

ANSTED FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH

The Ansted Free Will Baptist Church was formed as a result of an "old fashioned" tent revival held in the summer of 1948 at the mouth of the Coke Oven Hollow on Albert Minks property located on Hoffman Street, presently known as Westlake Street. Preaching was rendered by Rev. J. W. Cooper of Oak Hill, W.Va.

Following the revival, worship services continued to be held in different homes in the community. A great desire grew in several people to establish a Free Will Baptist Bible preaching church. On September 12, 1948, in an attempt to obtain this goal, an organizational meeting was held in the home of Milton Lambert. Officers of the church were voted in: Rev. J. W. Cooper, pastor; Mrs. Virginia D. Hardy, clerk; Steve Hogg, 1st deacon, who later become an ordained minister in 1950. At this time, the Holy Bible was presented to the people who desired membership of the church, by Rev. Phil Manning.

On September 25, 1948, the Rev. J. W. Cooper, F. C. Hardy, and Milton Lambert were elected trustees of the church. It was decided at this meeting a temporary church building, 16' x 20' be erected in which to hold services until a larger and permanent building could be built. Milton Lambert and Steve Hogg were appointed to purchase the material for construction of this building. The first worship service was held in this building on October 9, 1948. The seating capacity was too small to hold the congregation even at this early date so a wall of this temporary building was knocked out and the church was expanded to a size 20'x 30'.

Earl "Shortyö Bragg donated the land, located in Logtown Hollow, on which the one room church was built. Not only was Mr. Bragg generous with providing land, but God financially enabled him to meet the electrical needs of the church by paying for the electricity used to operate power tools used during construction and lighting for church services. God richly blessed the efforts of reaching the lost. By December 13, 1948, a total of 48 people had been saved and united with the church. The church was debt free at this date.

January 1, 1949, under the direction of Pastor, Rev. J. W. Cooper, the first election of Sunday School officers was conducted. The officers were: Superintendent, F. C. Hardy; Bible Class teacher, Deacon Steve Hogg; Senior boys class teacher, Elvin Skaggs; Senior girls class teacher, Agnes Peck; Primary class teacher, Madeline Nutter. Maggie M. Drennen was elected treasurer and clerk for the year upon the resignation of Virginia D. Hardy.

January 16, 1949, two more deacons were appointed to serve the church. They were William Niday and Milton Lambert. Lambert also became an ordained minister in August, 1954, (See deacon list for further appointees.)

January 22, 1949, the Ansted FWB Church was admitted to the Fayette Conference of Free Will Baptist Churches.

By March, 1949, the little church had wonderfully experienced the second problem of seating capacity. A committee was elected for the purpose of building a larger permanent church building. The committeemen were: Earl "Shorty" Bragg, chairman, William Niday and Steve Hogg. Under the supervision of the contractors, J. W. Cooper & Sons, Inc., the Ansted Free Will Baptist Church was built and is still in use today. Men in the community (members and nonmembers) freely labored to erect the church. Besides J. W. Cooper and sons, Lloyd, Carl and Ezra, other men mentioned to this writer were F. C. Hardy, Charles and Vernon Hardy, Chalmers and William "Big Bill" Skaggs, Elvin Skaggs, "Scooter" and Jerry Skaggs, Delbert and Bobby Peck, E. R. "Shorty" Bragg, Joe Thomas, Milton Lambert, Steve Hogg, Levon and Donald Hogg, Randal and William "Bubb" Niday, Jess Layton, Elsie Cooper, Frank Cole, Wilford Fox, a nonmember who was the town policeman at this time, and probably other men whose names are not mentioned. Because of a period of two weeks the men did not have work at the mines, the men donated their time to build the church. By Easter Sunday in April, 1949, the church building was ready for worship services. The benches were not complete, but the folding chairs used in the smaller building were set up for seating and boards were laid on large paint cans for seats. God continued to bless and add to the church. Building committee expired May 25, 1949.

