, nine on the north side of the Ada-Kenton Pike in Cessna Township and twenty-three on the south (Marion Township) side of the highway. The Ada-Kenton Pike was called Main Street. High Street was one block south of Main Street running parallel with it. Columbus Street was the principal north-south cross street in the center of town, and West Street was west of Columbus Street and parallel with it.

At the time of founding of the new Presbyterian congregation, what little mail intended for delivery to Johnstown was dispatched from Huntersville or Maysville in Allen County.^{4,12} After the post office was abandoned at Huntersville in 1877, largely due to the more rapid growth of Johnstown, Huntersville residents were required to go to Johnstown for their mail, until the Rural Delivery system was established later and serviced them through the Ada post office. The 1840 census figures for Cessna, Liberty and Marion townships were 259, 170 and 177, respectively.¹

The church moves to Johnstown. Discussion as to why the congregation transferred worship services from the site of founding to Johnstown in 1855 is not recorded. Services at its new site were held in Johnstown's old frame school house located on the corner of Main and Montford streets,¹³ and was still known as the Huntersville Presbyterian Church.² There is a good chance that church members viewed Johnstown as a more progressive village whose population

was growing at an appreciable rate. The Methodists in Huntersville, who were in the majority,² may have competed briskly for worshippers from the area.¹¹

Johnstown also had something that Huntersville did not – a railroad. Train service had arrived in Johnstown around 1853,² and connected the village directly with the outside world. At that period in history in nearly all parts of the country, settlements served by a railroad were likely the ones that survived and prospered. This was certainly true of Johnstown and because of the railroad, there were numerous job opportunities. These included a sawmill that boasted of an impressive hoop pole and stave trade. To members of the small band of Presbyterians in Huntersville, moving their enterprise to Johnstown meant unparalleled opportunity for survival, even growth. The distance between villages was reasonable for people to commute to or from services via horseback, wagon or buggy in a reasonable length of time.

Johnstown renamed Ada. There is an interesting story about how Ada became known by its modern name. The village had been originally named Johnstown after one of its early enterprising and broadminded citizens, Sanford M. Johnson. The name was confusing to postal workers and railroad schedulers, however, because there also was a village in Licking County with the same name. One or the other settlements would need to be renamed. Tradition holds that when a name change was discussed for the Hardin County village the name “Sweet Liberty” was suggested.¹⁴ This notion was quickly rejected by postal officials in Washington D.C. who considered the proposed name too long. The department chose “Ada” instead, naming the village in 1855 after a postal official’s favorite sister whose name was Ada.^{7,12} Today, there are likely citizens of Ada who rejoice that the postal officials in Washington D.C. rejected the suggestion of “Sweet Liberty” for the village’s new name! I am one of these grateful citizens.

The church name changes. Not much is recorded about the congregation during its earliest years in Johnstown. As noted, it is believed the group met in the Johnstown school building. On April 11, 1860, at a meeting of the Findlay Presbytery held at Mt. Blanchard the name was changed to the Johnstown Presbyterian Church. Eight years later, on April 22, 1868, the name was again changed to the Ada Presbyterian Church to conform with the change in name, which the village had undergone thirteen years earlier.^{2,7}

The Church Goes Big-time

Finally, a new building was added. About the time of onset of the Civil War a growing congregation proposed the construction of a church building for its use. A committee was appointed consisting of James Nelson, Robert Hyndman, Thomas Irvin, I. McGinnis, John H. Mustard, and Sanford M. Johnson, a pillar of the church and the man who laid out the village and for whom it was originally named. The contract for erecting the building was let to John Mustard and work was immediately commenced.² In the spring of 1861 a modest frame building was erected and enclosed at the southwest corner of Main Street and Mill (name later changed to Lincoln Avenue). The ongoing war effort retarded its progress so that work was not completed until 1864. It would be 1868 before the building would be officially dedicated.¹⁵ Rev. T.P. Johnson, of Lima, preached the dedicatory sermon.¹³

Church incorporation. In February, 1883, the society was duly made an incorporate body and named the Ada Presbyterian Church under the laws of Ohio^{2,7} (Appendix 2). To dispel any rumor concerning the church's official name, it is not the First Presbyterian Church, Ada First Presbyterian Church, First Presbyterian Church of Ada, or any other combination of terms that include the word "First." True, the society and church building were both "first" in the village but that's as far as use of the term is proper. Even today, many people, including some

(probably *most!*) church members, printed church documents and newspaper references, mistakenly fail to cite the church by its correct name. To perpetuate the error, a prominent sign in the church's front lawn today, and even the church building's cornerstone, as noted subsequently, incorrectly identify the edifice as the First Presbyterian Church. At the same time it must be realized that designation of the church as the "First Presbyterian Church," while incorrect, is probably not an issue to lose sleep over. Session did clarify the issue when on May 26, 2015 it moved and passed: "For clarification to all interested parties, the church's corporate name, the Ada Presbyterian Church, and its commonly used name, the First Presbyterian Church of Ada, refer to the same organization."¹⁶

Church expansion. A great revival was underway during the winter of 1888-89, out of which was realized that the small frame structure was no longer adequate to meet the growing congregation's needs. Therefore, replacing the building with a larger one for worship was openly discussed. A building committee was appointed consisting of the Board of Trustees and a Board of Directors comprised of Christian Young, president; William Lantz, secretary; and David G. Kemp, treasurer; along with George Epley, Robert Gilmore, Henry E. Neff, John H. Mustard, John Ash, Noah Heterick, Frank L. Bauman, John Souder, O.B. Pendleton, D.C. Nelson, and Justin Brewer. The congregation voted unanimously on September 10, 1889 to move forward with plans for a new building. Plans and specifications were submitted by several architects, and those of Charles H. Miller, formerly of Ada but then of Lima were selected. Bids were advertised for and at noon, May 1, 1890, they were opened and the contract for erecting the building was awarded to S.P. Stewart of Bowling Green, Ohio, for \$9,120.00.⁷

To make room for the new structure the old frame building was sold to its builder, John Mustard and moved to South Gilbert Street near the railroad.¹⁷ It remained in use by the

congregation until the new, much larger church building was completed. The old church building was converted into a school, but was finally destroyed by fire.

The committee for the proposed new building felt that additional land was needed so a forty-foot frontage plot located immediately to the south of the church was purchased from Dr. J.T. Croney. A residence was moved away and ground for the new structure was broken about May 20, 1890, and the contract for the foundation was sublet to E.G. Sousley.

The cornerstone was set on July 23, 1890 along with an impressive ceremony. The opening prayer was offered by Rev. Lemuel Herbert, a local Methodist pastor, who petitioned that no man would be injured in the erection of this building. Looking at the building's dimensions, especially to the top of its steeple, it can be understood why the concern for potential injury during construction was on Rev. Herbert's mind. By the grace of God, his prayer was answered. The scriptural reading by Rev. E.A. Lowe of Ottawa was followed by an address by Rev. Robert McCaslin of Sidney. During the ceremony a copper box containing various items was inserted within the stone, the stone was placed, and a prayer of dedication was offered by Rev. E.W. Work of Van Wert.

The stone, formed of red sandstone, was placed in the building's northeast corner facing Main Street. Its face measured two feet wide by two and a half feet high and as stated before, bears the incorrect dedicatory inscription: "First Presbyterian Church, Ada, Ohio, AD, 1890." Over the next century the soft cornerstone would face the ravages of northwestern Ohio weather so that its lateral measurement would eventually show signs of decay. But even today in 2016, the inscription remains fully visible.

Within the copper box were placed a copy of the Holy Bible; photographs of the U.S. President and Vice-President, members of the Cabinet, Secretary of State, and Postmaster

General, and photographs of Ohio senators, senator-elect, and the Ohio delegation in Congress. Additionally, it contains names and professions of about seven hundred prominent citizens of the United States; a Masonic pin that had belonged to I. McGinnis, who was an honored member and for many years an elder in the church, and a copy of the Bylaws of the Richie Lodge, No. 241, Ada, Ohio; a U.S. penny dated 1890, an English half-penny dated 1877, a U.S. silver dime dated 1812, a copper cent dated 1845; copies of the *Ulster County Gazette* published January 4, 1900, the *Herald and Presbyter*, *The Interior*, *The New Era*, *Ada Record* and *University Herald*; a catalog of the Ohio Normal University, a photograph of its faculty, a program of the exercises of the day, a Philo banquet program, and an ONU commencement program. Also enclosed are a premium list of the Tri-County Fair, a letterhead of F.L. Bauman, business cards of A. Shaw, James Bastable, T.J. Cunningham & Sons, and Gospel Sonnets published by Henry Erskin, one of the early Presbyterian ministers of Scotland. Also enclosed is a copy of the *Centennial History, Progress and Organization of the Presbyterian Church in North-Western Ohio, Lima Presbytery and Local History of Churches Under its Care*.¹⁸ The reason why certain items were chosen for inclusion is not recorded.

The contract called for completion of the building by November 1, but for some unavoidable delay the time was extended and the keys to the building were not turned over until February 10, 1891. The church was dedicated on May 10 of the same year. The building had been completed to the satisfaction of the committee but a few changes were made, principally in stone work, which involved an extra outlay of \$615. The total cost of the structure was \$9,735.⁷

Anyone who has ever built a new home will quickly realize that the cost of the building's construction is only a small part of the total investment needed. Early records imply that the church building was a very basic structure without any of the usual adornments or equipment

that we know exist at the facility today. In other words, the new church was a plain structure in many ways. Not wishing to belabor the subject, but we must assume that basic necessities such as pews, floor coverings, paint for the walls, a kitchen, and perhaps plumbing and electrical service expenses had to be added to the figure stated above. There was no landscaping completed so at least a minimum cost needed to be considered for this and for general cleanup. The building lot was already owned by the church but it was enlarged, at extra expense. There definitely was a mortgage; thus, there would have been interest and other charges by the lending institution added to the cost. And the expenditures continued to escalate upward for other purchases needed to make the “church” the outstanding edifice it was destined to become. Thus, the bottom line is that the total cost of \$9,735 for the structure was only “the **bottom** line” for the project.

The brick church building met the needs of the growing congregation nicely throughout the 1890s, but soon the need for additional space began to be felt. A building program was discussed for a number of years and plans for church expansion were even made, but nothing substantial materialized.

To meet the personal needs of ministers and their families, a brick manse (parsonage) was built within several feet of the church’s west side in 1902 for a total cost of \$3,483.63. There were 404 church members and 225 Sunday School members at that time. Membership would total 440 by 1925.¹⁵

The Rev. C.R. Thomas came to the field in the fall of 1924 and keenly realized the need for better equipment and more room. At the annual meeting of the congregation in April, 1925, he brought the matter before the group, and presented plans for a new addition to be added to the building along with a plan how to raise the necessary funds for completing the project. The plans were favorably received and a committee was appointed to investigate the matter and report back

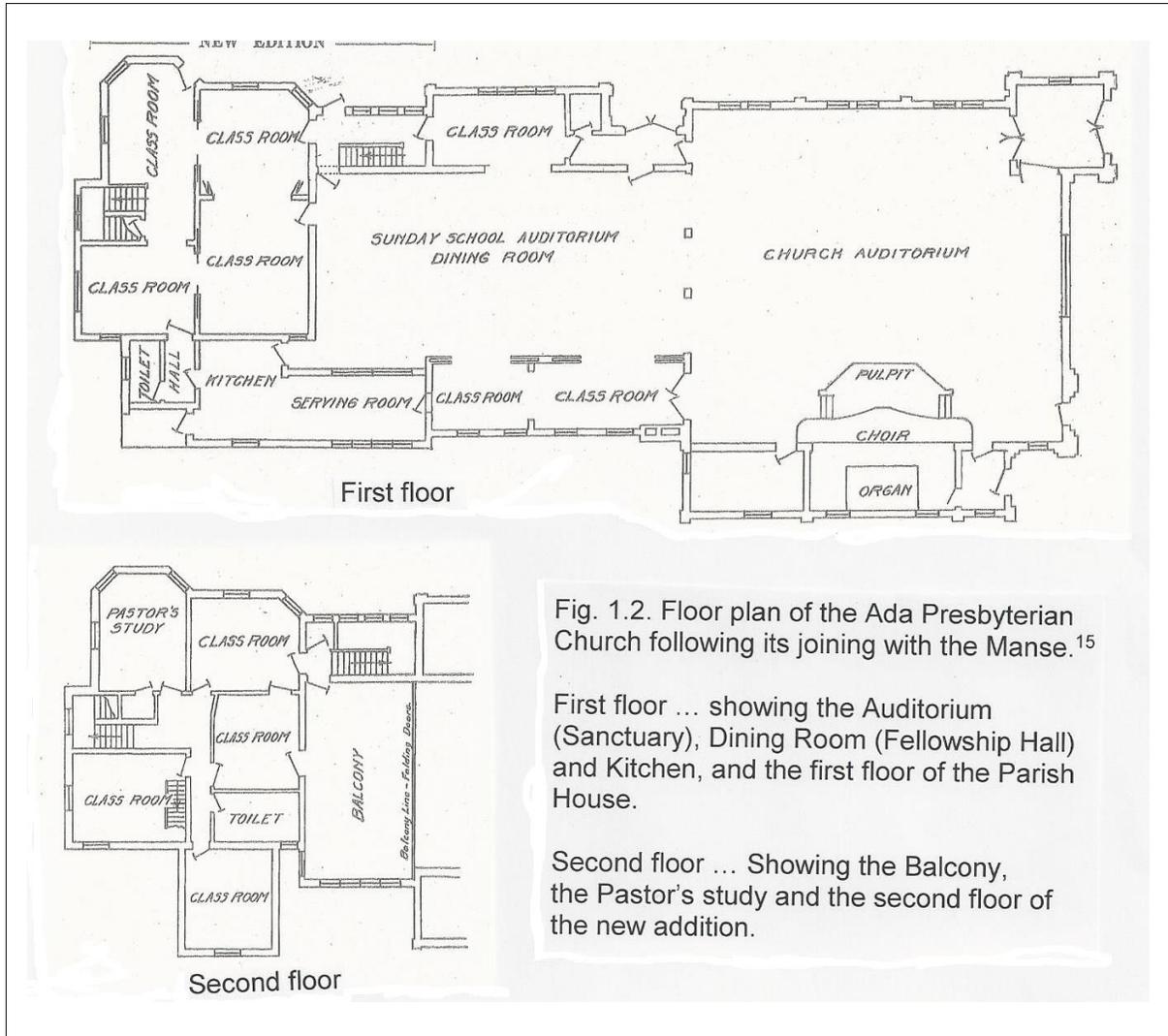
to the congregation. The inactivity of the committee (sound familiar!) led the pastor to reemphasize the needs in a sermon on Sunday, June 14, 1924. One can almost sense the intense emotion that Rev. Thomas must have exuded that day!

The Building Committee was immediately activated, and in a short time presented alternate plans for expansion of the church building by means of a new addition that would join the church and manse to create Sunday School classroom space and other needed areas (Fig. 1.2). When it was decided that the two buildings could indeed be wedded nicely, the plan carried without a dissenting vote. Work was begun almost immediately and rushed to completion.¹⁵ The building committee members were Harry Sousley, chairman; J.L. Runser, James R. Fulks, C.B. Moore and L.A. McElroy. Elder Thomas J. Smull, Jr. was selected as architect and W.O. Shelly as contractor. The cost associated with the project is probably recorded somewhere in the churches “dusty-records” files that, hopefully, will be found one day. The original church building size can be imagined by standing in the Fellowship Hall and looking west. At the point where the room’s ceiling dips lower, that marked the western edge of the building. The porch on the north side was originally part of the manse, not the church.

The newly enlarged structure served the congregation well for the next thirty-five years. By that time major renovation of the building’s exterior, refurnishing of the kitchen, and landscaping of the grounds had been completed. Remodeling of the church’s chancel had been completed and dedicated in 1949.¹⁹ The church’s pastors and their families continued to live in the “manse” portion of the building complex while sharing their living space, and likely many personal and household items, with church activity. This was obviously not a suitable housing arrangement.

Discussion at the Session level was therefore initiated regarding an alternate arrangement.

At a congregational meeting in June, 1960, it was agreed that a separate facility should be



purchased or built to serve as a manse. A suggestion was offered that a maximum price of \$20,000 was reasonable and affordable.²⁰

A new off-site manse. The situation was corrected in 1961 when a separate residence at 541 N. Main Street was purchased and would become the new home for the church's ministers. At that time, the former living area in the church annex was again converted to Sunday School use, meeting rooms, administrative offices, and storage facilities. Rev. Aubrey Hancock and his

family would be the first residents of the new manse. The purchase and later sale of the manse are discussed subsequently.

An Ada Citizen Reflects on the Church's Beauty, History and Heritage

So there you have it – a quick summary of the history of the real estate, the church Ada Presbyterians call home. In more recent times some have probably thought the building should be abandoned in favor of moving into a new facility that would not require constant attention to its high maintenance costs. Others however, view the building in entirely different terms.

Consider a news piece written for *The Ada Herald*, August 6, 1997, by Karen Ward, a citizen of Ada and member of the First United Methodist Church of Ada²¹:

“One of my favorite views in Ada is the steeple of the First Presbyterian Church. Its solid and swift sloping point upward directs the eye to the heavens ... Many times in the fall and winter, I look out my kitchen window and see this same steeple silhouetted in front of a deeply colored sunset. On daily morning walks, as I head home (east) toward the church, the steeple again glorifies itself against an occasional ‘holy’ sunrise.

“What makes these old churches so full of assurance and authority, beautiful to behold and lasting in their aesthetic architectural design? How could these congregations afford such extravagance? Were bricks more economical and architects and builders more accommodating in their fees? Or did the members of the church actually tithe ten percent of their salary and then some? Was the church a focal point of the community and thus a place to commit one’s energy and resources? I am quite sure the answers vary, yet one thing is sure, we the community, are blessed to enjoy the legacy of these buildings that our ancestors created for themselves and their children.

“These churches, such as the First Presbyterian, now require immense resources for upkeep and maintenance. The congregation carries this financial responsibility, but the community, whether we set foot inside the building or not, must recognize these structures are a part of us and, in a sense, belong to us all. She (the historical church) beautifies our village, enhances its quaintness and brings a reality of history to our children. To even imagine any of these buildings on Main Street and throughout our village nonexistent, leaves Ada with a little less of its soul and spirit.”

We Presbyterians agree. Needless to say, the church building does require considerable finances to maintain its functionality (Appendix 3). But if for some reason the building was ever abandoned or destroyed, Ada would never be the same. And neither would those of us in the church family who grew up in the grand old building or others who joined the church in more recent times, remain the same (see Chapter Four). May our Lord Jesus continue to be exalted by the graceful beauty of his church building and by his many thousands of people past and present who have worshipped within it.

Attitudes and General Goings-on Around the Country in 1841

- John Tyler was the tenth U.S. President, succeeded in 1845 by James Polk
- The future sixteenth U.S. President, Abraham Lincoln, was 32 years old
- Ohio was admitted into the Union only 38 years earlier
- H.S. Lehr, the future founder of ONU, was 3 years old
- Gold would be discovered at Sutter’s Mill in six more years, leading to start of the great California Gold Rush of 1848
- Onset of the American Civil War was still 30 years into the future
- It would be another 38 years before the Scott Paper Company invented the first rolled toilet paper
- Americans would need to wait another 67 years before Henry Ford introduced his first Model-T automobile
- The terquasquicentennial celebration of the founding of the Ada Presbyterian Church is 175 years away



Chapter Two

The church and its People, First 150 Years

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.
(Ephesians 4:11-13)

Three Periods in the Life of the Ada Presbyterian Church

The histories that follow three periods, 1841-1941, 1941-1966 and 1967-1991, are presented in large part as originally written by church members during the periods indicated to describe the church's history. Statements preceded by a quotation mark are presented in the words of the authors. If no quotation marks are present, the statements have been edited from their original reports. General commentary from the original reports including information relative to the physical plant is excluded from this chapter because this is contained in Chapter One. Comments listing names of individuals, be they congregants or pastors (Appendix 4), or others involved with the church are retained unabridged in the three reports that comprise

Chapter Two, although they may be in edited format. There are a few areas of overlap between reports that are retained herein, but generally, overlap has been minimized.

It is important to all of us today to understand that many people over the previous 175 years have contributed their time, talents, energy and personal finances to help define the makeup of the Ada Presbyterian Church today. Reflecting on these faithful individuals' names helps keep history alive and can encourage us today by our understanding the unprecedented commitment of our predecessors to this church and its congregation and much more importantly, their intense passion for ministry to extol the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. And most would agree that reading the names of the active Presbyterians who worked so diligently in the early church will bring to mind many fond memories of stories passed down from earlier generations.

As one example, David G. Kemp's name appeared numerous times throughout the records of the early church. Mr. Kemp was a dearly-beloved pharmacist (druggist) who owned and operated a drug store (the predecessor to Gardner's Drug Store) in Ada. I have long been aware of his work in the profession (i.e., pharmacy) I adore. Now, after reading of his strong service to his church and commitment to the Lord Jesus, I can understand the reason for his strong professional commitment to the many people in the village and surrounding area whose health needs he served for many years. Anyone who doubts this need only look carefully at the church's stained glass windows. Two of them bear his name, one presented to the church as a gift from he and his wife, and the other as a memorial to him for his work in the church. No other person is memorialized on these magnificent windows to the same extent as David G. Kemp.

For all three periods that comprise Chapter Two, additional discussion is included that was not part of the original reported histories. This material is headlined as "Additional Thoughts."

Period One: The first 100 years (1841-1941)⁸

The first known written history of the Ada Presbyterian Church was penned by **Cora Kemp Smull** (David and Laura Kemp's daughter) to help celebrate the church's centennial anniversary during October, 1941. She writes: "During the early period, supply ministers were Rev. John Ustick, Rev. James Marquis, Rev. William Young, and Rev. R.M. Badeau. Rev. William M. Reed was minister from 1868 to 1870. The church prospered greatly during this period. Rev. Reed was succeeded by Rev. John A. Meeks who also filled the New Stark pulpit, which was organized about the time of the Huntersville church. It was during his ministry, when on April 9, 1871, that the Northwestern Ohio Normal School (i.e., Ohio Northern University) was founded at Ada. From that time on the church boasted a splendid student membership.

