

A History of Lindsley Avenue Church of Christ January 2022

The congregation known today as the Lindsley Avenue Church of Christ can trace its history back to about the year 1855, when David Lipscomb, a leader in the 19th century Disciples of Christ “restoration movement” and founder of the Nashville Bible School (now Lipscomb University), conducted a gospel service attended by three women and a young boy. Following this humble beginning, Sunday school classes and preaching services were held at various times and places, in keeping with Lipscomb’s efforts to establish congregations across the growing city where people live.

For about 22 years the group begun by Lipscomb existed as a “mission” church. Although not apparently set in order with elders and deacons, this early group did have an active Sunday School (which was one of the largest among the disciples in Tennessee).

Later, some devoted Christians living in South Nashville purchased a lot on South College Street (now 805 Third Avenue South). The work assumed a definite shape in the spring of 1887 when a regular afternoon Sunday school was begun and preaching services commenced, being conducted in a hall near the corner of Cherry and Mulberry Streets. The brethren engaged in this work decided to raise money to build a meetinghouse on the lot already purchased, and within a short time sufficient finances were available to begin building. The first building could accommodate about 300 people and was later enlarged to a seating capacity of 640.

On Lord’s Day, November 13, 1887, the first worship service of the College Street Christian Church was held in the new building and evangelist T.B. Larimore delivered a sermon from the text “Preach the Word.” Under the preaching of Larimore, the congregation was set in order and David Lipscomb, J.C. Martin, and W.H. Timmons were appointed the congregation’s elders. The first gospel meeting continued for several weeks and resulted in 120 additions. Other preachers that have conducted protracted meetings for the congregation include J.A. Harding, F.W. Smith, E.A. Elam, J.S. Sweeny, Price Billingsley, and Cornelius A. Moore, who became the congregation’s first regular preacher around 1897.

From its very beginning the church was—and continued to be evangelistic—strongly advocating the preaching of the gospel according to the New Testament. It was the first to inaugurate “tent work” which resulted in the establishment of many other congregations across Nashville.

The congregation continued to increase and prosper, and at the end of 33 years was seeking larger facilities. In 1920 the Grace Presbyterian Church building, located one block away on the corner of Lindsley and Second Avenues, was purchased. The two churches “swapped” buildings and an additional \$5,000 was paid to Grace Presbyterian to complete the purchase. At this time the South College Street Church of Christ absorbed the Carroll Street Christian Church forming Lindsley Avenue Church of Christ. On October 17, 1920, F.W. Smith of Franklin, Tennessee, preached the first sermon at the first worship service in the new building with an estimated 1,600 in attendance. J. Leonard Jackson was the local minister and J.C. McQuitty, T.F. Moser, C.C. Derryberry, and J.B. Hughes served as elders.

On July 1, 1923, James A. Allen became minister and served the church in this capacity for 17 years. He then began preaching two Sundays per month and R.C. Williams, one of his converts, began preaching one Sunday a month, leaving the other Sunday to be filled by visiting preachers. In February 1945, Ira North became the regular minister and continued to serve the church for five years. He was succeeded by Jack Burch. Later ministers were Paul Matthews, Bob Anderson, James Lee McDonough, T. Coy Porter, G.E. Woods, James Mcpherson, and Earl Sutton. Other preachers who have conducted gospel meetings

for the Lindsley Avenue church include N.B. Hardeman, H.M. Phillips, Paul Hunton, V.P. Black, and Willie Lemons.

On September 2, 1973, A.T. Pate became the regular minister and served the church for 20 years. On February 7, 1993, Steve Hackney became minister. Paul Norwood became minister in May 1995, and Wayne Bailiff succeeded him as minister in May, 1997. Other preachers included Jim Costello and Mac Mauney. Steve Garrett served the congregation as minister from January 2009 thru December 2012. Laws Rushing began preaching for the church in January 2013 and continued through July 2020. Gene Wright became minister in 2020 and currently serves the congregation in this capacity.

The church continues to be mission-minded, active in the work of teaching and preaching the gospel, and helping the neighborhood. Throughout the many years of its existence, the Lindsley Avenue church has sought to serve the surrounding community and set the Christ-like example of helping “the least of these.” Some of these efforts include Youth Hobby Shop (now Youth Encouragement Services), special classes for the homeless, and collecting and distributing holiday baskets, food, and toys for less fortunate individuals and families. God has blessed the church with love, peace and unity.



David Lipscomb



James A. Harding



Ira North



2000s



2010s

