



125th Anniversary

(1840 - 1965)

HISTORY

•

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Iowa City, Iowa

•

CLARENCE A. ANDREWS, Ph. D.

A HISTORY OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF IOWA CITY,
IOWA ON THE OCCASION OF ITS 125TH ANNIVERSARY IN 1965,
AND WITH PARTICULAR CONCERN FOR THE YEARS 1940 - 1965.

by Clarence A. Andrews, Ph. D.

This is not the first history of the Church to be written, nor for that matter is it the most substantial. Several past histories of the Church exist and among them is the substantial one done on the occasion of the Church's centennial by Jacob Van Der Zee, longtime Church historian and the author of several lesser histories of the Church.

Iowa City was little more than a year old and the cornerstone of Old Capitol barely laid when the First Presbyterian Church of Iowa City had its beginning. The Church was formed on September 12, 1840, at a meeting at which the presiding ministers were Launcelot Graham Bell and Michael Hummer. These men had been commissioned for their task by the Schuyler Presbytery of Illinois after a meeting on August 1, conducted by Mr. Bell and Mr. Leonard Freely had resulted in a proposal for formation of the Church. The Iowa Presbytery was formed in November of 1840 at which time the Church joined; it has belonged to the Iowa Presbytery continuously since.

Formal records do not begin until 1849 and therefore it is difficult to make definite statements about the Church membership until that time. However it is known that the official title was the First Presbyterian Church of Iowa City, that the Ruling Elder was John McConnell, and that Michael Hummer was apparently the first resident pastor.

Within a year efforts were begun to build a church. In November, 1843, a subscription was undertaken to raise money for a building to be begun the following spring; it was specified that this building "in point of size, taste, and durability" should be inferior to no church in the city.

Chaucey Swan, a Presbyterian from Dubuque, who had supervised the platting of Iowa City and had set aside four half-blocks for religious societies, subscribed \$300 including a lot valued at \$100--the present site of the church, and one which Swan deemed the choicest lot in the new town. Forty-seven others promised a total of \$900--hardly enough money, even in those days. So while construction began, the minister--according to the custom of those days--was sent east to solicit funds. But contributions came in slowly and building was accordingly delayed. In 1846, with walls and rafters up (but no roof), services began in the basement.

Internal dissensions led to the departure of Mr. Hummer and, almost, to the dissolution of the church. With Mr. Hummer went the furnishings of the church--he claimed them, apparently, in lieu of unpaid salary--including the church bell. The disappearance of the latter was somewhat of a comedy of errors. Mr. Hummer, while removing the bell from the bell-tower, was trapped there for a time by irate church members who removed his ladder; the bell was said later to have been dumped into the Iowa River; and years later it was said to have been taken to Salt Lake City. Brigham Young of the Mormon Church once wrote that the bell was indeed in Salt Lake City and might be returned to Iowa City upon the payment of shipping costs. Various accounts of the bell's location have been written, and as late as 1911 it was still claimed that the bell was in use in the western city.

In November, 1848, Silas Hazard became the pastor of the church. Through his "heroic efforts" and the efforts of "zealous laymen the church was completed and the languishing congregation was revived."

Adding to the problems of this small group was the separation of the Presbyterians of America into two "hostile camps," the "Old School" and the "New School." The split came in 1837 after years of dissension over points of doctrine. The Old School people were conservatives; the New School people were liberals. The new churches which formed in Iowa represented either one philosophy or the other and at one time each philosophy was represented by an Iowa City Congregation. The First Church (or North Church, as it was then known) was of the Old School persuasion. It was not until 1870 that the Iowa City New School congregation was dissolved (following upon the settlement of the matters of dissension) and its members incorporated in the First Presbyterian Church.

Meanwhile a succession of ministers came to the Church. Mr. Hazard who served until 1851 was succeeded by John Crozier who served but four months. In 1854 Frederick A. Shearer came, and under his ministry the Church's financial situation was finally cleared up and the building was redecorated. But in 1856 the building was destroyed by fire and it was necessary to begin plans for a new building.

The financial panic of 1857 and the removal of the state capitol to Des Moines led to a state of severe depression in Iowa City and the congregation was forced to release Mr. Shearer. From 1859 to 1861 (while work on the new building proceeded slowly) Oliver O. McClean served as Pastor-elect. He was followed in 1862 by Samuel M. Osmond who served until 1879. This was the longest pastorate of any other than Dr. Pollock's, the latter's being approximately the same.

Under Mr. Osmond the new building was completed, and dedicated on August 20, 1865. Four years later a spire, 153 feet high was added but it was destroyed by a windstorm in 1877 and the present battlement tower was erected.

In 1879, by which time the membership of the church and the average attendance at church school had each risen to over 250 persons, Mr. Osmond left to go to Lawrence, Kansas. Some of the growth of the church had been due to the dissolution of the Congregational Church in 1863 and the New School Church (the South Church) in 1870. (The present Iowa City Congregational Church was formed in the late '60's by New School people and others.) One of those who came from the Congregational Church was Dana F. Stone whose legacy in 1883 made possible the first manse on Market Street.

Following Mr. Osmond there were William R. Henderson (1879-1880) and George P. Folsom (1880-1887). In 1888 Dr. Edward Newton Barrett came to the Church. During his pastorate a new pipe organ was installed and the manse constructed (1890). Also, in 1890 there was a four-day jubilee to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the church.

In April, 1900 the following resolutions were unanimously adopted by the sessions:

Whereas, The Westminster Confession of Faith was written Two Hundred & Fifty years ago, is long and cumbersome, and contains many statements of doctrines which are not held by a large number of the members of the Presbyterian Church of today, and Whereas, applicants for membership today are not asked to subscribe to said confession of Faith as a condition of membership, and Whereas, The Church is deprived of the services of many earnest, consecrated men as elders because they cannot conscientiously subscribe to said confession of Faith in all its statements, and Whereas, many thoughtful applicants for Church membership call for a written statement of the Creed of the Presbyterian Church and are not willing to endorse said confession of Faith in its entirety, and yet are devoted Christian people who would be a power for good in the Church, and Whereas, the present prevailing condition of Christian thought demands a change.

Therefore, be it resolved, That it is the sense of the Session of this Church, that a shorter, more devotional creed, a simple, working creed, easily understood, embodying all that is vital in Christian life and belief, a creed more in harmony with the belief of a large number of the consecrated Christian men and women in the Presbyterian Church of today, should be substituted for the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Be it further Resolved, that our delegates to Presbytery be and hereby are instructed to present the Resolutions to the Presbytery and ask that the Presbytery overture the General Assembly to take such action as will accomplish this result.

Dr. Barrett passed away in January of 1901. Under his pastorate the church membership had risen to 317 active members.