"One of the present members and possibly the oldest both in point of service and years, is Elizabeth Charlotte Epley, who united with the church in 1871 at the age of 16. She has been continuously faithful in her attendance throughout her 70 years of membership in the church."

Rev. Robert Edgar and Rev. John Kelly followed Rev. Meeks' pastorate. Rev. T.P. Johnson served as supply minister for about one year. In 1877 a call was extended and accepted by Rev. C.K. Lehman, who continued as minister until replaced by Rev. Z.B. Campbell in 1880. The Ada church was Rev. Campbell's first charge. At this time the congregation included fifty members.

The Women's Missionary Society was organized in Rev. Campbell's early ministry with Mrs. Campbell as president. She held this office during the twenty years of her husband's pastorate. Mrs. H.E. Neff, one of the present members at the time of the centennial celebration, served as secretary for fifteen years. It was custom in those early years that the minister's wife would serve as president.

The office of president of the Women's Missionary Society during the period 1914 to 1931 was filled by Mrs. D.O. Betz, Mrs. O.H. McAdams, Mrs. Charles Wilson, Mrs. Margaret Dickson and Mrs. T.J. Smull. After Rev. Walter Condon arrived in 1931, Mrs. Condon very ably filled this office until obliged to relinquish it on account of ill health. Since that time the office has been filled by Mrs. Harry Judson and Mrs. C.B. Moore.

In 1890 Rev. Campbell became the first fulltime minister of the Ada church. It was during Rev. Campbell's pastorate that Cora Kemp Smull's personal knowledge of the Ada Presbyterian Church began. Her father, David G. Kemp, served as a trustee during this period with I. McGinnis, A.C. Dobbins, George Epley and P.W. Ream. Her mother, Laura J. Kemp, also served as Sunday School superintendent. Both father and mother were vitally interested in church advancement and devoted much time and energy to its activities. In those days there was little church equipment. Whenever church suppers were given, the Kemp's personal gas stove, extension table, and a large part of their kitchenware were put into use at the church.

Cora Kemp Smull continues: "My memories of the old frame church on South Gilbert street are many. My father took upon himself the duties of janitor without pay, taking time out at odd hours from the drug and book store he owned, to fire the church's two box stoves, to clean and fill lamps for the chandeliers. He drafted the services of his family and paid us small sums for our efforts. My sister, May, cleaned and filled the lamps for the chandeliers, which I carried to their places. My brother, Howard, filled the wood boxes upon these occasions. My mother and the wives of other elders took turns baking wafers for communion services."

Rev. Campbell was an excellent financier and was well known in political circles of that time. He successfully solicited Senator Calvin Brice, Governor Campbell, Major McKinley and other members of the legislature to contribute to the building of the church.

Rev. Campbell was also deeply interested in the welfare of young people, helping many young men to find positions. During his period of service to the church there were thirteen young men studying for the ministry. Whether these men were initially members of the church who enrolled in a course of study for the ministry, or ONU students studying for the ministry who subsequently chose the Ada Presbyterian Church as their preferred place of worship, is not stated. Either way, thirteen students studying for the ministry at any one time was certainly a record that spoke highly of the church's religious programs and its members' spiritual life.

A Junior Christian Endeavor Society and Senior Christian Endeavor Society functioned during this time. The senior society was eventually replaced by the organization of an Intermediate Christian Endeavor Society, directed by Irma Rutter. For several years Miss Rutter presided over both Junior and Intermediate societies, with Anna Ream later taking charge of the Juniors.

“During a period of Rev. Campbell's pastorate, the choir was directed by Professor Hugh Owens, father of Professor Haydn Owens, who is a member of the music faculty of Ohio Northern today. There were many splendid voices in the church at that time, and the choir was supplemented by excellent soloists from the university. Mrs. Owens acted as organist.”

From the very beginning, music was an integral part of the Ada church services. Directors of music included Professor William Miles, Professor Hugh Owens, J.F. Kerr, Professor Allen, Dr. Robert Souder, Mrs. Charles Keeney, J.S. McKee, Mrs. Eunah Johnson and Miss Lucille Russell. At various periods university students majoring in music have directed the choir. Among the organists of the church since the latter part of the nineteenth century were Mrs. Frank Bauman, Mrs. Justin Brewer, Miss Burdella Lowrie, Mrs. E.J. Correll, Mrs. Hugh Owens, Mrs. C.E. Rhonemus, Mrs. Harry Goodbread, Mrs. Dale Yambert, Albert Warren, Mrs. C.B.

Beckes, Mrs. Reed Marshall, Miss Ethel Warren, Professor William Lamale, Mrs. Austin Potter and the present organist, Miss Edna Matson, who has performed this duty faithfully and efficiently over a long period.

“Rev. Campbell preached his farewell sermon September 30, 1900, after serving the congregation splendidly for more than twenty years. During his ministry he was a member of the Board of Trustees of Wooster College and the Normal Industrial department of Wilberforce University; chairman of the Board of Home Missions of the Lima Presbytery, and a member of the State Board of Missions. In 1892 he had conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity by Ohio University at Athens.

“The Sunday School program had grown steadily throughout this era from a small initial group. Unusual interest was manifested in Sunday School activities and considerable class rivalry was shown over attendance. During my childhood when my father was superintendent, I recall his personally directing the younger children for the many programs in which they participated. In 1925 the Primary department was organized as it is today with its quarters in the new addition provided by joining the manse to the church. Mrs. Austin Philpott served as superintendent of the Primary department for many years, being succeeded by Mrs. C.B. Moore.

“Among the superintendents who have served the Sunday School were David G. Kemp, Henry Neff, E.E. Edge, George Rothrock, R.E. Dunlap, Thomas J. Smull, Lester A. Clark and Austin Philpott, our present efficient superintendent. Some teachers who gave of their time and effort for the Men’s Bible Class were O.H. McAdams, George Rothrock, M.L. Snyder (former editor of the Ada Herald and father of Barton Snyder of our present congregation), Thomas J. Smull, E.E. Long, Rev. E.G. Morris, Dean Claude Pettit and at this time, Rev. Walter Condon.

“I have been asked to mention the service of my mother, Laura J. Kemp, as teacher of a class of boys (as she called them) for many years. And the boys who are middle-aged men today will testify that no sacrifice was too great for her to make for them in Sunday School or out. Other women doing outstanding service were Edith Bowers, Carrie Wilson, Mrs. Margaret Dickson, Anna Ream, Mrs. D.O. Betz and Mrs. O.H. McAdams. It is impossible to list others who served faithfully over a period of years and contributed to the growth of the Sunday School.”

Rev. James F. Elder succeeded Rev. Campbell, his ministry covering a period of six years from February 3, 1901, to February, 1907. Rev. Elder was an important factor in the growth of the church. During this time there were many young men in the university studying for the ministry who were members of his congregation. The latter included Rev. Emil Bauman who became minister at the Forest Avenue Presbyterian Church in Dayton, Rev. Jacob Dapp, who has served as secretary of the Board of Missions for the State of Colorado located in Denver, Rev. Abram Alyea, Rev. William Carruthers, who received the degree of Doctor of Divinity at Ohio Northern University, and Rev. Rudolph Meier, who held a pastorate in New Jersey.

Rev. O.B. Pershing served as pastor for three years, from 1907 to 1910, and Rev. C.B. Beckes from 1910 until February, 1914. Rev. Beckes brought a quiet dignity to the pulpit and a broad understanding of the spiritual needs of his congregation during a period when the country was embroiled in events leading up to the first World War. In 1914 Rev. J.L. Bardelmeier was received as pastor, remaining in that position until late in 1917. He conducted special Sunday evening services, which were extremely well attended, with not only the auditorium (i.e., the sanctuary) but the large Sunday School room (i.e., the current Fellowship Hall) being filled as well.

Continuing her history report, Cora Kemp Smull noted: “Rev. John W. Slack filled the pulpit from 1918 until 1924. He was responsible for recognition given to members of the Ada Presbyterian Church who were in the service during World War I, through the placing of a permanent honor roll in the church auditorium. Rev. Slack stressed patriotic services during this period. He was granted the degree of Doctor of Divinity by Ohio Northern University at the conclusion of his Ada pastorate. At this time Presbyterian hymnals were presented to the church by Mr. and Mrs. P.W. Turner. In the early part of this year the Westminster Sunday School class presented new hymnals to the church.

“Rev. C.R. Thomas became pastor in 1924. He was particularly successful in organizing young people’s groups and interesting them in the church. During his ministry a missionary group of children known as the Light Bearers was organized. They were directed for several years by Mrs. T.J. Smull, and in more recent years by Mrs. C.B. Moore. Rev. Thomas introduced the innovation of Sunday evening lectures illustrated with moving pictures.

“The Ladies’ Aid Society was organized at the same time as the Women’s Missionary Society, some time after Rev. Campbell began his ministry. Mrs. Christian Young was president of the organization during this period. Succeeding presidents include Mrs. D.C. Mohler, Mrs. W. Montgomery, Mrs. Frank Pugh, Mrs. S.S. Clayton, Miss Ola Rees, Mrs. John Stemple, Mrs. Loren McElroy, Mrs. John Baransy, Mrs. George Sanderson, Mrs. Charles Jameson, Mrs. J.L. Runser and Mrs. Forrest Black.

“In 1927 Rev. E.G. Morris assumed the pastorate. He was an extremely popular teacher of the Men’s Bible Class in addition to his ministerial duties. He instigated sending delegates from the church to the Presbyterian Summer Conference for Young People at Wooster. While Rev. Morris was minister a noteworthy service in the history of the church centered about the

burning of the mortgage incurred by the building program of a few years previous. Rev. Morris served until 1930.”

Rev. Walter A. Condon began his pastorate in January, 1931 and faithfully and capably served for ten years. He made the re-organized Young People’s Society his particular charge and encouraged the custom of semi-annual congregational dinners to promote closer cooperation and fellowship among the church members. Rev. Condon’s messages to the congregation had practical application to everyday living and problems and showed a comprehensive understanding of the church’s place in the chaotic conditions of the time. He will long be remembered for his strong Christian thoughtfulness in making pastoral calls. He was granted the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity by Cedarville College and moved on to become Clerk of the Lima Presbytery. Records of the Presbyterian General Assembly show that the Ada church had the largest number of new members of any church group in the Lima Presbytery during the mid-1930s.(47)

The officers of any church play a tremendous role in the life of the church, their roles often played out behind the scenes. Treasurers of the Ada church have been Mrs. L.W. Campbell, N.W. Tobias, J.S. McKee and the late Charles B. Moore during the greater portion of church history. Mrs. Moore held this office for twenty years. Among those who have served as Clerk of Session are William Lantz, Charles Wilson, Charles Jameson and Austin Philpott.

The trustees and elders are the financial and religious governing bodies of the church. Many members have served in this capacity since the church was established. The present Board of Elders (i.e., Session) consists of Arden Searson, Charles Wilson, William Floyd, Lester Clark, Austin Philpott, T.J. Smull, A.R. Webb, J.E. Gilmore and Lawrence Matson. Members of the Board of Trustees are Dr. Charles Breck, J.A. Jones, Arthur Brewer, Barton Snyder, Harry

Sousley, J.L. Runser, Harry Banks and John Lantz. The late Charles Moore served faithfully as trustee over a period of years.

“Many interesting and oftentimes (*sic*) vital events occur in the life of any institution over a period of one hundred years. We have deemed it inadvisable to cite events ‘handed down’ but not supported by the record. Some of the earlier records of the church have unfortunately been mislaid or lost.”

Additional Thoughts

Resolutions that show Session members’ compassion. At a meeting of Session on June 9, 1901, a committee was appointed to draft resolutions of respect for two aged and deceased members of the church. The resolutions were adopted for Aaron Allen who had been an elder of the Presbyterian church of McComb for 35 years and Alexander Sanderson who had been a member of the Session of the Ada church for 45 years.²²

“Whereas it has pleased God to call Fathers Allen and Sanderson from our midst here to the enjoyment of the blessed rest of God’s people, therefore:

“First. Resolved that while we as a session mourn our loss we bow in humble submission to the will of God;

“Second. We testify to their sterling character, their faithfulness in attendance upon the service of God’s house to their fidelity and diligence in the service of Jesus Christ;

“Third. We recognize in their sudden death the uncertainty of life and the necessity of being ready also;

“Fourth. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to the members of the bereaved families and direct them to the God of all comfort and consolation; and that a copy of these resolutions be spread upon the minutes of the Session and that a copy be sent to each of the families.”

Session minutes of June 13, 1937 reveal that at a special meeting of the Joint Board the following resolution was adopted²³:

“As officers of this church we desire to express our sincere sorrow over the death of one of our number, elder L.G. Slesman.

“He was a brother beloved by all, faithful in the discharge of his duties as an officer of this congregation, and we will miss his genial presence, cordial fellowship and faithful service.

“We bow in humble submission to the will of God in calling our brother to a higher field of service in the life to come, and even though we sorrow over his departure we are glad to know that his sufferings are at an end, and that he has entered into a fuller, better life.

“We extend our deepest sympathy to all his dear ones, and would urge them to remember that the promises of God are rich indeed to the widow and the fatherless, and our prayer is, that the great Father in heaven may be their stay and support in this sad time when the father of the family has been called from life.”

Other Session actions noted. Requests for letters of dismissal of members for the purpose of transferring membership to another church were not handed out randomly. Two entries in the Session minutes during the spring of 1903 reflect the church’s attitude. Consider the following:

On May 11, 1903, “The matter of granting a letter of dismissal to Edward McKay of Amnity was taken up and discussed and as he had been absent from the church and had failed for a period of ten years to support the church the session refused to grant him a letter and instructed our moderator to write him to that effect and to have him get some information as to his spiritual condition from the minister of his town.”²⁴

Two additional notations in Session minutes dated March 28, 1928 concern letters of dismissal (same as letters of “dismissal” as noted above). Another statement from Session minutes of April 8, 1928 follows. These notations are of interest to all of us today:

“The application of Clyde P. Cook for letters of dismissal to (no church named) for himself, Mrs. Elaine Cook, Ruth Cook, and Evelyn Cook, was considered, and on motion the request was denied on account of the Church law against issuing open certificates. The Clerk was instructed to communicate with, and explain to Mr. Cook, and issue the certificates whenever a Church home was named.”²⁵

“Elder Long made the statement that Mrs. Woodard had spoken to him in regard to a letter of dismissal for her daughter, Mrs. Ruth Woodard Ireland of Indianapolis Indiana. By motion, duly seconded, Mrs. Ireland’s request would be honored if presented in the proper form, and a year’s obligation paid. The Clerk stated the conditions surrounding a request made by one Jasper Smith of Shreveport La, for a letter of dismissal to the First Presbyterian Church of that city, and that there being no record of his ever having been a member of the church, he had written Mr. Smith for further information relative to the matter. The Session commended the Clerk for his action, and decided to await developments.”²⁵

“Mr. Geo McSweeney from a Baptist Church, accepted on his confession of faith, and his assertion that said Church would not issue a certificate of dismissal to a denomination which did not believe or practice baptism by immersion were presented for admittance, and after due consideration, by a motion, properly seconded, they were accepted for Church membership.”²⁶

So you want to play the organ for church? An entry in Session minutes for November 7, 1904 is interesting: “On motion and vote it was decided to employ William F. Neichernell as organist at the rate of one dollar per Sabbath. He is to play for all funerals free and to pay for his

own pumper for his own practice, and he is not to use the electric lights for practice. Mr. Neichernell being present, accepted the proposition.”²⁷

New pastor’s salary requirement met. Some church meetings are especially interesting and may even turn out to be somewhat whimsical in their topics and discussion. The following entry appears to be one of these.

A congregational meeting on August 9, 1907 concerned the possible hiring of a new pastor, Rev. O.B. Pershing, who had been present for a trial sermon on June 15, 1907. It was reported that a call had been extended to the candidate with the salary of \$1200 per year offered. Rev. Pershing countered by noting he needed \$1350 per year. Session minutes continue:

“Committee brought the matter to the congregation to decide. Mr. Reams stated that Mr. Pershing’s reason for refusing to accept the \$1200 was that he desired to be a generous giver to the church. A member said a good man was worth \$1350. Another favored paying \$1350. Another thought it practical to try to raise the money first and see what success would result. Another said we can work better with a strong man than a weak one. A strong man would secure better results. A penny man would preach penny sermons, while a \$1350 man would preach \$1350 sermons. Mrs. Mustard said if a man could be secured to build up the spiritual church the growth of the church would follow. Moved, seconded, and remarks on the motion, the voting was unanimous to pay Rev. Pershing \$1350.”²⁸

Disfavor with some members. Not everything was rosy-red and gleamed in the bright sunshine of the day. In Session minutes of June 28, 1904, the matter of some church members who allowed their shops to be kept open for the purpose of “blacking the Sabbath” was taken up and discussed at length. On motion and vote it was decided to have the matter of open business on the Sabbath day brought by the church pastor before the ministerial association, a meeting of

Lunch

Little Pigs in Blanket (pg 20)

Take as many large oysters as are needed, wash and dry them thoroughly – have some fat bacon cut in very thin strips – cover each oyster with bacon and pin with tooth picks. Broil or roast until bacon is crisp and brown. Do not remove tooth picks. Serve hot. (Mrs. J Searson)

Chicken and Celery Sandwiches (pg 135)

1 C chicken 4 T mayonnaise
1 C celery

Put chicken through chopper, add celery, cut fine, and mayonnaise. Butter white bread and spread with chicken mixture. (Mrs. L.A. McElroy)

Dinner

Oyster Patties (pg 14)

Put 1 qt oysters into a sauce pan with liquor enough to cover. Let come to a boil, skim well, stir 2 T butter, a little pepper and salt. Line some patty pans with puff paste, fill with oysters, cover with paste and bake 20 minutes in hot oven. The upper crust may be omitted if desired. (Mrs. F. Pugh)

Peanut Loaf (pg 18)

1 C peanuts ground 1 C milk
1 C bread crumbs 1 egg
1 C rice after cooked salt and butter

Cook 1 hr in double broiler or ½ hr in casserole in oven. (Mrs. A. Philpott)

Lemon Cookies (pg 65)

1 C granulated sugar 3 cents worth of baking ammonia
1 C sweet milk 5 cents worth of lemon oil
1 C lard pinch of salt
2 eggs

Dissolve ammonia in part of milk. (Mrs. James Carey)

Period Two, 1941 – 1966³¹

A brief history of individuals and events in the life of the church during the period 1941-1966 was initiated by first reviewing the celebration of the centennial anniversary observed back in October, 1941. The author of this report is unknown. While the written report has been preserved in church files, nowhere is the author's identity disclosed.

The author began by offering a quick summary of the church's centennial celebration in 1941 and states: "The first of several special services was conducted by the pastor, the Rev. Walter A. Condon, with the congregation and guests joining in the World-Wide Communion service. The Minutes of the Session state that new members were admitted, and related to church history the antecedents of two babies for whom the rites of baptism were performed. The children were Jane Ann Clark, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Glen Clark, the granddaughter of Elder A.L. Clark, the great-granddaughter of Rev. Thomas Clark, the original Presbyterian society's first pastor; and Diane Paget Parkhill, granddaughter of Elder Thomas J. Smull, great-granddaughter of Elder David G. Kemp. Diane's father later served as a deacon, trustee, and elder in turn.

"An historical program was presented by the women of the church October ninth under the leadership of Mrs. D.O. Betz. Mrs. T.J. Smull gave the church history, and Mrs. Clara Louise Smith, a synodical worker from Martin's Ferry, the address. Members of other missionary societies were present as guests.

"Rev. C.W. Muir of Findlay extended greetings from the Presbytery at a congregational dinner October tenth. Letters from former pastors and members were read by the pastor. Brief talks were given by J.S. McKee of New Castle, Pennsylvania; Attorney Fase of Akron; Attorney J.P. Taggart of Cleveland; Mr. and Mrs. P. Reed Marshall and Mr. and Mrs. Rice of Lima; Mrs. Carl Bauman, Mrs. Henry Neff, and Miss Ola Reese of Ada.

"Former members and guests joined the congregation for the Homecoming Service conducted by the pastor Sunday morning, October twelfth. His topic was 'Our Debt to the Past; Our Heritage to the Future.' The Rev Homer G. McMillen of Kenton, Moderator of the Synod of Ohio, was the speaker at the concluding union service of the Churches of Ada that evening.

“The Rev. Joseph Blackburn succeeded the Rev. Walter Condon as pastor in March, 1942. The church budget was increased to provide higher staff salaries and permit conversion of the Sunday School annex to its former use as a manse. The remodeling project was completed shortly after the Rev. Raymond M. Touvell accepted a call to the Ada and Dola pastorates. Pastors from the Presbyterian churches of Lima, Van Wert and Findlay participated in the installation service on October 8, 1944.

“At this time members of the Session were: Austin Philpott, A.R. Webb, T.J. Smull, C.R. Wilson, Arden Searson, D.C. Mohler, E.C. Heaps, C.W. Pettit, George Sanderson and D.O. Betz. The Board of Trustees consisted of B.F. Snyder, J.A. Jones, C.W. Breck, J.L. Runser, H.O. Sousley, J.A. Lantz and T.G. Tallman. Members of the Board of Deacons included Thomas Webb, Robert Shanks, Brown Pettit, William Tallman, Robert Elliott, Howard Elliott, A. Augsberger, Bernard Epley, Hale Messenger, Otis Anspach, John Brewer and Walter Sousley. Miss Edna Matson was the organist and Mrs. Charles Moore served as church treasurer. Many of these individuals and numerous others, who preceded or followed them as church officers, have devoted many years in service to the Presbyterian Church.

