

PROCEEDINGS OF THE EASTERN DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

Thursday Morning, October 5, 2017

The Eastern District Association of Primitive Baptists convened in its 165th annual session with Blackwater Lick (Big Door) Church, Blackwater, VA hosting this blessed event.

Blackwater Lick (Big Door) Primitive Baptist Church is one of Lee County's and our association's oldest churches. The church was called Blackwater Lick with the "Lick" coming from the old "salt works" located nearby, where salt water was pumped from a well and boiled down in large kettles on a furnace near the site of the present Post Office building.

It was organized on September 27, 1847, and is proud to have had such stalwart Soldiers of the Cross as Elder G. B. Wallen, who, as far as is known, was the first pastor. According to the writings of the late Elder Hampton Osborne, a local historian, "There was a large distillery where whiskey and brandy were manufactured and sold. It was told that the good people of the area made it so hot for the distiller that he pulled out for more peaceful precincts." The old "still" house was then used as the first church. The following year, in 1848, the Eastern District Association of Primitive Baptists met with Blackwater Lick. Six churches were represented, including: Blackwater, TN (Willis), Blackwater Lick (Big Door), Sulphur Springs, Zion (Burke's Union), Hickory Flat, and Cedar Fork. Local historians tell us that Blackwater was first called Whitewood and later changed to Blackwater.

During the latter part of the Civil War, a band of Yankee soldiers, or some said "Bushwhackers," stayed in the church one night. It is thought that they used the fireplace at one end of the building to cook their meal, and the next morning there was a pile of ashes where the church had stood. Whether the fire was accidental or intentional remains unknown.

A short time after the war, a large log church was constructed on the present site. The building was used for church, school, and community gatherings. The entrance had a large double door; therefore, the name "Big Door" naturally came to be applied to the church, to which it is most commonly called by the local community.

Sometime near 1900, a one-room building was constructed on the property at Enoch Osborne's home near the present church building. This combination church and school building was called "Osborne Institute." In 1906, a two-story building was erected. The late Elder W. S. Osborne had a saw mill and furnished most of the material, and local people did all the labor. That building served the people until 1960,

when a new and improved building was constructed of block which was later bricked, paneled, and the ceiling was sheet rocked, with electric heat being installed in 1968. The church fellowship hall was added in 1971 to help accommodate the 110th annual session of our association. In 2001, the church acquired the schoolhouse property to help with the association's 150th annual session. The school served as a garment factory from the early 1970's until its closing in 1995, and employed more than 60 people, which had an enormous economic impact on the community. Constructed in the 1920's, with two later additions, the school was a combined school until 1968, when the high school closed. Remaining an elementary school for several years after that, former students tell of times when they were allowed to leave school to attend revivals at Big Door, and of the many students who were redeemed at those revivals. We praise God for His enduring spirit, His mercy, His never-ending blessings, and for our Godly heritage.

Down through the years, our church has been blessed to be led by a host of Godly men who for the past 170 years, have helped the church to become a comfort to the distressed, a home to the saved, and a light to the lost. Unfortunately, many faithful members have died and others have moved away, leaving a small but active congregation to continue the holy mission set forth in 1847.

God has richly blessed the generations of people who have attended here over the years. It has endured from the Spanish American war through Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan and many other troubled times; and thanks be to God it remains an organization unmovable. We thank God for those saints who went this way before us, for what they stood for and the guidance they gave us. Most of all, we thank God for meeting here with us, and pray that He will continue to do so until time is no more.

If the Willis Chapel Church is our mother church — and surely it is — then it could be said that Blackwater Lick is where she travailed and the Eastern District Association was brought forth.

On Friday before the first Saturday in October, 1848, twenty-one delegates from six churches met in a log building near here to organize the association. They elected Elder Isaac Chrisman as moderator. Elder Chrisman and Elder Green B. Wallen wrote the church covenant when the Blackwater Lick Church was organized September 27, 1847.

One of the delegates from Blackwater Lick to that first annual session was a man named Solomon Robinette. In 1839 his son, Isaac S. Robinette was born and he was converted in 1866 and shortly felt the call to the ministry. At that time, the association was trying to recover from the effects of the Civil War and consisted of only 2 to 4 churches with a total of less than 100 members. He had a deep love for the churches

and an intense desire to see the association prosper. Isaac, who also served as pastor, later deeded the land to the Primitive Baptists. He seemed to love the association and its brotherhood better than anything on earth. He was a soul-stirring minister, tender in assail of error, though a firm defender of the truth. After being elected moderator, he served until his death in 1886 at the still young age of 48 years. Much of the early growth of the association is attributed to his preaching and organizational abilities. In the 20 years of his ministry, the association grew to 22 churches and approximately 1,000 members.

