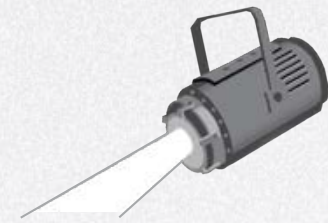


The Spotlight is on . . . our Churches!



Sayre, Pennsylvania

It was the in year of 1929 that 16 members joined hearts and hands to form the Pilgrim Holiness Church in East Athens, PA, under the capable leadership of Rev. George Becker as minister. During the ministry of the following pastors — Rev. O. W. Lawrence, Rev. Lorrin Wilson, Rev. Milton E. Pierpoint and Rev. Robert Addington — the congregation increased to such size that the need for more room was imperative. Thus, the purchase of the present lots on the corner of Madison and S. Wilbur Avenues in Sayre, for the purpose of building a new church, was made on September 29, 1948.

Shortly following this purchase, Rev. Addington was called to another field of service and Rev. Frank T. Finch came to be our pastor. It was under the direction of Rev. Finch that the ground-breaking service was held on June 29, 1952. The first shovelful of earth was turned over by Bert Lantz, chairman of the Board of Trustees at this time. A few days later construction began on the new church.

The cornerstone of the new church was laid September 14, 1952. A copper box was placed in it containing a Bible, church manual, the membership roll of East Athens Pilgrim Holiness Church, the names of the officers of the church and Sunday School at that time, as well as those who donated time and effort in the construction of the building. The Bible placed in the box was owned by Mrs. Carrie Merrill, who was 84 years of age at the time, and the oldest living charter member of the church. Her written testimony was placed within in the Bible.

Dedication services were held October 4, 1953 with Rev. O. L. Fay conducting the formal rite of dedication. This building, valued at \$70,000, was completed at a total cost of \$30,000 due to the many hours of strenuous labor donated by the pastor and people. Rev. Finch and several older members of the congregation — Bert Lantz, Charles Merrill and Arthur Merrill — actually gave a portion of their very lives in the construction of this building. All the



people had a mind to work, and did so!

Rev. Finch remained to lead these people until May 15, 1955, when he accepted another pastorate at Watson town, PA.

We were then privileged to have Rev. William K. George for our pastor. Under the direction of the Lord, he was able to give us a “working” organization, which spelled progress in all departments of the church. Many material gains were accomplished, among them being the purchase of a new organ. New spiritual advancement was also made. The resignation of Rev. George was effective in November, 1960.

Rev. Bobbie L. Bidwell came to us at this time. Under his leadership, the church mortgage was burned. In 1966, due to a significant increase in numbers, an addition to the front and side of the church was added. Bro. Bidwell labored faithfully and was given a lifetime call. The church continued to grow in numbers and spiritually with the presence of God felt in our midst. Rev. Bidwell felt led of God to go to another field of labor, and in 1971 he and his family moved to pastor in Gratz, PA.

Rev. Billie B. Bidwell followed in 1971. While he was pastoring here, the church had the opportunity to pur-

chase the former Wolfe residence across the street from the church. In January, 1973, after redecorating and installing a new kitchen, the parsonage family moved into this “new” parsonage. This 15 room home has been a great addition to the church due to its adequate size and large adjoining lot. Rev. Bidwell labored faithfully until the summer of 1981 when he felt led of God to move on to Endicott, NY.

Rev. Edward S. Lecates served as pastor of the Sayre church from July 1981 through the summer of 1987. He was followed by Rev. Ronald Eichel (1987-1991), Rev. Lawrence Burcaw (1991-1992), Rev. Doug



Manns (1993-1995), Rev. John Lum (1996-2002), Rev. Paul Case, Sr. (2002-2007) and our current pastor Bro. Daniel Waterman. During the respective tenures of these pastors, various updates and improvements were made to both the church and the parsonage.



The church had a new roof installed, new Bibles for the pews were purchased, new carpeting was installed in the sanctuary, the whole interior of the church was repainted, and new song books were purchased by various friends and members in memory or in honor of loved ones. A handicapped lift was installed in memory of Sr. Kate Casselbury, who attended the church faithfully for many years, and a new air conditioning system was installed

In memory of Rev. Bobbie Bidwell, a steeple was purchased and erected on our church by his saddened family. A dedication service was held on June 25, 1995 at 3:00 p.m. with various dignitaries and ministers participating. The

actual dedication of the steeple was performed by Conference President, Rev. Donald Myers.

The inside of the parsonage has been totally repainted. New carpets were installed, hardwood floors were refinished, and a new furnace and electrical entrance panel were installed. The kitchen was renovated, the roof replaced, and just last year we had new replacement windows installed in the majority of the parsonage.

From 1929 to the present, periods of God’s blessing have been on this church. Though many have come and gone from our midst — some to other places of service and others promoted to their eternal home — God continues to aid His people. May God grant that the past and present attainments be only incentives to bigger and better accomplishments for Him and His Kingdom in the future.

—Submitted by Sr. Sue Lantz

Additional Church Spotlights will be included as they are received.

Please send articles using contact information on page 2.