

**CELEBRATING 150 YEARS OF  
MINISTRY AND SERVICE**

**A CONTINUING HISTORY OF  
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF  
BRYAN/COLLEGE STATION, TX  
(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)**



**1866-2016**

**FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF  
BRYAN/COLLEGE STATION  
(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)  
BRYAN, TEXAS  
1866-2016**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>Schedule of Events for 150<sup>th</sup> celebration</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>An Early History of the First Christian Church of Bryan, Texas</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Serving the Lord by Serving the Community – 125 years</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>The Transforming God at Work – 140 years</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Our celebration of 150 years</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Ministers Who Have Served</b>	<b>55</b>

# 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

1866-2016

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

November 6, 2016

- 10:00 a.m. Coffee and Fellowship Time –  
Gathering Space**
- 10:30 Special Church Service Speaker: Rev.  
Peggy Edge, Coastal Plains Area  
Minister**
- Noon Celebration Luncheon – Fellowship  
Hall**
- Featuring comments by  
members, thank you's, and re-  
enactment of early members**
- 1:30 Dedication of Historical Marker  
awarded by the State of Texas**

*Historical Display in Gathering Space throughout the  
day*

## From our minister...

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) an American Church that traces its beginnings to Barton Stone, a Presbyterian minister, and the Cain Ridge, Kentucky revival of 1801. The spirit of unity fostered by the openness of Cain Ridge found like-minded partners in Thomas and Alexander Campbell. Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, the Campbells rebelled against the dogmatic sectarianism that divided people of different denominations. In 1832 Stone's Christians united with Thomas and Alexander Campbell's Disciples of Christ.

Centered in what is now the American mid-west, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) reached north Texas in 1839. Just after the Civil War a new city sprang up in east-central Texas along the Brazos River Valley, and in 1866 a group committed to vision of unity and openness offered by the Stone-Campbell movement was among the first churches to charter in Bryan. First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has served and worshiped in this community ever since.

Though the specifics have changed, we remain true to our founding vision. We are part of a movement toward wholeness in a fragmented world. Rather than adherence to creedal statements, we are called to study the Scriptures for ourselves. We have a deep commitment to Christian spirituality and a passion for justice. And above all else we are called to share the Good News of Jesus Christ, witnessing, loving and serving from our doorstep "to the ends of the earth." (For more on the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) go to: [http://disciples.org/our-identity/.](http://disciples.org/our-identity/))

Yours in Christ,  
Rev. Jesse L. Myers  
2016

**A HISTORY  
of the  
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

**Bryan, Texas**

By

**Elizabeth Wilson Cook**



**PREFACE**

With access to scattered references, this brief history of The First Christian Church of Bryan, Texas, is dedicated to the works of its early members.

People are the composition of churches for service and worship. There are many names unlisted, for it is written that they also worship who only come to pray. It is not important that names be recorded on earth except as reflections for others to remember and perhaps strive to emulate.

The first section of this history was written by Elizabeth Wilson Cook in 1974. As indicated, the occasion was the dedication of the sanctuary building. Mrs. Cook grew up in First Christian Church and was the organist for many years.

*"And the disciples were called Christians  
first in Antioch."*

Acts 12:26

On September 15, in the year of our Lord one thousand, nine hundred and seventy-four, The First Christian Church rededicated its mission as Disciples of Christ in its fourth sanctuary under the guidance and leadership of Reverend Robert A. Bray, Pastor. Dr. Harrell A. Rea, executive member of the Christian Church in Texas was the dedication speaker. Dr. William C. Howland, Jr., deputy general minister and president of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) gave the dedication prayer.

Our new building at Ennis Avenue and Homestead Street is of a soft brown brick matching the Fellowship Hall-Educational Building and is connected with it by a covered passage. The style is contemporary with a transept floor plan and a steeple fifty feet high topped with a cross. The interior, with natural-colored paneled walls and wood deck ceiling stained white, has a seating capacity of approximately 300.

A glass and wood wall separates the narthex from the sanctuary with a speaker system permitting this area to be used to accommodate an overflow crowd. A choir room, a women's lounge and restrooms are located off the narthex.

There are two rows of round translucent-type hanging light fixtures adding to the elegance of soft blending colors. The split chancel is flanked by two transepts, each seating 30 to 35.

The south transept is for the choir, the organ, and the piano, and the north transept, with access to an outside door, provides additional seating space. The elevated baptistry is located in the center of the chancel wall. Four large art-glass windows are located at both ends of the sanctuary and in each transept, and the carpeting is in earth tones blending with the art glass and upholstery of the pews.

The total cost of the new sanctuary, including furnishings (architect, S. Earl Merrell, Jr., and contractor, Calloway-Rhodes, Incorporated, of Bryan) was \$195,710.00.

The Building Committee for this edifice consisted of Mr. B. J. Adams, Chairman, Messrs. Willis Clark, Tom Davis, J. V. Henton, Calvin Linne, B. D. Moore, Mesdames Jo Graham and Virginia Nuckolls.

The officers of the Official Board when the decision was made to build this sanctuary were Dr. Art Wright, Chairman; Mr. Walt Wooten, Vice-Chairman; Mrs. Irelene Adams, Secretary; Mr. Harold Wilson, Treasurer; and Mrs. Louise Lyman, President of the Christian Women's Fellowship.

The following persons served as chairmen of the Official Board during the planning, fund raising, and building phases of the sanctuary: Mr. B. J. Adams, Mr. Marvin Durrant, Mr. Bob Hartsock, Dr. T. D. Tanksley, and Mr. W. L. Pipkin. Mrs.

Henry O. Graham and Lt. Commander Thomas D. Brady were in charge of memorial gifts.

There are those who have passed on whose presence is strongly felt in the realization of this dream, who gave of themselves in helping provide this hallowed ground for the worship of God, such as Mr. George E. Adams, Mr. J. Nolan Shepperd, Dr. Carl M. Lyman, and others well known among us whom we remember with prayerful thanksgiving.

The congregation worshipped in the Fellowship Hall-Educational Building prior to the construction of the sanctuary. This building was dedicated March 19, 1961, by Dr. Travis White, President, Midwestern University, Reverend Jimmy Hays, Minister. It was here the church celebrated its hundredth anniversary in Bryan on October 30, 1966, including a reception honoring members with a record of 25 years or more of continuous, unbroken, active resident membership: Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Langford, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Dishman, Mr. and Mrs. O. J. Moss, Mr. and Mrs. T. E. Rattan, Mr. and Mrs. George E. Adams, Mr. and Mrs. J. N. Shepperd, Dr. and Mrs. Carl M. Lyman, Messrs. J. Selvin Broach, G. E. Madeley, Jess McGee, R. H. McGee, Mesdames Artie Falgeau, Raymond Beard, Verna Beth Williams, Preston Dishman, LeRoy Barnett, Ann Baker, Ruth Radford, Lena Andrews, Elizabeth Wilson Cook, and Misses Louise Dishman and Sarah Bell Wilson.

To those who have worshipped all their lives within this church there are familiar names that are linked forever with their childhood, such as Messrs. Joe B. Reed, Sam B. Wilson, W. T. James, J. Allen Myers, George A. Adams, James J. Ray, Sr., Judge L. D. McGee, Mesdames J. W. Barton, Allen Smith, H. E. Manly, John Allen, G. J. Mawhinney, Mr. and Mrs. Guy P. Bittle, Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Dishman, Mr. and Mrs. W. S. Collard, Mr. and Mrs. R. M. Wilson, the three Umensetter sisters—Dora, Georgia, and "Miss Dee," and others who shared a common bond of Christian faith.

It was in the church on 27th Street and College Avenue that the First Christian Church observed its 75th anniversary in Bryan in 1941, with Reverend G. Lyle Smith as guest speaker, one who had started his ministry with this church 52 years previous to that date. Reverend E. S. Bledsoe was Minister on this occasion.

Some early members of the First Christian Church of Bryan became members of the newly organized Central Church of Christ in Bryan, some the Central Christian Church, and some assisted in organizing the A. and M. Christian Church in College Station. The First Christian Church of Bryan with the assistance of the Huntsville Church helped in the organization of the First Christian Church of Houston, according to "The Bryan News Historical Edition," dated March 27, 1940.

The sustaining influence of the early churches in Bryan has been an integral part of the life and character of Bryan and Brazos County. To present the pioneer days of the area is to portray a

succession of dramatic events with impelling speed of movement before an exciting backdrop of history, only a moment of time as measured by the centuries of recorded history.

It seems that almost overnight the tangled shadows of a wilderness melted into a community of businesses, outlying farms, railroads, schools, and churches. Open saloons nestled between stores on the main street of Bryan, but the steeples of churches rose above the din even before Bryan became an incorporated city. Voices of ladies' temperance groups competed with the snores of unconscious drunks, and religion functioned midst typical frontier vice and irreligion.

For nearly three centuries after the Spanish explorers penetrated as far as the Brazos River, the Bryan area was known only to the Indians and a few Spaniards. The Tonkawa, Towakoni, and Waco Tribes who were semi-nomadic, built granaries underground, cultivated corn, squash, beans, and a few other crops. Brazos and surrounding counties provided buffalo hunting grounds, and by the end of the 18th Century wild horses and cattle were found. There were raids on settlements well into the 1840's by the Comanche and Cherokee Tribes. Men from settlements below Brazos County entered the County in search of "bear, deer, turkey, javelina, quail, and prairie chicken."

