

*The First
Presbyterian Church
Effingham, Illinois*



*150th
Anniversary*

November 1864
to
November 2014

We will not hide these truths from our children;
we will tell the next generation about the
glorious deeds of the Lord, about His power and
His mighty wonders.

Psalm 78:4

History of First Presbyterian Church Effingham, Illinois

Nineteen years before the Community of Effingham was founded, Presbyterians gathered in Effingham County. The first meetings were in the year 1834 at the home of Jonathan Parkhurst, three miles south of present day Funkhouser. Rev. John McMaster was the leading spirit. Those associated with him were Johnathan, Elisha, Jesse, and Benjamin Parkhurst, John Funkhouser, John Trapp, Nicholas Radley, John and Patsy Scott. At another time, Rev. Stephen Kell also served to lead the group. No church building was erected, but the group met sporadically in homes over several years.

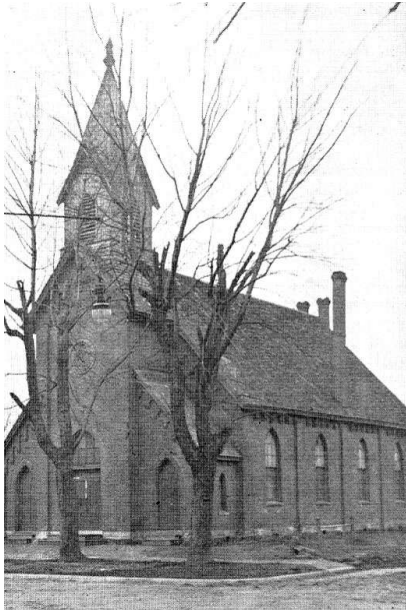
In 1850, the Ewington Presbyterian church was organized by the Rev. John H. Russ with eight members. Jesse Parkhurst was the first elder. When the Illinois Central Railroad was built, the people of Ewington migrated to the new town of Effingham. During the Civil War, this group of Presbyterians in Effingham realized that a church was needed.

Fourteen years later, on November 13, 1864, the Presbyterians of Effingham organized a church. Rev. S. R. Bissell came here as a Home Missionary, representing the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions. He saw the need for a church and secured the assistance of the Rev. A. J. Norton. The organization meeting was held in the Court House. In addition to these two men, there were five persons present. The original membership for the church consisted of the following: Solomon Swingle, Mrs. M. C. Swingle, Mrs. Sara Preston Bissell, Isaac Bates and Mrs. Jane Bates.

Rev. Bissell preached on Sunday and through the week taught a private school. For the first year, services were held in the Court House and then in Rev. Bissell's schoolroom, which was located two doors north of the present Armory. He served the church until 1869 (five years), and the membership grew from 7 to 20 (almost 200%). Rev. Bissell was the Father of Lewis H. Bissell who was the founder of the Illinois College of Photography.

Dr. Garnett A. Pollack was appointed part-time pastor in Effingham in 1869 by the Home Missions Board. He preached half time in Effingham and the remaining time at other churches. Services were being held at the Baptist church (the current Mason's building) through the courtesy of the Baptist Congregation. The members, however, soon began a church of their own, which was completed at the corner of West Fayette and Maple Streets in October 1870. Total cost was \$4,300 and the building was dedicated without debt. Dr. Jewett, of Terre Haute, Indiana, preached the sermon during the dedication. Others who participated were Rev. S. R. Bissell, founder, Rev. Powers, of the local Methodist Church, and Rev. Rhodes, of the Baptist church.

Dr. Pollack's prayer of dedication for the new church was, "We return Thee thanks, O God, that Thou has inclined the hearts of the people to arise and build for carrying forward this work to completion, and assembling the people under circumstances of so much mercy. We give thanks to Thee who has given so much to us. This House is God's House. May its walls be sacred; its spire ever point Heavenward; its seats be the place where the blind receive sight and the broken-hearted find rest unto their souls; its



First Building - Erected 1870

choir to be guided by the Spirit of God making melody in their hearts praising the Lord; its desk sacred, Holy ground to be trodden only by the chosen of the Lord, Who shall ever break the bread of Eternal Life."

