



PITT CHAPEL
CHURCH OF GOD

Rejoice in the Lord as we
Celebrate 100 Years of Ministry in
Pittsburg, Kansas.

May 26-28, 2023

JOE & JULIE CLOWER, LEAD PASTOR'S

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LOVE • SERVE • SHARE • GROW

A HISTORY OF THE PITTSBURG CHURCH OF GOD

By Richard Smithson
(Former Pastor 1990-1995)

(Information for this history was taken from letters by Bill Bothe (to Pam Baker) and Clara Mead (to Eleanor Lois) and from interviews by Rex Smithson conducted with Bill Bothe, Shirley Harford, Eleanor Lois, Bettal Orender and Zelda Orender. Denominational history was taken from the book "Ae a Mighty Army," by Charles W. Carr. The history has been edited for this publication.)

The Church of God, located at Thirteenth and Tucker in Pittsburg, Kansas, is a part of the denomination known as "Church of God" with international headquarters located in Cleveland, Tennessee.

The church today is the product of years of sacrifice, labor, love and prayers by many different families and individuals. One of those families, who was instrumental in the Church of God being established in Pittsburg, is the Meade family. Those of that family who were involved in the beginning of the church were Pernicie "NEC" (Mead) Orender, Oliver (Ollie) Mead, E.M. (Miner) Meade, Effie (Mead) Coslett, Tennessee "Tennie" (Mead) Hackworth, Hattie (Mead) Richardson and Tommy Mead.

The Meade children were raised in a religious home in Norwood, Missouri. Their father, Riley Mead, was a Baptist minister. His son, E.M. (Miner) Mead, met and married a young lady from Omaha, Arkansas. Through this marriage he was introduced to Pentecost and the Church of God.

Oliver Mead, E.M.'s brother, moved to Sherwin Junction, Kansas from Gainesville, Missouri in November 1913. He met Clara Shutt of Sherwin Junction and in 1915 they were married in Columbus, Kansas. Others of the Mead family were either already in Sherwin Junction, Kansas or moved there in the next few years with the exception of Pernicie (Mead) Orender.

The common thread that had brought them to Sherwin Junction was an opportunity to work on the railroad. Effie (Mead) Coslett's husband, Bill was a section foreman on the Missouri Pacific Railroad. The threads of "blood relation" and "common work" would become even stronger as another strand would be added through the events that would follow.

E.M. Mead moved to Sherwin Junction from Omaha, Arkansas in 1920. He had already been influenced by Pentecost and had received the Pentecostal experience, which is the outpouring of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues.

He held a revival in Sherwin Junction using people's homes as a place of worship, and many were saved and filled with the Holy Ghost.

At this time, those who were in Pentecost, or in holiness movements, were ridiculed and even outright persecuted. Ollie Mead's wife, Clara (Shutt) Mead, experienced the persecution that went along with being in a Pentecostal church.

Her family disowned her, and even when a funeral service was held in the Christian Church for one of her children, her family refused to sit on the same side of the building. They did not want any association with those "tongue speakers".

In spite of persecution, they refused to be daunted. After receiving salvation in the revival, they rode to Cherry Creek, and were baptized in water. A Brother James officiated at this service. This group of people continued to meet in houses and prayed for the Lord to send someone to organize them into a church.

The Lord answered their prayers by sending a Reverend Cottman from the Church of God General Headquarters in Cleveland, Tennessee. He organized the church in 1920. There were twenty-one people that joined the church in Sherwin Junction, and the new clerk was Effie (Mead) Coslett. In 1922 T.C. Mead was listed as clerk and they had fourteen members.

People began to move from Sherwin Junction as early as late 1920 or early 1921 because of their jobs, and by 1923 the Church of God in Sherwin Junction, Kansas, had to be disbanded. Some of those like Ollie Mead moved to Missouri and were instrumental in starting and strengthening churches in the southwest part of Missouri.

They became involved in starting another church, and this time it was located at 701 East 7th Street in Pittsburg, Kansas. John A. Hackworth and his wife Tennessee "Tennie" (Mead) Hackworth rented a store building at this address. Others of these early members were Effie (Mead) Coslett and Fred and Elzona "Zona" (Hackworth) Snatler. E.M. Mead is listed as an Evangelist in 1922.

A Reverend Pinkley served as Pastor of this new church from 1921 to 1923. He also served as state overseer of Missouri in 1921 and 1922. As the young church struggled for survival, there were clouds of discontent on the horizon throughout the Church of God denomination that would have an adverse effect upon this new congregation.

The problem that was disturbing Church of God members and ministers involved money. A.J. Tomlinson had been elected General Overseer of the Church of God in 1909 and he served until 1923. He was the first General Overseer of the Church, and with this election they failed to establish a procedure for length of tenure and failed to establish a provision for any more elections of General Overseer.

Tomlinson was a man of ebullience, optimism, and forthrightness, and the members of the church had an extreme degree of confidence in his ability and honesty. Because of this confidence in Tomlinson, the church took its first definite step down the road to confusion. They voted to establish a General Headquarters Treasury, into which all the tithes (10% of an individual's income) were to be placed. Seven men would regulate and make or order the distribution of these funds among the ministers of the church according to their needs, and according to the efficiency of their work, and according to the responsibility of their position in which they served.