“During the pastorate of Rev. E. DeVer Walker from 1948 to 1952 the chancel was dedicated and, for the first time in the history of the Ada Presbyterian Church, women were elected to the position of elder. Mrs. Rose Elliott and Mrs. Viola Philpott were the first to be so honored.” Women have continued to serve as elders to the present time, with session membership always including a balance of individuals of both genders.

“In 1953, Rev. Robert J. Butz accepted a call to serve the Ada and Dola congregations after the Ada congregation considered and rejected a suggestion for becoming a one-church field. Members of the Church donated their services to remodel the church basement in order to

provide attractive quarters for young people's organizations and additional space for Sunday School classrooms. In December, 1956 a new plan for the election of church officers was submitted by Rev. Butz, and subsequently adopted. This was known as the rotation system whereby one-third of the members of any official board of the church would retire each year.

“The Rev. James A. Anderson served as pastor from June, 1957 until October, 1961. Mrs. Jay P. Taggart made possible by generous gifts the refurnishing of the manse kitchen and extensive renovation of the exterior of the church building. The latter acquired a “new look” as the result of sandblasting and repointing the brick. A landscaping project was initiated for improvement of the church grounds. The rotation rule was extended to all church boards, a budget committee was established, a Knox Club was organized for college students, and a new manse was purchased. Benevolence giving was markedly increased to an all-time high in 1960.

“The church has continued to go forward under the leadership of the Rev. Aubrey R. Hancock who was installed into the pastoral charge of the Ada and Dola churches, April 8, 1962. The following ministers participated in his installation: Rev. Dr. Wood Duff, Lima, who acted as interim-moderator during the vacancy; Dr. John Halsey of Napoleon; Rev. Ernest Bigelow and Rev. R. J. Miller, both of Findlay.

“During Rev. Hancock's pastorate many improvements were made to the church property as well as gifts received. The upstairs of the old manse was redecorated and converted into administrative offices including a pastor's office and library, a supply room where all church and Sunday School equipment is kept, and a room designated for the Knox Club but also used by the Junior Highs for their Sunday School class. Among the many gifts received were – for the pastor's study: a modern desk and chair, a typist desk and comfortable swivel chair, and fluorescent lights; for the church office: a machine for folding bulletins, an addressing machine,

a small filing cabinet, and an adding machine; for the educational program of the church: a film-strip projector and a 16-mm Kodak movie projector, a tape recorder and dictionaries for the church library; for the sanctuary: candelabrum for the chancel, flower vases, offering plates, and a sound system.

“Special mention should also be made of the refinishing of the pews and floor in the sanctuary by the combined efforts of the congregation, and a most generous gift of new cushions for the pews and the refinishing of all the church doors by Mrs. Jay P. Taggart. Credit should also be given to the United Presbyterian Women’s Organization and the Westminster Class whose joint efforts were responsible for the new manse on North Main Street being redecorated and a powder room being installed on its first floor. These ladies also made improvements to the church annex. The United Presbyterian Women’s Organization tastefully refurnished the church parlor as its 125th anniversary project.

“The Board of Trustees, having received a most generous legacy from the estate of Mr. and Mrs. Homer L. Sutherin, undertook a program of extensive repair, remodeling, and redecorating sections of the church property where such was needed. The front entrance to the church was improved by the laying of a new floor in the vestibule and installation of a suspended ceiling and new light fixture. The assembly room (i.e., current Fellowship Hall) of the Sunday School is in process of remodeling and redecorating. ... To date, a new suspended ceiling and fluorescent lights have been installed, a powder room has been added by the closing of the two large sliding doors adjacent to the church kitchen, and when painting is completed, new carpeting will be installed throughout the assembly room and all adjoining rooms and hallway leading to the church parlor and the pastor’s study. For these and many other improvements to

the physical property of the church we give thanks unto God for the generosity of members and friends of the Ada Presbyterian Church.

“At this time members of Session are Thomas Martin, clerk of session, Francis W. Younkman, Joseph Banks Sr., R.B. Sunderman, Mrs. Alice-Jo Fulks, Mrs. Ethel Stauffer, Mrs. Betty Dunbar, Mrs. Rosie Hinds and Louis Gibb. The Board of Trustees consists of Walter Sausley, Chairman, Miss Lucille Russell, Secretary, Russell Stauffer, Arden H. Searson, Larry Hubbell and Robert St. John. Members of the Board of Deacons are Jay Epley, Joe Davis, Joseph Banks Jr, Don Dunbar Jr, Brad Hindall, Robert McNaughton, Vigil Rubeck, John Hancock, Roy Rodabaugh and Charles Norton.”

Additional Thoughts

The church takes care of its pastors and their families. As noted earlier, the church’s property was expanded when in 1961 it purchased an off-site residence for use by its pastors and their families. This was initiated the previous year with action by Session to convert the existing manse area of the church building to use for church-school programs.³² There was a shortage of space for Sunday school use at present and it was felt this shortage would become even more acute in the future due to expectation that the church would soon face enhanced growth. The notion was offered and passed that the cost was not to exceed \$20,000 including the lot. When it was later announced that a residence had been purchased, it was suggested that a contribution of \$1.00 per week per giving unit would liquidate the debt in four years and that cash gifts in addition to the weekly gifts would hold interest charges to a minimum.³³

Period Three: 1967 – 1991³⁴

Miriam Smull Parkhill was the author of this period’s history report (1967-1991). The report prepared for this period and delivered during the church’s sesquicentennial celebration in

1991 consisted in large part of a review of early church history dealing with its founding in 1841 and including information relevant to the physical plant through the years. This information is contained in Periods One and Two within this chapter. Information relevant to individuals and their contributions to the church during this Third Period consisted of two paragraphs.

Information relative to additional individuals during this period that was not part of Mrs. Parkhill's history was gleaned from Session Minutes and Annual Congregational Reports covering this period and continues subsequently.

“The present Youth Club was organized September 27, 1984, adult and junior bell choirs were formed in 1985, and home meetings of congregational groups were implemented in 1989. The church has maintained an active mission program. Significant improvements have been made to the manse and the church building, including the recent wheelchair ramp and landscaping. The women's organization completed a unique banner, involving the entire church membership, to mark the observance on October 6-13, 1991 of the church's sesquicentennial year and the centennial year of the present building.

“Hale Messenger, who joined the church October, 1925, has the longest, continuous membership of anyone in the congregation. He has served as deacon, trustee, elder and treasurer. He has also been a member of the Board of Maumee Valley Presbytery.”

Additional Thoughts

A breath of fresh air. Following Rev. Hancock's retirement in 1974, the door was opened to welcome a new breed of ministers to serve the Ada Presbyterian Church. This “new breed” represented young pastors who recently completed their formal pastoral studies and were joining the Ada church as their first charge. These pastors (see Appendix 4) included Rev. Doyll Andrews who served from 1975-1980, Rev. Jim Kerr, who served from 1981-1990, Rev. C.

Scott Pyle, serving from 1991-1995, and Rev. Patrick Allen, who arrived in 1997 and remains to the present.

The original thought amongst members of each Pastor Nominating Committee was that in addition to trying to match special qualities that each one possessed with needs the church sought to address, these younger pastors fit in nicely with the church's budget. With time however, it became clear that there was another very important reason why these particular men were invited to serve this church. Each brought a host of new ideas and energy that the Ada church needed to experience starting at once. Any attitude from the congregation suggesting that the church should search for more experienced (a kind way of saying "older" or "more mature") pastors to maintain the personal wishes of some of its members was quickly resolved. It was God's providence that brought each pastor to us, and each one taught us something that God intended for us to know, or each pastor learned some special lesson from us, a lesson that God knew we possessed and wanted them to understand. The formality of traditional Christian worship within classical Presbyterian churches in general up until the mid-1970s needed to be updated to the present time. The old description of Presbyterians being the "frozen chosen" must be laid to rest immediately. That was exactly what occurred. And as a secondary benefit, each of these pastors and their wives either started their families or added to them during their period of service, which in each case, was a special blessing to our membership.

One of the issues that Rev. Andrews addressed early on was to grant greater authority to Session. His comments were along the lines of "Session rules, so be it!" In other words, until this time, Session agendas and discussions were largely established and controlled by the moderator (minister). Of course, the system worked satisfactorily for the time. But Rev. Andrews delegated

greater authority, in the true spirit of Presbyterianism, to Session. That spirit of Session's Ruling Elders continues through today.

One amusing incident associated with Rev. Andrews involved the summer baseball games that many church members participated in and thoroughly enjoyed. The Presbyterian team was pretty good, all factors (e.g., players' ages, general physical condition, etc.) considered. A few non-Presbyterian citizens of Ada expressed a desire to play on this church's team. Rev. Andrews nixed this proposal by enforcing the church's unwritten rule that in order to play on the team, attendance at the church's worship services was required. The effect this rule may have had on determining Ada's baseball champions will never be known!

A highlight of Rev. Kerr's service was his establishment of a Youth Club. Rev. Andrews addressed this earlier but the program did not materialize.³⁵ At Rev. Kerr's suggestion, letters were sent out to all parents of children eligible to attend. Eligibility included children from third to eighth grade. At a cost of \$20 for the first child and \$15 for each additional child within a family,³⁶ eleven members were enrolled in the first class.³⁷ The group met on Thursdays, 4:00-6:30 and enjoyed Bible study, singing, recreation and a cooked meal. Today, thirty-five years later, adults who were active in the club while still a youth continue to rave about their positive experiences of years gone by. The club resembled today's Logos program (see Chapter 5) except parents were responsible for preparing the supper meal.

Rev. Kerr worked closely with the church youth in many other ways and he remained highly popular with them throughout his period of service. One program was to escort young people to a Pennsylvania Christian camp in the summer. Brian Madison still talks about his positive experiences gained from those trips.

As a side issue, Rev. Kerr planted a row of oak trees on the church manse property. Today, three decades later, these trees have matured quite well. The next time you drive past the former manse check them out – they are located on the north side of the property, near the fence. Jim’s green thumb plus God’s close attention to detail in preserving his green Earth have resulted in these majestic trees adding much to the beauty of the neighborhood.

Rev. Scott Pyle was married to Sheryl, also a pastor. While she did not lead Sunday worship services, Sheryl remained active in other church programs.

A highlight of Rev. Pyle’s service was the extent of his time and talents given to formation of covenant groups, Session education and a new members’ forum. He also led a monthly men’s breakfast meeting that attracted a dozen or so men that met in members’ homes or his own beginning at 6:30 a.m. Rev. Pyle was a strong proponent of calling others forward to lead and facilitate such activities as Youth Club, the youth choir, vacation Bible school, and the Junior and Senior High Fellowships.

In his year-end report for 1993, Rev. Pyle shared a situation with the congregation he saw arising with the Youth Club. He noticed there were only a few youngsters in grades 4-6. He saw various conflicts developing concerning school functions and sports activities, so he asked the congregation to consider an “All Church Night” event where children of all age groups would come together for one mid-week period for education and celebration. Many seemed very positive, but tangible support seemed minimal. But the good news was, according to Rev. Pyle, the Spirit moved. As he backed off, others in the congregation began to understand the issues and stepped up to the plate to serve. Lay leaders indeed met their calling into service.³⁸

Rev. Pyle resigned his position as of January 14, 1996 to assist in planting a new church in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania area. Along with Sheryl, the new church was formed and is reported to be a successful endeavor.

The Ada Ministerial Association. Throughout this Period the church's ministers were active members of the Ada Ministerial Association (AMA). This group, composed of leaders of churches in and around Ada, worked closely with each other to promote the work of Christ and improve the spiritual lives of individuals in the region.

For example, each January its member churches sponsored a pulpit exchange in which ministers reciprocated with another pastor in leading the church's worship service. This helped church members learn about the other religious leaders in the vicinity and the causes they endorsed. The Association sponsored community Lenten lunches with various ministers delivering a short message. Different churches hosted the meetings each year.

Board of Deacons. The church's deacons were kept busy throughout the Period. Deacons sponsored monthly events that were open to all church members. As examples, a bowling night was sponsored where members gathered at a bowling alley to learn who was the champion bowler (and who could eat the most pizza!). Another was a movie night when young people, including persons of older age who still felt young at heart, would join together to watch a quality movie while they gorged themselves on popcorn, candy and soda pop. The movie was always one that delivered a strong Christian message.

At Christmastime members enjoyed caroling to people who needed a boost in their spirits. These included persons with an illness or other affliction that kept them homebound, or others who, for whatever reason, it was believed he or she would enjoy the merriment of Christmas delivered in person by a group of joy-filled Christians. Caroling continues each

Christmas through today, with adjournment together afterwards to enjoy food and fellowship. Of late, members Jake and June Zimmerman have hosted the event.

Deacons also gathered church members and friends together on Super Bowl Sundays to watch the game together and eat their fill of homemade soup and other delectables. Question: Is it really sinful for Presbyterians to bet with each other on anticipated outcomes of favorite teams?

Presbyterian ministers have traditionally worked closely with ONU students and welcomed them into the church family for worship and caring. The deacons continue to invite these young people in for a luncheon treat following worship service early each September. Church members are always dispersed among the students to make them feel comfortable and at home.

The church also provides “goodie bags” to all students in worship prior to ONU’s final examination weeks. These bags contain a variety of candy, cookies and crackers along with other edibles such as fresh fruit and chips.

The Presbyterian Women’s Guild is founded. One of the most faithful groups within the church that stands strongly on its principles is the Presbyterian Women’s Guild. This group was formed following disassociation from its parent group, the United Presbyterian Women’s Association (UPWA), an auxiliary of the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA). Here’s how it all came about.

The UPWA was a community of women that witnessed to the promise of God’s Kingdom by supporting church mission and working for peace and justice. It was a popular group among ladies of the Ada church who, for many years, generously supported UPWA’s mission. Eventually the local group experienced difficulty in finding new members, filling a slate

of officers, and meeting financial responsibility of the parent group. This led to a report to Session in 1979 of its wish to disaffiliate its membership with the national organization.³⁹ Instead of the group abandoning its work for God's glory, according to the group's spokespersons, Ernestine Wiedemann, Jane Klingenberger and Lydia Cooley, the women wished to continue as a body within the local church with its duties of providing altar flowers and roses for new babies, purchasing memorial books for recently deceased members, sending cards and notes to shut-ins and persons in ill health, supporting church improvements and organizing and serving dinners following funeral services. Session approved the women's suggestion. Thus was born the Presbyterian Women's Guild.

It would be impossible to catalogue all events the Women's Guild has undertaken and causes the group has supported financially because there have been many. These include its support of both church improvement projects and mission each by approximately fifty percent of its expenditures. Sitting in on several of the group's monthly meetings over the past couple years, I happily witnessed the Guild's commitment to assist another church member with travel expenses to undertake a mission trip, give to community-based charities including Samaritan House in Lima and the Lima Rescue Mission, and to other charities. The group also committed funds to help pay for a new kitchen floor. Previously, the group replaced all pew cushions and paid for new coverings for parlor furniture. The Women's Guild currently helps support the Fetrow family, church members serving as missionaries in Mexico.

The women sponsor the church's annual Christmas auction that traditionally brings in revenue near or exceeding \$1000. The group has raised money by sponsoring a chicken Bar-B-Q and by featuring a bake sale at Ada's Harvest & Herb Festival. Through the years the Women's Guild has published and sold cookbooks containing members' favorite recipes. Family members

and friends of deceased individuals, while not required to do so, give generously to the Guild following funeral dinners it provides. Phyllis Gossel currently serves as Guild president and Marcia Siebesma as secretary.

Ada-Dola yoke dissolved. An issue was brought before the Ada congregation in February, 1968 regarding whether the Ada-Dola yoke that existed since 1915 should be retained or dissolved.⁴⁰ This wasn't the first time such action was discussed as noted previously. In 1953 a congregational vote defeated a motion to dissolve the yoke. No reason was recorded why the issue was brought before the congregation.⁴¹

The reason for discussion in 1968 was a perceived difficulty for a two-charge church to attract high-quality pastors. This perception was in error, of course, because the church has never experienced a shortage of well qualified pastors. It was pointed out in the 1968 meeting that no other Ada church was part of a multiple-charge parish. A secondary reason was based on economics in that the Ada church owned the manse and the Dola congregation had neither contributed to its purchase nor assisted with its upkeep. There is no mention throughout the Ada church's records that the Dola congregation had ever been asked to help. There was an Ada-Dola Council that reported directly to Session. Again, there is no mention on record that the Council had any information regarding the issue.

A month later Session members met with a representative from presbytery who expressed an opinion that the questioning was especially significant since the church at Forest was presently without a pastor so there existed the possibility of a yoke agreement between the Forest and Dola churches. Ada's Session members were advised to notify the Dola Session immediately concerning discussion underway with the congregation of the Ada church. The Dola Session

clerk was contacted and effort made for representatives of both churches to meet. A time satisfactory to everyone concerned could not be agreed upon and so a meeting was not held.⁴²

Later, a field administrator from Synod met with Session members regarding the dissolution question.⁴³ At that time it was noted that the Ada church actually received ninety to ninety-five percent of the pastor's time, while only paying seventy-seven percent of the pastor's salary with Dola responsible for the additional twenty-three percent. The representative then asked what the church would do with an additional ten percent of the pastor's time? The response was that the pastor would be expected to be present to teach an adult Sunday School class prior to the regular morning worship service, as well as devote more time to outreach efforts with ONU students.

Nothing of significance was decided concerning the yoked churches for the next decade and the issue seemed to have been largely forgotten – at least for the time. On November 4, 1980, discussion resumed concerning whether the yoke should be dissolved.⁴⁴ Rev. Andrews had resigned as pastor and the church was searching for his replacement. A qualified candidate was identified and about to be invited in for further discussion and delivery of the customary trial sermon.

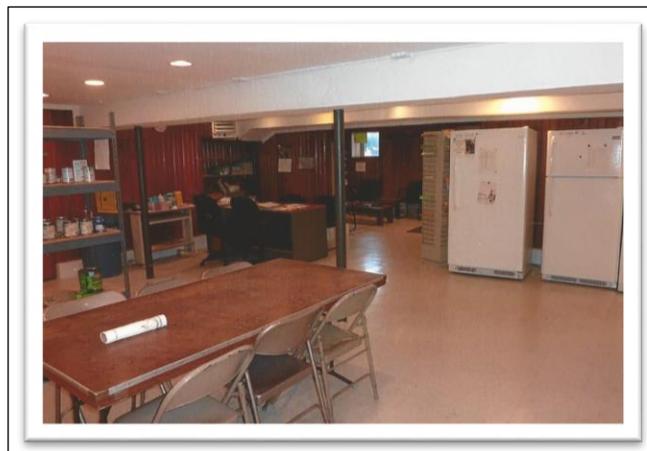
Meanwhile on January 25, 1981, Session members agreed that it was the earnest desire of the congregation of the Ada Presbyterian Church to dissolve the yoke. The die was thus cast and a congregational vote was called for. At a meeting of the congregation, out of fifty-nine members voting, all but seven were in favor of dissolving the yoke to become a single-charge church with its very own pastor.^{45,46} The church did not wish to impose undue hardship on the Dola church, and agreed there was no hard feelings between the two groups. Simply, the Ada church believed it would be extremely advantageous in the long run for it to become a single-charge church for

the reasons stated above.⁴⁷ Of primary note was the church's argument that the pastor should be present Sunday mornings during Sunday School sessions to guide the teaching.⁴⁶ It should be pointed out that the statement concerning no animosity existing between the two congregations was a feeling originating at the Ada church level. Thirty-five years later, there still remain some sour feelings amongst a few Dola church members, that the Ada church had indeed abandoned it earlier.

What about the pastor who was about to be invited to come to the church for an interview? Expecting and supporting the yoked congregation when he first applied for the position, the pastor backed out of further discussion with grace when he was told the yoke had been dissolved. So the Ada church was forced to reopen its search process and continue looking for a replacement pastor for Rev. Andrews. Rev. James Kerr was soon identified as the new pastor of the Ada Presbyterian Church.



The Ada Food Pantry (pictured above and to the right) is located on the ground level of the church. It is staffed by volunteers from area churches, including the Ada Presbyterian Church. The Pantry provides food and personal items to needy and hungry persons living in and around Ada.





Chapter Three

A Period of Transition, 1991-2016

*For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.
(Jude 1:4,5)*

The period generally began as one of peace and tranquility amongst its members. Membership was at a comfortable level and meeting the church's budget was not of major concern. Relationships between the church and its presbytery and denomination seemed stable and positive, on the surface at least. The church's recent pastors were well-liked amongst the congregation and well respected amongst village citizens. Congregational and Session meetings during the era's early years were generally quiet and reserved. Minutes of these meetings consisted largely of routine matters such as asking for nominations for various church offices, noting committee assignments, informing the congregation that new hymnals had been ordered and flowers had been planted around the building, reminding us that a picnic and kite-fly was on schedule for an upcoming Sunday afternoon in July, and listing an occasional corny (but "always-in-good-taste") joke by clerk Tom Kier. Overall it was business as usual for the Ada Presbyterian Church.

While some members might have been beginning to feel a bit uncomfortable with denominational events they felt were encroaching upon the church's *status quo*, they didn't openly discuss their feelings. The events were largely of a nature that might be casually mentioned to a friend over coffee, but taken no further. Their discomfort was perhaps best described as the slight tingling of one's skin immediately following a sunburn, but tingling that is followed by intense misery later.

In fact, time would soon dispel any thought that the period would continue without anything of major importance happening. A significant movement was already underway that would soon affect the Ada Presbyterian Church in a major way! Looking back over the period spanning the years 1991 through 2016, this could easily be termed a "Period of Transition," with changes that would supersede any other in the church's long history.