In 1902 a period of great expansion and activity came into being with the calling of Dr. Dwight Witherspoon Wylie who was to serve until called to a New York City Church in 1916. "The inauguration of the university pastor movement here and elsewhere was very largely due to Dr. Wylie's efforts," says Prof. Van Der Zee's history:

Ever since they began to resort to the halls of the state university, students have found their way into the churches of the city, especially to hear good preaching. From the beginning many have worshipped in the Presbyterian Church. Hailing from religious homes in every part of the State, they have received a welcome from the pastors and the members of this congregation and have also taken advantage of the abundant opportunity to attend Bible classes and do Christian service by active membership in young people's societies. The early Presbyterian ministers felt their obligations to the young men and women of a non-sectarian institution. On the occasion of his visit to Iowa City, in 1890, Mr. Folsom, a former pastor, admitted that he "looked upon this church, in the Athens of Iowa, as having a most important field of work. What was done was not for itself alone, but for every part of the state;" and he spoke of students who had been converted in Iowa City. Dr. E. N. Barrett, a friend of education, had many warm friends and admirers among the members of the faculty and the student body of the university; but it remained for Dr. D. W. Wylie definitely to initiate a new period in the history of the Presbyterian Church of Iowa City and the State and the nation.

During the first years of the twentieth century, the Presbyterian Church occupied new ground: influenced by new ideas and working under new conditions, it adapted itself to new needs. The church awoke more and more to its responsibility toward the student population. Dr. Wylie undoubtedly stirred his congregation to strong interest in the matter. To use the words of another writer: "the magic of personal influence, not the strength of sturdy institutions, was the inspiring force." At the same time his efforts were ably seconded by others, as a sketch of the movement will show.

As early as the spring of 1905 the congregation gathered to hear the report of a committee on ways and means of bringing Presbyterian students into more intimate relations with the local church. At that meeting, Dr. Wylie and Mr. George E. MacLean, president of the state university and also a Presbyterian minister, were appointed to present the Iowa City situation to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Their report at Winona Lake, Indiana, in 1905 started a nationwide movement which resulted in the establishment of the position of university pastor at many state colleges and universities.

In May, 1906 the elders accepted a sum of \$125 voted by the Presbytery to which the Iowa City church belonged for the work of a pastor among Presbyterian students. Dr. Wylie's plan for a circular letter to students allied with or friendly to the Presbyterian Church also met with their approval. Although progress was later reported in regard to the matter, it was not until March 5, 1907 that Mr. H. L. Olin received the appointment as the pastor's student assistant. In the autumn of the same year a motion carried to receive Presbyterian students as associate or affiliate members of the church: this practice continued for a number of years. Beginning in June, 1908 the session for many years also appointed someone to represent the church on the university's Y.M.C.A. board and committee on religious work.

In March, 1909 the session passed a motion to continue the new office another year and also approved a letter which Dr. Wylie sent out to enlist the support of ministers of the Presbytery: caring for the young people who were to be the State's lawyers, doctors, teachers, and leaders in other callings deserved to be looked upon as a matter worthy of more serious attention. At the same time the ministers of Iowa City churches succeeded in getting the university to establish courses in religious education, and Dr. Wylie gave a series of lectures on Christian ethics. In the same year began special Bible School classes for men and women students, which have been continued under the leadership of university professors, and Mr. George A. Chickering, a student, was employed to assist the pastor, his salary being provided by the Presbytery's home mission committee and later by the synod's board of home missions: so satisfactory was Mr. Chickering that he retained his position until April, 1911.

The attendance of 400 Presbyterian students at the university in 1910 led a committee headed by Dr. Wylie to apply to the board of education of the Presbyterian Church in America for aid in a campaign of publicity showing the need of a student pastor and funds for his support. The Synod of Iowa through its committee on religious work in state institutions decided to put the project on a permanent basis. In June, 1910 the ladies of the Iowa City church served a dinner to former Presbyterian students and graduates of the university who were in the city to attend commencement exercises. This alumni dinner, first given to stir up interest in the student pastor movement, was a regular feature of commencement week for many years.

The national movement had gained such momentum that in March, 1910 Richard C. Hughes received the appointment as a national secretary for university work in the United States. He began at once to spur Iowa Presbyterians on to raise money for the support of a university pastor in Iowa City. It was in the summer that the Synod of Iowa invited Dr. Francis M. Fox to become its representative and prevailed on him to begin the work among students in November, 1910. Supported by the Synod and independent of the local church except for its hearty cooperation, Dr. Fox set about to become the personal counselor and friend of every Presbyterian student. His interviews with them and their relations with him were on a purely personal basis: although there was nothing spectacular about the work, results were highly gratifying as the reports of 1911 and 1912 bore witness.

Towards the end of the year 1912 the session of the church passed the following resolutions:

Inasmuch as the work of the University Pastor for the Synod of Iowa has now taken definite form among the students of the University and in the Presbyterian Church of Iowa City, and inasmuch as this work is proving notably successful, therefore be it resolved:

1. That the Session of this church hereby endorses the work of the University Pastor as being distinctly helpful to the students and stimulating to the members of this church and congregation.

2. That the Session hereby invites the University Pastor to attend all regular meetings of the Session, to present such recommendations as, in his judgment, are demanded by the work among the students, in which field the University Pastor is regarded by this church as the authoritative leader, and to participate freely in all discussions pertaining to such work.

3. That the pastor and the University Pastor be and are hereby authorized jointly to arrange for such student and evangelical services on Sunday evenings as the work among our young people may demand, and that in such work the University Pastor be expected to assume active leadership, it being understood that all young people of the church and congregation shall be included in such services.

The Synod of Iowa at its meeting in 1912 entered into an agreement with the national Presbyterian board of education and the First Presbyterian Church of Iowa City, for cooperation in carrying out the new program. With the aid of funds supplied by the Board of education, the Synod in 1913 at a cost of about \$7000 purchased a large dwelling near the church, Synod House became the residence of the university pastor and headquarters for student social and religious activities. At a cost of nearly \$8500 the Iowa City church in 1914 completed an addition to the north end of its house of worship to accommodate the students and also to provide offices, with heat and light, for the university pastor.

Dr. Fox ably performed his duties for two and a half years and was succeeded by Dr. Elmer A. Bess of Clinton, Iowa, in October, 1913. He had already had much to do in giving impetus to the movement and was therefore well qualified to undertake the task.

