

HISTORICAL SKETCH

UNION SPRINGS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1953-1978

Compiled by

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Elder and Historian

FOREWORD

In attempting to record the history of this church for the twenty-five year period following the one hundredth anniversary celebration, the writer must rely largely on the minutes of the Session for that period.

The Clerk of the Session in the early part of the period was George L. McMillan, and he is to be highly commended for his clear, concise and accurate recording of the work of the Session, and this writer is grateful to him and to other clerks of the Session for their excellent records upon which much of this account will be based. It will be the purpose of this writer to delve into these minutes and hopefully to be able to furnish some interpretations and explanations of actions of the Session as they relate to church life in general.

It may be proper here to show how the minutes of the Session of the church are preserved. As each minute book is completed, it is sent to the library in Montreat, N.C., and this has been done throughout the life of the church. A writer from a northern university, in requesting permission to use these minutes in writing a history of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, stated that this church was the only one in the country with complete records on file in the library at Montreat. The last book sent to the library was checked out to be used in the writing of this account while the writer and his wife Regene, accompanied Reverend Willard Hurlburt and his wife, Pat, to North Carolina to attend the wedding of Dirk Carlson to Pam Pinkston.

After the one hundredth anniversary celebration, the church settled down to routine operation with fond memories of the great day and with hopes that we could continue in the splendid tradition of the days which had been remembered and celebrated on July 26, 1953.

In the Session minutes of September 6, 1963, this entry is found: "In view of a conflicting engagement in Dr. H.E. Russell's church, it was voted to approve the change of our week of Special Evangelistic Services from October 4th - 9th to September 27th - October 2nd." Present at this meeting were Reverend R. Clyde Douglas and Elders McNair, Simmons, Cox, with G.L. McMillan as Clerk. Dr. Russell came and on the date set forth in the minutes, gave inspiration and hope in a series of brilliant sermons enjoyed by the members of our church and by many guests from other churches in Union Springs and from outlying communities.

In a Session meeting on October 1, 1953, Gus Orum, Jr. expressed his desire to unite with our church and after having been examined, was admitted on profession of faith, and on October 11, 1953, Mrs. Mary Robins Rainer was granted her church letter to unite with the Altavista Presbyterian Church of Altavista, Georgia.

January 3, 1954 - Mrs. Eleanor Douglas Kozunas requested her letter to unite with the Sunton Temple Memorial Presbyterian Church of Washington, D.C., and Mrs. F.B. Robins united with our church by affirmation.

January 20, 1954 - Mrs. Florence R. Hayes was granted her letter to unite with Shades Valley Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama. In a report to the Presbytery, it was shown that the church had 6 elders, 15 deacons, and a total membership of 126. The pastor's salary was listed as \$1,800.

July 11, 1954 - In a congregational meeting the following men were elected to the office of deacon: W.E. Rainer, Phil Richardson, and Alfred F. Cook. Richardson and Cook were ordained and installed. Rainer, having already been ordained was also installed.

Mr. and Mrs. C.B. Creason united with our church by letter from Spring Hill Presbyterian Church in Spring Hill, Alabama.

January 7, 1955 - A letter of dismissal to Raymond McGough was approved for him to unite with the First Methodist Church of Fayette, Alabama.

March 6, 1955 - Word was received that Dr. F.W.A. Bosch, a former pastor of this church had passed away. The Session voted to send a suitable resolution to his family.

April 3, 1955 - This was a red letter day for the church as eight new members were welcomed. They were as follows: William Ronald Bates, Michael Stephen Creason, Carolyn Cox, Rebecca Eugenia Varner, Martha Elizabeth Varner, Charles Murphy Archibald, Ruth Ellen Archibald, and Benjamin Dwight Hixon. Also, it was announced that Reverend R. Clyde Douglas had invited Dr. John Leith to preach the commencement sermon in our church.

April 20, 1955 – Letters of dismissal were granted to Mr. and Mrs. J.D. Cade and Marcia Cade Cross to unite with the First Presbyterian Church of Sylacauga, Alabama. Mr. Bixler of Montgomery was named as commencement speaker and Dr. H.E. Russell was to be invited to conduct the evangelical services in October.

August 28, 1955 – Letters of dismissal were granted to Malcolm Cook to unite with the First Presbyterian Church of Hartford, Alabama and to Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Robins to unite with the First Presbyterian Church of Selma, Alabama.

September 11, 1955 – In a congregational meeting, C.B. Creason was nominated and elected to the office of Deacon.

October 6, 1955 – Mrs. Bobbie Ruth Watson Dunaway was received into our church from the First Baptist Church of Union Springs.

October 6, 1955 – Mr. and Mrs. O. Richardson Hamilton and Mrs. Sarah M. Richardson were received into our church by letters.

January 10, 1956 – The Session voted to write Elder S.J. King a letter expressing sorrow about his illness and to let him know that he was missed at church services and Session meetings. Reverend R. Clyde Douglas stated that he would retire after this year and that plans should be made in the near future to secure someone to fill our pulpit at the beginning of 1957.

February 26, 1956 – A resolution was adopted to express the sorrow of the Session and congregation over the death of Elder S.J. King, 1883-1956, on January 25, 1956. Mr. King had served as a deacon in the Bethel Presbyterian Church prior to moving to Union Springs and was elected to that same office in our church. In 1951 he was elected a ruling elder.

April 15, 1956 – Mrs. Octavia Moore Collier requested her letter to unite with the Winter Park Presbyterian Church of Winter Park, Florida and this letter was granted.

June 3, 1956 – Sherrod B. Hixon was granted at his request a letter of dismissal to unite with the Trinity Presbyterian Church of Montgomery. The pastor read a letter from Dr. H.E. Russell stating his tentative acceptance of an invitation to hold a week of services in our church on September 16-21.

August 26, 1956 – A congregational meeting was called for September 9, 1956, to concur with Presbytery in dissolving pastoral relations with Reverend R. Clyde Douglas as of December 31, 1956.

September 5, 1956 – The Session agreed to elect a manse committee to consist of one elder, one deacon, one member from the Women of the Church and one member from the Church-at-Large. G.L. McMillan was elected as a member from the Session.

