



THE PASTORS OF LITTLE RIVER BAPTIST CHURCH

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Prepared for Homecoming
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The first record of Little River Church seems to indicate some members of the Broad Run Church, including Rev. Richard Major, who became the first pastor of Little River, and his wife left that church in March 1768 and began worshipping in this area. The 1809 minutes of the Kettocton Association show the date of organization as 1769 and that is the year that William West gave one half acre of land on which the meeting house was built for use as a school and a meeting house for the Baptist denomination. This building was 25 feet by 20 feet in size.

Just three years later, the congregation obtained from Samuel Wyckoff one acre at the present location for the use and purpose of erecting a meeting house. The change in location may have been occasioned by the death of William West and the subsequent settlement of his estate, or probably because the congregation had outgrown their accommodations. An interesting item in connection with the West family is that in 1962 we received from Miss Alta F. West of Oregon myrtlewood offering plates in memory of her great-great-grandparents who had been married in the Little River Meeting House in the 1700s.

In the 1700's the road in front of our church was one of the main roads from Alexandria and Colchester westward to the Blue Ridge Mountain. This was 35 years before the Little River Turnpike (Route 50) was built.

In 1840 Francis Adams and his wife Patsey (Martha) deeded additional land to the church extending it to today's Route 600.

We know from court records a meeting house had been built at this location by 1775 and we assume it was of logs. A second building, this time of brick and with a balcony, was constructed in 1814. In 1888 it was determined the walls were unsafe and the brick building was torn down and a frame one erected. It was dedicated on July 5, 1890. In 1895 a baptistry was added and two small rooms were built to accommodate those being baptized. These were also used as Sunday school classrooms. In 1952 an addition was constructed providing eight classrooms. This building stood until December 11, 1971, when it was destroyed by fire. After deciding not to relocate, as had been suggested, our present building was completed in 1973 and the dedication was held on August 5. On

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November 20, 1977, a service of thanksgiving was held, the construction debt being paid, the notes were burned.

Now I will tell you about some of our pastors.

The first pastor, Rev. Richard Major was born in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, in 1722, raised in a Presbyterian family, but became a Baptist in 1764. In 1766 he came to Loudoun County and located on Elk Licking Run in the area of today's South Riding. On May 14, 1781, he qualified in the County Court of Loudoun to perform the rites of matrimony. Prior to this only those marriages performed by a minister of the Anglican Church were recognized in Virginia. Rev. Major served as pastor until his death in 1796.

The church was then without a pastor for a number of years until Rev. Robert Latham came and stayed for 15 years, being shown on the Associational minutes in 1809 and again in 1821, this latter date evidently being near the end of his pastorate. He lived in nearby Prince William County and regularly attended Little River during his last years in the early 1830s sometimes preaching. The Latham name is familiar to Prince William County residents.

Rev. John Johnson was shown as pastor 1824 through 1827 and Rev. Lovell Marders in 1828. In 1829, Rev. John Ogilvie became pastor and from the diary of a Miss Newman was still preaching here in July 1839 when she left the area. He probably continued until 1841 when he became pastor of Broad Run Church. He was a school teacher and became principal of the New Baltimore Academy in 1826, a position he held for 20 years. As was often the case he served several churches, at one time four, preaching at each one Sunday a month and often on Saturday also.

Rev. Lovel Marders was the next pastor but the dates he served are uncertain. We know he was pastor when several members left in 1851 to establish Mt. Zion Primitive (or Old School) Baptist Church. A letter from Mary A. James of the Conklin area to a relative in Ohio in 1852 related the news: "There has been a fine old ironside Baptist church built this side of Aldie on the side of the pavement last year." This is the only time I have encountered the term "old ironside."

Several pastors served for short periods of time during the next three or four decades, one of them being Rev. S.M. Athey who was pastor at three different times. Another was Rev. John J. Bailey, a native of England who became a citizen of the United States on January 18, 1892, while pastor here. Another here for a short time was Rev. Oscar C. Peyton, who left in November 1893 to attend Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Rev. Charles Wirt Trainham became our pastor in January 1894 and served until December 1903. He was always troubled with poor health, but in 1921 he again became pastor and served three years. His wife died in 1932 and as his second wife he chose a lady from Little River, Miss Mary Hutchison. He served as clerk of Potomac Association for many years and also as Associational Worker.

Rev. T.D.D. Clark was pastor from December 1904 until December 1913, a time when Little River shared a pastor with the church at Manassas. Mr. Clark was a poet and also loved music. At Manassas it is said he would suddenly stop preaching and sing one of his favorite hymns, "The Old Time Religion," "Take Time to be Holy," "The Holy City" or "Face to Face." He probably did this at Little River, too; as in the address of Rev. Westwood Hutchison given at the 160th Anniversary of Little River in 1929 he called him the "sweet singer of Israel." During his pastorate the young people were organized into a personal service league and one year later they reported a membership of 18.

Another beloved pastor was Rev. George T. Baker, who served from October 1914 to May 1920. He was also pastor of Leesburg Baptist Church at this time.

Rev. W.J. Banks served for two years following Rev. Trainham's second pastorate and then he moved to Florida. Rev. J.H. Strong served as interim pastor for the next year, and then Little River withdrew from the field with Long Branch and Middleburg and secured the services of Rev. Joseph M. Long, who served full time until December 1933. Rev. Long lived in Maryland and came on Saturday by Greyhound bus to Lenah or Gilbert's Corner, where he was met by a member of the congregation in whose home he spent the night. After the Sunday morning service and dinner, he was taken back to meet the bus for his trip home. When he resigned we again became a member of a field of churches, this time joining with Upperville, Pleasant Vale, and North Fork, where Rev. Fletcher Ford was the pastor. Since he had already been serving the other churches for several years, his time with Little River only spanned a little over a year. He visited Little River a number of times for special occasions and when visiting friends in the community.

Rev. C.W. McElroy served the field for 12 years, then Rev. Warren L. Oliff for four years. Rev. John C. Adkerson was with us in 1954, and Rev. Willie S. Davis served for 1-1/2 years, when he left to establish the Arcola Baptist Church.

Again we became a church with a full-time pastor in 1958, when Rev. James H. Smith came and ministered until August 1966, when he resigned due to his failing eyesight.

Rev. Joseph B. Anderson, Jr., came to Little River July 1, 1967, and served until 1972.

Rev. Jesse H. Parker came to supply for us when we were worshipping at the Arcola Elementary School, following the fire which destroyed our building. We extended him a call and he has been with us ever since, seeing us through some good times and some difficult ones, but always providing encouragement.

I would be remiss if I did not mention some of those who have answered God's call to special service. Rev. George W. Popkins was ordained by this church in 1877 and some who had been members of Little River and some who found the Saviour here are Westwood Hutchison, David Holbert, Ed Furr, Alan Hurst, and Dennis and Kim Sandretzky.