

PROCEEDINGS OF THE EASTERN DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

Thursday Morning, October 1, 2015

The Eastern District Association of Primitive Baptists convened in its 163rd annual session with Poplar Grove and West View Churches, Kingsport, TN hosting this blessed event.

The West View Primitive Baptist Church was organized in 1947 and became a member of the Eastern District Association of Primitive Baptists that same year. The church has lettered into the association every year since that time. When the association suffered a split in 1955 due to the practice of open communion in a number of the churches, the majority of the members of the West View Church voted to leave the association and became part of the Central Baptist Association. The minority members reorganized the church by resolution to remain in the Eastern District Association. They erected a new building and moved into it in 1958 with Elders J. H. Sybert and H. V. Hall as pastors.

Elders Gordon McCullough, Ray Gott and R. C. Whittemore have also served as pastors, with Elder Burnice Sybert serving the church since 2004. Church clerks have been R. C. Whittemore, Georgia Whittemore, Burnice Sybert, Anna Jane Donihe, and Delmer Wallen, Sr. with Nancy McCullough the present clerk. The deacons are Gale McCullough, Billy Walton, David Horton and Claude Smith.

The church was honored to host the association in 1976 and 1993. This 163rd gathering marks the first time two churches have joined together to act as co-hosts, and we are privileged to do so with our brothers and sisters in Christ at Poplar Grove Church. It is our prayer that this may encourage some of our smaller churches to work together in this great endeavor in the future.

The history of Poplar Grove Church was originally researched and written by Brother Ellis I. Wallen, Sr., a former clerk of the association, when the church hosted this “grand old body” in 1970. The church felt it suitable to use the same history with added information relative to the present. This being the fourth time that Poplar Grove Church has hosted the Association (1958, 1970, 1988, and 2015), we felt the need to recognize and pay tribute to the devoted, faithful, and prayerful members who helped organize the church and have maintained an interest and need to worship God for these 67 years.

It is somewhat difficult to arrive at a definite beginning of Poplar Grove Church. Cottage prayer meetings, singing services, and preaching services had been conducted in the community long before the church became a reality. Elder Milburn Morelock, sometime in early 1948, began to hold regular services in a building known in the community as “the chicken house.” Brother Morelock, the first pastor, has now gone to meet his reward in a better land, and “the chicken house” has been torn down. These early meetings displayed a true spirit of Christianity. The attendance and interest shown became more meaningful than ever in the life of the community once there was a permanent meeting place established.

The Poplar Grove Church was organized by an arm from Pleasant View, then a Primitive Baptist church in the Eastern District Association, in June, 1948. The church lettered to the association and has not failed to letter and send delegates since that year. Originally, the church received one member by letter and six by experience and baptism. The following were charter members: Rome Adams, Mrs. Rome Adams, Luna Brown, Mrs. Luna Brown, Maggie Hill, Everett Sims, and Mrs. Everett Sims (all now deceased).

The church grew and flourished for about a year and then moved to its present location inspired by the scripture, Nehemiah 4:6, "So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto half thereof: for the people had a mind to work." All are happy and pleased with the present location, Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose."

The church was dedicated in 1952 and is presently debt-free. With the passing of the years, Poplar Grove Church has been a haven of escape from the world. Today this place gives a feeling of the real meaning of Christianity, continuity, prayer, faith, dedication, patience, and obedience. In these surroundings of environment, one captures the sense of the strong, magnificent beauty of a powerful, all-wise, loving, personal Savior.

During the past 67 years the following pastors were dedicated to the calling of God and lead many souls to believe in Christ and join the church: Milburn Morelock (1948-1949), Joe Hickman (1950), Joe Hickman and Willard Carter (1951), J. H. Sybert (1952-1953), J. H. Sybert and Leon Lane (1954-1955), Walter Pendergrass (1956-1958), Leon Lane (1959), Leon Lane and Joel McMurray (1960), Joel McMurray (1961), J. H. Sybert (1962-1965), J. L. Hill (1966-1969), J. H. Sybert (1970-1973), Glen Williams (1974-1977), Howard Sybert (1978-1985), Bobby Williams (1986-1992), Gordon Justice (1993-1994), Bobby Williams (1995-1997), and Oscar Irvin (1997-Present).

Poplar Grove has been blessed with many faithful and devoted deacons: Luna Brown, Everett Sims, Ellis Wallen, Laney Shipley, Tom Ferguson, Hugh Price, Harold Thomas, Marvin Ketron, Paul Wallen, Ellis "Ikey" Wallen, Bill Poole, and Jerry Persinger (all now deceased). Our current faithful and devoted deacons are Austin Adams, R. B. Louthian, Bill Spurlock, Steve Hunt, and Gary Short.

Our church has had only five clerks during these 67 years: Luna Brown (1948), Delmer Wallen (1949-1950, drafted to military), Eliza Holmes (1951-1976), Jean Wallen (1976-1988), Joyce Greer (1988-1991), and Jean Wallen (1991-Present).

