

I. Statehood and Earliest Beginnings: 1803 -1886

In order to put the church's history in context, a few words about the history of the geographic area in which it is located are appropriate. In 1803, Ohio became the first state to be formed from the Northwest Territory. Pike County was formed in 1815, composed of land from four existing counties. Chillicothe Presbytery was formed in October of 1821, covering an area of six counties including Adams, Brown, Fayette, Highland, Pike and Ross, plus the eastern parts of Clermont and Clinton Counties.

When, in 1829, the routes for a series of canals linking the Ohio River with Lake Erie to the north were being planned, a village to be called Uniontown was seen as an important port on the branch of the canal system passing through Pike County. The town was built on the site of an old Indian village known as Wan-du-cha-le on land then owned by Meschak Downing, a native of Virginia, and one of the earliest settlers in Pike County. When it was found that Uniontown already existed, Ohio-Erie Canal engineer Francis Cleveland, who had been reading Sir Walter Scott novels, suggested the town be named Waverly. The village of Waverly was established in 1832. James Emmitt was Waverly's first postmaster, with an office in his own home. A leading businessman, he saw canal construction as an economic opportunity. First, he turned his home into a boarding house for canal engineers. When the Waverly section was completed in 1832, he purchased canal boats to carry grain, built a large grain mill and whiskey distillery, and raised hogs on the grain mash left from the distilling process. When cholera broke out in 1852, he responded to public outcry over the bad odor by moving the hog farm further away. He became the first millionaire in Pike County.

The first Presbyterian congregation in Pike County was established in Piketon in 1832, with the Reverend Gamaliel Beeman, who served as stated supply pastor until 1838. The Rev. William Burton, the next stated supply pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Piketon, had, in 1841, become interested in forming a congregation in Waverly. On April 5-6, 1842, the Chillicothe Presbytery met in the Pisgah Presbyterian Church of Ross County. It is probable that action by the meeting of Presbytery established the First Presbyterian Society of Waverly with Burton as stated supply; John Carolus, John Howard and Robert Emmitt as trustees; and John Carolus as elder commissioner. Membership was small, but included George and Robert Emmitt, and probably their brother James. Burton served as pastor of the Piketon and Waverly congregations from 1842-44,

then as pastor of the First Presbyterian Society of Waverly from 1844 to 1849, for a total of seven years.¹

The property at 122 East North Street was deeded on July 4, 1842 by John Carolus and his wife, through a series of transfers that culminated with the August 23, 1843 execution of a general warrant deed to John Carolus, Isaac Watts, and James Tomlinson, who were Trustees of the First Presbyterian Society of Waverly, Pike County, Ohio. While these transfers were in progress, the original building was erected in 1842. The German Evangelical Lutheran Church, organized in 1858, also met there until 1860, and, according to some residents, public school had been held in this church building as early as 1858. The original building became unsafe in 1880, and in 1883 “it was torn away and another one commenced, which is to cost when finished about \$2,700.”² The renovated 1883 building still stands, and is currently occupied by The Canal Church of Christ.

In the 1840's, just as the Waverly Presbyterian Society was being formed, the divisions between Old School and New School Presbyterians had reached Southern Ohio. Old School Presbyterians believed that a Plan of Union with the New England Congregationalists adopted in 1801 had compromised the polity and theology of their church. The New School Presbyterians modified Calvinist theology by developing doctrines that would support both revival and societal reformation. Chillicothe Presbytery was Old School, and was not happy with the activities of New School Second Presbyterian Church of Chillicothe among Waverly Presbyterians. In 1847 it voted to have Waverly separated from the Piketon church. Waverly was for a time identified as New School, which may account for the fact that in 1852, Chillicothe Presbytery refused to allow Waverly to continue as a separate congregation within its jurisdiction. In 1868, the Waverly group, being small, again united with the Piketon Presbyterian Church in the support of a minister, and remained united until the Waverly Presbyterians finally stood on their own in 1881. The Piketon Presbyterian Church was dissolved in 1886.

The practice in Presbyterian churches in the mid-1800's was to have communicants fast on the day before communion would be served. Preparatory services would be held before communion at which tokens or

¹ See appendix for a listing of pastors 1842 to present.

² *History of Lower Scioto Valley*, 1884, Chicago, Inter-State Publishing Co., p. 743.

medals would be given to persons deemed worthy for communion.³ It can be assumed that the Piketon Presbyterian Church and the First Presbyterian Society of Waverly followed this practice. However, we do not know exactly what criteria they used in determining what made a member “worthy for communion.”

In the late 1850’s, early 1860’s, there was a successful drive to have the Pike County seat moved from Piketon to Waverly, a move promoted strongly by James Emmitt and the businessmen of Waverly. Emmitt brought Thomas Higgins, an experienced lobbyist, from Columbus to Waverly in 1859 to manage the campaign. The Ohio-Erie Canal would go through Waverly, but not Piketon, and as part of the deal, Emmitt agreed to build a new county court house in Waverly.

After approval of the move by the Ohio General Assembly in 1860, the citizens of Pike County agreed to the transfer in 1861. Prior to the completion of the new county court house, Common Pleas Court hearings were held in the Presbyterian Society of Waverly’s church, an arrangement that continued through 1865, for a rental of \$117.

Between its founding in 1842 and 1886, ten men served the Waverly church, most as short time stated supply pastors. The two exceptions were the first pastor, Rev. William Burton, who served seven years, and Rev. William P. Eastman, who served both Piketon and Waverly from 1853 to 1866. The pulpit was vacant from 1870 until March of 1876, when Rev. John O. Proctor was employed. In 1881, the First Presbyterian Society of Waverly was reorganized by the Rev. Henry W. Biggs, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Chillicothe, with twenty-four members, four elders (John L. Caldwell, Adam Gehres,⁴ S.M. Seibert and C.T. McCoy) and two deacons (William McKenzie and Robert Lowery).

On February 26, 1884, the church was duly incorporated under the name of the First Presbyterian Church of Waverly, Ohio. Listed as incorporators were Adam Gehres, Eli Potts, C.B. Copple, William H.

³ *Buckeye Presbyterians, Prepared by a Committee of the United Presbyterian Synod of Ohio, E.B. Welsh, Chairman, 1968, p. 43.*

⁴ Adam Gehres was born in Prussia, Germany, in 1828, came to America with his family in 1836, and moved to Waverly in 1866. In June of 1870 he founded A. Gehres Planing Mill and Lumber Yard. By the 1880’s he had the “finest line of furniture in Waverly.” He and his wife, Rachel, had seven children. Three generations of the Gehres family would make significant contributions to The First Presbyterian Church of Waverly.

McKenzie and George Emmitt.⁵ Gehres, Potts, and Copple, as trustees of the old organization, then deeded the property to the new corporation.

II. Years of Struggle and Limited Growth: 1886-1950

During the period 1886-1950, the United States was involved in two world wars and a Great Depression, and the Waverly church continued to struggle. During this time, 22 men served as pastors of the church with roughly half of them serving for one year or less. Despite frequent changes of professional leadership, through a core of faithful, generous Christians, the church continued a viable ministry.

James Emmitt died in 1893. His funeral service was held December 8, 1893, conducted by the Rev. E.M. Page, then Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Waverly, at which the Presbyterian Church choir sang accompanied by pianist Mrs. Will Dougherty.

A Young Peoples Society of Christian Endeavor was organized at the First Presbyterian Church of Waverly on February 11, 1894 under the direction of Rev. Edward M. Page, who served as stated supply from October 1893 to June of 1895. At the first meeting 25 members were enrolled. The Society met Sunday evenings prior to the church services. At one point the Society had an enrollment of over 100 members, but as years passed enrollment went down. William Tetrick taught the class in the early 1940's, and by 1942 it was no longer meeting.