On Sunday, July 25, 1874, there was a terrible storm that broke over the little city of Effingham. St. Anthony's church was struck by lightning and considerable damage done. The new Presbyterian Church was also struck. Half of the brick wall at the rear of the church and two

thirds of the roof were destroyed. The congregation secured the Southern Methodist church to hold services, and met at this site until the building was repaired. There are no records of the cost, or how long it took to make these repairs, but the records show that the session met in the church on October 1, 1874, so it is presumed that the repairs were probably completed in two or three months.

In the four years of Mr. Pollock's pastorate, the church became self-supporting. He resigned in December 1877 and accepted a call to Mendota. During his pastorate of eight years, 220 people were added to the membership and in the same period some \$14,000 was raised and extended in the work of the church.

After the departure of Rev. Pollock, a call was extended to Rev. Cort, then a student of theology at the Northwestern University of Chicago. After his graduation, he settled in Effingham, but the ill health of his wife caused his resignation at the end of one year. The church was then without a regular pastor for a short time, when a call was extended to Rev. Moses Paisley of Hillsboro, in October 1879, for one year. Rev. Thomas E. Green was the next pastor, and remained six months. Next, Rev. George D. McCulloch, took charge of the church July 1, 1881, and continued until the fall of 1882, when he accepted a call to the Presbyterian Church in Hillsboro.

In the earlier days in the church there was no particular rule for the election of Elders. On August 8, 1877, at the Congregational meeting, it was voted that the Rotary System be employed and that Elders be elected for a three year term with the understanding that they might be re-elected from time to time. The first elders elected in February of 1868 were Seneca Austin and William Thompson.

Mary Newcomb, who was a Civil War nurse, was a member of the church. She followed her husband, Hiram's regiment into several battles during the war. He was wounded at Ft. Donaldson and was brought back to Effingham, where he died. The soldiers called her "Mother Newcomb".

The first record of infant baptism was January 30, 1881. In 1883, the Sunday school had an enrollment of 130. Judge S. M. Gilmore was Superintendent and A. C. Phelon was Secretary. In 1892, Harry Parker was elected as elder and served over a period of 47 years, though his service was not continuous.

The Ladies Aid Society was very active in the early years. In 1883 the Rev. Mr. McCulloch said, "A history of this church would be incomplete which did not recognize the efficient help the women have given in every department of its labors. They have been ready in every good word and work. The Ladies' Aid Society has existed since the beginning of the church. It has contributed largely to meet the expenses, and monthly "socials" have ministered to the life and the enjoyment of the congregation. A women's prayer meeting has met regularly for several years. A women's missionary society has been organized, and meets monthly in the interest of missionary work. The report given to Presbytery last year (1882) contained these items: Given to benevolent boards of the church, \$5,500; expenses for all church purposes, \$1,230." Reminiscences furnished by Mrs. J. H. Walker to the Effingham Republican of August 10, 1909, the society had been in existence for over twenty-five years. Mrs. Walker said, "Twenty-five years ago Effingham was not a city of many lodges, clubs and other diversion, the churches were the social centers of the town, and the Aid Society of the Presbyterians, as well as the other churches, set a high standard for social and educational entertainment." They sponsored chicken dinners, beauty contests, and quilting bees. They also had "silent workers" who aided the poor. Today, now called Presbyterian Women, the group contributes time and resources to many church projects, missions, and Christian educational needs for children and adults.

In 1892, the Christian Endeavor was organized (YPSCE - Young People's Society Christian Endeavor). The records show 40 active and 10 associate members. This organization played a very

important part in the affairs of the church through the furnishing of leadership and money.