One of the men who preached here regularly and gave much of his life to the ministry was Elder J. P. Peters. He served as moderator of the association on 3 different occasions, although for only one year at a time. He preached and labored in the ministry 42 years, beginning at the age of 17. Elder E. S. McPherson was pastor of the church for 32 years, association clerk for 2 years and for 20 years was moderator of the association. Elder E. A. Robinette served the church as pastor for many years. He not only served for 24 years as moderator, but served as clerk for 11 years. Elder Carl Lawson served as pastor for 34 years. Elder John Henry Sybert served the association as moderator for a total of 34 years and he served as pastor for 14 years. Elder Amos Osborne was association clerk for 15 years at various times and served his home church in that capacity for 59 years. For 36 of those years, he was also a Primitive Baptist minister. Elder Hampton Osborne was a member of this church all his Christian life. At the time, he was our oldest minister both in age and in the ministry, having been ordained for 64 of his 84 years. He served as association clerk for 2 years and as assistant clerk for 2 other years. Elder Daniel Hurd is our current pastor, who we are so proud of and we thank God for him.

The wives of these men and others, as well as other faithful women have been known by untold numbers of people for their kind and gentle lives and their belief in the truth of the doctrine preached in the pulpit of this church. These people entrusted the pastoral care of the church to a number of young ministers whom they nourished and supported until they too came to be considered leaders in the association.

Unfortunately, the records for the first fifty years of Blackwater Lick (Big Door) Church were lost or misplaced; therefore, we had to rely on the information obtained from older people as it was handed down.

In conclusion, this church, like all others, has had its problems; yet, it has served its purpose well in this community. The light from this church has penetrated the darkness of the perilous times and given hope to a multitude of troubled souls. It would be impossible to estimate the power and scope of influence this church has had. The gospel that has gone forth from this church, at the time may have seemed fruitless, but in later years was gathered up like bread cast upon the waters to be

gathered up days hence. Let us pray that this church will continue to grow through the coming years as it has in the past and continue to be a bright shining light to lost souls and a comfort and inspiration to the children of God.

The cool crisp air greeted everyone as they arrived at this 165th session of this grand body. Sister Zula McCullough led us in singing songs of praise to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. It won't be very long till all the saints get home and we'll sing with the angels around the throne. Tell the old, old story of Jesus and His wonderful love for us. We are trusting the unseen hand that guides us through this weary land where some sweet day we'll reach that strand. We long to see our Savior's face and sing the story saved by grace. Marcelle Bledsoe led the congregation in songs of praise for our blessed Redeemer. We are assured that earth holds no treasure and perish with using, but Heaven holds all to us, for it is joy without measure. Loved ones are watching and waiting our coming, so if we are prepared to meet Jesus our King, what a truly wonderful time is just ahead.

Our moderator, Elder Terry Sizemore, welcomed everyone to God's service. We are here for God's work; let us do His will in everything we attempt. The moderator also reminded everyone to turn in church letters, obituaries and financial contributions. He then appointed the Committee on Religious Exercises which consists of Ralph Baker (chairman), Dennis Stewart and Larry Fannon. During this past year, we have lost four of our Elders: T. J. Elliott, Harold Shaw, Bob Brown and Glen Williams, so please remember in prayer the families of these great soldiers of the Lord. Thank God for these men and their stand for the Lord.

Sister Zula came forward to lead the congregation in singing the old song that is the association's standard song, "Brethren We Have Met Again." We wait on our King when He shall return again. Some have gone to join that happy heavenly band, but we will meet again on Heaven's bright shore. Remember, all is vain unless the Holy Spirit comes down to shower the Holy Manna all around.

The Moderator asked all of our ministers to sign the minister's book, including ministers from other associations and church affiliations. He also reminded everyone that delegate ribbons are up front. We are so blessed to serve a risen Savior, for to be absent from this body is to be present with the Lord.

Brother Bradley Brown blessed us with songs of praise. Our precious Lord will linger near His children and hold our hand lest we fall. Through the storm through the night, through it all He takes our hand and leads us home. He will take our hand if we trust in Him. Wallen's Creek Church singers blessed us with their testimony and songs of praise. The valley of dark despair was threatening until He came and searched for us. Till Jesus came and searched for me. Jesus passed this way before us just as He

passed through Jericho to get where Zacchaeus was in the sycamore tree and He told him to make haste and come down out of that sycamore tree.

Prayer requests were made for the lost, our churches, those serving in the military, our country, Richard Seiber, Kathy Lawson's family and Roller's Chapel Church family, Hershel Baker, Brandon Williams, H. C. and Pearl Johnson, Nadine Horne's brother, Hershel; Lewis Baker, Roy Jones' brother and mother, families of those who have lost loved ones all over our country, Brenda Horton, leaders of our and other nations, Haley Shelton, Frank Gilliam, Gary and Lou McMurray, Beulah Webb, Roger Sturgill, Sherrie Brown and her brother, and a show of uplifted hands signifying countless unspoken prayer requests. Brother Casey Breeding blessed us with his prayer as he took us to the throne of grace.

