

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE EASTERN DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

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**Thursday Morning, September 29, 2016**

The Eastern District Association of Primitive Baptists convened in its 164<sup>th</sup> annual session with Swan Creek Church, Sneedville, TN hosting this blessed event.

Organized in 1872, soon after the Civil War, the foundations of Swan Creek Primitive Baptist Church began in Hancock County's Briar Creek community when Elder Hardin C. (H. C.) Foley was ordained to the ministry. Working ardently in its organization alongside his brother-in-law, Elder Thomas Dodson, Elder H. C. Foley aspired to found a church "to heal the hurts of the Great War" after observing abysmal violence and conflict during his two years as a sergeant. Thus, Swan Creek Church's roots are grounded in a mission of peace and unity in the post-Civil War Reconstruction Era. In addition to the names of Elder Foley and Elder Dodson, the charter membership roster included Sarah Joyce Dodson Foley, Susannah Dodson, Mary Ann Hatfield, Lydia Williams, Emaline Foley, Joseph Wilson, Josiah Moles, William Seals, Henry Wilson, Wilson Purkey, John Royston, Joseph Royston, Jacob Winkler, George Winkler, Elijah Johnson, Mary Moles, Armenda Purkey, Jane Hatfield, Nancy Hatfield, John P. Jefferson, Lucinda Jefferson, Nathan Hatfield, Mary Dodson, Abram Lee Dodson, Sarah Dodson, Rutha Dodson, William Purkey, and Nancy Purkey. Written in graceful calligraphy, the original Church Covenant dates on paper to 1874 and beautifully articulates a commitment to harmony, equality, and fellowship: "We will walk with one another in love and in the power of the Lord and not discover to the world the infirmities of each other . . . that each member shall have equal right in the body, that none shall have preeminence one over another . . . that we endeavor to live in love and in fear of the Lord and endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace."

Several years after its initial organization, the church was moved to Oak Grove on the banks of Swan Creek, the exact date now unknown. This building served as both a school and a church until it was destroyed by fire. Soon afterwards, Elders Hardin C. Foley, Thomas Dodson, Isaac Robinette, Wilson Purkey, John Fannon, and others built a hewn log house one-half mile west of the present Swan Creek Church. This served as the church until 1914, when Elder H. C. Foley donated land to build a new church on the same grounds upon which the current building stands. The building that was erected in 1914 provided shelter for the congregation for 77 years. After dilapidation made necessary the construction of yet another church house, in 1991 the present building was completed under the guidance of then-pastor, Elder Silas (Porter) Carroll, who also served as the master carpenter. Elder Carroll miraculously excised the painting of the Last Supper from the sheetrock of the old church and

mounted it behind the pulpit of the new building. Created by Sister Debra Reed, a descendent of Elder Thomas Dodson, this artwork continues to inspire the congregation during each service. Also, the present-day church contains the bell, the remembrance table, and the front door from the old church.

Among the pastors who served the church through the long history were the following: Elders H. C. Foley, Thomas Dodson, I. S. Robinette, Alfred Wallen, John W. Fanon, Emory Robinette, Nickolas Alder, William Jefferson, Wilson Purkey, Freeman Johnson, Floyd Ferguson, Hobart Hall, Logan Willis, Elmo Dodson, Clifford Williams, Clarence Johnson, John Purkey, J. L. Hill, Walter Willis, Oscar Irvin, Bobby Williams, T. J. Elliott, Eckel Head, Carl Ray Cope, Tommy Seals, Donnie Clifford, Silas Carroll, and Richard (J. R.) South. At its present moment in history, the church is exceptionally happy and proud that Elder Terry Sizemore, the Moderator of the Eastern District Association, is a beloved member of the Swan Creek family; he has served devotedly as the pastor since September 2012. In addition to Moderator Sizemore, four other ministers are also faithful members of the church: Elders T.J. Elliott, Silas Carroll, Carter Hager, and Keith Holt.

Not only is Swan Creek grateful for the devoted ministers in its past and present history, but it also gives thanks for the blessing of committed deacons since its foundation, including the following: Allen Chandler, George Winkler, William Jefferson, Abram Lee Dodson, Washington Barnard, Morrison Reed, and Reece Jefferson (all now deceased). Also serving in more recent decades were Bud Haire, Larry Coleman, Dwight Wilson, Bill Wilson, and Silas Carroll. The current roster of devoted deacons is comprised of Earl Lee Dodson, Clarence Morgan, Rodney Dodson, and Johnny Bunch.