The financial problem involved in these developments became a serious one. Appointed by the Synod of Iowa, which is the representative assembly of the Presbyterians of the State, workers at Iowa City were supported very largely by the \$2100 advanced by the Presbyterian board of education with the understanding that the Synod would reimburse the Board. In 1914 the Synod contributed so little that fear was expressed lest the Presbyterians of Iowa would forfeit the board's cooperation. The national viewpoint of conditions at state university centers was well set forth in the report of the board of education:

The work among the 25000 Presbyterian students at State Universities has taxed the resources of the Board. Fifteen university pastors. . . are being supported wholly or partly by the Board. Hundreds of students have been led to unite with the Church and declare themselves for the ministry or the missionary life. Nearly 5,000 have been gathered into Bible classes and organizations for Christian Social Service. The work of the able and devoted men at these strategic centers of learning is bearing tremendous fruitage in eternal values. The secular influences of the university are being met with strong evangelical appeals and the most earnest spiritual counsel. The Secretary for University Work has traveled many thousands of miles and spoken at hundreds of gatherings, in an effort to strengthen this work both financially and spiritually. We are now on the eve of great blessings for that large body of youth who have been attracted to these great State foundations. Nearly 3,000 of our own young people graduate from the State colleges and universities yearly. Will the Church adequately provide for this work so that these thousands may enter into the life of our nation and of the Church to become strong Christian influences in the building of the Kingdom of God?

Presbyterian students in the state-supported institutions at Cedar Falls, Ames, and Iowa City have been so much more numerous than those in the colleges maintained by the church that the Synod of Iowa has never failed to recognize its heavy responsibility for the religious welfare of these young people in their formative years. Its committee, therefore, recommended in 1916 that an endowment of \$300,000 should be raised for the proper support of the undertaking and a full-time field secretary should be appointed to conduct the campaign. Worthy of note is the fact that for the years 1911 to 1917 the Presbyterian board of education expended \$36,531 at Iowa City and Ames while the Synod of Iowa and individuals contributed \$24,557 more. In 1917 the Synod set up a board of nine trustees to take charge of "The State University of Iowa department of the Presbyterian board of education."

Other events which took place during the pastorate of Dr. Wylie were extensive remodeling of the church and manse, an election of a board of deacons (the first since 1840), the formation of the Presbyterian Brotherhood, and the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary.

Dr. Wylie's abilities soon attracted the attention of larger churches. In 1913, at the request of his people, he turned down the call of a Lincoln, Nebraska church. In 1916, after receipt of a call from St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, Dr. Wylie was asked to remain permanently in Iowa City and make the local church his life work. But this time the call was too great and Dr. Wylie left the church. In 1920 he went on to the Central Presbyterian Church of New York. He died there in 1941, his death ending a lifetime of service to his church.

Rev. Wylie was succeeded by Harry Burton Boyd who was soon to offer his services as a military chaplain during World War I. During his absence various pastors supplied the pulpit. Mr. Boyd did not return to Iowa City and so in 1919 Robert R. Reed was called from Champaign, Illinois, primarily because of his experience with a church in a university town. Considering that the church had been weakened by the consequences of the war and

the three-year absence of a regular pastor, Mr. Reed succeeded rather well.

"The year 1918 was a red-letter event for Presbyterianism throughout the United States because it saw the inauguration of the five-year New Era Movement as a reaction to the need for reconstruction in the world. It was hoped that church members would awaken to a realization of their stewardship and responsibility for such wealth as might be theirs. The session sent delegates to the New Era conventions and on May 18, 1919, at a joint meeting of the Board of Trustees and the session, the relation of the local church to the new movement was considered and a committee was appointed to determine its financial participation. The condition of the church's finances - considerable debt and the need of physical improvements - had a depressing effect upon those who would otherwise have taken a more active share in the enterprise. The congregation was divided into study groups for periodic conferences in members' homes; but not until November 1919 was an organization announced: Mr. M. C. Mumma became chairman and Mr. O. A. Byington vice-chairman and seven others were appointed chairmen of committees which were to educate church members in regard to the five-year program that had been mapped out. One year later, Mr. Reed's proposal to reorganize the work was adopted: his plan called for three committees of elders to take charge of the main divisions of the work, each to meet once a month. How extensively local church members fitted into the national movement in its spiritual aspects there are no records to prove; but that many affected indifference and lack of sympathy with what they regarded as agitation imposed from without rather than generated from within was evident at the time.

The same may be said of the Interchurch World Movement inaugurated in 1920. When the Presbyterian Church in America joined in the accomplishment of its general purpose and subsequently withdrew, the Iowa City congregation was canvassed for its quota of the \$1,000,000.00 obligation which had been assumed; the small sum of \$131 was contributed toward the deficit in December, 1920, but the idea of federating the Protestant denominations of the world for a united campaign of Christianization met with no particularly enthusiastic response.

In the meantime Dr. Bess had resigned (in 1918) as University pastor to become President of Macalester College. In September Herbert L. Searles became student counselor. Growing optimism about the future of the Church in the New Era movement led to plans for increased efforts, locally and nationally, in provisioning a campus program for students. Not all of the efforts were successful, however. In 1924 the Synod of Iowa decided to place its Iowa City program in the hands of the Westminster Foundation. Articles of incorporation were approved. Financial support for several years continued to be shared by the Synod's board of national missions and the Presbyterian board of Christian Education.

The church continued to grow during Mr. Reed's pastorate, and its annual budgets increased reflecting the growth. Several sizeable bequests were made to the church and the Market street manse was sold to the University.

Mr. Reed moved on to Columbus, Ohio in March of 1926.

"Before proceeding to the selection of a new pastor, at the annual meeting of the society in April, 1926 a committee was appointed to outline a plan of federation for the First Presbyterian Church and the Congregational Church. In May the session called out the congregation to hear and discuss

the tentative report prepared by a joint committee representing the two churches. The proposals were freely and frankly debated for over two hours one Sunday afternoon; some changes were adopted; and the fundamental principles involved were then submitted to an informal vote by those present. Thirty-nine members favored and twelve opposed the adoption of the report. It was decided to distribute the report along with ballots for a vote by mail by the entire congregation before any further steps should be taken in working out the details of a federated church to be served by at least two ministers. Whatever the result of the voting may have been (the vote is nowhere recorded), the proposal was apparently dropped inasmuch as the congregation in July proceeded to call John Gray Rhind of Lake Forest, Illinois. Mr. Rhind accepted and was installed some months later at the same time as the new student pastor, C. R. Douglass.

"First of the important matters confronting church officials during these years was the erection of a new house of worship or else reconstruction of the old building to care for the needs of the congregation and of the University students - all this resulting from the offer of \$7,500 by the board of trustees of the Westminster Foundation. This "challenge fund" led first to an investigation of the availability and price of the property west of the church and then to the selection of an architect and the preparation of plans for improvements in the old structure. Nothing, however, came of the project before Mr. Rhind dissolved the pastoral relation. Most significant event of Mr. Rhind's brief pastorate was the new agreement entered into by the Westminster Foundation and the Session with regard to future relations between the congregation and its student affiliates.

