

MAPLE LANE FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH

The Reverend George Burns who resided at Graysville Ohio, had a vision of a church building located somewhere in Pleasants County, West Virginia. Rev. Burns visited former class mate, Roy Lee Cox of Rock Run. George described to Roy the church he had seen in his vision. Roy, confident of the location, took George to see Maple Lane Methodist Church. The same church Roy had attended as a young lad.

Approaching the church, George was excited to see the church to be exactly as seen in his vision. The church was closed and had been so for several years. Arrangements were made to prepare the church for a revival. The building was cleaned, electricity was reconnected, and word was spread that revival would begin.

Revival began. With word spreading of great services, many folks from the community came to see first hand, God at work. Reverend Burns was surely blessed of God, as he preached his heart out to the people. Neighboring churches also heard of the "great revival" and visitors came to see and hear first hand, God's man in action. The revival continued for four weeks, many nights the church was filled to near capacity.

After the "great revival," God lead Reverend Burns to organize the Maple Lane Church as a Free Will Baptist Denomination. An organizational meeting was held on October 6, 1968, with Rev. George Burns in charge. The first item of business was to elect a church clerk. This office was filled by Sister Virginia Hadley. The next order of business was to decide on a name for the church. The decision was made to leave the name as it was already known, "Maple Lane". Deacons "set as watch care of the church" were named, they being Mr. Thomas J. Cox Sr. and Mr. Roy Lee Cox. Mr. Rex Hadley was elected as treasurer. Mr. Thomas J. Cox Sr. was elected as Sunday School Superintendent. Teachers elected were Adult: Mr. Rex Hadley. Teen: Mrs. Mae May, and Primary: Mrs. Margaret Cox. Pastor Rev. George Burns explained the duties of the Deacons and church officers. Meeting days and times were established as, Sunday School 9:30 am. Sunday evening services at 7:30 pm. Prayer Meeting Thursdays at 7:30 pm.

To complete the organization of the church, a special meeting was held on Saturday evening October 19, 1968. Officials from the North Eastern Ohio Conference of Free Will Baptist were in charge of the service,

and were as follows. Rev. Lawrence Smith, Bro. James E. Hilton, Bro. Ronnie Meekins, and Rev. Harlan Webb, all of Akron Ohio. Rev. Smith read Matthew 16: 12-24 and preaches. After his sermon he read the Church Covenant. Rev. Smith then invited all that wanted to become members to come forward. After prayer and a hymn the charter members were introduced. They were, Roy Lee Cox, Nina Cox, Thomas J Cox Sr., Martha Cox, Thomas Cox Jr., Dempsey Coss, Iva Coss, Betty Ruth Freshour, Rex Hadley, and Virginia Hadley.

BUILDING HISTORY

Information is sketchy on construction but it's believed the church was constructed in the late 1920's or early 1930's. Two small local churches were tom down and a larger church building was erected at Maple Lane. One church was located at Bethel, which was along McKim Creek. The other church was located at Blacks Run, just above Hebron. While under removal and reconstruction, church services were held at the Walnut Run School House until the Maple Lane Church was completed.

FREE WILL BAPTIST PASTORS

The following men have served as pastor of the Maple Lane FWB Church.

George J. Burns
Thomas J. Cox Sr.
Rex D. Hadley
Tim Childers
Rex A. Cox

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

***NOTE:** This information was given to the Historical Committee of the West Virginia State Association of Free Will Baptist, sometime in, or around June 2008.*