The law of April 6, 1830, enacted by the governing Mexican Congress encouraged counter-colonization of Texas by Mexicans and Europeans to stem the rapidly growing influx of Anglo Americans. "The first United States census taken in 1850 showed the population of Brazos County to be 614 persons, including 148 negro slaves. The County had four common schools with a total enrollment of 75 students. The total State taxes for the year was \$740, County taxes \$370, and special school taxes \$111."

Bryan was named in honor of William Joel Bryan, nephew of Stephen F. Austin and original owner of the townsite. In 1866 the County Seat was moved from Booneville to Bryan, anticipating the arrival of the Houston and Texas Central Railroad linking Houston and Dallas through Bryan. It had reached the village of Millican by 1860, but work on the lines was suspended in 1861 due to the impact of the Civil War. It reached Bryan in 1867, the year the yellow fever reached its peak in Millican reducing its population from 600 to 300. Bryan was chartered May 18, 1848, by the Republic of Texas. It was formally incorporated as the City of Bryan in 1872 by the State of Texas.

Graded schools and advanced course schools graced the community almost immediately after that date. The first class graduated from the Bryan Public Schools upon completion of the 10th grade in 1884. The Bryan Male and Female Seminary opened in 1871, the Bryan Academy in 1875, and the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas in 1876, becoming the first state institution of higher learning in Texas and eventually the largest all-male Military College in the United States.

People had begun to settle in Bryan before the end of the Civil War in 1865, but they settled rapidly in 1866. Although no major battles were fought on Texas soil, 60,000 Texans served under General Robert E. Lee with a loss of ninety percent of some of the finest of southern manhood. This war burned deeply into the hearts and souls of men, and those returning to the south after the spring of 1865 brought with them scars of bitter defeat. They felt a great spiritual need for redemption, for the solace of God's love and compassion, and an urge for renewed faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Thus missionaries and evangelists moved into this fertile field and were soon followed by the establishment of churches. The First Christian Church was organized in Bryan in 1866, the Methodist, Southern Baptist, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian Churches in 1867, and Saint Joseph's Catholic Church in 1878.

Colonel J. S. Proctor and Judge Spencer Ford were prominent in the organization of the First Christian Church and in the civic life of Bryan during this time. Others identified with organizing this first church and who served as ministers, evangelists, and missionaries were Reverend Benjamin F. Wilson, Major Durant, Levi Scott, Robert Johnson, D. S. Anderson, B. C. House, and Dr. Carrol Kendrick. Mr. George J. Mawhinney organized the first Sunday School and served as Superintendent. Mr. James P. Wilson secured meeting places for the little band of Disciples of Christ in Webb Brothers Dry Goods Store (now Lester's) and Sanders Grocery Store (now the LaSalle Nursing Home corner), and sometimes in private homes until the first sanctuary was ready for use.

Dr. Carroll Kendrick, a local physician, served the little group as minister for a number of years without remuneration. One is reminded of the sentiment in Kipling's poem "When Earth's Last Picture is Painted" in the lives of these pioneer disciples. The architects of this church worked not for the money, and it is only the Master shall praise them. *They have drawn the Thing as they see it for the God of Things as they are.* Ministers, as doctors, and possibly others in similar professions were sometimes paid with barter. The son of one of the prominent ministers who had a large family was known to have said he was grown before he knew there was anything to a chicken but a neck!

Little authentic information could be found regarding the first building erected by these early Disciples. A thesis by Lois Wilcox on the "Early History of Bryan" written in 1952 refers to an article in the *Bryan Daily Eagle*, January 10, 1929, by Reverend A. T. Ainsworth, in which it is stated that the church was built in 1868 and was of red brick. The knowledge that the church had a steeple and a bell which pealed forth every Sunday morning for Sunday School has been passed down by early members of the Church. It was built on a lot deeded to the Church in 1877 by W. J. and Cornelia Proctor on the corner of 27th and Dallas Streets (later College Avenue).

The first building was razed in 1907 for a new church to be built at the same location. During the interim the congregation worshipped in the Old Opera House. By this time a charter was required, and it was issued November 4, 1907, naming the Building Committee, J. A. Myers, Chairman, W. T. James, and R. M. Wilson, as Trustees to represent the congregation, as recorded in Vol. 71. Brazos County Deed Records.

The assistant committee whose duty it was to look after the art work and interior decorations consisted of Mrs. R. M. Wilson, Mrs. R. J. Ford, and Mrs. James A. Challender.

When completed, the church was dedicated by Homer T. Wilson of San Antonio, Texas, on February 2, 1908. According to the *Bryan Morning Eagle*, there were probably 750 people in attendance on that day.

The building had cost \$15,000.00. L. G. Green of Houston was the architect and R. T. Lewis of Bryan the contractor.

Reverend James A. Challender was the first pastor of the new church, Mr. Guy P. Bittle, Treasurer, Mr. J. J. Ray, Sr., Secretary.

The church was Doric in style, of buff and gray colored pressed brick Veneer with elaborate exterior concrete and cornice finishing work. The interior was divided into Sunday School rooms and an auditorium. The pulpit, baptistry, and choir space were on a rostrum against the center of the auditorium wall on the west side of the building.

The choir filed in for Sunday morning services up center front steps in close proximity to the baptistry which was always covered except for evening baptismal services when the choir did not assemble. There was an exception made for a baptism one Sunday morning, however, and a young gentleman filing in with the choir, hymnal in hand, a song on his lips, fell head-long into the water-filled baptistry with a mighty splash, a reluctant Christian completely immersed without benefit of clergy.

The communion table stood in front of the rostrum. It is interesting to know that the cloth covering the emblems of the Lord's Supper was an exquisitely embroidered cloth, the handiwork of Mrs. Spencer Ford and Mrs. Proctor.

Golden oak seats, arranged in semicircle, faced the pulpit and had a seating capacity of 600, the balcony possibly 200. Beautiful windows included memorials to pastors and dates they had served, as well as to others. The list included G. Lyle Smith, J. J. Williams, H. A. Majors, W. H. Duke, J. Hopkins, J. L. Andrews, John Ferguson, Benjamin F. Wilson, G. J. Mawhinney, Mrs. Carrie Hill Read, Mrs. Selety Erwin, B. F. Lemon, J. L. Crane, Jewel Howard, and James A. Challender. This building was completely destroyed by fire December 28, 1925, with small insurance coverage and the loss of all church records.

The congregation held scervices on the ground floor of the Masonic Lodge building until the basement of the third church

was completed where services were then held until the sanctuary was completed in 1928.

This third church, a Colonial chapel-style building, was a gem of distinctive design, embodying charm and beauty as well as compact versatility.

The upper walls were of red "wire-cut" brick laid in white mortar, the lower walls concrete with a white stucco finish, and the roof was covered with "Heather-blend" asbestos shingles laid braided from dark brown to light green.

The main floor had an auditorium with seating capacity of about 400, a pastor's study, and a robing room adjacent to the transept containing the baptistry in the back center of the rostrum. The choir space was on the left of the rostrum and the pulpit on the right. The communion table, a memorial gift salvaged from the church that burned given by Mr. Joe B. Reed and still in use in the Women's Bible Classroom, was in the center front of the rostrum on the main floor, the baby-grand piano purchased by the women's organization of the church was on the right, and the electric organ, a memorial gift from Mrs. Florence W. Reed, was on the left. An original painting by Mrs. George E. Adams covered the back wall of the transept above the baptistry. This beautiful love gift, with a little white church on a hill top, blends blue skies with the yellow and greens on the hill and tall grasses bordering a stream flowing downward to the baptistry. The painting now hangs in the Fellowship Hall.

The interior walls of the rooms had plaster finish. The main auditorium was of select pine woodwork painted in light cream in a plain design of excellent detail that harmonized with the style of architecture.

The pews, manufactured by W. W. Hall and Company of Bryan, were designed after the old colonial pews with ends of "block" style and with mahogany tops and backs. The seats were finished in the same color as the woodwork, of exquisite beauty and in keeping with the furniture.

There were two rows of three light fixtures opposite the six windows in the sanctuary. The light fixtures hanging 10 feet from the ceiling were bands of burnished copper arranged in a circle with six globes to each circle. This, the final touch of elegance and taste from the hands of a masterful architect.

The lower floor contained classrooms, banquet room, kitchen, and store room. The finish of these rooms was similar to the upper floor throughout.

The building was dedicated January 13, 1929, by Dr. J. N. McCash, President of Phillips University, Enid, Oklahoma.

The architect of this structure was Mr. Ernest Langford, Head of the Department of Architecture, The Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, and the builder was Mr. J. E. Nash, of Bryan. The cost was \$50,000.00.

Reverend A. T. Ainsworth was the minister and the church officers were Mr. George A. Adams, Chairman; Messrs. George E. Adams, Guy P. Bittle, J. E. Dishman, A. L. Darnell, D. I. Barnes, G. E. Madeley, J. Selvin Broach, W. S. Collard, E. E. Vezey, E. W. Glenn, B. F. Lemon, James Ray, Jr., W. A. Orth, M. L. Minter, Byron Allphin, C. G. Parsons, and H. O. Ferguson.