In 1893, a member of the Session handed in his resignation as a member of the church because, "I cannot with any comfort listen to the prayers of a certain church member who is addicted to profane swearing." He later reconsidered.

The first record of the church entertaining Presbytery appears in April, 1895. For a number of years, Effingham was located in the Wabash Presbytery. Later there was a redistricting of territory and the name of the Presbytery was changed to the Mattoon Presbytery.

The manse for the church was originally located on the corner of Shelby Avenue and Linden which was on the northwest corner of the block where the church stood. In 1895 there appears a record that the Trustees of the Church were authorized to "sell and buy." That tract of land was sold and the ground adjoining the church on the west was selected for the location of the manse to be built.

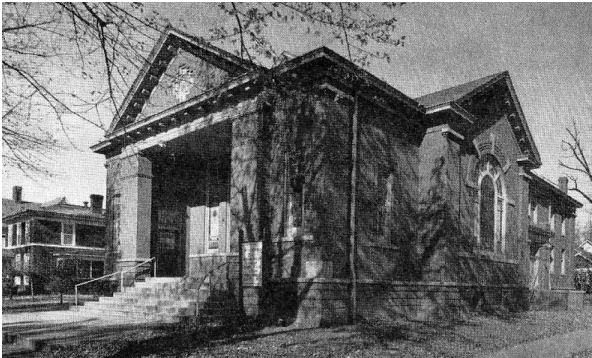
It is interesting to read that there was a fine spirit among the officers in those earlier days. The record of a meeting is shown for June 20, 1896, held in the office of Alfred Stewart at his store on Jefferson Street. This special gathering was to discuss the installation of water works in the newly erected manse. Charles Butler had been appointed to make arrangements and reported that the local water works company would furnish the labor at actual cost. He purchased the hydrant, Josiah Haselton the water pipe, and Alpheus Hasbrouck said that he would dig the hole for the hydrant.

Sunday School Superintendents in the early years were: A. Stewart, Virgil Wood, John W. Lacock, Alfred Finch, Emma P. Cooper, and A. J. Hasbrouck. One of the most successful periods in the early history of the school is said to have been during the first two or three years of what was called the Loyal Sunday School Army plan. Attendance ranged from 180 to 220 pupils, and the collections from six to ten dollars.

In 1895, Mary Hasbrouck became Superintendent of the Sunday School and through years of untiring efforts, built up a splendid organization. She served a great many years in this capacity. She was followed by E. E. Flack, who served a total of 15 years.

With the coming of Dr. Samuel M. Morton as Pastor in 1898, the church added one of its outstanding ceremonies, the observance of Harvest Home. After the harvest the church was decorated with the colors and fruits of the season. This ceremony is documented to have continued through 1964.

The first old church had a long, narrow auditorium and a wide aisle down the center. There was a large heating stove and August Ohman was for many years the loyal and efficient caretaker. On a cold Sunday his efforts at the stove were almost as important as those from the pulpit. Virgil Wood was a very able attorney and one of the founders of the Effingham State Bank (now known as Midland States Bank). In those days the streets were paved only with mud. The sidewalks were of brick or plank boards and the streetlights were few and far between. Mr. Wood always carried a hay burner lantern to light his path. Dr. Frank Wise Goodell hitched his fine team of ebony black horses at the old hitch rack



Second Building - Erected 1909

In 1908, with an estimated membership of 250, it was determined that the old church was unsafe for use. It was voted that steps be taken to build a new

structure. The building committee was appointed consisting of Charles Butler, Chairman; J. T. Ewing, Secretary; E. E. Flack, Treasurer, and members: Harry S. Parker, Calvin Austin, W. G. Austin, and Charles Hemminger. The new building, erected on the same site as the old church, was constructed of pressed brick with

Bedford stone trimmings; it was 50 x 80 with a full basement. It was composed of a main auditorium and Sunday school room, with a gallery providing several classrooms and was heated by steam and lighted by electricity. The cost of the new structure in 1909 was \$10,000. In August of 1909 the cornerstone of the new church was laid and the new structure was dedicated February 20, 1910. Participating in the services was two of the outstanding pastors of former days: Dr. G. A. Pollock and Dr. Samuel M. Morton. This church still stands on the corner of Fayette and Maple.