Elder Sizemore mentioned that our new speaker system is in use. Continue to pray for the preaching service. Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. Our Heavenly Father cares, and He cured all sin by taking it upon Himself on Calvary.

Elder Richard Seiber was chosen to preach the introductory sermon, but could not be with us due to health problems. Please remember him in your prayers that the Lord will bless him and restore his good health. Elder Mike Fullington came forward to preach the introductory message. He read Habakkuk 3:16-19 using as text, "Jesus is the same today as He was in Habakkuk's time." Our world is very similar to what Habakkuk saw because Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forevermore. The elders of that time had the same trust we have today. The same "I Am" is with us today, so let us rejoice in the Lord. This same God will never change and is with us all the time. Through the problems of this life, we still have Him just as he was when He created the universe. Even when we complain and murmur, God still hears His children and takes care of us. He is the same God; He has not changed and He is still on the throne at the right hand of the Father. Nothing beats salvation, for it is the same gospel as when Jesus walked on the earth. No matter how dark the way seems, He is with us. We don't have to face these problems alone. We don't always know if or how He will answer, but we know He is able. Rejoice in the Lord, for He is that ever-present help.

Elder Daniel Hurd followed with another wonderful message from our Lord and Savior. This grand old body is special and continues to be blessed of the Lord. This same God is just as able today as in times past. We are able to stand, rejoice and feel what we have down in our heart because of this man Jesus. There is nothing He cannot do except to lie, for when He says it, it becomes the truth. Regardless of our age when He saved us, it gets better each and every day. As shouts rang out across the building, God's children rejoiced in their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Heaven was made for me and you. Are you ready to go? He carried our sins that we might be

saved and have eternal life. He carried the whole weight of our sins that we might praise Him as we travel along this way. Praise His Holy name forevermore! If you don't know this Savior, we pray you can come to know Him today. If you ask, He will answer. We are on our journey home, never to leave again. As brothers and sisters in Christ, let us never forget to pray for the lost and each other.

Elder Sizemore led us in a song to allow those with a need to come forward. We'll walk down the aisle made of pure gold, the groom is asking the bride to come, how will you answer this invitation from our Lord and Savior? We were dismissed for lunch with a song and fellowship.

Thursday Afternoon, October 5, 2017

The host church served us a wonderful lunch as God's children rejoiced in this glorious day. Sister Zula led the congregation in singing several songs of praise as the congregation gathered for the afternoon service. When we are cast down in spirit and soul and the world seems to overwhelm us, He whispers sweet peace to our soul. Jesus is our rock of ages, and His unseen hand leads through ways we cannot see as we rise to worlds unknown.

Further blessings were bestowed upon us with special singing and testimony from Roger VanHoose, Bellbrook Church youth, Loretta Emery, Terry Sizemore, Naomi Adkins, Peggy Shaw-McBee, and Jason Robinette. Jesus left His home in glory and suffered on the cross of Calvary. Let us go on rejoicing, for in His likeness we will be shining and we'll be satisfied. We stepped our feet in the water one day and have never been the same, for we once were lost but now we are found. God answers prayers when His children ask in true belief. When Jesus saved us, we became walking, talking miracles for His honor and glory. We'll shout the victory as we enter our new eternal home. He didn't come here to stay, and neither will we when we meet Him in the clouds to all go home together. Just look around and see all the good things that we must thank Him for. Thank Him for what He has done is such a simple statement that has so much meaning we can only imagine.

The moderator mentioned the blessings of the young folks that sang for us earlier. Seeing our young people sing His praises is such a thrill for this grand body and likewise it is a true joy to have in our midst Sisters: Grace Russell (100), Lois Collier (98) and Pauline Lawson (95) for whom we thank God.

Elder Sizemore welcomed everyone to the afternoon service as he thanked God for gathering with us at this blessed event. He thanked the host church for the bountiful

lunch. The joy of knowing our blessed Redeemer is beyond anything we can imagine in this world.

Prayer requests were made for the unsaved, all those made during the morning service, Virgia Grace Hill's son and grandson, Jerry Scalf, David VanHoose, Roger Manring, Bessie Robinette, Ida Lee Flanary, Dan Sturgill, John Arnott, the girl's dad, others the clerk could not understand and numerous unspoken requests signified by many uplifted hands. Brother Dan Cross led us to the throne of grace in a soul stirring prayer.

Brother David Horton, Chairman of the Committee on Church Letters, came forward to give the report of our state and standing, reporting a total of 35 churches who wish to be received into our delegation. 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 Oscar Irvin was nominated. No other nominations were made. It was motioned, seconded and voted for nominations to cease. Elder Irvin 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. Elder Irvin asked the congregation to stand as recognition of their confidence in the clerk and treasurer and in so doing they would pray for him.

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 Irvin asked the congregation to stand in recognition of their confidence in the moderator and in so doing they would continue to pray for him.

