

SHORT HISTORY OF BEDFORD 1ST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

1830; October

Leatherwood Christian Church was formed

1835;

**First Christian Church meetings in Bedford
(1) meet in the Courthouse**

1847;

Leatherwood Church sponsored meetings in Bedford lead by O'Kane and Love Jameson

This group was the foundation of our Current Church

Leatherwood and Bedford church families had roots in the Bourbon County Ky. Cane Ridge Church and famous revivals.

Church started with 33 charter members.

These included; 2 Williams Families---2 Boyd Families---2 Hostetler--1 family each of Young--Campbell---Lockhart---Adamson---Gilwick---Sullivan ---Mallott and a single member of Williams, Boyd, Hostetler, Reed, Roach, Gary and Culbertson

1847---1853

Church meets for communion and religious lessons under the leadership of Joseph Hostetler

Occasionally there would be guest speakers but normally the discussion would be taught by one of the members of the congregation.

\$10,000 was raised to start the BEDFORD MALE AND FEMALE COLLEGE

**Faculty included; James Mathes, Wm. Chrisler, James Beattie, & Samuel Moore
The College operated from 1847 until 1871**

Alexander Campbell spoke 11/15/1850--The Presbyterian Church lent their church for that meeting

Campbell also visited with the Wesley Short family at Springville

The first regular minister: Aaron Hubbard, spoke in 1852. T. J. Edmonson spoke in 1853

Our Current church lot was bought in 1853 by trustees; Stever Younger; Henry Davis & Elisha Boyd

1853---1863

As the church grew and before the brick church house was finished in 1863 the congregation met at the Presbyterian Church or at the Baptist church (Now W F Myers location)

James Mathes presided at the church dedication May 3, 1863

Not many ministers can claim that they baptized over 6,000 souls into the Christian faith. Bedford resident, James Madison Mathes stopped keeping records of his baptisms at that number and many thought he continued until

the total number was closer to 9,000. Mathes, born in 1808, was raised in the Baptists church near Gosport. As a young man the Calvinists teachings of the church at that time caused him to rebel against the strict doctrine and he questioned religious association. After being a religious skeptic for several years his mother encouraged him to give the New Testament a careful reading and he made up his mind to follow its plain instruction as best he could. His views were not accepted as orthodox, but he found a Godly minister who took the risk and baptized him and recommended him to a church congregation.

In his first congregation he took an active part and spoke freely at its meetings. In a remarkably short time, he became a successful evangelist. Sunday School had been started by 1865 and there were 100 students and 12 teachers

1871

State Interest in forming a university was promoted; 15 churches (of total 850 members) voted for Bedford; 36 churches (of 2276 members) voted for Indianapolis. Today that college is known as Butler University

The early church was financially weak and could not afford a full-time paid minister. Many of the early ministers were employed as Farmers, Carpenters, blacksmith, editor and teacher

OTHER PERSONS OF INFLUENCE

Dr. J. W. Newland. Born 1827 in Lawrence County. Studied Medicine with Dr. Ben Newland and took courses at Louisville medical College. Started medical practice at Leesville in 1850 and Bedford in 1854 and died while giving a sermon in 1909. Served as Church Trustee for 8 years and shared the pulpit when needed and gave liberally to the church. His picture is in the back window of the sanctuary

**J Z Taylor; interest in starting rural churches in our area. Later was well known for his work at Kansas City
Preacher for 3 years**

Joseph Franklin; oversaw church house improvements of addition of a baptistery, new organ, new roof, central furnace, 200 new chairs carpet windows in the auditorium

Mrs. Franklin started the Aid Society (1887) and Woman's Missionary Society (1890)

**James Small; brought in 117 new members (1891) and 222 more (1899) Minister when the main old sanctuary corner stone was laid (1900) building was
Richard Edwards; Enthustic people person, knew every person first man, woman, boy and girls first**

**He and John Zahn led debt reduction program to burn \$7000 mortgage
Melvin Putman, Bible School enthusiast, church basement rooms were finished**

**H A Denton; encouraged new interest in the missionary efforts of the church
Ladies Aid Society led program to build a church parsonage**

Jewett I. Messick

Elder W. H. Tiller (preacher for 4 years)

Eldor W. P. Wallheiser

Levj & Rachel Houston

Stever Younger; raised building funds money