In 1914, under the leadership of Dr. A. Frank Ferris, the church observed its 50th Anniversary. A special anniversary program was prepared and contained a list of the officers at that time. Clerk of the Session was E. E. Flack; Church Treasurer was W. G. Austin; Elders were: Calvin Austin, E. E. Flack, W. G. Austin, Harry S. Parker, Alfred Stewart, and W. S. Broom. The quartet choir included Mrs. H. S. Parker, Mrs. J. T. Ewing, Calvin Austin, and C. J. Killen.

A Few Former Ministers



Pollock
Van Dуйn
Morton

Reynolds
Ferris
Hurrel

Kirkpatrick
Snyder
Vernon

Through the years the Presbyterian Church in Effingham was noted for its high quality of music. Besides a quartet choir, there were the Golden sisters, Hattie and Ruby. Mrs. J. B. Walker, in those days, was the choir director. At another time Wm. Roxby conducted the music. Some of the organists during that time were Jennie Truesdale, Ruby Golden, Mrs. A. C. Phelon, Professor Eric Charles, and Mrs. Maurece Steis who officiated over 40 years.

A "Pipe Organ Committee" was organized with L. H. Bissell as Chairman and Miss Mamie Hough as Secretary. An appeal was made to Presbyterian Andrew Carnegie, the generous Scot who made many contributions to help churches and libraries. Because of Carnegie's generosity, the church installed a Hinners Pipe Organ.

As the years passed there had been a number of revivals. Under the pastorate of Rev. A. W. Wright, it is recorded that "81 souls were added." Also, under the ministry of Rev. H. G. Hurrell's pastorate, an additional 61 came into membership.

In the 1930's the church was known as the "Railroad man's church". In those days the Pennsylvania Railroad Company had its shops located here. Effingham was a terminal base, and many trainmen made their homes in Effingham. The pulpit bible at that time was donated by the railroaders.



Rev. Fred Newlin

Rev. Fred Newlin was one of the churches strongest pastors serving prior to and through the years of World War II (1938-1945). Not only did membership and giving increase but also our church projected itself into the community because of Rev. Newlin serving on community committees. Rev. Newlin held a candle-lighting service on World Wide Communion Sunday, October 1, 1944. Fifty-eight candles were lit

in honor of the number of military personnel from the Presbyterian Church.

When the Effingham church celebrated its 75th anniversary in 1939, the following were the church officers:

Elders: James T. Ewing, William L. Broom, Edward A. Flack, Harry S. Parker, Warren S. Broom, George E. Schopmeyer, and LeGrand A. Flack

Deacons: William L. Read, Cecil VanDyke, Percy C. Raymer, A. Brown Dobbins, Vernon Shoop, and Howard S. Parker

Trustees: Herman Dobbins, James T. Ewing, Elmer S. Shamhart, and William E. Lawrence

Church Treasurer – George E. Schopmeyer

Organist and Choir Director – Mrs. Maurece Steis

Assistant – Mrs. Virginia Bea Davis

Head Usher – Percy C. Raymer

Superintendent of Sunday School – Howard S. Parker

President of Women's Missionary Society – Mrs. Fred M. Newlin

President of Ladies' Aid Society – Mrs. H. M. Caldwell

Sponsor of Christian Endeavor Society- Mrs. Virginia Bea Davis

President of Christian Endeavor Society – Edna Lucille Davis

Scoutmaster – John R. Fiedler

Shortly after World War II, the pastor was Charles M. Washburn. The men of the church were organized into a group known as the "Kirkmen Club". Regular monthly dinner meetings were held with a good attendance. At this time a project was started to make available more space. The south part of the basement was excavated.