We have always had a closeness with West View Church, not only in miles but in God's Spirit and fellowship. West View's pastor, Elder Burnice Sybert, often expresses his special feeling for Poplar Grove because it is the church where he accepted Christ as his Lord and Savior, February 7, 1953. He joined Poplar Grove and was baptized March 8, 1953. West View was organized and elected his dad, Elder J. H. Sybert, to serve as pastor. The Sybert family later moved their membership to West View. Poplar Grove's pastor, Elder Oscar Irvin was also saved at Poplar Grove on March 25, 1972 during a revival held by Elder Lucian Lane. He also joined the church and was baptized. This is the fourth church pastored by Elder Irvin to host the Eastern District Association. (Caney Creek, Peterson's Chapel, Little Cowan, and Poplar Grove)

We have sincerely enjoyed the work shared with West View Church during the past year. The fellowship with our brothers and sisters has truly been a blessing. Psalm 133:1, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" May God continue to bless both Poplar Grove and West View with His Holy Spirit, and may God continue to bless the Eastern District Association and this "grand old body."

The refreshing morning air greeted everyone as they arrived at this 163rd session of this grand body. The Lord blessed us with some much needed rain in the days leading up to this 163rd gathering. Sister Zula McCullough led us in singing songs of praise to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Won't it be wonderful there when we enter the glory land, joyously singing and praising our Redeemer? Keep your lamps all trimmed and burning, for the bridegroom watch and wait, for He will meet us just inside the eastern gate. It won't be very long till Jesus shall appear and the joy of that glad meeting will be upon

us. Our burdens we will lay down, for when we meet up there, we will know as we are known. His unseen hand will lead us to that home where sin nor sorrow e'er can come. We long to see our Savior's face where we can praise Him for his guiding hand. Oh what a wonder that Jesus loves even us, and we can say, it is well with our soul, then Satan must flee.

Thanking the host for their work as joint hosts for this grand body, Elder Terry Sizemore welcomed everyone to today's service. As we continue on our journey that started long ago, our main goal is to praise our Lord and Savior. Those who came this way before set up a good work with Christ's help and many have moved on to their reward. Most of all, our prayer is that if there is one among us that is lost, we earnestly pray that you may find that blessed peace on these grounds before leaving today. He left us a light in this world and He will never leave us nor forsake us. May our light so shine. We cannot bring these dear saints back, but we can go where they are.

Sister Zula led the congregation in singing the old song that is the association's standard song, "Brethren We Have Met Again." Let us join in much prayer and sing songs of praise to our Lord and Savior, for all is vain unless the Holy Spirit comes down.

The Moderator asked all of our ministers to sign the minister's book, including ministers from other associations and church affiliations. He also asked each church to get their church letters, donations, and obituaries in so they might be counted.

Elder Sizemore mentioned the passing of Elders Delmas Harris, Jerry Persinger and Robert "Bobby" Carter, since we last met. Please remember their families in prayer. Thank God for each of them and their stand for God.

The moderator appointed the Committee on Religious Exercises which includes: Gerald Moore, (chairman), Clifton Horne and Jim Bowlin.

Sister Naomi Adkins blessed us with her song, reminding us of the crimson river that is a bond to heal the nation; for this river is filled with our Savior's precious blood. It will heal our mind and body, it will comfort and protect us when we are sad and alone and save your soul from sin, yes we are talking about our Savior's precious blood. Bradley Brown also blessed us with his rendition of where he took us in, for down at the cross is where the blood was applied at that precious fountain. Thank God for the talents that He blesses His children with.

Prayer requests were made for the lost, our churches, those serving in the military, our country, David Moody, Jim Burke and his family, Carson Johnson's family, Swan Creek community, Dakota Blevins' family, Porter Carroll, Sherrie Brown, Draxie and Angela Johnson, Dexal Greer, John Bowlin, Mark & Anita Newkirk, John and Maude Turner, Jim Lykins' brother and sister, June Kail family, Ratliff family, Cora L. Neeley and her daughter, Wayne Williams' family at the loss of his son, Brooks family, and a show of uplifted hands signified countless unspoken prayer requests. Elder Scott Tipton blessed us in a heartfelt prayer as he took our petitions to the Lord.

Having been chosen to preach the introductory sermon, Elder Oscar Irvin took the first part of the service. Welcoming everyone to this labor of love between the joint hosts of this year's association, he asked us to protect our doctrine at all costs for we have a spiritual heritage. He read Psalm 16, and used as his thought the 6th verse, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." Who would we desire to be except the children of God? The hearts of mankind are evil, but God's blood is the cure. Noah found favor in God's eyes and he moved with fear, and when God shut the door, those on the outside realized Noah was not as foolish as they thought. Abraham didn't know where he was going, but when God told him to move, he did. We must not wait for God to show us

every little detail, but hasten to move and do what He bids. Abraham staggered not at God's instructions, but moved with haste up the mountain and as he drew back to take Isaac's life, God told him to stay his hand. Isaac was saved as God provided a sacrifice because of his belief and obedience. God made this foundation steadfast and strong, just as much today as when it was created. We see but just a little of it, but one day soon we will understand. He is indeed our all in all here and forevermore. He will never leave us nor forsake us. When God does a work, it is good for ever. Satan cannot snatch us from the arms of God. There is coming a time when we will rise and meet Him in the air. Our forefathers believed God and His promise that He does nothing for a while or part way, but what God does is everlasting. We do not know the time of His coming, but He will come again in due time to receive us unto Himself and we shall be with Him throughout all times.