"It was during the three years, 1926-1929 that the Presbyterian Board of Christian Education offered the Westminster Foundation \$7,500 on condition that the Iowa City church would raise \$30,000 more for adequately housing student life. Nothing came of the challenge and Mr. Douglass complained of a church poorly equipped, a Synod house ill-suited, and the handicap of a lack of funds.

"In 1929 the Presbyterian Board of Christian education conveyed its title to Synod House to the Westminster Foundation. Of still greater importance was a reorganization of such far-reaching significance that it deserves a special attention at this point. Instead of the old system of two coordinate and independent ordained ministers having charge of the Iowa City field, a new arrangement integrating the work under one pastor seemed to promise greater unity of effort and a richer and more varied program. Hence a formal agreement was entered into by the session of the church and Westminster Foundation's board of trustees then under the presidency of Dr. M. Willard Lampe, director of the university's school of religion. The new plan embodied therein permitted either party to withdraw at the end of any budget year. The session undertook to administer work among students and to correlate it with the general activities of the church in order that students might find an attractive church home and also develop spiritual as well as intellectual leadership during their college years, while the Foundation agreed to supplement church budget funds for such purposes as it might approve.

"The Westminster Foundation entered into specific agreements to bear full responsibility for and report the administration of student work to the Synod; review for approval the annual budget as presented by the Session; provided money for such purposes as were not the distinct and sole respons-

sibility of the local church; assist in the selection of members of the pastor's staff; and advise regarding the selection of a new pastor previous to his presentation by the session to the congregation for election.

"The session entered into specific agreements to formulate a policy in regard to student work in consultation with the Westminster Foundation; employ the pastor's assistants with the approval of the Foundation; consult with the local committee of the Foundation in preparing a budget each year; supervise expenditures under the budget and make quarterly reports to the Foundation; and obtain from the pastor monthly reports of the progress and success of the enterprise.

"The agreement further provided for the creation of a student relations committee consisting of nine members; two appointed by the session (at least one being a member of the session), three students elected by the student council, one elected by the Westminster Foundation, and also the pastor and his assistants. Under the general directions of the session this committee should initiate and direct student religious activities and likewise make recommendations and report progress quarterly to the session."

Following Mr. Rhind's departure at the beginning of 1930 three Presbyterian ministers, professors in the University, served in various ways: James C. Manry, M. Willard Lampe, and Charles A. Hawley.

"The main reason for delay in the selection of a regular pastor lay in the renewed desire of the elders to bring about the federation but not the union of such churches as might be interested in a more comprehensive and effective program of approaching and serving the spiritual needs of citizens and students in Iowa City.

The committee appointed in December 1929 immediately went to work and reported a program of action; members of the congregation were informed of the meaning of federation and ballots were distributed asking whether they wished to proceed and if so whether they authorized elders and trustees to appoint a committee to negotiate with other churches. At a congregational meeting in January 1930, the count of ballots showed 126 for and 56 against further consideration of the project. Although most of the members of the church refrained from participation the vote could be interpreted as a fairly strong indication of agreement with the main proposals; under the federated plan, the Presbyterian Church would not lose its identity; all churches would join in choosing one able preacher and other pastors to assist him; a far better educational program could be provided for children; more could be done to make religion attractive to young people; the religious forces of Iowa City could be brought into greater unity; unnecessary duplications could be avoided; and a larger and better house of worship could be built for the federated group.

"Elders and trustees accordingly decided to go ahead and consult with other churches on the basis of the general principles above set forth. All were urged to approach the problem in the right spirit and not on the supposition that federation was "in itself a magical panacea for the ills of the spiritual life which lie far deeper than any questions of organization." The Baptist, Christian, Methodist and the Congregational churches showed some interest in a joint program of religious education; but in the end only the Congregationalists declared a readiness to discuss federation. In August 1930 plans were evolved and distributed by committees representing the two

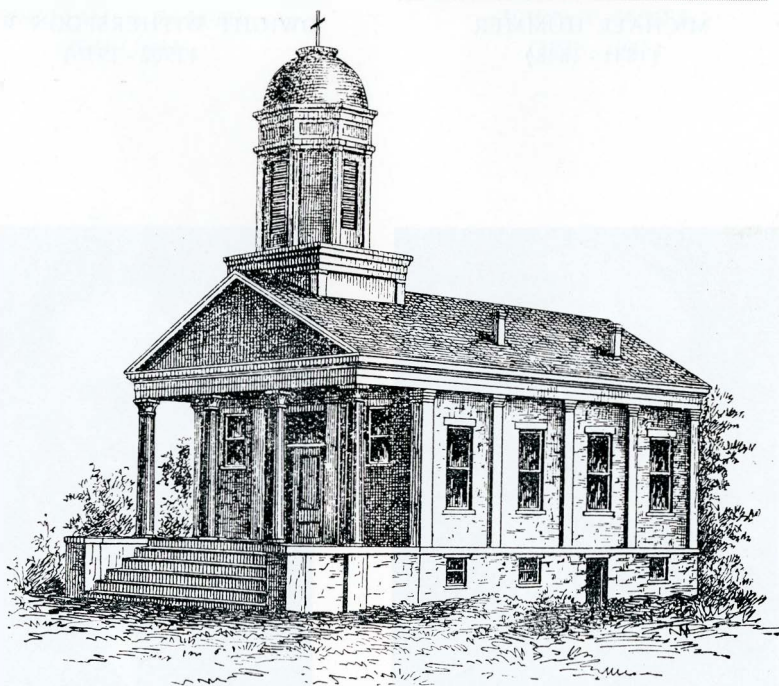
interested congregations and a later revision was submitted for balloting in October with the recommendation of elders and trustees that it be adopted with the following understandings; the Congregational minister would be retained with responsibilities primarily pastoral in character; another man would be selected immediately by a joint committee for his qualities as a preacher; the Congregational house of worship would be used as a junior church; the Presbyterian church would be remodeled at once for regular services; and the Sunday School and educational programs of the two societies would be combined. It was also announced that if the Baptists joined, their pastor would become the director of religious education in the Federated Church. When the Presbyterians voted favorably 94 to 69 but fell short of the two-thirds majority previously agreed upon, the project was regretfully dropped from further consideration by the church boards."

The arrival of Dr. William P. Lemon from Minneapolis in 1931 co-incided with the beginning of the financial crises caused by the Depression years; the 50-year old Stone fund was wiped out, for example. But there was brighter news. At this time the will of Mr. Charles Ryerson, which left his entire estate to the church, made possible the future use of a sum estimated at between \$50,000 to \$75,000 and opened up the prospects of a new church building at some time in the future. In the meanwhile extensive remodeling and redecorating of the church was undertaken and a new organ was secured.

