

PROCEEDINGS OF THE EASTERN DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

Thursday Morning, September 30, 2021

The Eastern District Association of Primitive Baptists convened in its 169th annual session hosted by Fairview Church (Bellbrook, OH) held on the grounds of Clear Springs Church in Spring Valley, OH.

Fairview (Bellbrook)

Over 80 years ago, people from various mountain sections of Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky began to migrate to this area of Ohio as they sought a more prosperous way of life. Many found employment in industrial plants in this area and established their homes and farms in the vicinity.

Although they were enjoying their new homes and better means of earning a living, there was something not quite to their satisfaction. They visited various churches and sought to worship with them, but there was a spiritual atmosphere they had known previously that was missing from them here. They started having services in their homes, in groves, or wherever a building could be found when weather conditions prevented them from meeting outside. As they enjoyed these services, a need for a church building of their own was felt.

The location where the church is now was offered to them, and arrangements were made for it to become the permanent location of a band of Primitive Baptist people. This was made possible with the help of George Driskel, who owned the land. Although he was a member of another organization, he was a true friend of this church.

The original building was erected, and in August, 1938, the church was formally organized with the help of Elders E.A. Robinette, W.H. Burke, H.V. Hall, and J.H. Sybert with a total of 18 charter members. The building was dedicated, and the first Union Meeting was held. The church lettered into the Eastern District Association in October, 1938, with 37 members on the roll.

Elder Clarence Slagle, who was the first Pastor, served in that capacity until 1976. Others who have served as Pastor include: Elders Joe Dean, Frank Brown, Rolan Callahan, Charles Roller, Luther Abrams, Bryan Moore, Elmer Parsons, Crawford Sage, Ron Bledsoe, Kenneth Mitchell, and Hasco Jenkins. The current Pastors are Elders Jason Robinette and Joseph Robinette.

The first Deacons included Brothers Orbin Barnett, Lewis Joyner, and Bryan Moore, who all rest with the Lord. Others who have served as Deacons include: Brothers Owsley, Leonard Davis, Homer Lovins, Jim Osborne, Crawford Sage, Bobby Taylor, William Vanover, Kyle Vanzant, Ron Bledsoe, Kenneth Mitchell, Emerson Browning, Morris Giles, Ray Eldridge, and Eldon "Sonny" Wallen. Current Deacons are Brothers Jake Fairchild, Bobby Graham, and Josh Harkleroad.

Brother Lewis Joyner was the first Clerk/Treasurer and served the church until 1966. Other Clerks who served the church are: Sisters Virginia Hall Osborne, Berneda Moore

Vanover, Betty Barnett Livingston, Brother Kenneth Mitchell, and Sister Charlene Mitchell. Current Clerk is Sister Jennifer Robinette with Sister Erin Harkleroad serving as her Assistant.

In 1950, Sister Georgia Moore Sage was elected as Treasurer and served until her death in 2008. Current Treasurer is Sister Shelley Wallen with Sister Kristy Fairchild serving as her Assistant.

A clear and cool morning provided a pleasant start for the 169th session of the Eastern District Association of Primitive Baptists. Brother Steve Minton, Tony Smith, and Bradley Brown led the congregation in singing several songs of praise to our Most High God. His forever I will be, for the Love He gave for me. There's no other friend on whom I can depend. As the singing concluded, many had gathered under and around the tent.

Our moderator, Elder Terry Sizemore, welcomed everyone to the 169th annual gathering of the Eastern District Association of Primitive Baptists. Elder Sizemore then asked that the congregation sing the Association's standard song, "Brethren, We Have Met Again." Some of our brothers and sisters have left this world, but we have the assurance of a Better Land if we know Jesus in the power of His resurrection.

The Moderator asked all ministers to sign the minister's book, including ministers from other associations and church affiliations. He reminded each delegate to get their ribbon for the afternoon service.

The moderator reminded everyone to turn in church letters, obituaries, and financial contributions. The Letter Committee for 2021 was appointed beforehand, consisting of Robert Brown (chairman), Gary Hall, Danny Lawson, and Ronnie Johnson (alternate).

The moderator appointed the Committee on Religious Exercises, which consists of Dennis Stewart (chairman), Steve Minton, and Marvin Moeller.