Donations were made by almost everyone in the town of Ansted to pay for the church. By October 7, 1950, the building was paid in full. A dedication service was held on October 15, 1950. A total of 110 people attended the meeting. (See dedication service for details.)

December 22, 1951, a new building committee was elected for the purpose of building Sunday School classrooms. Committee was: Eugene Campbell, chairman, Chalmer Skaggs, and Jess Layton. These first three classrooms were erected, paid off and dedicated to God by December 13, 1953.

The belfry on the front of the church was added in July, 1957. It was built by John Corum.

A bus was bought to help bring people to church in January, 1962. Sold in 1962.

January 20, 1963, a building committee was nominated to secure information in buying the property adjacent to the church property. Committeemen were: David Hess, James Pack, Ewell Rogers, and Charles Adkins. This house was to be used for an auxiliary building. January 27, 1963, a report was made the property was for sale at \$1700 at the rate of \$25.00 per month from Mollie Blair. Motion was made to buy the property. May 30, 1965, the church borrowed enough money to pay Mrs. Blair in full for the property. The Woman's Auxiliary continued to pay \$25.00 per month to the bank until the property was paid in full.

A radio broadcast from WOAY was held on Sunday evening of 1:00 o'clock by the pastor, Rev. W. H. Samms, from July, 1964, until his postorship expired, and the program followed info the postorship of Rev, Frank Legg. A quintet, "The Christianeers", consisting of Linda Pack (Syner), Ruth Hess, Jeanne Samms (Lupardas), Arlene Adkins (Samms), and Shirley Reed song the theme song, "A Love Like the Love of God" at the beginning of each program.

May, 1965, new church pews and carpet for the aisles were purchased. It was paid in full by August 4, 1967.

Electric heat was installed for the winter of 1968.

July 7, 1976, a motion was made to build a new auxiliary building and parsonage, the building committee appointed to take care of this project was James Pack and David Hess. Robert Skaggs was added to this committee July 21, 1976. This building was erected under the supervision of the pastor, Rev. J. W. Cooper, who had returned to pastor again after 38 years. He had previously established the church in 1948 and had supervised the erection of the church building in use today. The parsonage part of the building was completed first, giving Bro, & Sis. Cooper a place to live while he was pastoring and completing the auxiliary building. The kitchen from the old auxiliary was moved to the new one in November, 1976.

The old auxiliary building was sold for the lumber for \$300.

The upstairs bedrooms were completed in August, 1978, so Pastor Russell Wright and his family of 3 children could occupy the parsonage. These rooms were paid in full by August 26, 1979.

The utility building was built in June, 1980.

The bathrooms were moved to the front of the church during the fall of 1981. The aluminum siding and brick for the front of the church was put on at this time. The church was remodeled inside with new windows being put in. The tan commercial carpet was installed covering the entire church in 1982.

A van was purchased some time before Feb. 3, 1982, to be used as a church bus. It was sold some time after July 24, 1985, for \$1500 and another larger bus was purchased.

Air conditioning was installed during August, 1983 in the main auditorium.

August 21, 1985, meeting was held. Motion was made to build two new Sunday School Classrooms. Classrooms were built.

June 12, 1988, meeting was held, Motion was made to install air conditioning in the Sunday School classrooms. Air conditioning was installed.

At the present time the church is debt free and in the process of purchasing new pews for the sanctuary.

MINUTES OF THE DEDICATION SERVICE

OCTOBER 15, 1950

The Ansted Free Will Baptist Church held its dedication service October 15, 1950. There was a total of 110 people present for the Sunday School service beginning at 10:00 o'clock a.m. Song, "The Old Home Place" was sung by Sister Eagle and her daughter. Several shouted the praises of God. Brother Rigby from Huntington sang "The Lord Will Make A Way Somehow." Shouting still continued. He then gave a message enjoyed by all present. The "Midway Quartet" sang the song "Wonderful."

