

Christian Church of Bethlehem

by
Anna King Smith

The Christian Church of Bethlehem was the first church to be organized in Bethlehem by the Rev. Morgan Parr, who was a Christian preacher. It was soon after 1852 the church was organized and meetings held in his home. Eli Hammer and wife deeded in 1858 to the trustees of the Joint-Stock church in Bethlehem, and the different denominations held services there until 1861.

A few of the early members were; Mr. and Mrs. Morgan Parr, Columbus Parr and wife, Mrs. J.W. Rankin, Minerva Morris, Mrs. Mary Draper, Mrs. Rachel Morris, Mrs. Clara Morris, Elizabeth Morris, Miss Huldah Babbit (who became the wife of James B. Diemer) Mr. and Mrs. Robert Pray, Mr. and Mrs. Dick Given, Wright Sutton, Orange and Polly Sutton.

In 1901, Rev. B.F. Hall conducted an Evangelistic meeting and a new church was organized on October 29, 1901. A fine frame church was built and it was dedicated on June 21, 1903. Dean A.M. Haggard of Des Moines, Iowa delivered the dedicatory sermon. Rev. O.L. Adams was the pastor at this time. Miss Hallie Laing was the pianist and she later married Rev. Hall.

This new church was located on Lot 24-25, - block 5 in the town of Bethlehem. Charter members of this new organization were; Mr. and Mrs. Robert Pray, Mr. and Mrs. L.D. Pray, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Pray, Mr. and

Mrs. Joshua Draper, Mrs. Huldah Diemer, Mr. and Mrs. Jerome L. Parsons, Mr. and Mrs. G.N. Sutton, Mr. and Mrs. C.A. McLain, Mrs. Florence McIntire, Mrs. Madie (Jose) Kern, Rheinart Becker, Mrs. Lizzie Becker, Mrs. Nora Partridge, Mrs. Irene (Enoch) Scott, Mrs. Sarah Hellyer, Misses Pearl, Opal and Linda Diemer, Nettie King, Josie King, Fern Showalter, Marie Comstock, Kate Rhodes, Robert Sutton, Marion and Lawrence Pray.

The official Board of this new church was; Elders; Robert T. Pray and Lou D. Pray
Deacons; Frank I. Pray, and Jerome L. Parsons
Deaconess'; Mrs. Huldah Diemer, Mrs. J.L. Parsons, Miss Nettie King.
Clerk; Lou D. Pray
Treasurer; Frank I. Pray.

The organization was depleted by death and removals. It was then sold and torn down about 1938, and the material was moved to another county to be used in a church of the same denomination.

On October 1940 the trustees E.L. Davis and Hattie Pray sold the property to Florence Simms.

Thus another church has left the people with only memories of the good men and women who were faithful to the work.