

Sitka Church of Christ early beginnings were community tent meetings

The Church of Christ at Sitka began between 1917-1919 when Bro. J.L. Holland and Frank Perry held some tent meetings in the community. The results of those meetings brought together some brethren and sisters of the church who were not acquainted thus creating a bond of fellowship heretofore unknown.

Several persons obeyed the gospel in those meetings, and the older Christians seeing the necessity of their responsibility in helping the new converts in Christ, began meeting on the Lords Day from house to house. Worship consisted of partaking of the Lord's Supper, studying God's word, praying, and contributing in every way possible to the work of the Lord. The group decided in 1920 to erect a meeting house.

A building program was begun by taking contributions for that purpose, and the money came from poor members as far as this world's goods are known. Some gave

money; others gave trees which were hauled to the sawmill and cut into lumber for the construction of the church building. Everyone had a mind to do something. Some gave work and many hours of it. A carpenter, Bro. Mack Woods, was hired to be there while the building was under construction. The first building at Sitka was completed, and it measured 30 feet by 50 feet.

After the building was completed, Bro. Frank Perry preached a sermon on adding instrumental music in the church building. Bro. Irvin Fly and Bro. Henry Daniels secured Bro. Overton from Union City to meet Perry in a debate. Following the debate, that was the last of Perry's preaching in the building at Sitka.

A preacher was employed once a month to do the preaching. These included J.L. Holland, W.E. Morgan, Joe Ratcliff, E.L. Whittiker, and others. A gospel meeting was held each summer to deliver God's truths.

The evangelists included these brethren: Holland, Morgan, Van Dyke, Whittiker, Curd, Overby, Chunn, Boone, Pate, Penny, Roberts, Greer, Pierce, Hall, Hoover, Kilpatrick, McMinn, Bradfield, McInteer, Parsons, Highers, McKendree, Hill, and Cottrell.

The work prospered until 1941 when the U.S. government bought the land in the community and established Milan Arsenal. The members were scattered and only three families were left to carry on the work of the church. The few struggled and managed to keep the work going. Those few, working together, graded and beautified the church lot and turned the old building around, and added a baptistry with a painted scene in the background.

The work continued to grow, and in 1948 other improvements were planned. Donations of money and labor were contributed for four new classrooms, ladies and men



restrooms, nursery, and a lobby with a new entrance. Later, four more classrooms were added for a total of eight classrooms.

In 1950 a preachers home was built of brick veneer, and the church building was bricked.

A regular minister was employed in 1944, and the congregation has had fulltime preaching ever since that date. Located ministers at Sitka include Ernest V. Boone at two different times, Harold Murphy,

W.E. Morgan, James R. Greer, Neal Penny twice, Bobby Pinckley, Carl Wade, Dale Buckley, Jack Hilliard, Bob Hesselrode, Gary Hargrove, Phillip Hathcock, Reed Bennet, F.T. Patton, Ron Trimm, Raymond Seig, Dale Willis, Larry Montgomery. The present minister is Scott Bloodworth.

A new building program was launched in 1968. The work at Sitka was completed without any outside help.