The year 1929 also marked the end of an extravaganza in the United States, the restless, sentimental '20's, apparently a rebound from the trenches of World War I. It was an age of piano-stomping rag-time blues and of orchestration with sliding trombones, of Duke Ellington's rhythmic jazz and Guy Lombardo's "sweetest music this side of heaven." Everybody sang of "The long, long trail awinding into the land of dreams," and were familiar with the innuendos of "How ya gonna' keep 'em down on the farm after they've seen Patee." There was the cheek-to-cheek dancing of the Bunny Hug, the One-Step, and the Fox Trot, and the gymnastics of the Charleston, the Turkey Trot, and the Tango. Money flowed freely like wine until suddenly the curtain came down with a crash. The stock market hit rock bottom before a stunned and stricken public.

People were jobless, penniless, and hungry when Franklin D. Roosevelt became President March 4, 1933, instigating the New Deal which channelled federal funds to help revive the staggering economy. On the heels of this great depression, however, on December 7, 1941, Japan bombed our naval fleet at Pearl Harbor and the nation became embroiled in World War II.

Bryan and College Station became military training centers with additional federal funds for housing development and relief for home mortgages. The Bryan Air Force Base was established, and the A. and M. College of Texas added the Civilian Military Training Corps and the Naval Meteorological Unit while retaining the seven branches of the basic Army Reserve Officers Training Corps. Bryan schools and churches were crowded and airplanes and motor vehicles became a way of life.

The area continued to grow with the return to a degree of normalcy after the war ended in 1945. There was a period of readjustment, then growth and progress moved in, bulldozing old landmarks and relegating them to memories or to the "25 Years Ago Column" of Mrs. Lee J. Rountree in the *Bryan Daily Eagle*. This column was a homey, nostalgic scrambling of choice bits from old files of the paper, items of historical value, social and civic events, personal comings and goings, such as a called meeting of the Women's Christian Temperance Union July 17, 1885, the J. A. Myers Wagon Contest closed in 1898, an Austrian scientific man discovered the fingerprint to catch burglars and thieves in 1902, a farmer sold a bale of long-staple cotton for 23 cents a pound in 1906, a preacher united four couples in marriage in two hours in 1906, etc. Wagons, fringe-topped surreys, dirt streets, coal and wood-burning stoves and kerosene lamps had long since been buried under the rubble and the age

of plumbing, gas, electricity, diesel engines and busses obtained. Filling stations had reached the epidemic stage on College Avenue.

By the mid-1950's, it became obvious that the First Christian Church on the corner of 27th and College Avenue (the main highway between Houston and Dallas as well as between Bryan and College Station) would be compelled to move its location. Because of the encroachment of apartments, a service station, and commercial buildings on the block and the First Baptist Church and Wiley's restaurant immediately across 27th Street, there was no direction to go for possible expansion and the traffic congestion drastically decreased parking space. The church had built a Sunday School annex behind the sanctuary building and rented a room in a residence for the Women's Bible Class across the traffic-riddled College Avenue.

It was with ambivalent feelings, reluctance to leave our beautiful building and reluctance to remain facing eventual decreasing attendance within its walls, that the church finally initiated plans to move. A lot was purchased on Ennis and Homestead and preparations were made for erecting this, our fourth building.

Reverend Paul R. Fullerton was the Minister and the following members served on the Official Board at that time: Lt. Commander Thomas D. Brady, Chairman; Messrs. R. L. Anderson, G. E. Madeley, George E. Adams, J. N. Shepperd, T. D. Denton, Elo Juneck, J. C. Sandlin, W. B. Wooten, Boyd Elder, Bobby Huffaker, Dr. Carl M. Lyman, Dr. E. B. Middleton, and Mesdames R. L. Anderson, H. O. Graham, and A. L. Witcher.

In the expansion, churches had experienced more efficient organization and a broader scope of activity. The "Little Brown Church in the Wildwood" had been replaced by brick and mortar edifices in well populated areas of the city. New denominations mushroomed and chapel-style architecture replaced steeples and belfries. Today, conventional trends include modified versions of steeples with crosses.

One pronounced change within the church itself was the vital challenge that emerged in the participation of women in all fields of diversified Christian endeavor. Their minds had always been easily changed, but never their purpose. Throughout the history of the church, the services of the women have provided substance and stamina to the leadership and complemented any and all phases of accomplishments with leg work and cooking "know-how," and, strangely enough, money raising. They held rummage sales, covered-dish meals for family get-togethers at the church, picnics, dinners open to the public to raise funds for church operations without the luxury of dish-washers or gas stoves in the early days, and, of course, had "silver" teas with china bowls awaiting the tinkle of coins from the guests. On these long-ago occasions protocol provided an opportunity for "Sunday-go-to-meeting" dress-ups with hats, gloves, and bustles, figures fashioned by long steel staves and

strong drawstrings. Most of women's functions in the church, however, remained backstage. They taught elementary and intermediate Sunday School classes and decorated and refurbished the church buildings.

The minutes of the Ladies Aid Society dated 1900 and 1901, in a ledger belonging to Mrs. H. O. (Sadie Mawhinney) Ferguson, a life-long member of the Christian Church, contained the following:

"Be it known that on the 18th day of February 1900, the following-named ladies met in the Christian Church in Bryan, Texas, and organized a Ladies Aid Society for the purpose of cooperating with the Pastor and Elders and Deacons, and the members of said church in all financial and spiritual matters having in view the advancement of the cause of Christ, to wit:

Mrs. Judge Spencer Ford	Mrs. Lucinda Dansby
Mrs. Cornelia Proctor	Mrs. A. S. Dansby
Mrs. R. J. Ford	Mrs. Laura Camp
Mrs. R. M. Wilson	Mrs. S. A. Payne
Mrs. Harry Dillashaw	Miss Eugene Bone
Mrs. Thomas Grace	Lillian Peacock
Mrs. S. Tutler	Mary Johnston
Mrs. B. F. Lemon	Alice Pico
Mrs. Mary Bradley	Mrs. J. C. Bennett
Mrs. W. T. James	Mrs. G. J. Mawhinney
Mrs. V. B. Hudson	Mrs. J. H. Allen
Mrs. Judy Britts	Mrs. J. W. Leigh
Mrs. McIntosh	Mrs. C. N. Doss

and be it further known that the following-named ladies were elected as officers of the said Ladies Aid Society, to wit:

Mrs. Paul Bradley, President; Mrs. R. M. Wilson, Vice-President; Mrs. Harry Dillashaw, Secretary; Mrs. J. H. Allen, Treasurer.

Signed, Mrs. Harry Dillashaw  
Secretary."

Others joining during the year were "Mrs. J. A. Myers, Miss Gustin Nall, Miss Amber Hall, Mrs. Edna Knox, Mrs. Dan Batte, Miss Josia Kendrick, Mrs. Chancy Kernole, Mrs. Jewel Howard, Mrs. C. G. Parsons."

The respective duties of the officers were clearly set forth by Evangelist B. B. Sanders and resolutions were adopted related to organization, procedures, financial matters, and social affairs, all duly signed by Mrs. Harry Dillashaw, Secretary.

The meetings were every Tuesday, dues 10 cents per week. The programs consisted of a roll call, a speaker, a devotional exercise, and a study of some chapter of the Bible. Social activities consisted of fund-raising teas, pounding parties for the preachers, and receptions. There were also committees appointed for outside solicitation of funds for needed repairs and other extra expenses. Projects included refurbishing the vestibule of the church, adding all new doors and transoms, painting inside door facings, repairing windows, putting paper overhead, putting in a trap door. At one meeting the question of building a parsonage was freely discussed, as were funds needed for painting the church. There was a pounding planned for Brother Howard, and a Christian Endeavor Convention to be held April 6, 7, and 8, 1900, at the church.

There were Honorary members of the Ladies Aid Society approved, including Brother Jewel Howard, Messrs. B. F. Lemon, D. B. Knox, J. A. Myers, Jim Ford, Judge Nall, W. R. Thomas, Sam B. Wilson, C. G. Parsons.

Today, world wars, travels, economies, and governments later, the interest, experience, and scope of women's work have expanded according to their seasons. The Christian Women's Fellowship, the prototype of the original Ladies Aid Society, is open to all women of the church. It is divided into three groups actively supporting the general organization and participating in the general monthly meetings and projects. The President of the General Christian Women's Fellowship is a member of the Official Board of the Church. The purpose of the CWF is to develop all women in Christian living and in Christian service as part of the witnessing of Jesus Christ. There is a yearly budget of approximately \$1,500.00, with each group responsible for raising a portion of this amount. The funds are used for such purposes as unified promotion, hospitality, literature, building fund, Christmas food and clothing distribution for the poor, aid for the City Mission, Brazos County Girls Club, Convention Expenses, and miscellaneous projects as needed. Some groups pay monthly dues in lieu of fund-raising projects. But more, their stewardship and responsibility and aptitude are sturdy in service and in leadership.

