

WRIGHT CHURCH OF CHRIST

AND LATER

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST

Waldron, Michigan

In June 1860, the Reverends William Jewel and Zephaniah Shepard, Spring Hill, Ohio organized the Wright Church of Christ, at the pink schoolhouse in District 4, They were commonly known as Disciples and numbering 15 members.

Meetings were held in schoolhouses for fourteen years, James Vandervort, New Antioch, Ohio was elected Elder in October 1863. Samuel Vandervort, who was his son, Leonidas Hubbard, Isaiah McNitt and Horace Weaver became Elders later. Euclid Hubbard and William W. Coman were elected deacons. Elders performed the ministerial work and occasionally a minister would visit. There were no funds for a full time minister.

In 1874, Mrs. Eliza Doughty gave one acre of ground to the congregation, located at the corner of Hartley and Tuttle Road. A church building 30 by 46 feet and seating 300 people was built. The building cost \$1,360, the furniture cost \$150, and the church bell cost \$200. The money was raised by subscription and everything was paid for before the dedication. It was known as the Wright Church of Christ, and was dedicated in October, by Reverend F.M. Green of Kent, Ohio.

During the winter of 1898 – 1899, protracted meetings were held at the M.E. Church and the U.B. Church in the village of Waldron. As a result new additions were made to the Wright Church of Christ.

In September 1900, an organizational meeting was called and the lower room of the Weaver Building in Waldron was rented and fitted for prayer services, occasional preaching and observance of communion every Lord's day. This group, under the guidance of Leonidas Hubbard of the Wright Church, elected the following officers: John Avis and John Winans, elders; A.B. Woolace and Dr. J.M. Barnes, deacons; E.T. Abbaduska, secretary and Dr. J.M. Barnes treasurer; R.H. Smith, Fenton Coman and Freeman Skinner, trustees. On January 27, 1901, the By-Laws and Constitution were adopted, subscribed to and signed by thirty-four members.

During the winter of 1900 – 1901, the membership decided to build a new church building at 107 West Street, Waldron. This new structure was dedicated September 15, 1901 by L.L. Carpenter, of Wabash, Indiana. The mortgage was fully paid by December 26, 1903.

The old Wright Church of Christ Building was moved in sections and reassembled on the south and east sides of the new church for sheds to protect the horses while their masters were at worship. The bell from the old building was taken to Vestaburg, Michigan to serve a church being organized by Dr. Melvin C. Hubbard.

The present addition to the south side of the building built in 1920 provided four new classrooms and extra room in the basement. The minister at this time was Elmer C. Johnston. High School Baccalaureate services were held in the new church building for a number of years through 1946, Several years an old pump organ was used along with a piano for music. The first Electric Organ was purchased in 1949.

In 1955, during the ministry of Kenneth Ferguson, the church was redecorated. New drapes, new floors and pews were installed. At a later date the sanctuary and parsonage were carpeted. The Ladies Aid helped financially with these projects. A communion table in memory of Lily Foglesong and a new communion set in memory of Alice Brandeberry were donated by their respective families.

In 1965, restrooms and a nursery were added; George Lee did a lot of the work and furnished a lot of the material. In 1969 a new ceiling was installed in the sanctuary. A new electric organ was purchased in 1970, a public address system was installed in 1974 and a spinet piano was purchased in 1975. The original public address system was updated in 1982 and a cassette taping system was added in 1984. A lighted bulletin board was placed in front of the church by Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Williams.

On Aug. 5, 1984, the congregation approved the purchase of the Vernal Carpenter property, 120 W. Mackinaw St., as a new parsonage for the church. After extensive remodeling the house was occupied on Oct. 5, 1984, by the John D. Ater family. The former parsonage at 105 West Street was later sold and moved to a location on Camden Road near Camden. The empty lot was made into an off-street parking lot.

The two small rooms behind the pulpit were remodeled for the minister's study and a copy room in the 1980s.

In 1990 Dale Wheaton and Harvey Hollstein built storage cupboards in the east upstairs classroom and later remodeled the basement kitchen, moved the north dining room wall a few feet north, and build new cupboards, etc. In 1999 masonry work was done on the entire brickwork.

Water in the basement became a larger than usual problem and in the summer of 2000 a new catch basin and 8-inch drain were put in place on the south side of the building. The basement was then redecorated, baseboards replaced, etc. All new eavespouts were installed in 2001.

During 2001 and later work was done to remove the north stairway to the basement and replace carpet in foyers, auditorium and nursery, and to re-wire much of the building.

Ministers of the First Church of Christ, Waldron, Michigan

Name	Date Ministry Began
E. C. Nicholson	1902
L. E. Chase	1903
J. G. Wilson	1905
W. R. Cady	1907
J. W. Borden	
M. O. Jarvis	1911
W. T. Hacker	1912
J. G. Wilson	1915
W. H. Van Deusen	1919
E. C. Johnston	1920
D. T. R. McLean	1923
J. W. Frye	1925
J. B. Little	1926
J. D. Driskill	1928
W. R. Ellis	1937
Harry Mason	
Milton Fronsoe	
J. F. Baxter	1941
William Phillips	1946
Kenneth Ferguson	1953
Clark A. Fait	1957
James Hulbert	1966
Frank Horn	1968
G. Edward Geans	1969
Wayne Skiver	1974
Rocky Young	1975
James Hawthorne	1976
Russell Hodgman	1979, January

John D. Ater	1983, Nov. 13
Scott Osborn	1991
Randy Penwell	1993
Jerry Leazenby	1994
James Brown	1997
Lynn Hart	1998-2003