Organized women's work began on the Synod level in the 1870s. A Thank Offering was initiated by the women in 1888. They asked church members to make a special offering of thanksgiving for the many blessings they had received in life. The money was then used in other parts of the world where available resources weren't sufficient to meet people's needs. The Synod of Ohio Historical Collection at the College of Wooster Library has three notebooks of minutes of the Martha-Mary Society meetings held from 1905 to 1923 by the Waverly Presbyterians. Records of women's meetings prior to that time, if they exist, would have been transferred to the Presbyterian Historic Society holdings in Philadelphia.

In the early 1900s the church went through a real struggle. The records show that from 1891 to 1914 the salaries paid by the local church

⁵ George Emmitt worked in his brother James Emmitt's distillery for a number of years. In 1864 he established an extensive flour milling business in Waverly which he sold in 1870. He then bought the Waverly Woolen Mills in 1871, and operated it under the name of George D. Emmitt & Co. It turned out flannels, stockings, yarns, jeans, satinetts, and blankets, and did some custom work, all using wool raised in Pike County. George Emmitt died May 5, 1899.

ranged from \$400 to \$600 a year; one exception was \$712.50. However, as the Waverly church was the only Presbyterian church in Pike County, at least some of that time the Home Mission Board paid the ministers additional amounts.⁶ No pastoral leadership was listed between the Rev. Earl A Miller's departure in January 1909 and the Rev. J.G. Galbreath's arrival in February of 1913.⁷ The March 30, 1910 congregational meeting report states, "... no preaching service having been held for over one year, although the Sunday School is doing well for which we thank God, that some steps should be taken to have preaching in the near future and that some needed repairs to the church should be made." The April 23, 1913 report states that they were glad to have a pastor and regular services again,

In 1916 some younger men of the church bought a log house across from the church and made it into a recreational room. About that time the Sunday School took on new life. Shortly after that, at the prompting of the Presbytery, the log house was sold.

On December 20, 1920, the Chillicothe Presbytery bought the house at 118 East Second Street, owned by Lizzie Lorbach and Margaret Streitenberger, for \$4,300 to be used as the church's manse.⁸ On September 27, 1934, the Chillicothe Presbytery deeded the manse over to the First Presbyterian Society.⁹



On July 1, 1923, it was moved and passed at a congregational meeting that they have four elders and four deacons and that the membership be divided into four groups with an elder and deacon in charge of each group.

On May 5, 1934, at the congregational meeting, it was reported that the Chillicothe Presbytery had been dissolved.¹⁰ With the dissolution of the

⁶ Much of the information covering the period from the early 1900s to the mid 1950s was taken from the book *Record of Congregational Meetings March 29, 1905 to January 8, 1958* borrowed from the Synod of Ohio Historical Collection located at the College of Wooster Library.

⁷ One list gives I.N. Wilkins as stated supply but lists no dates.

⁸ This photo of the house at 118 East Second Street was taken in 2011. It is not clear when the addition on the left side of the building was added. It now houses businesses.

⁹ The church was no longer known by the name of the Presbyterian Society of Waverly, but the deed had to repeat the grantee name on the preceding deed.

Chillicothe Presbytery, the Synod of Ohio gave the church the choice of joining the Columbus or the Portsmouth Presbytery. The congregation voted to join the Columbus Presbytery.

In December of 1936, the church called the Rev. Harry Wickerson as pastor, and it was reported that the Second Street Manse would remain under lease for several months, so a residence would have to be rented. Rev. Wilkerson voluntarily stated he would pay one-half of the rent. In 1937 the number of elders was again increased, this time to six. The following year, repairs were made to the manse, paid for by voluntary contributions. Adult membership was 75, with average Sunday worship attendance of 36, and average Sunday school attendance of 60. The Martha-Mary Society was averaging 25, and an auxiliary for younger members had been established with an average attendance of 12.

Although the trustees were first authorized to sell the manse in 1938, they did not do so until April 2, 1947, when William E. Tetrick and Charlotte Hibben, president and secretary of the Board of Trustees of the First Presbyterian Society of Waverly, signed a warranty deed transferring the property at 118 E. Second Street to R.H. Murray and A.H. Boyer.

Two years later the congregation established a building committee, chaired by Irma Gehres Lorbach, to plan and oversee church repairs and expansion.

Property located at 310 East North Street was purchased from the estate of James Emmitt by William S. Gehres and Joseph A. Gehres in 1895. A few years later a house was built on the property, and

Joseph's four children, Hewitt, Lloyd, Mary and

Irma, grew up there. In 1918 Irma Gehres married Leo W. Lorbach.¹¹ In 1950, Ms. Lorbach and her brothers remodeled the home and presented it to First Presbyterian Church in honor of their parents, Joseph Adam and Mary Hewitt Gehres, and their deceased sister, Mary



¹¹ After losing both of their children, a daughter who died soon after birth and a twelve-year-old son who drowned, the Lorbachs purchased an insurance agency which they renamed the Lorbach Insurance Agency. Irma Gehres Lorbach was a community leader and a lifelong member of the First Presbyterian Church, where she was active in various committees and the Martha-Mary Circle. Irma Gehres Lorbach died on August 30, 1989, at the age of 97 years, and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery.

Willard Gehres. It was dedicated as the Presbyterian Church Manse on June 7, 1951. Later, Irma Gehres Lorbach established the church's Manse Endowment Fund with an initial \$25,000 bequest managed by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation.

III. The Mowry Years: January 1, 1951 to September 30, 1957

Beginning in the 1950's, the church went through more than half a century of more stable professional leadership with five pastors, each serving for longer periods of time. The first of these, Rev. Dr. Eli Miller



Mowry, served the church for six and a half years in the 1950's. He and his wife, Lois, were the church's first full time pastor and family to live in the manse at 310 E. North Street. Their three children, Lucetta, David, and Miriam, were all grown and living elsewhere. He had served under the Board of Foreign Missions as a missionary in Pyongyang, Korea, from 1909 to 1941. During this time he served in Soong Sil College: first as a teacher of biological sciences, then for 20 years as dean, and

finally his last five years as college president. While in Korea he also worked in village church work, starting a number of rural congregations. In 1941, he and his family were ordered out of Korea by the Board of Foreign Missions due to the coming war with Japan. In March of 1950 Dr. Mowry received a Citation for Distinguished Service to the Republic of Korea from Korea's president, Syngman Rhee.

In the "*Autobiographical Sketch of Eli Miller Mowry*," written in Rev. Mowry's late 80's, he wrote,

"In January, 1950, according to its rules, the Board of Foreign Missions 'retired' us, but we stayed on at the South Charleston Church till January, 1951. We then went to the church at Waverly, Ohio, which had been without a resident pastor for two years. The next summer, the Government started building an atomic plant in the area, and this brought in thousands of workers and their families. The next few years were busy ones, and the church grew rapidly. In October, 1957, I retired and we moved to Columbus"

In January of 1951 the church had \$7,657.82 in its manse fund and \$1,274.89 in the building fund. The donation of the manse by the Gehres family allowed the church to transfer much of the manse money into the

building fund. Work was under way to add to the building at the 122 E. North Street church in May of 1951. At 11.30 a.m., three men were working in an excavation at the base of the foundation for a new addition. Noticing the ground cracking, they scrambled out just in time as the brick wall, about 25 feet high and 40 feet wide, began to fall. Half of the choir loft collapsed with the wall. The *Republican Herald* newspaper of May 17, 1951, further described the incident in these words,



“During a heavy wind and rain storm around 6 p.m. Thursday night, a section of one side wall pulled loose and by the first cave-in toppled over. A heavy roof truss dropped onto the pipe organ, damaging it considerably.”

In June of 1951, the congregation authorized taking out a \$10,000 mortgage on the church building to help pay for the repairs and additions, which ended up costing \$21,000. During the time the building was under repair, services were held in the Masonic Lodge. The rebuilt and newly expanded church was dedicated on November 11, 1951.