A New Pastor for a New Day

Rev. Patrick Allen was selected by unanimous vote of the congregation to begin service in 1997. As noted above, the Period to date was one of general tranquility, except for the slight tingling sensation that was increasing in its damaging severity along the way. It's tempting to say that God sent this young, newly ordained minister to help us counter the false teaching that was arising from within the leadership of the church's denomination. The analogy seems very real as we now ponder how God sent the young minister Timothy to lead the church at Ephesus in its struggle to avoid the teaching of false doctrines (1 Timothy 1:3,4). And now in modern times the same encroaching cancer was underway around the country with our church in line to soon feel the full impact of misguided thinking. Whether or not Rev. Allen sensed the role he would soon assume in shepherding the Ada Presbyterian Church to the new heights God was preparing it for is a question even he probably could not answer during his early years here and likely still

cannot. Regardless, a major event was underway that could soon cause a dire change in the makeup of the church. It was Rev. Allen who would bring us through all this and in doing so would strengthen the faith of its members along with their commitment to work even harder to increase God's Kingdom.

The Church Ardently Defends its Beliefs

October 14, 2012 marked the most significant event in the life of the Ada Presbyterian Church during this or any previous period. That was the date the church voted to sever its allegiance from the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA) to join the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) denomination.⁴⁸ The church's movement away from biblical teaching will certainly go down in history as the day its members, out of desperation, said "We've had enough!"

So what was it that led to this drastic move? After all, being Presbyterian by choice assumes that its member churches should support their denomination, their governing body, doesn't it? To answer these questions, it will be helpful to quickly summarize what was happening within the PCUSA denomination.

The events. It is hard to pinpoint the precise date that the denomination began to backslide on its basic tenets. Our denomination was making decisions and promoting causes we believed compromised God's Word. A number of disturbing trends reflecting theological liberalism within the national denomination occurred over the decades beginning shortly after its founding, and picked up speed as time progressed. The basic issue was spiritual decline as the agenda of humanistic (some might say, satanic!) forces took over the denomination.⁴⁹ The trends suggested moral confusion from standards elaborated in Scripture and the denomination's *Book of Confessions*. For example, there was a move first to "overlook," then eventually to eliminate,

statements defining fidelity and chastity from the *Book of Order*. This action set the stage for authorizing individual church Sessions to ordain as elders, people who engaged in non-marital sexual activity. A number of Presbyterian churches across the country did just that!

Then there was the crusade to no longer affirm Jesus Christ alone as being the way to salvation. Increasing numbers of delegates at General Assembly conventions over the years simply refused to acknowledge Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life. Tied in with this was a strong sense that biblical Scripture, in fact, was not as holy as it once was declared to be. There also were other issues that pointed more and more to the increasingly liberal thinking of the PCUSA, but these were the top three that got the most press and began to fuel one of the most dynamic movements in the history of the Presbyterian church nationwide: The Confessing Church Movement.

The Confessing Church Movement. It was around the onset of the twenty-first century when faithful church leaders and congregations from across the nation began to catch a wave of resistance to what the PCUSA was promoting. This led to one church after another to reaffirm three essential doctrines: That Jesus Christ alone is Lord of all and the **only** way of salvation; that holy Scripture is the Triune God's revealed Word, the church's only infallible rule of faith and life; and that God's people are called to holiness in all aspects of life, including honoring the sanctity of marriage between a man and a woman, the only relationship within which sexual activity is appropriate. These churches were identified as Confessing Churches within the PCUSA. To be identified as a Confessing Church and identified on a Web site about the Confessing Church Movement within the PCUSA required a resolution passed by Session and communicated to the church's presbytery.⁴⁹

Ada Session members discussed the issue in August, 2001,⁵⁰ and continued in-depth discussion with the congregation throughout the remaining year. On January 26, 2002, Session resolved to⁵¹:

- (1) “Identify itself with the Confessing Church Movement in the Presbyterian Church (USA) and,
- (2) Reaffirm those historic and orthodox teachings that are most under attack in our present day. We specifically confess that Jesus Christ is the only Savior. Scripture is true in all it affirms and is the church’s sole authority, and human sexuality is reserved for marriage between man and woman.”

Session then recommended that a letter of explanation be sent immediately to the congregation and that a special meeting be held following worship on February 17 for further discussion and clarification.

The congregation was strongly interested in continuing the church’s involvement in the Confessing Church Movement. This was noted, and the Ada Presbyterian Church became one of more than 1300 churches across the land that were thusly listed.⁵² Throughout the period, only two members left the Ada church, stating that their personal views remained aligned with those of the PCUSA, but our stand helped attract newcomers who may have had reservations about the PCUSA.

It is one thing to speak out on issues deemed abrasive to Christians (e.g., describing the events that led to this church’s joining the Confessing Church Movement). But words alone without action is of little benefit (James 2:17). This church believed the issue had to be taken to the next level. Further serious thought was therefore directed toward abandoning the PCUSA and

joining another Presbyterian denomination that was determined to keep Christ central as its number-one priority.

Writing to the congregation in his Pastor's Report for 2012,⁴⁸ Rev. Allen described the overall activity best when he penned: "I still remember the Session meeting that was different from so many of our previous gatherings. In August of 2010, we met in the parlor and reflected on the recent General Assembly and its proposed re-write of the *Book of Order*.... The Session normally kept abreast of General Assembly actions, but this time the atmosphere was different – elders began expressing openly the desire to withdraw from the PCUSA. It wasn't that they wanted to leave, but that they recognized the church had left them – theologically, culturally, and biblically, our church and our denomination were in very different places.

"Over the next two years, the Session prayed and studied scripture. We explored new Presbyterian movements (the Fellowship and ECO), sending representatives to Minneapolis and Orlando [to seek additional information]. We had difficult yet honest discussions about the future of our church and the need for evangelism. Finally, the Session called for a time of discernment in late summer of 2012. Elders contacted all of our members and led small group discussions about where we felt God leading us as a church. After sensing unity at these meetings, the Session called for a special congregational meeting on October 14, 2012, in which the congregation voted unanimously to leave the PCUSA and affiliate with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) (Appendix 6).

"As your pastor, this was a challenging year. I never expected to write a letter renouncing jurisdiction of the denomination that had ordained me, yet I had come to recognize that the space for "traditional" Christian pastors within it was rapidly shrinking. At the same time, I felt the joy of seeing the elders grow in their leadership and desire to be faithful to the historic truths of the

faith despite potential hardship. Our path is made somewhat easier in that we are fellow-travelers with many other Presbyterian congregations who have taken similar steps of faith during this time. On the whole however, it remains a challenging road but one worth taking, since it will strengthen our congregation, our practice of the historic Christian faith, and our witness in the community to which God has called us to be light and salt.”

Following the unanimous congregational vote in October, 2012 to leave the PCUSA and affiliate with the EPC denomination, the church was received as a transitional member. The church then followed protocol, as would be expected of a Christocentric church, and dutifully informed the Maumee Valley Presbytery (MVP) of its decision to leave PCUSA. In response, the presbytery formed an administrative commission on January 23, 2013 to work with the Ada church. Church members responded admirably to questions posed by commission members, but would not deter from their position. After successfully completing the EPC’s elder exam in June, the church became a full member of the EPC. In order to clean up its own rolls, MVP agreed to dismiss the church in September.⁵³ The EPC recognized Rev. Allen’s ordination and after examining him on his views received him as a full member of presbytery in September, 2013.

The Lord was on our side. There was a special event that occurred about a little more than a year earlier, which in time confirmed we made the correct decision to disaffiliate from the PCUSA. The church was notified that it was named the beneficiary of a sum of money willed by a former member. The gift bore no restrictions as to its use so it was added to the general fund. At the time of dismissal from the PCUSA, presbytery officials notified Rev. Allen that in order to keep the church building as its own, a payment to MVP would be required. Even though we disagreed on the legality of their claim, it was obvious that the Lord was on our side in that the funds received a short time earlier were more than sufficient to pay MVP in full as well as cover

all legal fees the church had encountered in protecting its property. A few church members felt this payment was unfair, but agreed that the Ada church needed to move forward and further haggling with presbytery was not in keeping with what was believed to be our Lord's wishes for his church. As has been the case so many times in the past when church members have closely felt the Lord's presence, the receipt of unanticipated cash in an amount sufficient to upgrade our membership to the EPC showed us again that our Lord often works in strange, but marvelous, ways.

Evangelical Presbyterian Church denomination. The name Evangelical Presbyterian Church describes the denomination well: It is evangelical in its zeal for the gospel, as well as evangelism, missions, and living obediently as followers of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is deeply rooted in the Protestant Reformation, and embraces the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (including the Large and Shorter Catechisms) as its doctrinal standard. All other documents are subordinate to Scripture, which is the supreme and final authority on all matters on which it speaks. The EPC also embraces a list of essential beliefs. The "Essentials of Our Faith" (Appendix 7) identifies those basic issues of the Christian faith to which there can be no exceptions in personal beliefs. The denomination's mission and primary focus is to carry out our Lord Jesus' Great Commission (Matthew 28:19). Its values are Presbyterian, Reformed, Evangelical and Missional (Appendix 7). As of February, 2016, the EPC has grown to approximately 575 churches representing nearly 150,000 members and those numbers are increasing rapidly. We are proud to be included in those numbers.

We are missional. Since the EPC embraces the Great Commission, it is thus missional. To be missional means being committed to taking the gospel outside the church and engaging society with the message as our Lord has commanded.⁵⁴ Missional has a broad meaning that

cannot be captured in a simple, abbreviated definition. Missional is a term used in contrast with historical institutional churches. Church leaders as well as Christians in general have often thought of the church as an organization to which outsiders must come in order to receive the gospel and all its associated benefits. Institutional churches are sometimes perceived to exist for the members and depend on pastors and staff to evangelize the lost. The “missional church,” on the other hand, attempts to take Christ out to “the lost” and its members are personally engaged in reaching these communities with the message of Jesus Christ. With our membership now firmly established in the EPC, the Ada Presbyterian Church enthusiastically joins the ranks of Christians throughout the land who think about God and his world constantly, and arrange their total activity around their faith and put it into everyday actions.⁵⁵

Let’s face it! No, we have not yet reached our goal. The church has a way to go before it can boast of being fully missional. We have a mission statement that was drafted in 1993 during Rev. Pyle’s service (Appendix 8), which has served us well since that time. While the statement adequately described the church’s mission when it was approved, it falls short of listing it as being missional. But we are now on our way toward reaching that goal. It’s one baby step at a time, which may not seem like much, but with each step taken we come closer to where we believe our Lord wishes us to be.

Missionaries and mission work. Throughout the period, the church has supported a number of its members and friends who accepted a call as workers in short-term mission experiences. These have included Rob Agin, Jasmine Agin, Jon Allen, Nathan Allen, Noah Allen, Patrick Allen, Will Allen, Chris Brown, Kate Brown, David Fetrow, Phyllis Gossel, Tom Gossel, Aniko Ludanyi, Csilla Ludanyi, Julie Ludanyi, Claudia Madison, Dale Madison, Jill Ogle, Elita Smith, Lydia Smith, Barb Ulrey, Neisha Ulrey, Ryan Ulrey, Jake Zimmerman and

many more. Mission trips have included other sites in Ohio, West Virginia, Mississippi, and Romania.

The church has continued regular support of missionaries Jonathan Swift and family to minister in Lebanon and now new church planting in Dearborn, Michigan, and Allison and Tony Westrape, missionaries in Cameroon. It, as well as many church members individually, also supports David Fetrow, his wife Kelly and their four children who serve the Lord through Wycliffe Bible Translators, working in Oaxaca, Mexico. The Fetrows are members of the church and were active in its programs before their present assignment.

The Church Develops a Vision

In a sermon message to the congregation on June 12, 2016, a stand-in minister who was subbing for vacationing Rev. Allen and preaching from Acts 11:1-18, emphasized three points for worshippers to assure a church's good health and a successful program for its growth. These were (1) first, seek a vision from God, (2) then respond to God's leadership, and (3) **expect God's blessings**. He then elaborated that the Session-approved church Vision Team has been seeking God's wisdom and vision via weekly meetings over the past nine months.⁵⁶ The team believes it has caught Gods vision and shared it first with Session members and Deacons, then with the congregation.⁵⁷

Amongst the vision were a number of suggestions that the team, Session members and the congregation has taken seriously as having been given by God through his Holy Spirit (Appendix 9). The suggestions were quickly embraced and are currently in the process of being acted upon. Some suggestions are basic to the building's utility and their fulfillment will require a considerable outlay of cash. Others require additional in-depth study by various standing committees to further clarify what the Lord intends for his church. Finally, by unanimous

acclimation, all members of the congregation were believed to have accepted that God was indeed active in implementing the vision and that his never-ending blessings would be forthcoming if the church was faithful to the vision. As part of the congregation's charge, they were told that evangelism was to be a large part of the overall plan and was not to be understood or undertaken as a remote or second-hand activity; rather, evangelism was to be considered and accepted to be an active part of it and all members will need to be involved.

The Building Gets a Face-lift

Throughout its history the building was maintained in good order by upgrading and modernizing its facilities along the way to prevent costly repairs later on. Immediate needs were also tended to as they appeared. The cost of repairs and general upkeep was substantial (see Appendix 3) but well worth it considering the building's age and overall beauty it brings to the village. The cost of maintenance and repairs was covered by funds taken from its various endowment accounts as well as multiple generous gifts given along the way by active congregational members.

With the Vision Team's suggestion in early 2016 that we assure the building met the requirements for a facility that would remain useful for worshippers in today's climate and well into the future, a subcommittee undertook a study to assess its overall appearance and utility for completing the Lord's mission for it in the village. Some conclusions pertinent to the sanctuary, albeit still under study, were to upgrade the sound system, add projection capability and screens to the front wall, alter the chancel area to a plain platform devoid of the physical barriers that currently exist, and build a center to house controls for the electronic audio and visual equipment. New carpeting was suggested as a necessity to be added after other remodeling projects have been completed.

The Fellowship Hall needed fresh paint and decorations, and new floor coverings. Paramount to this was the need to maintain a neutral color palette, which appears to be more acceptable to men. This belief is well known across the land and is of major concern to all churches that, like the Ada church, are vamping up efforts to attract more men into their church families and help them feel comfortable.

As of October, 2016, work has begun on the building's revitalization and will likely continue into the next year and perhaps longer.

A Most Valuable Asset

Throughout the history of the Ada Presbyterian Church, members and friends have freely volunteered their time, talents and energy for work assignments, putting in countless hours of labor all for the glory of God. While specific requests for assistance have brought forth volunteers for many projects, other jobs have been identified by individual volunteers and the work accomplished without asking for additional workers. One group of faithful members working through the Property Committee in recent times who are known to have freely volunteered their time and skills consisted of Howard Haight, E.R. Rodebaugh, Richard Carpenter, Rob Agin, Tom Jeffrey, Jim Ulrey, Dick Fulks, Charles Norton, Dale Madison and Jim Klingenberger. Thanks to these and hundreds of other dedicated and talented Christians working hard through the years, the church building and manse were maintained at all levels. God will certainly honor all this hard work of course. Congregation members also thank these individuals, and all others before them who have contributed their time, energy and talents, for their faithful service to the Ada Presbyterian Church.

The Church Sells its Manse

A question concerning whether the church manse should be sold was raised by Rev. Allen in 2004. He pointed out that church ownership of a manse was no longer considered to be a requirement for providing for a pastor's wellbeing. Rather, the current trend across the country was for churches to encourage pastors to purchase their own homes to help them acquire equity during their period of service, with pastors receiving a housing allowance from the church.

Benefits to the Ada Presbyterian Church of not owning a manse were considered. A primary benefit was the church would no longer be financially responsible for repairs to the facility, and the church would not need to continue requesting assistance from volunteers to perform work on it. Judging from the age of the manse, keeping it in good repair could represent a significant drain on the church in the future. Moreover, it was perceived that pastors would tend to remain in service for longer periods if they were purchasing their own home. Indeed, this trend toward private ownership was in agreement with presbytery's belief.^{58,59} The suggestion was presented to the congregation which, after careful discussion, approved the suggestion.⁶⁰

The property was advertised for sale during the summer of 2004 and sold quickly for \$113,000.⁶¹ It had been proposed that the principal from the sale would be preserved with the following exception: If requested by the pastor, authorization is given to use a portion of the principal for a loan to the pastor for a down payment on a home. The loan would be repaid no later than six months after the pastoral relationship is dissolved.⁶²

Other Relevant Actions During the Period

Board of Trustees adjusted to a property committee of Session. A major change in the makeup of the governing bodies of the church was abolishment of the Board of Trustees during 2001, with trustee duties delegated to a standing committee of Session.⁶³ The major impetus for

this change was an inability to attract sufficient church members to serve as trustees. Also, the small size of the church's membership meant that normal trustee duties could be undertaken adequately by a smaller number of individuals. From that point onward, that assumption was shown to be accurate.

Pastor's sabbatical. Rev. Allen had served the church for eighteen years without significant time away from his church responsibilities aside from vacations or occasional personal days. He was permitted time away to attend continuing education, presbytery and General Assembly meetings, but these were all of a professional nature geared to the church itself.

On June 10, 2015, he brought the idea of a sabbatical to Session for its consideration,⁶⁴ and to the congregation on June 28, 2015. The people quickly approved the idea and, with sincere empathy, apologized to Rev. Allen for not thinking of this earlier. The Ada church had never had a sabbatical policy and therefore had not given it any thought. The apology was sincere because our pastor had worked ceaselessly for the church. In a one-pastor charge such as the Ada church, we quickly learned how important it is to make time available for the pastor to pursue personal interests including rest and relaxation, reflection, writing, study or other endeavors left to the pastor's discretion. By his own admission, Rev. Allen was recognizing symptoms of pastoral burnout and feeling as though his spiritual reserves were low. He was granted approval to proceed at once with his sabbatical over the remaining summer months, with his return on August 23, 2015.

The value of paid sabbatical leaves became clear when Rev. Allen returned from his time away. He was rejuvenated by the power of the Holy Spirit to resume his service that, it now seems, might not have occurred otherwise. The church now has an official sabbatical leave

policy for the future. It was approved by the congregation on December 6, 2015,⁶⁵ and is shown in Appendix 10.

Music. Music has always been an important component of worship experiences. Indeed, it was cited in numerous reports from the past, with topics including choir activities, naming choir members and music directors, and even specifying hymn titles. Oftentimes Session and congregational meetings would be preceded by hymn singing. The church generally held to the great hymns of days gone by except in children's programs including vacation Bible school when there were some pretty "wild" songs introduced, and during Sunday School opening sessions. All said, the Ada Presbyterian Church was an *Old Rugged Cross* type of congregation. But the times were rapidly changing. More and more people seemed to be shunning the classic liturgical churches with some of these individuals even calling them boring.

Beginning in 2001, Christian music that conveyed a strong contemporary twist was introduced into worship services.⁶³ A praise team was formed and accompanied this newer form of music twice each month. Part of what led to this conversion was an inability to find an organist except for short periods of time. Also, the church organ had been in use for some years and soon, with continued and constant use, would likely need repairs. Replacement parts for the electronic instrument would soon, it was estimated, no longer be available. Watching and carefully listening to adult congregants, including the older ones, revealed that they seemed to enjoy participating in the upbeat newer musical selections. It needs to be stated that the songs selected still convey a strong Christian message. Who could go wrong with musical titles including *By Faith, I Lift My Eyes Up*, or *Lord I Lift Your Name on High*. The classic hymns of the faith have not been completely eliminated from worship services, but the more modern songs have taken the lead.

More recently, contemporary forms of classic congregational responses were introduced into worship services. These included singing the confession of sin and a new version of the Gloria Patri – different words and melodies, but the same messages. Every indication is that contemporary music and modernized responses will prevail.



The Ada Presbyterian Church gets a new roof in 2002.



Chapter Four

Personal Reflections and Memories

*The memory of the righteous will be a blessing, but
the name of the wicked will rot.
(Proverbs 10:7)*

This chapter contains a collection of personal reflections and beautiful memories of the Ada Presbyterian Church submitted by a number of its active members. Although not of historical significance as such to this volume, the reflections convey a valuable picture of what this church is all about. Read the messages and ponder them, and enjoy the photos from the past. They will help us all to understand what the Lord is doing in his church. In addition to personal value for each of us today, readers in future decades will know precisely what we, their predecessors, thought about the Lord's church today. These reflections will be our gift to them.

“Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Charles Dickens once said, “Reflect upon your present blessings, of which every man has plenty; not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some.”

The above quotes resonate with me and tie in to what I want to share in this piece. As I reflect on my many blessings and how thankful I am, here is one I wish to share.

My family and I began to attend the Ada Presbyterian Church three years ago when we moved from Athens, Ohio. Moving to Ada was particularly challenging because of the village's shortage of suitable living accommodations. We were having a hard time finding a comfortable

place to live. We eventually decided to talk to our pastor at the First Presbyterian Church in Athens. Fortunately, the pastor got in touch with Tom Gossel who at the time was acting on behalf of the Ada pastor. Tom was very helpful in that he went beyond what one would expect and helped us find a great place to live. He was very kind and made us feel welcome in our new home. Tom, along with his wife Phyllis, made our moving to Ada and becoming members of the church very easy and comfortable, actions that made a big difference in our lives. I conclude with a verse from Psalm 115:14,15: "May the Lord cause you to flourish, both you and your children. May you be blessed by the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth."

Albert Akyeampong

In early September, 1968, after our honeymoon, Carol and I moved to Ada into an apartment on the SW corner of Gilbert Street and Lincoln Avenue. We started our regular attendance to both the Ada Presbyterian Church and Our Lady of Lourdes. In September or October, I transferred my membership to the Ada Presbyterian Church. Shortly after I became a member we were asked to be greeters and we accepted. Carol was at the door from the Lincoln Avenue entrance and I was at the front door. An usher was with each of us handing out the bulletins. The usher with Carol (I think his last name was Davis) commented to her something to the effect, "This is the first time we have had a catholic as a greeter here." We also attended the Adult Sunday School class, which was frequently held in the kitchen around the big "preparation table."

Chuck and Betty Conklin sort of adopted and took us under their wing as we began our life with ONU and Ada.

