

DRAIN CHURCH OF CHRIST

The beginning of the Drain Christian (as it was then called) Church goes back to August 12, 1878 when a small group of Christians only, decided to perfect an organization so that they might worship according to the New Testament order, having no creed but Christ and no book but the Bible, and so that their children might have a church home. Among these charter members were: Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Perkins, Mr. and Mrs. Simeon Harlan, Mr. and Mrs. William Boots, Mrs. Mary Hollyfield, and Mr. and Mrs. Fitch. A Brother Whitney was the organizing minister, but the first minister's name was Morgan. Carrie and Ella Harlan were the first ones baptized in the new church.

Memories grow dim, records are lost, but through the help of early record books and with thanks to Mrs. Florence Miller of Yoncalla, I shall endeavor to restate some things of interest.

Two of the early preachers were R. G. Callison and Kate Mulkey.

Soon Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Harlan, Mr. and Mrs. James Cowan, Mr. and Mrs. John McClure came to be added to the little church. The latter two couples coming from Yoncalla, having been baptized two years previously. James Cowan was the first white child born in Douglas County; Mrs. McClure was his sister.

The church was strengthened by new additions: In 1881 Miss Sadie Gardner, in 1883 by Mr. and Mrs. S. J. Trine and Miss Virginia Applegate; in 1885 by Mrs. J. T. Miller, Charles Putman, and Miss Belle Hollyfield; and in 1886 by J. T. Bridges, Charles Hedrick, Miss Emma Hollyfield, and J.W. Sanders, who later became an elder in the church.

Uncle Billy Moore came into the church in August 1889 and by 1900 the roll included seventy-eight names with Harlans, Redfords, Hickethiers, Gardners, Cowans, Hedden, Perkins, and Hedrick noted.

In June 1902 the enrollment was given as sixty. Preaching was twice a month and D. C. Kellems was minister.

At first the little congregation worshipped in a skating rink on the sight of the bank building and then in the old school house just below (to the south of) the present church building and later, probably in the fall of 1882, plans were made for a building. Mr. W. H. Wilson gave 50 bushels of wheat which was sold to the Drain brothers, and the money turned over to the building fund. Much of the work and material for the church was donated. Mr. Abe Morningstar hauled lumber and also dressed stone given by Mr. N. E. Mulvaney for the foundation. One of these original stones is now incorporated in the wall of the basement and bears the date of the completion of the building - 1883. This inscription was paid for by Mrs. Mary Perkins as a memorial to these pioneers of the faith. The original building was what is now the auditorium. The room was heated with a large wood-burning stove which stood at the north side of the building near the back and the entrance was where the two windows are at the east end. The builders were Robert and Herman Anluf. Later the belfry was built with funds solicited by James Harlan. Simeon Harlan was head carpenter. Uncle Billy Moore painted the belfry and we note by 1915 there was trouble with it leaking.

The church sight was purchased from Willamette Real Estate Company and the deed, dated 1883, states that if the sight ever ceases to be used for church purposes the title shall revert to the company. Church trustees at that time were S. J. Trine, William Perkins, and Simeon Harlan.

The little church had quite a struggle to exist and that it did exist and grow was largely due to the efforts of Simeon Harlan. It is fitting that we pay respect to the zeal and piety of this man who, with his co-workers, laid such enduring and enduring foundations.

Mr. R. L. Shelley was the first resident pastor of the church. It is difficult to list the ministers. Mr. Green preached in the schoolhouse in 1880. Then came Rolandus Shelley who lived in Drain from 1880 to 1892. He owned a shoe and harness shop and managed the Drain - Scottsburg stage line though he seldom drove. Rufus Callison succeeded Mr. Shelley in 1897. A. H. Mulkey came as an instructor in the Drain Normal School and while here served as pastor. He was born in Kentucky and spent a half century as minister of the Gospel. Between 1900 and 1903 there were five men: Harry Benton, George C. Richey, A. D. Skaggs, G. L. Lobdell and D. C. Melluns. From 1907 to 1916 there were six pastors: Fredrick N. Brooks, R. L. Dunn, Lee Sadler, E. E. Robb, Brother W. A. Diggins, and my grandfather, J. C. White. Grandpa White had been a circuit rider in Missouri. His pay as minister was \$5.00 per Sunday. The janitor received \$1.50 per week. The records show the value of the church building in 1916 as \$1,000. Preaching was twice each month.