After the church's back wall fell, every Friday night in late 1952-1953, the women of the church held a dinner to help pay the cost of rebuilding the church. Most of the food was donated by the women, and there were two sittings each Friday: one at 5:00 p.m., and a second at 6:30 P.M.. Each time the serving area was filled to capacity.

On August 4, 1952, Waverly's *Republican Herald* announced that Pike County had been chosen by the Atomic Energy Commission of the federal government as the site for its proposed giant gaseous diffusion plant. Soon thousands of construction workers poured into Zahn's Corners and Waverly. Many A-Plant workers joined the church, and by 1956 membership had reached 243.

On January 12, 1955, Charles M. Caldwell, asked to be relieved of his duties as Clerk of Session, a post he had held since January of 1920. Caldwell had been declared an elder for life in 1947. The requirement for elders to serve on a three year rotational basis did not exist at that time, and Caldwell, who, at the time of his resignation, was 89 years old, had

been Clerk of Session for thirty-five years.¹² Later that year, the number of elders on the Session was increased to nine, and they began considering dividing the Session into committees.

The session also agreed that the church should join the newly organized Pike County Council of Churches, and a Young Mothers' Club was organized for mothers of nursery-aged children. In 1957 that group's name was changed to the Mowry Circle. Other active groups within the church that reported to the Session in 1956 were the church school, Martha-Mary Society, the Calvin Circle, and Youth Work.

Dr. Mowry was very active visiting Goodyear A-Plant workers moving into Waverly, and many families joined the church. With the influx of so many new members, the church's education program was coping with cramped quarters. By January of 1956, church school enrollment was at 254, with an average attendance of 158, planned for and taught by 29 teachers and officers. So in August of 1956, the congregation set up a Long Range Planning Committee.

In November of 1956 Dr. Mowry told the church that he felt it was time to retire, but he agreed to stay on until a replacement was installed. True to his word, he stayed until September 30, 1957.

IV The Carlson Years: October 1, 1957 to February 12, 1961

The Rev. Glenn C. Carlson was called as pastor at First Presbyterian Church of Waverly, effective October 1, 1957. His undergraduate education began at the College of Wooster, but was interrupted by a three-year stint as a Naval pilot in WWII. In March of 1949, he received a B.A. degree in radio speech from Ohio State University. He spent some time working in broadcasting, then decided to become more active in church work.



Glenn Carlson entered San Francisco Theological Seminary in 1951, where he met Madelyn Curtis. They were married in 1953. He received his Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1954, and she graduated with a Master of Arts in Christian Education in 1955. In the summers of 1954 and

¹² Charles M. Caldwell had graduated from Cincinnati Law School and, in his younger years, had served as a prosecuting attorney in Pike County for two terms. He and his wife Molly had ten children. Charles Caldwell maintained a private law practice most of his adult life. He also served as Director of the Waverly Building and Loan Association for 50 years. A life-long member of the Presbyterian Church, he died in 1957 at the age of 91.

1955, Mr. Carlson had spent some time assisting Dr. Eli Mowry, who was then pastor of First Presbyterian, in a mission project in Zahn's Corners, where the Carlsons spent the first summer living in a small, hot trailer. In September of 1955, the Carlsons left for Scotland, where Glenn Carlson spent two years working toward his Ph.D. at the University of Edinburgh. In the fall of 1957, the Carlsons moved to Waverly to begin his pastorate. They were accompanied by their two children, Raymond and Karen. A third child, Sherry, was born during their time in Waverly.

On November 22, 1957, Dr. Charles Pindar, chairman of the Unit of City and Industry for the Synod of Ohio, made a presentation to session asking that First Presbyterian Church of Waverly take the Zahn's Corners Westminster Fellowship Center under its care as a mission church.¹³ The Waverly church would not be financially responsible; its only responsibility would be to provide fellowship and encouragement. The proposed name of the Zahn's Corners group would be Westminster Community Church (Presbyterian).

By January of 1958, the Waverly church had 284 members, and active groups within the congregation included three women's circles: Martha-Mary Circle, the Mowry Circle (formerly known as the Young Mother's Club), and the Calvin Circle.

The Waverly Presbyterian church was active in local missions. In 1958 it agreed to contribute to the Pike County Ministerial Association's Christmas basket fund from the church's Special Relief Fund, and in January of 1959, the session approved the church adopting two families from a group of flood victims being moved into Waverly. The church adopted the families "with the objective of supplying the immediate needs of these families."

By 1958, the church was having two worship services, and the Sunday School Classes were jam packed. Next to the church was a double building, really two buildings joined together, one half of which was owned by Daniel Ray and Georgia Gehres.¹⁴ When Georgia Gehres died in 1958, she willed her half of the building to the Presbyterian Church for educational purposes. Her executor, Irma Gehres Lorbach, reported in February of 1959 that the church could use the building immediately with

¹³ This information and much of what follows was taken from a book of Session and Congregational Meeting minutes, January 1, 1955 through April 16, 1967. Background information on Carlson, Kelsey, Purcell, and Hays was taken from articles appearing in the Waverly newspapers.

¹⁴ Daniel Ray Gehres was a member of First Presbyterian Church 1920-1942; and his wife, Georgia, was a member 1921-1958. They were Irma Gehres Lorbach's aunt and uncle.



three stipulations: 1) a plaque would be presented in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Gehres; 2) the rental income from the barber shop would be used to defray Mrs. Gehres remaining pledge; and 3) that the last three years of Mr. Justice's five year verbal lease would be honored and his rent would remain \$65 per month. In May of 1959, the church paid

\$10,000 for the other half of the building at the corner of North and High Street. The new educational facility would require some work, and plans were made to dedicate it in April of 1960.

On February 21, 1960, the Rev. Carlson asked to have his pastoral relationship with the Waverly Presbyterian church dissolved as of May 1, 1960, so he could complete his doctoral thesis. As a compromise, in order to keep him as their pastor, on February 28, 1960, the congregation agreed to give him one month's vacation in May, followed by three month's leave of absence when he would be paid the difference between his regular base salary and pension and the cost of a substitute minister during his leave of absence. The church then got a student from Princeton Theological Seminary to cover the summer months. By December 31, 1960, church membership stood at 319.

On January 12, 1961, Rev. Carlson announced that he had accepted a call to Saint James Presbyterian Church of Bellingham, Washington, and his last service would be February 12, 1961. The April 13, 1961 Session minutes state that effective April 4, 1961, Ralph L. Lewis was interim pastor. He was in town on Sundays and Tuesday and Friday afternoons for which he was paid \$65 a week.

V. The Kelsey Years: August 13, 1961 – April 9, 1968



The Rev. Roger Williams Kelsey was accepted as pastor at an August 13, 1961 congregational meeting and began his pastorate at First Presbyterian Church with a celebration of Worldwide Communion on October 1, 1961. Rev. Kelsey had earned a B.A. in psychology from Westminster College, New Wilmington, PA in 1956, and a Bachelor of Divinity from Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, PA in 1958. He was ordained on June 31, 1959, and was installed in the M.

Leigh and Eckmansville Presbyterian Churches in Seaman, Ohio.

The church manse at 310 East North Street had been vacant since the Carlsons moved out in February, and was newly decorated for Rev. Kelsey and his wife, Carol Jean.

During Rev. Kelsey's time, he and his wife, Carol, led a very active Youth Fellowship Program. During Lent, youth from his group and from the Methodist Church group cooked and served breakfast on Thursday mornings before school. The location for the breakfasts alternated between the Presbyterian and Methodist churches; and the church serving breakfast led devotions the following week.