September 9, 1956 – Congregational Meeting – The congregation voted to concur with Reverend R. Clyde Douglas in his request that pastoral relations be dissolved as of December 31,

1956. A pulpit committee was elected as follows: Cecil McNair from the Session (Convener), Philip Richardson from the Diaconate, Mrs. Alfred F. Cook from the Women of the Church, and Mrs. D.W. Parker from the Church-at-Large. Also, it was voted that we build a new manse, and a committee was elected and given full power to proceed with this construction. The members were H.H. Morgan, (Convener) from the Church-at-Large, G.L. McMillan from the Session, Donald C. Parker from the Diaconate, and Mrs. J.M. Varner from the Women of the Church.

September 16, 1956 – Dr. J.S. Cook united with our church by letter from the First Baptist Church of Union Springs. Dr. and Mrs. Malcolm Cook united with our church by letter from the Presbyterian Church of Hartford, Alabama.

October 7, 1956 – Mr. and Mrs. Paul Dunaway by request were granted letters to unite with Trinity Presbyterian Church of Montgomery.

November 4, 1956 – Mr. C.B. Cowan united with our church on statement of faith. He had been a member of this church as a boy and wanted to come back home.

December 2, 1956 – Mrs. R. Clyde Douglas and Clyde Campbell Douglas were by request granted letters of dismissal to unite with the church of their choice in Jacksonville, Florida. Since December 16, 1956, would be the last day for Reverend Douglas to occupy the pulpit, the Session voted to invite Dr. John Bowman to preach for us on December 23.

December 2, 1956 – Mr. James H. Ross, Jr. united with our church on profession of faith, having been baptized as an infant.

January 11, 1957 – A resolution was adopted as a memorial to Mr. Frank E. Wilson who departed this life on December 26, 1956. His services to the church as a deacon and as a member of the choir were highly praised and he was characterized as a good friend and neighbor. It was also told in this meeting that Mr. E.J. Pierce, another deacon, was very ill in a New Orleans hospital.

March 5, 1957 – A resolution was adopted In Memoriam of Mr. Edgar J. Pierce a long time deacon in the church and a former outstanding citizen of Union Springs who departed this life in New Orleans, Louisiana.

May 12, 1957 – In a congregational meeting moderated by elder G.L. McMillan, Reverend Robert Barron's name was placed in nomination for pastor of this church. There being no other names placed in nomination, Reverend Barron was extended a call unanimously by a show of hands.

June 14, 1957 – Reverend Robert Barron, who had received an official call to be pastor of this church, met with the Session to discuss the relationship. Members present were Cecil McNair, J.M. McKay and G.L. McMillan. Philip Richardson, who had served as chairman of the pulpit committee, was present by invitation. Reverend Barron accepted the call and agreed to begin his work as pastor on September 1, 1957.

July 7, 1957 – Groundbreaking services were held for the new manse.

September 8, 1957 – Mrs. Ann Hamilton Parker was received in to full fellowship and membership in this church having transferred from the First Baptist Church of Montgomery.

September 15, 1957 – Elder A.G. Simmons was elected delegate to Presbytery in Prattville at which meeting Revered Robert Barron was to be received into the Presbytery.

October 2, 1957 – The following men were nominated for the office of elder: C.B. Creason, Donald C. Parker, Philip M. Richardson and J.M. Varner. For the office of deacon Hunter B. Parker and H.H. Morgan were nominated.

October 6, 1957 – Mrs. Robert S. Barron was received by letter from the First Presbyterian Church of Albany, Georgia.

November 10, 1957 – In a congregational meeting, the budget for 1958 was adopted and the following were nominated for elders, two to be elected: C.B. Creason, D.C. Parker, Phil Richardson, and J.M. Varner. By secret ballot with the two receiving the highest number of votes to be elected, C.B. Creason and J.M. Varner were elected. There were only two nominations for deacon – H.H. Morgan and Hunter B. Parker and these two were elected by a show of hands.

January 12, 1958 – The newly elected officers, C.B. Creason and J.M. Varner as elders, H.H. Morgan and Hunter B. Parker as deacons, were examined by the Session and their election approved. The Session recessed until Sunday morning service in which these officers were properly ordained and installed. K.M. Varner, Jr., of Westminster Presbyterian Church, a brother of J.M. Varner, participated in the ceremony of laying on of hands.

January 29, 1958 – It was announced that Reverend Merle C. Patterson of Montgomery would conduct a revival service here on September 21–26. This would be Reverend Patterson's second time to bring his fine messages to our people. Mrs. Christine Dawson Renshaw was granted her letter to unite with a church of her choice. Deacon Charles M. Archibald was appointed to serve as Superintendent of the Sunday School succeeding the Elder J. M. (Mack) Varner who had served in this capacity for about fifteen years.

April 6, 1958 – Thomas Creason was received into the full fellowship of the church, his baptism to take place at the following Sunday morning service. Mr. and Mrs. Bowden Robins were granted their letters to unite with the Oak Park Presbyterian Church of Montgomery.

June 29, 1958 – It was voted to discontinue prayer meeting during July and August. Deacon Hunter Parker was elected director of the choir. A committee was appointed to write an In Memoriam resolution for Mr. Bowden Robins who had been a deacon in this church while residing in Union Springs.

September 28, 1958 – Mr. and Mrs. J.D. Cade were reunited with our church by letter from the First Presbyterian Church of Sylacauga, Alabama.

October 20, 1958 – Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth N. Cross united with this church by letter from the First Presbyterian Church of Sylacauga, Alabama.

November 2, 1958 – Mrs. W.R. Wood, Jr., (Malda Wellborn) reunited with our church by letter from Idlewild Presbyterian Church of Memphis, Tennessee.

February 3, 1959 – Miss Mary Kennon, a sister of Mrs. J.M. McKay, and a semi-invalid was united with this church by letter from the Westminster Presbyterian Church of Decatur, Alabama.

March 29, 1959 – The following young people met with the Session and united with our church by profession of faith: Peggy Ross, Patsy Ross, Lee Rainer, William E. Rainer, Jr., and B.E. Cox, Jr.

April 12, 1958 – It was announced that Reverend Merle C. Patterson had accepted an invitation to conduct revival services here in September.

April 20, 1959 – Mr. and Mrs. Ray Mason united with our church by letter from the First Presbyterian Church of Tuskegee.

