

Churches in the Shenandoah Valley

Walnut Springs Christian Church 1905 Oranda Rd, Strasburg, VA 22657



Photograph by Dennis Attwood

A brief History

The first records of activity show that in 1808 a few persons at Strasburg, met as members of the Church of Christ, taking the name of Christian and agreeing to have no rule of faith and practice other than the bible. During the next few years, ministers of the Old Christian church of Christian Connection visited the area and meetings were held in various homes. In September 1821 Brother R.T. Ferguson moved to the area and brought his family, and built a house in which lived until he moved to Baltimore in 1846. In this house he taught school for a number of years in connection with his preaching, not far from where the present church stands.

At a meeting of the Christian Church held in Strasburg, Shenandoah County, Virginia, March 24, 1820, it was unanimously agreed that "this convention shall be called the Christian Church and shall never be known by any other name"

A revival was taking place "in these regions" (from a letter written from Shenandoah County) and it was

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announced that in August 1822 "There will be held at the Walnut Springs School House a four to five day meeting and a great concourse of people was expected.

It seems that while the membership was scattered over a large territory the most frequent place of meeting was in Strasburg until the congregation built a house of its own at Walnut Springs, because that was the most central place.

On August 26 1826 the church transferred its membership from Strasburg to Walnut Springs

October 31, 1835, Susanna Danner and Anna Stickley gave a cup of the Christian Church at Walnut Springs Schoolhouse to be used by the Disciples in the communion of the blood of Christ on the first day of the week. This appears to have been around the time when the congregation goes over from the "Christian Connection" to the "Disciples of Christ"

March 4, 1843, the forerunner of the Sunday school appeared when it was resolved to form a Bible class that should meet each Lord's Day.

January 2, 1847, it was decided to build a church on an acre of ground adjoining the schoolhouse. The land was conveyed by David Stickley to trustees for the purpose. The stone church seems to have been completed early in 1848; at least it was so from that time on that the meetings were held in it. Also in February 1848, two male suits and one female suit was purchased for baptizing

By 1854, the membership of the church was ascertained to be about 80.

Brother John Pirkey had followed Brother Ferguson after he had left the area, and became the pastor for the next thirty years, closing in the fall of 1883.

August 11, 1890 the old church was torn down. The same day work was begun on the frame building, which was occupied for the first time for prayer meeting, October 26, 1890, a month and a half after it was begun, though it was not entirely completed for nearly a year.

On Sunday, December 23, 1944, just as people were gathering for Bible school, the church building caught on fire and burned to the ground in a very short time. The furnace became overheated in the absence of the janitor. The Strasburg fire department responded at once but could do very little as there was no water of any amount nearby. The members and people of the community were soon on the scene and all the furnishings of the auditorium were taken out, including the pews. All the communion trays and many other things which were in the two rear rooms burned. Particularly sad was the fact that the congregation had just spent \$2000 to remodel and improve the building in 1942.

The cornerstone for the new brick church was laid on November 24, 1946 and within a year, services were being held in the basement. A dedication service for the church was held in June, 1948 with only the Sunday School rooms left unfinished but by June 17, 1956, these facilities were completed.

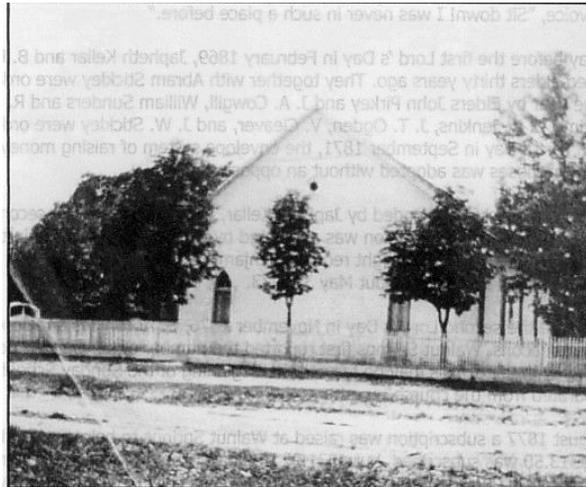
In 1965, the necessity for additional Sunday School Classrooms was realized. On October 21, 1965, the foundation was laid for the new wing. These rooms were used for the first time on Sunday, September 4, 1966 and dedicated a month later during the afternoon services on Homecoming Day. It was during Homecoming Services, October 13, 1968, a note-burning service was conducted, canceling the indebtedness of this addition.

Originally the Walnut Springs Congregation did not have a musical instrument within its walls as prior to 1899 one was thought to be anti-scriptural however in the early 20th century pianos were introduced, and the first electric organ, a Baldwin, was dedicated in January 1959 at a cost of \$1200. In 1972 a Thomas organ was dedicated.

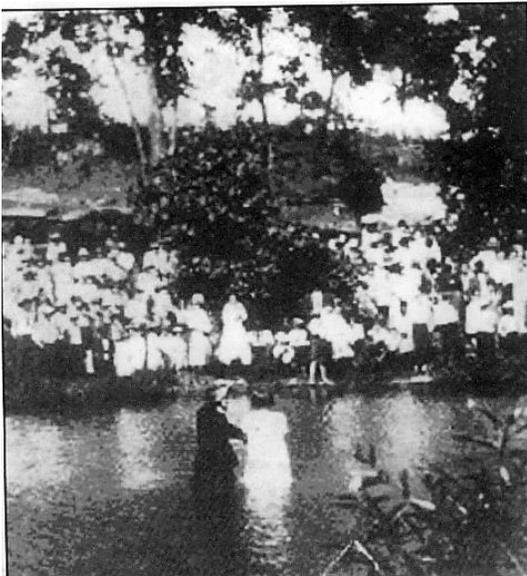
Extracted from information provided by Monty Loving January, 2012.

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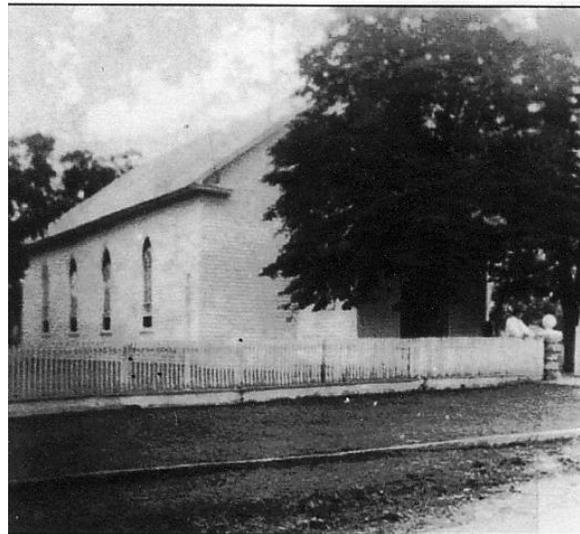
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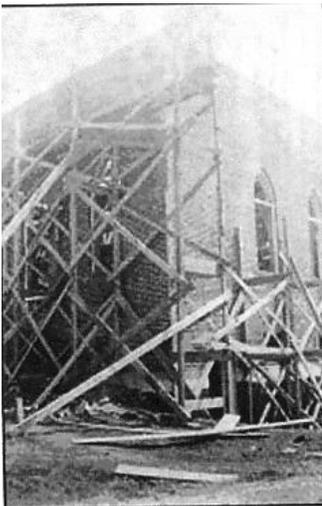
2nd Church building built in 1890-91



Baptisms in Cedar Creek



Frame church with new portico over front door



Rebuilding - the new brick church



Fire December 23, 1944

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