A Waverly housing development known as Bristol Homes had advertised its houses for sale or rent in the fall of 1954. It had been built in anticipation that the Goodyear Atomic Plant would need more than 22,000 employees. As it turned out, by 1961 the permanent work force stood at about 1,800¹⁵ and so few Bristol homes had been sold that in 1960 the development went into foreclosure and the FHA took title. On August 14, 1961, bids were taken on the property. The successful group was led by the Rev. John Glenn of Boulevard Presbyterian Church in Columbus. In addition to Boulevard, the financial backing came from the Chillicothe Presbyterian Church, Second Presbyterian Church of Portsmouth, and First Presbyterian Church of Waverly. On August 23, 1961, Ohio Church Residences, Inc. officially registered as a non-profit corporation, and the Rev. Roger Kelsey and businessman John B. Wilson of First Presbyterian Church of Waverly were on its first Board of Trustees. Representatives of First Presbyterian Church of Waverly have served on that Board ever since.

Sunday, October 15, 1961, was opening day for a two week Bristol Village open house, and Irma Gehres Lorbach, was one of the Waverly women who spend day after day showing visitors through Bristol and Waverly.¹⁶

In the December 14, 1961 report of the Special Committee on Area Ministry, the relationship to Westminster Chapel at Zahn's Corners, which had originally been limited to fellowship and encouragement, changed. Under these changes, Rev. Kelsey would officiate at a 9:45-10:30 a.m. worship service at Zahn's Corners and an 11:00-12:00 a.m. service at Waverly. The Director of Religious Education, Margaret Potts, would live in

¹⁵ The A-Plant in Piketon stopped producing highly enriched uranium for the weapons program in 1964; but highly enriched uranium production for nuclear submarine reactors would continue until 1991; and production of all low enriched uranium would terminate in 2001.

¹⁶ *Twenty Years of Caring: Bristol Village*, 1982, National Church Residences, pp. 1-12.

Zahn's Corners. She would work with the education program in Waverly 9:30-10:30 and in Zahn's Corner 10:45 to closing. Westminster Chapel would pay its own bills, and provide \$20 per month to Waverly for the pastor's automobile allowance.

On December 31, 1961 the Waverly church had 360 members.

Westminster Chapel was closed October 1, 1962 to April 1, 1963 and people were encouraged to attend Waverly Presbyterian for church school and worship during that period.

In January of 1963 the congregation adopted the Constitution and Bylaws of First Presbyterian Church of Waverly. The Martha-Mary Circle, Mowry Circle, and Georgia Gehres Circle were among those reporting. The Women's Association asked to be relieved of responsibility for the church nursery after May of 1963. That same month, the Session appointed a special committee to study and clarify the duties and functions of the Board of Deacons and Board of Trustees in relation to the Session. As a result of that study the Board of Deacons became responsible for the areas of worship and stewardship.

The following month, the Session moved to store old church records in a fire proof vault at the College of Wooster Library, discussed the status of United Presbyterian Men, and suggested that sponsors be assigned to all new members.

In May of 1963 the Waverly chapter of United Presbyterian Men was dissolved and the Session accepted Mrs. Wilmer Gehres' memorial gift in memory of Mr. Wilmer Gehres. A year later the church purchased a communion set for 216 from the memorial funds. Mr. Gehres died in May of 1964.

In August of 1963 the Session recommended "that future budgets be of a more realistic nature." The recommendation also stated the need for a better organized and working budget committee and a long range planning committee, and urged better communication with the congregation.

In the early spring of 1964, Kelsey was out on medical leave, but he returned to work by April of 1964. In the summer of 1964, First Presbyterian sponsored Vacation Bible School programs at Zahn's Corners and Carr's Run. At the end of summer the parish worker, Don Morland, was leaving and so the Session looked for someone to continue a weekly Bible study at Carr's Run. In November plans were made to distribute the Christmas White Gift food offering at Carr's Run. It was also decided that 20% of the operating budget would be designated as benevolence, and divided 75% to General Assembly general mission, 18% to Synod causes, and 7% to Presbytery causes.

In December of 1964, the Rev. Kelsey requested that each Elder pledge 5% of his income to the church budget. Membership on December 31, 1964 had risen to 445.

In 1965 a four session mission study was held Sundays during Lent. In March it was decided that if the Christian Education Building mortgage was paid off by the end of the year, and the general fund was sufficiently large, \$120 would be sent to Ohio Church Residences to be used for Bristol Village needy residents.

In June the Carr's Run Vacation Bible School was held evenings at East Jackson Elementary School, and the Zahn's Corners children were transported to Waverly for VBS. The Session also voted to allow organ students approved by the Director of Music, Mr. William Tetrick, to practice on the church's organ.

An open study session on the proposed Confession of 1967 received a very favorable response, and Rev. Kelsey recommended approaching the Methodists, Evangelical United Brethren, and United Church of Christ to explore the possibility of a joint program study on the Consultation on Church Union

In July of 1966 the church was asked to supply a representative to serve on a committee dealing with hunger issues, and in February of 1967¹⁷ Session received a report of an Outreach Conference that outlined plans for a Church and Community Council. In March the Session discussed the possibility of having a monthly church newsletter, and in April they decided to purchase new hymnals as part of their 125th anniversary celebrations.

Shortly after Rev. Roger Kelsey moderated the March 20, 1968 Session, he fell ill; and he died on April 9, 1968 of Hodgkin's Lymphoma.

Concerned as to whether the manse would be suitable to interest possible future candidates, the church authorized up to \$5,000 to modernize its kitchen and make other improvements. A series of pulpit supply ministers led the services and moderated Session meetings for the following eight and a half months, while the church went through the process of finding another full time pastor. The church continued to pay the manse utilities while Rev. Kelsey's wife, Carol, remained in the manse for a few months. In July of 1968, National Church Residences presented a memorial book in Roger Kelsey's honor. The church held a tea in Carol Kelsey's honor on October 6, 1968.

¹⁷ The following information was gleaned from the book of Session and Congregational Meetings minutes covering May 17, 1967 – November 16, 1986.

On November 17, 1968, the Rev. Jack Lewis Pursell preached a candidating sermon, and received congregational approval to become its pastor as of January 1, 1969. Mrs. Kelsey's membership was transferred to Worthington Presbyterian church shortly after Pursell's arrival. On December 31, 1968, church membership stood at 469.

VI. The Pursell Years: January 1, 1969-June 30, 1986



The Rev. Jack Lewis Pursell was born in Lancaster, Ohio, and received his B.A. from the College of Wooster and his B.D. from Western Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania. During one summer while in seminary he traveled extensively through Europe. Following seminary graduation, he became pastor of the Jersey Presbyterian Church near Pataskala, Ohio, a position he held for nine years.

In the Columbus Presbytery he served as vice moderator and enrollment clerk and held membership in several Presbytery committees. He was also active in community affairs, serving five years as Jersey Township Chairman, being elected to the Licking Heights Local Board of Education, and being a charter member of the Pataskala Jaycees. In his spare time he enjoyed all sports and liked to refinish antiques.

The Rev. Pursell moved to Waverly with his wife, Yvonne, and their three sons, Eric, Andre, and Joel. He chaired the January 15, 1969 congregational meeting, and was installed on February 23, 1969.

Within five months of his arrival, a committee was set up to consider the nature and cost of redecorating or rebuilding the church at 122 East North Street. An architect was hired and two plans were presented. The plan eventually accepted, rearranged the seating, increasing it by 74 seats, slightly lowered the ceiling, did some rewiring, changed the choir area, and added a door from the choir room. The estimated cost of the plan was \$65,000.

During Rev. Pursell's pastorate, more emphasis was placed on adult church education, focusing on studying new church trends and the cultural and economic problems facing Christians. In February of 1970, a group from the Presbyterian church met with members of the United Church of Christ. The UCC's membership had decreased to 60 members, with about

half living in Bristol, and it had been recommended that the church disband and its members either join the Waverly Presbyterian Church or a UCC church in Chillicothe. They eventually chose the latter.

