

**Union Presbyterian Church at Bunceton
Bunceton Presbyterian Church (Union)
Bunceton Federated Church**

*201 East College Street
Bunceton, Missouri 65237
Phone: (660) 427-5800*

*Scott Ehrlich, Pastor
9:00 a.m. Sunday School
10:00 a.m. Worship Service*

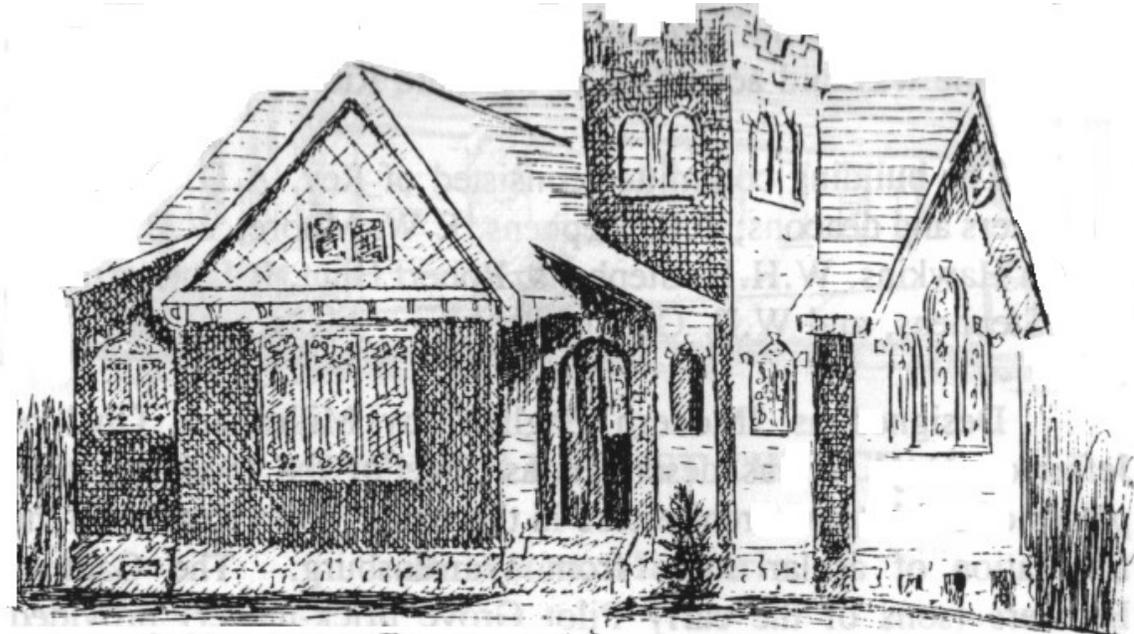
Township:	T-47-N	Organized:	1860
Range:	R-17-W	Disbanded:	No
Section:	34	Active:	Yes as a Federated Church
Latitude:	38.831700	Longitude:	-92.872600
Map:		Updated:	March 8, 2020

Cemetery: There is no cemetery associated with this church.

Area: Bunceton, Missouri

Records: The location of the church records is unknown at this time.

History:



Sketch From "Cooper County Church Sketches" by F Chesnutt

Union Presbyterian Church at Bunceton

From "History of Howard and Cooper Counties Missouri", 1883

Union Presbyterian Church at Bunceton - Organized in 1860, by Rev. W. G. Bell, of Boonville. The constituent members were Mrs. Mary Phillips, Dr. E. Chilton and wife, John J. Huge and wife, Isaac

Hewitt and wife, Miss M. Hewitt, James Hewitt and Mrs. E. Russell. First elders, John J. Hoge, Isaac Hewitt and Dr. E. Chilton.

Bunceton Presbyterian Church Union
From "History of Cooper County Missouri" by W. F. Johnson, 1919

Presbyterian Church (Union) Bunceton, was organized 1860 by Rev. W. G. Bell, of Boonville. The constituent members were Mrs. Mary Phillips, Dr. E. Chilton and wife, John J. Hoge and wife. Isaac Hewitt and wife, Miss M. Hewitt, James Hewitt and Mrs. E. Russell.

