

# MARTIN CHURCH OF CHRIST

## History

In the year 1874, William Fall, a Christian only, set out to find others like himself in the Martin area. Fall lived with his wife and daughter about seven miles southeast of Martin. Soon he located J. H. Westmoreland of Gardner and W. J. Burchard of Martin. The three Falls, along with the Westmoreland and Burchard families, assisted by B. T. Bondurant and a Mrs. Evans of Sharon, founded the Martin church of Christ. J. H. Roulhac of Union City was asked to hold a meeting for the group and apparently preached for them when they met for worship.

Within the next five years, Mrs. W. J. Burchard, M. M. Burchard, Miss. Jenni Dibrell, Mr. & Mrs. Joe Glass and Dr. G. W. Dibrell were added to the Lord's church here. This was destined to be the home for the Martin church of Christ for more than seventy-five years.

By 1889, the group had grown to fifty-nine members with five elders: W. A. Godwin, J. H. Westmoreland, Dr. G. W. Dibrell, T. G. Morris, and T. F. Lee. The deacons were P. W. Lee, F. M. Kennedy, and W. J. Burchard. R. M. Johnson kept the record of members, expenses, etc.

Eighteen-ninety brought J. S. Haskins as minister. Also, brother Smithson, the "Blind Preacher," visited and preached here. Joe Ratcliffe and H. A. Brown were ministers from 1894 to 1899. Hall L. Calhoun preached in a meeting held in 1895, baptizing several including Verna Cox. In 1899, electric lights were installed in the church building. David Lipscomb, W. H. Sutton, E. G. Sewell, A. G. Freed, N. B. Hardeman, F. B. Srygley, and A. O. Colley also preached here around the turn of the century.

By 1910 the Martin congregation had reached about 130 members. At this time, a new and larger building replaced the original one. It had a baptistery and a hot air furnace. In 1913, A. B. Lipscomb baptized thirteen during a gospel meeting. A 1915 meeting by Brother Lipscomb saw seven more added. In meetings held by N. B. Hardeman in 1916 and 1917, eleven were baptized. Foy E. Wallace, Jr. was here in a meeting in 1925 and H. Leo Boles in 1930.

Around 1935 an educational annex was added to the building. This contained several classrooms and a new concrete baptistery. (This addition still stands at the corner of Oxford and Olive Streets and is being used as an apartment building.) N. B. Williams, Sr. was a contractor for this improvement.

By the mid 1950's the Martin congregation had passed the 250 mark and the building was stressed to accommodate the numbers that came together for worship. Property was purchased a short distance west at the corner of Oxford and Mill Street (present location) and a contemporary A-Frame building was erected with an auditorium seating in excess of 500. This was surrounded with a rectangular shell consisting of classrooms, foyer, restrooms, offices, a baptistery and hallways. N. B. "Buster" Williams was the contractor for this building which was dedicated on March 27, 1960.

During the year 1967 attendance reached over 300. It was about the middle of this decade that plans were formulated for a student center on the campus of the University of Tennessee at Martin. Work began by meeting in an apartment at the corner of Hurt and Lovelace Streets. They later met at the side of the UTM campus. Directors of the student center have included Mike Wilson, Eugene Keefer, Lindsey

Warren, Laddie Owens and Ralph Gilmore. Danny Lamb was the devoted campus minister from September 1978 until January 1995. David French and Jeremy Jackson served the remaining years of the 1990's.

The Student Center and its ministry continued to thrive under the direction of Brian Stephens in the early 2000's. Along with the faculty, staff, and students of UTM, this mission field has been good for the Martin congregation both spiritually and numerically. Spiritual direction and enrichment for students who come to UTM for higher education is the greatest thing the Martin congregation could ever do for them. Much credit is due to Herschel Maxey and H. C. Allison for the beginning and growth of the student center during its early years.

In September 2012 a 3 phase Student Center building plan began. Phase one was completed in 2014-2015 that included a new roof, a new kitchen, and expansion of the dining facility. The gym area was also converted into a theater and most recently the parking lot received a much needed overhaul.

In 2017, Jarrod Bailey began his work as the campus minister.

---

In 1998, the decision was made to again expand the physical plant. This fellowship annex measured 154 feet by 60 feet. This added 7 classrooms, a large fellowship area, 2 restrooms, an industrial kitchen, pantry, storage and halls, etc. Larry Kelly was the contractor.