For a few months, the Session considered moving to a unicameral structure of local governance rather than having separate Trustee and Deacon Boards reporting to the Session, but such a change was never implemented during Pursell's ministry in Waverly. In the early 1970's the national church had a Commission on Church Union (COCU); and Rev. Pursell suggested a study group involving the Presbyterians, two local Methodist churches, and the United Church of Christ congregation. When the study finally occurred only 3-5% of the churches' membership attended and 50-80% of the attendees were Presbyterian, so the study was discontinued. However, when the Presbyterian sanctuary was being remodeled, the Presbyterians worshiped with the United Church of Christ congregation on Market Street for four Sundays. In 1970, media reported that the General Assembly(G.A.) appropriated \$10,000 to the Angela Davis Defense Fund.¹⁸ Up to this time the Waverly Presbyterian Church had been sending mission money to the General Assembly, Synod, and local Presbytery. To express their disagreement with the G.A.'s actions, for two years the church divided the money it generally sent to the G.A. General Mission Fund between the work of National Mission Representative Rev. Turnbull in West Virginia, and the Frances Newton Hospital in Ferozepur, India.

By the end of December, 1971, church school enrollment was down to 61 and the Christian Education Committee began a program of visitation to try to increase that number. They were still struggling with that issue five years later. In 1974 Bill Whitfield was hired as Youth Advisor. Some church members were also concerned that communicant class graduates were not staying as active church members after graduation. For a few years the Daily Vacation Bible School was held jointly with Grace United Methodist Church.

¹⁸ In 1970 the Commission on Church and Race (COCAR) recommended that the General Assembly establish the Emergency Fund for Freedom. It did so, and over \$65,000 was allocated to synods and presbyteries to assist persons within their bounds who sought justice when and where it was in short supply, particularly for Afro-Americans. St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Sausalito, California requested, and was given, \$10,000 to contribute to Angela Davis's defense fund. Ms. Davis, an Afro-American UCLA professor of philosophy and activist, was charged with having supplied guns to two black Soledad Prison Inmates who, along with the judge, were killed in a Marin County courthouse shoot-out. A tidal wave of outrage broke out across the church in 1971. She was finally acquitted in June 1972. Twenty black Presbyterian clergy raised five hundred dollars each overnight, and repaid the \$10,000 that had been provided through the Emergency Fund.

In mid-1973, the church's first pictorial directory arrived. By the end of 1973, the adult membership was at the highest point it would reach, namely 517¹⁹. Between 1969 and 1973, 98 new members were added and 75 members left, 35 by death. A number of people were moving out of town and requested letters of transfer to churches in their new locations. The Session began moving members who were known to have moved, but hadn't requested transfers, onto "inactive status."

In 1976 the church agreed to allow the social hall to be used for voting on election day, and two years later agreed to let the second floor of the education building be used for public school kindergarten.

The church's Women's Association has remained active throughout the church's history, with increasing numbers of women involved as the church's membership increased. In 1971 there were four circles (Koinonia Circle, Martha Mary Circle, Georgia Gehres Circle, and Evening Circle) with 127 women enrolled. A Circle of Hope was added in 1973, and a Circle of Faith in 1977. In addition to participating in all of the ongoing activities and services of the larger congregation, they held monthly meetings, seasonal retreats, mother-daughter banquets, and attended women's meetings at the Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly. The Women's Association and its circles have always been heavily involved in mission. For many years they collected clothing and blankets for Church World Services. Beginning in 1970, and continuing for at least six years, they held birthday parties and other events at Pineview Manor Nursing Home in Beaver. Annually they promoted a Summer Medical Offering, and several women volunteered at Waverly Welfare House and the Pike County Outreach Council of Churches food pantry.

Throughout Rev. Pursell's time in Waverly, he kept the Session informed of issues and actions of the General Assembly, the Synod, and the Presbytery. At times the church made a point of informing others of its stand on these issues, as when it "sent a message to the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church U.S.A. opposing its action endorsing civil disobedience and condemning the effort of the United States to protect one Southeast Asia Country from an invasion of another" in 1972. Or when it agreed with an overture in the local Presbytery banning ordination of self-confessed, practicing homosexuals in 1978.

¹⁹ At its heyday, two out of every 100 Americans were Presbyterian. "The first year of losses was 1966 and the decline has never been less than 1 percent since 1969," Jack Marcum, associate for survey research told the Presbyterian News Service. "There was an acceleration in the early 1970s but since 1975, the losses have been somewhere between 1 and 2 percent." By 2005, the PC(USA) accounted for only 0.78 percent of the population.

Throughout Rev. Pursell's time in Waverly, the church remained active in, and financially supportive of, the Pike County Outreach Council. Most of the time the church's benevolence giving was 20% of the annual budget, although it went as high as 22.5 % in 1977 and as low as 19% in 1982. The church helped support a foreign mission in India and a national mission, first in West Virginia, and then in the southern Kentucky mountains. In 1976 the church agreed to participate in the denomination's Major Mission Fund program that sought to raise \$60,000 in three years. The church pledged \$15,000 and ended up raising \$19,826. The church participated in the annual local CROP walk from the time of its inception. After 1984 the church dedicated one Sunday a year for Bread for the World's Offering of Letters to members of congress urging support for legislation addressing issues of hunger and justice.

On June 16, 1980, Barbara Patterson, who had attended the church as a teenager, became its secretary. In 1983 the Presbyterian church that had separated into northern and southern branches during the Civil War reunited.

The church maintained an active music program which included both an adult choir and, at times, a junior choir. Bill Tetrick was Director of Music for many years, until he retired from the position in 1983 and Neil Schleicher took over the position. During Tetrick's time, in 1976 the church purchased an Allen digital computer electric organ for \$14,609, and a piano was purchased in 1980. After Neil Schleicher took over, new choir robes were ordered in 1984. In the fall of 1985, Neil Schleicher moved out of town, and in November Margaret Gebhart became Director of Music.

In the summers of 1983 and 1984, a memorable vacation Bible school was held at May and Max Russell's home at Lake White. The themes were based on the Mid-Eastern culture with tents, costumes, food, etc.

But some tensions were developing. In the mid 1970's, some members began transferring their membership from First Presbyterian to the Presbyterian churches in Chillicothe or in Portsmouth, and even to Grace United Methodist Church in Waverly. In April of 1980, a planning session was held at which a group of Elders discussed eight major points needed to improve the church's structure and growth. By August of 1981, a letter went out informing the congregation that there would be a several thousand dollar shortfall in the budget, with no reserves on which to fall back. During the period of 1974 through 1981, 158 members had been added to the church, but 223 had left by transfer, death, or moving to inactive status. By the end of that year membership was down to 415.

In 1982 a Special Building Maintenance Fund drive was initiated to raise \$9,000 to pay for a new roof, furnace, and heating system for the educational building. By the end of that year, church adult membership was down to 355. In 1983 the Session approved Rev. Pursell's request to enroll in the Doctor of Ministry program at the Methodist Theological School in Delaware. He received his degree on May 17, 1986.

At the Session's request, in August of 1985, Rev. Francis Nagy, Executive Presbyterian, and Rev. Patricia Ashley, chairperson of the counseling group of the Committee on Ministry, met with them to discuss church and session problems.

In January of 1986 the session and Revs. Nagy and Ashley met again to work out details for dissolving the church's pastoral relationship with Rev. Pursell. At the meeting, there were some very contentious exchanges between session members and Rev. Pursell. In the end, the Session approved terminating the relationship on March 31, 1986, and providing a severance package of full salary and manse usage until December of 1986. A Congregational Meeting to consider the recommendation was set for February 12, 1986.