Adjourned for lunch on the picnic tables outside.

After lunch, the service continued. Several singers from the Methodist Church sang; the Ansted Quartet sang; The McClung Trio sang; Sister Eagle and her daughter sang. Rev. Bergis Grant gave the dedication sermon. Vess Peppers sang a song. Several ministers were present, each one giving a talk. Rev. J.W. Cooper led the devotional services for the entire day. The church was well packed and everyone enjoyed the worship services for the day.

The Church belongs to the Fayette Conference of Free Will Baptist, the West Virginia State Association of Free Will Baptist, and the National Association of Free Will Baptist.

CHARTER MEMEBERS

Helen Bryant
Mae Bryant
Mrs. Betty F. Hardy
Vernon F. Hardy
French Hardy
Mrs. Opal Hardy
Mrs. Virginia D. Hardy
Charles Hardy
Jennings W. Morton
Mrs. Billy Jean Seacrist
Macel Hardy
Milton Lambert
Mrs. Josephine Lambert
Mrs. Laura Belle Lambert
Mrs. Irene Thomas
Mrs. Gladys Niday
Rondal Niday
Steve Hogg
Virginia Mae Hardy
Hazel Hardy
Mrs. Juda Bush
Mrs. Virginia Priest
Clarence Grose
Mrs. Betty Jane Grose

Mrs. Madeline Nutter
Mrs. Dolly Layton
Mrs. Edith Niday
Jesse Layton
Mrs. Agnes Peck
Delbert Peck
Mrs. Frances Bevins
Mrs. Alice Niday
Mrs. Beatrice McGraw
Junior Bush
Ellen Drennen
Blanche Drennen
Mrs. Mabel Hogg
Mrs. Lena Potter
Mrs. Pauline McVey
Mrs. Maggie Dremnnen
Howard Potter
Arnold Hart
William "Bubb" Niday
Jack Jones
Mary Bush
Mrs. Ruby Pauley
Gilbert Skaggs
Mrs. Lillie Skaggs

PASTORS

J. W. Cooper - - - - - Sept. 12, 1948 to Sept, 27, 1954
Joe Thomas - - - - - Sept. 27, 1954 to May 28, 1955
R.H. Doan - - - - - May 28, 1955 to May 17, 1956
Bergis Grant - - - - - May 17, 1956 to May 29, 1961
W. H. "Billy" Samms - - - - - May 29, 1961 to May 30, 1966
Frank Legg - - - - - May 30, 1966 to Jan. 19, 1967
Jerry McGraw - - - - - March 5, 1967 to June 15, 1968
Darrell McNeely - - - - - June 15, 1968 to June 4. 1971
Daniel Kelly - - - - - June 4, 1971 to April 4, 1973
Joe Cuthbertson - - - - - May 23, 1973 to May 5, 1976
J. W. Cooper - - - - - May 25, 1976 to May 3, 1978
Russell Wright - - - - - May 3, 1978 to Aug. 20, 1980
 Asst: Robert Hobbs - - - - - Sept. 6, 1978 to Aug. 1979
Joe Cuthertson - - - - - Aug. 20, 1980 to May 31, 1984
Harold Taylor - - - - - June 1, 1984 to Dec. 30, 1986
Jack Dempsey - - - - - March 2, 1987 to March 30, 1988
Mark Hess - - - - - April 13, 1988 to April 30, 1989
Joe Cuthbertson - - - - - April 30, 1989 to Aug. 25, 1991

NOTE: More information was given . . listing every: Deacon; Trustee; Clerk; Treasure; Song Leader; Asst. Song Leader; Janitor; Grass Cutter; Sunday School Officer; Sunday School Teacher . . . And a list of Ministers associated with the church, as well as a list of present members (1991).

This information is available - but not placed in these Records

NOTE: This information was given to the Historical Committee of the West Virginia State Association of Free Will Baptist, sometime in, or around August 2005. The information was provided in the form of a booklet some 21 page long.