Elder Burnice Sybert followed with another wonderful message from God on high as he thanked God for you all allowing them to host the association. Our purpose here is to honor Jesus Christ. As an example of God's handiwork, both men were lead to the same scripture for today's service. As we see our crowds reduced in size, we must pray that many souls will be saved and join our ranks. God is still in control and while we don't know what He has in mind for the new comers, we know He is still at the right hand of the father. As a warning to us, each of us needs to take every step necessary to ensure this Gospel will remain in its entirety. False doctrine will lead us astray if we allow it to come in. Great suffering and stress will follow, therefore we must resist and depend on God. Man and Satan are still trying to lead man astray, but God remains steadfast and true to His word. Our goodly heritage is great and we must stand firm in the Lord. This modern world has nothing to offer God's children; let us make sure we stick to God's word, for He will never fail us. Much evil abides in the world today, just as it did in Solomon's day, but that does not mean we should follow it. Churches must stand in these last days; many have failed in following God's word, but we can come together in one mind and one accord to worship God in truth and spirit. We welcome everyone in our midst, but take all care that Satan doesn't slip in unawares for he will wreak havoc in every way possible. Our ministers have preached, and continue to preach God's truth. A promise of reward for the saved and of eternal punishment for the unsaved exists today just as in times past. We must live for God on a daily basis, and when we sin, we have an advocate with our Father. The death, burial and resurrection are in all reality what it is about. Regardless of what religions we may see, stand firm in our heritage from God. Man says we must live it, but we must first have it, for only then can we do a good work for the Lord. Let us leave to the next generation what our previous generation left us. May we never allow things to come in among us that will cause division, for when He calls a man to preach His Gospel, He will also qualify him. Be busy about His work, and leave all others alone. As many as did believe Him, He gave them power to become the sons of God, for outside Jesus Christ there is no other way to glory.

We were dismissed for lunch with a song by Zula McCullough. What will we leave behind when we leave for worlds unknown? Farther on, still go farther for Jesus will never forsake us.

Thursday Afternoon, October 1, 2015

The host churches served us a wonderful lunch as God's children enjoyed this wonderful day. Sister Zula led the congregation in singing several songs of praise as the congregation gathered in the tent for the afternoon service. When the redeemed are gathering in, how we will shout as the saints sing redemption's story. We will hear His invitation, come ye blessed of the Lord; for we are washed like snow and free from all sin with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Dan Cross led another song after testifying of God's saving grace, while thanking God for this privilege of meeting one more time this side of heaven. Wonderful Jesus, marvelous King, let us behold His glorious face as He guides our footsteps and shows us the way.

Further blessings were bestowed upon us with special singing and testimony from Billy Marcum, Eddie and Wanda Malone, Copper Creek Church singers, Terry Sizemore, and Virgie Williams. Thanking God for this heaven-bought privilege, everyone praised His name that He would receive all the honor and glory. We escaped that awful place when Jesus saved our soul and because of this, the only fire we will ever feel is burning in our heart. He is the resurrection and one day soon we will stroll down the streets of glory, and will say arise, arise my little one, arise. For all our life we have heard the wondrous story; do you know His wondrous love and mighty power? If you knew Him as we know Him, you would make our Savior yours this very hour. He didn't come here to stay, just to show us the way, then He got on a cloud and went home. How wonderful to know we belong to Him and He belongs to us! We are just weary pilgrims getting ready for that holy city, and to be in that number when the saints go marching in will be true peace and joy.

Elder Sizemore welcomed everyone to the afternoon service; as he thanked the host churches for taking such good care of God's people. He thanked God as we were blessed to hear the gospel.

Prayer requests were made for the unsaved, all those made during the morning service, an unspoken request for a friend who needs help with a problem, Virgie Grace Hill's granddaughter and her unborn child, David VanHoose, lady that had open heart surgery, Harold Shaw and family, Beulah Webb's 2 year old granddaughter, unspoken requests signified by many uplifted hands. Elder Harmon Willis led us to the throne of grace in a soul stirring prayer.

Brother Billy Walton, Chairman of the Committee on Church Letters, came forward to give the report of our state and standing. Letters were received from 36 churches. We should receive the letter from Clear Springs tomorrow. It was motioned, seconded and voted to accept the recommendations of the committee and seat those delegates duly elected or appointed by their respective churches as the voting body of the association.

The delegation was seated in order to conduct the business of the association.

The moderator asked for nominations to serve as moderator pro-tem during the election of the association officials. Elder Burnice Sybert was nominated. No other nominations were made. It was motioned, seconded and voted for nominations to cease. Elder Sybert came forward to serve during the election.

The moderator asked for nominations to serve as clerk and treasurer of the association. A nomination was made and it was seconded for Brother Danny Lawson to serve as clerk and treasurer. It was motioned and seconded for nominations to cease. Through the vote by acclamation, he will serve for the ensuing year.