It is with humility they pray: "Unto thee, O God, we give our thanks and lift our hearts in prayer. May thy presence be with us and thy love surround us as we work together in the Christian Women's Fellowship. Open our eyes to the needs of the world and fill our hearts with concern for all people. Guide us that we may truly serve thee through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen."

And in this year of 1974 we again dedicate a sanctuary, a building well proportioned for the things that are wanted and

needed. Max Ehrmann in "Desiderata," which means things wanted and needed, admonishes us not to compare ourselves with others lest we become vain and bitter, for always there will be greater and lesser persons than ourselves, but to enjoy our achievements and plans.

Our achievements are but gentle reminders of our heritage from the time the disciples of Christ were first called Christians at Antioch to our venerable founders of a Christian Church in Bryan in 1866; their strong, enduring stewardship a legacy of hope for tomorrow.

Encompassing the counsel of the years, aware of the treachery and artifice of life, may we recognize the power of love and responsible stewardship if numbered only by a faithful few. Despite the noise and haste, *may we walk in peace and find a beautiful world*, God's Universe unfolding according to His plan. Our today is the history of tomorrow.

SERVING THE LORD BY



125th Year

SERVING THE COMMUNITY

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
BRYAN/COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS

1866-1991

**Update Written For  
125<sup>th</sup> Church Anniversary  
"Serving the Lord by Serving the Community"**

We are celebrating our 125<sup>th</sup> church year with the theme – "Serving the Lord by Serving the Community". In Honor of this year we are redistributing copies of our church history published in 1974 and written by Mrs. Elizabeth Wilson Cook, whose parents were some of our early church leaders. Mrs. Cook, along with her sister, Sarah Bell, grew up in First Christian Church and was the church organist for many years.

In the years from 1974 to 1991, our church programs have expanded greatly. One of the changes that has been made is in the name of the church from First Christian Church of Bryan to First Christian Church of Bryan/College Station.

In the Education Department we now employ a Youth and Education Coordinator to assist the Education Department Chairperson. We have church school classes for 2 year olds through college age, in addition to three adult classes. Our church van transports about 20 children (ages 5 through 14) to and from Sunday School, Youth Group meetings, junior choir practice, and special events—these Gospel Chariot Riders join the children whose parents bring them.

We have a two day a week Mother's Day Out Program with a consistent enrollment of 35 or more children five and under.

Our very active Campus Ministry program provides fellowship, Bible Study, and campus ministerial support for Disciple students at Texas A&M University.

Our Christian Women's Fellowship consists of three circles and members are active in the local Church Women United organization and raise funds for local and national outreach.

We have an active Christian Men's Fellowship, the members meeting the first Sunday of each month for breakfast, fellowship and a program. They also raise money for outreach causes by presenting bi-annually a dramatization of the Lord's Supper in addition to assisting in maintaining church property.

We have an on-going Bereavement Support Group which meets twice monthly.

Many of our members are involved in the Brazos Church Pantry, the local Hospice, Twin-City Mission, Bryan/College Station Habitat for Humanity, and other local welfare, support, and charitable organizations.

Our annual budget has kept pace with our growing programs, with the 1991 total budget being \$138,804, with the designated outreach giving set at \$20,900 plus special day and special purpose offerings totalling approximately \$5,000 more.

The highlight of our year long 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, was the April 27-28 Celebration Weekend, featuring a Saturday evening catered banquet for members, former members and guests. The program featured speeches and anecdotes by long-time current and former members, followed by a concert of sacred and patriotic music by our Sanctuary Choir. We also had many former choir members return for the weekend's festivities.

At the special Worship Service on Sunday Morning, participants included: Reverend Margaret Harrison, the Southwest Regional Minister; Dr. Charles Isbell, Coastal Plains Area Minister; and Reverend Michael Miller, United Campus Minister. The sermon was delivered by former minister, Reverend Robert A. Bray (1967-1978).

The weekend featured several historical displays consisting of photographs, important church documents, bulletins and programs. The congregation received a certificate from the Disciples Historical Society offering congratulations. A brass plaque was dedicated and added to the exterior of the sanctuary building.

In the past 125 years this congregation has weathered many storms to come forth today in the sunshine of love, friendship and renewed faith and hope for the future.

We wish to bestow our tribute and blessing upon our present minister, Pastor Norman L. Irons, for renewing our faith and helping to point in the direction of love, cooperation and hope. At this time, we have chosen not to elaborate further on the eloquent words of Mrs. Cook, but simply to share them with you.

April 1991

### MINISTERS, FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Of the following, some were evangelists who held one or more meetings, others were pastors, but each and all sustained some relation in the ministerial capacity of pastor, evangelist, or missionary.

Benjamin F. Wilson, J.J. Williamson, H.A. Majors, W.H. Duke, J.J. Hopkins, W.H. Bagby, John Ferguson, B.B. Sanders, J.C. Mason.

<u>Names</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Dr. J. Carroll Kendrick	1866
G. Lyle Smith	1889
J. L. Andrews	1897
Jewel Howard	1901
J. L. Crane	1904-1906
James A. Challender	1906-1909
James N. Thomas	1909-1915
J. C. Welch	1915-1917
J. W. Holsapple	1917-1919
E. G. Haley	1919-1920
W. H. Trainum	1920-1921
C. N. Calmes	1921-1923
Guy L. Ament	1923-1926
A. T. Ainsworth	1927-1929
Arthur A. Hyde	1930-1932
E. S. Bledsoe	1932-1944
Francis J. Smythe	1944-1947
J. Allan Watson	1948-1950
R. C. McCord	1951-1953
Floyd Legget, Interim Pastor	1953
E. J. Barnett, Interim Pastor	1953
Paul R. Fullerton	1954-1957
Roy D. Holt	1957-1960
Jimmy Hays	1960-1967
Walter Allen, Interim Pastor	1967-1968
Richard Stadelman, Interim Pastor	1968
Robert A. Bray	1968-1978
Dan Reihing	1979-1980
Logan Weston, Interim Pastor	1981
John J. Walker	1981-1986
Charles M. Bretz, Interim Pastor	1986
Norman L. Irons	1987-1994
Rush Barnett, Interim Pastor	1994-1995
Shannon Maloney, Asst. Minister	1994-1995
Lew Champ	1995-1997
Andrew Pate, Interim Pastor	1997-2000
Roemer Hudler, Interim Pastor	2000
R. D. Chandler	2000 - present

# NOW AND THEN

A

HISTORY

OF

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF  
BRYAN/COLLEGE STATION  
(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

1866 - 2006

FROM OUR MINISTER....

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) originated around a table --- an open table. God welcomes us into relationship, life, service and mission. For 140 years, this good news has been realized, lived, and shared in and through the life and ministry of the First Christian Church of Bryan/College Station. As we celebrate this occasion, we continue to seek ways to expand God's welcome through our life and worship together and through the carrying out of the unique ministries to which God calls. Even though I am not able to fully participate in these celebration events because of health problems, please know that my prayers are with you all on this wonderful and historic occasion. My love and to God be the glory. Your brother in Christ,



Rob Chandler  
November 19, 2006

**FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH B/CS  
(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)  
BRYAN, TEXAS**

1886 -2006

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Schedule of Events .....	2
The Transforming God At Work-140 years .....	3
Serving the Lord By Serving the Community-125 years .....	11
Ministers Who Have Served .....	14
A History of the First Christian Church, Bryan, Texas .....	15



**140<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
1866 - 2006**

**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

**November 19, 2006**

**10:45 Special Church Service**

Speaker . . . . . Rev. Robert A. Bray  
"Blessings" written specially for our 140<sup>th</sup> celebration  
by Mary Lloyd . . . . . Choir  
Recognition of 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Banner . . . . .

**Noon:** Celebration Luncheon . . . . . Lillian Sipes

**On Display in Fellowship Hall:**

Commemorative Mugs  
Cookbook . . Nurture Committee's Cookbook Ministry  
Scrapbooks . . . . . Jeanette Phariss  
Video . . . . . Tim Scott  
Church Banners (Featuring 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Banner)

**THE TRANSFORMING GOD  
AT WORK**



**140 YEARS**

**FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF  
BRYAN/COLLEGE STATION  
(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)**

**1866 - 2006**

## CELEBRATING 140 YEARS

### “The Transforming God at Work” 1886 -2006

#### General Information

Sunday School: 9:30 - 10:30 am  
Worship: 10:45 am -12:00 pm  
Choir Practice: Wednesdays, 7:30 pm

#### Staff:

Minister ..... Robert D. Chandler  
Interim Minister for November and December 2006 . Robert A. Bray  
Church Secretary ..... Betty Kostelka  
Choir Director ..... Karl Aufderheide  
Pianist ..... Karen K. Smith  
Minister to Youth (until December 2006) ..... Paul Carpenter  
United Campus Ministry Minister ..... Kyle Walker

#### Lay Leadership

Chair of the General Board ..... John Hoyle  
Vice Chair of the Board ..... Melvin Weber  
Treasurer ..... Sharon Pennell  
Board Secretary ..... Carolyn Hoyle  
Chair of the Elders ..... Ann Pittman  
Chair of the Trustees ..... To be determined  
Chair of the Deacons ..... Jim Carter  
President of Disciples Men ..... Bill Dixon  
President of Disciples Women ..... Tonya Chandler  
Director of Mother's Day Out Program ..... Blanche Whittemore  
Chair of Christian Education Committee ..... Jason Moats  
Chair of Worship Committee ..... Cheryl Aufderheide  
Chair of Stewardship Committee ..... Ann Pittman  
Chair of Property Committee ..... Jim Carter  
Chair of Memorials Committee ..... Melvin Weber  
Chair of Fellowship Committee ..... Lillian Sipes  
Chair of Church Growth and Nurture Committees . Tonya Chandler  
Chair of Outreach Committee ..... Liz McGee  
Visioning Committee ..... John Hoyle and Jeanette Phariss  
Chair of Building Committee ..... Art Wright  
Covenant Liaison ..... Jason Moats  
Church website: <http://www.firstchristianbcs.org>

The budget for First Christian Church of Bryan/College Station for 2006 is \$228,501.00. This budget was approved based on our faith that God would help provide the funds that are needed to carry out our mission. Our budgetary year runs from January to December.

