

SALEM CHURCH A CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY

The earliest references to Salem Presbyterian Church indicate that it was in existence prior to 1784. According to Rev. Robt. Davidson, HISTORY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN KENTUCKY, 1847, p. 73-74, “the Rev. Adam Rankin, from Augusta county, in Virginia, having received a call from the Presbyterians of Lexington, was organizing a church in that thriving town, under the name of Mount Zion. He arrived on the 1st of October, 1784, and immediately found himself surrounded by large congregation. ... In conjunction with Mount Zion, Mr. Rice took charge of the congregation of Pisgah, about eight miles south-west of Lexington. This year also the Churches of Paintlick in Garrard County, and Salem in Clarke County were formed.”

Based on various sources, Salem already had at least three Elders in its congregation in 1784. Harold W. Rarden, www.kykinfolk.com/muhlenberg, reports that “Hugh Martin was a staunch Presbyterian and was an elder at the Old Salem Presbyterian Church in Clark Co., Kentucky, in 1784.” Martin had migrated to Kentucky in 1779 and was instrumental in the building of the early settlement at Bryan Station on Elkhorn Creek before relocating to the area near Basin Springs in what became Clark County. Similarly, Rev. Robt. Davidson, HISTORY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN KENTUCKY, 1847, p. 75-76, indicates that at the General Meeting for Conference held at Cane Run, March 30th, 1785, “there were 10 representatives present from five congregations: Caleb Wallace and William M'Cune, from CANE RUN; Thomas Maxwell and Saml. Woods, from PAINT LICK ; James M'Coun and George Buchanan, from NEW PROVIDENCE; James Beard and James Allen, from SALEM; and John Brooker, from MOUNT ZION.” When the Conference met again, according to adjournment, at Cane Run Meeting-House, on Tuesday, July 12th, 1785, there were in attendance twenty-three representatives from twelve congregations, each congregation or neighborhood, save one, being fully represented by two delegates. The list includes James Beard and James Allen of Salem, along with Jacob Fishback and Andrew Elders of Forks of Dick's River.

In 1787, with the formal creation of Transylvania Presbytery, Rev. Andrew McClure officially organized Salem Church as part of Transylvania Presbytery. In the early years, the people of Salem worshipped in a log church somewhat centrally located among the several families, although not on any road, as there were no roads then, only paths. From 1785 to 1798, Salem was served variously by Adam Rankin, Andrew McClure, James Crawford, David Rice, James McConnell, Robert Marshall, Gary H. Allen, Steven Bovell, Isaac Tull, and Joseph P. Howe.

In 1787, Jacob Fishback moved to Clark County and joined Salem Church. Jacob had originally migrated west with a Presbyterian pastor from Culpepper County, Virginia, to Tennessee and then, in 1783, settled in what is now Garrard County, where he became a member of the church founded by David Rice at the Forks of Dick's River. In addition

to serving as an Elder at Salem for many years, Jacob Fishback served as a trustee for newly-formed Transylvania University, and his younger brother, James, was a student, and later, a teacher there. James went on to become a doctor, a lawyer, and the first pastor of the Baptist Church in Lexington. He married the daughter of Isaac Shelby, the first Governor of Kentucky. In 1798, Jacob was elected to serve in the new Kentucky Legislature as Clark County's representative. In 1807, Jacob drew the difficult task of serving as foreman of the jury that tried former vice-president Aaron Burr when he was accused of treason. Burr was acquitted in spite of a strong public demand for his execution, and Jacob felt the public's wrath. Jacob's son-in-law, James Stonestreet, Salem's Clerk of Session from 1811 to 1843, also served during these years as Clerk of the Kentucky Senate. For over 200 years, from 1787 until 1993 with the death of Frederick Fishback, the Fishback family was a constant presence in the leadership and membership of Salem and Clark County. Kentucky.

In 1800, John Lyle became pastor of Salem. He was licensed to preach the gospel by Lexington Presbytery, April 21st, 1796. He was ordained by the West Lexington Presbytery in the Fall of 1799, and in 1800, took charge of the churches of Salem and Sugar Ridge, in Clark County, Kentucky, where he remained until 1803. He also opened a school in Winchester. In May, 1807, he moved to Paris, Kentucky, where he established an academy for woman, the first of its kind west of the Allegheny Mountains.

From 1803 until 1833, Robert Stuart served Salem as a Stated Supply and as Pastor. Rev. Stuart, son of John Stuart and Elizabeth Walker was born in Rockbridge County, Virginia, August 4, 1772 and died in Nicholasville, Kentucky, August 5, 1856. He graduated from Liberty Hall Academy (Washington & Lee University) in 1794. He came to Kentucky in 1798 to become one of the first three professors at Transylvania University. In 1803, he became pastor of Salem and Walnut Hill churches. He married Hannah Todd, daughter of Gen. Levi Todd. In 1807, their son, John Todd Stuart, was born. John T. attended Centre College and then studied law. He commenced his law practice in Springfield, Illinois. He served in the same battalion as Abraham Lincoln in the Black Hawk War, and encouraged Lincoln to become an attorney. They became law partners from 1837 to 1841. ("The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society," Volume 54, No. 187, April 1956.)

In 1826, an Elder in the church, Walter Preston and his wife gave Salem additional land adjoining the lot on which the original log church stood, and a brick church was built to replace the log building. The Preston family gravestones in the churchyard are the only things that mark the location. In 1836, James Anderson and his wife, Sarah, conveyed a house and lot to the Trustee of the Salem Church to be used for a home for the minister. There is nothing left to tell of that location. In 1870, the Salem Trustees deeded the 3 acres where old church stood to J. Lucien Goodwin.

