

EATON RAPIDS--CHURCHES--
GRIFFITH



Griffith Church Centennial

Aug. 27-28, 1955

Lambert G. McClintic, Pastor

Sunday Morning Service

Prelude ----- Vera Jackson.

Call To Worship

Invocation

Hymn No. 315 ----- "How Firm A Foundation"

Profession of Faith

Scripture Reading ----- Rev. McClintic

Pastoral Prayer ----- Rev. McClintic

Lord's Prayer ----- Congregation

Response ----- Choir

Announcements

Special Music by Choir

Offertory

Doxology

Hymn No. 268 ----- "Are Ye Able"

Sermon ----- Dr. Frank Fitch

Hymn No. 29 - "Savior Again To Thy Dear Name We Raise."

Benediction

Sunday Afternoon Service

Prelude ----- Vera Jackson
Invocation
Hymn No. 256 ----- "Faith of Our Fathers"
Responsive Reading No. 642 ----- 1st Reading
Prayer
Response ----- Choir
Special Music ----- Choir
Sermon ----- Bishop Reed
Hymn No. 551 ----- "God Be With You"
Benediction

History of The Griffith Church

By Ralph W. Griffith

In this year 1955, when we are celebrating the one hundredth anniversary of the building of our church, it is interesting to consider the religious background upon which the church was founded.

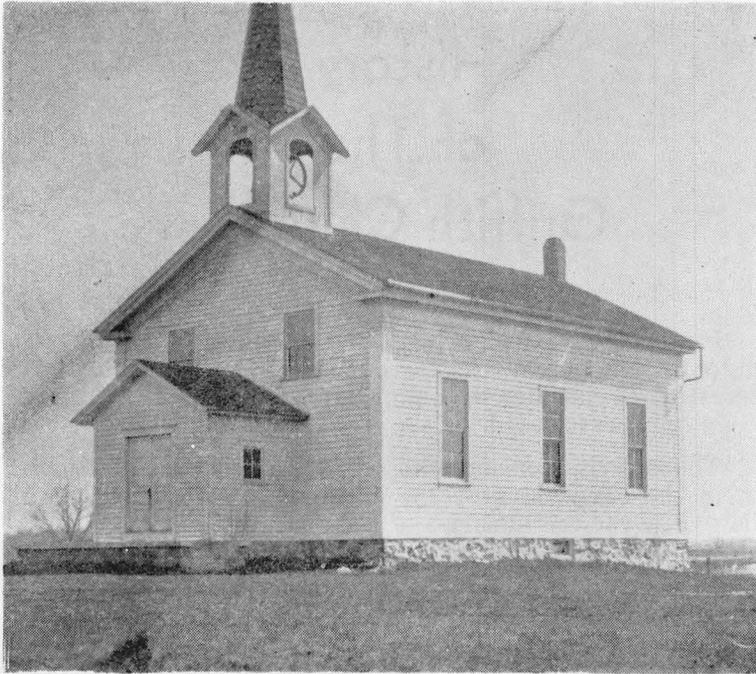
Those early pioneers who settled in this part of Michigan in the early days of the eighteen thirties were soon followed by the missionaries of the church.

In writing this history I have relied very much on a history written in 1890 by Darius B. Pierce, also a history of the Pope Church of a more recent date and the cooperation of Howard Jaycox and others for the data I have used.

The home of Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Reynolds, which was located where Milbourne Bush now lives, was the scene of the first religious meeting ever held in this community. This was in the year 1836. In September of that year a Methodist Conference which was held at Mansfield, Ohio, sent a missionary by the name of Kinnear into this part of Michigan. He was soon followed by others, among them a Mr. Jackson who went on foot, holding meetings, and traveled as far as Grand Rapids.

In October 1838 a class was formed at Griffith with a membership of twenty-one. These were soon joined by other settlers moving in. During these times this class was included in a circuit with Eaton Rapids, Parma, North Parma, Pope and, at one time, Spring Arbor. Some of the preaching was done by local preachers.

Among the early circuit preachers who served this charge was Judson Collins who soon after went as the first missionary to China, and died there when yet a young man.



Griffith Church as remodelled in 1897

He was directly related to Howard and Claud Collins, former residents here.

Meetings during those early days were held in the school house in the Griffith neighborhood. But in 1855, with Isaac Bennett as pastor, a movement was started to build a church. These plans were brought to completion and a new church was dedicated with appropriate ceremonies in February 1855. Not long after this Pope and Griffith were joined in one circuit, which was known for many years as the Tompkins charge.

In 1885 some extensive repairs were made on the church. At that time the church, which faced south, was turned part way around to face the west. The belfry and spire were added at this time.