*Below are various groups that carry out the work of this congregation and minister to members and others. Our church operational year runs from July through June of each year.*

#### Disciples Women and other ministries to and for women

##### Disciples Women

Group I meets 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month at 9:30. Meet for study, worship, fellowship and various local, national and international service projects.

Group II: Currently working on new church cookbook with heritage recipes to celebrate the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

#### Disciples Men

This group meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month at 8:00 for breakfast with different members providing the meals. The men conduct workdays for church repairs during the year. This past year they also held a fish fry with the proceeds going to Homestead Haven. They have also provided support for Mark Musumba and for Homestead Haven children at Christmas.

#### Christian Education

Our Sunday School program continues to minister to all ages. We are happy to announce that the Women's Bible Class (taught by Anita Foley) and the Adult Sunday School Class (taught by John Atterbury) are combining with John and Anita alternating teaching duties. This class will continue to use Standard series which currently focuses on the Old Testament and the life of the Jewish people and their teachings. There is another adult book discussion class which is currently being led by Karl and Cheryl Aufderheide. They are studying "Hearts of Christianity".

The college class, led by Terry Smith continues to meet and head for an interesting, contemporary ministry that culminates at Shipleys.

The high school class also deals with the contemporary issues faced by the teenagers of today. The issues are framed in the Christian context and is led by the director of youth ministries. One of the most exciting classes we have is for the tween's, those located between elementary school and high school. This Sunday school class engages those who attend through the study of religious art from a scriptural basis. Terry Hart and Evelyn Lively teach this class. We can't forget our elementary and pre-k crowds who are learning memory verses and are excited to spread the word. The point of this is that there are classes for all ages – check out one of the Sunday school classes for adults and for children

**Outreach Committee** - The budget for 2006 is \$25,625.00 which is 12% of our anticipated income for the year. These funds are divided between many charities both here in this community and nationally and internationally. Some include the Thailand Christian Mission, Homestead Haven, Twin City Mission, Habitat for Humanity, The Disciples General Fund and many others. The amounts to donate and the charities are decided by this committee.

**Property Committee** - As its name implies, this committee looks after the physical plant of the church. This year there have been a number of air conditioning emergencies. The committee also oversees the insurance on our property.

**Nurture and Church Growth Committee** - The Nurture committee works with the minister and the elders to attend to the needs of members whether it be in times of sickness or other times of need. The Growth Committee handles publicity for the church and calls on visitors and prospective members. These two committees are working as a unit for 2006 - 2007.

**Other Nurture Ministries:**

Hearty Living - Cheryl Aufderheide

Prayer Shawl ministry - 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday at 7:00 p.m. This group has been meeting regularly since early 2006 and has made many shawls for the ill and for those experiencing trouble.

Yoga - 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays at 7:00 p.m.

Acoustic Music - 4<sup>th</sup> Monday at 7:00 p.m.

Secret Sisters - runs from September through December

**Worship Committee** - This group oversees the music program and works with the minister and others as appropriate to plan the weekly worship service and special services such as Maundy Thursday, Christmas Eve and others.

**Fellowship Committee** - This committee plans and carries out various fellowship meals during the year including Thanksgiving and other special times.

**Stewardship Committee** - This committee develops the yearly budget by reviewing committee requests for expenses for the year and measuring those against the anticipated giving by members and other sources of income for the church.

**Memorials Committee** - This committee oversees the expenditure of the funds which are given to the church in memory of members or friends.

**United Campus Ministry** - This group is a cooperative ministry between the Presbyterian Churches in the community, United Church of Christ congregations, and the Disciples. It supports Texas A&M as a public university setting where religious diversity, dialogue and mutual understanding are cultivated and a climate of religious uniformity and dogmatic exclusion is soundly rejected. One of the core beliefs of the group is belief in Jesus's prayer "that they may all be one" and strive toward that goal. Their website: <http://www.aggieucm.org/>

**Youth Groups** - The youth groups have been very busy this year including attending TCU Day in October, Church Camps, Fall and Midwinter Rallies, Sponsoring the Fall Festival, and Youth Sunday. Many students also participate in area youth activities.

**Covenant Liaison** - This person is our ears and voice to the larger church including the Coastal Plains Area, the Southwest Region and the National church.

**Homestead Haven** - Homestead Haven, an after school ministry to neighborhood children, is co-directed by Tonya Chandler and Vicki Green. The program began in the fall of 2001 and recently celebrated five years of ministry. Over the five years over 50 volunteers have been called to serve the more than 150 children who have participated. In addition to Tonya and Vicki, currently UCM students are working with the children.

### Mother's Day Out Program

This program continues on Tuesdays and Thursdays with Christian based learning and nurture for children from infants to toddler. Mother's Day Out has been in operation for over 25 years.

### Special Ministries and Projects Taking Place in 2005, 2006 and Continuing into 2007

#### ***Visioning Committee and Capital Campaign***

Beginning in the fall 2004, a Visioning Team chaired by Jeanette Phariss began the work of evaluating our church facilities and the needs of the congregation. This work continued through 2005 culminating in a proposal for a gathering space between the Sanctuary and Education/Fellowship Hall Building. The team also recommended major renovations and remodeling of the Education/ Fellowship Hall Bldg. After an evaluation by the congregation of the Visioning Team's proposal and recommendations, it was determined that a Capital Campaign be conducted to raise \$350,000 to fund a large portion of the proposed project. The campaign was an over whelming success with almost all of the funds pledged to meet the goal. A Building Committee has been tasked to work with an architectural firm to come up with plans that will meet some of the major needs of the church while staying within the funds on hand and those pledged throughout the next three years.

#### ***Support for Hurricane Katrina evacuee family***

In August 2005, our minister, Rob Chandler, became acquainted with a family from Louisiana - the Browns - who had come to our community fleeing from the destruction of Hurricane Katrina. The Brown family included Greg and Lacy and their three children. They had lost everything when much of the city of New Orleans was flooded. Rob brought the Browns' plight to the attention of the congregation and within a day the family had moved into our mission house. Members of the congregation responded quickly with food, clothing, furniture, and household goods. The Browns quickly adjusted to their circumstances and within days Lacy had found a job teaching at Bryan High School. Since that time, they have purchased a home in the community - this home was one which one of our church families was selling to downsize so everyone benefitted. Helping this family was a gratifying and spiritual experience for all involved.

#### ***Celebration of 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary***

The main celebration of our 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary took place on November 19, 2006. However, earlier in the year a historical re-enactment was presented by Andi Scott when she portrayed, in period dress, Mrs. Spencer Ford, the wife of one of the founders of our congregation. Several people worked hard to make this celebration a memorable event including the special worship service. A new song celebrating this occasion was written by Mary Lloyd and presented by the choir during worship. Following the worship service, a celebratory luncheon was held featuring the airing of a video telling our story in words and pictures. Jeanette Phariss put together scrapbooks highlighting people and memories and also featured some historical documents. The Nurture Committee prepared a new cookbook which Liz McGee contributed many hours to put together. Commemorative mugs were available for sale on that day along with the cookbook. Liz McGee fashioned and prepared a bookmark featuring some historical information. The booklet containing our church history was updated and fashioned in such a way that it can also be given to new members providing them with lots of information about the workings of the church. Invitations were sent to our out of town members and friends and some were present on that day. A new banner was sewn by Cheryl Aufderhiede and displayed on that day.