The moderator asked for nominations to serve as moderator of the association. Elder Terry Sizemore was nominated and it was seconded for him to serve as moderator of the association. It was motioned and seconded for nominations to cease. Through the vote by acclamation, Elder Sizemore will serve as moderator for the ensuing year.

Elder Sizemore thanked Elder Sybert for standing as moderator pro-tem during the election of the association officials. The moderator thanked the delegation for their confidence in him. Continue to pray for your association officials, we desire your prayers as we go through another year.

Elder Sizemore read the report from the Religious Exercise Committee which includes:

Thursday night: October 1, 2015

Stand: Joseph Robinette and Jim Lykins

Friday morning: October 2, 2015

Stand: Terry Sizemore and Jason Robinette

The moderator asked for a motion and second to allow him to appoint all committees necessary to carry on the business of the association. It was motioned, seconded and voted to allow the moderator to appoint any and all such committees.

The moderator appointed the following committees:

Committee on Electrical and PA System: Delmer McPherson (chairman), Scott Mellons, Eric McPherson and Danny Lawson.

Committee on Newly Constituted Churches: Ministers: Greg Hill (chairman), Eddie Malone and Jerry Johnson; Deacons: Roy Jones, Ronnie Brooks and Dan Cross; Layman: Null Lawson.

Committee on Finance: Daniel Hurd (chairman), Jim Lykins and Mike Fullington.

Committee on Obituaries: Frank Gilliam (chairman), Charles Bernard and Joseph Robinette.

Committee on Arrangements and/or Queries: Ministers: Scott Tipton (chairman), Lewis Baker, Joe Pitzer, Carter Hagar and Richard Seiber; Deacon: Rodney Dotson; Layman: Joe Horton.

The moderator reminded the delegation that Excused Absence forms are available at the clerk's desk, as well as a Community Service form.

It was motioned, seconded and voted to have all things which are standard printed in the minutes.

It was motioned, seconded and voted to allow the clerk to replenish the necessary forms to properly perform his duties.

It was motioned, seconded and voted to allow the clerk \$1,800 in appreciation for his services.

It was motioned, seconded and voted to allow the moderator \$800 in appreciation for his services. The clerk reported all financial transactions of the year to the delegation.

Brother Delmer McPherson, chairman of the Electrical and PA System Committee came forward to give their report, stating that everything was in good working order.

Brother Roy Jones reported to the delegation on the Ayers Chapel property. Since last year, all known hurdles were crossed; however the buyer was not accepted for the loan. In dealings with the court clerk, we received the judge's OK to proceed and was named as the owner of the property. At this time, we do not have a committed buyer, nor can we obtain a deed in the association's name; even though the judge listed the association as owners. We need a buyer before we can go under contract and petition the court again. The moderator asked the delegation if we should place the property in a real estate company's hands. It was motioned, seconded and voted to allow Roy permission to do whatever it takes to help in taking care of the property. Whatsoever he deems necessary to help move the sale along, he and the Virginia trustees can do. A motion was made to increase the gift of \$600 to help defray costs and to compensate him for his time and trouble for brother Roy to \$1,000. Roy came

forward and asked the delegation to allow the money to stay in the association treasury. The motion was withdrawn at his request.

The clerk reported on the costs to reprint the church direction books, as well as the Query books. These costs include: Direction Books consisting of 20 pages was \$593 for 500 books and \$846 for 1,000 books if they are stapled and \$649 for 500 and \$932 for 1,000 books if they are perfect bound. The publisher recommended that we staple the books. It was motioned, seconded and voted to order 1,000 stapled books at a cost of \$846.

The query books contain 32 pages and would cost more to print. This includes: 500 for \$730 and 1,000 for \$988, if stapled. If perfect bound, the costs would be 500 for \$852 and 1,000 for \$1,162. It was motioned, seconded and voted to print 500 stapled query books at a cost of \$730.

Elder Burnice Sybert reported on the updating of the query book. The query book will contain all of the entries of the previous book, plus those determined by the committee of Burnice Sybert (chairman), Scott Tipton and Mike Fullington.

The business being concluded, the delegation was dismissed until Friday morning, October 2, 2015.

Friday Morning, October 2, 2015

The Lord blessed us with some much needed rain, in addition to the showers of blessings. We should love Him evermore for the anguish that He bore for us. Knowing the Lord as we do, we cannot be denied His blessings. When He saved us, He made us whole, so Satan has no hold on us. On Christ the solid rock we stand, for all other ground is sinking sand, allowing us to rest on His unchanging grace. How sweet the sound of God's amazing grace that saved such a wretch as we were before we just began to live.

Elder Sizemore welcomed everyone to today's service on this beautiful day which the Lord made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. Thank God for each one that is here today. Thank God for meeting with us today as He has in the past. Bless his Holy name! He set us aside from death, for this house of clay will be dissolved and we will be in glory.

We were blessed with special singing from the Swan Creek youth singers. The saved of the earth will be present, for when the roll is called up yonder; all God's children will be there. Let us labor for the Master from the dawn till setting sun, to talk of all His matchless love and care. We may face Satan all day, but God never fails to send reinforcement. Soon the sun will come up in the morning and like an eagle we'll take to the sky, as this old clay will give way to glory.

