

# **History of Albion Community Church**

## **Albion, Washington**

Albion Community Church is a continuation of the town's original three churches - Christian Church, Methodist Church and United Brethren Church. Over the years, the three usually held evening services together, and beginning around 1900, Sunday School was a joint effort, meeting in a different one of the three churches each week. In 1953-54, the Methodist Church and the Christian Church merged to become the Albion United Protestant Church. In 1959, the United Brethren Church dissolved and its members joined the Albion Protestant Church, which was re-named Albion Community Church in 1973.

The Albion Community Church today continues the evangelism and spiritual life of the great American revivals known as The First and Second Great Awakenings. The Albion churches have never been a part of the popular Pentecostal/Charismatic movement that began in 1906 and that promotes healing services and speaking in tongues. Since about the mid-20th century, our church has had close ties with IFCA, the Independent Fundamental Churches of America, and with Northwest Independent Church Extension, the IFCA church-planting mission in the Pacific Northwest. This connection grew through close ties with the church in Onecho south of Colfax, and through the doctrinal conservatism of Pastor John Cowles and those who followed him.

The church's agreement and fellowship with Evangelicalism can be seen in its missionaries who serve under many of the evangelical faith missions (see our page, Missions Program). We are ecumenical in this sense: we try to practice the unity of the body of Christ. His body is all Christian believers everywhere in the world and in all generations since the day of Pentecost. For example, we pray for and support persecuted Christians and indigenous pastors in distant lands. The Albion church is fundamental in that it holds precious the historic Christian doctrines of Christ and his salvation, and of the Bible as God's inerrant Word. We are not separatist by exclusion of and criticism of other churches, but by personal commitment to be holy as Christ is holy.

## **HISTORY OF THE THREE CHURCHES**

By Jean Goodnight Harrington, updated by Bill Lyons

## **UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH**

The United Brethren were the first to conduct Christian ministry in the Albion area, before there was a town. The United Brethren established the Cascade Mission in 1864, well before land grants began in 1890, and before Albion was platted in 1883. Meetings were held in various homes and were led by itinerant preachers. Some accounts state that services were held off and on "in the three-tree grove" on what became the Clare homestead.

In 1869, the mission boundaries were changed and Albion (then Guy) became part of the Walla Walla mission. Rev. Jeremiah Kenoyer became pastor that year. Rev. Kenoyer, who fathered children and has many descendants still living in this area, is considered "the father" of the United Brethren churches in the Pacific Northwest, and some even called him, "Father Kenoyer."

In 1872, this area was renamed Palouse Mission and O. Osbourne was pastor. Services were held in the old school house on First Street, or in homes. In 1884, Rev. J. W. Berryman became pastor.

An article in the Albion Independent dated October 28, 1909 reports that construction of the new United Brethren Church At D Street and Second Street will begin as soon as material is acquired. "Cost of the building, exclusive of seating and furnace, is \$2700. When completed, the church is to be dedicated as "Kenoyer Memorial Chapel" in honor of the life and labor of Rev. and Mrs. Jeremiah Kenoyer." The building, made of cast concrete blocks that resemble stone, was completed in 1910. Rev. A. J. Ware was pastor that year.

Names of members gleaned from meeting notes through the years are: Asa and Gladys Calvert, J. R. Hopkins, G. W. Benjamin, J. T. Hoskins, J. A. Kenoyer, John P. Kenoyer, Antrim Kenoyer, Anton Emerson, Ruth Emerson, George Reid and Eva Kenoyer Erwin. Official records of the United Brethren Church are elsewhere in denominational files.

Edwards College was built in Albion by the United Brethren organization in 1889 and was located just on the northeast side of the present Community Building. Rev. Kenoyer was instrumental in establishing the college here. Rev. L. B. Baldwin was president and I. R. Hughey was financial agent when the college opened with an enrollment of 53 students and four teachers. The college closed in 1902, re-opened in 1905, and remained in operation until 1913. Bishop Hoskins, W. H. Davis and Asa Calvert each served a term as president. I. H. Wilson was pastor of the local church when the college opened.

## ***METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH***

The site for the Methodist Episcopal Church on the corner of First and D Streets was acquired in 1884, and the church building was constructed in 1901 (same year as the Christian Church). The parsonage behind the church on First and E Streets was acquired in 1901, with additions made to it in 1903 and 1909.

The Methodist Church was incorporated in November 1903. Trustees were J. W. Rice, Nelson Allen, M. C. Morrison, J. E. Jones, John Berman (all residents of Guy), W. R. Hickman from Onecho and G. W. Reid of Branham. The signing of the articles of incorporation was witnessed by W. A. Standard, T. J. Hardwick and George M. Carey. Membership in 1906 numbered 113. This was near the end of a scarlet fever epidemic (about 1901 to 1906) that claimed the lives of many children in Albion.