Knowledge of Swan Creek's past derives from the writings of its record-keepers. In its long history, the church has only had eight clerks. The first three elected clerks each served short terms: Joseph Wilson (1874-1878), Jacob N. Winkler (1878-1879), and James Wilson (1879-1880). Then, one of the charter members, Abram Lee Dodson, a young man when Swan Creek was first organized, was elected as clerk; he served over a half-century (52 years), from August 1880 - December 1932. The clerkship has been held consecutively by A. L. Dodson's descendants for the past 83 years: son Harrison Dodson (January 1933 - May 1954), son Elder Elmo Dodson (June 1954 - August 1972), grandson Clarence Dodson (September 1972 - May 1992), and great-granddaughter Danita Dodson (June 1992 - present). Though the position of Clerk was once combined with Treasurer, a separate office was created in June 1989, at which time Sister Lillie Belle Reed was elected, and she is still serving efficiently as the current Swan Creek Treasurer.

Since its foundation, Swan Creek Primitive Baptist has been honored to host the Eastern District Association nine times in its history: in 1884, 1891, 1903, 1916, 1922, 1933, 1953, 1960, and 1980. The first time that the Association

convened at Swan Creek, in 1884, it is noteworthy that the Moderator, Isaac Robinette, was also the church's pastor, a remarkable parallel fact to this year's assembly. The Swan Creek church clerk during this first Association gathering was Abram Lee Dodson. In 1980, the last time that the Association assembled at Swan Creek, Elder Basil Freeman was Association Moderator, Elder Burnice Sybert was Association Clerk, Elder Bobby Williams was the Swan Creek pastor who delivered the introductory sermon, and Clarence Dodson was the Swan Creek clerk. Today, thirty-six years later, the entire Swan Creek Primitive Baptist body is extremely happy and proud to host the 164<sup>th</sup> Annual Session of the Association, still cherishing the unity, love, and bonds of peace expressed by the founding members in the 1874 Covenant.

The refreshing morning air greeted everyone as they arrived at this 164<sup>th</sup> 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 our burdens we'll lay down and all the saints get home to receive our crown. We will raise the heavenly anthem in that meeting in the sky, when the redeemed are gathering in. When the great procession is over, how we will shout and how we will sing. We will tell redemption's story for we are washed like snow and free from sin. Just over in the glory land we'll join the happy angel band. His unseen hand will lead us through ways we cannot see. His hand has led through shadows drear and while it leads, we have no fear. Some sweet day we'll reach that strand still guided by the unseen hand. Let us ever praise Him for His guiding hand.

As the host, Elder Terry Sizemore welcomed everyone to today's service. Thank God for each and every one gathered here today. We praise Him for every smiling face we see here today. He is faithful, just and willing to give us our desire to praise Him for everything. During this past year, we have lost two of our Elders; remember in prayer the families of Elders John Turner and John Bowlin. Thank God for these men and their stand for God.

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 Roy Jones (chairman), Doug Willis and Ronnie Brooks.

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." Twelve months have rolled around again and many have gone to join the band in that happy heavenly land. When our work is done down here below, then to heaven we will go. 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. I. S. Robinette, a former pastor at Swan Creek who is buried just up the road, is officially credited with writing this song.

Elder Sizemore led the congregation in singing "Amazing Grace." It was His amazing grace that taught our heart to fear. Through many dangers, toils and

snare we have already come and His grace will lead us on, for we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun. We have just begun to live and God's grace is sufficient for all things. God is there for all our troubles, especially for that one that doesn't know him in the free pardon of sin.

The Moderator asked all of our ministers to sign the minister's book, including ministers from other associations and church affiliations.

Elder Eddie and Sister Wanda Malone blessed us with their songs of praise. It is harvest time in our country. The true and faithful must come forward, for the fields are white; it's harvest time.