During the early 1950s, Rev. Benjamin Coleman served the church. It was a time of conflict and many members were lost. The congregation chose to dissolve his pastorship with them. During Rev. Harmon Reeder Jr.'s service (1956-61) it was a time of healing.

Also during the 1950s, there was much discussion on repairing the pipe organ in the sanctuary or replacing it with a new electric organ. After a few lively and lengthy congregational meetings, it

was finally determined that the purchase of a new electric organ from Samuel Music company (\$4472) was a more practical choice than to repair the old pipe organ (estimate \$10,000 - \$12,000).



The choir in late 1950s

First Row: John Swain, Judi James, Wilma Sherrick, Nancy Sherrick, Laura Kincaid, Maurece Steis, Katherine Seely, Joyce Bloemker, Edna Broom, Betty Lauter, and John Koenig; Second Row: Lawrence Nicholson, Marcus Broom, Doris James, Clenna Young, Barbara Crawford, Joyce Malloy, Bonnie Anderson, Mary Jo Hebron, Roy Young and LeGrand Flack. Mrs. Steis was organist and choir director.

On April 27, 1963, the Session began to investigate the possibility of building a new church. Elders LeGrand Flack and Walt Hagman were asked to examine the costs and the availability of land. Elders Gene Henderson and Dr. David Bristow were asked to analyze the feasibility of relocating a church and Sunday School facilities to another site in the City of Effingham.

At the time, the congregation did not have a lot of people, or a lot of money, and they were without a minister from November 18, 1963 until June 7, 1964. In June of 1964, Rev. Alvin Sigafus accepted the church's call to be pastor.

The site selection committee looked at six sites and recommended a site in Rollin Hills subdivision. After more study the Rollin Hills site was rejected. After a fly over by the pastor, chair of committee, and Synod of Illinois advisor on church sites, it was determined that a site on the northwest side of town would be best. On July 17, 1965, the Session agreed to purchase the Hoelscher property on the corner of Maple and Temple. The site was slightly less than five acres and the cost was \$20,750. On August 8, 1965, the Session presented the proposed property to the congregation for a vote of approval. The vote was approved and passed, thereby confirming the location of the new church.

Two months later, on October 3, 1965, the congregation voted to commission Walter Kroeber as the architect. Following the acceptance of the architect's design the congregation approved the employment of Grunloh Construction Company of Effingham as the general contractor. With the cost of land and construction, the new church would cost \$232,000.



Those participating in groundbreaking ceremonies for the new First Presbyterian Church: left to right front row, Mrs. James Parker and daughter, Kim, William Frank, Tom Henderson, Brenda Van Dyke, Sharon Clough, David Goeble, Rev. William Bird of the Methodist church, president of the Effingham ministerial association, and Rev. Alvin D. Sigafus; Back row Mrs. Sigafus and daughter Rebecca, Clifford Rust, Presbyterian pastor from Charleston, Hilton Wood, Clifford Grunloh , contractor for the new building, Walt Hagman, Effingham Mayor L. Keller, Mrs. Clifford Stevenson, Phillip Griffith, Mrs. Franklin Keller, Lawrence Nicholson, and Keith Walker

At the September 25, 1966, session meeting, the building committee agreed to sell \$100,000 worth of bonds at 6% interest.

Members of the congregation gathered to celebrate the placing of the cornerstone on the new church on Sunday, April 23, 1967. The service immediately followed the regular Sunday Morning Service in their old church. Included in the members present were 60 members who had attended service 58 years earlier for the cornerstone placement at the church at Maple and Fayette.



Third Building - Erected 1967

LeGrand Flack introduced honored guests. Howard Parker read the list of contents placed into the box in the cornerstone. Rev. Alvin Sigafus blessed the contents. Then Walt Hagman, Chairman of the Building

committee, placed the mortar behind the stone and workmen for the general contractor, Grunloh Construction Company, set the stone.