According to a diary kept by Eugene Rice, his father, J. W. Rice, was the first organist in Albion. J. W. traded an \$80 cow and \$20 in cash for the organ, which was no doubt put in the Methodist

Official records of the Methodist church can not be found in Albion, and might be among Methodist Episcopal records elsewhere in Washington. The September 9 2009 issue of the Albion Independent reports that Rev. R. A. Gailey was assigned to the Albion Methodist Church, succeeding Rev. P. E. Bartlett.

In 1932, The Methodist League lists 33 members, including, among others, Olive and Juanita Simpson, Marjorie Huff, Gladys Tuttle, Orlie and Odessa Markham, Irene Markham, Ruth and Alton Kulp, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Kinzer, Trenton Huff Nardin and Nellie Kulp, Merna and Bill Kinzer, Jewel Matson, Harry Huff and Mabel Jennings.

It appears that Rev. Earl Shoup was pastor in the late 40's and early 50's. A Rev. Beall is also mentioned in the 50's. Membership was down to about 14 at this time, and after many months of conversation and correspondence with the Methodist Conference and a District Superintendent Graves, the Albion Methodist Church was officially dissolved on May 16, 1954, and members became part of the United Protestant congregation.

## ***THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH***

**1893 to 1943**

The Christian Church was organized at Guy, Washington (which was later named Albion) March 8, 1893 by W. B. Pendle, Mrs. L. M. Pendle, Benjamin Cloud, Margaret Cloud,

Reece McReynolds, Mrs. Eva Manning, Mrs. Ada Manning, Mr. Edwin Watkins, Mrs. Bertha Watkins, Mr. Neslon C. Bissell, Mr. Richard McMahan, Mr. Walter Pendle, and Mrs. Sariella Cunningham.

The first pastor, Brother Melford W. Smith, held a revival during which were added Mrs. Minnie Bissell, Miss Maudie Loving, Mr. Hiram Manning, Mrs. Maud Willoughby, Mr. Warren Willoughby, Mr. J. T. Wallace and Mrs. Hanna J. Wallace. Services were held once a month, and in July 1893, a business meeting was held, at which W. B. Pendle and Benjamin Cloud were chosen elders; Ed Watkins and J. T. Wallace deacons; and Nelson C. Bissell, treasurer and clerk. Frequent additions during the early years show that the church was alive, while the records of the treasurer indicate that money was not too plentiful. Brother Thomas L. Childers began in August 1894 and preached a year without salary, receiving free-will offerings. On March 3, 1895, the church made its first missionary offering, \$4.50 for foreign missions, thus getting a start at an early date in the right direction. Brother Edwin Watkins was killed in a runaway accident on October 17, 1894.

Brother R. L. Lotz began a protracted meeting (a revival without a set ending date) November 29, 1895. He continued preaching thereafter until the spring of 1896. In 1897 and 1898, brother J. B. Daisley supplied occasionally and held two revivals. Brother Barrows and his wife, both preachers, and Brother Duncan, served part time in 1899.

The church was incorporated October 18, 1899, and in 1900 began an active campaign for a building. On January 20, 1901, the following entry appears in the record book; The First Christian Church of Guy, Washington was dedicated to the worship of Almighty God by Neal S. Callum, state evangelist.

From 1901 to 1903, the following ministers were employed; Brothers Milvain, L. C. Haulman, Burnette, E. F. Beaudreau, Husband, Melford W. Smith, and in September 1903, Brother Elwood Harold was engaged to preach half-time. Records of 1903 to 1911 are missing.

From 1911 to 1915 we find the names of Brothers Diggins, McConnell, Osborne, McWhirter, McIlvain, and Elwood Harold, who assumed a full-time work here in January of 1916. Here again we have no record for several years, unless Elwood Harold served continuously from 1903 to 1911 and again after 1916. Others who ministered at Albion were Brothers George B. Thomas, H. O. Sabin, Ralph Perry, J. Edward Moseley, William Harris, Verne J. Barbre and Miss Alma Lauder, carrying the work up to 1933.

For many years the three Albion Churches--Methodist, United Brethren and Christian--united for Sunday evening service. Some time after 1933, Lew Brown began preaching at Albion on every third Sunday evening. A little later he undertook a full-time ministry there and continued until the fall of 1941, when he took up the work at Colfax. Succeeding him at the Albion Church was his wife, Mrs. Lew Brown. On September 18, 1942, Mrs. Brown was ordained to the Christian Ministry by the Albion church. She served until November 1943.

1943-1953 The only official record found for this period is the church clerk's record book in the collection of the Guy-Albion Historical Society. Joint services, especially Sunday Evening services, were held among the three Albion churches during this time. Joint Sunday School classes were held during this period. Christian Church financial records show the following pastors served, most of them part-time, during these years: Frank Rehle 1943-45, 1949-51; John Lilley 1945-47; James Doak 1947-49; W. O. Chisolm; Doug Price; Carl Christian; Milton Ensley 1951-53. Some of these pastors were WSU students at the time of serving Albion Christian Church.