In 1969 we bought our first home at an estate auction, talk about a nervous stomach. Carol was working at St. Rita's Hospital that Saturday and as I was walking around our future home I saw Ann Haight, who said hello and asked if I was going to buy anything. I tried to joke about it and said I wanted to buy the house. Later I was walking through the house when another lady asked, "If you are interested in buying the house they are starting to sell it from the front porch." I ran outside and stood in the driveway bidding on the house. I bought it. The second lady who told me about the starting of the auction was Jane Klingenberger who would be our neighbor for 17 years. Jim and Jane Klingenberger and their family became our Ada family.

In 1973 our first child, Julie, was born in St. Rita's Hospital in Lima. One day of Carol and Julie's stay in the hospital, Carol received communion from a priest assigned to the hospital, as well as a visit from Rev. Hancock from the Ada Presbyterian Church. After Rev. Hancock left the room the new mother in the other bed asked Carol what church she belonged to? Carol answered her describing our situation and that we both attended both churches.

When I took a job in Adrian, Michigan in 1985, our family was leaving HOME and when we returned to ONU and Ada in 1991 we returned HOME.

For several years I worked with Howard Haight, primarily in the evenings or sometimes on a Saturday, on a number of projects around the church building. We replaced almost all of the

building's wiring and plumbing, cleaned the "basement" area under the sanctuary, removed two old boiler heating systems, converted an unused bathroom on the second floor to a utility/furnace/AC/storage room, updated the kitchen in the parlor area, closed a door and window from the back hall to the minister's office, and gutted and prepared the main kitchen with new walls, ceiling, level floor, and serving area for new cupboards and appliances. I enjoyed working with Howard and I learned a lot.

So many people in the church have been a part of our lives. If we tried to list them all we would far exceed our word limit.

Dick Carpenter

We were asked to tell about a favorite memory of Ada Presbyterian Church. That is so much harder than it sounds. When you have been amongst a congregation of people for all of your life, it is difficult to sum it up in a few words. I was baptized, confirmed, married and had my own children baptized here. This church and its people are part of who I am and they are all family!

I have so many memories here. When I was a child I absolutely loved Sunday School and Youth Club. Thursday was my favorite day of the week because of Youth Club. Jim Kerr and Debbie Klingenger (Roehle) made every Thursday a new and fun adventure. I fondly remember singing church camp songs at the beginning of each Thursday. Jim Kerr led the opening music. One particular song, *I've Been Redeemed*, had a line that said, "Oh you can't get to heaven in _____ car, cause _____ car won't go that far." We would all fill in the blank with Jim Kerr's name, but he would always fill in the blank with Dale Madison's name. For some reason I thought it was always so funny that he would make fun of my dad.

Another event I loved as a child was family movie night. This was usually held on the Sunday before Martin Luther Day so it was nice that we didn't have school the next day. Our families would gather at the church with our pillows and sleeping bags and watch movies on the old reels. Someone would pop popcorn and we would watch the old black and white Little Rascals and Three Stooges movies. I looked forward to that day all year.

When I was young, we also had an annual fall gathering or bonfire at my parent's house. This was something I looked forward to. We would gather at the Madison's (my parents) and roast hotdogs and marshmallows and everyone would bring a dish to share (in true Presbyterian fashion). While I really enjoyed the food, my favorite part was the hayride. Marty Clum would bring a large truck and trailer and drive us all over the countryside while we sang camp songs and enjoyed all the beauty of fall.

Later in life, and now, some of my best times at church are with my fellow sisters in Christ. I am so thankful that Dave and Kelly Fetrow moved here so that Kelly could be a missionary to me. I needed to hear the Gospel in a new way and she knew just how to share it with me. She gave me the opportunity to ask questions that I thought others would think were stupid, and then she answered them so that I could understand. I have never met anyone like her. She also started women's Bible studies that I attended and gained so much from. The other

women who also came and continue to come, have become such an important part of my life. These are some of the BEST people in my life. I am so grateful for all of them.

As I have grown older, I still enjoy the church family nights and gatherings, but I truly enjoy just being with my church family. As I reflect over my life I realize that my best friends during each season of life, from elementary school until now (except for the college years) were from our church. God has such an amazing way of orchestrating our life and using each of us to encourage and guide each other to glorify him. When I think of our church and our friendships within, one song comes to mind and so I leave you with this: “Blessed be the tie that binds, Our hearts in Christian love; The fellowship of kindred minds, is like to that above.”

Tara Erickson

A job change brought our family to Ada, OH in the summer of 2004. As God would have it, we purchased the manse from Ada Presbyterian Church for our family home. As we went through the purchase process we came to know the Allen family and several other church members – everyone invited us to church! Our first Sunday in town we attended Ada Presbyterian and we knew we had found our new church home. Over the next decade, our family grew – in number (adding three more kids), in Christian service (learning to lead Bible studies, teach Sunday School, lead worship, and serve in leadership), in community (developing deep and rich relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ), in spiritual maturity (through Biblical teaching, preaching and discipleship) and in faith (learning to trust God through challenges as a family and a church).

When God called our family to the mission field in 2014, we wondered, “How can we leave this place? This is our home, our church,” yet we realized God had used his people, his church in Ada, to prepare our family for a new task. How powerfully God had worked in our lives through this community of believers! This church that had raised us up, taught us, ministered to us, and loved us is now sending us out, extending the same love lavished on us to peoples who have yet to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Though we now live far away from our church home, the prayers of our church family and the love they have for Jesus Christ and his Gospel encourage us every day. No matter where we live or serve, Ada Presbyterian Church will Always be our “home” church and our forever family in Christ.

David & Kelly Fetrow

I felt blessed to be able to serve God by helping our church in a way that fit my talents. Around 1978 I learned that the church secretary was retiring and moving away. I was already working one part-time job but knew that the secretary position would only require a few hours each week. So I applied and the Session hired me.

Rev. Doyll Andrews was our minister at this time. My primary job was to prepare the bulletin and type any letters that needed to go out. At this time the bulletin was typed on a

“stencil” that was then put on a drum with ink inside to run off copies! Oh, how messy! I remember Charlie Norton teasing me whenever he found a misspelled word in the bulletin!

The secretary at this time had a desk upstairs IN the pastor’s office, while the copy machine and supplies were in another room. This made it pretty inconvenient especially when someone came to talk to the pastor privately. At some point the pastor’s study and the copy room were painted and wallpapered and the secretary’s desk was then moved into the copy room. This made for a much better working arrangement.

Another job was added when the pastor decided to send out a monthly newsletter. This was written by the pastor, but my job was to print it, fold, address and add a stamp. The busy time of the year was Easter and Christmas when additional services were held.

The job became much more pleasant when we purchased a copy machine and eventually put away the typewriter and purchased a computer.

Another part of the job was to change the sign out front each week, come rain or shine! It is tricky to hold the tray of letters in the left hand while holding the sign’s glass door so it doesn’t blow around, and then install all the words with the right hand. Many times I had to make my way through snow to change that sign. One day as I was changing this sign a stranger approached me and introduced himself. He was the new minister at the United Methodist Church, Rev. Wayne Albertson.

I ended up serving as church secretary for thirty-plus years: working for four ministers, Doyll Andrews, Jim Kerr, Scott Pyle and Patrick Allen, and several interim ministers. It was a joy to serve in this manner.

Phyllis Gossel

My first impression of the man with the big smile who was standing at my door that mid-July afternoon was that he must be a salesman. Probably insurance or vacuum cleaners or ovenware. He was wearing a dark suit with tie, so he could have been an undertaker bearing bad news. I did invite him in when he introduced himself as Rev. Hancock from the Presbyterian church. He was told the Gossel family had moved to Ada and we might be interested in the local church. The year was 1972, and at that time ONU passed such information along to area pastors. The man seemed nice enough and I didn’t feel threatened by him. By now Phyllis was part of the conversation. We both thanked him and affirmed that we would check out the church.

We kept our promise and within a couple weeks had claimed our pew in the third-row at the far west side of the sanctuary. I think I can truthfully say Phyllis enjoyed Rev. Hancock’s sermon and felt blessed by his message. But me – well, I was bored to tears and told myself I didn’t understand a word I heard. You see, Phyllis came from a strong Presbyterian family and knew what was going on. I, on the other hand, was pretty much a dunce when it came to matters of religion. Church just wasn’t my thing. Still, we both joined within months of that first meeting, with me joining only because I knew Phyllis wished it.

While others who have shared their reflections in this volume extended some pretty hefty platitudes for the church, my first twenty years were just the opposite. What little church experience I had was gained during my primary and early high school years. The church I knew was more on the fundamental side and its memories were what was stashed away in my heart. I couldn't pull myself away from thinking about the religion of my youth and I believed the Presbyterian church couldn't even come close to providing me with the same. As a youth I got to know all those nice ladies in the floor-length dresses who wore no jewelry or used cosmetics, ladies who taught that playing cards or watching movies was sinful. From 1972 when Phyllis and I joined the Ada church until early 1993 I constantly harbored thoughts about leaving the Presbyterian church mostly because I felt the church was far too formal for me. Oh, I was treated superbly by everyone in the church including its succession of great ministers, Rev. Hancock, Rev. Andrews, Rev. Kerr and Rev. Pyle. But my stubborn streak kept me miles away from learning anything about Jesus Christ, until ... well, until something BIG happened and that's when my attitude changed for the better. It was Rev. Scott Pyle who came to my rescue.

Early in January, 1993, Scott Pyle asked me after worship if I would stop by sometime for a chat. I did so the following Thursday afternoon. Scott told me of his "urge" to talk with me – to this day neither he nor I can pinpoint any incident that led to his invitation. That Thursday we chatted about things in general without either of us being particularly serious as to any single topic. To this day I am convinced he invited me in because God told him to. But that was the start of a wonderful relationship that developed between the two of us – no, to the **three** of us. It would be but a few months when I met the Lord Jesus firsthand.

Here's the issue relative to this church. It was Scott who brought me through some pretty difficult times. It was he who convinced me that this church was first of all God's house and that my stinking thinking about it in the past was entirely wrong. It was he, along with the Spirit's intervention I am sure, who turned me on to what the church was all about. And carrying on where Scott left off, Patrick along with many dozens of fellow members throughout the years have continued that teaching lesson and have done their job well. At this point in my life, some of my closest friends and confidants are those with whom I worship regularly.

I haven't always agreed with my pastors' comments or decisions on a variety of matters except those regarding faith. To the Ada Presbyterian Church and the people who make up the church, especially Rev. Hancock, I beg your forgiveness for what I might have said vocally or felt within my heart in years gone by. I admit my sinfulness. I feel extremely honored to be one of you in this church, and even more as one of you in Christ's Church.

Someday when I meet up with Rev. Hancock in Heaven, I will thank him sincerely for stopping by that July afternoon more than forty-four years ago and inviting the Gossel family to come to church. That invitation was the beginning of a life-changing experience that would become one of the highlights of my life. It would be the beginning of my own life's purpose.

Thomas Gossel

On Labor Day in 1968 my wife Ann, my sons Mark and David, and I arrived in Ada and began moving into our new home on Conley Avenue. I had accepted an appointment as a new faculty member in the chemistry department at Ohio Northern University and we all looked forward to our new life in Ada. We had been members of Presbyterian churches prior to arriving in Ada and planned to eventually join the Ada Presbyterian Church after getting organized in our new home. We began attending services and in 1969, became active members of this church.

In college at the University of Nebraska, I enjoyed being a member of the university chorus, which presented the “Messiah” at holiday time. Also at that time I was fortunate to become acquainted with a retired professor of music who had formed and directed an a cappella choir specializing in sacred and classical music. I joined that choir and really enjoyed participating in rehearsals and concerts during my last two years at the university.

A few months after joining our church in Ada, I was invited to become a member of the church choir. At that time the choir rehearsed on Wednesday evenings and presented an anthem during the regular Sunday service. A new choir director, Susan Winchell, had just been appointed and was interested in doing some special things with the church choir. Susan and her husband Byron had recently moved to Ada where she was the high school music teacher and he was a law student at the university. With long-time regular choir members like Marge Norton, Jean Searson, Billie Hindall and several others, Susan decided to have the choir work on a special cantata for Easter. She played the piano and directed the choir for “Easter Song” which was the highlight of the year for the choir. Susan and Byron left Ada when he graduated from law school and they now live near Chillicothe, Ohio. I still hear from her via email occasionally and we both remember the good times with the church choir.

Howard Haight

My name is Noah. One thing I like about our church is Logos. Logos has been fun for a long time. It was good when Kelly Fetrow was helping with the program. Her ideas were fun.

Another thing I like about our church is Sunday School. Mrs. Roehrle is my teacher. In Sunday School there are always some fun projects going on. I like when the lessons include drawing activities in our books. I think our church is a nice fun church with a lot of history.

Noah Huff

My girls (Aniko and Csilla) and I had started attending the Ada Presbyterian Church in the spring of 1992. We then spent a school year in Hungary as a family, and it was in the fall of 1993 upon our return, that the three of us became members.

In the years since then, I have been given many opportunities to serve as an active Elder, as a Bible study leader for a couple of years with some lovely ladies, teaching an occasional class or session for the adult Sunday School class, more recently teaching the pre-confirmation LOGOS class (a two-year commitment each time) and most recently serving on the church’s Vision Team.

God calls us to serve in whatever way we have been gifted, and when we serve with our whole heart, soul and strength, He gives us joy in that service.

Even as we work on renewing, refreshing and modernizing our church building, we also seek God's help in refreshing our souls and recommitting our lives by having a daily relationship/conversation with Him, by connecting with our fellow congregation members (both socially and faith-wise) and by reaching out to friends and neighbors in our community to share the Good News of the Gospel.

Julie Ludanyi

My entire church life has been with the Ada Presbyterian Church. I was baptized in this church, took communicants class and became a member in this church, was married in this church, had all four of our children baptized in this church and seven of our fourteen grandchildren are attending this church. I definitely have a lifetime of memories, but I will share only a few at this time.

One of my first memories of attending church is having Alice Jo Fulks for a Sunday School teacher. I remember how much I enjoyed being in her class. I also remember that she had a talent for writing poetry and after the birth of each of our children she would bless us with a poem written especially for that child.

Bess Rodabaugh was also one of everyone's favorite Sunday School teachers. It was obvious that Bess's heart was truly overflowing with the Holy Spirit. My sister Judy told me that it was during one of Bess's lessons that she accepted Jesus as her Lord and Savior.

Our son Brian recently told us how much Rev. James Kerr influenced his spiritual growth and how much he enjoyed attending Camp Seneca in Pennsylvania with him.

I taught Sunday School for about twenty years and enjoyed being with the young children and trying to help them grow in their faith in Jesus Christ and their knowledge of the Bible. I taught the fourth, fifth and sixth graders for several years. The students would often hurry up the stairs ahead of me so they could hide in one of the closets or rooms until I came up to find them. On one particular Sunday morning, I could find everyone but Jared Wolf. I looked everywhere but to no avail. Finally, one of the students pointed to the window and there he was sitting outside the window on the porch roof! Needless to say that was the end of our little hide and seek game.

Another time I was teaching the class about Matthew 6:6, "But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." As the class was coming to a close, one of the children (I think it was Ryan Ulrey) suggested we go one at a time into the closet to pray. I thought the children must really be getting this lesson. They wanted me to be the first to go into the closet, which I gladly did. As I closed the door, they quickly locked the door on me and ran down the stairs! Oh well, I guess I am the one who learned the lesson that day.

Jane Klingenberger was such a blessing and a wonderful example of what it is to be a Christian, not only by her words but also by her actions. It seemed like whenever a job needed to be done in the church, Jane would quietly be there doing it. I feel she was God's messenger to me. If anyone reading this does not remember Jane, but knows Debbie Roehrle, then you have an idea how Jane was!

I hope these few memories will give you an idea of what my church family has and does mean to me and how blessed I feel to be a part of the Ada Presbyterian Church.

Claudia Madison

I have been a member of this church since 1970, having joined shortly after Claudia and I were married. Rev. Aubrey Hancock was the minister at the time. We had to attend a premarital counseling session with him. During that meeting he kept referring to me as Dwayne instead of Dale. We were afraid he would call me Dwayne during the marriage ceremony but he didn't. He thankfully remembered my name correctly!

A couple years later (1977 or 1978) when Doyll Andrews was our pastor, I was helping direct our Christmas pageant. Doyll's young son, also named Doyll, was the inn keeper. He was to open the door at the inn (which was made out of a piece of paneling) and say "We have no room." As he opened the door, the whole contraption fell forward into the front row of pews. Everyone got a big chuckle out of that. We set it back up and finished the program.

In 1984 our pastor, James Kerr, preached a sermon on baptism. It was then that I realized the importance of baptism. I wasn't sure whether I had ever been baptized. After checking, I realized I had not and so I was baptized at the age of 39.

I remember taking the teens to Cedar Point along with Tom Kier and Jim Kerr. A fun time was had by all, including the adults.

When Scott Pyle was pastor we went to a Billy Graham Crusade. It was such a blessing to hear this great evangelist in person.

In 2007 Claudia and I went on a mission trip to Gulf Port, Mississippi along with Tom Gossel, Jake Zimmerman, Rev. Patrick Allen and Brian Myers. It was a great week but I spent most of it with my head under a sink trying to fix a leak.

In 2011 it was a joy to serve on a committee with Jeff Smith, Julie Ludanyi and Kelly Fetrow to help determine whether our congregation should leave the P.C. USA and if we did, what other branch of Presbyterianism we should join.

In 2012 Howard Haight, Jake Zimmerman and I worked to rebuild the back porch of the church. Although it was a lot of work, it was also a lot of fun.

Over the years there have been many wonderful people who I had the pleasure of knowing through the church. There are too many to mention and many have passed on to be with our Lord, while others have moved on. But through it all, it has been a pleasure to be a member of the Ada Presbyterian Church.

Dale Madison

I have worshipped at the Ada Presbyterian Church for forty-two years. I was baptized, married, and had my four children baptized all in this church with many of the same loving members surrounding me. As a child I attended youth group and now my children do as well. Many wonderful memories have been made on Wednesday nights!

My favorite part of membership in this church is that everyone feels like family. When someone is sick or has a new baby, or is in need we all pray, work together to bring the families meals, and help anyway we can. Several ministers have come and gone during my forty-two years, but our love for God and one another has always remained paramount at the Ada Presbyterian Church.

Christa Preston

I was baptized in this church, so it has been my home church for more than fifty years. My earliest memories are of going to Bible School in the morning and singing *Climb, Climb Up Sunshine Mountain* with Rev. Hancock. I loved having Karen Kroft Simon as my Kindergarten Sunday School teacher. I cried when she got married and had to move away. Charlie Norton was the Sunday School teacher for many years for the older Elementary kids. We used to pick up Mrs. Gilmore each week to bring her to Sunday School. Dick and Peggy Lawrence led some activities and Bible studies for our age group when we were in Junior High just before we began Confirmation Class after Rev. Andrews came. We had a big class; I think we had at least three of the Elliott boys. Around the time I was finishing high school and starting college, I was asked to be on the Nominating Committee as the youth representative. I was lost as to what was going on, but Jackie Ludwig Sperling took me under her wing and made sure I was included in the whole process. I was thankful to be on the committee that selected Rev. Kerr to come to our church.

My positive experiences at our church while growing up gave me the desire to be a part of several of the chapel groups while in college and I felt comfortable to be a leader in these groups. Because of those leadership positions, I ended up being the Christian Education Director at Shawnee United Methodist Church. The three years I worked there was the only time I have not attended our church regularly.

When I returned to Ada, I enjoyed teaching Junior & Senior High Sunday School for several years. There weren't always a lot of students, but I hope those who did come benefitted from our time together. Over the years I have always enjoyed working with the kids through Youth Club, Christmas Programs, Sunday School classes, Nursery, Logos, etc. I also liked visiting with the older members of our church and hearing their life stories.

My favorite Christmas Eve service was at a time when we were between ministers. My mom and I were on the Worship Committee so we helped plan the service. Since we knew that our family would be there, several members helped with the service and I think that made my Mom's Christmas very special.

Overall, my favorite thing about our church is the people. They show the love, care, concern, and support to one another just as God loves us. I miss so many of those who have passed on and I have enjoyed watching others grow up in our church and all the younger ones we now have – wow! Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Debbie Klingenberg Roehrl

One of my favorite recollections about our church is how supportive the people are of missions. Even though it is small in numbers, I have felt amazing support from the church in my pursuit of international missions. During high school, I took a short-term mission trip to Papua New Guinea, for which the church and its members provided a large amount of funds for travel and support. Again in my senior year of college, I took a trip to Mexico City, which the church provided for financially as well. And now I am heading to Mexico again, in hope of pursuing long-term mission work there.

God has provided in amazing ways through the church. And not only financially, but they have also supported me through prayer and encouragement. Because of our small size, people are closer and know pretty much everyone else in the church. Even if people aren't able to give financially, they still encourage and pray for me, which means more than they probably know. I've received unexpected but greatly appreciated letters, messages, and countless hugs from my church family. And it's not just me; our church also supports the Fetrow family, Allison and Tony Westrate, the Jonathan Swift family, and many others on short-term trips. It's incredible to see how God is using the Ada Presbyterian Church to fulfill the Great Commission, both in this village and across the world.

Elita Smith

"I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." Psalm 119:11. Many Bible quizzers have memorized large sections of the book we study for the year. One year Noah Allen, Jeremiah Smith and Elita Smith memorized and quoted the entire gospel of John.

This is so important as the culture is moving away from the Word. "Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." Ephesians 6:11.

Quizzing has had a big influence in my life. Not only has it helped me learn the Word of God better, but it has helped me make friends and become closer to God. I live by the spirit and walk in his spirit (Galatians 5:25). A favorite memory was when I got my first perfect quiz because I saw how far I had come and realized I had a much better understanding of the Bible than what I had when I started. -Kesewa Akyeampong.