We were blessed with special singing by Bradley Brown, then Billy Marcum. It won't be very long, til Jesus shall appear. How we will shout when the redeemed are gathering in.

Testimonies were shared and prayer requests were made for the lost, the Association, Kenneth Mann, Lewis Baker, Frank Gilliam, our elders, Dan and Virgie Cross, Brenda Horton, Denise Brooks, Betty Sizemore, Jewell Williamson, Randena Stewart, Edna Lane, Jewell Spurlock, Vicky Spurlock, Kay Short, August Robinette, Lois Taylor, Betty Russell, Ivel Price, Erin, Savanna, CJ, Bella, and Alexa Harkleroad, Marty and Suzie Yount, Penny VanHoose, Hunter Hensley's dad and papaw, Homer Osborne and his daughter, and many unspoken requests. Elder Scott Tipton led us to the throne

of grace with a humble prayer, asking God to touch the requests and to send the drawing power down to convict the lost.

Having been chosen to preach the introductory sermon, Elder Joseph Robinette began by sharing his testimony of salvation and welcoming everyone to the Association. He read from the 12th chapter of Hebrews verses 1-4, and also Hebrews Chapter 10, verses 11-25, using the thought, "looking unto Jesus." God gave the best Heaven had to offer as a sacrifice, offered once for all, that we might be saved, and saved to the uttermost. Find and walk in the old paths by looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. He laid aside Heaven to become the Supreme Sacrifice, and He is worthy of our praise.

Elder Jason Robinette followed, preaching from the same foundation. We have a high priest that can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. In this world you'll have tribulation, but be of good cheer, Jesus has overcome the world. He suffered death and became obedient unto death and the cross for you and me. God has perfected those that are sanctified, set apart from the world, walking in the old path, following the Holy Spirit, and loving one another, even as Christ loved us.

We were adjourned for lunch in a song of praise. I am so glad that Jesus loves me; Jesus loves even me.

Thursday Afternoon, September 30, 2021

The host church provided a plenteous lunch, and laughter and fellowship could be heard and seen among the attendees. The Good Lord provided a soft, cooling breeze to accompany the beautiful, sunny day.

Brothers Steve Minton, Bradley Brown, and Scott Tipton each led the congregation in singing songs of Zion as the congregation gathered for the afternoon service. I long to be by my Savior's side, just over in the Glory-land. O I tell you that is where I want to go. Some happy day I'll live with Christ for aye.

Elder Sizemore welcomed everyone to the afternoon service as he thanked the host churches for the natural food and thanked God for the Spiritual food.

Further blessings were bestowed upon us with special singing and testimony from Tammy Lawson Jones, David and Wanda Parsons with Kim Robinette, and Tony Smith. I will cherish the old rugged cross that held the Dearest and Best that heaven had to offer. What a day that will be when we get to see Jesus.

Prayer requests were made for Alicia McPherson, Virgie Grace Hill, Ettia Ruth Creech, David Wells, Elder Mike Fullington, and a number of unspoken requests by the raising of hands. Elder Jason Robinette led us in humble prayer.

Elder Robert Brown, Chairman of the Committee on Church Letters, came forward with testimony and to give the report of our state and standing. With 36 churches total, 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. Brother Kevin Hale was nominated, and it was seconded for him to serve as clerk and treasurer. It was motioned and seconded for nominations to cease. Through the vote, 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, Elder Sizemore will serve as moderator for the ensuing year.

Elder Oscar Irvin asked for the delegation to stand in agreement that they would earnestly pray for the moderator and clerk as they serve the Association.

Elder Sizemore humbly thanked the delegation for their vote of confidence. We always desire your prayers that we follow the Lord's will in every aspect of the offices.

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 then appointed the following committees:

Committee on Electrical and PA System: Delmer McPherson (chairman), Scott Mellons, Eric McPherson, Clifford Bledsoe, Danny Lawson, Adam Lawson, and Curtis Hale.

Committee on Newly Constituted Churches: Ministers: Mark Newkirk, Robert Brown, and Hunter Hensley; Deacons: Clifton Horne, Steve Hunt, and Tony Smith; Layman: Ed Williams.