At the Congregational Meeting, one of the session members stated that she was most responsible for raising the dissolution question. She stated that "her deep concern for the church and loss of many long-time members to other denominations or churches were reasons for her questioning the effectiveness and concern of the pastor in relation to the congregation as a whole as well as the individual members." Rev. Pursell spoke at length, explaining in minute detail his rationale for his actions, and finishing with the statement, "You can trust me to serve faithfully." In the end, 87 church members voted for the dissolution and 45 voted against. It was a very difficult time for the church, as some members had found Rev. Pursell's ministry very important to their family and its spiritual development. Some felt strongly enough that they left the church after the vote. Others felt equally strongly that he needed to leave for the good of the church. In the end the congregation voted to move the date of dissolution forward to June 30, 1986, and the December 31, 1986 end of the severance package remained as stated.

During the months that followed Rev. Pursell's ministry, Barbara Patterson continued as church secretary, and Martha Gebhart as choir director. Retired ministers who had been worshiping with the congregation were asked to volunteer their services to preach and cover pastoral care for one week each. The Rev. James Glenn was asked to moderate Session. A committee was formed to prepare the

denominationally required Identifying Congregational Mission (ICM) study, and when it was finished, a pastoral nominating committee was formed to begin the search. In November of 1986 the trustees began to investigate renting the manse until another minister was called. In the end, Rev. Pursell rented the manse until June 30, 1987. By the end of 1986, without needing to pay a full-time pastor, the church's financial situation was improving, so an honorarium was paid to each minister who voluntarily preached after July 1, 1986.

The church continued participating in the annual CROP walk, the Offering of Letters, and support of the Pike County Community Action Committee. The annual Offering of Letters in the spring of 1987 was on making the welfare of women in developing countries a Congressional priority. In March the Session noted that there were no present leaders to continue the men's group.

Through the effort of Rev. John Hamlin, who had been active in the congregation since moving to Waverly in 1982, another international dimension was added to the church's mission involvement. In the spring there had been a luncheon to support building a new seminary in Thailand²⁰. The Daily Vacation Bible School had been held again with the Methodists.

The Rev. Richard Secrest Hays preached a candidating sermon on August 16, 1987, and the congregation voted to call him as their new minister. His official date to begin was October 1, 1987.

VII. The Hays Years: October 1, 1987 to the Present



The Rev. Richard Secrest Hays graduated from Western Reserve Academy in Hudson, Ohio, and went on to receive an A.B. degree from Lafayette College, Easton, PA. He spent one year studying with the divinity faculty at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, and then completed his Master of Divinity degree at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, PA. While there he

²⁰ The Rev. Dr. E. John Hamlin, and his first wife, Frances, had been Presbyterian missionaries from 1954 to 1974, serving for short terms in Singapore, China, and Burma. Most of the time they were in Thailand where Rev. Hamlin taught Old Testament at the Thailand Theological Seminary in Chiang Mai, during which time he had become President of the seminary. He remained actively involved in the Waverly church, serving as a Parish Associate, until his death on May 22, 2010, at the age of 94.

met his wife, Paula Barron Hays, who completed her Master of Arts Degree in Christian Education there. Prior to coming to Waverly, Rev. Hays had served as pastor of the Rockford Presbyterian Church of Rockford, Ohio, for 11 years. When the family moved to Waverly, the last week of September, 1987, their daughter, Elizabeth, was 11, and son, Andrew, was 7. Rev. Hays was officially installed as pastor of First Presbyterian Church on November 8, 1987. On December 31st, the church had 293 adult members.

Shortly after arriving, Rev. Hays reorganized some sections of the worship service being used, and was given Session permission to include various church creeds in the service, rather than always using the Apostle's Creed. During the interim period, the church had gone to a single service on Sundays. When the issue of going back to two services on Sundays was raised, Rev. Hays did a study of the church's seating capacity and recent worship attendance numbers, and concluded that there was no need for a second Sunday service.

At the annual joint meeting of Deacons and Session in May, the Membership Committee reported the church needed to call on new Bristol Village residents shortly after their arrival, and invite them to church. No official action was taken on the report. That month the church also hosted a celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Pike County Outreach Council that had been founded by Rev. Kelsey and Father Grimes of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church.

In the summer of 1988, Rev. Hays was elected vice president of the Pike County Ministerial Association.

At the June 29, 1988 joint meeting of Session and Trustees, the decision was made to recommend buying land and building elsewhere rather than facing continual maintenance and upgrading of the century old church facilities at 122 E. North Street. This began a thirteen-year- process that led to the erection of the present church facility. The first step was to retain an architect to prepare and present a report on the relative costs of the renovation or redevelopment of the existing facilities, or of acquiring ground and erecting a new structure. After this was done, the governing bodies recommended, and the congregation approved, going for a new location and structure.

In the fall of 1988, a Women's Bible Study Group was formed with 8 members, a new church picture directory was delivered, and Rev. Hays reported he was serving as a member of Presbytery's Division of Care of Churches.

Early on, Rev. Hays had suggested periodic retreats for the Session, but, although the reaction seemed favorable at the time, no implementing action was taken. In January of 1989, Session was organized around seven committees: worship and music, mission, membership, Christian education and nurture, nominating, personnel, and budget. Rev. Hays would meet with each committee to discuss its plans for its part of the mission of the church. A subdivision of the membership committee restarted monthly visits to shut-ins the third Friday of March. It was also decided to give new members a one-year's subscription to *Presbyterian Survey*.

Margaret Gebhart's choir presented a John Rutter Requiem on Maundy Thursday. In August, an Elder asked if Rev. Hays was visiting new residents at Bristol Village. He responded that he had developed a basic letter, as pastor of one of the founding churches, to welcome new residents to Bristol Village, invite them to worship services, and offer them a personal visit, if requested. That fall, the calling committee reported that they had visited four shut-ins at home, four at Pleasant Hill, and nine at Bristol Village Convalescent.

The congregation approved building a new church, and a Church Campaign Committee was established. In December of 1990, the Trustees approved filing papers to "Quiet the Title" on the education building as the mortgage was fully paid and the procedure was a preliminary requirement to selling the facility. At various times, unused portions of the education building were leased. The largest and longest lease was to the Pike Christian Academy that needed extra classroom space. The Pike County Outreach Council started leasing two rooms for offices in 1997, and continued to use them until late 2002, when the church began to clear the building for sale. A few other groups used the social hall periodically. Among them were the Brownies, the Boy Scouts, and the Gold Wing Rider's Club.

Margaret Gebhart resigned as choir director, effective May 1, 1991, and organist Julie Ries also resigned. Kevin Elliott was hired to replace her, but only stayed five months. Church member Lois Gilbert agreed to fill in as organist. In September of 1992, Margaret Gebhart came back as choir director. Virginia Baker took over as organist in the summer of 1994.

In September, a newly constituted men's group began having breakfasts the second Sunday of the month. In the summer of 1992, Rev. Hays was elected chairman of the Presbytery Division of Care of Churches. The church also celebrated its 150th anniversary with a month of Sunday church celebrations, a new pictorial directory, historical articles about the

church in the *News Watchman*, and a few mid-week concerts featuring area musicians. That fall, the membership committee reported it was having problems getting Elders to visit shut-ins.

In May of 1993, the Pike County Ministerial Association began discussing establishing a safe homeless shelter under the name of "Bridgehaven." A house at 109 W. Second Street was finally purchased in 1996. Special offerings were taken for Bridgehaven's purchase and support for a while; then it was added to the church's regular mission budget.

In March of 1995, the Session approved putting earnest money down on a tract of land behind the Waverly Plaza and overlooking Rte 23, that was part of the old Schmitt farm. On August 6, 1995, the congregation approved proceeding with the purchase. On September 20, 1995, the church finalized the purchase of 13.5 acres from Woda Development and Construction Company of Bridgeport, Ohio, developers of Clough Commons. At the time, David Boyer was president of the Trustees and Patricia Strickland was treasurer. The land cost \$225,000 and was paid in part by a \$60,000 five-year mortgage on the manse.