Prayer requests were made for the lost, our churches, those serving in the military, our country, Roy Jones family, John Bowlin family, Matthew Montgomery, Steve Brown, Chester Rayburn, Brandon Williams, Jackson and Easton Bledsoe, Thelma Gunner, Francis Armstrong, Phyllis Hurd, Juanita Bowen, Mrs Reed, Pat Fuller, Sherrie Brown, Nancy McCullough, Vicky Jones sons and her sister, and a show of uplifted hands signifying countless unspoken prayer requests. Elder Tommy Meade blessed us in a heartfelt prayer as he took our petitions to the Lord.

Having been chosen to preach the introductory sermon, Elder Terry Sizemore took the first part of the service. God will fill our every need. Pray that the community might see something in these services and the church would stand as a light. He read Philippians 2:1-11. As a thought, "look every man on the things of others, God's teachings are universal to all." Christ came that He might become a servant, so take this example and present ourselves as servants of God. His name is above all names. We must keep our minds on the things above, not on the things of this world. Let this mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus. He was the propitiation of sin, willingly taking our place. Never take your eyes off the things of Christ. Everybody will be happy over there, but we need to be happy on the journey now. Let us be likeminded, as Christ made Himself of no reputation. If we want Christ in our life, we must embrace the things of Christ. Forgiveness is a foundational principle of our Christian lives. Be willing always to say thank you God, for being in our lives. If our thoughts are about the mind of Christ, we can build our life with a forgiving heart.

Elder Porter Carroll followed with another wonderful message from our Lord and Savior. We lose Christian soldiers from one gathering to another, but we'll never lose Christ, for He will go with us till the end. Regardless of the adversary, Christ is able: it is all Jesus. Whatever Jesus tells us, do it. We each fall short in this respect, but until we abide in Him, we cannot prosper. We must trust, but we must also obey, if we are to overcome the power of the hour. Walk in the spirit to know when the adversary is coming after us. May we always strive to please our heavenly Father. He did something for us that no one else could do. We can never repay Him, but we can serve Him in truth and in spirit. There is no other

way to do things other than the way Jesus set before us. True peace and joy comes from our Father, regardless of what man might say or do. We all like to have things done our way, but we must place our full trust in Him and obey Him in all things. Our country has changed so much it is hard to recognize, but bless His Holy name, God changes not.

We were dismissed for lunch with a song. The field of endless day lies just a little farther on, still go farther on.

### **Thursday Afternoon, September 29, 2016**

The host church served us a wonderful lunch as God's children enjoyed this glorious day. Sister Zula led the congregation in singing several songs of praise as the congregation gathered in the tent for the afternoon service. His matchless love was shown for each of us when He suffered all alone in our place. Thru eternal ages, His praises ring as we stand on the promises of God our Savior. Steve Minton led us in singing some more hymns of praise. We have been redeemed by God's love divine and we owe everything to our Savior. Great is our joy, as we resolve all things to Him. We have a home on God's celestial shore and there's just a few more weary days to labor before we'll fly away to that land where joy shall never end.

Further blessings were bestowed upon us with special singing and testimony from Loretta Emery, Bradley Brown, and Billy Marcum. It must have been a sad day for the disciples, but He left us this message that He would come back the same way. Tarry here, it won't be much longer; for very soon we're all going home, so work while it is day. A fair haven of rest for the weary in a place called Heaven made for the true and the free, how beautiful Heaven must be. God's love is forever there shining, it is indeed the home of the happy and free. This may be our last time to gather here on this side of Jordan, so let's take advantage of it. Good news came to us when we arose and went to Jesus. Jesus stands ready to save every believer, and He will receive us, for in His arms are ten thousand charms. Let us arise and go to meet Him.

Elder Sizemore welcomed everyone to the afternoon service; as he thanked God for everything and for the wonderful 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, Walter and Alice Willis, Earl and Betty Dodson, T. J. and Evelyn Elliott, Lenore Stevens daughter, Copper Creek members, Sherrie Brown, Bobbie Fuller, Harmon Willis and many unspoken requests signified by many uplifted hands. Elder Harmon Willis led us to the throne of grace in a soul stirring prayer.

Brother Joe Robinette, Chairman of the Committee on Church Letters, came forward to give the report of our state and standing. Joe has trouble reading, so he asked Brother David Horton to read the report. There were some questions with the Sloantown Church letter, nothing major, the committee just needed some more information. The letter from Sloantown would be reviewed later when additional information could be obtained. 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.