In 1890 Rev. W. I. Elmer came here as pastor. During his pastorate a very successful revival was held, many con-



Griffith Church as it is now

versions were made, and an Epworth League was formed which prospered for a number of years.

Another outstanding man, Rev. N. P. Brown, came to this charge as pastor in 1897. He was a man with much enthusiasm and possessed with high spiritual ideals. During his pastorate a number of changes in the church were made. The balcony was removed and an entryway was built and some fine new pews were added.

After this the charge was served by a long list of able men as pastors. But gradually the number of members grew so small that the burden of maintaining services could not be borne by the few who were left, so there was a lapse of a few years when no services were held.

In 1920 the Eaton Rapids Parish was formed, which included Griffith and several other country churches. Among

the assistants on the parish was a young man, Rev. William Helrigel, who since that time has always had a warm spot in his heart for the Griffith Church. He has only recently retired as our District Superintendent. This Parish plan lasted only a few years and again we were left with only an occasional supply.

In 1932 Mrs. Andrew Jackson, who with her husband and family had recently moved here, saw the need for a Sunday School and held the first meeting in her front yard. The church was then opened and a Sunday School organized with Howard Jaycox as Superintendent. The following year, by the help of all the men of the community and the backing of the Ladies Aid Society, a basement was excavated. This provided the church with a place for many social gatherings.

In 1939 our church was united on a charge with Pope and Eden, with George Cameron as pastor. This arrangement lasted only two years, at which time Griffith became part of the newly formed Springport Parish. This plan united our church with Springport, Lee Center, Pope and Charlesworth and provided for a resident pastor at Springport, who was assisted by students from Albion College.

About six years ago the Parish was divided. Pope, Charlesworth and Griffith forming the Outer Parish. This plan has worked very successfully and for the past three years we have been very ably served by Rev. Lambert McClintic, who with his wife and family have become endeared to all our people.

In the summer of 1953 the remodeling project, which gave us the fine church building we now enjoy, was started. The plans for a new basement and two additions to the building were drawn by William Clarke and Clarence Foster. By numerous work bees, and the contributions of friends from near and far, the work was accomplished, and the church was re-dedicated Jan. 10th, 1954.

We note with satisfaction the appearance of many younger families who are now active in the church, and through them we are assured that this institution, which has functioned for the past one hundred years, will continue this good work in the future.

Ministers

EARLY CIRCUIT PREACHERS

Rev. Kinnear and Rev. Jackson 1836-1839
1839-1853

Isaac Bennett	Norman Abbot
Levi Warner	J. S. Sutton
C. H. Stringham	R. C. Meeks
David Knox	Amos Wakefield
Henry Chapman	G. T. Root
William E. Bigelo	Samuel Bessy
Hiram Law	J. Summerfield
J. D. Collins	O. D. White

PASTORS FROM 1854 TO THE PRESENT TIME

M. B. Camburn 1854-56.	Uri Mason 1874-77
N. L. Brockway 1856-57	D. C. Woodard 1877-79
Isaac Abbot 1857-59	J. H. Tanner 1879-81
A. Billings 1859-61	E. D. Bacon 1881-84
H. Caldwell 1861-64	J. H. Thomas 1884-87
C. Holdstock 1864-66	William Taylor 1887-90
J. E. McAllister 1865-66	W. I. Elmer 1890-92
J. L. Childs 1866-68	Uri Mason 1892-95
Isaac Taylor 1868-69	Albert Smith 1895-97
M. I. Smith 1869-70	N. P. Brown 1897-1901
A. J. Russell 1870-72	A. S. Williams 1901-04
G. W. Hoag 1872-74	Irving Eagle 1904-06

D. E. Steffe 1906-08

C. J. Kendall 1911-14

A. B. Martin 1908-09

B. F. Wade 1914-16

Frank Fitch 1909-11

James A. Brown 1916-18

Griffith made a part of the Eaton Rapids Parish in 1920-21.

Richard M. Millard resident pastor.

Griffith without a pastor from 1921-26.

Nellie Shorter Kilburn 1926-27

Roy Johns 1927-28

Paul Schanzlin supplied 1936.

George Cameron 1939-41

Our church was made a part of the Springport Parish in 1941 and was served by Clare Snell, James Nixon, Don Carpenter, Robert Kesler, Bernard Lomas, Gerald Salisbury, George Hartman, James Thomas, Lewis Redman and Fred Fisk.

Springport Outer Parish formed in 1949.

Harold Taber 1949-50

John Willis 1950-52

Lambert G. McClintic 1952-55.