Committee on Finance: Joe Pitzer (chairman), Joseph Robinette, and Curtis Hale.

Committee on Obituaries: David Parsons (chairman), Doug Willis, and Steve Minton.

Committee on Arrangements and/or Queries: Ministers: Burnice Sybert (chairman), Jason Robinette, Roger VanHoose, Scott Tipton, Oscar Irvin, David Horton, and Tommy Meade.

Letter Committee for 2022: Danny Lawson (chairman), Ronnie Johnson, Dennis Stewart, and David Horton (alternate).

Brother Delmer McPherson, chairman of the Electrical and PA System Committee, came forward to give the report, thanking the host church for all the effort in preparation for this year's meeting and all the help in preparing the electrical and sound system. Brother McPherson brought forward a recommendation to reimburse Brother Adam Lawson \$827.00 for the video camera that has been used for recording and live streaming the Association meetings. He also provided an idea for the Association to get service for a mobile hotspot to be able to live-stream the Association meetings in the future.

The moderator asked the delegation if they would like to act on either of these recommendations. It was motioned, seconded, and voted to reimburse the \$827 for the video camera.

Discussion took place concerning the mobile hotspot. A recommendation was made to inquire into pricing first. Brother Danny Lawson provided information that prior inquiry into the matter showed it would likely require an annual contract for service at approximately \$20 per month. It was then recommended that the delegation set a budget to allow the committee to get the service prior to the next Association. It was motioned, seconded and voted that a mobile hotspot service be investigated, and service be purchased with a maximum budget of \$500 annually.

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

Brother Dennis Stewart, chairman of the Religious Exercises Committee, came forward to give the committees report.

- Thursday night at Fairview Church: David Parsons, Kevin Cross, and Billy Marcum
- Thursday night at Macedonia: Terry Sizemore, Joe Pitzer, and Patrick Pitzer
- Friday Morning in Stand: Roger VanHoose and Scott Tipton

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

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 \$2,000 in appreciation for his services.

It was motioned, seconded, and voted to allow the moderator \$1,000 in appreciation for his services.

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 Kevin Cross until Friday morning, October 1, 2021.

Friday Morning, October 1, 2021

The Lord provided another beautiful morning to start the second day of the 169th association. Brothers Dennis Stewart, Steve Minton, Bradley Brown, and Billy Marcum led the congregational singing. Though trials should come, let this blest assurance control that Christ hath regarded my helpless estate and hath shed his own blood for my soul. It is well with my soul!

Elder Sizemore welcomed everyone to today's service. Thank God for blessing us with another day and for the wonderful meetings thus far. We praise Him for the hope of an Unclouded Day.

We were blessed with special singing from the youth of the host church. He knew who I was when he carried the cross. God has been so good! I have been blessed!

Testimonies were shared, and prayer requests were made for the lost, the sick and shut-ins, our churches and revivals, Sherrie Brown, Bradley Brown, Harmon Willis, Wally Berry, Alene Crawford, Betty and Hershel Baker, Daniel Hurd, Billy, Cathy, and Missy Walton, August Robinette, Polly McBee, Roy and Vicky Jones, Emma Jean and Joe Robinette, Miss Charlene, Nadine Horne's family, Keith Holt, Kristen Sizemore, Marty Yount, Roger VanHoose's family, Eileen Brown's son, many unspoken requests, and several request that the clerk could not hear to record. Elder Hunter Hensley led the congregation with a humble prayer.

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 Roger VanHoose, having been chosen by the Committee on Religious Exercises, came forward to take the first part of the service. Elder VanHoose began by singing "Wayfaring Stranger" with Dennis and Karen Stewart, as shouts and praises erupted from throughout the tent. Elder VanHoose began reading in the first verse of 2nd Peter and read through the 4th verse, using as the thought, "According to His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness." Salvation is not of the flesh, but it is a new birth into the Kingdom of God. The sting of death is taken away, because not even death can separate us from the Love of God. He is worthy to be praised!

Elder Scott Tipton came to take the second portion of the preaching service. If you want peace, you can have it. You must come to Jesus, call on Him, and believe on Him. Once the Blood is applied, we will persevere through grace. We will still meet death, but we don't have to meet it alone.