July 20, 1959 – Elder Cecil McNair had composed a letter to be signed by members of the Session and sent to the family of S.J. Caldwell expressing sorrow at his passing and expressing appreciation of his service as good and faithful church member.

July 12, 1959 – Mrs. Joe W. Carroll and Walter Carroll were received into the church by letter from Trinity Presbyterian Church of Montgomery.

September 6, 1959 – Mr. and Mrs. Hunter B. Parker were granted letters to unite with the First Presbyterian Church of Donalsonville, Georgia. Members of the Session assured them that they would be greatly missed in our church.

November 22, 1959 – Frank Hixon was granted dismissal to unite with the Gainesville, Georgia Presbyterian Church.

October 23, 1960 - Dr. and Mrs. Malcolm Cook were granted letters of dismissal to unite with the Southminster Presbyterian Church of Birmingham, Alabama. The Diaconate had suggested that a committee be appointed to work on the project of additional space for the Sunday School and a committee was appointed with members as follows: Cecil McNair from the Session, D.C. Parker from the Diaconate, Philip Richardson from the Sunday School, Mrs. G.L. McMillan from the Women of the Church and Mrs. C.B. Creason from the congregation.

December 4, 1960 – Mr. and Mrs. Donald H. Segrest were received into our church by letter from the Tuskegee Presbyterian Church.

January 15, 1961 - Mrs. Joseph W. Carroll and Walter C. Carroll were granted letters of dismissal to unite with Trinity Presbyterian Church of Montgomery.

January 18, 1961 – The Clerk of the Session, G.L. McMillan, was asked to write the South Highlands Church in Birmingham for the letters of Dr. and Mrs. Gilbert E. Fisher.

January 29, 1961 – Dr. and Mrs. Gilbert E. Fisher were received as members of this church by letters from the South Highlands Presbyterian Church in Birmingham.

April 21, 1961 – Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth E. Arthur were received as members by letters from the Memorial Presbyterian Church of Columbus, Georgia.

July 2, 1961 – Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Nappier were received as members – Mr. Nappier by letter from the Elmwood Missionary Baptist Church of Lonedell, Missouri and Mrs. Nappier by letter from the Steelville Presbyterian Church of Steelville, Missouri.

August 27, 1961 – Mrs. Philippine Vardaman was received by letter from the First Baptist Church of Pell City, Alabama.

September 17, 1961 – Mrs. Howard C. (Sadie Collier) Smith was granted a letter of dismissal to unite with the Presbyterian Church of Butler, Alabama. She had joined this church on September 18, 1921.

September 24, 1961 – Donald Segrest, Ray Mason and Dr. Gilbert E. Fisher were nominated as candidates for deacon and Segrest and Mason were elected in a congregational meeting on October 8, 1961. Dr. Fisher declined the nomination in a letter to the Session and requested a vote of confidence if he was to continue teaching the Adult Sunday School Class. The Session was unanimous in requesting that he continue teaching the class but expressed the hope that he might be more regular in this assignment.

January 7, 1962 – The Session met at 10:20 before Sunday Morning Service and examined Donald Segrest and Ray Mason, newly elected deacons, and the examinations having been deemed satisfactory, they were duly ordained and installed at the morning service. Mr. and Mrs. Stewart Crawford were admitted as members on profession of faith.

April 18, 1962 – The following young people were united with the church: Julia Rose Hixon, Alfred F. Cook, Jr., Roger Parker, David Parker and Joe Varner, Jr.

April 18, 1962 – The Session in considering the racial situation, so much in the minds of our people in those days, took the following action: “We, the members of the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Union Springs, Alabama, being very much aware that the church is a house of God, and that all who assemble there to worship should do so in an orderly and reverent manner, being convicted also that all circumstances which would hinder worshippers from fulfilling this function should be avoided, therefore we adopt the following policy: (1) The congregation being duly assembled for worship, and the deacons on duty as ushers at this occasion, said deacons are to remain on duty at the doors until time for the sermon. (2) If a member of the Negro race or any other person accompanying him, shall seek to gain admittance during a worship service, the deacon on duty shall refer this person or persons to a church of his

own race. If said Negro insists upon being seated, he and his companion shall be ushered to a suitable seat by the deacon on duty. (3) In the event that the above-mentioned person or persons shall appear to be uncooperative, and the pastor deems it advisable in the interest of maintaining the proper spirit of worship and peace in the house of God, the pastor shall ask the congregation to stand and be dismissed with the Benediction.”

The occasion never rose again for this policy to be put into effect and as time passed the so-called racial crisis almost completely disappeared from our society.

April 22, 1962 – Mrs. Carolyn Wood Moore was granted her letter to unite with the Methodist Church of Midway, Alabama.

May 26, 1962 – Reverend Robert Barron requested that a congregational meeting be called for May 27, 1962 to concur with him in a request to Presbytery to dissolve his pastoral relations with our church so that he might accept a call from the Chapel In The Pines Presbyterian Church of Tampa, Florida. In a congregational meeting on May 27, 1962 the congregation concurred in Reverend Barron’s request that the pastoral relation be dissolved and his resignation was to become effective on June 12, 1962. It should be noted that during his pastorate the Session had granted him much time to continue his education at seminary, and that he was pastor of this church for almost five years. A pulpit committee was elected to secure the services of a suitable pastor.

May 27, 1962 – With Reverend Robert Barron moderating and Elders Creason, McNair, Varner and McMillan present, the Session appointed a pulpit committee as follows: C.B. Creason, Chairman ProTem from the Session, D.C. Parker from the Diaconate, Mrs. Leonora Rainer from the Women of the Church and Mrs. Edna Ruth Archibald from the congregation.

May 8, 1962 – In a congregational meeting with Elder C.B. Creason moderating, Philip Richardson gave a report from the Sunday School Planning Committee. The report informed the congregation that Mr. Richard Murray had submitted a bid of \$30,000 and a bid for partial completion of \$25,000. The congregation voted that we attempt to go for a complete job. The plans at that time were for an annex to be added to the sanctuary on the west side to be used for Sunday School activities. When the Brabham property was purchased and used as a Christian Education building, the plans for an annex to the sanctuary were abandoned.