Elder Sizemore thanked Elder Irvin for standing as moderator pro-tem during the election of the association officials. The moderator thanked the delegation for their vote of confidence. Continue to pray for your association officials; we desire your prayers as we go forward into another year.

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

Thursday night: October 5, 2017

Stand: David Stapleton and Chris Salley

Friday morning: October 6, 2017

Stand: Burnice Sybert, Oscar Irvin, and Kevin Cross

The moderator announced several revival services beginning soon which include: Poplar Grove with Scott Tipton and Terry Sizemore and Swan Creek with Oscar Irvin and Carl Ray Cope.

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, Clifford Bledsoe and Danny Lawson.

Committee on Newly Constituted Churches: Ministers: John Banks (chairman), Charles Bernard, Chris Salley; Deacons: Robert Sword and Doug Willis; Laymen: Gary Hall and Clarence Dodson.

Committee on Finance: Oscar Irvin (chairman), Joseph Robinette and David VanHoose.

Committee on Obituaries: Jason Robinette (chairman), David Stapleton and Jim Emery.

Committee on Arrangements and/or Queries: Ministers: Burnice Sybert (chairman), Scott Tipton, Carter Hager, Roger VanHoose, Greg Hill, Eddie Malone and Roger Manring.

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 read the letter from Peterson's Chapel Church and noted that it was appreciated that the church pastor and deacons returned their ordination credentials. It was also noted that as long as the church keeps the same name and continues to meet as a religious organization, there is not a problem, but if they cease to do so the church property will revert back to the Eastern District Association.

Brother Delmer McPherson, chairman of the Electrical and PA System Committee, came forward to give their report, stating it was a pleasure to be here. The new system is in place with new speakers and wiring, microphones at the stand and 2 wireless mics. The old system was taken to Jeff's Morrell Music in Kingsport to be evaluated. After a couple of months, it was recommended that we replace the old equipment with the new equipment mentioned above. While the team is continuing to fine tune the new equipment, it is working great and everyone seems to be pleased with the results.

The clerk spoke concerning the Ayers Chapel Church property. Since the first contract has been dissolved, another contract was entered into with Lonnie Garrett. From January 2017 through July 2017, he paid the monthly fee of \$300, making a total of \$2,100 paid on the rent to own contract. It was motioned, seconded and voted to help Roy Jones with a gift of appreciation for his willingness to work with the Ayers Chapel property. Brother Roy had turned down such offers in the past, but asked that we pay it to his home church, Cadet. The amount is to be determined by what we had paid him in the past. The clerk searched past records dating back through 2009 and found the following:

From the 2012 minutes: Brother Roy Jones has been taking care of the Ayers Chapel Church property. It was suggested to give him \$300 in appreciation for all his work on the church property, then it was motioned, seconded and voted to give him \$400 in appreciation for all the work he has done.

From the 2014 minutes: It was motioned, seconded and voted to allow Roy Jones \$600 in appreciation for his services in handling the maintenance and sale of the Ayers Chapel Church property.

From the 2015 minutes: A motion was made to increase the gift of \$600 to help defray costs and to compensate Brother Roy for his time and trouble 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 all financial transactions of the year to the delegation.

The moderator brought to our attention the fact that our trustees need to be updated. Brother Dennis Stewart will be added as an Ohio trustee to replace Brother Eldon "Sonnie" Wallen. The moderator requested that we consider adding the trustee list as a permanent part of our minutes. It was motioned, seconded and voted to add this as a standard entry into our minutes. The association trustees consist of: Kentucky – Robert Sword, Roger Sturgill and John Banks; Ohio – Joe Pitzer, Mark Newkirk and Dennis Stewart; Virginia – Roy Jones, Jim Bowlin and Ralph Baker; Tennessee – Earl Dodson, Billy Walton and Steve Hunt. These will be listed as a standard part of the minutes.

The business being concluded, the delegation was dismissed in prayer, led by Brother Lloyd Morelock until Friday morning, October 6, 2017.

Friday Morning, October 6, 2017

The Lord blessed His people as they gathered for the second day of this 165th association. Sister Zula McCullough led the congregation in singing several songs of Zion. His matchless love was shown for each of us that we may love Him evermore. It will be wonderful when we enter the Glory Land where everybody will be happy in that land where no one knows a care and there are no burdens for us to bear. He bled and died to take away our sin, then sings our soul, my Savior God to Thee. When Christ shall come with shouts of acclamation, we will proclaim my God how great Thou art! Marcelle Bledsoe led us in singing another song of praise. As we travel through this weary land, we need His blessed light to guide us every hour. Blessed Jesus hold our hand and keep us that we may be wholly thine.

Elder Sizemore welcomed everyone to today's service as he urgently requested that everyone obey the Lord. He acknowledged to the delegation that Brother Ronnie Leonard attended every union meeting this year. Ronnie thanked God for the privilege of attending these meetings and for the love he felt as he went to our churches. Thanking God for the messages he heard and for God's guidance in his travels, he praised God for watching over him. Let this be encouragement to each of us that when we put forth the effort, God will richly bless us.