Changes Have Led Several Bunceton Churches to Join in Services
Bunceton Federation Church
From "Memorabilia of Cooper County", 1990

I have chosen for my sketch the story of that which is most important, and gives the most pleasure and inspiration in our town and community - our churches. Many of you will remember with me the things of which I write, and turn with me the pages in the book of time which becomes history as the years go by.

Four little white churches, the Christian, Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian, each with a good attendance record, were in progress in the years of yesterday when the only transportation to church services was the horse and buggy, driven in winter's cold and summer's heat. Hitching posts surrounded the church yards where the faithful horses were tied to await the family for the return trip home.

The old Cumberland Presbyterian church, where the congregation gathered, still stands just south of Main Street and is now used as the Masonic hall. A new brick church was erected in 1904 on College street and was dedicated with a service which hundreds of people attended. The Rev. A.D. Johnson was their pastor, and served for a number of years. Its organization, the Lona George circle, meets each month in members' homes.

The Baptist church on West College Street is still an attractive building, outstanding because of its belfry in the church steeple which can be seen some distance through the green trees of spring and summer and the snow covered trees in winter.

This ringing bell has been the call to worship for many years at this church which has continued with a good attendance throughout the years. New generations have kept the work going and the building in good condition. Its organizations are the Women's Missionary society, the Men's Brotherhood, and the Sunbeam Band. The latter organization is a group of youngsters with leaders who are really giving the children training and instruction and teaching them responsibility and deeds of kindness which make them worthy of the name Sunbeam Band.

The Rev. E.A. Winchell was pastor of the church for some years and only recently resigned to accept a pastorate elsewhere.

The Methodist church, located on Main Street, was also a strong congregation with a Young People's organization. The Epworth League had a large membership and under the leadership of Miss Mary Frances Layne, now Mrs. Warren George, as president, became a sort of union league to which the young people of all church groups attended. The late Mr. Snow was at one time a pastor of this church and a sincere worker for the cause of Christianity. More recent pastors were F. L. Standard and R.B. Shook.

The Christian church building was erected in 1895 in Bunceton, its dedication service being held April 20 of that year, with the Rev. Mr. Hill, pastor. Other pastors of the church have been B. F. Hill, J.H. Allen, H.E. Monser, J.P. Furrish, T.F. Cottingham, F.M. Rice, Mr. Rudd, Mr. Wharton, Mr.

Walker, and H.C. Clark. The latter was then a resident of Boonville. This church celebrated its 50th anniversary a number of years ago. The Ladies Aid is its women's organization.

Changes Bring Problems

These were the four first churches of Bunceton. Each had a good attendance record and a full time pastor in the years gone by. With the passing years many of the older members died, many of the young people left for other towns or cities where they were employed, and so the membership became less and it was difficult to finance a salary for minister.

After continued efforts, and realizing that these denominations could not progress alone, the congregation of the Christian, Methodist and Presbyterian churches decided to consolidate and work together in one church building.

During this time another church was organized, the Grace Lutheran church which held meetings in the Princess theater and in the home of Dr. Krause. The Methodists sold their church building and parsonage to the Lutheran group and since that time the Lutherans have progressed with a full time pastor until recently when the pastor, the Rev. C.P. Rohloff became ill and unable to preach. Since then the Rev. Gilbert Wenger of Lone Elm has conducted services each Sunday, for a time in the afternoon, and recently at 8:30 am. Harry Hagameier, and Arthur Brandes are deacons, and Fred Bosau and Emil Vieth trustees.

That church consolidation can be effected without the merging organizations losing their identity has been proved at Bunceton where the Methodists, Christian, and Presbyterian congregations, under the name of the Bunceton Federated church, are worshipping in the Presbyterian church building.

Groups Merge

All three groups have merged in one Sunday school, and one young peoples' organization. Consolidation was first effected in 1937, and for some time a pastor of each denomination conducted services during each month. Pastors who served were Neil S. Baughman, Presbyterian, who drove over from Higginsville once monthly to serve his Presbyterian parishioners, H. C. Clark, who came to preach to the Christian congregation; and Mr. Standard, resident of Bunceton, Methodist minister.