In 1844, a Pulpit Bible was “Presented to Salem Church by L.P. (possibly Letitia Preston, a member at the time).” That Bible has served as a steady and continuous reminder of Salem’s heritage for over 180 years.

From 1850 to 1853, Rev. Joseph Bullock supplied the Salem pulpit. Rev. Bullock was born in 1812 in Fayette County and grew up worshipping at Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church. He then attended Centre College and studied law at Transylvania University before attending Princeton Theological Seminary in 1835. He was licensed to preach by the West Lexington Presbytery in 1836. He served as pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Frankfort, from 1836 to 1846. In 1837, he was appointed as Kentucky’s first Supt. Of Public Instruction and served in that capacity until 1839. In 1848, he returned to his home church of Walnut Hill Presbyterian as pastor and Principal of the Walnut Hill Female School. After serving as Salem’s pastor for two years, he became pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church, Louisville. He resigned in 1855 and returned to Walnut Hill. From 1861 to 1870, he was pastor of the Franklin Street Church in Baltimore. From 1870 to 1880 he was pastor in Alexandria, Virginia. He served as Chaplain of the United States Senate from 1879 to 1884. In 1888 he was elected Moderator of the Presbyterian General Assembly, the highest honor which can be paid by the church to one of its ministers.

From 1865 to 1872, the Rev. Dr. Ezekial Forman served as Salem’s Stated Supply. Dr. Forman was born in 1819, graduated from Centre College in 1837, and then completed his theological studies at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1841. He then returned to Kentucky and served a number of churches over the years. He represented the West Lexington Presbytery at the General Assembly in 1846, and then was the delegate from the Transylvania Presbytery at the General Assembly in 1860.

In 1870, at the suggestion of the pastor, Rev. Forman, Salem Church was moved to its current location – a lot on the Comb’s Ferry Pike near the Pine Grove Station. The lot was donated to the church by Mr. Jacob Hughes, who was at that time one of the largest landholders in Kentucky. Mr. Hughes was not a professed Christian, but donated the lot out of respect and high regard for Mr. Robert Stuart Taylor – one of Salem’s longtime Elders and part of an original pioneer settling family.

In 1875, Rev. E. O. Guerrant first began his ministry career, preaching at Salem. Rev. Guerrant was born in 1838 in Sharpsburg, Kentucky. He graduated from Centre College in 1860 and served as John Hunt Morgan’s adjutant general as part of “Morgan’s Raiders” for the Confederacy during the Civil War. He graduated from the Belleville Hospital College in New York City and was a practicing physician in Mount Sterling from 1867-1873, before attending seminary at Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia. After Salem, he served as pastor in Louisville from 1876 until 1885. He left that pastorage to become a missionary to Appalachia where he founded multiple missions, churches, schools, orphanages, and medical clinics.

From 1876 until 1933, Salem shared pastors and Stated Supply with other small churches, including

1876-1881	Rev. Erasmus E. Ervin, S. S. (also Union and Walnut Hill)
1881-1885	Rev. Eber Elam Bigger, pastor (also Walnut Hill)
1885-1887	Rev. John B. Devault, pastor (also Mt. Tabor)
1892	Rev. M. V. P. Yeaman, pastor (also at Walnut Hill)
1894-1895	Rev. Rutherford Douglass, S.S. (also Walnut Hill)
1896-1903	Rev. W. B. Cooper, S.S and pastor (also Walnut Hill and Mt. Tabor)
1904-1905	Rev. Robert Stuart Sanders stated supply (also Walnut Hill)
1905-1908	Rev. William M. Eldridge, stated supply (also Walnut Hill)
1914-1916	Rev. William Cummings, S. S. (also pastor at Winchester).
1917-1921	Rev. Joseph Hagins, stated supply (also pastor at Walnut Hill)
1928-1930	Rev. S. M. Hutchison, Stated Supply (also pastor, Walnut Hill)
1931-1933	Rev. Joe Sudduth, S.S. (also pastor of Mt. Tabor and Walnut Hill)
1937-1943	Rev. S. M. Logan began preaching. (Retired minister.)
1944-1950	Rev. Thomas C. Rhea, who was executive secretary of the home mission committee of Lexington-Ebenezer, served as moderator and preached regularly.
1951-1967	Rev. Walter K. Maude was executive secretary of Lexington-Ebenezer Presbytery from 1951 to 1961 and of Transylvania Presbytery to 1967, and frequently preached and served as moderator in these years.
1951-1954	Richard Smith, student, became temporary supply.

In 1955, the present Christian education and fellowship wing was added with funds donated from Mrs. Ernest Bowyer.

1957-1958	Rev. Walter Brown, student and an ordained elder became supply.
1958	Edwin N. Grigsby, student at Louisville Seminary, temporary supply.
1959-1960	Raymond C. Brown, student, served as supply.
1961-1964	William Ryan called as student minister.

In these days, Rev. Robert Stuart Sanders frequently preached, served communion, and moderated session meetings.

1964-1965	Rev. Raymond C. Brown as Stated Supply.
1965-1969	Rev. W. R. Raborn as temporary supply.
1969-1970	Rev. Michael Smathers invited to be part-time (occasional) supply.
1970-1971	Rev. Jean Willis served as Stated Supply.
1971-1972	Rev. John Shafer (Methodist minister), served as temporary supply.
1972-1973	John Hays served as temporary supply.
1974-1993	Rev. Ken Tarleton served as Stated Supply.
1993-1999	Rev. Edwin Hanna appointed Interim Pastor
2000-2004	Rev. Pamela Rucker served as Stated Supply and then as pastor

2005-2010	Rev. Suzanne Martin served as Stated Supply
2011-2016	Karen McDonald was ordained and began serving as Stated Supply
2017 –	Rev. Donald Stanley, Jr. has served as Stated Supply