November 26, 1962 – There was a discussion with C.B. Creason, chairman of the pulpit committee, and J.M. Varner, who was in charge of pulpit supply since Reverend Robert Barron departed, about pulpit supply while the church was without a pastor. Mr. Anderson of Columbia Seminary was commended and thanked for sending outstanding young men to bring us a message each Sunday.

March 31, 1963 – The Session with Elders Creason, McNair, Varner and McMillan present commissioned Cecil McNair to write a memorial for Mr. F.H. Anderson who was a life-time member of our church. A copy of the memorial was to be sent to the family, a copy kept for Session records, and a copy for publication in the Union Springs Herald. Among other statements in the memorial for Frank Hunter (Pop) Anderson, Sr., was this sentence: “His calm,

cheerful, and sympathetic bearing made it a pleasure to be in his presence, and his gentle smile and kindly judgment and philosophy invited confidence and good will.”

June 28, 1963 – In a congregational meeting C.B. Creason, Chairman of the Pulpit Committee, placed the name of Hugh Halverstadt in nomination for pastor, and he was duly elected.

September 15, 1963 – With Elders Creason, Simmons, Varner and McMillan present and Reverend Hugh Halverstadt sitting in, the Session elected G.L. McMillan to represent our church at Presbytery, and it was announced that Reverend Halverstadt would be examined by Presbytery on September 17.

September 22, 1963 – It was announced that Hugh Halverstadt had accepted a call to our church and the Bethel Church. At that time and at some time before and after, the pastor of this church served the Bethel Church by having services there at an earlier hour on Sunday morning then returning to this church for the eleven o'clock service. Bethel Church furnished a portion of the pastor's salary.

October 13, 1963 – With Hugh Halverstadt, Creason, McNair, Simmons, Varner and McMillan present it was voted to have a committee draw up resolutions for Mr. Donald W. Parker who departed this world on September 25, 1963. Mr. Parker at one time had been a member of this choir and had served as deacon since 1927. The committee was as follows: Cecil McNair from the Session, H.H. Morgan from the Diaconate and Leonora C. Rainer from the Women of the Church.

November 3, 1963 – It was voted to officially express appreciation to Dr. Merle C. Patterson for bringing us a series of inspiring messages during our revival in October and Elder Varner was commissioned to convey this expression to Dr. Patterson by letter.

November 26, 1963 – It was voted to write a letter to Dr. Robert Strong informing him that a majority of this congregation opposed the admission of Negro churches into the East Alabama Presbytery. A Parker Memorial committee was appointed to work out plans for a suitable memorial for the late Mabel M. Parker who had served so faithfully and efficiently as organist for many years. Those appointed to serve on this committee were Mrs. Kathleen Cope, Mrs. Leonora C. Rainer, Mrs. Margaret Varner, Phil Richardson and G.L. McMillan. It was also voted to purchase 150 new Presbyterian Hymnals and to ask members of the congregation to buy one or more hymnals as Christmas presents to the church at a cost of \$2.00 per book.

December 18, 1963 – The clerk, G.L. McMillan, was asked to write Mrs. Marjorie Fisher a letter of appreciation for playing the organ and to request that she become our regular organist.

January 28, 1964 – It was announced that Mr. James Halverstadt, Hugh Halverstadt's father, would preach for us on May 31, 1964. Mrs. Halverstadt, Hugh's mother, planned to accompany her husband on his visit to our church.

May 31, 1964 – In a congregational meeting George McMillan made a motion that the congregation buy the property of George L. Harden, III, a house and lot adjoining the church property on the west side, for \$7,000 to be used as a Christian Education building. Plans for building an annex to the church were indefinitely postponed.

May 29, 1964 – It was voted to write Mrs. Margaret Varner a letter of appreciation for playing the organ for several Sundays.

July 19, 1964 – The questionnaires mailed to the adult members of the congregation regarding the admission of Negro churches to the East Alabama Presbytery were tabulated. Eighty-five were sent out and sixty-five were returned. It was not shown in the minutes how the congregation voted, but the Negro churches were later admitted to the Presbytery.

The following were appointed as a committee to study and recommend repairs to the Christian Education building: George McMillan, Phil Richardson, Martha Creason, Marjorie Fisher, Mary Carlson, and Donald C. Parker.

September 22, 1965 – The Women of the Church were granted a free hand in remodeling the kitchen of the Christian Education building.

February 22, 1965 – The Session approved the use of the Sunday School collection for the month of February to buy a bicycle for a missionary. This amounted to \$37.62.

March 23, 1965 – A generous sum of money was donated by the Women of the Church to the Deacons to purchase a stove and refrigerator for the kitchen of the Christian Education building and the clerk was asked to express to them appreciation from the Session. The Strengthening Committee made a motion that the Session approve their recommendations for repairs to the Christian Education building which involved exterior repair, interior renovation, and interior furnishing.

May 9, 1965 – The Witness Committee was to schedule the showing of pictures taken by Dr. Gilbert E. Fisher during his recent visit to the Far East.

May 23, 1965 – Reverend Hugh Halverstadt advised the Session that he had received a call by the Christian Education Board to serve as Director of Higher Education for the General Assembly. A congregational meeting was called for May 30, 1965 to consider his request that Presbytery dissolve his pastoral relationship with our church, and in this congregational meeting the congregation concurred in this request. The following communication to him was presented: “Hugh Halverstadt has been minister and pastor of this congregation for about two years. It is impossible for one to be closely associated with the lives and problems of people for such a period of time and then to depart without leaving part of himself behind. Similarly, he necessarily carries with him a part of the people with whom he has lived. This church will be much richer for that part of Hugh Halverstadt which remains in Union Springs. His warmth and concern in times of trouble and grief, his eloquence, his enthusiasm, his dedication, his love and his deep sense of justice have made more of a mark on this church and this community than he can know. While there is a feeling of real personal loss at his leaving, we can find some comfort

in the knowledge that he is acknowledging a call for greater service to the Lord. Christian love is marked by the unique quality of growing even greater as it is given away. It is this love that we offer Hugh and in this spirit that we say goodbye. We wish for Hugh and Barbara a full and wonderful life and pray God's blessing on them and their future labors in His behalf."