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 and recognize their confidence in these officials and in so doing they would pray for us.

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, September 29, 2016:

Stand: Mike Fullington, David VanHoose, and Keith Holt

Friday morning, September 30, 2016:

Stand: Lewis Baker, Daniel Hurd, and Eddie Malone

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: Scott Tipton (chairman), Mike Fullington, Roger VanHoose; Deacons: Steve Hunt and Ralph Baker; Laymen: Don Brown and Robert Brown.

Committee on Finance: Jason Robinette (chairman), Jim Emery and Chris Salley.

Committee on Obituaries: Eddie Malone (chairman), David VanHoose and Tommy Meade.

Committee on Arrangements and/or Queries: Ministers: Oscar Irvin (chairman), Harmon Willis, Richard Seiber, Joseph Robinette, Porter Carroll and Sam VanHoose.

The moderator reminded the delegation that Excused Absence forms will be available at the clerk's desk tomorrow, 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.

The Letter Committee reported that information had been obtained concerning the Sloantown Church letter and everything is in order. The committee recommends accepting their letter and seating them as part of the voting body of the association. 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 part the voting body of the association.

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.

Brother Delmer McPherson, chairman of the Electrical and PA System Committee came forward to give their report, stating that we are experiencing some trouble with our microphones and they would need to be replaced. The committee asked the delegation if it would be okay to do so. It was motioned, seconded and voted to allow the committee to purchase the new equipment.

The clerk spoke concerning the Ayers Chapel Church property. A contract has been signed with James Bass for the “rent to own” purchase of the church property. While Mr. Bass was not current on his payments, it was felt we needed to help him to meet the conditions of the contract. Elder Sizemore recommended that we try to help him in hopes that he could successfully follow through. It was suggested that we recommend that Mr. Bass pay some amount, even if it is not the full payment to show good faith on his part. It was motioned, seconded and voted for the clerk to make this recommendation to him.

The clerk reported all financial transactions of the year to the delegation.

The business being concluded, the delegation was dismissed in prayer, led by Elder Richard Seiber until Friday morning, September 30, 2016.

### **Friday Morning, September 30, 2016**

The Lord blessed His people as they gathered for the second day of this 164<sup>th</sup> association. Sister Zula McCullough led the congregation in singing several songs of Zion. Till Jesus came and made us whole, we would not be denied. Satan may tell us that God will not hear our prayers, but bless His name, He is here for His children. We're headed for a place where there will be no sad farewells, no tear dimmed eyes, and the soul of man never dies. Won't it be wonderful there with no burdens to bear, for it will be joy without measure? Brighter its glory will be while millions sing the wonderful story that Heaven holds all to God's children.

We were blessed with special singing from Jason Robinette, Naomi Adkins, Peggy Shaw-McBee and Jonathan McBee. Deliverance will come for those that remain true to our Lord and Savior. Palms of victory, crowns of glory we shall wear as we shout hallelujah when we reach the Promised Land. Let us never cease to thank Him for what He has done. Look back to the crucified One and kneel once more to thank Him for what He has done. In the great beyond we'll meet friends who left this world so long ago, but most importantly, we'll meet the One who made a way for us at Calvary, so we can praise our blessed Lord for evermore. Jesus is the lighthouse that shines the light around us so we can clearly see. A wonderful time is just ahead as the gates of Glory land are opened that we may see what God has in store for us.



Elder Sizemore welcomed everyone to today's service. It is wonderful to be here with God's people. Thank God for being that lighthouse. Please be obedient to the Holy Spirit that God would have His way. No one can measure what God has done. We will be released from the bonds of this old world, for eye hath not seen nor can we imagine the treasures laid up for those who are saved by His marvelous grace. We truly have something to be excited about. We pray if there is one among us that does not know our Lord, we pray that you might seek Him; He will save you. Let us hide in Him, for His protection is never ending. We are hid in the cleft of the rock that we can see the hinder parts. Satan may try to blind us, but through God we can see through every fiery dart sent our way. It is well with our soul. Shouts of praise for our Savior rang out throughout the tent.