#### ***Supervised Ministry Program for Brite Divinity Student - Paul Carpenter, Minister to Youth***

The church has taken on an activity that we have not been privileged to engage in before - that of participating in the Supervised Ministry Program at Brite Divinity School. Paul Carpenter, our youth minister, is a student at Brite and is currently enrolled in the Supervised Ministry Course. Paul has a ministerial supervisor, currently Kyle Walker, and works with a Lay Training Committee to enable him to work effectively with volunteers and to learn all aspects of parish ministry. This has been a very rewarding experience and will continue through December of 2006. After that time, Paul has chosen to continue his ministry elsewhere, possibly in the Dallas/Fort Worth area because of travel difficulties. The Lay Training Committee consists of:

Carolyn Hoyle, Chair	Jeanette Phariss
John Hoyle	Ann Pittman
Bob and Liz McGee	Sandy Reeves

### ***Support for student from Uganda - Mark Musumba***

In Fall 2001, our minister, Rob Chandler, met Mark Musumba at a United Campus Ministry (UCM) meeting. Mark had recently traveled from Uganda to seek admission to Texas A&M University. They met shortly after September 11, 2001 when Rob went to UCM to talk to the foreign national students about September 11. Mark had recently lost his housing accommodations and was desperate. After a few days, Mark went home with Rob to live and he was with Rob and his family for 11 months. The church has been very active in Mark's education at Texas A&M including providing tuition, funds for books, transportation and car expenses. Members of the congregation who are also former students of Texas A&M purchased Mark's senior boots and his Aggie ring. Mark received his bachelor's degree in 2005 and will receive his master's degree in agricultural economics in December of 2006. This past summer Mark's father in Uganda was experiencing deteriorating health and Mark really wanted to go to visit him. The First Christian Church, along with UCM, sponsored a benefit walk/run and raised approximately \$10,000 for Mark and Rob to travel to Uganda. Subsequently, Mark's father was re-invigorated by the visit and his health has improved somewhat.

## **WHERE WE ARE NOW**

Several new initiatives have taken place since our 140<sup>th</sup> celebration in November of 2006. Because of Rev. Rob Chandler's illness, we had an interim minister – Rev. Bob Bray - until May of 2008 at which time Rev. Jesse Myers was called as our permanent minister. Under Jesse's leadership our style of worship has taken some new directions and new programs have been initiated.

One of the first projects to be undertaken by the church under Rev. Myers' leadership was the Chandler Run for the House benefitting Habitat for Humanity. There was a twofold purpose to this run – to honor Rob Chandler's service and memory and to benefit Habitat. The first race was held in Fall of 2010 and raised slightly over \$4,000.

John Hoyle was a spearhead in this effort and mobilized the church and some A&M students to conduct this Fun Run. The race has continued with the last one being held in March of 2016 which raised a little over \$16,000 to be used by the Interfaith Committee of Habitat to build houses. Since its inception this project raised more than \$40,000. Smith Dairy Queen, headed by Karen Smith of our church, has also conducted fund raisers for Habitat and built a house dedicated to the late Terry Smith.

Another successful project has been First Christian's support for Young Life. Some Young Life leaders came to Jesse shortly after his arrival and were looking for a place to meet to conduct programs for middle school young people in Bryan. The church voted to allow Young Life to use our building twice a week for this purpose. The Monday evening group

serves students from Stephen F. Austin Middle School (our across the street neighbor) and the Thursday night group has served Jane Long Middle School. Each group consists of about 10 leaders and 40 or so young people. This collaboration has been a blessing for Young Life as well as for the church. The Young Life leaders also help the church with our annual Halloween Trunk or Treat and served as set up crew and ushers for our dedication of Dishman Park in October of 2016.

### **GATHERING SPACE**

In 2005 a committee was formed to look at the church's direction and programs. One of the recommendations was to build a structure to connect the sanctuary structure with the Fellowship Hall-Educational Building and to provide better handicap access to both buildings as well as handicap accessible restrooms. The groundbreaking was held on July 20, 2008. A 2,218-square foot addition was constructed which allows for a large gathering space for receptions, fellowship and other activities. The total cost for this addition was \$630,240. That debt was completely paid off in five years after two successful capital campaigns. This new addition was dedicated in May 2009. Members of the planning committee were Carolyn Hoyle, Board Chair; John Hoyle, Campaign Co-Chair; Jeanette Phariss, Campaign Co-Chair; Ann Pittman, Campaign Secretary; Henry O'Neal, Advance Pledge Committee; Liz McGee, Publicity Committee Chair; Jeanette Phariss and Carolyn Hoyle, Follow-Through; Karen Smith, Faith Foundation Committee; Lillian Sipes, Meals Committee Chair; Jim Carter, Team Leader; Bill Dixon, Team Leader; Gail Youngdale, Team Secretary; Vicki Green, Team Secretary; Sharon Pennell, Capital Fund Treasurer; Betty

Kostelka, Church Secretary. During the planning of this addition Reverend Rob Chandler was minister; however, Reverend Jesse Myers was minister when the building was completed and dedicated in May 2009.

### **TRANSFORMATION EXERCISE**

In 2013 and 2014 the church participated in a transformation exercise designed to deepen our faith and equip us to better spread the gospel and find our place in this neighborhood and the entire community.

As the result of this Transformation Exercise, new ministry teams were developed which conduct many of the projects previously handled by various standing committees. Those Ministry Teams are:

#### **THE FAITH SHARING MINISTRY TEAM**

This group seeks ways to minister to those in the community, the world, and our neighborhood. Their ongoing activities or projects include: Trunk or Treat, Outreach to Stephen F. Austin Middle School, Young Life, Dishman Park, outreach to St. James Christian Church in Lyons and others. Members of this group are Ron and Jane Colbert, Jeanette Phariss, Vicki Green, Sharon and Calvin Jeffrey, Ben Tedrick, Bob McGee, Jim Carter, Ann Pittman-Thompson and Jesse Myers. The group meets bi-monthly and meet at C&J's BBQ to serve as a face for the church in the community.

### **COMMUNITY BUILDING MINISTRY TEAM**

This team is tasked with planning social events for the church, conducting the annual Thanksgiving celebration, birthday dinners, serving memorial dinners, providing refreshments before and after church, greeting visitors and follow up on same, and a card ministry for those needing prayer or other support. Members of this team are Carolyn Hoyle, Nancy and Jack Finchum, Vicki Green, Theda Landskroener, Sue Elrod, Betty Kostelka, Betty Seagraves, Cheryl Aufderheide, Ann Pittman-Thompson and Jesse Myers. This group meets on an as needed basis.

### **SPIRITUAL GROWTH MINISTRY TEAM**

This team is comprised of the leaders of House Church, Sunday School, Youth Groups, Disciples Women, Disciples Men, Worship Planning and the Sunday Morning Prayer Group. These individuals work together to constantly oversee the spiritual growth of the congregation. The persons on this team are Karen Smith, Vicki Green, Jane Colbert, Ron Colbert, Cheryl Aufderheide, Marge Crouch and Jesse Myers and others.

### **RECENT TIMOTHIES**

As an electrical engineering student at Texas A&M University *Paul Carpenter* felt a call to ministry and reached out to Rev. Rob Chandler for guidance. Paul graduated from Texas A&M, and Brite Divinity School. He first served Highlands Christian

and is currently serving as senior minister to First Christian Church in Lubbock, Texas. He and his wife, Valerie have three children.

As a Texas A&M student, *Trey Posey* approached Rev. Myers and wanted to work with him to learn more about ministry because he was feeling a call to enter the ministry after his graduation from Texas A&M. Trey and his wife, Emily, became an integral part of FCC during their time in the area and he went on to graduate from Brite Divinity School. He wished to be ordained at First Christian and this ceremony was held on February 22, 2014. Trey and Emily first served a church in Burleson, Texas and he is currently serving as a Navy Chaplain in North Carolina. They are the parents to two children with a third on the way.

### **CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP**

The CWF is currently very active with about 20 members and having a regular attendance of 13-14. Vicki Green is the President, Jackie Krantz, vice president, Marge Crouch, Treasurer, and Sue Elrod, secretary. Anita Foley is the study leader and always presents wonderful lessons. The group meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 9:30 a.m. for refreshments with the meeting and study beginning at 10. Current members are Vicki Green, Betty Seagraves, Carolyn Hoyle, Mary Anna Franke, Bernice Burns, Connie Forman, Sharon Jeffrey, Rae McNulty, Anita Foley, Marge Crouch, Sue Elrod, Jackie Krantz, Evelyn Lively, Wynon Clark, and Ann Pittman-Thompson. The budget for CWF for 2016 is \$1,500. They support various projects to include the Church Finance

Council, the Brazos Church Pantry, the Salvation Army Angel Tree, and Project Heifer International.

### **CHRISTIMAN MEN'S FELLOWSHIP**

The CMF is active serving a breakfast on the first Sunday of each month for the entire church. Ron Colbert is president. The men also plan a recognition for Mother's Day each year.

### **BIBLE STUDY/HOUSE CHURCH**

This group has been meeting since 2009. It began meeting at the church but is currently meeting at the home of Karen Smith who serves as the leader on Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m. The evening begins with fellowship and a light supper and followed by study. They have used several studies including "Experiencing God", an "Advent Study", "Why is Jesus so Radical", and others. Attendance has been from 12-13 to as many as 18. Members over the years have included Vicki Green, Steven Myers, Marilyn Myers, Rae McNulty, Theda Landskroener, Carolyn Hoyle, Mary Anna Franke, John Atterbury, Anita Foley, Ann Pittman-Thompson, Jeanette Phariss, John Woods, Betty Seagraves, Jackie Green, Jesse Myers, Kim and Greg Stuenkel (friends of the congregation), Heather Barron, Jessica Meng (friend of the congregation), Melissa Tedrick, Terry Smith, Emi Lagunes, and Nancy Vidotto.