Fred Riehle was pastor from November 1943 until April 1945. After that, he preached on occasion and became regular pastor again from June 1949 to 1951. It appears that Rev. Riehle was paid according to the morning's offering. John Lilley, an Albion resident, pastored the church from 1945 to 1947. His salary was \$25 per month. James Doak, W. O. Chisolm, Doug Price and Carl Christian shared the pulpit during 1947 and 1948, with Rev. Doak continuing to preach until 1949.

Milton Ensley preached his first sermon at the Christian Church on September 23, 1951, and probably preached until the United Protestant Church was formed in 1953. There is no financial record of a pastor during this two years, with money being sent to missions regularly. The last entry in the clerk's record book is June 14, 1953.

In 1952, members of the Christian and Methodist churches began discussion of uniting and finding a full-time pastor. A board consisting of Carl Reid, Gladys Johnson and Minnie Finch from the Christian Church and Ralph Bryan, Maureen Christopher and Nardin Kulp from the Methodist Church, was appointed to pursue uniting the churches. This group held many meetings and consulted with Rev. Earl Shoup, Methodist pastor, and Milton Ensley, acting Christian pastor. A constitution and by-laws were drawn up for the UNITED PROTESTANT CHURCH; "members to consist of any fundamental members" and "membership not to be

disturbed." It was agreed to use the Christian Church building and the Methodist parsonage, and a board of trustees (of 3 - 9 members) was to be elected.

**1953 to the Present** – (Christian Church became United Protestant/Albion Community Church)

In late 1953, Pastor Martin Stuck accepted the call of the Albion United Protestant Church and he and Mrs. Stuck moved up from Texas. He was also to preach one Sunday a month at Onecho. The Christian Church parsonage was renovated for their use until the Methodist parsonage was available and fixed up. (the Christian Church parsonage was a small house located just west of the church on 1st St. Sometime later, it was sold to Don Emerson to make room for the new Christian Education wing. Don moved the small parsonage to the corner of Main Street and Patterson Road, where it now stands. Don added to the house and rented it out. In about 1995, Bill Lyons, while at the time pastor of Albion Community Church, bought Don Emerson's rental and made some improvements, rented it for a year, and sold it. ) The Methodist parsonage, located at 1st and E Streets, served as home for United Protestant pastors for a number of years after its renovation. It was later sold and the house at 215 Main Street was the church's parsonage from 1971 until 2009. In 2009, the Albion Community Church sold the parsonage on Main Street and bought for their parsonage the former 4-bedroom ranch-style home of Laveta Marll at 211 D Street. Ms. Marll was the pastor of the United Brethren church in Albion from 1941 to 1956.

In May, 1954, the Methodist Church dissolved and officially became a part of the United Protestant Church. Articles of Incorporation for the Albion Protestant Church are dated June 2, 1954. Listed as trustees are: Ralph Bryan, Carl Reid, Maureen Christopher, Nardin Kulp, J. W. Kinzer, Minnie Finch, P. G. Christopher, Farrell Fleiger and Gladys Johnson.

During the early years of the United Protestant Church, a small building was obtained and placed in back of the church on E Street. It was remodeled and heated and used as Sunday School quarters until 1959 or 1960. The present church annex was built in 1959-1960 under the leadership of Pastor John Cowles. The Christian Church building was deeded to the United Protestant organization on October 30, 1954. An organ used until about 1996 was donated in the early 1960's by Leone Lawson Nelson in memory of her mother, Josephine Lawson.

The United Brethren Church dissolved in 1959 and members joined with the United Protestant congregation. Both the Methodist (First and D Streets) and United Brethren (Second and D Streets) church building were subsequently sold to private individuals.

The name was officially changed to ALBION COMMUNITY CHURCH on September 27, 1973 and the Articles of Incorporation were amended accordingly. Trustees at that time were Orin W. Pearson, Donald A. Lynn, James L. Casry, Jack L. Goodnough, Audrey B. Cain, and Donald L. Quist.

A Christian School was operated by the church from 1981 to 1989. It used teaching/learning materials from Accelerated Christian Education, or ACE. The first teacher was Tom Saffold, followed by Steve Pregovisk and Faith Ostrander with Jean Goodnough teaching the last year the school was in operation.

Pastors of the United Protestant (and subsequently Community) church through the years are: Martin Stuck 1953-1955; Russell Peet 1955-1959; John Cowles 1959-1971; Charles Powell 1971-976; Gaylen Dedmon 1977-1988; Dennis Franklin 1989-1990; William Lyons 1990-2010; Laban Molsee 2010-present.