The Swan Creek singers blessed us, as did the young people of the church, with their songs of praise. God's amazing grace will allow us to stand on top of Mount Zion where he will say welcome home, you're here for good. He brought salvation to you and to me, He brought salvation so full and so free. It will be worth the wait as we step through the gate. We'll never walk in that dark valley again. We have so much to thank Him for, we could never finish.

Prayer requests were made for the unsaved; all the requests from yesterday, those serving our country in the military, our association, our country, Virgie Grace Hill's children, Brandon, Terry's children, Gary Hall's mother and daughter, Casey Breeding's daughter, Frank Gilliam's grandson, the Bowlin family, Steve Hunt's grandson and brother, Roger Manring, Doug, revivals, young people, Charlie Banks, our churches, several others that the clerk could not get, rest assured the Lord knows, and many wonderful testimonies were given thanking God for His blessings. Many unspoken requests were signified with uplifted hands. Brother Ralph Baker humbly took us to the throne of grace in a soul stirring prayer.

The moderator acknowledged the attendance of Elder Harold Shaw as he welcomed him to today's services, thanking God for the many miles he and others have traveled over the years.

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 Lewis Baker, having been chosen by the Committee on Religious Exercises, came forward to take the first part of the service. The great God of heaven is all-wise, and everlasting. He read Romans 8:1-7. Everything we do or even attempt to do, must bring honor and glory to God. We cannot do anything without Him. His word was made flesh and we have eternal hope. Religion can be almost anything, but salvation is of God. It all belongs to Him; He owns it all,

whether man agrees with it or not. We await a new body and we shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. He is coming back after His redeemed. How great it is to feel and know His spirit. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. His spirit will bear witness with those saved by His marvelous grace.

Elder Daniel Hurd followed with another wonderful message from on high as he read verses 8-11. We must humble our hearts before God. They rebuilt the walls because they had a mind to work. When we were saved, we stepped into a brand new world. We are a family, and this divine body means something to Christ; He died for us that we might be a part of it. Our travels might lead us to places unknown, but our greatest journey will end in sight of our precious Redeemer. Our destination is not of this world, but for a place that God has prepared for those that believe and trust in His salvation. This free gift cost us nothing, but it cost Jesus everything, for He paid the supreme sacrifice. May we never fail to lift our hands in Holy praise of our Savior, for He took all our sins to the cross that we would have eternal life.

Elder Eddie Malone followed with still another wonderful message directly from our Savior on high. The love shown to God's children is beyond measure. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love and serve Him. His grace should lead us to seek after more grace. It is such an honor to know these men of God.

We were dismissed in song. He will take us home where joy will fill our heart and we can exclaim how great Thou art.

### **Friday Afternoon, September 30, 2016**

The congregation assembled after a wonderful lunch served by the host church as everyone continued to praise the Lord. When the roll is called up yonder, we'll be with our blessed Redeemer. We can say it is well with my soul, praise the Lord, oh my soul. When we are down in spirit and soul, He whispers sweet peace to us.

We were further blessed with special singing and testimony from Aubra Hill, the Clear Springs Church singers, Hunter King, and Naomi Adkins. The blood bought redeemed have a reservation paid for by the blood of the Lamb. Think of the moment when our soul shall leave this earth, we'll behold Jesus face to face. The joy of knowing to Heaven we are going. Just imagine that moment when you see Jesus. Let us show Him how His faithfulness has helped us and how much we love Him. When there seems to be no way to go, He makes a way; He is our rock, our shelter, and our way out when we get in trouble, He is truly our all in all. No gems nor jewels, nothing this world can offer to pay our sin debt, but it's only by the blood that Jesus shed for us. There is a crimson river flowing

from where our Savior died which is filled with His precious blood that can do all things, comfort and protect us in our midnight hours alone, heal our mind and body, save our soul from sin, and take us through the flood. It can do these things because it is our Savior's precious blood.

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

Prayer requests were made with many wonderful testimonies. Always remember the unsaved, all those serving our country in the military and their families. Remember in prayer: David Jerrell, Tommy Meade's sister, Linton Harrold, Sister Stewart's brother and sister, and many unspoken requests signified by uplifted hands. Brother Jim Bowlin 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.

