

HISTORY OF BLACK LICK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

Black Lick Presbyterian Church, Presbytery of Blairsville, Synod of Pittsburgh, is located in Russell township, about one mile from Black Lick Station.

The first meetings were held in a school house still standing, near the church building. The first sermon was preached sometime in March or April, 1865, by Rev. James T. Patterson, at that time a student in the Western Theological Seminary, Allegheny City, Pa.

A Sabbath school was organized about the same time, with eighteen scholars and three female teachers.

Rev. James R. Hughes, then principal of Blairsville Female Seminary, preached regularly every two weeks, for some time, when he was followed by Rev. James Davis, of Blairsville, who continued as stated supply until after the organization and erection of the church building.

The history of the organization is as follows: At a meeting of Blairsville Presbytery, held in Greensburg, June 26, 1867, a petition was presented, signed by thirty-seven persons, requesting that a committee be appointed to visit the field and ascertain whether or not a church organization was needed.

The committee was appointed, and having preformed their duty, reported in favor of an organization. The report was adopted, and on October 31st, 1867, the church was organized by Revs. S. H. Shepley, J. R. Hughes, James Davis and George Hill, D. D.

There were twenty-four original members, and their names are as follows: John Wright, James Fair, Harriet S. Fair, Thomas W. Bell, Mary E. Bell, David Palmer, Mary Palmer, Aaron Weir, Sarah A. Weir, Mary McGinity, Belle S. Daugherty, Amanda W. Shannon, Clara Bell, Mary E. Householder, Jane Scully, Sarah Jenkins, Sallie J. Livingston, Nancy Alexander, Martha D. Simpson, Thomas Shirley, Eliza E. Shirley, F. M. Kinter, John Daugherty, Maggie E. Daugherty.

From the time meetings were first held until the organization, the field was regarded as an outpost of Blairsville church, the session of that church having received a number of persons into its communion, and the pastor having administered the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in a large barn belonging to W. C. Aughinbaugh, Esq.

The present and only house of worship was completed April 18, 1869, and dedicated sometime in the month following, and cost \$2,200.

The church has its third pastor.

Rev. David G. Robinson, began preaching as stated supply, April 29, 1870, and was ordained and installed pastor, for one half time, February 2, 1871.

Rev. Robert Carothers, preached the sermon, Rev. George Hill, D. D., charged the pastor, and Rev. James Davis, the people. The other half of Mr. Robinson's time was occupied at Homer City. Mr. Robinson was pastor until called away by death, April 3, 1873, aged 33 years.

The second pastor, Rev. John Stockton Axtell, was ordained and installed for one half time, July 28, 1874. Rev. J. H. Hunter, preached, Rev. W. F. Hamilton, charged the pastor, and Rev. D. L. Dickey, the people. The church was in connection with Homer City, during his pastoral relation, also.

Mr. Axtell was released from this part of the charge April 26, 1876. The present pastor, Rev. John Gourley, began preaching as stated supply July 15, 1877. In July, 1878, the church was transferred from the Presbytery of Blairsville, Synod of Pittsburgh, to the Presbytery of Kittanning, Synod of Erie, in order to unite with Bethel Church in forming a pastoral charge. Mr. Gourley having been ordained previously at Bethel, was installed pastor for one-half time, September 5, 1878, Rev. Alex. Donaldson, D. D., preached the sermon, Rev. Franklin Orr charged the pastor, and Rev. W. W. Woodend, D. D., the people.

The first Elders, Messrs. John Wright, James H. Fair and F. M. Kinter, were elected October 31, 1867. Mr. Kinter was ordained and installed, Mr. Wright having been ordained in Pittsburgh, and Mr. Fair in Blairsville. They were installed the same day. The present session consists of Messrs. John Wright, James H. Fair, S. S. Morrison, McConnel Moore and S. L. Wiggins, M. D.

Messrs. Morrison, Moore and Wiggins were elected May 21, 1877. Mr. Morrison having been ordained in Armagh was installed, and Mr. Moore and Dr. Wiggins were ordained and installed all on the same day of their election. Mr. F. M. Kuiter, having removed from the bounds of the congregation, was dismissed by certificate April 26, 1877.

The first Trustees were Messrs. John Daugherty, James H. Fair, Thomas W. Bell, F. M. Kinter, David Jenkins, John Wright and Thomas Shirley.

The present Trustees are Messrs. Isaac Earhart, Alex. McCune, McConnel Moore, James Fair, Thomas W. Bell and J. H. Bell, M. D.

The present membership is seventy-five. The Sabbath School membership is fifty. Mr. John Wright, now in his eighty-fourth year, has been Superintendent of the Sabbath School from the time of its first organization, prior to the existence of the church. Owing to the infirmities of age, the active duties of the office devolve chiefly upon Mr. McConnel Moore, who, with Mr. S. S. Morrison, is Assistant Superintendent.

The organization of the church was secured mainly through the energy of “Father” Wright, while its “rise and progress” has been largely due to his earnest zeal and liberality. May he long be spared to see it grow and prosper.

The church has produced one minister – Rev. A. Z. T. McGogney.