We were blessed with special singing from the Big Door singers. He has prepared a place for us in heaven and when we all get there, what a day of rejoicing that will be; for when we see Jesus, we'll sing and shout the victory. Onward to the prize before us as the pearly gates open, we'll live with our dear Redeemer forever in glory by-and-by.

Prayer requests were made for the unsaved; all the requests from yesterday, those serving our country in the military, our association, our country, revivals, young people, our churches, Virgia Grace Hill family, William Seibers, Margaret and Judi Sorah, Wayne Leonard, our pastors, Patrick Banks, Steve Hunt's son-in-law's family, Edna Lane, Kenny Osborne, Earl Dodson and his wife; Kay Short, Shirley Sullivan, Helen Willis, Steve Minton's son-in-law, Mary Calhoun and many wonderful testimonies given in praise, thanking God for His blessings. Many unspoken requests were signified with uplifted hands. Brother Joe Robinette humbly took us to the throne of grace in a soul stirring prayer.

Elder Daniel Hurd, pastor of the host church, came forward to thank everyone for their help in getting ready for this grand event. Each individual and every business is greatly appreciated from the bottom of our hearts. Without this help, we wouldn't have been able to do it. Please pray for his granddaughter, Whitney.

The delegation was called to order to transact the business.

It was motioned, seconded and voted to adopt the business proceedings of yesterday as read.

Elder Burnice Sybert, having been chosen by the Committee on Religious Exercises, came forward to take the first part of the service. He blessed us with some history of the Primitive Baptists and his wonderful testimony. In the case of Primitive Baptist, Primitive is used to mean original, because our doctrine has not changed over the years and we stand on the original word of our Savior. An individual's soul is the most important thing that we can consider. Elder Sybert read Acts 26:19-26 and used as a text a portion of verse 22, "I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:" along with the last part of verse 26 "for this thing was not done in a corner." Preach nothing except that which is in the word of God. Our knowledge comes from studying the Word, just as Christ taught the disciples and they in turn taught others. Recall to your mind what God taught you. Paul taught from the Old Testament and preached God's word just as our elders do today. He spoke to the prophets (no prophet since John) and revealed that Jesus is come. His word revealed all the truths of God, for it is inspired of our Heavenly Father. He is the same yesterday, today and forevermore. Be aware of what is around you and listen to God, not man. No man knows the time when Christ will come after His children. Watch

always and be ready, for He is coming to receive us unto Himself that we can be with Him forever. Press on for He will return to receive us unto Himself.

Elder Oscar Irvin followed with another wonderful message from the Lord. We must humble our hearts before God. He came forward thanking God for this wonderful opportunity of being here yesterday and today. We know God is ready, willing and able to add to our churches, but we the church have a responsibility to let our light shine to those around us. Tell others just what Jesus means to you and what He has done for you. The Old Testament is a schoolmaster to us and if we will come humbly, it will teach us much. God thought it out before He ever created Adam. When He had created everything, then He created man. The world, Satan, wants everyone to think that everything is all right. The world as we know it is blinded to the good works of the Lord. There was One to come that would bruise the serpent's head and Jesus did just that. Aren't you glad the Angels told of His coming as a new born babe? Christ died for the sins of the world. Being born of a virgin is impossible with man, but everything is possible with God. He is the same yesterday, today and forevermore. What a big change that took place when God came into our life.

Elder Kevin Cross followed with still another wonderful message directly from our Savior on high. An old, old story showed us how our Savior came from Glory and gave us our victory in Jesus. Let us rejoice in our Lord this day. Only the children of God can understand. This Heaven bought privilege was paid for in full on the cross of Calvary. His Spirit fills our hearts just as it filled the grounds around this blessed place during this gathering. Our faith in Jesus Christ will see us through everything this old world can throw at us, for the Word of God speaks to us through the Holy Spirit. Ye that have an ear, let him hear the Word of God. To be a Christian is an extraordinary thing coming directly from God, but it is also a serious thing that we cannot take lightly; for the life we live, we live by faith in Jesus Christ. We have a hope of a great resurrection when Christ will come to take us home to be with Him forever.

We were dismissed in song of His Amazing Grace and how sweet is the sound that saved a wretch like us. Most precious is the hour we first believed. He will take us home where joy will fill our heart and we can exclaim how great Thou art. Shouts of praise for our blessed Redeemer rang out throughout the building. Bless His Holy name!

Friday Afternoon, October 6, 2017

The congregation assembled after a wonderful lunch served by the host church as everyone continued to praise the Lord. Just knowing our blessed Redeemer, we know He can wipe our troubles away. We stand on Christ the solid rock where our anchor is

in the veil as all other ground is sinking sand. Steve Minton led us in more praise to the King. We are redeemed by love divine, and great is our joy, for Christ is ours and precious is He to us.