Dr. Lemon left in November of 1934 to go to Ann Arbor; he was succeeded by Dr. Illion T. Jones on New Year's Day of 1935. Dr. Jones, who had served churches in Texas from 1917 to 1934, came from San Antonio. Because there had been no assigned student pastor since 1929, Dr. Jones, as Dr. Lemon before him, served in both capacities--church pastor and student pastor.

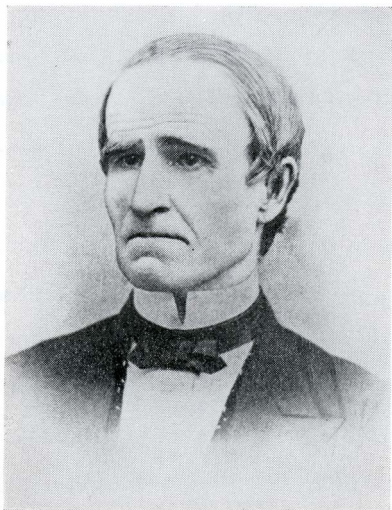
LAUNCELOT G. BELL

Organizing Pastor
September 12, 1840

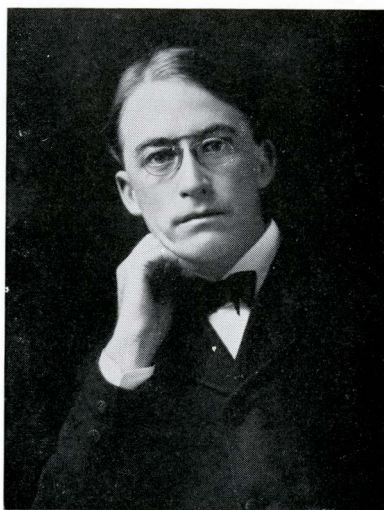


FIRST BUILDING
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Iowa City, Iowa

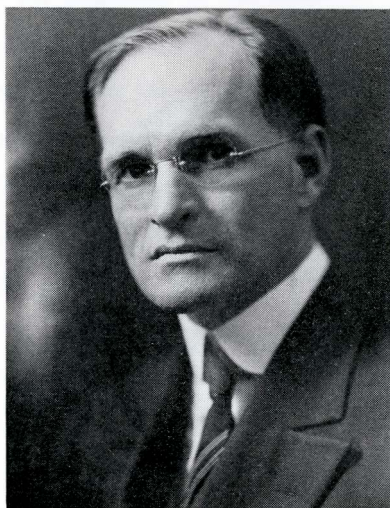
(Started 1843 — Completed 1850 — Burned 1856)



MICHAEL HUMMER
(1841 - 1848)



DWIGHT WITHERSPOON WYLIE
(1902 - 1916)



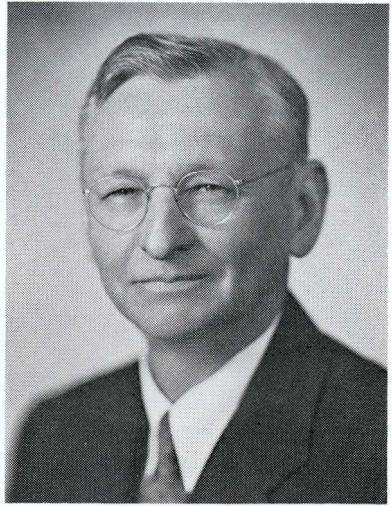
ROBERT R. REED
(1919 - 1926)



JOHN G. RHIND
(1926 - 1929)



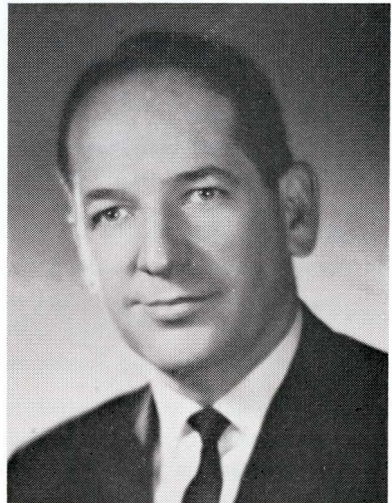
WILLIAM P. LEMON
(1931 - 1934)



ILION T. JONES
(1935 - 1945)



P. HEWISON POLLOCK
(1945 - 1962)



JACK L. ZERWAS
(1963 - Present)



PRESENT CHURCH
(Started 1856 — Completed 1865)

Spire added in 1869, which fell in windstorm in 1877, when present "battlement" tower was built. In 1914 the North Addition was built, and in 1953 the Educational and Youth Wing was added.

In 1938 a committee, with Dr. J. T. McClintock as chairman, was established to study the legal status and organizational aspects of the church. As a result of the committee's work, the congregation in April of 1939 not only voted to establish the corporate affairs of the church on an up-to-date basis, but also established yearly classes for the Trustees, gave the Trustees power to fill any vacancies until the next annual meeting and established procedures for a church nominating committee. In 1949 the Articles were further amended limiting the continuous service of Trustees to two consecutive three-year terms. With the exception that the time of the annual meeting has been changed from April to January, the by-laws have since remained essentially the same.

In 1940 the church observed the Centennial of its founding with a three-day program, Sunday, November 17 through Tuesday, November 19. Features of the Centennial Program were the Centennial Church Service, an evening program on The Westminster Foundation, an anniversary luncheon, a reception for former pastors and a pageant which was based on incidents of the local church history. The Program concluded with a Centennial birthday dinner at which several former pastors spoke. A book One Hundred Years of Presbyterianism in Iowa City and a booklet The Centennial Celebration were issued by the Church. Both were due to the work of Jacob Van Der Zee.

Dr. Jones continued to serve the church through the trying years of World War II; he left in the summer of 1945 to become Professor of Pastoral Theology and vice-president of the San Francisco Theological Seminary at San Anselmo, California.

During the interim period between the departure of Dr. Jones and the arrival of the new pastor, Dr. P. Hewison Pollock, Dr. N. Willard Lampe of the University's School of Religion served as supply pastor and as moderator of the Sessions.

For these services and for many others Dr. Lampe is remembered by many in the church.

Dr. Pollock began his ministry in December of 1945, coming to Iowa City from Bozeman, Montana. His ministry, one of the longest in the church's history, was marked by a growth of membership which almost doubled the church's population. Some of the highlights of this period were the church's efforts to aid displaced Europeans, an every member commitment canvass in 1960 (the first in 25 years), the publication of a monthly church newsletter (from September, 1959 on), a Colony Plan for increased fellowship and greater participation in the life of the church.