Prayer requests were made for the unsaved; all the requests from yesterday, those serving our country in the military, our association, our country, many wonderful testimonies were given thanking God for His blessings. Please pray for Lisa Fowler, Frances Armstrong, Carson Johnson's family, and many unspoken requests signified by uplifted hands. Elder Chris Salley gave his wonderful testimony and gave us wonderful news of precious souls being saved just before he humbly took our petitions to the throne of grace.

The delegation was called to order to transact the business.

It was motioned for the clerk to make some amendments to the proceedings of yesterday, seconded and voted to adopt the business proceedings of yesterday with the amendments noted in the service.

Brother Harold Vance, a visiting minister from Ohio, blessed us with his wonderful testimony and song of praise to our Lord and Savior. A land where death can never enter, we'll be on the sunny banks of sweet deliverance, there to live forever, where God Himself will wipe the tears away.

Elder Terry Sizemore, having been chosen by the Committee on Religious Exercises, came forward to take the first part of the service. He blessed us with a wonderful song before he read Genesis 22:7-8 and used for a thought a portion of the 7th verse, "God will provide Himself a Lamb," or as we see it now, God has provided Himself a Lamb. When Isaac called to his father, Abraham, he responded, "Here *am* I." These are service words and need to be in our lives daily that we would serve the Lord more. As Jesus said, Father I'll go, I'll pay the sin debt for this child that is lost; He is the only one that could answer, for it is still the blood of Jesus that brings victory. The evidence in our faith must also be shown in our actions. We must know without a doubt that our promise is beyond this world and this peace that surpasses all understanding only comes from God. God always provides for His children just as He provided the lamb for Abraham and Isaac. God has a way where we can be at peace. God provided a Lamb for us in Jesus Christ that we might know and understand. Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission and Christ became the replacement to answer for sin on the cross. The answer for sin is death, but through Jesus Christ the answer is life. Our sustenance is in Him, not in the things of man. Behold the Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world and it is for gain to the sons of God. Embrace the promise of knowing that God is able and our victory is in the Lamb of God.

Elder Jason Robinette followed with a song of praise for our Lamb and another message from on high. Matters not what you think about us, if we have been washed in the blood, we have Jesus close beside us and He'll go with us all the way. God provided us a Lamb in His own Son, Jesus Christ. Abraham didn't know the ram would be caught in the thicket, but he went forward, believing as he told Isaac the Lord would provide a sacrifice. In looking as it were, we can see a Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. We have a better country just waiting for us whose builder and maker is God. When the Father said I need someone to pay the sin debt, Jesus Christ paid the debt in full and it no more hinders His children.

We were dismissed in song. What can wash away our sin, nothing but the blood of Jesus? God's children rejoiced as they continued with song, testimony and praise to our Savior.

Friday Afternoon, October 2, 2015

The congregation assembled after a wonderful lunch served by the host churches as everyone continued to praise the Lord. We may have dodged a few rain drops, but no one could dodge His Holy Spirit as it swept over His children. Witnessing what we have in our Lord and Savior, we can proclaim, my God how great thou art! Our soul will sing as we are blessed from the moment we wake up in the morning, till we lay our head down to rest at night. This world is not our home; our treasures are laid up in a world beyond the blue, so we can't feel at home in this world anymore. We have no friend like Jesus. God places the rainbow in the clouds, and while we may not see a natural rainbow, we certainly witnessed a spiritual rainbow here today.

We were further blessed with special singing and testimony from Jerry Johnson and folks from New Life Church, Swan Creek singers, Scott Tipton and his daughters, Amy and Kala. It is a safe hiding place in the rock of Jesus, for we are His flock. As joint heirs with Jesus, He hides us in the rock. Some

day we will stand in God's city to thank Him for what He has done. There will be no crying in that city, nor could there be when we consider what He has done. One day we'll kneel at the feet of Jesus to thank Him for all He has done. As we travel on the Jericho road, He will bless our heart, for on this road there is room for just two, Jesus and you. His unseen hand will lead through ways we cannot see. If we will just trust the unseen hand, it will lead us through this weary land and we will reach that strand. We long to see our Savior's face, for we know it leads where we have no fear, and it will lead us to that home where sin nor sorrow can come. When we walked down sin's long road, we were so lonely and miserable, but when we called on Jesus, He came to our rescue and we are well on our way to heaven. We have started for heaven and mean to go through. We are so unworthy of all He does for us, but just look around, see what all you have to thank Him for, in other words look where He brought you from.

Elder Sizemore thanked the church for a bountiful and delicious lunch and asked that everyone continue to obey the Lord.

Prayer requests were made with many wonderful testimonies. Always remember the unsaved, all those serving our country in the military and their families. Remember Peggy Harrold, Jim Burke, that he may come to know the Lord, T. J. Elliott, Eddie Malone's great grandsons, Walter and Alice Willis, Roy Jones' youngest brother and his wife, Kay Short, Jerry Scalf, Lowell Johnson and his wife, Edna Baker, and many unspoken requests signified by uplifted hands. Brother Ralph Baker blessed us with his wonderful and earnest testimony before he took our petitions to the Lord.