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

Friday night: Scott Tipton, Joseph Robinette, Chris Sally.

Saturday morning: October 1, 2016:

Stand: Burnice Sybert, Oscar Irvin and Greg Hill.

Saturday night:

Stand: Jason Robinette

Rollers Chapel: Billy Marcum and Sammy VanHoose.

Kingswood: Porter Carroll, Roger VanHoose and Harmon Willis.

Sunday morning, October 2, 2016:

Stand: TBD

Kingswood: (10:00 a.m.) Ohio Connection

Rollers Chapel: Roger VanHoose and Harmon Willis

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 appointed the Church Letter Committee for 2017 which includes: David Horton (chairman), Bradley Bowen, Steve Hunt and Steve Minton (alternate).

The Moderator asked that we add Elder Allen Hensley to our list of preaching brethren that have died during this past year.

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

The Committee on Finance reported \$5,475 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 men chosen to write the circular letter for 2016 were Minister: Joseph Robinette, Deacon: Delmer McPherson, and Layman: Andy Wallen. All of these men came forward and testified of their salvation as Andy Wallen read the letter. Its message contained advice to each of us in a spiritual and scriptural manner, reaching directly to our hearts. As Christians, we all have a job to do. We are a peculiar people, the family of God who must promote the cause of Christ, that He would always receive the glory and honor for everything. It was motioned, seconded, and the moderator asked the delegation to stand to their feet as a means of voting to show their approval to print the letter in our minutes as it was read.

The moderator appointed the Committee on Circular Letters for 2017 which includes: Elders Burnice Sybert, John Banks, and Lewis Baker.

The committee formed to check on chairs for the association gave their report. They went to the company and found the chairs were \$13 each, padded on the back and bottom, and are residential chairs with a 250 pound rating. The committee recommended that we wait on money from the sale of the Ayers Chapel property. While the property is considered sold, just under another plan, we can wait until additional funds are received. It was suggested that we buy some if needed. It was stated that we are in good shape with those we have until such time the funds are available.

We were led in a special song by Elder Sizemore, as a special offering was taken up to help offset some of the costs incurred in rebuilding the kitchen floor. In addition to replacing the floor, the inside was repainted, a new freezer was purchased and 2 new fire extinguishers were purchased to replace the existing ones that have been out of service for a while. Jesus didn't come here to stay, just to show us the way, so he got on a cloud. A donation of \$1,437.40 was received.

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: Blackwater Lick, Fairview, and Swan Creek. Swan Creek withdrew before the plea process began, leaving the plea process between Blackwater Lick and Fairview. During the vote, by a clear majority the delegation sent the association to Blackwater Lick Church, where the Lord willing we will convene on Thursday morning, (October 5, 2017) before the first Saturday in October, 2017 for the 165<sup>th</sup> gathering. Introductory – Elder Richard Seiber; Alternate – Elder Mike Fullington.

Adjourned until Saturday morning, October 1, 2016.

### **Saturday Morning, October 1, 2016**

God continued to bless His children as everyone gathered in the tent for our memorial service. As God's children we have and look forward to more joy unspeakable and full of glory. Pleasure will no longer our soul enslave for we are saved, saved, saved. Our soul is redeemed and we are happy in Jesus our King. When we are happy in Him, December is as pleasant as May, and His presence disperses our gloom for we are sensed with His love. By His good pleasure we will arrive home some glorious day. There is coming a day when no tears will dim the eye as we arrive on that golden shore. What a day, glorious day that will be when our Jesus we shall see. Just think, no more parting and forever it will be eternal peace as He takes us by the hand and leads us through the promise land. 77 We will meet in the morning just inside the eastern gate. If you make it there before we do, just linger near the gate as we see all the riches God has in store for us.

Elder Terry Sizemore welcomed everyone to our memorial service. He thanked sister Zula for all the years she has led the congregation in singing. Thank God for everyone in attendance today and throughout the week.

We were further blessed with special singing and testimony from Dustin Lawson, Rita Marcum Asbury, and Daniel Smith. Consider all the ways God blesses us to proclaim how great thou art. Have you been anointed with the Father's love? He extends mercy as He whispers peace be still. He is still anointing with His blood that all may come to know Him. Earth holds no treasure, but perish with using, yet there's a country to which we are going for Heaven holds all to us. Joy without measure will be our treasure. As sweet as heaven is, hell is just the opposite that this world needs to realize. We pray that if there be one among us that does not know Him, that they could see His redemption.