Later the Rev. R.B. Shook, resident Methodist minister, Mr. Clark and Mr. Baughman worked out the consolidation plan in good fellowship and it was unanimously voted by the official boards.

Three members from each church were selected as a governing board. This board chose officers and teachers for the Sunday school, giving each group representation. Selection of literature was largely left to the teacher of each class. It was interesting to note the Sunday school enrollment was not far from that of the Bunceton grade and high school.

Attendance was good and operating costs were cut. An interesting angle of the consolidation was the Sunday school became the clearing house for all financial matters; heat, light and janitor expenses were included in the Sunday school budget, and religious fellowship strengthened.

The late J. Newberry Moore a Presbyterian, was Sunday school superintendent with Porter Wilson, a Christian church representative assistant. In this way each denomination shared the work and responsibility for the interest of the Sunday school and church.

Part From Rural Areas

About 50 per cent of the Sunday school and church enrollment comes from Cooper county farms. The combined membership is about 300.

Residents of Bunceton and vicinity who are not members of the three churches represented as well as the members themselves are pleased, and expressed their praise of the church's harmony and progress.

Since the consolidation the Methodist church and parsonage were sold to the Lutherans, but the Christian church has not been disposed of and the occupied one Winter when the Presbyterian church furnace was not in order. The attitude of the Baptist church congregation, who seem to represent the strongest group here, is most cordial. Each year there is a union Bible school in which all four groups cooperate. Union revival meetings have been held, one of the fine features is a union choir. Young people from the Baptist church occasionally share their singing talent in a special song service which is appreciated.

There has been no friction whatever. In fact the consolidation was effected easily and with it came a greater interest in friends and neighbors.

by Miss Emma Lee Kurtz

The Federated Church of Bunceton
From "Cooper County Church Sketches" by F. Chesnutt, 1993

One mile north of Bunceton is Dublin Spring, which was once surrounded by an arbor of trees. Here in the fall of 1842 Rev. P.G. Rea (active in the Cumberland Presbyterian Seminary at New Lebanon) held a revival. The interest stimulated some of the area residents to organize the first Cumberland Presbyterian Church in the community.

Charter members were the Dickson, Stephens, Hutchison, Moore, Cason, Bunce, Levens, McCarty, and Cole families. They built a brick church (Old Providence) 1/2 mile northeast of Bunceton. It was burned in 1863 during the War Between the States as most of the Cumberland Presbyterians sided with the South.

After the war in 1871, a Rev. A.M. Thompson held a service in a vacant store, and, with Rev. Rea the Bunceton congregation reorganized. With the Wallace Lodge of Masons frame two-story meeting house was built south of Main Street. Church members William and Reuben George constructed pews and pulpit. This cooperative arrangement with the Masons lasted until 1908 when the present building was dedicated. The cornerstone was laid according to Masonic Rite.

The building committee consisted of Rev. A.D. Johnston, and elders and deacons; T.B. Stephens, E.W. Moore, W.B. Kerns, Joseph Hawkins, W.H.H. Stephens, Robert Hunt, R.L. Harriman, J.C. Stephens, and W.E. Coleman.

Designed as "Modern English" by Miller and Opal of Jefferson City, it was described as "one of the most beautiful pieces of small town architecture in the state." Otto Knabe did the foundation of ashlar stone from Warrensburg. The Gantner Brothers (sons of the early Pilot Grove brick-maker) provided brick work. The bell came from the Presbyterian College For Young Women in Boonville of which Rev. Rea was once president. The Brussels carpet, cypress and cedar woodwork, fanshaped seating, chandeliers, and stained glass remain as originally built.

From the beginning the Church was used by other congregations, for high school graduations, civic and social groups. In 1948 under Rev. G. Wetherell of the Methodist School of Religion, the congregations of the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Christian Churches formally merged and adopted articles to form the Federated Church.

They chose the Bunceton Presbyterian building as a home. In 1949 the first Fall Festival and Lord's Acre Sale was held. This event has been an annual occurrence since.
