

## Presbyterians Plan 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Little River News March 25, 1965

The Ashdown Presbyterian Church which is now 60 years old will have a special day April 4, commemorating its organization in 1904. A special service at the 11 o'clock hour Sunday, April 4, will be conducted by the Reverend Francis Holt, pastor, followed by dinner to be served in the Fellowship Hall. All members, former members of other towns and friends are especially urged to take part in this occasion including both the service and dinner.

The official organization of the Ashdown Presbyterian Church took place December 4, 1904, with 29 members. Dr. J.L. Stuart, ruling elder, and W.P. Bridewell, deacon, were installed and ordained by Rev. R.L. McAdams.

The 23 charter members included Dr and Mrs J.L. Stuart, Ed Stuart, Mrs. H.H. Orton, Mrs. Nannie White, W.F. Bridewell, Mrs. Julia L. Hicks, Miss Velma Hicks, Mrs Tom Conley, Mrs Cora Sanderson, Mr and Mrs John Bouldin, Mrs Arabella Phillips, Inez Bullington, Dr. P.H. Phillips, Mrs Jennie Curran, Joseph W. Head, Mrs Olea Ball, Miss Effie Price and Mrs Emma Winkler.

The local Presbyterian Church is actually the outgrowth of faithful work which began in 1900. The first Presbyterian sermon was preached by Rev. R.H. Latham in 1900. Rev. J.S. Cash conducted services in 1901, a Rev Guy held services in 1902, and Rev J.Z. Haney took charge as supply pastor in 1903 and 1904. Rev Haney assisted by Rev. J.D. Fleming, evangelist of Ouachita Presbytery, held two protracted services, one in January and the other in October 1903.

The above mentioned Rev McAdams was called to this charge to supply the Ashdown church, the Garland Church in Miller County and the Richmond Church seven miles southwest of Ashdown. He lived in Garland for the first year preaching two Sundays at Garland and the other two at Ashdown and Richmond. Rev McAdams served the church here until 1900 when he resigned to become superintendent of the Ashdown schools. After two years in this position he answered a call to the Presbyterian Church in Osceola.

Rev W.L. Sullivan supplied the church following Rev McAdams. It was during his ministry that the first Presbyterian Church building was

constructed. This building was located at the corner of Main Street and Park Avenue where the McAllister Service Station now stands. Prior to this construction services were held in a small union church building used by several denominations. It stood on the corner of Commerce and Keller streets where the present Strange Furniture Co. building is located.

The Richmond Presbyterian Church which is considered the mother church of the local church disbanded in 1908 since most of its members had moved to Ashdown. There gave their pews, carpets and pupil chairs to the Ashdown church. The other equipment along with the building was given to the Arden Presbyterians.

The pulpit stand for the first church built in Ashdown was made by Mr Kirk, a cabinet builder, and given to the church. This is the same pulpit in use today.

The present church building located at 471 Park Avenue was built during the pastorate of Rev T.A. Park, who was called to serve in 1923. Officers of the church at this time were elders: W.A. Chewing, N.C. McCrary, Dr. J.A. Wood, J.H. Welch, and M.C. Routon, H.M. Westbrook, Dr. F.H. Phillips, C.I. Bowles and A.J. Russell.

The formal opening service of the new church building was held June 24, 1928. Pastors to serve since Rev Park's resignation in June 1929 were: Rev Edgar H. Graham, Rev. Samuel P. Riccobene, Rev. Max Ecke, Rev Harold Wise, Rev Lester M James and Rev Vincent Titterud.

In addition to his regular duties in the Ashdown church, Rev Graham served the Arden church, 12 miles west of Ashdown on the first, third and fifth Sunday afternoons and the Peytonville church, four miles northeast of Ashdown, on the second and fourth Sunday afternoons. The shade trees at the present church site are enjoyed today through the efforts of Rev Graham and his Boy Scout troop who set out 12 trees. Rev Graham left in 1944.

Rev Riccobene, a native of Erma, Sicily and educated in West Virginia, continued to serve the Arden church on Sunday afternoons. The Peytonville outpost had been disbanded by this time. Rev Riccobene served as principal of grade school and also taught high school science while in Ashdown.

Rev Ecke was in Ashdown during World War 2 days and taught some high school mathematics classes and coached the girl's basketball team in addition to his regular church duties. He left here in August 1950 to accept a call as assistaqt pastor in Hot Springs.

During the time Rev. Titterud was here mid-week services were revived. Early in his pastorate the women of the church acquired the 100 years old chandeliers from the Arden Church which had been dissolved by the Presbytery. One of the chandeliers was reconditioned and converted from oil lights to electric lights and installed in the choir loft.

Just recently the women of the church financed the reconditioning of the second chandelier. It has been installed above the main sanctuary after being rebuilt, painted and converted into an electric fixture.

The Presbyterian Church, which contributes much to the religious life of Ashdown and Little River County today is now under the leadership of these men: Deacons: Dr. Joe G Shelton Jr., Curtis Daniel, C.I. Bowles, Charlie Garrett ; Elders: J.H. Welch, Leon Sellers, H.H. Orton Jr., D.M. Head, D.H. Barton, Henry Phillips and W.H. Daniel.

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