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, Steve Brown, Paul, Teresa Step, Tony Step, Brenda Neely and family, J. R.

South's daughter, young man from Poplar Grove, and Keith Holt's friend. Brother Mark Newkirk humbly led us to the throne of grace.

Special singing from the trio of Talmadge Gibson, Sharon King and Terry Sizemore blessed the congregation. Jesus came from Heaven the sins to atone. The saints will arise to meet in the sky and we'll get on a cloud and go home. The tomb of Buddha contains his bones, but the tomb of Jesus is empty today for He arose on that third and appointed morning. If you're wandering in darkness, please step into the light where Jesus leads the way.

Brother Johnny Bunch came forward to thank the surrounding community for all their help throughout the association meeting. Thanking all the churches, businesses, elected officials, and individuals for their donation of money, time, prayers and everything else regardless of what it may have been.

Mishayla Hensley blessed us with her song of the splendor of almighty God, our Heavenly Father above. He cares when our head is bowed low. Please let us introduce you to the greatest friend ever known. Consider the lilies and then you will know He is never too busy to care about you. Thank God for our young people.

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.

Sunday service will be held on the grounds, weather permitting.

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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 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 Burnice Sybert took the lead of our memorial service. He read Acts 9:36-41 then he also read Acts 11:24 and used as his thought: "To let people know that you were a

good person and helped lead many souls to Christ.” Most of our churches have more women than men. They are special in our churches and we are truly blessed to have them in our lives. Tabitha was a good woman, well known for her charity and as a garment maker. We are all part of the family of God. Remember how things used to be. The Apostle Paul traveled much as he told many what happened to him on the road to Damascus. As God deals with us, let us always ascertain that all of the honor and glory goes directly to God. These saints that have passed from us during this past year are no different than Tabitha. God deals with His children and ensures we are taken care of. Each of them is special in their own way, because they knew the Lord and they wanted Him to have all the glory. Remember these saints as they served God, for we will rise to meet them in the air and so shall we be with the Lord forever. These saints are asleep in Christ, just waiting for the time when God will pass by to receive us unto Himself.

Elder Oscar Irvin was the second servant of our Heavenly father to take the stand in this memorial service. There is a time coming for all of us when death will come, but to die in Christ is good. We have walked, talked and worshiped with many of these folks whose names were read today. We can rejoice in knowing they are home awaiting our coming. It behooves us to know that we are saved as the spirit will reveal the deep things of God in our life. To know Him is to love Him and want to serve Him in any way He so desires. Christ paid the debt we could not. We may call it dying, but we will simply move to our new home, for His word states that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. We live because He lives. We have a resting place for those that die in the Lord. Gone home, some day, if time permits, they will say that about us, but until that day, let us labor in the fields for God. This world is full of troubles, trials and heartaches, but we will go home to be with the Lord forever.

Elder Greg Hill came forward with another wonderful message from God. He has not changed, He is the same. Remember the good council we received from these saints that have gone on to their reward. These have fought a good fight and finished their course, so we need to do likewise. We will miss these loved ones, but we know they have gone home to be with our Lord. Trust in the Lord and He will fill the empty spaces in our hearts. This woman from the readings, Tabitha, or Dorcas as she was called, was a good woman, well liked and respected in her community. More importantly, she belonged to Christ. Look around to see the handiwork of God in these dear departed saints' life and be proud of the work we have done for the Lord.

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 from the Clear Springs youth class. Such wonderful testimonies were given as we were adjourned until Sunday morning, October 2, 2016.

## **Sunday Morning, October 2, 2016**

The morning began with sunshine and the colors of harvest, echoing the blessings that God has graced us with throughout the week. Gathering outside for one last time in gracious fellowship, we were welcomed once again by the spirit of the Lord. With uplifted voices in praise of our Lord Jesus Christ, Ronnie Brewer, Danita Dodson, Clarence Dodson, and Tee Osborne led the congregation in songs of praise. Our singing together this lovely morning reminds us that there will be a happy meeting in heaven and that will be a glad reunion day. He bids us seek His face, believe His word, and trust His grace. We are redeemed by His love divine, and great is our joy as onward we go. As day by day we travel, we'll keep Him ever nigh, knowing that we are headed for that jubilee, yonder in the skies. We were also blessed with a song from Lillian, Leigha, and Ann Bunch: "God Saves Old Sinners."