The choir sang “Christ Is Our Cornerstone”, followed by the minister and congregation sharing the reading of the Litany of Dedication. The service ended with a prayer of consecration and the singing of “All Hail The Power Of Jesus’ Name”.

On Sunday, July 30, 1967, Rev. Newlin preached the sermon in the “Farewell Service” at the Fayette Avenue Church. There was no Sunday Church School that day as the Sunday Church School equipment had been moved to the new church.

On July 30, 1967, the First Presbyterian Church was dedicated. Those who participated in the service were: Rev. Eugene Smathers, Moderator of the General Assembly, Rev. Charles

Filson, Rev. William Bird, Rev. Fred Newlin, Rev. Harmon Reeder, Jr., Rev. Alvin Sigafus, Harold Irish, Clifford Grunloh, contractor, Walter Kroeber, Architect, Walter Hagman, Chairman of the building Committee, John Anderson, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Doris James, pianist, and Duane Neet, organist.

November 24, 1968, the congregation voted to sell the church at the intersection of Fayette Avenue and Maple Street to the Calvary Baptist Church at a selling price of \$25,000.



Rev. Russell Stark

In 1970, Rev. Sigafus accepted another call and Rev. Russell Stark arrived from Lake City, Iowa, in July of 1970. This was also the time when a significant number of Presbyterians relocated from Sparta to Effingham to work at the new World Color Press Crossroads plant. Rev. Stark is remembered on his first Sunday of red hair and a bright green suit.

In 1975, the bonds were retired, leaving a mortgage at the First National Bank of Effingham of \$110,000.

With the congregation making the necessary pledges and after receiving a memorial in memory of a loved one, air conditioning was installed in the summer of 1979 for the sanctuary and Hagman Hall. The office, Broom Lounge, and the nursery were air conditioned when the church was built in 1967.

Russ and Marge Stark are remembered for their Christmas coffee cakes. They made 25-30 cakes and gave them to members of the congregation at Christmas. Marge was known for her excellent care of cleaning the church. They were also very active with the youth taking trips to Colorado and Florida.

During the Christmas season of 1981, organist Kurt Beals, a high school student, asked permission to have an organ brought in for

the Christmas season from Samuel Music Company, where he also was employed part-time. The organ was an Allen System 505 Digital Computer Organ and Kurt was anxious to play Christmas music on this organ. The organ was temporarily placed in the chancel area and Kurt performed several special numbers on Christmas Sunday. Pastor Russ jokingly remarked during the service that “if the Christmas spirit really moved anyone that morning, he could explain to them how that new organ could become ours!” On the way out of church that morning, Alf and Betty Thompson handed the pastor a check and said, “Start an organ fund!” For the next year, several more donations were received. With the old Hammond organ needing repair, the Session agreed to have an organ drive. When the drive was complete, there was still a shortage of the \$23,725 price, and again, Alf and Betty Thompson donated the necessary funds. The final organ payment was December 1982 and the dedication was planned for January 9, 1983. The organist at that time was Bruce Bannister. Others who previously served in the music program were Pauline Cope, Scott Lowrance, and Phil Coats.

There were many memorials to the church over the years. To name a few, the large handcrafted cross that adorns the front of the sanctuary; the spire on the exterior of the church; a carillon (which no longer chimes on the hour); the beautiful brick sign that adorns the front yard of the church indicating “First Presbyterian Church;” the flagpole, flag, and light; and an upright Yamaha piano.

By fall 1988, the mortgage had been reduced to \$22,000. Response to a challenge to pay off construction debts resulted in a special mortgage burning ceremony during the Sunday morning service on May 7, 1989. At the same time the 125th Anniversary of the church was also commemorated.