We were further blessed with special singing and testimony from the Osborne Chapel youth group, Wallen's Creek Church singers, Caney Creek Church singers, Rose Chapel singers, Sammy VanHoose and Aubra Hill.

Just a little talk with Jesus makes everything right. We can tell Him all about our problems and He will remove all our doubts and fears, for He already knows our troubles. One day soon we will fly away to God's celestial shore. Swing low sweet chariot, He is coming for to carry us home, for we have seen the light and there will we be no more in darkness. Thank God for our young people. Jesus paid it all and salvation has been brought down where we all can partake of it and tell it all over this land and country. All of our hopes in this world are anchored in the blood of the Lamb. Such peace and joy within can only come from Jesus. He took away death's sting and the joy of knowing Him will take away our cares. Face to face we shall behold the One who saved us by His grace. Such joy to know we are going to Heaven to see Jesus face-to-face. Let us mention how much we love Him, when we see no way, He makes a way. Wonderful testimonies and praises rang out throughout the building as God's children praised His Holy name. If we go or if we stay, the victory is ours. If we know the Lord, we are a winner either way.

Elder Sizemore thanked the church for the bountiful and delicious lunch and asked that everyone continue to obey the Lord. Such a wonderful time in the Lord and a precious place to be.

Prayer requests were made, along with many wonderful testimonies. Always remember the unsaved, all those serving our country in the military and their families, all those with cancer, Tommy Meade, all those dependent on drugs, Richard Workman and his family, Nadine Horne's brother, and many unspoken requests signified by uplifted hands. Brother David Parsons blessed us with his earnest prayer as he took our petitions to the Lord.

The delegation was seated in order to transact the business.

The Letter Committee addressed the Letter from Gardner's Memorial. It could possibly be in the mail at the clerk's home. The committee recommends that the clerk send Richardson's Chapel letter to the church pastor for his signature. Since there were no other problems with the letter, once it is received, the clerk will enter the information into the minutes. Likewise, when the letter from Gardner's Memorial is received, the clerk will review it and take appropriate actions to get the church

information into the minutes. It was motioned, seconded and voted for the clerk to take the appropriate actions for these churches.

The moderator appointed the Church Letter Committee for 2018 which includes: Bradley Bowen (chairman), Steve Hunt, Steve Minton and Robert Brown (alternate).

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

Friday night:

Stand: Sammy VanHoose, Joseph Robinette and Jason Robinette

Saturday morning: October 7, 2017:

Stand: Terry Sizemore and Roger VanHoose

Saturday night:

Stand: Harmon Willis and Tyler Stapleton

Roller's Chapel: Mike Fullington and Jason Robinette

Swan Creek: Billy Marcum

Sunday morning, October 8, 2017:

Stand: Determined from those in attendance

Roller's Chapel: Roger VanHoose

West View: Porter Caroll

Poplar Grove: Billy Marcum

Swan Creek: Tyler Stapleton

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 moderator noted that Brother Jim Bowlin asked to be removed as a Virginia trustee. Joe Horton will be added as a Virginia trustee.

As a follow up of business from yesterday concerning giving Brother Roy Jones a gift in appreciation of his services for taking care of the Ayers Chapel Church property, it was motioned, seconded and voted to give Brother Jones \$600. As requested by Roy, this money will be sent to his home church of Cadet.

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

The Committee on Obituaries reported that 34 have been received at this time.

The Committee on Finance reported \$5,630 in receipts for the year. The chairman thanked each church and individual for their contributions.

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

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

The men chosen to write the circular letter for 2017 were Elders Burnice Sybert, John Banks, and Lewis Baker. John Banks came forward and gave a wonderful testimony of such wondrous salvation before reading the letter. Let each of us serve and obey our blessed Lord in everything we attempt. We are a special people in His eyes and we are to love one another as He loves us. Let the Redeemed of the Lord say so! 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 2018 which includes: Elders Sam VanHoose, Jason Robinette and Oscar Irvin.

It was noted we are still waiting on the sale of the Ayers Chapel Church property before taking any action concerning new chairs.

It was brought to our attention that the association kitchen will need three new stoves before next year, so everyone sang praises to the Lord as they fellowshiped and took up an offering to help with this cost. A donation of \$1,253.50 was received.

The moderator reminded the delegation that only those chosen or appointed by their respective churches as delegates were allowed to vote and the maximum number of votes per church was 4 if all delegates are present. Likewise, if only one delegate was present, then the church would only have one vote. There were 6 churches that asked for the association to meet with them next year. These are: Blackwater Lick, Burke's Union, Clear Springs, Fairview, Macedonia and Rose Chapel. As noted, four of these churches are standing as a joint venture. These are: the Ohio churches of Clear Springs, Fairview, Macedonia and Rose Chapel. Blackwater Lick withdrew before the plea process began, leaving the plea process between Burke's Union and the Ohio churches. During the vote, by a clear majority the delegation sent the association to the Ohio Churches on the grounds of Clear Springs Church, where the Lord willing we will convene on Thursday morning, (October 4, 2018) before the first Saturday in October, 2018 for the 166th gathering. Introductory – Elder Jason Robinette; Alternate – Elder Roger VanHoose.