From January 1, 1947 until 1952, the work with University students was carried on by an assistant who also devoted half of her time to the work of the Church School. In 1952 the addition of a two-story unit which provided additional space for the church school and student work led to the employment of a full-time student pastor, Mr. Jerome Leksa, the first such person since 1929. Further growth in the University student body together with increased support from the Westminster Foundation led to the employment of Miss Joan Bott in 1960.

The growth of church school enrollment led to a plan for two church school meetings in 1954. In 1958 Mr. Gerald Kane was called to serve the ministry of church education: he remained in that position until 1961. Since that time the professional requirements of the church school have been served by a lay Associate for Christian Education.

The continued growth of the church membership led to the institution of duplicate Sunday morning services in 1954, and to the founding of St. Andrew church in 1958. Also, in 1958 Mr. Russell Hunter began a period of service as the first associate pastor of the church, his duties being primarily pastoral care.

In 1961 First Church, along with others helped to found a United Presbyterian's summer young people's camp near Wyoming, Iowa.

In the summer of 1962, Dr. Pollock and Mr. Hunter asked that they be released from their pastoral relationships with the church. Dr. Pollock, who had been in the ministry nearly 40 years, accepted a call as an associate secretary of the Department of Ministerial Relations of the General Assembly with offices in Columbus, Ohio. Mr. Hunter continued as interim pastor until the arrival of Dr. Zerwas. During that period Dr. Hubert Brom, pastor of St. Andrew Church, served as moderator of the session.

The pastorate of Dr. Jack L. Zerwas began on February 1, 1963. Dr. Zerwas had been pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Minot, North Dakota since 1948. Prior to coming to Iowa City he had been moderator of his presbytery and of synod, and had been a trustee of Jamestown College. Since coming to Iowa City, Dr. Zerwas continues to serve the church in a number of national capacities.

On June 20, 1963 Mr. Robert Gwaltney undertook the position of Assistant Minister. In addition to sharing responsibility for the morning services of worship, Mr. Gwaltney has a major responsibility visitation and work with youth of the church.

GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

A few statistics will serve to demonstrate the rate of growth of the church family and the work of the church in the past 25 years:

Net total of communicants:	March 31, 1940	585
	December 31, 1962	978
	December 31, 1965	1073
Sunday School members, teachers, etc.	March 31, 1940	211
	December 31, 1962	424
	December 31, 1965	489
Total Congregational receipts (other than benevolences):		
	March 31, 1940	\$14,762.00
	December 31, 1962	47,830.00
	December 31, 1965	88,899.40

Benevolences:	March 31, 1940	\$ 1,544.00
	December 31, 1962	15,099.00
	December 31, 1965	17,600.00

In comparing these figures, one must keep in mind the establishment of St. Andrew.

In 1959 an analysis was made of the attendance at church services on six selected Sundays through the year. 3,254 persons attended church on these Sundays, an average attendance of 542. Of those responding to a questionnaire (85.8%) 42.9% were members (4.3% student members), 28.2% other students, 14.7% members of other churches. Maximum attendance on one of these Sundays was 609.

Because of the continued growth of the church and because the church auditorium will seat comfortably only about 400 persons, it was decided to add a third service (at 8:15 A.M.) in the fall of 1965.

The continued growth of Iowa City, of the University and of the Church in the last twenty-five years has produced problems (and some solutions) for the church which finds itself more and more restricted by University land use and building development. The Church has continued to feel that it needs to be located close to student concentrations so that students may conveniently attend church and Westminster Foundation (now United Campus Christian Fellowship) activities.

In 1954 and 1955 discussions began about the possibility of launching a second Presbyterian Church in Iowa City. A Church Expansion Committee was formed and the Synod offices contributed advice. There followed a series of "Cottage Meetings" which culminated in a definite recommendation that the Church move toward the establishment of another church.

In 1957 the congregation voted to provide \$15,000 from permanent funds to the new church. A like amount was contributed by the Iowa Board of National Missions and over \$60,000 was furnished by national sources. Thus, \$90,000 was available for a new building.

In May 1958 the church organized as St. Andrew Church with a few over 80 members. On January 1, 1959 Mr. Paul Parker began to hold Sunday Services in an old farm house on the west side site which had been purchased. A new church building was completed in 1959. By September of 1959 there were over 225 members and Dr. Hubert Brom has been installed as the regular pastor.

Still First Church continues to grow. Presently a building committee is meeting at intervals to analyze the future building and program needs of the First Church. Both University and Church recognize the value of a location within the periphery of the University community. Space is a primary consideration, not only for building but also for automobile parking. Repair or remodeling of the present building continues to be an item for concern. Undoubtedly decisions will have to be made; the provision of adequate worship and meeting facilities will continue to be a major problem.

WESTMINSTER FOUNDATION

The Westminster Foundation is a joint venture of the Board of Christian Education, the Synod, and a local committee.

Financial resources for the operation of a local student center are obtained from four major sources: The Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. The Synod Benevolence Budget, students participating in the local program, gifts from alumni, parents of students and interested friends. Responsibility is divided among the above in the following manner: Salaries of all full-time professional staff are provided by the Board of Christian Education. Funds for the payments of salaries of non-professional staff, housing for the program and the professional staff,

equipment and program resources are received from the Synod Benevolence Budget. These funds are subsidized by resources developed by the Local Committee, among alumni, parents of students, and interested friends. The student program budget, including Presbyterian and project benevolence, is the responsibility of the Local Westminster Student Fellowship.

From 1907 to 1929 there had been six student pastors of whom the first two were student assistants who had not been ordained: Mr. H. L. Olin, 1907-1909; Mr. George A. Chickering, 1909-1910; Francis M. Fox, 1910-1913; E.A. Bess, 1913-1917; Herbert L. Searles, 1919-1925; Curtis R. Douglass, 1927-1929.

From 1910 to 1929 the work of these men was conducted in Synod House, the building at 125 North Clinton Street. Control of the student work was transferred from the Iowa Synod to the Westminster Foundation in 1924. From 1929 on, the directorship of the Foundation was assumed by the church pastor; he had as his assistants the following: Miss Genevieve Chase 1929-1931; Miss Mildred I. Leech 1931-1933; Miss Jean Louise Smith 1933; Miss Harriet M. Otto 1934-1939; Mrs. Elwood H. Olsen (Miss Taylor) 1939-1941; Miss Margaret Cheek 1941-1942; Mrs. Owen Sutherland (also Church secretary) 1942-1943; Mrs. Brainerd Covert 1943-1949; Miss Wilma Grossheim 1949-1952; Mrs. Ray Johnson 1952-1954. From 1949 to 1952 the following served as Junior Assistants: Miss Eleanor Wesselink, Mrs. Harvey Talmadge, Miss Peggy Rough and Miss Margaret Stutzman.