Quizzing was a great opportunity that I was fortunate enough to have. It strengthened my knowledge of the word and brought me closer to God. -Maddie Preston

I loved the moments when a quizzer would share a connection from one chapter in the book we were studying to another chapter or sometimes make a connection of something in the book we were studying to something the students learned from a book studied in a previous year. -Melinda Smith

I remember how awesome the 2011 finals were when we won first place. It was a humbling experience when I observed qualities like leadership and patience trumping any skill. -Jeremiah Smith

I remember the first finals that Ada Presbyterian Church participated in. During the final rounds of quizzing, Noah Allen answered a crucial ten-point bonus question correctly. Mr. Smith called a time out and gave Noah a big bear hug, which lifted him off the ground (He was much smaller back then). Noah had a very surprised look on his face. Priceless!

Nathan Allen's first year of quizzing at finals was so intense in the final rounds that he kept telling Mrs. Smith that he wanted to go to Hawaii. Everyone deals with the fun stress in different ways.

One year Jon Allen's team of three went the whole finals weekend with no losses. What a team. The year before, Jon had a disappointing loss. Spent a bit of time walking around the small pond contemplating.

Lydia Smith remembers one year as we traveled to the Michigan invitational in Port Huron, the Google map and Pastor Patrick's GPS led us into Canada. Woops!! Many of our quizzers were under the age of 15½ so had no ID's. Maddie Preston did put forth her hunting license. All turned out fine and we even made it on time to the competition.

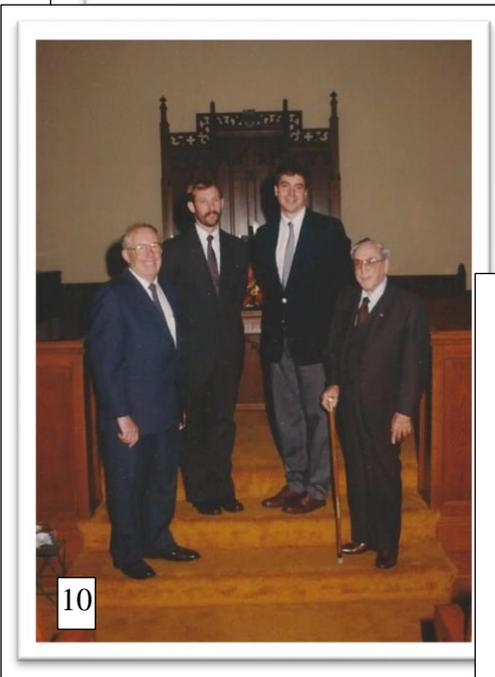
Melinda Smith

August, 1994. We found a loaf of bread in our apartment mailbox! Or, should we say two ladies from the Ada Presbyterian Church found us! A few Sundays before, we were church hopping. Julie Ludanyi and Judy Leonard were so thoughtful to have remembered and reached out to us. They shared a homemade loaf of bread with us, just like Christ shared His Body – the bread of life – with his disciples.

Years thereafter, we have been worshipping right here in the “heart of worship” while many more ladies (and men, young ones and all ages in between) have welcomed us as part of this Church family and encouraged us to be what God set out for us in this little village of Ada, Ohio. Moving forward, we gather, grow and go with all of you for God's glory.

Albert & Rema Suniga







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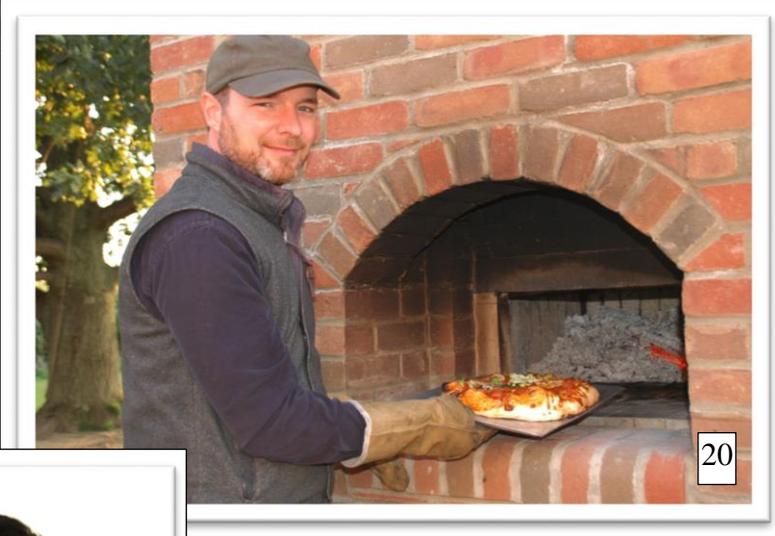
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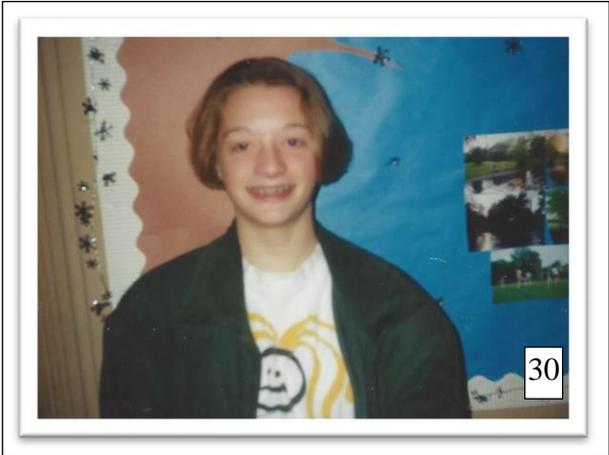
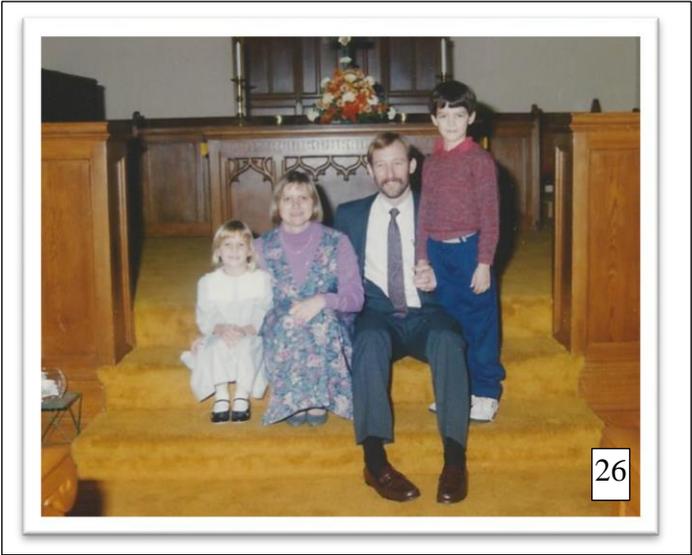


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175th Church Anniversary Celebration Committee

Key to photo ID: 1. Board of Trustees, 1988; 2. Treasurer Naomi Tipple) & Secretary Phyllis Gossel), 1988; 3. Boards of Session and Deacons, 1988; 4. Choir, LeAnn Moore, dir.; 5. John Lowman; 6. Betty Plummer, Peggy Smith & Geri Rodabaugh; 7. Ellie Everett & Betty Plummer; 8. Charlie Norton & Dick Fulks; 9. Jack & Peggy Smith; 10. (l to r): Rev. Butz, Rev. Kerr, Rev. Pyle & Rev. Hancock at Sesquicentennial celebration; 11. Sara Clum, Deb Donner & Sally Jeffrey; 12. Rev. Kerr washing dishes; 13. Evelyn Epley & Francis Clum; 14. Myra Traxler & Janice Umphress; 15. Janice Umphress, Marcia Siebesma, Debbie Roehrle & Marj Norton; 16. Alice Jo Fulks; 17. Celebrating Ann Kistler's baby shower; 18. Brenda & Danny Brown; 19. Kids at Halloween party; 20. Pastor Allen baking pizza; 21. Tony Wan; 22. Allison Westrape; 23. ONU student dinner, with Don Traxler, Margaret Elliott & Marie Bischoff looking on; 24. Howard Haight & Doc Rodabaugh; 25. Scott & Sheryl Pyle; 26. Jim & Jane Kerr & family; 27. LeeAnn Timmerman & Csilla Ludanyi; 28. Jane Klingenberger & Jeff Oestreich; 29. Karen Montgomery & Pam Clum; 30. Aniko Ludanyi; 31. (l to r): Claudia Madison, Barb Ulrey, Phyllis Gossel, Marcia Siebesma, Eilene Hubbard & Debbie Roehrle.



Chapter Five

The Church Today

Christ is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.
(Colossians 1:18)

The synopsis contained in this chapter may be helpful when talking with a friend about the Ada Presbyterian Church. The church has been serving the village and Ohio Northern University community for 175 years. The church continues to impact families and individuals throughout the area.

The church's Session members (elders) and Deacons (Appendix 11) are the governing executive and administrative bodies of the church. The church's bylaws are shown in Appendix 12. Christian education, prayer groups, men's and women's small-group fellowships, outreach projects and social functions form the basis for a fully comprehensive program to complement the worship services. Through worship, service, study, prayer, and fellowship the church's mission and commitment are fulfilled.

We belong to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) denomination. Through this connection with other local congregations, we can encourage and be encouraged to proclaim

Jesus Christ and his Gospel both locally and abroad. The EPC Motto is: “In Essentials, Unity; in Non-Essentials, Liberty; In all Things, Charity.”

The congregation (Appendix 13) creates a spiritual home and warm Christian fellowship for those who desire to participate in worship and service based on love and faith just as we Christians were first commissioned by the Lord Jesus himself to do 2000 years ago (Mathew 28:19). Our vision, established after a long period of prayer and study, is to **Gather** in worship that is grounded and fresh; **Grow** in communities of support, study, and outreach; and **Go** to speak and serve in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Worship has been led by Rev. Patrick Allen for the past nineteen-plus years. Pastor Allen moved to Ada from Boston in 1997 after completing studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He and his wife Debra grew up in Western Pennsylvania and met as undergraduates at Penn State University. Along with his various hobbies, he and Deb keep busy with their seven children.

Weekly worship services begin at 10:30 each Sunday morning throughout the year. Children and adult Sunday School classes rally together at 9:00 for a joint session, then disperse at 9:15 into separate classes. Barb Ulrey has served as Sunday School Superintendent for several years.

The church is active in mission and outreach programs, sending teams to sites in Ohio, West Virginia, Mississippi and Romania. The church prays for and financially supports the families of an ONU graduate, now a school teacher with Wycliffe Bible Translators in The Republic of Cameroon, and a missionary church planter in Dearborn, MI. Additionally, the Fetrow family from within its congregation is teaching the Bible in the local language of a community in Mexico.

ONU students are welcomed to join in worship and community events. A number of them make the Ada Presbyterian Church their home away from home.

Logos. Logos is an intergenerational ministry by and for families. The goal is to form long-term relationships connecting younger children with older members of the church. Its focus is to help the children make the life of the church a natural and meaningful part of their lives. Logos meets weekly for twenty-four weeks from September through March each year with theme-based programs that include strong biblical teaching, singing, playing games, and enjoying a full dinner. Gwen Jochims is the program coordinator.

Bible Quizzing. In our Bible quiz program teens study Scripture and compete with other teams from Ohio, Michigan and Indiana. Quizzers learn Bible stories, memorize verses, and some memorize entire books of the Bible. Our team has won numerous awards for accomplishment of goals. Plaques and trophies marking these triumphs are on display within the church. Jeff and Melinda Smith direct this program. The quizzers are shown on the right.



Community service. The Ada Presbyterian Church takes the lead on significant outreach ministry in the village and its surrounding area.⁶⁷ It currently houses the Ada Food Pantry, an ecumenical venture that was conceived and is supported by the Ada Ministerial Association, along with other churches in and around Ada. The Pantry is staffed by individuals from area churches along with student volunteers from ONU and Ada communities. It is open Tuesdays from 4-6 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to noon.

Church members annually donate gift boxes with gifts and supplies for children around the world. Operation Christmas Child is an outreach program of Samaritan's Purse that works with local churches and ministry partners to deliver the gifts and share the life-changing Good News of Jesus Christ.

The church provides space for the Hardin County Health Department to provide immunizations for children and adults from the community. Various clubs and groups including Liberty Belles & Boys 4-H Club meet there regularly. The 4-H Club is a community of young people across America who are learning citizenship, leadership and life skills.

Welcome to All

As members of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church denomination, we welcome all who desire to witness to their faith as well as those who are searching for truth. For further information, please call or contact Rev. Patrick Allen at 419-634-5661. The church address is 201 S. Main St, P.O. Box 237, Ada, OH 45810. Its Web address is www.adafirstpres.org.

THE END

No, this is not the end. It is

THE BEGINNING!



Epilogue

An Imaginative Peak Into the Future

*Restore us again, O God our Savior, and put away your displeasure toward us. Will you be angry with us forever? Will you prolong your anger through all generations? Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you? Show us your unfailing love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.
(Psalm 85:4-7)*

Imagine it's the church's bicentennial year, 2041. Imagine that the following report is penned by a person who joined the church back in 2016 and is now reflecting on the past twenty-five years, 2016-2041. This period could very well define the most important era in the history of the Ada Presbyterian Church. Readers of the history reported in the year 2041 are likely to read the story that begins as follows:

The Church Moved Forward

The Ada Presbyterian Church has reached its bicentennial year. Those familiar with the church's history will know it was founded in 1841 in the neighboring village of Huntersville, and moved into Johnstown (i.e., Ada) in 1855. Still called the Huntersville Presbyterian Church, its name was eventually changed to the Ada Presbyterian Church to reflect the village's name change to Ada.

The church built a modest frame building on the southwest corner of Main Street and Mill (name later changed to Lincoln Avenue) and dedicated it in 1867. This was replaced in 1891 by an enlarged brick structure. A brick manse (parsonage) was constructed to its immediate west side in 1902. The church and manse were joined in 1925 when additional room was needed to accommodate a burgeoning church membership and numerous programs.

Church growth continued upward over the next couple decades. In response to members lost to transfer, moving to another community or to death, or to the reported national trend of general church disinterest or distrust by many Americans, membership began a slow but steady decline to a low point around 2006 and remained constant over the next decade. Rev. Patrick Allen, like his colleagues preceding him, worked diligently to reverse the declining membership and they all need to be acknowledged and thanked sincerely for their efforts. The problem was, their efforts were not sufficient to reverse the trend for a number of reasons including those mentioned previously for the decline.

The church was nearing its 175-year celebration when Rev. Allen organized a Vision Team that began meeting weekly in September, 2015 to implore God's counsel on what needed to be done to share the Gospel effectively and make disciples of God's people living nearby, always working in the spirit of the Lord's Great Commission (Mathew 28:19). Excitement escalated throughout the summer of 2016 as its plans were formalized. The excitement continued for many months beyond at the prospect that God would be leading the people into many exciting new roles.

Congregation members were well equipped and prepared to reach out. Small-group fellowship sessions of men and others for women had been meeting regularly and studying various means for evangelizing. The Session's Evangelism and Missions Committee met

regularly during the spring and throughout the summer of 2016 to develop a sound strategy for outreach. By the time for celebrating its 175-year anniversary in the Fall of 2016 the die had been cast! The church would move forward, thoroughly rejecting all negative, as some might say “stinking thinking,” from the past knowing that the Lord was on our side.

Church revitalization. Phase One of our church revitalization program was thus underway. This included repainting the Fellowship Hall, along with the small room off its south side and the building’s entrance area from the north doors; adding decorative wood flooring to these side areas and new carpet to the large area; and repositioning the door to the closet used for storing tables and ladders. New floor covering was on order for the kitchen, and furniture would soon be received for the Fellowship Hall. Outside the building, new steps leading up to the north doors and an enlarged landing had been completed several months earlier. Rev. Allen reminded the congregation again that the remodeling of areas within the church was just a small part of the church’s revitalization; specifically, it should not be considered to be the most important part of revitalization. Instead, it was activity that might stimulate members to be more active participators in evangelism, and a way to actually make new people who would come into the building feel more welcome and at home.

The kickoff for the Vision Team’s directive to “Gather-Grow-Go” had begun. The date, Sunday, July 24, 2016, was one that would long be remembered as the day it all began. Cards prepared for the event were distributed to all worshippers including children as they entered the sanctuary that morning. Rev. Allen then discussed the card’s purpose directing this first to the children in their sermon message, then to others in the congregation. Everyone, including the children, was asked to identify one or two friends he or she would invite to church on one or more of the following dates: August 21, August 28 or September 4 and to also sign the cards as

the inviter. Rev. Allen would be speaking those dates on what the Bible says about sports and play. A prayer team was ready to accept the cards and offer individual and group prayer for the indicated invitees, and for the inviters signing the cards. Congregants were then asked to return the cards in the collection plates on the day of receipt or the following Sundays.

By the following Sunday, ten cards had been received, listing twenty-one invitees or family units. The numbers were less than anticipated and, truthfully, disappointing to the Evangelism and Missions Committee members and probably Rev. Allen. But by August 14, additional cards were received, altogether listing approximately forty-five persons or family units who had been invited to come and worship during one or more of the dates during the sermon series.

At the same time, the Evangelism and Missions Committee was discussing alternative programs that would also follow the “Go ... to speak and serve in the name of Jesus Christ” directive as advocated by the Vision Team. Numerous ideas were identified and put into place along the way. Most importantly, it was emphasized that prayer to invite the Holy Spirit’s intervention should be the primary focus and would precede all other activity.

It is difficult to report a definite number of persons who responded positively as a result of their being identified on the “Invite a friend” cards to come and worship with us on one or more of the three designated sermon dates. This was difficult because many of the invitees regularly had been prayed for over a long period even before the project got underway. Other invitees could not make it to church on any of the three specified meeting dates but came later as a result of having been invited to the sports’ sermon series.

By now some members had become more interested in being involved in helping whatever way they could to influence the people they knew personally, including friends,

acquaintances and family members, to join them in worship. Some members shared that they offered to pray at that initial time with the people they invited and many responded affirmatively. The invitees' willingness to pray only stimulated inviters all the more to maintain their vigor in ultimately inviting even more people to join them in worship. In all cases, the member prayed enthusiastically at home for those invited to the church. And of course, the prayer team that had by then been enlarged considerably was actively praying.

By the end of September several new individuals had attended repeatedly and this in turn aroused the attention of other members who had not received the cards when originally distributed because of travel commitments or other reasons. Some of these members probably did not realize why they felt nudged into joining the movement. Others, including Rev. Allen, knew right away – it was the **Holy Spirit** who was motivating them into action. Again, it must be stressed that the same prayer team formed to pray for those invited to the original three-sermon sequence continued to expand even more via the adult Sunday School class.

By June, 2017, the church had received into membership two new families, one of three persons and the other with four individuals. The family of three had arrived at the invitation given through one of our own member's daughter, age 11, who invited her school friend who, in turn, asked her parents to come with her.

Along with these were another three individuals who had been invited. These included two spouses of active members and the other who was invited by a friend. It would still be another six months or so before these three said yes to Rev. Allen's invitation to join, but the important thing is, all three did just that. Their repeated presence sitting in a pew closely aligned with their family, especially their children, was a true blessing to all and very likely added further energy to stimulate even greater evangelistic activity among the membership.

By September, 2017, additional church members were asking if they could take a more active role in praying that the church was truly on a pathway outlined for it by God himself. The prayer team that had been organized during the previous summer continued meeting each Wednesday evening and met without ceasing throughout the duration of the year, except for one Wednesday, Thanksgiving Eve. It was during these prayer meetings when the Lord's presence was felt in an especially powerful way.

Another outcome of these weekly meetings as well as during times of personal prayer, as various members admitted, was that their prayers came a lot more easily with time. While some shared that it wasn't easy to commit to meeting regularly for one to two hours each midweek, others noted that it wasn't nearly as difficult as they would have imagined had they given thought to making such a commitment a year earlier. Even those who had a variety of personal commitments for Wednesday evening activities were becoming more comfortable with putting their priorities in proper order and spending their time in "holy conversation."

By January, 2018, the church showed a net gain of twenty-one individuals. One long-time member had moved from Ada and another older member had passed away before Christmas. But twenty-three had joined, with four of that number being young people through confirmation.

This led Rev. Allen to ask Session members to consider scheduling only a single topic for its first meeting of the new year, to assess what was going on within the church and what was on the minds and hearts of members regarding their perception. Rev. Allen fully understood what was underway, but he wanted each member to realize this personally and trust the Spirit to continue his work uninterrupted.

Along with Session members the excitement of working God's plan in the community spread outwardly throughout the congregation. The sober expressions that once marked people's

faces during worship took on renewed expressions of joy as people continued to pray that the Lord's will shall be accomplished. One could see people's lips in motion during the periods of prayer as though they were in personal conversation with their Lord. Yes, they were praying as before, but their prayers had now changed from casual participation in communal prayer to a more personal nature, with all thoughts and conversation directed solely to the Lord.

Then, there was another realization that took some members by surprise, but overall assured the group that they were on the right track. What was happening within the church was, of course, directed by the Holy Spirit, but the outcome could be traced to its members' actions. Throughout the church's history, just as was likely true in most other churches in the land, members relied heavily upon the pastor to do the legwork involved in beating the bushes to bring new people in to worship. It was now the people of the church who were the active players on the Spirit's team. Rev. Allen's primary function was oriented back to ministry of Word and Sacrament as his commission emphasized during his ordination. It was largely the peoples' job to bring them in (Gather) and the minister's job to disciple them (Grow). Once this was realized and understood, it made complete sense and more importantly, it made for improved relations amongst members and pastor.

Revival was underway. It was obvious to anyone familiar with the church that a true revival was underway. Rev. Allen had confided years before that true revival would not occur in any church in response to the pastor or congregation whimsically wishing for it or even casually praying for it as long as their hearts were not truly into it. True revival is always a gift from God and commenced by the Holy Spirit. He told us then that all would know when revival was underway. No doubt about what was happening at Ada Presbyterian Church. The Spirit had moved the group into true revival and the adventure of a lifetime had begun.