May 26, 1965 – The following were nominated as members of a pulpit committee to seek a new pastor: George L. McMillan (Convener) from the Session, Philip M. Richardson from the Diaconate, Mrs. Bootie W. Cook from the Women of the Church, and Robert E.L. Cope, III, from the Church-at-Large.

It would be well at this point to list the names of those received into the church and of those withdrawing during the period May 28, 1962 – November 8, 1964.

Names of persons received: September 2, 1962 – Mrs. A.F. (Faye E.) Maxwell, September 22, 1964 – Mr. and Mrs. Leif Carlson, Jean Marie Carlson, Michael Richard Carlson, William Charles Cook, Kenneth L. McMillan and Clinton Ray Mason, Jr.; December 15, 1963 – Mr. and Mrs. James H. Gentry; March 21, 1964 – Mr. and Mrs. Oscar A. Moore; May 29, 1964 – Mrs. E.L. Harper; September 20, 1964 – Jane P. Cope, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth (Mildred) Haines, Bruce Haines, Mr. and Mrs. (Jean) Roger Welk, Ron Welk; November 8, 1964 – Mrs. Margarite McCaslan, Mrs. Ronald L. McLanahan.

Names of persons withdrawing: May 27, 1962 – Mr. and Mrs. Stuart Crawford; October 10, 1962 – Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth E. Arthur, Mr. and Mrs. Charles M. Archibald, Charles M. Archibald, Jr., Ellen Archibald; December 18, 1963 – Mrs. Myron W. Lowell (Harriett Norman); April 28, 1954 – George M. McLaurine, Jr.

September 20, 1965 – Financial arrangements were made to handle contributions made to the Gilbert E. Fisher Leprosy Fund, such money to be used by Dr. Fisher in his efforts to treat this dreaded disease in the Far East.

October 10, 1965 – It was voted to recommend to the Deacons that they give the pulpit committee authority to offer a prospective pastor a salary of \$4,600 per year. This amount plus the \$800 from Bethel Church would give the new man slightly more than the \$5,200 minimum salary set by Presbytery. In a meeting shortly thereafter voted that the salary to be offered to J. Fred Moore, a prospective pastor, in a proposed call should be \$4,400 and \$600 for car expenses. The prospect did not heed the call.

April 24, 1966 – David B. Antonson, a senior at Columbia Seminary, was present at this meeting and stated that he was giving our field consideration and would notify the Session if he felt the call to this church.

May 15, 1966 – In a congregational meeting with Cecil McNair as acting moderator and George McMillan acting as clerk, Philip M. Richardson, reporting for the pulpit committee, placed the name of David B. Antonson in nomination for pastor of this church. George McMillan was commissioned to submit the call to Presbytery. Reverend Antonson came to us and was duly installed as pastor.

August 3, 1966 – Pastor David B. Antonson, having been duly elected and installed, was moderator of this meeting. The following men were nominated for the office of Deacon: Roger Welk, Leif Carlson, and Edward M. Lindbloom. Shortly thereafter these men were duly ordained and installed.

November 16, 1966 – Philip M. Richardson was elected Sunday School Superintendent.

May 17, 1967 – A letter from Trinity Presbyterian Church requested the letter of Menzo David Fitzpatrick, but no record of membership could be located. The Session agreed that this church would join with the First Baptist Church in operating the Vacation Bible School.

January 4, 1967 – Mr. E.W. Antonson, the father of our pastor, was a visitor at this meeting. The following men were placed in nomination for church office: Phil Richardson and Donald C. Parker as Elders and Kenneth Haines and Henry G. Goodson as Deacons. Mr. Haines declined the nomination, but Mr. Goodson was ordained and installed shortly thereafter.

January 21, 1967 – A resolution was adopted memorializing Sterling Price Rainer, Jr. who had served as a Deacon in this church for forty-two years, having taken this office in 1925. The resolution, written by Cecil McNair, praised him as an outstanding citizen and stated that he will be long remembered for his calm, patient manner, his keen sympathy for those in trouble, and for his generous support of all worthy causes.

July 25, 1967 – It was told in this meeting that the James Doziers would present their infant for baptism on July 30, 1967.

September 20, 1967 – Donald H. Segrest was elected to serve as Sunday School Superintendent for the coming year.

November 5, 1967 – The Session voted to approve the budget of \$11,851.11 for 1968 as presented by the Deacons.

November 29, 1967 – It was announced that Mrs. N.B. Bald would be in charge of preparing and serving the meal for the Presbytery which would meet in our church in January of 1968. G.L. McMillan requested that the Session elect another Clerk of the Session to take office at the beginning of the new year.

December 20, 1967 – It was voted to write letters of appreciation and thanks to Mrs. D.C. Parker and Mrs. Roger Welk and those who assisted them with the splendid Christmas Pageant in December.

January 24, 1968 – These suggestions were made for improving our Sunday morning worship services: (1) Organ prelude before choir comes in; (2) Use hymns that have a tune people know; (3) Sermons of a more evangelistic nature; (4) Remind people to prepare themselves ahead of time. Bernard Cox was elected as representative to Presbytery to be held at our church with Donald Parker as alternate. Phil Richardson, Mack Varner, and Donald Parker

were appointed to serve Communion at Presbytery. Chilton B. Creason was elected as Clerk of the Session to begin serving February 1, 1968.

January 21, 1968 – Cecil McNair was commissioned to write a memorial resolution for the late John Myron McKay who had been a member of this church since 1899 and who had served as Deacon from 1918 until 1948, a period of thirty years, and as Elder since 1948, a period of twenty years. He had been a member of the choir for many years and a Sunday School teacher for Senior Boys.

April 17, 1968 – A resolution memorializing George Laurens McMillan was read and approved. This resolution, written by Elder McNair, expressed appreciation for the great service rendered to this church as Deacon, as Elder, and for many years as Clerk of the Session. It was stated that his life in the community and in the church has been such as to commend him as an example to all who would serve their God, their community and their country in a note-worthy manner.

July 22, 1968 – Reverend Antonson reported that a mail poll of the congregation indicated that twenty-one families desired their subscriptions to the Presbyterian Survey be discontinued. A letter from Edward M. Lindbloom requested that his position on the Board of Deacons be vacated due to his move from this community and this request was granted.