From 1929 on the funds expended by the Foundation were derived from the Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, the Synod's Board of National Missions and rentals from the Synod House. This building was sold to the University in 1950. For some time after the arrival of Mr. Leksa he served as Director of the Foundation and Associate Pastor of the Church.

Dr. Pollock served as Associate Director of the Foundation, an arrangement which on occasion led to administrative problems. The demands on Mr. Leksa's time because of duties connected with his role as Associate Pastor and the increase in the work of the foundation led to the employment of Miss Joan Bott as his assistant in September of 1959. In March of 1960 she was ordained to the ministry of the gospel and continued in her work with the Foundation until 1964.

Following Dr. Pollock's resignation in 1962, Mr. Leksa resigned as Associate Minister of First Church. At this time the University ministry and the Church's ministry became administratively separated. The work continues on a cooperative basis and the Foundation continues to share church facilities.

The present direction of the Campus ministry is a cooperative one known as the United Campus Christian Fellowship. This program has national and Synod approval. It became operational in Iowa City in 1965 and will become administratively unified in 1966. In Iowa City the other denominations involved are the United Church of Christ (Congregational), the Christian and the Evangelical United Brethren.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

According to the best information available the Sunday School of our church was organized in 1843 through the zeal of Deacon Diodate Holt, one of the charter members of the church. It has been in continuous operation since, under the capable leadership of a host of voluntary workers - men, women and young people. At one time the church experimented with the policy of paid teachers; at another time the officers and teachers planned their own courses of study, but both experiments proved unsatisfactory and were abandoned.

For a number of years all the offerings received in the Sunday School were used for benevolences, the church proper paying the running expenses of the school. But now the school is self-supporting and has its own envelope system and its own budgets. It makes an annual contribution to the current expenses of the church and to each of the benevolent boards of the denomination.

The Sunday School is carefully graded, has the usual departments of a church school from the nursery to the adults, uses the up-to-date literature published by the Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, and is conducted by a capable, faithful, and devoted group of officers and teachers.

Since the late '40's the services of a full-time professional worker have been necessary to implement the work of the various volunteers in the program. In 1957, Gerald Kane was called as an associate pastor for Christian Education and served through 1961. Since that time (January, 1962) Mrs. Clarence Andrews has served as Assistant for Christian Education.

Supervision of the Christian Education program is delegated by the session to the Christian Education Committee, consisting of at least two Elders, one of whom serves as chairman, three members from the congregation, the Pastors, the Superintendent of the Sunday School, and one representative each from the Women's Association and the Boy Scout leadership.

The committee recognizes that many church and church related activities are educational. Accordingly, the Committee tries to encourage the Boy Scouts and their leaders, attendance at conferences and summer camps, attendance at leadership or teacher training conferences, Fellowship groups, Youth Choirs and the like. Teaching in the Sunday or Vacation Church School is an educational experience. The Committee is developing a library to help teachers, church officers, and program leaders and to provide reading materials for any persons, young or old, who want to know more about our own or other religions. The Committee has given considerable thought to the educational opportunities available to the adult members of our Church. Granting the educational potential of present church activities, the Committee would like to develop additional opportunities for study and discussion.

THE WOMEN OF THE CHURCH

The first organized work of the women of the church seems to have been established in 1874. From the very beginning, however, the women of

all ages have been a major factor in the material, educational, missionary, and social work of the church. Before they were organized into formal groups they were informally at work contributing to the improvement and upkeep of the church property, giving benefits, preparing meals, teaching in the Sunday School, and otherwise supporting the various activities of the church. It would be impossible to pay too fine a tribute to the many women whose services have been given so generously to the church and without whose labors we could hardly visualize our church being as efficient as at present.

Over the years many kinds of societies, such as Foreign Missionary, Home Missionary, Ladies Aid, and Guilds, have come and gone. It is divided into nine circles: Zerwas Circle, Jones Circle, Grace Circle, Bywater Circle, Newcomb Circle, Reed Circle, Hunter Circle, Pollock Circle, and the Wylie Guild, the latter an evening group for business and professional women. The Association proper meets monthly and the Circles arrange their own meetings to suit the wishes and convenience of their members. Most of the Circles, however, also have a monthly meeting. Each Circle engages in missionary, social, educational, and church-aid service, and has its own treasury. But each participates in the general work of the Association and contributes to its general treasury.

THE MUSIC OF THE CHURCH

There is no record of musicians who served the church throughout all of the years. John Crozier, who was acquainted with the church from its infancy and who served as pastor for a brief time in 1853, once paid a glowing tribute to some of the early musicians, both those who played instruments and the vocalists. Those who have aided in the ministry of music since, deserve a similar tribute.

When the church was remodeled in 1934, the present Austin Organ was installed at the expense of approximately \$7,000.

For seventeen of the last 25 years (1942-1959) the music was under the direction of Prof. and Mrs. Thomas Muir, he serving as choir director and she the organist. Their tenure, one of the longest periods of service to First Church, was marked by an harmonious relationship between them and the congregation which ended only with the resignation of the Muir's. Professor Muir continues to be a member of the church with his wife and also continues in his status of Associate Professor Emeritus of the University Department of Music.

Presently the responsibility for the music of the church is vested in a Music Committee which is responsible for selecting a Director of Music and a church organist.

From 1959 to 1961 Mr. Richard Grace served as choir director and Mr. Robert L. Landis as organist. In September of 1961 Professor Gerhard Krapf of the University's music department became organist and choir director. In 1964 Dr. Rosella Duerksen became Director of Music, a new position in the church.

Under her directorship there are presently five choirs in the church. The Adult Choir is present at most Sunday services. The other four are youth choirs: the Geneva Choir (Senior High); the Junior High Choir; the Junior Choir; and the Carol Choir. Presently Mrs. LeRoy Butherus is assisting with the Carol Choir (Second and Third Graders.)

DISPLACED PERSONS

The world social and political upheavals which began with the Nazi invasions of central Europe and have continued on to this day have brought new problems to the church in this quarter-century, and the church has responded.

In 1948 the Vladimir Koslov family, Russian refugees in Germany, was brought to Iowa City and for a time lived on a farm near Iowa City. For such families the church's responsibility was the fare from a port of entry, provision for a house and employment so that the family would not displace an American family, and assurance that the family would not become a public charge. The Koslov family remained in Iowa City somewhat more than a year at which time they moved to New Haven, Connecticut where Mrs. Koslov's brother was a priest of a Russian Orthodox Church. The family succeeded there and in 1960 their daughter was a freshman at the University of Connecticut.

In 1955 the Max Pock family came from Austria. Mr. Pock later graduated from University of Iowa with a JD degree with highest honors. He became a teacher at the University of Michigan and a member of the Law Research Institute there; still later, having become an American citizen, he was admitted to the bar and invited to become a faculty member at Emory University at Atlanta, Georgia.