No longer were the many lame excuses that were once heard among various members as to why they had not shared the Gospel story with family, friends and other acquaintances or invite them into church for worship. It used to be difficult for most people to obey Lord Jesus' commandment that he told all his disciples, including the people of the Ada Presbyterian Church in his Great Commission, but by now was automatic. As importantly, invitees were responding positively and freely.

By mid-2022, church membership had increased to 124, up by a full forty-two persons over its number in 2016, and budgetary matters that were of serious concern in those earlier years no longer required a significant amount of Session's meeting time. None of this surprised Rev. Allen because as he had repeated over and over beginning decades earlier that the Holy Spirit would move in truly marvelous ways when members seriously invited him to do so.

A great blessing was to watch our church family pull together in unity. Somewhere along the way the motto "*Ada Presbyterians Working for Christ*" became the driving force for members' actions. A simplistic motto, perhaps, but a true rallying cry for our members. Someone suggested we have tee-shirts printed with that motto emblazoned in bright letters on the front and back but an older member cautioned that we didn't need these because our presence and purpose in Ada was quite obvious by now and the tee-shirt message might mistakenly identify us as radical "Jesus Freaks" and actually turn people off to all religion and churches in the area. The same thought was given to nix the suggestion that we have bumper stickers printed for members' cars. Every Sunday morning at least one person from the congregation stood and with arms stretched upward expressed this motto verbally during the worship service as a reminder to all of what the church now had become – We were a bunch of passionate Presbyterians serving our Lord Jesus as best we could! It was a rare Sunday when at least one guest was not introduced

during the service. The congregation was by then truly evangelical in its function and it fully understood its purpose for existence. And it was working. Now when members talked about growth and numbers, they were no longer referring to the Ada church (small “c”), but to Christ’s Church (capital “C”). Our Lord Jesus’ Kingdom was increasing through the efforts of the church family and that alone was the reason for our existence.

This revival of church spirit did not decline over ensuing years; instead, it was maintained, growing stronger with time. Progressing through the remaining 2020s and 2030s, the church continued to flourish in a manner reminiscent of what historians of the first half of the last century had reported. By 2030 membership had reached nearly the same level, 440 individuals, as was reported in 1925. That number increased by another fifty percent by 2040 as more people living in surrounding cities came to the Ada Presbyterian Church to worship. Members noted the increased size but did not brag to others about it. Instead, long before, they had made up their minds to not worship the numbers. They were not shooting for success, but seeking to disciple believers. They continued to worship the Lord for his abounding grace shown the church. And they continued with their prayers to Lord Jesus through the Holy Spirit, praising him again and again for the number of souls who once were lost but now were found.

Excitement was in the air as the church was faced with new and exciting challenges. Meeting space was one of those challenges that was definitely on everyone’s mind and there just wasn’t enough of it.

Neighborhood chatter called them coincidences. By this point all the activity going on in the neighborhood seemed to be “coincidental” to village nonbelievers. Rumors to that effect abounded. But church members knew better for what was happening. For example, the rental property to the immediate south of the church that years before had been converted into college-

student apartments had become an eyesore to the village and its expense to keep it in halfway decent repair was greater than its elderly owners wished to endure. They therefore offered the property to the church at a price less than fifty percent of its appraised value. The church happily purchased it and replaced the aged building with a magnificent brick annex that was connected to the church building. The remaining two-thirds of the lot to the annex's west side was paved as a parking area for twenty vehicles. The space problem was eased at least for the instance.

Soon, though, the parking issue became acute. An increasing congregation size demanded a need for additional parking space. Rev. Allen approached ONU asking if it had plans for the former Snyder property on the southeast corner of Lincoln Avenue and Gilbert Street, which was only steps across the alley west of the church. Owned by ONU, the university had offered the property to the church about forty years earlier after inheriting it but the church was not in position at that time to commit to another mortgage. The university had no immediate plans for the property since it was located out of the way of the institution's growth plans. ONU thus offered it again to the church for a fair price and the church purchased it with a plan to demolish the house and develop the lot for additional parking space. Of special interest was the owner of the property immediately south of the church's new parking lot then voluntarily offered it to the church with pretense that the house could be taken down and our parking lot doubled in size. Needless to say, we quickly purchased it without further delay. It was at that point that one could only imagine what the outsiders were now saying about all the real estate "coincidences" they had talked about earlier! All three events had taken place within sixteen months. To those people we respond, "Coincidences? No way! They were God incidences."

As revealed in the remainder of this 2041 historical report, the church flourished during the previous twenty-five years. There was no way it could ever have survived too far beyond

2016 had its members ignored what God had been telling them through the weekly sermon messages Rev. Allen preached starting around 2015, into and beyond, 2016. They were all messages of faith and hope. God had a definite plan for the church and that plan required only that its members faithfully open their hearts to the Spirit's leading and **“Go ... to speak and serve in the name of Jesus Christ.”**

Nearly two millennia ago the Apostle John closed his Gospel by telling the world, “Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.” (John 21:25) The same holds for the Lord's actions taken through his church in the village of Ada. What is reported here is only a small part of what all he did. God did so much more through the Ada Presbyterian Church and its people during the historic 2016-2041 era than could ever be reported in this volume. Of great significance is that the church not only survived this past quarter century to the present, it prospered. Each member learned a very important lesson – that God is supreme to all beings in all ways and is very much alive today. He is in charge of all that is, including this church. And of equal importance to Lord Jesus is that his Kingdom is now greatly enhanced because we members, in childlike faith, gave up trying to go it alone, and freely gave ourselves into his will as shown through the working of his Holy Spirit. Sing hallelujah to the Lord...

The Author's Dilemma: Solved

My original intent was to end this volume with a peak into the future of the church with that peak revealing two potentially opposing endings. These would include the first (Scenario One) as describing the church being on a slow decline with its eventual disappearance from the community, and the second (Scenario Two) with the church prospering beyond any current member's wildest imagination. The events differentiating the two scenarios would be very

realistic and included along the way in a manner that the reader could readily recognize. My thought was to present the ending with the bad news first in Scenario One and then end the story with the alternative finale, the great news, as Scenario Two.

I had been thinking about this approach since first starting to write Chapter One. To reach my goal I decided to first pen Scenario Two, the version with the positive outcome, then modify it appropriately for Scenario One by omitting critical elements (e.g., the importance of prayer) or adding others of a negative nature (e.g., viewing church beautification activity as the qualifying reason for expecting revitalization). The details with the positive outcome came easily and it was included in this epilogue. But then I faced a real dilemma. I had to deal with Scenario One.

Trying to write as though the church had failed to survive was a problem I had not anticipated. It was an emotional drain trying to find appropriate words to describe the death of what has become the church I truly love. I simply could not do it. Day after day I pondered how to go about this. My brain was obviously stuck in park and I was struggling big-time. There was no way I could engage my thinking process to move forward. Furthermore, this led to renewed thoughts about a powerful truth I had learned decades earlier: “We become what we think about all day long.” I was thinking about failure all day long (and well into the nights). That’s when I had to admit I was concentrating all my time on a subject I was fearful could very well happen, one I certainly did not want. When I finally realized that a description outlining how and why this church failed to survive was purely a figment of my own imagination and failure did not have to occur if we members would respond as we knew in our heart we should. At that point the black cloud of doubt that suggested the church might be on a spiral downward lifted from me in a heartbeat. Within a minute of that realization I had pencil in hand writing this confession.

So, I pray that we, our Lord's Church (note the capital C), will all join together to assure that the Ada Presbyterian Church's history for its bicentennial year will be a positive one. My prayer, along with your prayers, will help assure that outcome if we concentrate on adding souls to the Lord's Kingdom rather than simply adding names to our membership roster. Don't forget that it all starts with prayer and we all know what Lord Jesus expects from each one of us!

Expect God's Blessings

Go ahead – why wait? Don't put it off any longer! Think positively. Remember the message offered by the guest minister in June, 2016 (see Chapter 3). Speaking from Acts 11:1-18, he said that **we should expect God's blessings**. Do that! Expect that God will bless us royally. Pray boldly right now that what you have read in this epilogue will come to full fruition and even go well beyond what is presented. It can happen and will happen if we are faithful to our Lord's instruction. Then our Lord Jesus will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" (Matthew 25:21)

*He who testifies to these things says, "Yes,
I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.
(Revelation 22:20)*

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Appendices

Appendix 1⁶⁸

The Life and Times of Reverend Thomas B. Clark

The Reverend Thomas B. Clark was born January 28, 1779 in Harford County, Maryland. He was educated at Greensburg Academy in Darlington, Pennsylvania and was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Harford, Pennsylvania, on August 30, 1809, and by the Presbytery of Ohio on April 18, 1811. He was installed as pastor of Crabapple Church in Belmont County, Ohio on June 30, 1811, and peached a fourth of his time in a tent at Nottingham. He was one of the eight charter members of the Presbytery of Steubenville, which was formed on October 11, 1819.

Reverend Clark served forty-six years in the ministry of the Presbyterian Church. He died at age 73 on January 13, 1853 in Logan County, Ohio, and is buried in the Bellefontaine City Cemetery, Bellefontaine, Ohio.

Appendix 2

Articles of Incorporation (Amended) for the Ada Presbyterian Church*

ARTICLE 1

The name of the corporation shall be The Ada Presbyterian Church.

ARTICLE 2

The principle location of this corporation shall be Ada, Hardin County, Ohio.

ARTICLE 3

The purposes of the corporation, a non-profit religious organization, are:

- (1) To proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed in the traditional Reformed Christian manner, recognizing, acknowledging, and proclaiming:
 - i. That the one God who created all things exists in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
 - ii. That this Triune God revealed himself in the bible, the church's sole and infallible authority in matters of faith and life.
 - iii. That Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, God's Son who was raised from the dead, is the unique savior of the world and all must call upon his name for salvation and forgiveness of sin.
 - iv. That although salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone, this salvation issues forth in new life, a life of holiness, purity, and obedience to scripture as sustained by the Holy Spirit.
- (2) For gathering to worship God and carrying out the sacraments established by Christ: baptism and the Lord's Supper; For preaching and teaching the Word of God and for prayer, singing, and praise; For encouraging the church's members through discipleship and accountability, building mature Christian people who grow in all the graces of Christ according to Holy Scriptures; For evangelism and outreach into the community and world; and to voluntarily associate with a Reformed denomination in accordance with the dictates of conscience, in aid of all these purposes.

ARTICLE 4

The corporation shall establish bylaws for the governance of the church. The business of the church and the officers of the corporation shall be ordered and provided for as set forth in the bylaws.

ARTICLE 5

This corporation shall have the power to acquire and hold title to both real and personal property in fee simple, in trust, or otherwise. Any property held in trust, or deemed to be held in trust, shall be in a revocable trust, unless expressly stated otherwise in writing, such powers of revocation being expressly reserved by this corporation. Property held in trust by this church corporation shall be deemed held in trust for the use and benefit of this particular church

corporation and its congregation, unless expressly stated otherwise in the signed document establishing the trust in accordance with the trust laws of the state of Ohio.

ARTICLE 6

No part of the assets of the corporation shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in article 3 hereof.

ARTICLE 7

This corporation is a non-profit corporation, as a religious institution, and no member of the corporation, including officers, trustees, and members of the staff of the church, shall be personally liable for any corporation debts or obligations.

ARTICLE 8

This corporation shall have all the powers that a corporation of this class has under the laws of the State of Ohio. The corporate status of this corporation is not dependent upon being affiliated with a denomination.

ARTICLE 9

The directors of the corporation are designated trustees. The trustees shall be those persons who are elected, installed and serving as active elders of the Ada Presbyterian Church.

ARTICLE 10

Only members on the active roll of the Ada Presbyterian Church shall be members of the corporation and eligible for election as trustees.

*These Articles have been amended from the earlier Articles as cited in reference #69.

Appendix 3

Recent Major Church Repairs

2000		
	• Brick work completed on the entire building by Trisco Systems of Lima	\$52,000
2002		
	• New church roof (stripped down completely) and replaced by Birt's Building Maintenance	\$51,600
	• Exterior trim painted by Birt's (cost approximate)	\$20,000
2003		
	• Bell restored onto new frame by Birt's (cost approximate)	\$12,000
2004*		
	• New furnace/air conditioner unit installed upstairs by Ada Services (cost approximate)	\$7-8,000
	• New electrical service installed by Ada Services (cost approximate)	\$6-7,000
	• Sanctuary painted by T&J Painting (cost approximate)	\$6,500
	• Nursery renovated with new oak cabinets	\$2,500
2006		
	• Stained Glass windows renovated by Bigelow Glass, Findlay	\$91,240
	• Heating/air conditioning upgraded into two zones (Fellowship Hall & Sanctuary), Ada Services, (cost approximate)	\$16,240
2007		
	• Pew cushions replaced by Women's Guild (Fine Touch Furniture) (cost approximate)	\$14,000
	• Church doors refinished by Birt's (cost approximate)	\$5,000
	• Parking lot paved (cost approximate)	\$3,500
2008		
	• Brickwork/tuck pointing by Birt's	\$25,000
2009-2010		
	• Kitchen renovated by church volunteers and Bontrager's Woodworking (cabinets, counters and flooring) (cost approximate)	\$50,000

2012		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trim on bell tower painted by Birt's. Fascia trim repaired on NW corner of building (outside pastor's study); leak repaired on NE corner of roof near bell tower (staining down NE wall of sanctuary) (cost approximate) 	\$7,500
2013		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New doors installed on Main St. & Lincoln Ave. by Big Bend Wood & Glass of Fredonia, PA. (Main St. doors \$14,500; Lincoln Ave. Doors \$14,000) 	\$28,500
2014		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brick restoration by Quality Masonry of Marion, OH (replaced bricks around building, tuck pointing & sealed, cost approximate) Porch on north side rebuilt. Bill Spar (cost approximate) 	\$37,000 \$11,000
2016		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New steps/handrail for north entrance (Lincoln Ave.) Provided by Crites Excavating of Elida, OH. Glass strips installed on Lincoln Ave. doors. Ordered custom glass from www.onedayglass.com online New sanctuary furnace, M&R Plumbing, Bluffton. Cost of new unit plus installation (cost approximate) 	\$6,400 \$250 \$3,000

*Messenger Estate Year

Appendix 4

The Church's Pastors

Thomas B. Clark	1841-1845	John L. Bardelmeier	1914-1917
John Ustick*	1845	John W. Slack	1918-1924
James Marquis*	1847	Coorvirt R. Thomas	1924-1927
William Young*		Everett G. Morris	1927-1930
R.M. Badeau*	1850	Walter A. Condon	1931-1942
W.M. Reed	1868-1870	Joseph Blackburn	1942-1944
John A. Meeks	1870-1872	Raymond M. Touvell	1944-1948
Robert Edgar	1872-1875	E. DeVer Walker	1948-1952
John Kelly*		Robert J. Butz	1953-1957
T.P. Johnson	1876-1877	James A. Anderson	1957-1961
C.K. Lehman	1877-1879	Aubrey R. Hancock	1962-1974
Zephaniah Campbell	1880-1900	Doyll Andrews	1975-1980
James F. Elder	1901-1907	James W. Kerr	1981-1990
Orlando B. Pershing	1907-1910	C. Scott Pyle	1991-1995
C.B. Beckes	1910-1914	Patrick D. Allen	1997-present

*Exact dates of service remain unknown

Appendix 5

Summary of Doctrine Held by the Presbyterian Church (1906)⁷⁰

1. One God; infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth, subsisting in mysterious and eternal trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
2. One Word; the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, all given by inspiration of God, and our only infallible rule of faith and practice.
3. One Condemnation; there being no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, because the carnal mind is enmity against God.
4. One Savior; the Lord Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, the power unto salvation from sin and endless death, by atoning expiatory sacrifice, through faith.
5. One Atonement for Sin; made by Jesus Christ in his obedience unto death, sufficient for all, adapted to all, taking every legal obstacle out of the way of all, and on these grounds to be offered to all.
6. One Spirit; God the Holy Ghost, through whose sovereign agency in regeneration, the soul, dead in sin, is made alive in Christ, and through whose sovereign agency in sanctification, the soul is changed more and more into the divine image from glory to glory.
7. One Life; the life hid with Christ in God the life eternal; begun when a sinner believes, and assured forever thereafter by the effectual and sovereign grace of God; so that once given this eternal life, no believer shall ever perish.
8. One Church; which is Christ's body, all the members of which, God hath from the beginning chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the Truth.
9. Two Sacraments; and only two, as ordained by Christ, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism being a sacrament wherein we have "sign and seal of ingrafting into Christ, of remission of sins, by His blood, and regeneration by His spirit," and the Lord's Supper being a sacrament wherein "the Lord's death is shewed forth," and the worthy receivers are, by faith, "made partakers of his body and blood, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace."
10. One Judgement; when the dead, small and great, shall stand before God, and every man shall be judged according to his works; and the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.

Appendix 6

Comparison of Two Presbyterian Denominations: Theology, Belief, and Ethics*

	Presbyterian Church (USA)	Evangelical Presbyterian Church
Jesus	The way and truth for Christians but ultimately only one of many ways to God. Many views	God incarnate and the only way to salvation. Holds to traditional Reformed views
Incarnation	Affirms Nicene understanding of fully human and fully divine. However, many diverse interpretations with no single view authoritative	Maintains traditional (Nicene) language and standards and Reformed understanding
Trinity	Trinitarian by its confessions, but allows and/or embraces views that undermine historic Trinitarian faith	Strongly embraces traditional (Nicene) standards
Language for God	Encourages new expressions such as describing the Trinity as Mother/Child/Womb or Rock/Redeemer/Friend. Discourages “Lord” and “lordship” language as sexist and patriarchal	Adheres to biblical and traditional vocabulary
Ground of Salvation	God’s universal love and acceptance	Grace of God enacted in Christ Jesus and received by faith
Bible/Scripture	Declared authoritative but accepts many ways to understand, interpret, and apply Scripture with none being understood as superior or necessarily true	God inspired and thus authoritative in all matters of faith and life. Scripture is over all creeds and confessions and church polity
Theological Pluralism & Universalism	Historically no, increasing trend is strong yes	No
Theological Essentials Affirmed & Expressed	Affirmed in principle but never listed, described, or defined; indeed, it is believed essentials cannot be named/defined	Yes. Definition of and adherence to essentials considered vital to church health and mission
Creeds and/or Confessions of Faith	Book of Nine Confessions	Westminster Standards with Essential theological tenets
Authority of Creeds and/or Confessions Affirmed	No. Viewed as historical documents that serve to guide but are effectively under polity	Yes, under Scripture but over polity and form of government. Single confession aids clarity
Evangelical Faith & Values Affirmed	Allowed but church is becoming increasingly hostile to Evangelical perspectives	Yes
Evangelism	Very poor through past decades. Initiative to plant 1001 new churches recently begun	Yes. Strong emphasis on church planting
Missions/Missional	Historically strong but past decades have seen sharp decline in mission work and funding of missionaries	Highly missional with strong, vital, and healthy work being done
Accountability Structures	No. Church discipline is rarely exercised and never theology	Yes. Church discipline considered vital. Wisely practiced
Call for Ethical Purity	No. Peace and unity seen as higher value	Yes

Ethical standards for sexuality for those being ordained	No national or constitutional standard. Local standards currently allowed but are being challenged in church courts and are likely to be disallowed	Yes. Sexual expression limited to marriage between a man and a woman or chastity in singleness
Ordain Practicing Homosexuals	Yes	No
Allow Same-Sex Marriage	No. But this issue has come up for vote in numerous General Assemblies with a closer vote each time. Will likely be approved soon	No. Marriage defined as between one man and one woman
Abortion	Declares no position but is effectively Pro-choice	Pro-life
Political Office / Lobby	Yes (Washington D.C.)	No

*Data correct at the time of preparation of chart.

Comparison of Two Presbyterian Denominations: Facts, Details, and Figures*

	Presbyterian Church (USA)	Evangelical Presbyterian Church
Year founded	1983	1981
Number of churches	10,466 (rapidly shrinking). At current rate PCUSA will cease to exist by 2060	364 (growing, having doubled in the last five years). Predicted to grow to 1000 over next several years [±]
Members	1,952,287 (loosing 2-3 percent or 50-60,000+ per year; almost 64,000 in 2011)	140,000
Average giving per member	\$900	\$2,769
Percentage of members attending on a Sunday	52 percent	94 percent
Missionaries per ten thousand members	1	10
Church Property	Owned by denomination, held in trust	Owned by congregation
Location of General Assembly office	Louisville, KY	Livonia, MI
Ordains Women (Pastors, Elders, Deacons)	Yes	Yes, but not universally. Currently very few women pastors in the EPC but number is increasing
Affiliated with Santa Barbara Presbytery	Yes	No
Santa Barbara Presbytery churches choosing to Join		None
Keep property?	Yes	Most likely
Insurance/Pension extended to same-sex partners	Yes	No
Character	Traditional mainline, liberal. Great variety among congregations	Traditional mainline, evangelical, Great variety among congregations

*Data correct at the time of preparation of chart.

[±]Numbers, as of 2016 were 575 churches with nearly 150,000 members.

Appendix 7

Essentials of Our Faith⁷¹

All Scripture is self-attesting and being Truth, requires our unreserved submission in all areas of life. The infallible Word of God, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is a complete and unified witness to God's redemptive acts culminating in the incarnation of the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible, uniquely and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, is the supreme and final authority on all matters on which it speaks.

On this sure foundation we affirm these additional Essentials of our faith.