June 15, 1969 – The Session authorized a withdrawal of \$100 from the Sunday School account to help defray cost of attendance by young people on Young Life Campaign trip to Frontier Ranch in Colorado.

October 22, 1969 – Elder Philip Richardson reported that a plaque in memory of the late Elder George L. McMillan was being engraved and soon would be placed on the Communion table purchased in his memory.

December 18, 1969 – Reverend Antonson reported on the proposed opening on December 20 of the Down and Under Coffee House to provide wholesome and inexpensive entertainment for the young people of this community.

January 21, 1970 – Elder Cecil McNair was elected clerk of the Session for a term of two years. This motion was made by Elder Richardson, seconded by Elder Varner and passed: “The Session of the church will send a communication to J.M. Varner, Chairman of Classroom Site Committee of the board of trustees of the Bullock County Private School Foundation, containing the following message: In the event it becomes necessary for a private school to become established by the present board of trustees of the Bullock County Private School, this church is willing to enter into an equitable leasing agreement for the use of certain rooms of the Church’s Education Building under terms to be agreed upon later.”

March 11, 1970 – David Antonson asked that a congregational meeting be called for March 22, 1970 to concur in his request that the pastoral relation be dissolved so that he could accept a call from the Village United Presbyterian Church in Redford, Michigan, and to elect a pulpit committee to begin seeking a new pastor. In this congregational meeting the following

persons were elected to serve on this committee: Donald Parker from the Session, Henry Goodson from the Diaconate, Carol Porter from the Women of the Church, Cathy Thorne from the PYF, Bill Slater from the Church-at-Large and Leo Houston from the Bethel Church. The congregation also concurred with the request from David Antonson that the pastoral relationship be dissolved. We were again without a regular pastor.

October 25, 1970 – The Session voted to request that the Deacons arrange for a contribution to the Gulfstream Building Fund.

December 27, 1970 – In a congregational meeting with Phil Richardson acting as moderator and C.B. Creason as Clerk, the congregation voted to call Reverend David Crocker as its pastor. His salary was to be \$7,200 which would include \$1,200 for travel expenses and \$500 for utility expenses. Bethel Church also called Reverend David Crocker.

January 24, 1971 – With Elders Richardson, Creason, Parker, Varner, Cox and McNair present and David Crocker sitting in as a visitor, the date for the community service to welcome the new pastor, David Crocker, was set to be February 28, 1971 at 7:00pm.

April 18, 1971 – A congregational meeting was to be called on April 18, 1971 for the purpose of electing a new Deacon. Bill Salter was nominated by the Session and he was unanimously elected. He was ordained and installed on October 3, 1971.

May 23, 1971 – David Crocker was granted permission to take part in Air National Guard activities for one day a week.

November 17, 1971 – A copy of a letter to Mrs. Marjorie Fisher expressing thanks and appreciation for her many services and gifts to the church was read by Reverend David Crocker. Mrs. Fisher had to discontinue her services as organist because of ill health and the congregation greatly missed her wonderful music which had added so much to the worship services.

We pause here in this account to give a list of persons uniting with the church during the period October, 1965 – April, 1972: October 24, 1965 – Mr. and Mrs. Edward M. Lindbloom; April 9, 1966 – Hoyo Woodruff, Douglas Haines, Dudley Haines, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Porter; January 8, 1977 – Henry G. Goodson; March 22, 1967 – Dirk Carlson, Dana Owens, Debbie Owens, Cathryn Ann Thorn, Pamela Richardson; March 26, 1967 – Ken Cross, David Cross, Mrs. David Antonson; November 5, 1967 – Mrs. Carol Barnett; February 9, 1969 – Mrs. H.H. (Ada Kate) Morgan, Mrs. Evelyn Whitman; May 14, 1969 – Karen Carlson, Amy Richardson, Debra Mason; November 30, 1969 – Mrs. Pamela (William) Salter; March 21, 1971 – Mr. and Mrs. Froman Bruce Johnson; April 1, 1971 – Allie Carmen Cook, Sara Virginia Richardson; June 17, 1971 – Mrs. David (Kathleen June) Crocker; November 14, 1971 – Linda Mason Cox, James Byron Dozier; December 26 1971 – Mrs. Joe (Shirley Capps) Varner; February 27, 1972 - Mrs. Rita Faye Craft; March 26, 1972 – Mr. and Mrs. Thomas H. Vodenik, Janet Vodenik; March 29, 1972 – Cameron Segrest, Mrs. Mary Linda Roughton; April 1, 1972 – Donald Moore Parker, Anderson Hembree, Mr. and Mrs. A.H. (Bill) Hembree, Robert Rosson Hembree, Elizabeth Marie (Lisa) Hembree.

Members withdrawing during this period: June 7, 1965 – Mrs. Annie Mae Cameron; January 21, 1967 – Mrs. Mary White Carney; October 16, 1968 – Mr. and Mrs. Edward M. Lindbloom; March 9, 1969 – Mrs. Billy Jo Vardaman; June 15, 1969 – J.T. (Sonny) Wood; July 30, 1969 – Mrs. H.S. (Margaret) Banton; February 18, 1970 – Patricia Cox; July 12, 1970 – Mrs. David (Judith) Antonson; August 23, 1970 – Mrs. A.G. Simmons; October 10, 1971 – Kitty Cope; February 23, 1972 – Sam Stewart.

October 8, 1972 – In a congregational meeting Donald Parker placed the names of Bruce Johnson and Thomas Vodenik in nomination as Deacons. They were elected by acclamation.

November 22, 1972 – The Session voted to invite Reverend Ben Wilkerson to conduct a week's revival from February 11 to February 18. This date had to be changed later to February 4-11 due to a conflict.

December 20, 1972 – A Men-of-the-Church meeting was planned for January 10, 1973 at 7:00pm with Elder Mack Varner in charge of the arrangements.

February 11, 1973 – Reverend David Crocker reported that the Assembly of God Church had been destroyed by an accumulation of snow and the Session agreed to let the congregation of the destroyed church use the Presbyterian Church building on a basis to be arranged so as not to interfere with the services of the Presbyterian Church.