Elder Tommy Meade took the stand for the final part of the morning service, preaching his testimony about God's "Amazing Grace." God doesn't want anything from us, except our heart. We can give it all to him on an altar of repentance. Turn to Jesus, for he has the power to save us and raise us up.

We are thankful to have preachers that fervently preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It's *that* Gospel that can convict and save the lost.

We were dismissed for lunch with a song. Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come. And His Amazing Grace will lead me Home.

Friday Afternoon, October 1, 2021

The delegation returned to the tent following a delicious meal provided by the host churches. An eagerness to serve by all involved has been apparent throughout the week.

Brothers Steve Minton and Bradley Brown led the congregation by singing Spirit-filled songs praising our Lord and Savior. There's a blessed assurance knowing that Jesus is mine. O what matchless love for me was shown through Jesus's suffering. Nothing can for sin atone; nothing but the Blood of Jesus!

The moderator welcomed the congregation back from lunch, thanking the host churches for the great food and thanking God for His blessings.

The Holy Spirit moved greatly in the special singing and testimony from Walker Bales, Peggy Shaw-McBee and Jason Robinette, Priscilla Irvin, and the singers from Copper Creek Church. God, his Son not sparing, sent Him to die and take away my sins. How Great Thou Art! Reach out and touch the Lord; he can supply your every need. Lay off that ragged old coat of flesh and put on a new coat of my Savior. He forgave me of my transgressions, and now He is my All and All. I have so much to praise Him for! Thank you, Lord!

Testimonies were shared and prayer requests were made for the lost, Gaylord Hill, David VanHoose, and many unspoken requests. Elder David Parsons came forward to lead us in prayer, thanking God for His Holy Spirit dwelling with us and asking Him to touch the prayer requests, to convict the lost, and for the remainder of the business.

The delegation was seated in order to transact the business.

Brother Dennis Stewart read the report from the Committee on Religious Exercises.

- Friday night – Fairview: Hunter Hensley and Curtis Hale
- Friday night – Macedonia: Oscar Irvin and Scott Tipton
- Saturday morning in Stand: Burnice Sybert, Oscar Irvin, Terry Sizemore
- Saturday night – Fairview: Sam VanHoose, Bill VanHoose, and Bobby Graham
- Sunday morning – Richardson Chapel: Oscar Irvin

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.

Brother Clifton Horne, on behalf of the Committee on Newly Constituted Churches, reported that none had been received this year.

Elder Joe Pitzer reported on the behalf of the Committee on Finance. It was reported that there were \$5195 in receipts for the year. We thank each church as they generously give to the Association year after year.

Elder David Parsons reported on behalf of the Committee on Obituaries that 38 have been received at this time. A reminder was given to include church membership or affiliation in each obituary. Each obituary is to be approved by the church before being submitted.

The Committee on Arrangements and/or Queries reported that two queries have been received from Macedonia Church and New Life Church, though they were concerning the same matter. The queries were concerning having a single, specified location for the Association, year after year, namely the Blackwater Lick School, owned by Blackwater Lick (Big Door) Church. It was stated there are many churches that do not have the means, whether it be parking, facilities, manpower, or finances, to host the Association. Having a single location could alleviate some of these issues and provide other benefits, like indoor facilities, ample parking, etc.

The committee's response was that the individual churches having the opportunity to host the Association is part of our heritage. The committee recommends not making any changes and continuing to allow each church that desires to host the Association to plea for it to come to their church.

There was not a motion and second to bring the queries to discussion; therefore, these queries were not addressed by the Association.

The men chosen to write the circular letter for 2021 were Elders Kevin Cross, Harmon Willis, and Wally Berry. Elder Kevin Cross came forward to read their letter. Its message to each of us was one of encouragement and was filled with the Spirit. It was motioned, seconded, and voted to print the letter in our minutes as it was read.

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

The moderator appointed the Committee on Circular Letters for 2022 which includes: Elders Oscar Irvin, Curtis Hale, and Roger VanHoose.