In 1959 the Mievaldis Broze family came from Germany under the sponsorship of the church. They continue as members of the church although their home is now in Beaverton, Oregon.

In mid 1962 First Church, in cooperation with St. Andrew, aided in bringing the Nicholas Jans and Frans van der Waag families from Indonesia following the upheaval there.

THE MERCER FUND

Through the years the church has made itself of use to University students in many ways, some of which are outlined above and some of which are implicit in the presence of a Church in a University town. One means of service, that of financial assistance, was made possible in 1959 by a bequest from the late Mr. W. W. Mercer which established the "Willis

W. Mercer Student Emergency Loan Fund." This fund is administered by a joint Church-Westminster Foundation committee: it is a revolving fund whose purpose may be inferred from its title.

THE RYERSON FUND

Mention has already been made of the origins of this fund with a bequest in the early thirties from Mr. Charles Ryerson. The income from this bequest was to be used for the benefit of the church until such time as the trustees "may deem it necessary to construct a new church," when the whole or part of the principal sum could be expended for that purpose.

Presently the value of this fund is about \$65,000. A loan from the fund helped in the establishment of St. Andrew.

CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

This church has the three governing bodies as provided in the Presbyterian Form of Government. They are: the Session, the Board of Trustees, and the Board of Deacons.

THE SESSION: The Session is composed of the minister, who is the moderator "ex-officio," and of as many elders as the congregation may choose. Its responsibilities are by ecclesiastical law limited to such "spiritual" services as worship, the church school, the admission and dismissal of members, and the administration of the communion.

Coincident with the organization of the church in 1840, the Session of this church was organized with the minister and one elder, John McConnell. Since that time the church has been in continuous service, its records being intact from 1849. In 1886 the Session was incorporated in order that it might administer the Stone Fund. Inasmuch as that fund no longer exists, the articles of incorporation have not been renewed.

Over the years the number and terms of office of elders have varied

with the needs and wishes of the congregation, For many years the church has operated under the rotation system, which limits the term of office to three years, and makes an elder ineligible for re-election for one year after his term of office expires. At present the Session consists of the moderator, a clerk, twelve elders chosen from the membership and two from the student membership. Although some action had been taken in the matter of student elders in the 1920's, none had served in this important capacity until 1938. The practice of electing student elders was discontinued in 1941 and then re-instated in 1947. Although for a long time only men served as elders, in more recent years ladies have been elected to the session and so far have continued to merit the trust placed in them.

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

The Trustees are the civil officers of the church. They are elected by the congregation and operate under articles of incorporation which are taken out in accordance with the laws of the state. The duties of the Board of Trustees are confined to such "temporal" matters as holding title to and caring for the properties and funds of the church, raising and expending money for its current expenses, and in general managing its finances on a sound business basis.

This congregation was incorporated on December 31, 1842. At that time six trustees were elected: Chauncey Swan, Joseph Schell, George G. Huey, R. Hutchinson, J. W. Margrave, and Diodate Holt. In 1849 the congregation was again incorporated under the Iowa law of 1847 governing religious bodies. This statute placed no time limit on the life of such charters, and so it has never been renewed, although it has been amended from time to time.

Competent legal authorities inform us that we can operate under this charter indefinitely and that it is of considerable historical value. They recommend that it be retained so long as the laws of the state permit.

The charter of 1849 provided for seven trustees to be elected annually. From that time the number of trustees has remained the same, but a recent amendment changed the term of office to three years, with eligibility for re-election. The records of the Board of Trustees are intact from 1849.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY

The Board of Trustees employs a financial secretary who is directly responsible to them. Miss Elizabeth Hunter occupied this position continuously from 1918 to 1961 during which time she occasionally served the Church in other capacities. No other person has served the Church for so long, nor, for that matter, so well. On Sunday, January 15, 1961, Miss Hunter was recognized with a ceremony of appreciation at a morning service and with a reception and gifts in the lounge in the afternoon.

CHURCH HISTORIAN

One other long period of service to the Church came to an end in 1948 when Prof. Jacob Van Der Zee relinquished his post as Church Historian after serving in that position since the 75th Anniversary of the Church. During that time Prof. Van Der Zee wrote several histories of the Church including One Hundred Years of Presbyterianism in Iowa City, Iowa 1840-1940. Prof. Van Der Zee died on October 29, 1960.

THE BOARD OF DEACONS

The Deacons are charged with the responsibility of looking after the needy and ill of the congregation, and the disbursement of such

funds as are entrusted to it for charitable and philanthropic purposes. At the time the church was organized in 1840, Diodate Holt was elected as Deacon. After that time the records have little to say about the work of Deacons until April, 1909, when the present Board of Deacons was organized. Under the law of the church the minister is "ex-officio" moderator of the Board. The Deacons, like the Elders, are elected and their number and terms of office are determined by the congregation. For some years the Board consisted of nine members, but the congregation in 1939 voted to reduce the number gradually to six. More recently the growth of the Church has required that a larger Board be selected; presently there are twelve deacons and three student deacons.

MINISTERS WHO HAVE SERVED THE CHURCH

John Stocker	1840-1841
Michael Hummer	1841-1848
Silas H. Hazard	1848-1851
John Crozier	1853-1854
Frederick A. Shearer	1854-1858
Oliver O. McClean	1859-1861
Jacob Winters	1861-1862
Samuel M. Osmond	1862-1879
Wm. Rossman Henderson	1879-1880
George P. Folsom	1880-1887
Edward Newton Barrett, D.D.	1888-1901
Dwight Witherspoon Wylie, D.D.	1902-1916
Harry Burton Boyd	1916-1917
James H. Bigelow	1917-1918
D. N. Scott	1918-1919
Robert R. Reed, D.D.	1919-1926
John G. Rhind, D.D.	1926-1929
Charles A. Hawley	1930-1931
W. P. Lemon, D.D.	1931-1934
Ilion T. Jones, D.D.	1935-1945
P. Hewison Pollock, D.D.	1945-1962
*Jerome Leksa	1952-1962
*Gerald Kane	1957-1961
*W. Russell Hunter	1958-1963
Jack L. Zerwas, D.D.	1963-
**Robert M. Gwaltney	1963-

* Associate

** Assistant

Note: The author is indebted to the 1940 Church History of Prof. Van Der Zee from which he drew copiously for accounts prior to 1940; and to Prof. Edward Mason, Dr. Paul Seebom, Miss Elizabeth Hunter and Dr. Jack L. Zerwas who read a draft of this manuscript, and offered suggestions and advice. Egregious errors are the sole responsibility of the author.

Iowa City, Iowa
April, 1966