When the church celebrated its 125th Anniversary and Burning of the Mortgage in 1989, the following were church officers:

Session: Randall Light, Sharon Macklin, Harold Wear, Leon Woodland (Clerk), Ann Chalstrom, Kenneth Crawford, Justin

Schopmeyer, Arthur Strom, Sue Woltman, Bruce Bannister, Gene Henderson, Sue Schimmelpfenning, and William Schmidt

Deacons: Jvee and Theresa Harner, Terry and Sandy Stevenson, Joe and Cathy Freimuth, Audrey and Viola Gaskill, Donnie and Jennifer Dueker, and Ken and Nancy Joslyn

Presbyterian Women Officers: Sue Woltman (President), Grace Nelson (Vice-President), Julie Nelson (Secretary), Nancy Joslyn (Treasurer), Marge Stark (Coordinator of Studies), Lorene Schopmeyer (Interp. Of Missions), and Helen Skinner (Coordinator of Involvement)

Mortgage Celebration Committee – Russell Marvel, Isabelle Bloemker, Gene Henderson, Darlene Pillers, Mary Lou Sams, Sue Schimmelpfenning, Kay Wear, and Harold Wear

December 1990 brought the retirement of Rev. Russell Stark after 21 years of outstanding service to the church and the community. After an interim time with Rev. Louis Sandos, Rev. Drew Holloway accepted the call to First Presbyterian in October 1991, and continues as the current pastor today. Rev. Holloway is known for his storytelling style of preaching.



Rev. Drew Holloway

With a generous donation from the Schopmeyer family in 1990, a trust was formed that provided funding for another major construction project in 1994, with the addition of a new education wing. Six new Sunday School rooms were added and new bathrooms were built. Additionally, several community ministries were gifted over \$200,000.

Currently, every summer, Vacation Bible School is held for the youth. For several years it was based on a unique Marketplace theme with children dressing as biblical days and attending marketplace stations of learning.

In 1998, Youth Mission Trips were started to locations such as South Carolina, Florida, and Colorado. In 2006, Adult/Youth Mission trips were initiated annually and continue to present. These mission trips have been to disaster areas such as the Katrina Hurricane, floods, and tornadoes.

With additional Schopmeyer trust funding, Youth Minister Mike Daume came to The First Presbyterian Church in 2001. After relocating, Mike has returned on two special occasions to baptize his two children. In 2013, Youth Director Scott Goodson was welcomed and continues with us today to encourage the spiritual growth of our youth.

In May 2001, Bruce Bannister closed his 26-year career as music director, organist, and choir director of the church. Bruce created a unique music program at our church. The congregation appreciated the beautiful anthems, moving Christmas Cantatas, and powerful music from the organ. At Bruce's departure, Rachelle Cekander has taken the music program into new directions ranging from a gut bucket band, praise band, and On High Singers who reach out to the community, nursing homes, and assisted living homes. An Easter-themed Palm Sunday cantata service was added to the church's music ministry. The children's music program is alive and thriving due to the efforts of many parishioners. Junior High and Senior High student musicians have enriched our church music ministry with beautiful instrumentals.

In September 2006, the driver of a vehicle fell asleep and crashed into the southwest side of the church causing a large hole in the brick wall of the music room. The vehicle hit the wall with so much force the bricks propelled across the room and broke through



the stained glass windows that looked into the sanctuary. Fortunately, nobody was in the music room at the time. With structural damage to repair, the congregation chose to make additional renovations to the church at that time.

In 2010, the Noah's Ark Playground was built. A useful outdoor meeting place was also constructed on the west end of the church. It was dedicated in honor of a former pastor and named the Russell Stark Pavilion. Occasionally, church services have been held at the pavilion.



In 2011, an attractive walking bridge was installed along with many trees and plantings donated by caring members and families. These items became the basis for an Inspiration Garden, which incorporates the Stark Pavilion. Today, the

Inspiration Garden includes a walking path through a special natural area located on the church grounds. Many volunteers work together to enhance the enjoyment of this lovely area.