The delegation was seated in order to transact the business.

Brother Billy Walton gave the final report of the Letter Committee. The letter from Clear Springs Church was received and their state and standing was read. It was recommended by the committee to include this church as part of the voting body of the association. It was motioned, seconded and voted to seat those duly elected delegates as part of the voting body.

The moderator appointed the Church Letter Committee for 2016 which includes: Joe Robinette, (chairman), David Horton, Michael Peterson and Bradley Bowen (alternate).

The moderator read the report from the Committee on Religious Exercises.

Friday night:

Poplar Grove Church: Keith Holt and Matthew Stevens

Blue Springs (Hiltons): Jason Robinette, Joseph Robinette, Jim Lykins and Sammy VanHoose

Saturday morning: October 3, 2015:

Stand: Greg Hill and John Banks

Saturday night:

Stand: Daniel Smith and Wally Berry

Roller's Chapel: Joseph Robinette and Sammy VanHoose

Wallen's Creek: Billy Marcum

Sunday morning, October 4, 2015:

Stand: Scott Tipton and Lewis Baker

Roller's Chapel: Billy Marcum, Mike Fullington and Jason Robinette

Please note that Sunday, October 18, 2015, Roller's Chapel will have a dedication service for their new church with Elders Terrv Sizemore and Oscar Irvin, beginning at 2:30 p.m.

The clerk read the Resolution of Thanks that he had prepared. It was motioned, seconded and voted to print it in the minutes as read.

The Committee on Newly Constituted Churches reported that none had been received.

The Committee on Finance reported \$4,880 in receipts for the year. The chairman thanked each church and individual for their contributions.

The Committee on Obituaries reported that 30 have been received at this time.

The Committee on Arrangements and/or Queries reported that no queries had been received.

The moderator noted that all committees are dismissed upon delivering their final report.

The association has not received anything from Irondale Church. It was motioned, seconded and voted to allow the clerk to review the letter if it was received after the association and if deemed in order, include it in the body of the association.

The men chosen to write the circular letter for 2015 were Deacons Dennis Stewart, Steve Hunt and Doug Willis. All of these men came forward as Steve Hunt read the letter. Its message was to everyone, that we should dwell in love, peace and harmony as we trust in God. It was motioned, seconded, and voted to print the letter in our minutes as it was read.

The moderator appointed the Committee on Circular Letters for 2015 which includes: Minister: Joseph Robinette, Deacon: Delmer McPherson, and Layman: Andy Wallen.

After some discussion, it was motioned, seconded and voted to pick up new copies of Direction books and the Query Books at the association meeting in 2016 to reduce the cost of mailing them.

Purchasing new chairs will remain on hold until the Ayers Chapel property is sold. When it sells, the committee can buy the new chairs and the old chairs can be sold to our churches for \$5 each.

We were led in special song by Aubra Hill, as a special offering was taken up to help offset some of the costs incurred in rebuilding the mobile kitchen. A donation of \$1,403 was received.

Since Elder Sizemore would be involved in the plea process to determine where the association will be next year, it was suggested that Elder Burnice Sybert, having been elected moderator pro-tem in Thursday's service, come forward to handle this process. There were no objections, so Elder Sybert came forward. Before the plea process began, Elder Sybert requested that when we return to our home churches that each church send a special donation to the association to help build up the funds. He also suggested that next year each church give as much to the association as they give to the host church.

The moderator reminded the delegation that only those chosen or appointed by their respective churches as delegates were allowed to vote. There were 3 churches that asked for the association to meet with them next year. These are: Fairview, OH (Bellbrook), Swan Creek and Valley View. No church withdrew during the first and second rounds of the plea process. During the vote, by a clear majority the delegation sent the association to Swan Creek Church, where the Lord willing we will convene on Thursday morning, (September 29, 2016) before the first Saturday in October, 2016. Introductory – Elder Terry Sizemore; Alternate – Elder Porter Carroll.

Adjourned until Saturday morning, October 3, 2015.

Saturday Morning, October 3, 2015

God continued to bless us with rain showers, as well as His blessings from His storehouse of love. Smiling faces were abundant as God's children gathered in the church for the memorial service. Sister Zula McCullough and Ralph Lawson, Jr. led the congregation in several songs praising our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Why should we long for this world and its sorrows when there is a country full of joy without measure? That beautiful home of the soul awaits us in the land where we'll never grow old. When our work here is done, our troubles and trials will be o'er in that land that is fairer than day. Our bountiful Father waits just over the way in the sweet by and by. A land of joy and peace with skies ever bright, where having been saved by grace divine, we are going that way. Our Savior is with us each day as we cling to him in this world, but we will meet Him in glory at last.