Some of the ninety-seven listed on the church roll by 1908 were: Kent, Foote, Patton (she was my Sunday School teacher), Hedden, Fatchen, Dickson, Russell, Newton, Richards, Barker, Chandler, Harlan, Cowan, Krewson, and Sanders.

In 1918 our minister was E. K. Patterson who served for three years, and in 1922 Dr. and Mrs. T. B. White were here. We also had many student ministers from the Bible College in Eugene.

The total money received in 1916 was \$161.95 (is this possible).

Some of our evangelists have been: Brother Duffy, A. L. Webb, I. G. Shaw, Teddy Leavitt, Elery Farrish in 1931, J. B. Lister, W. A. Wood, R. L. Linn, Floyd Ross, J. F. Ghermy, G. E. Williams in 1915, R. E. Jope, John T. Stivers, G. A. Chaney, and more recently: Chuck Sackett, Al Young, Clayton Kent, Kenny Beckman, Bob Ballard, Gene Shelley, Ray Zack, Don Robinson, Mel Kaufman, Floyd Hughes, Dewey Gbenchain, Leo Yoder, Kelvin Traxler, Lloyd Whitford, Galen and Doyle Farnsworth. During a meeting held by Teddy Leavitt in 1926, there were 107 responses.

Lavis, McFarland, Rice, Damewood, and Mr. and Mrs. Herman Miller were other faithful workers whose names appear about 1920.

The church has been responsible for starting two new churches. The one in Yoncalla in 1928 and also the church in St. Helens.

Along about 1920 we had three or four gospel teams (groups of usually four young people) who went out to out-lying districts - usually to school houses to hold Sunday afternoon worship services.

Elders elected in 1929 were J. W. White, W. H. Damewood, L. W. Compton, Carl Henderson, and S. B. Snell. Money received in 1928 was \$1,454.07.

The Brutons moved here from Roseburg about 1931. He had a shoe repair shop. The J. W. White family (parents of Willie White and Bessie Lakey) came in 1910. Carl and Grace Henderson responded in the Ted Leavitt meeting about 1926. Mom Gardner and family came from Cottage Grove in 1937. The Ross family came February 10, 1927. Cunninghams, Bruce and Jeane were baptized October 15, 1944, the Sid Moores in 1947, Anne and Delmar Wilson in 1938, Frankie and Glen Cole in 1944 and the Clarence Carters in 1947.

The Bonds, Stanley and Mary, were our ministers from August 1928 into 1930. In July 1930 E. M. Patterson was here, in June 1931 Albert (Buster) Kribs and E. E. Coulter came in 1933. In 1935 Emil Helseth came. C. Fred Trimble came in 1939 and in 1941 Ingvwald (Inky) Nelson. Next was James Powell in 1943. In 1948 I. M. Nelson returned. In 1950 Chester Stewart was our minister followed by Rusty Hudson. Then Hubert Frather with Dick Smith as youth minister was followed in 1956 by Delbert White our present minister.

Early in 1915 the side room was fitted for use and the entire building wired for electric lights. During Dr. White's ministry, the piano was bought - we'd had an old pump organ before. Also the building was painted and enlarged. The baptistry and the back rooms were added in 1924 and the basement completed about 1927 at a cost of \$1,100 largely through the instrumentality of the Loyal Berean Class - a mixed group of about thirty taught by Bessie Lakey.

Many have gone out from the Drain Church in full time religious work: Jessie Turnidge, Harold Richards, Percy Krewson, Opal Hedrick, Ella Robb (whose father was our minister in 1910), Willie White, Anor Emerson, Richard Carter, Millie Woods Shold, Lee White and John Bogan. Four were ordained here: Arthur E. Gardner in 1899, Mrs. Anna Richards in 1928, Richard Carter in November 1956, and Lee White in December 1975.

No one can say how much good this church has done, nor how many souls it has reached. And so, on her 100th birthday we rejoice because she has endured and prospered and has had in her fold those whose lives were a blessing and whose memories are a benediction.

*Compiled by
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