### **SANCTUARY CHOIR**

The choir is led by Karl Aufderheide with musical choices for the choir and congregational worship being chosen by Cheryl Aufderheide, Carolyn Hoyle, Mary Richards and Rev. Myers. The choir meets on Wednesday evenings and includes the following members: Gerry and Terry Hart, Rae McNulty, Mary and Bob Richards, Ben Tedrick, Cheryl Aufderheide, Carolyn Hoyle, Ann Pittman-Thompson and Meghan Wingo. Cheryl Aufderheide and Mary Richards have written many original compositions for the choir and as special music. Karen Smith is the current pianist and has been filling that role for more than 20 years. Mary Richards occasionally plays the harp for worship throughout the year. Both Cheryl and Mary have written special songs for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary and those are detailed in that section.

### **PUPPETS**

Ron and Jane Colbert conduct a puppet ministry for children during worship on usually the third Sunday of the month. Timmy and Katie (the regular puppets) are a delight to both young and old and often teach lessons which are as appropriate for adults as they are for the children.

### **SUNDAY SCHOOL**

There is currently one adult Sunday School Class meeting which is taught by Rev. Myers. They are completing a multi-year study of every book of the bible. Regular attendees include Marilyn Myers, Jeanette Phariss, Ron and Jane Colbert, Theda Landskroener, John Atterbury, Marge and Arlen Crouch, Karen Smith, Carolyn Hoyle, Mary Ann Culpepper,

Sue Elrod, Jerry Forman, Richard and Annette Stadelmann, and Ben Tedrick

### **CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Over the past several years, Children's Sunday School classes have been taught by Vicki Green, Jane Colbert, Connie Forman, and Melissa Tedrick. Sandy Reeves is the regular nursery attendant, but while she is on sick leave Jessica Meng is caring for the children.

### **CYF/CHIRHO**

This group meets on Sunday afternoon and is led by Vicki Green and Jane Colbert. Ongoing members of the group are Collin Chandler, Keenan Rogers, Hunter and Taylor Graalum, Taylor Rasco, and Jaden Meng. The church assists with camp fees for any of this group who desire to attend church camp each summer.

### **DRAMA GROUP**

A drama group was formed under the direction of Scotty Reynolds and they presented several plays including a Christmas drama, an Easter pageant, and several others. Participants included June Morris, Cheryl Aufderheide, Mary Richards, Jesse Myers, Marilyn Myers, Diane and Melvin Weber, Nancy Watson and others.

### **GENEROSITY OF MEMBERS**

During the last 10 years three members, who are deceased, were honored for their generosity with special plaques which

hang in the gathering space. Those persons are Nona Moore and Don Cain who each donated \$50,000 to the church in their wills. Charlotte Westberg bequeathed the church \$150,000.

In addition, the Bob Chandler family and Tonya Chandler family donated a new steeple to replace the old one which was in disrepair. This donation was in memory of Rev. Rob Chandler.

During the last two years, our church nursery has been revamped and brought up to outstanding specifications through the donation of another church family.

### **OUTREACH TO STUDENT FROM UGANDA**

Mark Musumba, mentioned in our 140<sup>th</sup> celebration, is our student from Uganda whom the church helped complete his education at Texas A&M. Mark subsequently completed a PhD in Agricultural Economics and is currently in a post doctoral position at Columbia University in New York. A total success story!

### **SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS DURING OUR 150<sup>TH</sup> YEAR**

#### **DISHMAN PARK**

The beginnings of the Park started a few years before 2014. The church owned two small frame houses on the property behind the church. One had been a rental house and one was used for Homestead Haven in 2001 to about 2005. The structures had fallen into disrepair and it became apparent that

something should be done with them. The decision was made to tear them down and a low interest loan from the City of Bryan was obtained for this purpose. After the demolition, the process of deciding how to use the vacant property was begun. Thus, the inspiration for Dishman Park. The Dishman Community Park was dedicated on Saturday, October 1, 2016 with about 120 people present. This park is located at the corner of Homestead and Winters directly behind the church. This wonderful project was made possible through the very generous donation of Mr. Charles Dishman, a Bryan native who now lives in Houston. Dishman Park honors the memory of the late Harry and Hazel Dishman, long-time residents of Bryan. Harry Dishman, the owner of Dishman Motors, was mayor of Bryan in the 1940's. Features in the park include a pavilion, a wedding venue, a prayer path, picnic tables and benches, fruits of the spirit panels as mentioned in Galatians 5:22., gardening boxes, a volleyball court, and a lovely bridge over a creek which intersects the church property. Mr. Dishman contacted the church in April of 2014 desiring to leave funds in his will to honor his parents. Several potential projects were presented to him and the one he liked the most was a neighborhood park. Mr. Bob Ruth, landscape architect, was approached to draw up plans and the conception started to become a reality. The groundbreaking was held on January 25, 2016. JaCody Construction was the general contractor for the park and Jeanette Phariss was the project manager. The total cost for this project was just over \$200,000 with Mr. Dishman providing the majority of that funding. There are several goals for this new park including reaching out to the neighborhood around the church, providing new venues for church activities, and reaching out to the larger community. As part of the park,

a Neighborhood Association was formed which includes many of the individuals living directly near and around the church.

### **NEW CHRISMON**

First Christian has a beautiful set of Chrismons which were originally made in the 1970's. That set was added to in the 1980's. This year a special Chrismon celebrating our 150<sup>th</sup> year has been designed and is being made by Cheryl Aufderheide. The new Chrismon will be dedicated at the Hanging of the Greens ceremony in November of 2016.

### **HANDMADE QUILT**

One of the items made to commemorate our 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary is a beautiful quilt designed and stitched by Millie Carter. The quilt contains Disciple symbols as well as photos of each of our church buildings and of special events over the years. The quilt was dedicated in February 2016 with the following words. *"February is the month of love and therefore it seemed fitting that we would dedicate this beautiful quilt on this occasion. This quilt was made with love and that shows through. The method of quilting is a lesson for all of us in Christian love and commitment. Quilts are made with three layers – backing, batting or filling, and the quilt blocks on the top. Each alone would not be strong enough to withstand the rigors of time and use. However, each layer sewn together is strong, warm and resilient – just like Christians working together and supporting each other. The quilt blocks represent each*

*of our different talents when shown together are truly something beautiful. Millie, we thank you for this expression of your faith and commitment. Jim, we thank you for your assistance to Millie in obtaining and preparing the photos. This quilt will serve as symbol of your faith and commitment and for the warmth and beauty of this congregation through the years."*

### **STAINED GLASS HANGING**

Ron Burton Colbert fashioned a beautiful stained glass hanging which is displayed in our gathering space. Early in the 21st Century, Ron saw a church bulletin printed with a stained-glass window picture. He was so enamored by it that he had it enlarged and dreamed of constructing it. The idea lay fallow for years as work responsibilities crowded out creativity. However, the thought of our church's 150th anniversary sparked the desire of completion. Many have requested interpretation of the images.

Beginning at the bottom of the picture, you will see an open Bible. God's Word teaches us of Jesus the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Above the Bible is the Chi Rho emblem which is the symbol for our Lord and Savior. To the right of the Bible are three crowns. These are open to individual interpretation. Perhaps they represent the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Sheaves of wheat flank the Bible. Jesus is the Living Bread. Above the Chi Rho is a Light. Jesus is the Light of the world. The angel in flight is prominently heralding both the Light of the World and the Bright and Morning Star which is Jesus Christ. The rainbow signifies God's promises.

Ron's interpretation: In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him and

without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. John 1:1-5. This piece was dedicated May 15, 2016 Pentecost Sunday. This piece hangs in one of the large windows in the Gathering Space.

### **STEWARDSHIP IN OUR ANNIVERSARY YEAR**

The Stewardship Committee consisting of Arlen and Marge Crouch, Carolyn Hoyle, Mary Ann Culpepper, Jeanette Phariss, Ann Pittman-Thompson and Bob McGee, ex officio, met a total of three times. A mailing was sent to all members of the congregation as well as some friends and calls were made. There were 36 firm commitments (either written or phone) and two brand new pledges. The figures contained eight estimates of giving from people based on their past giving patterns. The total budgeted expenses were proposed to be \$183,974 and the total for proposed giving was \$179,120 showing a projected deficit of \$4,218 for 2016. Each year 10% of our anticipated income is set aside for outreach efforts within the denomination, the local community, and worldwide projects. The distribution of these funds is decided upon by the World Outreach Committee. In 2016 the following entities received outreach funds from this congregation: The Brazos Church Pantry, a Brite Scholarship Fund, Church World Service, the Coastal Plains Area, the Disciple Conference Center, the Disciples Mission Fund, Heartbeats of Faith, Hospice Brazos Valley, Jarvis Christian College, First Christian Church Minister's Discretionary Fund (for helping those in need), the Ministers' Pension Fund of the Disciples of

Christ, Still Creek Ranch, Twin City Mission, the Valley Beans and Rice Project, Voices for Children, and Doctors Without Borders. Donors were written to thank them for their faithful support.

### **NEW SOUNDS**

During this anniversary year, a new state of the art sound system was installed in the sanctuary. Funds had previously been set aside for this purpose by Terry Smith before his death and this year Karen Smith honored that donation by finishing the project.

Earlier in 2016 a new carillon system was installed with funds provided by Mary Ann Culpepper. This wonderful addition to our church now peals forth during the day and most especially on Sundays.