Many activities are enjoyed by the congregation including a Dinner Club, Men's Bible Study, Women's Circle Groups, Fellowship Meals, annual Hayride and Weiner Roast, and Salvation Army Bell ringing.

This year of 2014 marks the 150th Anniversary of First Presbyterian Church in Effingham. Current Staff: Pastor: Rev. Drew Holloway; Youth Director: Scott Goodson; Music Director: Rachele Cekander; Treasurer: Keith Hartman; Financial Secretary: Pat Berry; Childcare: Brittany Althoff and assistant Bailey Bushue
Session: Jason Larsen, Julie Poland, Dan Holste, Connie Walton, Matt Cekander, Karen Schmitz (Clerk), Tom Henderson, Theresa Harner, Joe Freimuth, Laura Linders, Kristen Schoonover, and Lucas Shaffer

Deacons: Terry and Mary Clark, Jerry and Marilyn Tolliver, Sam and Carol Bidrawn, Max and Emily Nelson, Katie Beck, Doug Shuler, David Shuler, and Debbie Weinstock

Presbyterian Women Officers: Marge Lancaster, Theresa Harner, Mary Clark, Kimberly Hughes, Rita Toops, Lana Henderson, Janet Henderson, Judy Bannister, JoAnn Wear, Nedra Mesnard, Carole McDevitt, Ellen Williams, Margie Henderson, Kathy Schmidt, Nancy Nelson, and Nancy Joslyn

Church members and friends enjoy the special environment created by the attractive building and grounds located at the intersection of Temple and Maple. More importantly, local Presbyterians enjoy the interaction with children and adults of all ages and professions who attend the regular services and many church activities. Visitors are welcome and greeted with open arms along with a commonly used phrase ‘Please Come Join Our Community of Faith’.

Ministers of the First Presbyterian Church

S. R. Bissell	Nov. 1864 – Nov. 1869
G. A. Pollock (P)	Dec. 1869 – Dec. 1877
Wm. C. Cort	Jan. 1878 – Apr. 1879
Moses Paisley	Oct. 1879 – Oct. 1880
Thos. E. Green	Nov. 1880 – May 1881
Geo. D. McCulloch	July 1881 – Sept. 1882
Henry Gardner	June 1883 – Oct. 1885
A.W. Wright	Jan. 1887 – July 1887
H. J. Van Duyen	Oct. 1887 – Oct. 1887
J. A. McDonald (P)	May 1892 – Apr. 1894
Edwin McNutt (P)	May 1894 – Apr. 1898
Samuel M. Morton	May 1898 – Sept. 1907
R. Lloyd Roberts	Jan. 1908 – Apr. 1909
Chas. R. Murray	May 1909 – Oct. 1909

Andrew J. Taylor	Dec. 1909 – Jan. 1911
John G. Reynolds	June 1911 – Sept. 1912
A. Frank Ferris (P)	Oct. 1912 – Dec. 1915
H. G. Hurrell (P)	Feb. 1916 – Nov. 1917
F. W. Kirkpatrick (P)	Jan. 1917 – Jan. 1924
H. O. Stevens	Apr. 1924 – Sept. 1925
Logan A. Snyder (P)	Nov. 1925 – Dec. 1928
Fayette E. Vernon (P)	Apr. 1929 – Sept. 1938
Fred M. Newlin (P)	Oct. 1938 – Apr. 1945
Chas. H. Washburn (P)	Jan. 1946 – Aug. 1950
Edward Van Horn (P)	Nov. 1950 – May 1953
Benjamin A. Coleman (P)	Dec. 1953 – Feb. 1956
Harmon Reeder, Jr. (P)	Nov. 1956 – Apr. 1961
Gifford R. Ruby (P)	Oct. 1961 – Nov. 1963
Alvin D. Sigafus (P)	June 1964 – Jan. 1970
Russell W. Stark (P)	July 1970 – Dec. 1990
Drew Holloway (P)	Oct. 1991 -

(P) Indicates those who were regularly installed as pastors.