Adjourned until Saturday morning, October 7, 2017.

Saturday Morning, October 7, 2017

God blessed His children once again as they gathered for our memorial service. Sister Zula McCullough led us in songs of praise for our blessed Savior. We're on our way home where all is peace and joy and love and the soul of man never dies. Just knowing Jesus saved us is enough for us to continue on our journey home. His cleansing power is sufficient to keep us in the path set before us. Blessed assurance is our story and our song as we praise Him all the day long. All is at rest for in our Savior we are happy and blessed. There is coming a day when no heartaches shall come and there is peace forevermore on that happy golden shore where we shall see Jesus face-to-face. Just think about it, no sickness, no burdens to bear, no parting over there for Jesus will take us by the hand and lead us through the promised land. Marcelle Bledsoe led us in more songs of praise. In that land on the far away strand we'll never grow old. We'll reach our new home to never more roam. When misgivings darken our way, our Lord whispers sweet peace to us. We trust Him by faith and by faith we hold His hand as that still small voice speaks to help even when we are cast down in spirit and soul.

Elder Terry Sizemore welcomed everyone to our Saturday morning memorial service, thanking God for our wonderful services thus far. Smiling faces were all around as Elder Sizemore encouraged everyone to obey the Lord. Bless His Holy name for everyone in attendance today and throughout the week.

We were further blessed with special singing and testimony from Billy Marcum, Mishayla Hensley, Dustin Lawson, Jonathan and Peggy Shaw-McBee. There is a place of torment, but we escaped that awful place when Jesus saved our soul, so the only fire we'll ever feel is burning in our heart. Serving our Savior is joy even though we haven't seen Him face-to-face yet, but one day we will. We don't even know the half, but one day we will behold Him in all His splendor and glory. Don't doubt it or deny it because He really cares about us. To prove His love, He gave us His only begotten Son. If it wasn't for His lighthouse, our ship would be no more. That old lighthouse has guided many a stray ship home. Where would you be without that lighthouse?

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, Billy Walton, Vicky Jones, Kathy Lawson and family, Shirley Sullivan, Helen Willis, three teenage boys, sister's lost family, Cora L. Neeley and family, Thelma Tankersley and many

unspoken requests signified by uplifted hands. Brother Bradley Bowen humbly led us to the throne of grace.

Thank God for our access to the throne room. Prayer changes things and is God's way of allowing us to bring things to Him.

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 one addition to the preaching service at Roller's Chapel tonight.

Sister Eileen Brown has pictures on the window sill, available to anyone that wants them on a first come, first serve basis.

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: Please report to her via email.

Eileen Brown

Phone: 865-993-4960

Email: ebrowntravel@gmail.com

For many years, the Saturday morning 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 gone on to their reward. Please remember their families in your prayers and thank God for having known them.

Having been chosen by the Committee on Religious Exercises, Elder Terry Sizemore took the lead of our memorial service. He read Mark 7:24-29 and used as his thought, "Let us be reminded just who we are." We must be drawn by His Holy Spirit, and only the power of God will do this. To know the Lord is a personal thing. The disciples followed by sight, but we have the Holy Spirit to lead us. There is something within us that helps us to deal with our Lord. We must know in our heart who Jesus is, so we can have an understanding of the things of God. We must acknowledge our self to Him. It is not what we know or think we know, but it is God and His will. What a thrill it is to feel God in our life. Many times when the Lord speaks to us, we only hear what we want to. Peter didn't have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as we do, but he was with Jesus and could see what sayeth the Lord. When the Lord is in your house (soul), He cannot be hid, but He will show up. We must persevere to give God all the honor and glory. There is no place to quit, or even slow down, in the

work of our Lord. Our prayer helps us draw nigh to Him and Satan has to flee. We may be living when He comes again, then we'll get on a cloud and go home.

Elder Roger VanHoose was the second servant of our Heavenly Father to take the stand in this memorial service. Paul preached to the Gentiles, as we were once, but when God saved us, everything changed in our life. What a privilege it is to be a child of the King; everything else is a distant second in comparison. Things of God are a mystery, but He will reveal things to us so we can understand His plans for our life. So many people will not accept, nor even listen to the things of God, but there will be a time when they will know things as they truly are. Salvation is to everyone that will call upon the Lord, repent of their sins and accept Him as their Savior. This simple thing is the most important thing that an individual can do. It is truly a gift from God. With the help of the Lord, we have the power to bring this outward man under subjection. Without the spirit of God, all is in vain. God's testimony is steadfast and sure and will not work unless we hear it straight from God. We must step out for the Lord that others will know the great "I Am," for little is much when God is in it.