During the period beginning December 31, 1987, two months into Rev. Hays' pastorate, and December 31, 1995, the church had lost 52 members. Sixty-one new members had joined, but 123 had left the church: 30 by transfer elsewhere, 75 by dying, and 18 by being transferred to inactive status. The rate of loss was twice the rate of gain. Membership in December 31, 1995 stood at 241. In the summer of 1996, Rev. John Hamlin formed visitation teams to deliver information about First Presbyterian to residents of the Hilltop and Emmitt Station sections of Waverly in hopes of increasing the church's membership. In 1997, the Parish Visitors visited all homes on Columbia and Stafford in Kilgore Estates. Unfortunately, the visitation did not bring any encouraging results in terms of possible church membership.

Virginia Baker resigned as church organist, effective August 1, 1996, and Lois Boyer, FKA Lois Gilbert, replaced her. That fall, Martha Gebhart again resigned as choir director, and Paula Hays and Virginia Baker agreed to share the job, with Paula directing the choir and Virginia doing the background work. In July of 1999 Virginia Baker resigned as co-director and Paula Hays assumed full responsibility for the choir.

In September, the Christian Education Committee reported that Sunday School was being suspended due to the low number of children, and they were proposing starting monthly family-oriented programs. In the spring of 1997 Session approved purchasing a Peace Pole, and it was

dedicated August 31st. It was announced that Rev. Hays would become Vice Moderator of the Scioto Valley Presbytery in May.

A six week Learning for Living Tutorial program, coordinated by the Rev. E. John Hamlin, the church's unpaid Parish Associate, and meeting in the social hall of the Education Building, began in October of 1997, with 15 children from fourth and fifth grade classes at Waverly West Elementary School attending. Some tutors, including Maude Ramey and Anne Young, were from Waverly, others were from Bristol Village. Adults escorted the children to the church, and members of the congregation volunteered to take them home after the classes. The program met Monday and Wednesday afternoons and included snacks, classes in English and math, a Bible story, and a prayer. The successful tutoring program was repeated twice a year through 1999. In 2000 and 2001 it was replaced by the HOSTS, Helping One Student at a Time to Succeed program, which required 16 tutors to do the individual instruction. When the church moved into its new building, it was too far for the children to walk so a school bus delivered them.

In February of 1998, Rev. E. John Hamlin, added an experimental four week After School Youth Club with seven fourth and fifth graders working with the theme Preserving God's Beautiful Earth. In the fall of 1999, it was expanded to seven weeks. The after school Youth Club activities included dance, story, song, and a service project. This program continued through 2003.

On May 19, 1998, Rev. Hays was installed as Moderator of the Scioto Valley Presbytery. That summer, the mission committee introduced the idea of the church developing a partnership with a church of the Pakh Il Presbytery in Thailand. In September the church held a dinner for a delegation of Pakh Il visitors. A Thai group from Den Dumrungsart Church visited in September of 2000, and again in the fall of 2004. A group from Waverly visited Thailand in 2002.

During the Lenten season in 1998 through 2000 a series of daily meditations led by pastors of several denominations were held at the church. In 2001, small groups met in the homes of five church families. In 2000, the church also took a first step towards reinstating a 9:30 a.m. adult education class, which still continues. Rev. E. John Hamlin also taught a Bible Class every Sunday evening at 5:00 p.m. through 2009.

August of 1998 the church hired Architects Burgess and Niple, to complete the study and site plan phase of building the new building. In January of 1999 the Long Range Planning Committee, under the

chairmanship of Clarence Monroe, M.D.²¹, began planning a fund-raising campaign to secure 1.5 million dollars to build the new church facility. They also raised the issue of looking for a buyer for the old church. By May they had \$285,000 in pledges for the new church fund. A year later Clarence Monroe stepped down as chair of the Long Range Planning Committee, but stayed on as a member. An anonymous member offered to match up to \$300,000 in further contributions to the new church fund.

The Trustees and Session accepted a contract with RWS Building Company to build the new church and agreed with having First National Bank provide up to \$800,000 in a construction loan supported by mortgages on the land, the new building, and the buildings at 122 E. North Street.

In January of 2000, Dr. John Taphorn III resigned as Clerk of Session, a position he had held for 14 years. That fall, the church entered into an agreement with the Pike County Library to organize vital statistics records of past church membership, and make them part of the county genealogy records, before the oldest records were sent off to Philadelphia, to be preserved by the Presbyterian Historical Society.

The new church was dedicated October 7, 2001. It had cost \$1,396,000 to complete. That fall, after appropriate study and consultation with the Deacons, Trustees, and Session, the congregation approved moving to a unicameral governing body of 12 Elders serving three years each, with one third rotating each year. Prior to the change, it had taken 30 of the 173 church members to fill the positions on the three Boards.



The old church building was sold in the summer of 2002, and the \$94,484 in proceeds were used to help reduce the remaining debt on the

²¹ Clarence Monroe and his first wife, Ellen, moved into Bristol Village in 1974. He had been a practicing plastic surgeon at a hospital in Chicago, Illinois, and a professor of surgery before retiring. He had also volunteered through the denominational medical services in Haiti, Korea, and Liberia. The Monroes joined First Presbyterian in May of 1975, and Ellen Monroe served as a Trustee until she resigned from that position in November of 1978, and they transferred their membership to the Chillicothe Presbyterian Church. Clarence transferred his membership back to the Waverly church in the summer of 1996; and his second wife, Mary, died in August of 2000. On June 21, 2001 he married Lois Boyer, who had also been widowed twice. Clarence Monroe remained a member until his death on March 5, 2005. He was 99 when he died, and had outlived two wives.

new one. The old church is now the Canal Church of Christ. In late fall of 2003 the Canal Church also purchased the education building for \$40,000.

Because the church secretary was having to handle increasing requests by non-members for emergency financial assistance, in 2003 the Presbyterian Church signed an agreement to have Pike County Outreach Council distribute the church's Deacon's fund. A local church member helped write a grant application to the Scioto Valley Presbytery for local mission funds. The \$4,000 received was divided up with \$1,500 going to the Pike County Outreach Council and \$2,500 to Welfare House, which dispensed clothing to needy people. In the spring of 2005, a Ministries Fair was introduced into the annual congregational meeting to encourage members to commit to helping with the various missions of the church. It was discontinued after a couple of years.

The Women's Association has continued to be an important part of the Waverly Church. Over the years, the number of circles decreased from six to two; the two remaining, Martha Mary Circle and Ester Circle, are named after important women in the Bible. The circles meet monthly for study and fellowship in member's homes. They continue to sponsor a Thank Offering in November and a Birthday offering in May, to contribute to the Fellowship of the Least Coin, and to support the work of the Pike County Outreach Council. They also sponsor six birthday parties a year at the resident care facility, Traditions at Bristol Village.

In early 2005, Clarence Monroe donated funds to put "sounding pads" in the community room to reduce echoes, and this worked so well that pads were also added in the corridors. Dr. Monroe died March 5, 2005, and the church received \$295,000 from his estate which, with the remainder of the Church Fund, closed out the existing mortgage on the church property. His widow, Lois Monroe, gave an additional \$25,000 gift to the church's operating fund. In early 2006, existing New Church monies were used to upgrade the manse's kitchen.

Patricia Scheimann was hired as church organist in early 2006, and in April of 2007 the church gave Rev. Hays a four-week sabbatical leave at full salary in honor of his 20 years of pastoring First Presbyterian. At a session meeting in June of 2007, Rev. Hays shared a letter from Presbytery indicating that he would be serving as Stated Clerk. Some time after that he began spending Tuesdays at the Presbytery offices in Columbus.

New choir robes were purchased in the summer of 2008, and the mission committee began planning a band camp for children in the summer of 2009. Unfortunately, it had to be canceled for lack of registration.

However, the church did sponsor its first YMCA soccer team that summer. A personal supportive relationship with Mark Hare, missionary in Haiti, also began that summer.

