

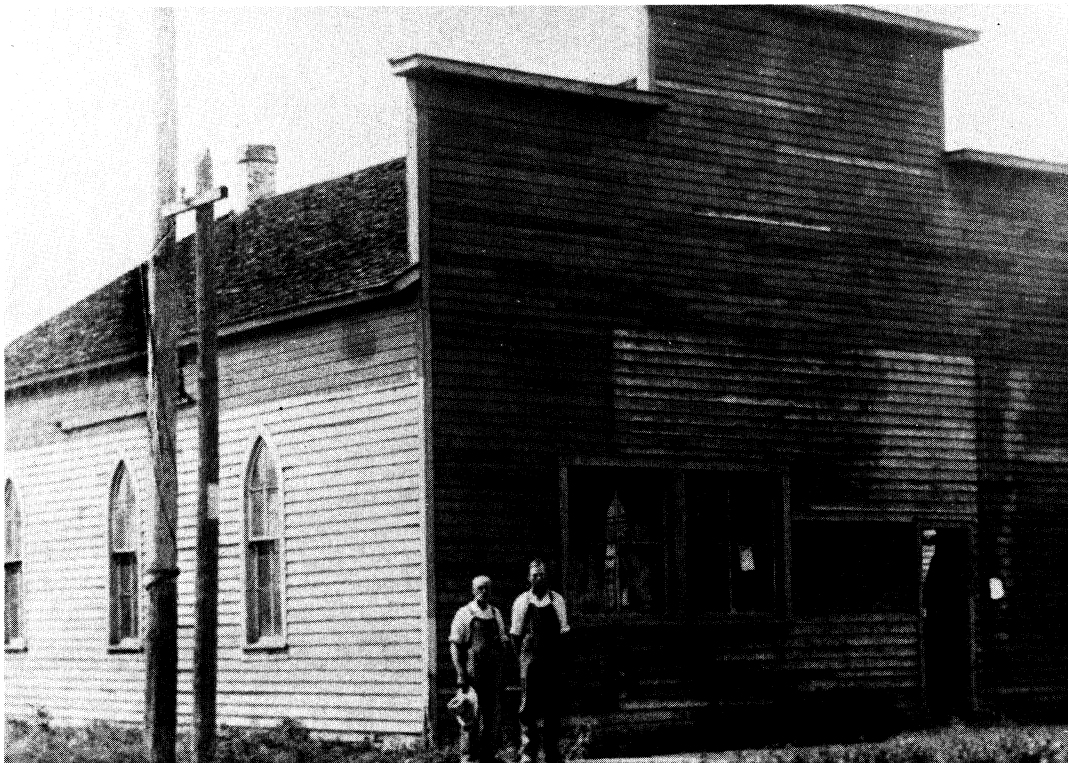
Chapter 5

The History Of The United Church Of Christ

The early church history began as soon as settlers moved into the area. In 1855, the Rev. A. C. Smith held services in the homes of area homesteaders. Services were also held variously at the Magee, Samuel Mooney and Warner school houses. Baptisms were in the Minerva Creek and Samuel Mooney's pond. The Rev. J. N. Holland served the church from 1858-1867 while the first church was being planned and built.

It is said there were fifty-two founders of the original church, but there are two extra names, so the number could have been greater. This group first met on February 20, 1869, to plan the building.

George W. Magee	Joseph King	H. W. Jones
James S. Evans	James T. Smith	C. Wright
George Hines	J. W. McCormack	G. W. Short
Michael Keopple	Wm. M. Clemons	W. N. Dennis
R. E. Allen	M. Teager	W. J. Clemons
C. E. Link	A. Smith	Samuel Mooney
Peter Benoit	Joseph Keopple	Wm. Mooney
Jacob Wearer	John Clemons	Thomas Blackburn
D. E. Wearer	Mr. Dart	George Julien
George Lent	J. M. Gaunt	J. Bryant
H. Smith	O. E. Gaunt	A. H. Taylor
Philip Keopple	Wm. J. Clemons, Jr.	Sam Julien
B. Bryant	Joseph Dakin	J. Deal
Wm. T. Keopple	Richard Gates	Dave Blackburn, Sr.
H. J. McCormack	Wm. Stough	Marshall Elder
J. B. Adams	J. Stoutt	D. Mueland
Joseph Harris	W. H. Berins	M. Betsler
T. Pierce	J. K. Stargh	J. B. McCormack



Original Church moved from "Liberty Line". It was later a Buggy Shop, Carpenter and Decorating Shop.