### **HISTORICAL MARKER**

The church applied in February of 2016 for a Texas State Historical Marker to recognize our 150<sup>th</sup> year as a congregation. The lengthy process began in May of 2015 and Ann Pittman-Thompson and others worked with the Brazos County Historical Commission on the application. The marker is being dedicated on November 6 as part of our 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. The cost for the marker was donated by the Arthur Wright and John Wright-Gilbert families. It was installed in the grassy area between the sanctuary building and the gathering space by JaCody Construction which donated the cost of the installation.

### **GROUP PHOTO**

On Sunday, October 16, 2016, several members of the congregation gathered at the site of the original church building at the corner of 27<sup>th</sup> Street and what is now Texas Avenue (formerly College Avenue) to have a group photo taken. Members present were: Cheryl and Karl Aufderheide; John Atterbury; Jim and Stacy Atterbury; Bernice Burns; Ron and Jane Colbert; Mary Ann Culpepper; Jim and Millie Carter; Marge and Arlen Crouch; Jack and Nancy Finchum; Anita Foley; Mary Anna Franke; Jackie Green; Vicki and Larry Green; Terry and Gerry Hart; Carolyn Falgeau Hoyle; Sharon and Calvin Jeffrey; Betty and Emil Kostelka; Bob McGee; Rae McNulty; Jesse, Marilyn and Steven Myers; Jeanette Phariss; Andi, Tim and Elissa Scott; Karen Smith; Melissa and Ben Tedrick; Meghan Wingo; and John Woods. Not all members were able to be present on this day. Some of the persons present also worshipped in the third church building which stood on this site: John Atterbury, Mary Anna Franke, Carolyn Falgeau Hoyle, and Bob McGee.

### **CROP WALK**

First Christian Church has participated in the world-wide CROP Walk for more than 30 years. In 2016 we had 7 walkers and raised over \$900 to help stop world hunger as well as here in this community.

## **ELDERS AND DEACONS**

During our anniversary year, the following persons were elders and deacons. Elders: Ron Colbert, Jeanette Phariss, Jim Carter, Karen Smith, Anita Foley, Rae McNulty, Andi Scott, Karl Aufderheide, Ben Tedrick and Ann Pittman-Thompson. Deacons are: Sue Elrod, Sharon Jeffrey, Calvin Jeffrey, Theda Landskroener, Carolyn Hoyle, Cheryl Aufderheide, Steven Myers, Betty Kostelka, Cheri Graalum, Hunter Graalum, Mary Anne Culpepper, Vicki Green, Larry Green, Jane Colbert.

## **BOARD OFFICERS:**

Ann Pittman-Thompson, Chair

Carolyn Hoyle, Vice Chair

Bob McGee, Treasurer

Sue Elrod, Secretary

## **SPECIAL MUSIC**

In celebration of the church's 150<sup>th</sup> year, both Cheryl Aufderheide and Mary Lloyd Richards composed new songs. The words to their compositions follow. The words are a very fitting tribute to this congregation, our past service, and a look forward into the future.

## ***Is There Such a Church***

*Is there a church with a congregation?*

*Made up of people with Christ-like eyes;*

*Welcoming, heedless of class or station;*

*Children of God they will not despise.*

*Seeing, like Christ, the lonely and downcast,*

*Seeing the value in every face.*

*Were we to be such a congregation,*

*Then would our church overflow with grace*

*Is this a church with a congregation?*

*Acting with kindness to all we see,*

*Looking within to see Christ the Savior,*

*Sharing a vision of what could be.*

*All through the years we've studied the Gospel,*

*Pondered and prayed and read every word.*

*Teaching and preaching with compassion,*

*We show the world that we love the Lord.*

*Copyright Cheryl Aufderheide 2016*

## *People of God*

*(Christ for all the World)*

*Composed by Mary Lloyd Richards, © 2016*

*This church is blessed ground, sanctified by prayer and song...*

*And works of service through the years, a legacy so strong.*

*These people are God's own; Lord, gently love, and guide them still...*

*And give them hope and vision to do your will.*

*We are Christ's hands in all the world,*

*We do the work that must be done,*

*In love we try to follow faithfully,*

*We help the world by helping one...*

*We are Christ's face for all the world,*

*Ours is the only face some know.*

*Lord, may our face reflect your light that shines;*

*Give us the flame of love to show them...*

*This church is blessed ground, sanctified by prayer and song...*

*And works of service through the years, a legacy so strong.*

*These people are God's own; Lord, gently love, and guide them still*

*And give them hope and vision to do your will.*

*We are Christ's heart for all the world,*

*Compassion is our guiding star.*

*We do our best to love as he would love;*

*Embracing neighbors near and far...*

*This church is blessed ground, sanctified by prayer and song...*

*And works of service through the years, a legacy so strong.*

*These people are God's own; Lord, gently love, and guide them still*

*And give them hope and vision to do your will.*

## **CONTINUED CELEBRATION INTO 2017**

With our 150th year, we are working on focusing on our service throughout our history. This history has mentioned some of our large projects, such as the Run for the House and our partnership with Young Life. We are also encouraging our members to make a note of their personal service with our "150 Acts of Service" tree. We are asking members to write down their personal service, whether recognized or anonymous so that in the future, we can remember that service is done on all scales, from the personal to the large group effort.

Sometime in 2017 we will also decide on contents and bury a time capsule to be opened in the future. More details will be available later.

### SUMMARY

The First Christian Church, being one of the first congregations in the City of Bryan, has continued to serve the Christian faith as well as the citizens of Bryan and College Station and beyond for 150 years. The congregation continues to reach out to the community, the country and even other parts of the world. The members of this church have gained a reputation for being caring and giving to many community projects including Twin City Mission, Hospice Brazos Valley, Habitat for Humanity (in various ways), Voices for Children, the neighborhood surrounding the church, the Brazos Food Pantry, ministry to Texas A&M students, support for Stephen F. Austin Middle School, and Young Life. Over the years the church has supported several students at Texas A&M who went on to enter the ministry within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Our complete list of Timothies is fairly impressive considering our size and we continue to follow their careers. Several years ago, the church made a conscious decision to stay within the neighborhood of Ennis and Homestead Streets in Bryan (near the Eastside Historical District) and make a concerted effort to minister to persons and organizations within that area. The newly established neighborhood association, support for Stephen F. Austin Middle School, and the Dishman Park dedicated in October 2016 are three most recent examples of

those efforts. The church is determined to “brighten the corner” where we are and bloom where it is planted.

### Complete list of ministers of First Christian Church <sup>(10)</sup>

<u>Names</u>	<u>Dates of Service</u>
Dr. J. Carroll Kendrick	1866-1889
G. Lyle Smith	1889-1897
J. L. Andrews	1897-1901
Jewel Howard	1901-1904
J. L. Crane	1904-1906
James A. Challender	1906-1909
James N. Thomas	1909-1915
J. C. Welch	1915-1917
J. W. Holsapple	1917-1919
E. G. Haley	1919-1920
W. H. Trainum	1920-1921
C. N. Calmes	1921-1923
Guy L. Ament	1923-1926
A. T. Ainsworth	1927-1929
Arthur A. Hyde	1930-1932
E. S. Bledsoe	1932-1944

Francis J. Smythe	1944-1947
J. Allan Watson	1948-1950
R. C. McCord	1951-1953
Floyd Legget, Interim Pastor	1953
E. J. Barnett, Interim Pastor	1953
Paul R. Fullerton	1954-1957
Roy D. Holt	1957-1960
Jimmy Hays	1960-1967
Walter Allen, Interim Pastor	1967-1968
Richard Stadelmann, Interim Pastor	1968
Robert A. Bray	1968-1978
Dan Reihing	1979-1980
Logan Weston, Interim Pastor	1981
John J. Walker	1981-1986
Charles M Bretz, Interim Pastor	1986
Norman L. Irons	1987-1994
Rush Barnett, Interim Pastor	1994-1995
Shannon Maloney, Asst.	1994-1995
Lew Champ	1995-1997
Andrew Pate, Interim Pastor	1997-2000

Roemer Hudler, Interim Pastor	2000
Robert D. Chandler	2000-2007
Robert A. Bray, Interim Pastor	2007
Jesse Myers	2008-present

NOTE: If something occurring in the last 10 years has been omitted, we're sorry and ask that you please notify the office if you should notice an omission. An attempt has been made to include as much as possible, but with human error something might have been missed.

#### **150<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**Andi Scott, Chair**

**Cheryl Aufderheide**

**Ron and Jane Colbert**

**Carolyn Hoyle**

**Jesse Myers**

**Jeanette Phariss**

**Ben Tedrick**

**Ann Pittman-Thompson**

*Photo on front cover – first church building erected in 1968 of red brick.*

*Acknowledgements:*

*Updated history compiled by Ann Pittman-Thompson.*

*Tim Scott, Photography for the day*

*Betty Seagraves, luncheon decorations*

*Ben Tedrick, Jesse Myers and Young Life, set up*

*Buppy's Catering– luncheon. Cost of which donated by an anonymous donor*

*Scrapbooks and memorabilia display – Andi Scott and Jeanette Phariss*

*Copy Corner, Printing*