The Cadet Church singers, Dustin Lawson, Poplar Grove and West View church singers so wonderfully blessed us with their testimony and songs in honor of our Savior. Burdens come and are so hard to bear, but then our Lord from heaven above wipes our tears away. We don't need a mansion here, for Jesus said we could go to one that awaits us in our heavenly home. The old rugged cross, the emblem of suffering and shame, held our blessed Savior as He hung in our place. We will continue to cling to it and exchange it someday for a crown. The years spent in vanity and pride give way when we tremble at the law we spurned. The love of God is greater far than any words can ever tell. From the top to the bottom and side to side, His love covers all. If not for this love, we would be of all men most miserable. His redeeming grace is sufficient and His love will see us throughout any timeframe that might bind us here in this world. To be so glad that Jesus loves even us is beyond our comprehension, but one day we will understand it all. We pray that everyone can shout that Jesus loves even me. Special recognition was given to Pearl and H. C. Johnson for all their hard work and dedication to this grand body. We thank God for them and appreciate their years of devotion. We love them and thank God for the privilege of calling them our friends.

Elder Terry Sizemore welcomed everyone to our memorial service. Thank God for His blessings. As we think about our new home, we recall the countless souls that have passed from our midst over the years, we rejoice in their peace and rest. They no longer have to put up with the cares of this world. This life is temporary, but heaven is eternal. Time swiftly passes, and as we look at our life, God blesses us to know many saints and through memories they are still with us. Our relationship with each other is an important part of life. When we reach our eternal home, time will be no more, for we will not need it then.

Remember in prayer the lost, the requests made in previous services, our young people, all those serving our country in the military and their families, Roy Reed family, Billy Barrett family, Clifton Horne's 2 lost brothers, Jerry Scalf, and Fred Gilreath. Brother David Parsons humbly led us to the throne of grace.

We were further blessed with special singing and testimony from Jerry and Faye Johnson, who blessed us with songs of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. To be His child is worth more than this world will ever know. One day soon the eastern sky will open and reveal God's Son. Death is swallowed up in victory. In the sum of all things, to be His child is worth it all, for today is the day of salvation.

The delegation was seated in order to transact the business.

It was motioned, seconded and voted to adopt the business proceedings of yesterday as read with the amendments mentioned during the service.

Elder Oscar Irvin came forward to thank several of the area businesses and the surrounding community for all of their help during this blessed event. A special thanks to Jennifer Horton for securing so many donations, and to everyone who helped during this setting of the association. Please support these local businesses mentioned today to help them as they helped the association.

It was motioned, seconded and voted to print Sister Eileen Brown's contact information in the minutes as she continues sending out revival and special service notices. Please let her know by the 20th of the month for the notice to be included in next month's announcements. Individuals and churches should send a donation to help Sister Eileen with postage and handling. Her contact information is as follows:

Eileen Brown
Phone: 865-993-4960
Email: ebrowntravel@gmail.com

For many years, the Saturday service has been dedicated as a memorial service for those saints who have passed from among us. The moderator read the names of those that have passed from our midst this year. Please remember their families in your prayers and thank God for having known them.

Having been chosen by the Committee on Religious Exercises, Elder Greg Hill took the lead of the service. Singing an old song of praise and testimony, he reminded us of the clouds opening up and there stood Jesus. He read from Solomon 8:13-14. If we are saved, we are planted in His garden, but those that do not belong to Him will be plucked up. God made man in His own image and placed man in His garden. We must be workers in His vineyard as He gave man dominion over things and charged him with keeping it intact. Adam dwelled in the Garden of Eden as we dwell in this world today, but we have a job to do here as well. We must be about His business each and every day, so others may see and believe and trust Him as their Savior. He blessed us with speech that we might preach and teach the Gospel and lead others to Christ, for we are the light of the world. He requires us to tell the wondrous story of Jesus and show others His greatness. May we all get to the point where we cannot hold it in any longer until we shout it from the roof tops and in the highways and byways of His truth and greatness. God bids us come unto Me all ye that are burdened and heavy laden and I will give you rest.

Elder John Banks came forward to take the second part of the service with a message from on high. Blessed are those that die in the Lord. If we sow to the spirit, He will reward us with everlasting life. Nothing can separate us from God, for He loves us as no other can do. Our faith is not in vain because Christ lives and sets at the right hand of the Father making intercession for us. Our time here is limited, but Heaven knows no time constraints as we have here in this world. The world may say we have nothing, but as children of the Lord, we have it all. Let us always love one another, just as Jesus loves His children, for it is the only way to overcome evil. Because He lives, we have hope through faith in Him of a better home.

These men preached the Gospel to us and we thank Him for their dedication and faithfulness to the work of the Lord.

We were dismissed in songs of praise and wonderful testimonies as we were adjourned until Sunday morning, October 4, 2015.

Sunday Morning, October 4, 2015

The beautiful sunshine was abundant just like the blessings of the Lord have been all week. Smiling faces greeted everyone as they gathered in the church as the spirit of the Lord welcomed everyone. What a week we have had as God so richly blessed His children. Several songs were sung in honor of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. What a blessing it is to gather one more time this side of glory. Thank God we have the ticket we received when we believed and the boatman will take it to lead us safely home. When we sing our final song of our Savior's precious blood, the boatman will take our ticket and see us safely home. Let us all be overcomers when it comes to serving our Lord.

Elder Oscar Irvin welcomed everyone to today's service, thanking God for everyone coming this way. The house is full as well as the hearts of God's children. The liberty bestowed on the preachers and the spirit of God that visited us here at this association meeting was nothing but amazing. Let everyone gathered today obey the spirit and do what God bids. Our prayer is that some lost soul could come to know the Lord. We beg that everyone would obey Him.