---

Two preachers that are due special recognition in the early and middle years of the Martin church of Christ are E.P. Smith and J.R. Stockard. Brother Smith worked here as early as 1911 while serving as superintendent of Martin schools. He worked with and preached for the Martin congregation for many years. His influence here has never been surpassed. Brother Stockard did most of his preaching here in the 1940's. His ministry was one that shall long be remembered and appreciated by members. Others who preached in Martin regularly or as visiting evangelists were Willard Collins, Noel Merideth, E.R. Harper, Garland Elkins, Ken Joines, L.L. Briggance, Adrian Doran, Wendell Winkler, Frank Pack, Hugo McCord, Guy N. Woods, Jerry Mayes, Lee Brown, D. Ellis Walker, J.E. Green, Joe S. Warlick, Roy Deaver, J.W. Dunn, John E. Dun, H.W. Trice, Charley Taylor, G.C. Brewer, George Bailey, C.W. Stubblefield, F.L. Paisley, J.C. Haskins, T.B. Larimore, G.W. Morris, S.P. Pittman, H.T. Copeland, C.E. McGaughey, Alonzo Williams, Jesse Wilcoxson, Virgil Trout, Basil Overton, Price Billingsley, Glenn I. Wallace, Johnny Ramsey, Jack Wilhelm, Tom Holland, Bert Thompson, and others.

Some regular ministers prior to 1938 were Cecil Douthitt, James R. Greer, R.R. (Rex) Brooks, and H.A. Dixon. Regular ministers since the late 1930's were James W. Faulkner, Robert (Bob) Brooks, Warren Morris, David Davidson, Ewing Wray, James Pounders, Billy Newby, Shawn Jones, John Forgy, and Tim Hatfield., Lindell Doty Our present minister, Ricky Phillips began here in Sept. 2006.

---

In 1986, Gary Wilson became part-time Educational Director, a position previously held by Brooks Kennedy. In June 1989, the Martin congregation employed its first part-time Youth Director, Gabo Siklosi. In the fall of 1991, Paul Hagler was hired as a full-time Youth/Educational Director, followed by Greg Swindle and Bobby O'Dell. Terry Gillim served as full-time youth and family minister from August

2000 until 2004. John Farber (2004-2007) and Scott Bond (2007-2011) followed with their work as Youth and Family Ministers at the Martin congregation. Aaron Dodson now serves as the Youth and Family Minister.

---

The Martin church of Christ has long been a mission minded church. Mission work in the early years included supporting J.C. Haskins as a full-time evangelist in the local area. Works in Wisconsin and South Carolina were later sponsored. In the 1960's, support was given to Graham McKay in Hilo, Hawaii, as well as orphan homes and radio programs. In the past, support has been given to the Old Fulton Road church here in Martin and the church in Romeo, Michigan. Currently, the Martin church of Christ is involved heavily in missions across the world. Other works receiving support include the Memphis School of Preaching, Panama School of Preaching, Southern Africa Bible School, and several Christian Bible departments of Universities.

In addition to the UTM campus ministry, present mission works are many and varied. The congregation is divided into four "Care Groups" which are involved in visits, sending cards, taking food to shut-ins and others who may need it. We have many teachers for each adult class in our Bible School Program, and they rotate teaching in their respective class. We have at least four teachers for each of our five adult classes on Sunday Morning. We normally have at least two Gospel Meetings each year, one in the spring and one in the fall. We also have other activities the design of which is to edify the congregation in special areas and needs. We regularly support Children's Homes with money and goods. We also have special emphasis activities from time to time. Currently, members of the Martin church are involved in evangelistic campaigns in the former Soviet Union and work in medical missions in Central America. Van Swaim and Joe Exum have led missions into the Ukraine, Panama, and Costa Rica. Yearly mission campaigns are planned to involve high school, college, and adult members. The congregation supports fully or in part, 13 churches in Costa Rica and is heavily committed to helping build church buildings and conducting evangelistic efforts in that country. The Martin church of Christ is also seriously engaged in benevolence work on a local and worldwide basis. Clothing, food, furniture, and financial assistance are regularly given to those in need whether it be locally, nationally, or in foreign countries.

---

At the present time, the Martin congregation is under the oversight of elders Ron Ayers, Danny Cash, Rick Hepler, Phillip Vallee, Johnny Vincent, Richard Kelly, and Johnny Shanklin. Ricky Phillips continues his work as the pulpit minister. Aaron Dodson and his family continue to work with our young people and their families. And Jarrod Bailey has just begun his work with the campus ministry. God has blessed this congregation throughout the years and will continue to do so as work in His Kingdom. The current staff and leadership is excited for what the future holds. Please continue to pray for the Martin Church of Christ as we look to the future and to God in all things