April 15, 1973 – A motion was made and carried to call a congregational meeting on April 29 to concur with Reverend David Crocker in the dissolution of the pastoral relation with the church to become effective on May 31, 1973. The congregation concurred in this request and elected the following persons to serve on the pulpit committee to seek a new pastor: J.M. Varner from the Session, Roger Welk from the Diaconate, Hoyo Woodruff from the congregation, Mrs. Ada Kate Morgan from the Women of the Church, and Amy Richardson from the PYF. Elder Richardson made remarks of appreciation for Pastor David Crocker's services to the church and community and expressed regrets for his coming departure.

May 16, 1973 – With Crocker, Richardson, Parker, Cox, Varner, and McNair present, Phil Richardson made a motion that the pulpit committee be instructed to find a pastor who (1) believes and supports the Westminster Confession of Faith, (2) conforms to the Book of Church Order and believes that the Bible is the word of God, and (3) agrees with the Session that our church should remain in the Presbyterian Church in the United States until such time arrives, if ever, that the Session deems it wise to present the issues of withdrawing to the congregation for its decision. The vote on this motion was three "Yes" and three "No." This vote showed that the Session was divided on the issue of whether the church should withdraw from PCUS and join the group which was then called the Continuing Church.

A letter from the chairman of the pulpit committee advised the Session that the pulpit committee could proceed no further in seeking a new pastor until it was known whether the church wanted a man loyal to PCUS or one that favored withdrawal from PCUS and going with the Continuing Church.

November 4, 1973 – The Session voted to send the following letter to the members of the congregation:

“Dear Member:

We ask your very careful attention to this letter and the enclosures therein.

Your Session is unanimously agreed that the two papers enclosed fairly and accurately present the two viewpoints in controversy before our denomination today. The paper entitled “Why Some of Us Are Not Leaving the PCUS” by Dr. Robert Strong argues for remaining in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.; whereas the paper entitled “Decisive Issues That Prompt Our Leaving the Presbyterian Church In the U.S.” by Dr. Donald Graham presents arguments in favor of withdrawing from our present denomination and becoming a part of a new denomination being formed, the so-called Continuing Presbyterian Church. We feel that careful reading of these two papers will give you an understanding of the essential points on both sides of the question.

Our pulpit nominating committee has requested that the Session be asked to have some informative discussion on the Continuing Church and the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. and have a straw ballot or some other means of finding the feelings of the membership.

The Session is complying with this request by providing the two papers enclosed and the form for your statement of position. We ask that you complete the enclosed form. This information will be of help to the pulpit committee in their efforts to secure a minister. This is not an official ballot, but only an opinion poll. Please study carefully the material enclosed and ask for God’s guidance as you complete your form.

Return your completed form in the stamped addressed envelope so as to reach us before November 18. Envelopes are to be opened and tabulated by your Session on November 18.”

Yours in Christian fellowship,
Cecil E. McNair, Clerk of the Session
Union Springs Presbyterian Church

November 18, 1973 – Donald Parker, acting moderator, announced that the purpose of this meeting was to count the straw votes concerning the matter of staying in the PCUS or withdrawing to join the Continuing Presbyterian Church. The results were as follows: Ballots received – 62; for remaining in PCUS -49; for withdrawing to join the Continuing Church – 11; undecided – 2.

This settled the controversy and although some members were disappointed at the outcome, they did not allow this feeling to interfere with their church life and their continued participation in church activities. Bethel Church, our mother church, did withdraw to join the Continuing Church which later changed the name of their new denomination to the Presbyterian Church In America or PCA.

January 20, 1974 – It was decided to make an agreement with Columbia Seminary to furnish ministerial students to conduct worship services for this church while we are without a regular pastor. For a period of over two years the Seminary sent ministerial students to conduct worship services and because of the loyalty of members in the matter of attendance and contributions, the church was able to continue in a normal manner despite the lack of a resident pastor.

May 26, 1974 – Donald Parker was appointed to contact an officer in the Bethel Presbyterian Church to find out if Wallace Tinsley would be able to work with the Union Springs Presbyterian Church during the summer.

April 12, 1975 – Phil Richardson reported on his attendance of a called meeting of Presbytery in Montgomery on June 17, 1975 at which Willard B. Hurlburt was examined for admission to the Presbytery. This cleared the way for this church to send in our call to Willard B. Hurlburt to be considered at the September 23 meeting of Presbytery.

October 14, 1975 – Phil Richardson explained the Howard H. Morgan bequest to the members of the Session and of the Diaconate. A motion by Elder Parker that the Session go on record as endorsing in a general way a plan for the management of the anticipated bequest from the Howard Morgan estate which will be handled by the Board of Deacons, subject to the advice and consent of the Session, was made and carried.

November 20, 1975 – A motion was made and carried that the following procedure be adopted in the manner of the Howard Morgan bequest: All of that portion of the Morgan estate willed to the Union Springs Presbyterian Church will be administered by the Board of Deacons, subject to the following conditions; (1) Any transaction involving the sale or exchange of stocks, bonds, or mortgages is to be made only with the consent of the Session; (2) None of that portion of the estate received in cash, with the exception of the initial \$25,000, is to be spent without the consent of the Session; (3) The Board of Deacons is instructed to provide separate bookkeeping and accounting for the proceeds of the Morgan estate and to present a detailed report of income and expenditures to the congregation at least once a year; (4) Income received from the Morgan estate is to be used at the discretion of the Deacons, but they are urged to use such income only for special needs or benevolent causes.

The budget of \$23,318 presented by the Deacons was approved.

December 9, 1975 – Deacon Bill Salter visited the Session and reported that a separate bookkeeping system had been set up for the Morgan bequest and gave details of the stocks and bonds values and plans for the sale of some of them and investing the proceeds in others as recommended by a broker who is assisting in the handling of the funds. The Session approved the financial transactions and plans as presented from the Deacons by Deacon Bill Salter.

The Session also voted to call a congregational meeting for December 28, 1975 to elect one elder and two deacons. In this meeting Joe Varner and A.H. (Bill) Hembree were nominated and elected as deacons. Sunday, January 11, 1976 was set as the date for the orientation and installation of Varner and Hembree and for the installation of Welk.

January 13, 1976 – Pastor Willard Hurlburt was authorized to go to Des Moines on the following Monday to attend to the business affairs of his incapacitated father who was seriously ill.