Elder Greg Hill came forward with another wonderful message from God. Singing about our Lord. We are going there to meet our blessed Redeemer, for we are going over Jordan, going home. We are fellow citizens to the household of faith. Give the most earnest heed to the things of Jesus. Those gone before us now rest from their labors but their works go on. What is life to you? We are here for a little while then we vanish away. God is not hid from our midst, but is here with us for He said He would never leave us nor forsake us. The King of Kings will answer our call if we ask in faith believing. We can never clean up ourselves enough to be worthy to enter the kingdom of God, but He will do the cleaning of our soul and make us fit subjects. Those that wait upon the Lord will rise up as eagles.

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. As we work at Jesus' feet, it is joy unspeakable and full of glory. One day soon we'll meet just over in the glory land. Such wonderful praises were made as we were adjourned until Sunday morning, October 8, 2017.

Sunday Morning, October 8, 2017

The Lord blessed us again with some much needed rain on this our last day of the 165th association gathering. There is a land that is fairer than day and in the sweet by-and-by we shall meet on that beautiful shore. I will meet you in the morning just inside the Eastern gate, so be ready faithful pilgrim that you not be too late. We have the glorious gift of His love and some glad morning we'll fly away to God's celestial shore. When we die, hallelujah by and by, we fly away. To know it is well with our soul is extremely important for every Christian to be certain of. Christ regarded our helpless estate and shed His own blood for us, so we will know our sin is nailed to His cross and we bear it no more. Sweet is the song we sing today and shout I have been redeemed by love divine. Precious indeed is our Savior to us. Let us trust in His unseen hand that leads through ways we cannot see, for we know it will lead us to that home where sin nor sorrow can come. It is not the things that we want, but the things we need; therefore, we must leave it in the hands of the Lord.

We were blessed with special singing and precious testimonies from Doug, Helen and Sarah Willis. God's children know how they made it and rest assured we made it by God's amazing grace. We live by that One who abides within us.

Elder Daniel Hurd, pastor of the host church, welcomed everyone to today's service praising God for being here on the grounds with us. What a time we have had in the Lord this week.

Prayer requests, along with some wonderful testimonies, were offered to our Savior. Please remember the unsaved, the sick, and the destitute, our country, those serving our country in the military, the lost in Carl Osborne's family and coworkers, our association, Joe Horton's family, for all those taking part in this association, Richard Seiber, William Seiber who has never been saved, Tee Osborne's family, Virgia Grace Hill's family, especially her boys, and Billy Walton who had a heart attack. Elder Chris Salley humbly took our petitions to the Lord.

Following prayer, we were further blessed with songs from Carl Osborne, Dustin Lawson and Brenda Horton. Even though we are homesick for a country to which we have never been before, some day we will stand where our home will be eternal. Looking out across the river, our faith will end in sight as we take our heavenly flight. Consider all the worlds thy hands have made, for then sings our soul how great Thou art. Christ will come with shouts of acclamation, then we will bow in humble adoration and there proclaim my God how great Thou art. Love and honor His name and trust and obey. Such wonderful testimonies were made in honor and praise to our Lord and Savior. Bless His holy name for all His blessings on His children!

Elder Daniel Hurd took the first part of the service, reading Acts 27:27-33. He used as a thought the 31st verse, "Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." When times get so rough, it is only through God's will that we can sail through safely to the other side where we can drop our anchor. This is not a "maybe" thing; God works in a straight forward manner and is not a fan of chaos. In Paul's time, God told him no harm would come to anyone who stayed on the ship and the same is true for us if we stand firm in Him. Walk with God and He will bless you to the utmost. The old ship of Zion has been tossed and battered, but she sails on today just as God promised. This old world holds nothing for God's children, because we have a better place, an eternal home in Heaven. God prepared it for us and we know when we reach that Heavenly place, we will be completely satisfied. He is the life that dwells within us today. Let us never fail to obey God rather than man. He died on the cross for our sins, but on that third and appointed morning He arose from the dead just as He said He would do. Bless His holy name! When we see all the things we are seeing take place today, He said to look up for the time of His coming is nigh.

Elder Chris Salley followed with another message from on high. God said if they would abide in the ship they could not be saved. They abided in the ship and were safe from all harm, just as we are when we abide by God's word. This old world worries only about themselves, not caring for anyone else. Paul had a concern for all, the same as all of God's children who are concerned for the lost. Never forget to pray for those that don't know the Lord in the free pardon of sin. The captain is ready to sail the ship away; therefore, do not hesitate or it may be too late. When God is not involved, chaos is the result, but He is not pleased for He is our God of order and peace. God's people know what to do for they know in whom their trust is placed.

A beautiful final fellowship of congregants ended the association service. Such a wonderful place to be and such a wondrous spirit has descended all over this valley during this great gathering of God's children. God prepared a building not made with hands for those that are saved by His marvelous grace. I appreciate so much everyone that came this way for this great association meeting. Bless you and your family.