



# CONGREGATIONAL HISTORY

Gallatin Church of Christ

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Issue 1

November 2011

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## **Explanation**

This newsletter is an attempt, on my part, to accomplish these goals: to begin writing the results of researching our church's history and to communicate this research with interested readers. The frequency, length, content, etc. of this newsletter may vary, but, nevertheless, I have begun it with the hope that it will bear more fruit—for me and for others.

## **Research Team**

Recently, I asked Cameron Crutcher, Sarah Jones, and David Schreiner to work with me as a research team. My vision was that we would individually research specific dimensions of our church's history and then would meet together often enough to share our findings and discern together how to further the research.

## **Church Archives**

I could not talk about this research, nor could I begin this newsletter, without acknowledging the work of David Brown Parrish and Cameron Crutcher to maintain and curate the many pictures, documents, and other objects of our church's past. Our church archives has been an invaluable resource in exploring our history. I might also add that, to the best of my knowledge, most Churches of Christ do not have an archives. The fact that we do is a rare jewel, and something of a statement about us. If you have not spent time in our archives, you should.

## **Draper's History**

In the 1990s, with the help of a few other individuals, Nannie Dunn Jones Draper compiled a history of our church. It began with the earliest known Churches of Christ in our area, proceeded with the known facts pertaining to our church, and ended with pages of comments from, among others, Julius Hovan, who was our preacher at the time of this compilation. As is the case with our church archives, my indebtedness extends also to sister Draper's work, which provided a natural starting point for my research.

## **My Interest and Research**

I am curious, and I love history. When I began working for our church in December 2005, some individuals told me that our church had a history relating to the millennialism controversy of the early- to mid-1900s. In effect, I was told that our church was different from

other Churches of Christ, partly because of our premillennialist heritage. This explanation captured my interest. In 2007, while I was still in graduate school at Lipscomb, I took “Guided Research” in the summer and fall semesters, for which I researched premillennialism as a belief, the millennialism controversy in Churches of Christ, and began researching our congregation’s history—in general, and as part of that controversy. Two semesters was hardly sufficient to complete the research.

Since then, I have attempted to use free time, here and there, to continue researching and compiling. In the last two months, however, I have decided to pick up the pace. It was then that I asked Cameron, Sarah, and David to help me, and I have since spent loads of time in our church archives, in the Sumner County Archives, in journals and history books, on the Internet, in e-mails, and on the telephone.

My interest in, and knowledge of, our church’s history has broadened well beyond the millennialism controversy—formative, though, those events were. Our story is so much bigger and more involved. There are knowledge gaps that need filling. With the help of others, I hope to help our church fill in those gaps, that our church might have a more complete story and more thorough knowledge of itself. I do not know where this research will end, and have some personal goals that I hope come to pass, but, regardless, I’m enjoying the ride.

### **1870-1914: Gallatin Christian Church**

I would not conclude this first newsletter without actually communicating something tangible about our history. I will begin, then, with an explanation of the picture on page 1, which I plan to use as this newsletter’s banner on an ongoing basis. (In a future issue, I may print a larger copy of the picture to show more detail.)

The picture on page 1 is a photograph of the first building that our church owned.<sup>1</sup> At that time, our church called itself “Gallatin Christian Church.” In 1870, the trustees of Gallatin Christian Church bought the property and building—located on Green Street (now Boyers Street)—from William Wright, who had used this building as a woolen factory in the 1850s and ‘60s. Prior to Wright’s woolen factory, this building had housed the worship of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church since about 1830. This building was the first house of worship in Gallatin owned and used by a specific denomination. Another way to say this is to say that the Gallatin Cumberland Presbyterian Church was the first church in Gallatin to have its own building—preceding First Presbyterian Church and First United Methodist Church—and that, when the Christian Church bought and used this building, they were worshipping in a church building that was older than the buildings built and owned by any other church in town.

Clarification: The above statements do not suggest that our *church* is older than those other churches, but rather that our church made use of a *building* that was older than the buildings of certain other churches.

Gallatin Christian Church met in the pictured building until 1914, when its new auditorium on Main Street was completed and ready for use. The preacher at that time was Harold Olmstead.

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<sup>1</sup> This newsletter will, in the future, make use of footnotes to document the sources of our knowledge. For this issue, I will simply tell what I have learned, without reference to sources.