February 8, 1976 – The Session agreed to advise the Deacons that all members of the Session were in favor of setting up a Dial-A-Prayer system for Union Springs.

March 9, 1976 – The Session went on record as opposing the union of East Alabama Presbytery with the Tuscaloosa Presbytery. Later the two Presbyteries were united to form the John Knox Presbytery.

April 13, 1976 – Pastor Willard Hurlburt was granted permission to visit his father in Des Moines from Sunday, April 18 until Friday, April 23. A schedule was set up whereby the Elders would take turns in reading the prayers on Dial-A-Prayer.

May 18, 1976 – The Session concurred with the Deacons in their plan to buy the Holifield property, consisting of a house and lot, adjacent to the church property for \$5,000.

June 8, 1976 – It was called to the attention of the Elders that the Presbytery would meet in our church on September 28, 1976. It was agreed to recommend to the Deacons that the interior of the church be painted before the new chandeliers furnished by the Women-of-the-Church, were installed. The Deacons had this done and this, with the handsome light fixtures, made the sanctuary a beautiful place in which our members worship each Sunday. Pastor Willard Hurlburt reported that the Deacons appropriated \$4,000 to pay for the improvements in the sanctuary.

January 11, 1977 – Pastor Willard Hurlburt thanked the Session for the consideration shown him during the illness and death of his father.

February 14, 1977 – It was reported that Mrs. Seth (Linda) Anderson had agreed to serve as church organist and she has served with distinction since that time.

April 12, 1977 – It was announced that the Deacons had voted to purchase a baptismal font as a memorial to Howard Morgan.

December 24, 1977 – The Christmas season was made a sad one for the congregation because of the death of Deacon Lloyd Coleman who served in this office for many years.

March 14, 1978 – It was reported to the Session that the Deacons had agreed to accept the bid of the Brown Electric Company of Eufaula to install a heating system in the church.

August 15, 1978 – A motion by Elder Richardson was made and carried to appoint a committee to study the feasibility of celebrating the 125th anniversary of the church sometime this year. The following were appointed: D.C. Parker, Chairman, Joe Varner, Olivia McMillian, Jean Welk and Dwight Hixon. Cecil McNair was appointed historian to write the history of the church for the twenty-five year period following the 100th anniversary celebration in 1953.

August 27, 1978 – In a congregational meeting the members voted to elect the members of the Session as trustees of the church and also voted to allow the sale of the Holifield property to Shelby Renfroe for \$7,100.

October 2, 1978 – The date for the celebration of the 125th anniversary was set for November 19, 1978.

Names of persons joining the church for the period April 18, 1972 to September 22, 1977 are as follows: December 20, 1972 – Mr. and Mrs. Louie Harrelson; August 7, 1975 – Mr. and Mrs. James M. Mink; September 9, 1975 – Mrs. Willard B. (Pat) Hurlburt; June 20, 1976 – Meredith Allene Howard; June 24, 1976 – Tracey Carlson; September 5, 1976 – Mrs. Leonora C. Rainer; October 3, 1976 – Mr. and Mrs. Seth Anderson; February 14, 1977 – Mr. and Mrs. Fred Wilson; July 12, 1977 – Renee Nolan and Mrs. Dwight Hixon; September 22, 1977 – Mr. and Mrs. Sam S. Rainer.

Those withdrawing during this period were April 18, 1972 – Mr. Dana Owens and Debbie Owens; June 4, 1972 – Mr. and Mrs. Chilton B. Creason; August 6, 1972 – Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy Dozier; December 20, 1972 – Mrs. Rita Faye Craft; July 8, 1973 – Mrs. David Crocker transferred to Ozark Presbyterian where David Crocker went to serve as pastor on his departure from Union Springs; March 15, 1977 – Mr. and Mrs. James M. Mink.

Recently the church and community mourned the passing of two of our prominent members – Fred Wilson and Miss Carrie Anderson. Fred Wilson, who with his wife, Elizabeth, had joined this church during 1977 was considered a relatively new member, but his amiability and calm bearing had endeared him to all members of the congregation and their sorrow at his passing was indeed great. His funeral service at the church was attended by many members of the church and by numerous friends of the community who came to pay tribute to him and mourn his passing. Miss Carrie Anderson was born in 1883, the same year in which this church was constructed, and it was related during the funeral service by Pastor Willard Hurlburt that Miss Carrie was the same age as our church building.

During the period covered by this account the Deacons have made noteworthy improvements in the sanctuary. Air conditioning equipment was installed and has made the congregation much more comfortable during warm weather services. The beautiful east window was completely rebuilt and a plastic covering was placed on the outside for protection. A note of interest in this work was that the man who undertook this painstaking task found his father's name on the window and thus knew that his father had installed the original window. A new heating system was installed in place of the rather ancient and outmoded system which had been a source of trouble and expense for years, and it was no longer necessary to move out of the main area of worship in severely cold weather. In addition to these improvements the Deacons have had repairs made to the roof, have had painting done on the interior of the sanctuary, and have during the entire period considered carefully the needs for maintenance and repairs and have unfailingly appropriated the funds that they felt to be adequate in each circumstance.

The writer of this account of events and personalities during the past twenty-five years feels that it should be concluded with a tribute to Willard B. Hurlburt, our present pastor, who came to us when we were without a spiritual leader and who has endeared himself to us by his pulpit messages for hope and comfort. His sermons have been notable for the absence of gloomy threats of condemnation and punishment, but they have been filled with ideas and thoughts which encourage us to attain levels of spiritual thought and action.

His concern for the sick and grief-stricken has carried him to homes, hospitals, and to wherever there are those in need of kindness and prayers. He has not limited his ministrations to

Presbyterians, but rather offers his benevolent assistance to any of our people who need and welcome it.

His outreach program, consisting of radio sermons and Dial-A-Prayer, has brought spiritual help and guidance to many.

As we finish this twenty-five year period and look forward to the next such period, let us look backward with pride to the past and look forward with hope and faith to the future, always remembering the words in the foreword of the 100th anniversary book: “It is well at times to dwell upon the past, drawing from it lessons for our profit, and gathering the inspiration it has to give for future undertakings.”