The local portion of the annual Peacemaking Offering was given to a Chillicothe prison ministry, Pike County Domestic Violence, and Pike County Children's Services in 2007. In 2008 it was given to Bristol Village Residents for Peace, who sponsored a Kids for Peace program at the local public library. In 2009 it was used to purchase curriculum on "bullying" taught in the Waverly Schools by Toni Develin from the Pike County Domestic Violence Partnership. Every summer the church held a community picnic, often co-sponsored by the Methodists.

In 2010 the Stewardship Committee was particularly active, and a Presbyterian Foundation representative spoke to the members that fall, encouraging them to remember the church in wills and charitable annuities. In 2011 a challenge was issued to make an extra gift to the church to help reduce an expected budgetary deficit.

In 2010 the canopy at the front door of the church was extended. The estimated cost when the extension was originally approved was \$32,890, but the final bill for the extension was \$48,240. In 2010, the Allen organ, originally purchased in 1976, was replaced by a newer Allen, which had been discounted as it was a demonstrator. A dedication concert was scheduled for May 16, 2010, but had to be postponed because the chosen organist's spouse was in a car accident. The committee that oversaw the organ's purchase proposed establishing an "Organ Performance/Scholarship Fund" to provide for concerts by local organists of merit, allow approved high school organ students to practice on the church's organ, and to provide scholarships for organ students.



In the summer of 2010 Paula Hays resigned as choir director and Bob Huck was hired to replace her. A visitation task force proposal also resulted in commissioning three designated deacons to serve a one-year renewable term to provide short, spiritually based visits to shut-ins. Between 1996 and 2010 the church continued to lose twice as many members as it gained, so that at the end of the year the church had 115 active members.

At the January 2011 Congregational Meeting, Rev. Hays was asked to explain his status as the Presbytery's Stated Clerk. He stated that his position had been renewed for three years, and that he was spending one

day a week at the Presbytery office, and more time as needed, for which he was being paid. At the May 16, 2011 Session meeting, Rev. Hays presented a written proposal to the church which stated, "The Council of the Presbytery of Scioto Valley has asked me to ask the session and congregation of the Waverly Church to temporarily reduce the terms of my call from full-time to half-time in order that I might work half-time for the presbytery as Transitional Stated Clerk/Treasurer for the period of September 1, 2011 through November 30, 2013." As this would be a major change in the life of the church, the Session met several times with Executive Presbyter Jeannie Harsh and Rev. Tim Jones concerning the impact Rev. Hays' reduced involvement would have on the ministry of the church. As a result, the Session voted to accept the proposal and to set up a Session appointed team to work with Rev. Jones for several months to clarify the congregation's planning for its mission and staffing needs for the future.

By fall, the Transition Team had come to a clearer vision of where the church might focus its energy, and the changes in the pastor's terms of call necessitated by his split position. On December 4, 2011, a congregational meeting was held at which the congregation accepted the Sessions' recommendations that the change begin January 1, 2012. The Session-appointed Transition Team is still in the process of looking for the best person to fill the other half-time position.

VIII. In Summary

As we look back, we see that First Presbyterian Church began as a small group of dedicated Christians who struggled to create a place where they could meet in community to worship God, teach their children the faith that had sustained them, and spread the good news of God's amazing love to members of the larger community.

The church has been blessed over the years with the generosity of members who donated the present manse, one-half of the former Christian Education Building, and who contributed thousands of dollars to help pay for the new church building. The church has also been blessed by its pastors and many members who have given tirelessly of their time and talents to further the kingdom of God, both in the congregation, and in the wider community. On its 170th birthday, the church is in a time of transition, but is going through it with the assurance that the God who has blessed and used it in the past will continue to do so in the future.

Appendix: Pastors Who Have Served this Church

Earliest Beginnings 1842-1886

[Rev. Gamaliel Beeman	SS ²² , Piketon	1832-1842]
Rev. William Burton	SS, W&P	1842-1844
	Pastor, W. only	6/1844-6/1849
Rev. H.W. Taylor	TS, W&P	1849-1850
	P, W. only	6/1850-4/1851
Rev. James Hueston	P, W&P	1851-1853
Rev. Wm. P. Eastman	W&P	1853-1866
Rev. Irvin Carson	SS, W&P	1866-1867, or 10/1869-10/1870
Rev, John O. Proctor	SS	3/1876-4/1877
Rev. C.B. Gillette	SS	5/1877-4/1878
Rev. R.N. Adams	P	4/1878-3/1881
Rev J.P.A. Dickey	Some Mos. between	4/1882-6/1884
Rev. John W. Wilson	SS	7/1884-10/1885

Years of Struggle and Limited Growth: 1886-1950

Rev. Wm. M. Galbreath	SS	4/1886-4/1887
Rev. T.S. McWilliams		6/1889-1890
Norman Jones	SS	1890
Frank G. Moore	SS	10/1891-9/1892
Jonah Smith	TS	5/1893
Rev. Edward M. Page	SS	10/1893-6/1895
Rev. Jacob F. Slagle	SS	11/1897-12/1902
Rev. W.M. Reese	SS	1903
Rev. Scott I Wallace	P	2/1904-10/1905
Rev. I.N. Wilkins	SS	1906
Rev. Earl A. Miller	SS	3/1907-1/1909
Rev. J.G. Galbreath	SS, then P	2/1913-3/1916
Rev. James L. McWilliams		1/1920-3/1920
Rev. George W. Bell	P	9/1920-10/1922
Rev. George L. Pake	P	4/1923-5/1926
Rev. T.C. Kerr	P	10/1926-5/1929

²² P = Pastor, SS = Stated Supply, TS = Temporary Supply, W&P = Waverly and Piketon

Rev. William Price	SS	5/1931-4/1934
Rev. George Masselink		9/1934-4/1935
Rev. A.P. Donnelly	SS	5/1935-5/1936
Rev. Harry Wilkerson	SS, then P	12/1936-2/1939
Rev. Philip L. Williams	SS	9/1939-5/1941
Rev. Glen Sylvia	SS	9/1941-9/1942
Rev. Charles M. Brown	SS	3/1943-6/1945
Rev. R.L. Offield	SS	6/1946-5/1948
Rev. Herbert F. White	SS	12/1948-5/1950
Rev. Thomas M. Patterson	SS	6/1950-10/1950

The Last Five Pastorates: 1950-2112²³

Rev. Eli M. Mowry	SS	1/1/51-9/30/57
Rev. Glenn C. Carlson	P	10/1/57-2/12/61
Rev. Roger W. Kelsey	P	8/13/61-4/9/68
Rev. Jack L. Pursell	P	1/1/69-6/30/86
Rev. Richard S. Hays	P	10/4/87-Present
Rev. E. John Hamlin	Parish Associate	9/28/97-5/22/10

Entering a period of multiple Transitions 2112 -

Rev. Richard S. Hays reduces his position to half time pastor effective 1/1/12 [serving as Clerk of the Presbytery the other half]

Rev. Robert L. Getty hired to serve half time co-pastor with Rev. Hays, serving 4/15/12 - 3/30/16

Rev. Charlotte O'Neal serves half time with Rev. Hays 4/1/17-9/30/17

Rev. Richard S. Hays retires 9/30/17

Rev. Joseph T. Fields, Jr hired as full time transitional minister 11/1/17

²³ The list of pastors, stated supply pastors, and temporary supply pastors from 1842 to 1950 reveals the short period of service of most pastors, and about half a dozen uncovered breaks in pastoral leadership. Two conclusions are possible: the indomitable spirit of the small number of members which enabled the congregation to survive, and/or their unwillingness or inability to support a pastor. During the entire first period, assistance from the Board of National Missions was forthcoming. In any case, the witness of Presbyterianism to the Lordship of Jesus Christ persisted.