Elder and Moderator Terry Sizemore welcomed everyone to today's service, offering gratitude and love to the host church for the dedicated work during the association. Every individual worked so hard to make our visit with them enjoyable and we thank each one for their labor of love. Today's service was held outside to allow the ladies in the kitchen to hear and take part in the service. What a joy to serve God with our fellow Christian brothers and sisters.

We were blessed with special singing and precious testimonies from Sharon King, Wanda Carroll, Pauline King and Jim Bowlin. People may not understand the joy and happiness, but we strive to go to a perfect land, built by Jesus' own hand where we'll live forever. We are assured that this unseen hand will lead us to a home where sorrow never shall come. We've no less days to sing God's praise than when we've first begun. Glory will be ours forevermore. The wisdom of man is foolish, so we need be willing to humble ourselves before God and be saved. At this point we can use our talents for God and hopefully see many souls saved.

Moderator Sizemore was then liberated to share glorious words of praise that we have a country we are heading to, a land where there is no sorrow, no more pain, trouble or strife.

Prayer requests along with some wonderful testimonies were offered to our Savior. Please remember the unsaved, the sick, and the destitute. A special request was made for Daniel Smith's family during this time of sorrow due to the passing of his wife Mandy's father, our country, those serving our country in the military, the lost and Frank Gillam's grandson, Matthew. Gary Hall humbly took our petitions to the Lord.



Following prayer, we were further blessed with songs from the Copper Creek Quartet: "Let's Meet By the River." Clifton Horne shared his testimony and sang "He Has Spoken My Name."

Elder Daniel Hurd took the first part of the service. There is a wondrous attraction and beauty in the cross where our Lord and Savior died for our sins. Can you see the blood flowing today? It is still there; it is here today, in our hearts. Over 2,000 years ago, He opened the way by His beautiful sacrifice. Beaten and scourged, His blood dripping on the ground, He left a trail for us to find Him. Can you hear the hammer ringing on the spikes that nailed Him to the cross? He hung there humble as a babe, though He made all things. We should close our eyes and envision the suffering, with Jesus crying out to all humankind to come unto Him in equal humility and willingness. He prayed to let this cup pass from Him, not His will but the will of our Father be done. With His death, we have the power to overcome things in the flesh because we are joint heirs with Jesus Christ. The best is yet to come.

Elder Chris Salley followed with a wonderful testimony and preaching. Reading from I Corinthians 1:11-21. The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; however, unto us who are saved, it is the power of God. The blood atonement at Golgotha, once and for all, rent the veil and opened the way for grace. We have been made alive forevermore. He opened our eyes, gave us a measure of faith to believe in Him and one day soon we will receive a new body and be with the Lord forever more. In glory, we'll be able to worship Him the way He so richly deserves. The crimson flow has redeemed us and given us hope, saving souls to the uttermost. There will be perfect praise and perfect glory.

Elder Silas (Porter) Carroll Jr. also preached to us, expressing his thanks for this week's gathering and recalling the saints of old that he knew when the association last convened at Swan Creek in 1980. Sharing the introductory verse from Genesis 1, he reminded us of the power of the Word, established from the beginning and following Jesus to the cross. The Word was taken down from the cross, the Word was put in the tomb, and the Word rose again. Sadly, the Word is ignored throughout our land. We have been taught to walk in the integrity of the cross, to put on the Word daily. Just like in the beginning, His word has been there and remains there today.

Following the preaching, a beautiful testimony was offered from Dustin Lawson, who expressed his desire to be a blessing to others. Offering love to the congregation, he gave thanks.

A beautiful final fellowship of congregants ended the association service.

The clerk was not able to attend Sunday's service, but I would like to thank Sister Danita Dotson and Brother Dustin Lawson for their help in providing me all the

details of the last service of this great gathering of God's children. I appreciate their willingness to help me and put their notes together for me.