1. We believe in one God, the sovereign Creator and Sustainer of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To Him be all honor, glory and praise for ever!
2. Jesus Christ, the living Word, became flesh through His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit and His virgin birth. He who is true God became true man united in one Person forever. He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. On the third day He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He now is our High Priest and Mediator.
3. The Holy Spirit has come to glorify Christ and to apply the saving work of Christ to our hearts. He convicts us of sin and draws us to the Savior. Indwelling our hearts, He gives new life to us, empowers and imparts gifts to us for service. He instructs and guides us into all truth, and seals us for the day of redemption.
4. Being estranged from God and condemned by our sinfulness, our salvation is wholly dependent upon the work of God's free grace. God credits His righteousness to those who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation, and thereby justifies them in His sight. Only such as are born of the Holy Spirit and receive Jesus Christ become children of God and heirs of eternal life.
5. The true Church is composed of all persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit are united together in the body of Christ. The Church finds her visible, yet imperfect, expression in local congregations where the Word of God is preached in its purity and the sacraments are administered in their integrity, where scriptural discipline is practiced, and where loving fellowship is maintained. For her perfecting, she awaits the return of her Lord.
6. Jesus Christ will come again to the earth – personally, visibly, and bodily – to judge the living and the dead, and to consummate history and the eternal plan of God. “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” (Rev. 22:20)
7. The Lord Jesus Christ commands all believers to proclaim the gospel throughout the world and to make disciples of all nations. Obedience to the Great Commission requires total commitment to “Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.” He calls us to a life of self-denying love and service. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” (Eph. 2:10)

These Essentials are set forth in greater detail in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

In Essentials Unity
In Non-Essentials Liberty
In All Things Charity

Appendix 8

Mission Statement of the Ada Presbyterian Church (1993)*

Created in the image of God, loved through Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we the people of the Ada Presbyterian Church commit our lives, in accordance with the Reformed Tradition, to ...

- Accepting people for who they are by loving each other and forgiving sin in one another for the sake of Christ.
- Encouraging active participation by all members and commitment to giving time, talent and resources.
- Offering sound Christian education for all age groups based on the teachings of Scripture.
- Responding to the challenge of evangelism, through prayer, training and witnessing.
- Providing for the needs of others through local, national and international outreach programs.
- Nurturing spiritual, emotional and physical needs.

By committing ourselves to these goals, and being honest before God, we pledge ourselves to the process of spiritual growth and transformation. In this, we affirm that Scripture will be our guiding light:

Deuteronomy 6:5 "...Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."

John 15:12 "...Love each other as I have loved you."

*Drafted in October, 1993, by members and friends. Approved by Session on November 30, 1993.

Appendix 9

Vision Statement of the Ada Presbyterian Church*

Gather: We **Gather** in worship that is grounded and fresh.

Worship is the hub of the church's life and activity. It is the vision of our church that our members **Gather** for worship with eagerness, participate actively and look for God's presence. When we gather for worship, we gather not only to glorify God, but also to be refreshed by the Lord: he strengthens us with preaching (Rom. 16:25); he stirs our hearts with singing (Col. 3:16); he meets us at the Lord's table (1 Cor. 10:16); and he gives us a new identity and purpose in baptism (Titus 3:5). Worship truly is the "privilege and primary duty" of the local congregation (*EPC Book of Order* 4.2).

It is furthermore the vision of our church that our worship practices be **grounded** in the historical life of the church, yet **fresh** in the way they interact with the present day. The *EPC Book of Worship* (2.4A) strikes this balance by instructing us to look for guidance on worship from the following three sources: Scripture, the Reformed tradition, and the circumstances of the congregation. The first two arise out of the past; the latter out of the present. Looking to the past helps us overcome our own cultural blinders and grants us the collective wisdom of the larger church. Looking to the present reminds us that our worship must be globally minded and intelligible to the local church and community.

Practically, we will retain the classic practices of worship (the confession of sin for example) on most Sundays, but also look for ways to keep them fresh (perhaps by singing the words of confession). One might think of the interaction between the old and the new as a song in the hands of a skilled jazz ensemble. An established tune is the foundation for the music, but in the hands of talented musicians, the tune is also improvised and expanded, surprising and delighting those listening. Likewise, old worship practices can be made fresh through thoughtful worship planning and preparation.[±]

Grow: We **Grow** in communities of support, study, and outreach.

It is the vision of our church that all of our members **grow** in their walk with the Lord. There are many avenues towards Christian growth and discipleship. Throughout the New Testament and the history of the church, we see Christians growing as they **support** one another with prayer, counsel, and material goods (James 5:16, Prov. 27:17; 1 John 3:17); we see Christians growing as they **study** the Word of God together (Acts 17:1-12); and we see Christians growing in their faith as they **reach out** with the good news of the gospel to others (Acts 4:29-35).

As a result, it is the vision of our church that **we grow through communities of support, study, and outreach**. Practically, we want to see the members of our church develop spiritual friendships and become involved in small groups. Not only will these small groups gather for Bible study, but also for support and outreach. Support might take the form of prayer, counsel,

financial assistance, outings, or shared meals. Outreach might take place as groups welcome newcomers, meet in public places, or look for opportunities to take on an existing outreach ministry of the church or develop a new one.

Go: We **Go** to speak and serve in the name of Jesus Christ.

It is the vision of our church that we go, that we move outward in witness towards those who don't know the love of the Triune God. Jesus gave us the great commission in Matthew 28, telling us to go and make disciples of all nations. This outward focus is consistent with the nature of God, who intervened in our lives by sending Jesus Christ to **speak** the good news and to **serve** us by healing the sick, caring for the poor, and offering his life on the cross for our sins.

As a result, effective outreach must do two things: it must **speak** the good news of Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:14-15), and it must **serve** the real-life hurts and needs of our neighbors (Matthew 25:40). As a result, it is the vision of our church **to go to speak and serve in the name of Jesus Christ**. Practically, we will especially seek out those ministries and mission opportunities that allow us to speak about our faith with others, to pray with them, and to share the hope we have in Jesus Christ. At the same time, we will love those with whom we speak, seeking to serve them by meeting physical needs such as hunger, poverty, illness, or other forms of suffering and human need.

* Approved May, 2016

± Today, Gregory Jones calls this approach "Traditional Innovation," Constance Cherry calls it "Convergence Worship," and Robert Webber has called it "Ancient Future Faith."

Appendix 10

Sabbatical Policy of the Ada Presbyterian Church^{65*}

A ministry sabbatical is modeled after the biblical concept of rest and Sabbath-keeping. Given the spiritual, emotional, and physical demands of pastoral ministry, the church wishes to grant a set time for the renewal of the pastor.

It is expected that the sabbatical may take shape in a variety of ways: reading, praying, journaling, reflecting, learning, traveling, enhancing family time, resting, pursuing hobbies, attending spiritual retreats, seeking counseling or care, writing, or working on a special project are all possibilities for the sabbatical time.

Our full-time pastor will be eligible for a sabbatical after six consecutive years of ministry at the church. For every year of service, two weeks of sabbatical time accrue with a maximum of twelve weeks possible. On this schedule, in the seventh year, the pastor would be eligible for a twelve-week sabbatical. The process will then begin anew with the year following the sabbatical counting as year one.

The pastor will be released from the duties of ministry and paid full salary and benefits during the sabbatical. The Session will be responsible for providing pulpit supply and arranging pastoral care for the congregation during the pastor's sabbatical.

The pastor will contribute all of his continuing education weeks and half of his vacation time to the sabbatical in the year it is taken. It is further agreed that the pastor will not use the sabbatical time to pursue other pastoral calls.

It is expected that the pastor will work with Session to develop a plan for the sabbatical in the months leading up to it. The pastor will provide a report to the Session at the conclusion of the sabbatical.

*Adopted December 6, 2015.

Appendix 11

Standing Committees, Organizations, and Personnel*

Board of Session

Tom Kier (Clerk)
Phyllis Gossel
Tom Gossel
Tara Erickson
Dale Madison
Marcia Siebesma
Jeff Smith
Barb Ulrey
Jim Ulrey
Patrick Allen, Moderator

Board of Deacons

Christa Preston
Gwen Jochims
Doug Atkinson
Debbie Roehrle
Rodney Roehrle
Rema Suniga

Vision Team

Deb Allen
Patrick Allen
Julie Ludanyi
Dale Madison
Melinda Smith

Worship and Music

Jeff Smith
Marcia Siebesma
Phyllis Gossel
Rema Suniga
Diane Atkinson
Jill Ogle
Melinda Smith
Albert Suniga
Debbie Roehrle
Deb Allen

Evangelism and Missions

Tara Erickson
Tom Gossel
Julie Ludanyi
Jeff Smith
Barb Ulrey

Secretary and Treasurer

Albert Suniga

Custodian

Vi Huff

Christian Education

Phyllis Gossel
Jim Ulrey

Stewardship and Membership

Albert Suniga

Property

Dale Madison

Women's Guild

Phyllis Gossel
Marcia Siebesma
Marie Bischoff
Rema Suniga
Diane Atkinson
Eilene Hubbard
Vi Huff
Julie Ludanyi
Claudia Madison
Debbie Roehrle
Barb Ulrey
Melinda Smith
Abigail Akyeampong

*October, 2016

Appendix 12

The Ada Presbyterian Church Bylaws*

PREAMBLE

The congregation of the Ada Presbyterian Church has been in existence continuously since August 21, 1841. The congregation originally met in Huntersville, OH, a few miles southeast of Ada. Fifteen years later, in 1855, the congregation transferred to Johnstown, which was later renamed Ada. After a great revival in the years 1888-1889, the church was vibrant and growing. Several societies were organized to promote the cause of Christianity. Thirteen members were studying for the ministry. To keep pace with the congregation's growth, the present-day building was constructed in 1890 at the cost of \$9,735. In the 1920s, with a membership of 440, the church set an ambitious membership goal of 500, stating, "let 'soul winning' be the object of all our planning, and our 'hobby' be evangelism; and our slogan be 'the world for Christ, Christ for the world, and me for my next door neighbor.'" Building on this strong history, the church remains in existence today and faces the future with confidence, believing God's grace and power will go with us for the purpose of work and worship according to the Christian faith, doctrine, and Word as set forth in the Holy Scriptures.

WHEREAS: it is the desire, purpose, and instruction of this church and this corporation to operate and be governed as provided for herein through these bylaws or as may otherwise be referenced herein.

Therefore, the following bylaws for the said church and corporation are hereby adopted:

IDENTITY AND OBLIGATIONS

- A. The Ada Presbyterian Church, of Ada, Ohio, is a congregation of believers ascribing to the Reformed Presbyterian traditions, and as such, is elder led, and recognizes the Westminster Confession of Faith as an accurate description of our theology, all subject to the Word of God set forth in scripture.
- B. In accordance with the dictates of conscience, the Ada Presbyterian Church is in voluntary association with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (by vote of the congregation on October 14, 2012), and as such, recognizes that its Book of Order, along with the Westminster Confession of Faith, are the guiding and governing documents for the denomination and this church.
- C. So long as this relationship shall exist, these documents, in conjunction with these bylaws, shall order the business of the church. Inherent in maintaining this relationship is the mutual recognition of scripture as the Word of God, Jesus Christ alone the Lord of all and the way of salvation, and the calling of all God's people to holiness in all aspects of life.
- D. During such times when the church is affiliated with a denomination, it is proper for the church to follow the Constitution of any such denomination to the extent permissible by the dictates of conscience.

- E. The term “Church” is used herein to refer to the Ada Presbyterian Church, shall be understood to include the terms “Congregation” and “Corporation” unless otherwise specified.

PURPOSE

The Ada Presbyterian Church is an incorporated religious organization, Christian and ecclesiastical in nature, established for the purpose of gathering to worship God and carrying out the sacraments established by Christ: baptism and the Lord’s Supper; For preaching and teaching the Word of God and for prayer, singing, and praise; For encouraging the church’s members through discipleship and accountability, building mature Christian people who grow in all the graces of Christ according to Holy Scriptures; For evangelism and outreach into the community and world; and to voluntarily associate with a Reformed denomination in accordance with the dictates of conscience, in aid of all these purposes.

MEMBERS

- A. The members of the church shall be those persons who are on the Active Membership Roll of the church, maintained by Session. Session may add or cull membership at its discretion, as is appropriate for the circumstances, and may reference the Book of Order for guidance on membership criteria. Session shall have the final say as to membership status, although may, at its discretion, refer the matter to another judicatory for determination.
- B. As required by the laws of the State of Ohio, only the members meeting the above qualification plus full legal age, as specified by the laws of the State of Ohio at the date of any particular meeting in question, shall be eligible to vote on questions dealing with property and matters that are strictly the business of the corporation as a legal entity. Otherwise, all members of the church are eligible to vote at all stated and special meetings of the church.

MEETINGS

- A. The Annual Ecclesiastical Meeting of the church shall be held following morning worship on the fourth Sunday of January following the annual Corporate Meeting for the transaction of any business properly coming before each meeting.
- B. Special meetings of the church may be called by the Session. Session may call a special meeting if requested by the Presbytery. The Session shall call a special meeting of the church membership promptly upon receipt of a petition signed by at least one-fourth of the members of the church, provided that such petition states clearly the purposes for the meeting.
- C. The purpose of all special meetings shall be clearly stated in the call of such meetings and no other matter save that specified in the call may be considered.
- D. Public notice of the time, place, and purpose of all meetings of the church shall be given at a regular service of worship from the pulpit and/or in the church bulletin on at least two Sundays preceding the meeting, including the Sunday of the special meeting.

Additional means of announcing the call of the meeting are encouraged, but not required, (e.g. mailing, e-mail, internet posting).

- E. The Quorum of a meeting of the congregation shall be not less than one fifth of the members on the Active Membership Rolls.
- F. All meetings of the church shall be open and closed with prayer. Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with appropriate legislative rules of order.
- G. All voting shall be in person. Voting by proxy is not allowed.
- H. The Moderator of the Session will preside over all meetings of the church. In case the moderator is ill or otherwise unable to be present or if the Pastor or Elders agree that the subjects to be discussed require it, a Presbyterian clergy member may be invited by the Session to preside in the Senior Pastor's stead. A moderator pro tem may be appointed from Session to moderate the meeting.
- I. The Clerk of Session shall be the secretary of all meetings of the church. In the event of his/her inability to serve, the Session shall designate a person to serve as secretary.

MEETINGS AS A CORPORATION

- A. The Annual Meeting of the Corporation shall be held on the fourth Sunday of January following the morning service of worship and preceding the Annual Ecclesiastical Meeting for the transaction of any business that is specifically legal and corporate in nature.
- B. Special meetings of the Corporation may be called by the Trustees and shall be called by the Trustees at the request of the Session.
- C. The President of the Board of Trustees or other member of the board designated by it shall convene meetings of the Corporation and shall preside.
- D. The Secretary of the Board of Trustees shall be the Secretary of the meetings of the Corporation. In his/her inability to serve, the Board of Trustees shall designate a secretary for the meeting.
- E. Additional provisions concerning meetings of the Corporation shall be the same as those of Article 3, Paragraph B, and Article 4, Paragraphs C, D, E, and G of these bylaws, and corporate meetings shall be opened and closed in prayer.

OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

- A. The affairs of the congregation and of the corporation shall be governed by the Session, which shall have full administrative responsibility for the church, both spiritual and corporate. The Session shall be the Board of Trustees for the purpose of the secular law. The Session shall have all powers and duties necessary and appropriate for administering the affairs of the corporation and of the congregation except as may be reserved for others or limited by the Articles of Incorporation, these bylaws, or the Laws of the State of Ohio.
- B. The Session shall consist of the ruling elders, who shall be commissioned members of the church in good standing, duly elected to a term of active service on the Session, and a moderator who shall be the installed pastor (or in case the office of Pastor is open, an ordained Presbyterian clergy member, by invitation of the Session) along with any associate pastor or pastors.

1. There shall be nine (9) members on the Session, in addition to the moderator, divided into three equal classes, one class of which shall be elected each year at the annual meeting for a three-year term. Elders may be re-elected to serve a consecutive three-year term on the Session. An elder who has served all or part of two consecutive terms shall be ineligible for re-election for one year.
 2. All boards and/or committees of the church, including the Board of Deacons and the Board of trustees, except in matters of a corporate, legal nature and/or pertaining to the holding of real property, function under the direction and jurisdiction of the Session.
 3. The Session shall be empowered to act on behalf of the church with respect to all business matters, including but not limited to contracting, conveying, encumbering or exchanging property, both real and personal. The church may have and hold property in its own name. The Session shall be empowered to hold property in trust for the church, as allowed at law, or for others, reserving the right of revocation in all instances. All property held in trust must be in an express trust. In any instance where a court of law or other judicatory determines that an express trust exists, whether written or not, such trust is to be deemed revocable, and questions of ownership should be resolved favoring ownership by this church, such being the intent of the church.
 4. The Session shall elect its clerk from the ruling elders who are members of the church, including those who are members of the Session, for a term of service to be determined by the Session.
 5. Vacancies on the Session by reason of death or resignation shall be filled at the next annual meeting of the corporation unless the Session determines by resolution to call a special meeting for the purpose of filling the vacancy.
 6. The Session, as Trustees, shall report annually to the corporation an exhibit of all real property and other corporate holdings of the church together with an estimate of expenses and needs in the year ahead to maintain the corporate holdings.
- C. The Board of Deacons. The Board of Deacons shall consist of the deacons who shall be commissioned members of the church and in good standing, duly elected to a term of service on the Board of Deacons and shall have such responsibilities as are designated by the Session. There shall be six (6) Deacons, subject to the same division and election procedure as the Session.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

- A. There shall be a representative Nominating Committee. It shall consist of one member designated by and from the Session, who shall be named as the chairperson; one member designated by the Board of Deacons; and other members in sufficient numbers to constitute a majority of the committee, none of whom may be active members of the above boards, shall be chosen from the congregation.
- B. According to the above formula, the Nominating Committee shall be composed of one active elder, one active deacon, and at least three members from the congregation. The members of the congregation shall be nominated from the floor at the annual meeting of the church.

- C. The Committee shall bring to the annual meeting of the church nominations of eligible persons for all vacancies to be filled in positions as officers of the church, in number equal to the number of positions to be filled.
- D. The Pastor shall be a member, ex-officio without vote, of the Nominating Committee.
- E. The Committee will convene at a meeting called by the Pastor, or in his absence at the call of the Clerk of Session, at least ninety (90) days prior to the next annual meeting to organize.

ELECTION OF A PASTOR

- A. The church may call a pastor. Session shall have the authority to provide for the call and shall have the authority to appoint a Nominating Committee towards those ends, as it shall deem appropriate. The congregation shall set the terms of the call. The Pastor's Nominating Committee shall consist of seven (7) persons, representative of the whole church, to select a candidate for the office of Pastor.
- B. The Nominating Committee shall place the names of seven (7) persons, representative of the whole church, in nomination to be elected as a Pastor's Nominating Committee. Additional information may be submitted from the floor.

CHURCH TREASURER

- A. The church treasurer shall be an elected officer of the church who shall be elected by the Session for such term as the Session shall decide.
- B. While serving in the office of treasurer, the church treasurer shall be eligible to serve as an active member of any of the official boards of the church.
- C. The church treasurer shall, although functioning as a member of the church staff and receiving immediate guidance from the head-of-staff, be under the direction and authority of the Session.
- D. The church treasurer shall receive the funds and collections of the church, and its organizations as desired, and shall keep account of the source and designations of all the funds, and shall disburse funds as directed by the duly authorized.
- E. The treasurer shall report regularly to Session and shall prepare for distribution a complete financial report at the close of each calendar year.

AFFILIATION

- A. These bylaws expressly affirm the right of the congregation to consider and decide upon matters of denominational affiliation according to the dictates of conscience.

BYLAW AMENDMENTS

- A. These bylaws may be amended subject to the charter of the corporation and the laws of the State of Ohio at any Annual Meeting, or at any Special Meeting, by a majority vote of the voters present, provided that a full reading of the proposed changes shall have been made in connection with the call of the meeting.

- B. If any amendment or repeal of the rules of the bylaws is to be presented at either the Annual Meeting or Special Meeting, written notice of the meeting together with a copy of the proposed amendment(s) shall be furnished each eligible voter of the church two weeks prior to such meeting.

*Revisions passed at congregational meeting, March 17, 2013.

Appendix 13

Membership Roster*

AGIN, Jacob	FETROW, Kelly	PRESTON, Madison
AGIN, Jasmine	GILBERT, Ruth	REESE, Dennis
AGIN, Nick	GILBERT, Steve	REESE, Sue
AGIN, Rob	GOSSARD, Madison	ROEHRLE, Debbie
AGIN, Sherry	GOSSARD, Melissa	ROEHRLE, Rodney
AKYEAMPONG, Abigail	GOSSARD, Sidney	SIEBESMA, Marcia
AKYEAMPONG, Albert	GOSSEL, Phyllis	SIMON, Karen
ALLEN, Debra	GOSSEL, Thomas	SMITH, Elita
ALLEN, Jon	HAIGHT, Howard	SMITH, Jeff
ALLEN, Nathan	HAYES, Ruth	SMITH, Jeremiah
ALLEN, Noah	HIESTER, Rebecca	SMITH, Lydia
ALLEN, William	HUBBARD, Eilene	SMITH, Melinda
ATKINSON, Bryce	HUBBARD, Richard	SUMNER, Jennifer
ATKINSON, Diane	HUFF, Charlie	SUNIGA, Albert
ATKINSON, Doug	HUFF, Viola	SUNIGA, Rema
AWAD, Elvira	JOCHIMS, Gwen	TIMMERMAN, Lee Ann
BAUMGARTNER, Adam	KATAYAMA, Olga	ULREY, Barb
BAUMGARTNER, Sheila	KIER, Erica	ULREY, James
BISCHOFF, Marie	KIER, Karen	ULREY, Katie
BROWN, Chris	KIER, Thomas	ULREY, Neisha
CLARK, Francis	LUDANYI, Julie	ULREY, Ryan
CLUM, Frances	MADISON, Claudia	UMPHRESS, Janice
ELLIOTT, Margaret	MADISON, Dale	WOLF, Ann
ERICKSON, Abigail	McPHERON, Helen	WOLF, Charles
ERICKSON, Tara	OGLE, Jill	YOUNG, Kent
EVERETT, Eleanor	PRESTON, Christa	YOUNG, Shane
FETROW, David	PRESTON, Kelly	ZIMMERMAN, Jake
		ZIMMERMAN, June

*August, 2016

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***“To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy – to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.”
(Jude 1:24,25)***