L-R

Aaron Brackney and Carl Anderson

Two possible sites were considered. One was near the cemetery, and one near the Liberty-Minerva Township line. The group voted to build at the latter site, which was just south and east of the Eldah Bryant farm. This location was called Elder's Grove. It would be controlled by the Christian Church. The cost of the building was \$1,182.90.

On September 16, 1870 Samuel and Sarah Clemons Mooney deeded land on the Liberty Line location (the northeast corner of northeast ¼ running south 22 rods and west 7 rods, north 22 rods - 1 acre) to the Clemons Grove Christian Church. The following was the stipulations set up by the grantors: "The parties of Sarah Mooney and S. A. Mooney only give the land above described for the use of it so long as it is used for religious purposes when it is other wise used to return it to the grantors. The timber on said is reserved for the use of said partners of the first. The premises above described to refer to all religious denominations for worship when not occupied by the Christian Church."

Originally, the church was to be 26 x 30 feet. Later this was changed to 30 x 40 feet. There would be ten windows, each with twelve lights. A blackboard three feet wide would reach across the north side and a like one on the south side. There would be recitation seats going the full length under the blackboards. The roof was to be self-supporting, with pine shingles laid four inches to the weather. The windows were to slide up and down. The building would be painted with two coats of white paint. The meeting house was dedicated June 4, 1871. The first service in the new church was conducted by Mr. Krill, by faith a Dunkard. The first regular pastor was Judge Smith of Marshalltown.

It is thought that church records for twenty years, from 1867 until 1887, were lost or destroyed, as no records exist for that time period. From diaries kept by Wm. M. Clemons, we learned some names of persons who served the church. Among those names are these: Robert Culp, Mr. Donnel, Mr. Barnard, Mr. Cumpton, Richty, Mr. George Patent, Brother Hannah, Andrew Martin, Wm. E. Smith, Darner, and Camelite Brothers. Robert Culp seems to be mentioned the most during this time.

Wm. M. Clemons' diary entry of May 5, 1883, reveals, "the members agreed to move the church to Clemons". Around that time the building was moved to the site where the U. S. Post Office stands today. The building was sold to John McCormack when the new church was built. He sold it to Aaron Brackney and Carl Anderson. Brackney had a wagon shop in one part, and Anderson a paint shop. Later Aaron Brackney bought Anderson's part and started a grocery store. There were plans to use the old church as an "Opera House". However it never materialized due to lack of people and demand.

From Max Proctor, the following information was received:

The original church building apparently had no built-in baptistry, and since total immersion was the custom then, people were baptized in the creek south of Clemons.

Communion was served "up front" in the early church building from a single decanter with a separate, but matching, glass for men and for women.

A brief history of the church from the Rededication bulletin in 1952 states:

Plans had been in motion for some time for a new church to be built at the present site and on October 15, 1899, this church was completed and dedicated. Abraham Lincoln Clemons and Addie Clemons deeded the land on Lots 5 and 6, block 1 of Clemons second addition to the trustees of the Clemons Grove Christian Church. This donation was deeded over on October 13, 1899 and is the land of the present church site. A. L. Clemons was the son of Wm. M. Clemons.

The first couple to be married in the present church was Claude and Lottie Mooney Cox in 1900. Lottie was the granddaughter of William and Nancy Clemons.

The church had some remodeling done but we could not get any definite dates. There used to be a steeple which was taken off the winter of 1913 and 1914. Then, too, the platform where the minister now stands, used to be on the same level as the platform behind him where the altar is, and which was used as a choir loft for a time. A glass window was behind the pulpit, which later was painted to blend with the sidewalls. In the recent remodeling done, this window was removed.

On November 29, 1942, the church dedicated a service flag to honor the boys and girls from this community who were in military service. At that time thirty-nine names were pinned on the service flag. Other names were added later.

It was in 1943 that our choir was outfitted with choir robes.