Billy Marcum led the congregation in singing "Going up Home to Live in Green Pastures" and "The Only Fire I'll Ever Feel is Burning in My Heart" as several volunteers took up an offering to help with Association expenses. A generous donation of \$1001 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 five churches that asked for the association to meet with them next year. These are Burkes Union, Fairview (Bellbrook), Flower Gap, Wallens Creek, and Willow Chapel. Delmer McPherson and David Parsons delivered the plea for Burkes Union. Joseph Robinette came forward on behalf of Fairview and withdrew, stating he was excited that so many other churches wanted the Association this coming year. Hunter Hensley pled on behalf of Flower Gap. Wallens Creek's pleas were made by Brandon Williams and Curtis Hale. Scott Tipton came forward on behalf of Willow Chapel and

withdrew, stating He doesn't feel it's in God's plan for the Association to go to Willow Chapel next year.

Through the vote, the Association was sent to Burkes Union where, the Good Lord willing, we will convene on the Thursday morning (September 29, 2022) before the first Saturday in October 2022 for the 170th gathering. The introductory and alternate sermons will be preached by Elders David Parsons and Burnice Sybert, respectively.

Elder Burnice Sybert dismissed us in prayer, thanking God for such a wonderful time that we've had in Him, as we were adjourned until Saturday morning, October 2, 2021.

Saturday Morning, October 2, 2021

God blessed His children once again to gather together for our memorial service. Brothers Dennis Stewart and Bradley Brown led the congregation in several songs of Zion. I've a home prepared, just over in the Glory-Land. When He comes from His home in the sky, then we shall meet Him in a Land where we'll never grow old. I will arise and go to Jesus; He will embrace me in His arms.

Elder Terry Sizemore welcomed everyone to our Saturday morning memorial service, thanking God for the privilege of gathering together for the 169th annual session and for each one in attendance.

We were further blessed with beautiful, Spirit-filled singing and testimony from David and Wanda Parsons with Kim Robinette, the singers from Wallens Creek, Tony Smith, and the Pitzer family. Troublesome waters around me roll, but Lord, I'm trusting in you. He led me from darkness and promised me a heavenly home where sweet rest can be found. I'm so glad that I've got a better place to go, because I've placed my trust in Jesus. I'm waiting for the boatman to carry home across Jordan. God, You gave me Jesus and made me Your child, and I just thank You, Lord. He's more than enough to wash the sin out of me. My Lord loves me!

Testimonies were shared and prayer requests were made for the lost, the elderly, our churches, our country, Joe Pitzer, Burnice Sybert, Eileen Brown's sister, Henrietta Adams, Cora L. Neeley, August Robinette, Penny VanHoose, Walker Bales and his family, and many unspoken requests by raising hands. Elder Robert Brown humbly led the congregation in prayer, praising God for all He's done, most of all for salvation, and asking God to touch each request and to convict and save the lost.

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 addition as requested.

Brother Dennis Stewart provided the final report of the Religious Exercises Committee.

- Saturday morning in Stand: Burnice Sybert, Oscar Irvin, Terry Sizemore
- Saturday night – Fairview: Sammy VanHoose, Bill VanHoose, and Bobby Graham
- Sunday morning – Richardson: Oscar Irvin
- Sunday morning – Clear Springs:

It was stated that we would discontinue to print Sister Eileen Brown's contact information in the minutes. We thank her for the years of service to our Association by sending out announcements to the individual churches.

Elder Jason Robinette came to the stand with a song a song of praise and to extend thanks on behalf of the host church to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for the Spirit coming down to visit with us. Elder Robinette continued by thanking "the folks from down south" who helped set up the tent, Clear Springs Church for use of their facilities to host the Association, the children who helped with the food, everyone in attendance, and most of all, thank God. He concluded by singing, "When I Thank Him for What He Has Done."

The moderator reminded all ministers to sign the Ministers Book.

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 friends and family members that have moved on to their eternal home in the past year. Please remember their families in your prayers, and we thank God for the time we had with them.

As Burnice Sybert, who chosen by the Committee on Religious Exercises, was unable to take the first part of the service due to sickness, Oscar Irvin came forward saying it is a joy to be here. He had many friends on the list, even his brother, but we're so glad that we have a glorious hope that we shall meet again. Those that die in the Lord are far better off than you or me. Death is not a punishment, but a deliverance from a world of trouble and sorrow to a Land where there are no problems.

