

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

E C H O

Morehead, Kentucky

Charles L. Brooks	Minister	Mrs. Victor Cenettozzi	Choir Director
Paul J. Reynolds	Board Chairman	Mrs. Violet C. Severy	Organist
Mrs. J. B. Calvert, Jr.	Treasurer	Mrs. Grace T. Apel	Church Secretary

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CHURCH, COLLEGE AND COMMUNITY BEGINNING

As much has been written and spoken regarding the early beginning and subsequent history of our Morehead State Teachers College, it seemed good to this writer to gather additional facts to add to the record, which would be of real interest to our church, and its many friends.

The following salient history is taken from several documented sources which are in possession of the Morehead First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Namely: from a Historical and Progress edition of The Morehead Independent under date of October 1934 by Dr. Gilbert H. Fern, then pastor of the Church. The Special Inaugural Edition of the Rowan County News, April 30, 1936 and from The Inaugural Edition of The Morehead Independent under the same date line; also from the recorded minutes of the Morehead Christian Church under the date of July 23 1876; J. M. Carey, Clerk.

It is not the intention of this writer to record an exhaustive history from the early beginnings until now, but rather to supplement what has already been written, in the hope that a more complete history may be written in the near future.

The history of the First Christian Church dates back to the early beginning when the city was but a large village. The first services of the Church in common with other Church Organizations of the Community were held in the Court House.

During the period from 1884 to 1887, all Church Services in the town and community were intermittent and irregular. It was the period commonly referred to as the time of the Rowan County War.

It was a Presbyterian minister by the name of Dr. Guerrant who finally succeeded in inducing the church people of the community to erect a Union Church building, in which, at stated times, the various church organizations might hold their services. This Union Church building stood on the site or very near to it, of the present First Christian Church edifice.

In 1887 the Kentucky Christian Missionary Convention, in connection with General William T. Withers of Lexington, Kentucky, sent Dr. F. C. Button and his mother, Mrs. P. E. Button, to Morehead to found a school and work in the Church. From this time on the early history of the Church and the School were bound together. This will appear more evident as these early historic events are further elaborated.

During the period from 1887 to 1895 the Presbyterian interests in the Union Church was purchased by the Christian Church and the Methodist interests by the Church of God. Toward the end of the above period under the leadership of Dr. Button and others, the Christian Church became the full owners of the Union Church building. It served as their meeting place until the present church building was erected in 1924-25 and formally dedicated on May 17, 1925.

For thirteen years the school was supported mainly by the Kentucky Christian Missionary Society (Disciples of Christ). On July 31, 1900, the Kentucky Christian Missionary Society transferred control of the school to the Christian Womens Board of Missions, a national Board of Missions of the Christian Church. Under the management of the Christian Womens Board of Missions the school reached its greatest proportions. The way was thus paved through the activities of the Christian Church and the small beginning made by Dr. Button and his mother, for the next step, the establishment of the Morehead State Teacher's College, in 1923.

Further evidence of the cooperation between the Church and higher education is evidenced by the fact that the corner stone of Burgess Hall and Hudson Hall bearing the letters of C. W. B. M. reposed at the front entrance of the First Christian Church, and photographs of Mrs. Phoebe E. Button and Dr. F. C. Button hung on the walls of the Church Parlors.

The First Christian Church of Morehead, therefore, not only on its own behalf, but as a representative of a great state and international Brotherhood refers with gratitude to the things that have come to pass and have been accomplished in forging the links in the great chain that have led to the present accomplishments. From an institution with scores of faculty and a few hundred students to more than a hundred teachers and thousands of college students, it is well on its way now to becoming a University.

The Church too has grown and has a congregation of loyal leaders in the Christian Community. Its financial structure is strong and continues to grow both locally and in outreach. There is peace and harmony among the people which is a far cry from the days when the crack of a Winchester echoed from the hills as a sign of hatred and turbulence.

Numbered among the early ministry were the following with the dates of their service so far as is known.

S. B. Abrams	no date	} Mostly for short duration as to time
Rev. Yates	no date	
H. Minnich	no date	
John Marcum	no date	
F. C. Button	1887-1892	
Ralph Julian	1892-1895	
F. C. Button	1895-1901	
J. B. Dickson	1901-1903	
H. B. Wade	1903-1904	
D. G. Combs	1904-1906	
W. F. Smith	1906- ?	

One word needs to be added to assure all who are a part of our church life. We enter into the benefits of those who labored before us. Both as a church and as individuals, our interest in higher education and a campus ministry has not abated. We seek every opportunity to serve our church, in all its activities and services, is open to the faculty and students of Morehead State.

Our best wishes go out to those who now lead, in their labors and activities seek to advance to higher and greater achievements. As in the past, so in the future, "We are in the midst as one who serves".