In 1947 the basement was remodeled. An oil furnace was installed, equipped with a blower. New cupboards and new serving and work counters were built in and a new gas stove was installed.

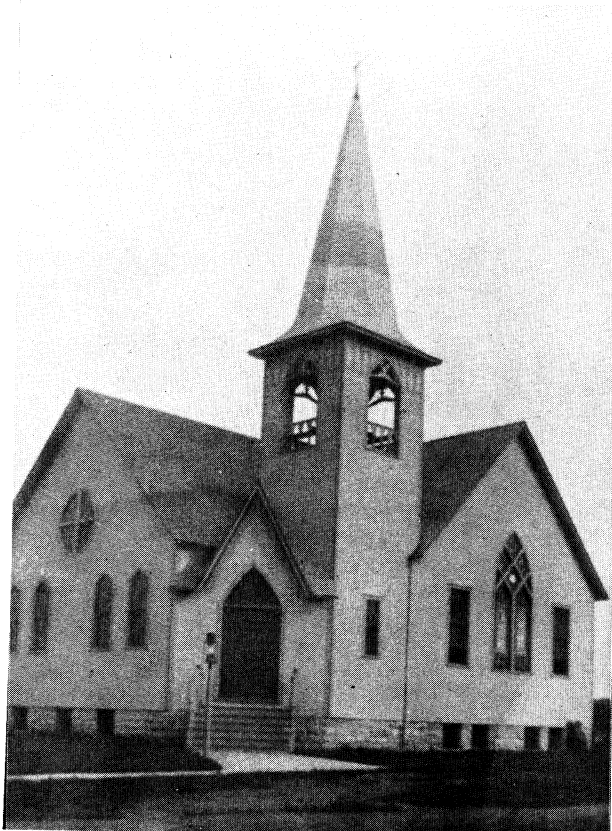
In 1948 the windows were releaded. Those on the east were taken out and replaced by ones similar to those of the west, thus reducing the glare of the morning sun.

At the 50th Anniversary meeting there were nine people who were present at the dedication service in 1899: Mrs. Cady Everist, Mr. Martin Gaunt, Mr. F. C. Davis, Mr. and Mrs. Cyrus Bartine, Mrs. Lester Proctor, Mr. S. K. Eley, Mrs. Charles Lindquist, and Mr. Frank Tucker.

During 1952 rearrangement of the upper interior of the church was done. Redecoration, new furniture and new lighting was added.

In the summer of 1958 the church sanctuary was redecorated. A Sunday School addition was built on the lower level to the east of the basement in 1959. This addition contained four Sunday School rooms and a worship center.

In 1961 the congregation voted to accept the by-laws of the United Church of Christ, calling this church Clemons United Church of Christ Congregational Christian.



This is the Clemons Church as it looked in 1899. The steeple was removed in 1913 and 1914.

This congregation voted on April 24, 1966, to yoke with the Albion Presbyterian Church, and a Presbyterian Minister, Rev. Ernest Neilsen, was hired.

The back entrance was refinished in 1967.

Early in 1971 the kitchen was remodeled. The choir rooms were refinished also. The church roof was reshingled in 1972.

The new addition was approved by the congregation on April 29, 1973. This included two rooms upstairs to the southwest, with a storage room in the basement. The addition was air conditioned. The small upstairs room serves as the pastor's study and the large

room as a meeting room. Adult Sunday School class also meet there. The addition was funded by a generous donation from the Earl VanMetres and the financial support of members and friends of the church.

A new furnace was installed in 1974. In 1975 some paneling and insulation was done in the Sunday School rooms. Heavier wiring was installed for the baseboard heaters.