Elder Irvin read from Romans chapter 8 (commenting that it was J.H. Sybert's favorite chapter) verses 18-23 and 2 Corinthians chapter 4 verses 15-18, using Romans 8:20-21 as the thought: "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children

of God.” He found us lacking, wanting, and dead in our trespasses, but Christ provided a way of escape that we won’t have to face death. In Christ we’re made alive, and alive for evermore. That man on the inside is growing more and more like Jesus, getting ready to bust out of this old clay, and to take a flight to where there is no night. Because of the promise of God, we know we have a better place to go. We have victory of death, sin, and the grave because of the man called Jesus Christ. Sin brought forth death. Elder Irvin ended by thanking God for placing him among such a great people and for the love and friendship that he has with all the people of this group of people.

Elder Terry Sizemore began by singing, “He Got on a Cloud and Went Home,” and preached the second half of the service using the same scripture. This creature will lay aside this mortal form, “for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” Time in this house of clay is temporary, but we have another building, not made with hands. We have a hope beyond that which is seen in this world, and that hope is in the Spirit of the Lord and the revelation of Jesus Christ. Everything on earth will fail us, but God will never fail us. When you feel His presence in your life, you want more of Him. He fills our churches with His Spirit, and it’s the same Spirit that we have at the Association.

We thank God for one more opportunity to hear His Word preached in Spirit and in Truth, to fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ, and to give Him all the Glory.

We were dismissed in songs of praise led by Elder Roger VanHoose and prayer led by the Moderator. The congregation fellowshiped together with smiles, hugs, and laughter, and we were adjourned until Sunday morning, October 3, 2021.

Sunday Morning, October 3, 2021

The Good Lord once again provided the privilege for His people to gather together and worship in the Spirit.

Congregational singing began with “Where the soul never dies,” along with “I love to walk with Jesus” and “I’m never alone.”

Elder Jason Robinette opened the service and asked for prayer requests and testimonies. Prayer requests were made for Bernice Sybert, Savanna Harkleroad, Joe Pitzer, Penny Vanhose, Myra’s sister-in-law, August Robinette, the lost, and many unspoken requests. Testimonies were shared by Betty Russell, Jeff Huseby, Josh Harkleroad, and Bonnie Huseby. Sister Betty Russell led the congregation in prayer.

Special singers were the Bellbrook Youth Group, who sang “Family of God” and “Glory, Glory, Glory.” Joe Robinette, Jason Robinette, and Erin Harkleroad followed, singing “Walking in the light” and “Do you know how it feels?” along with “Do you remember,” “Sweet Heaven’s in view” and “Two coats.”

Brother Jake Fairchild asked for prayer over the preaching service. Bobby Graham took the stand first. He began by giving his testimony about running away and the struggle of accepting what God wants him to do. He used 2 Corinthians 4:1-18 as his text.

Elder Joseph Robinette took the second part of the preaching service, using the same text and the thought, “The Excellency of God.” We are persecuted but not forsaken. We have the same spirit of faith. “I believed, and therefore have I spoken.” Many believe in some sort of god, but that isn’t enough. You must believe in God and also in Jesus. Whenever we believe, we must speak of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Roger Vanhooose took the next part of the service, saying it’s easy to be fired up when you’re on the mountain top, but the valleys are coming. Don’t make the valley harder by not turning to Jesus. That is the time to learn to lean on Jesus. One preacher is not better than another. They all need the power of God to be able to preach, because without Him, we can do nothing. If you reap of the flesh, it leads to corruption, but if you reap of the spirit, you will be blessed.

Jason Robinette preached the final portion of the service. In Him was life, and in Him was the light of men. Jesus Christ is the light of our lives. The things we see with these natural eyes are temporary, but we have an eye of faith. We don’t walk by natural sight but by faith. Through that eye of faith, we have received the end of our salvation.

The congregation sang “Living by Faith” while they fellowshiped. Brother Josh Harkleroad closed the service in prayer.

I wish to sincerely thank Sister Jennifer Robinette for her detailed description of the Sunday morning service. I’ll never be able to describe my appreciation for all the help and love we receive from our brothers and sisters in Christ. It is my prayer that God will continue to watch over and bless all of our churches and their respective members over the next year, and we are already looking forward to joining Burke’s Union for the 170th annual session.