We were blessed with songs from Willow Chapel Church singers; Andy Wallen led the congregation in songs of praise, Peggy Sizemore, Matthew and Terri Stevens, Steve Minton, Harold Vance, a United Baptist minister and the West View Church singers. God's Holy Spirit is welcome and needed in our lives today as we are attacked from every angle, but with God's help we can overcome. May His spirit flood our hearts with the assurance of His love. When the storm around us rages and we are tossed to and fro, stand still and let God move. When we feel we have reached the end, stand still and let God move. Glory, glory, glory the Lord touched us with His precious hand and made our life complete. Regardless of the day He touched you, it was the most precious moment that you will ever experience. Regardless of the weather, God's children always walk in Son-light. We can rejoice in singing His praise for He is ours and this light shows us the way.

A request was received from Jim Burke that Peggy Sizemore sing The Old Ship of Zion and record it that he might watch it from the hospital. Our prayer is that the Lord would save Jim. The old ship of Zion is sailing now, please do not let it pass you by. At the stern was the Captain, as He calls out your name, please get on board. Earth holds no treasure for God's children, for there is country to which we are going where joy without measure will be our treasure, as Heaven holds all to us. His unseen hand is there for each of us to lead us through the things we cannot see. Let us trust the unseen hand, for some sweet day we'll reach that strand. We long to see our Savior's face, to sing the story saved by grace, to praise Him for His guiding hand. Long years ago when we were out in sin we had no hope, no peace within, but when we prayed to Jesus, He gladly set us free and rolled all the burdens of our soul away. We sing and shout it for He is everything to us. Oh sinner come to His dear feet and humbly bow, confess your sin, and He will cleanse you and save you. Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like us. We were once lost but now we are found through God's marvelous grace that taught our heart to fear and allowed us to believe. When God's amazing grace came in, we just began to live. As we travel through this weary land, we pray that Jesus will continue to hold our hand and protect us by His saving power. There is no other friend on which we can depend. God's Lamb is no longer in the grave, for He is alive forevermore.

Prayer requests were made for Sherri Brown, Steve Hunt's 2 brothers, Hershel Baker and his family, Wanda, Geraldine and her brother, Sadie Hensley, Daniel Hurd's oldest daughter, Danyale Hurd Wade and her family, our country, those suffering loss all over our country, Rick and his in-laws, Such wonderful testimonies all over the church.

Elder Scott Tipton took the first part of the service. Let each of us examine ourselves to know that we are the child of the King. We will never meet like this again. Reading from St. John 6:23, Elder Tipton brought a wonderful message. When we have a need, God is there in a mighty way. He has a purpose for everything and we could not stop it, even if we wanted to. Just ask yourself, what did He see in us? He saw in us something that we cannot comprehend, but God's power and spirit makes us strong. What God saved belongs to Him and while this old clay will go back to the dust, we have a wonderful home built by Jesus on high. Excuses do not work with God; He knows our heart and He will continue to fill us with His holy spirit. If you have never drunk from the fountain containing living water, you need to partake before it is too late. God is a spirit and He seeketh such to worship Him. We try to take things off of us and place the blame on someone else, in many cases the Lord. Let things go and answer the call of our Heavenly Father. What God put forth, it is finished.

Elder Lewis Baker followed with wonderful testimony and preaching from God our Father. This inward part can only be made alive through Christ Jesus. God condemned sin in the flesh and only He can wash our sin away with His precious blood. Wickedness in our land today causes fear to man, but God is still in control of all things and He will deliver on His promises. The Lord knows everything about us and He is willing to help us through any trial. What would our forefathers think of the job we are doing, if they could see us now? Thank God for His Son who died that we might have everlasting life. If we suffer with Him, we can also reign with Him. We have an inheritance with God our Father. He is from everlasting to everlasting and His ways, his thoughts and His ideas are so far above ours, we cannot comprehend, but be thankful that He is alive, and alive for evermore.

Such wonderful preaching, but more importantly God's spirit was with His people. Thank Him for meeting with us during these services. Thank God for all of our preaching brethren and folks that gathered with us today. The children of God were so wonderfully blessed throughout these services. Praise His Holy name for all His blessings and for meeting with us! Bless His Holy name. Please pray for the lost that they might find the Lord in the free pardon of sin and for the sick that the Lord may touch them and make them well again.

Every year, we must repeat this downtime, but then we think of all the blessings of the Lord. What a tremendous time we had in all of our services. It may be a little sad for our host churches, but they can rejoice in knowing with God's help they did a phenomenal job in taking care of God's children. God will take their sadness and put a smile on their face as they thank Him for everything. We pray God will richly bless those that could not attend. Our hope is that somewhere in the words of these minutes, there will be a blessing for everyone. It is a known fact that while we can't put the blessings experienced during the past few days in the minutes, our prayer is that God will bring to our remembrance those blessings received during this gathering, and that He will renew our strength daily. We pray God will continue to bless this grand body as we return to our earthly homes, rejoicing in the fact that we have a Heavenly home, not made with hands, where we can go to dwell forever. Bless His Holy name!