MINISTERS WHO SERVED THE CHURCH

Judge A. C. Smith	1855-1858
Rev. J. N. Holland	1858-1867
Judge A. C. Smith returned in	1887-1891
Rev. D. M. Helfenstein	1891-1893
Rev. A. C. Burnham	1893-1894
Rev. J. W. Ackley	1894-1898
Rev. F. G. Coffin	1898-1900
Rev. E. E. Bennet	1900-1901
Rev. E. H. Wiley	1901-1902
Rev. John Stover	1902-1903
Rev. D. M. Helfenstein	1903-1905
Rev. Charles Luck	1905-1908
Rev. E. G. Walk	1908
Rev. K. McCord supplied for a time	
Rev. B. F. Clayton	1911-1913
Rev. U. S. Johnson	1913-1915
Rev. Clayton	1915-1916
Rev. Raymond Clark supplied for one summer	
Rev. George Jecklin	1917-1919
Rev. Frederick Cooper	1919-1921
Rev. Leland Spaulding supplied for a while in	1921
Rev. Levi Carter	1921-1925
Rev. Raybourne	1925-1928
Rev. A. C. Huff	1928
Rev. J. E. Lair was pastor for a short time	
Rev. Jesse Kauffman	1930-1933
Rev. Everett Robie	1933-1935
Rev. J. Sugurd Stone supplied for a time	1935-1936
Rev. Stone was hired	1940
Mrs. Grace Cleveland	1940-1942
Rev. C. W. Cleveland	1942-1943
Rev. E. F. Lipscomb	1943-1944
Rev. B. F. Martin	
Rev. Rhodes supplied until	1945
Rev. Ruel Roberts	1945-1946
Rev. L. T. Proctor	1946-1960
Rev. Dallas Roland	1960-1965
Rev. Ernest Nielsen	1965-1972
Rev. Richard Selby	1972-1975
Rev. Geo. Campbell	1975-1978
Rev. Daniel Grauberger	1979-1981
Mr. Darrell Bailly	1982-

ABOUT OUR PARSONAGES

D. D. Mitchell and Amanda J. Mitchell donated land for the first parsonage in Clemons. This was deeded September 1, 1913 and located on Lot 8, Block 3, in Clemons second addition to the trustees of the Clemons Church of Clemons Grove.

The second parsonage was purchased from Jess and Emma McClain in 1960. It's location was Lot 12, Block 2 in Clemons first addition. This was occupied by Rev. Dallas and Mary Roland and family until 1966. The lot was then sold to Robert and Charlene Parker in 1967.

The present parsonage site was purchased from Henry Shultz in 1971 by Eunice Tucker and donated for a parsonage. On October 26, 1975 the congregation voted to build on the property. The building was completed in a few months time. Rev. and Mrs. George Campbell moved into the new parsonage in 1976.

In March of that year the Senior IPF held an auction and realized \$1,000.00, which was donated to the Parsonage Fund. Pledges and contributions enabled the church to burn the mortgage on the parsonage in 1978.



A birthday party for Mrs. Melinda Christensen at the home of Florence Bartholomew.

L-R

Melinda Christensen, Bernice Baunt, Mabel Bacon, Christina Noble, Dora Hughes, Roxy Bartine, Jennie Jones, Mrs. French.



The Clemons United Church of Christ in the 1970's.

CLEMONS COURIER

April 16, 1934

Clemons Ladies Aid Meeting was held on Wednesday afternoon at the home of Mrs. Lura Davis, with Mrs. Mary Linn as assistant hostess. There were 19 members and 5 visitors present. The meeting was opened by singing, "Brightly Beams Our Father's Mercy". The scripture lesson was read from Matt. 18:21-35 by Mrs. Mildred Robie, followed with the Lord's Prayer repeated in unison. The group then sang, "Work For the Night is Coming". The usual business meeting was conducted. Refreshments were served by the hostess.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS MEETS

The Young Ladies Sunday School Class No. 5 met Tuesday evening at the home of Helen Brackney with 22 members present. The meeting was called to order by Vice-President Bertha Davis. Devotionals were in charge of Mrs. Robie. Inez Jones and Helen Borton were in charge of the games. Refreshments were served by the hostess, Helen Brackney, Kathryn and Dorothy Hiatt, assisted by Marjorie Camp and Mrs. Brackney.

CLEMONS CEMETERY

The Clemons Cemetery is one of the oldest cemeteries still in use in the area. The first burial in the cemetery was probably the burial of Henry Elder, the child of Robert and Jane Elder who died March 5, 1851. The next oldest grave that could be found was the grave of the infant of Robert and Jane Elder dated July 28, 1852. The fifth or sixth burial was the grave of Jane Elder who died July 14, 1854. These graves and other old graves are located in the center of the cemetery on the hill under the large old maple trees there. These are near the graves of William M. and Nancy Clemons who died in 1900.

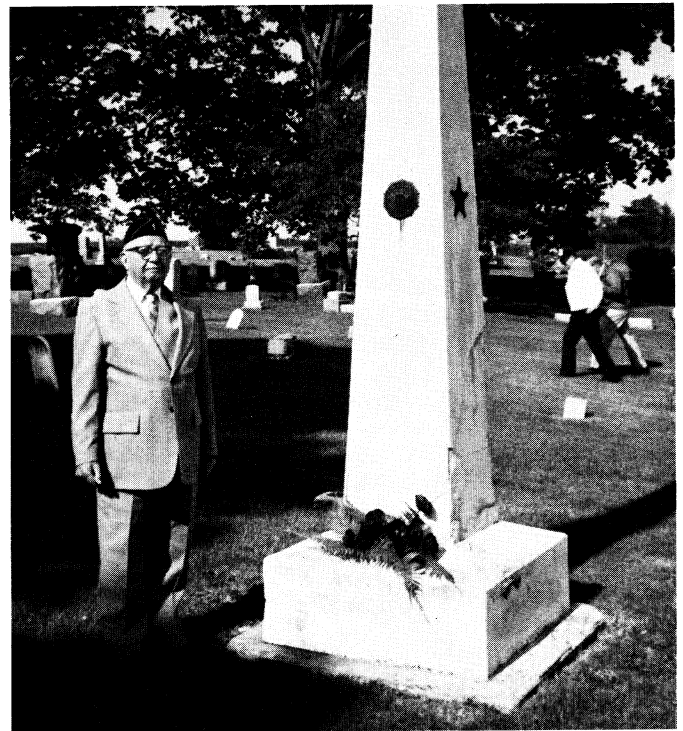
The presence of the cemetery is noted in a deed dated February 27, 1856, for land from Robert Elder to George Magee for the northeast $\frac{1}{4}$, southwest $\frac{1}{4}$, Section 3, Minerva Township "except 2 acres in the northeast corner".

Also in a deed dated December 31, 1868 by Robert Elder and wife Rebecca Elder deed the following land to Minerva Township:

"Commencing at the Northeast corner of NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ 3-84-20 thence West 15 rods, thence South 21 $\frac{1}{3}$ rods, thence East 15 rods and North 21 $\frac{1}{3}$ rods. - to be used for a public burying ground for the use of the public."

On November 7, 1899 Robert Elder deeded to the Clemons Grove Christian Church, "a square 2 acres in the Northeast Corner of NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ 3-84-20 the above plot that is now and has been for many years been used as a public cemetery and it is the intent of this deed to perpetuate such use".

For many year this cemetery was owned and operated by the Clemons Grove Christian Church. On February 20, 1869, a group of 52 men met to select a site for a church. One site was near the cemetery and the other was on the Minerva Liberty Township Line on the



Rev. Lester T. Proctor conducting Memorial Services at the Clemons Cemetery in May 1981.

west side of the North Quarter corner of Section 3. The site on the township line won in a vote of 30 to 22.

The cemetery was later turned over to the Minerva Township Trustees, who have been responsible for it since.

On January 6, 1971, the west addition between the west county road and the north part of the cemetery was added. Until that time there was a lane down from the road to the north side of the cemetery. The road then went along the north side of the cemetery and a "U" shape drive went up through the cemetery and back. There was an ornamental metal wire fence between the north lane and the cemetery.

A short stroll through the cemetery will reveal the American Legion Memorial on the hill just west of the east drive. Also, there are many stones with the "Clemons" name on them. The cemetery contains the grave of the five William Clemons who have lived in the area. There are also stones with the names of all the other families who settled in the area: McCormack, Blackburn, Magee, Atkinson, Mooney, Ely, Hines, Davis, Ross, VanMetre, Bryant, Smith, Warner -- just to name a few.

The large old hard maple trees in the center of the cemetery were probably planted in the cemetery about the time the cemetery was established. Hard maple are a common tree but are not native to this part of the state. The trees' ages have been estimated to be 100-150 years old.

At a July 7, 1916 Clemons Council Meeting, they discussed opening the road east from the cemetery to connect to the town street, but nothing further was done and the road was never opened extending the road past the cemetery to town.