This means that all of the tithes that were paid into the local church would be sent to General Headquarters in Cleveland, Tennessee, and the seven-man board would disburse those funds back to the ministers. The board was never established, and Tomlinson personally handled the matter of collecting and disbursing money.

From the very beginning of this operation, many ministers received very little or no remuneration for their services. One such minister was E.M. Mead, who was working in the church at Pittsburg, and was serving as an evangelist. Local congregations when they found that their pastors were going hungry, gave them collections of food and money, and loyally continued to send their tithes to General Headquarters.

A sense of insecurity and disquiet became apparent throughout the church. An auditor's request after the September 1922 General Assembly showed a shortage of \$14,141.82. Further investigation showed a total of \$31,000.00 that had been misappropriated. An Elder's Council was called by the Executive Committee to convene in June and its purpose was to consider these matters. At this council, called the "June Council," Tomlinson was impeached.

These events affected the whole denomination, and some ministers and complete congregations followed Tomlinson. Many people believed that he was innocent of any wrongdoing and Tomlinson, instead of admitting guilt and seeking to be restored to the church, started his own denomination, the Church of God of Prophecy. Pinkley, the pastor of the Pittsburg church, had been in Cleveland and attended the June Council, and he was one of the ministers who opted to follow Tomlinson.

Pinkley came back to the local church in Pittsburg and persuaded many of the members to stay with him and become a part of the Church of God of Prophecy. Others that remained loyal to the Church of God were left without a building, or a pastor. They scattered and began to attend various holiness churches, and some of these even traveled to Joplin, Missouri to attend the Church of God in Joplin.

Pinkley's group pressured those who were indecisive and told those who followed him to not have any fellowship with those who attended the Church of God.

This meant that some families were denied the right to visit their own parents and in-laws. This pressure was instrumental in decisions to place membership in the Church of God, and to reject Pinkley's group.

Because of this dissention over former General Overseer Tomlinson, the Church of God in Pittsburg was now without a building and a pastor. They had to start over and on November 30, 1924, the Church of God was again set in order. The new location at 2201 North Tucker, Pittsburg, Kansas was in an area known as "Shantytown". The moderator of this service was Wilma Artist, and the new pastor was E.M. Mead. The State Overseer involved in setting the church in order was John Burke.

There was an independent group of people using this building for their place of worship. When the Church of God was set in order, they deeded the building to the Church of God with headquarters in Cleveland, Tennessee, but the land was never deeded over to the church. The land belonged to a man named Dr. Dray. This oversight would cause some problems for the church. This congregation, who had already faced hardship, was again going to face a severe trial. Again, they would almost be destroyed.

When the church found that they did not own the ground where the building was setting, they began to look for a place to relocate. They bought two lots at 1113 North Tucker from a Mr. Batefuhr for \$250. They planned to move the building from 2201 North Tucker to 1113 North Tucker.

The people of Shantytown became irate and tried to stop the church from moving its building. They also persecuted the members of the church. They put padlocks on the door and on some occasions would throw dirt through the windows at the people as they worshiped. Others would interrupt the orderly process of service with questions, and one even defecated inside the church building between the pews. The church endeavored to keep their building and even hired lawyers to fight for them in court, but before it was all settled someone set the building on fire and they were not able to save it.

With an arsonist burning the building, the church was again left without a place to worship, but they were determined to survive. They purchased a schoolhouse in Litchfield, Kansas, and dismantled the building. The materials were used to erect a building at 1113 North Tucker. The year was 1935.

The first building was a thirty-foot by forty-foot hull. The floor was "chat," and there was no ceiling or inside walls. The outside of the building was rough lumber, and there were cracks between the boards large enough to see cars going down the street, but for the people involved it was the "House of God".

From the time they relocated to 1112 North Tucker, the church stabilized and began to move forward. They still had periods of persecution and hardships, but they were able to rise above them. They had to leave windows open in the summer to have air flowing through the building, and a crowd would gather outside to watch the "Pentecostals" worship. The custodian caught the new church on fire twice while tending to the stove, but they were able to put the fire out without too much damage to the building.

Around 1950 a new sanctuary was built on the south side of the building. Again in 1965 they added even more to the church, with the building of an even larger sanctuary measuring approximately forty feet by one-hundred feet. Since then, they had added more to the building, including a fellowship hall.

YOU ARE INVITED!

PITT CHAPEL CHURCH OF GOD 100 YEAR CELEBRATION

Celebrating 100 years of ministry in Pittsburg!



Pastors
Joe & Julie Clower

MAY 26-28

Friday & Saturday at 6:30 pm
Sunday at 10:30 am & 6:30 pm



Special Singing each service & catered meal after Sunday AM Service



FRIDAY SPEAKER
Former Pastor
Richard Smithson



SATURDAY SPEAKER
Former Pastor
John Mark Smithson



SUNDAY AM SPEAKER
Administrative Bishop
Tim Cushman



SUNDAY PM SPEAKER
Youth & Discipleship
Director Casey Cook

www.pittchapel.org 1107 N. Tucker St. Pittsburg, KS

CELEBRATION SCHEDULE

Friday Evening May 26th 6:30pm Former Pastor Richard Smithson
Saturday Evening May 27th 6:30pm..... Former Pastor Mark Smithson
Sunday Morning May 28th 10:30am..... Administrative Bishop Tim Cushman
Sunday Evening May 28th 6:30pm Youth & Discipleship Director Casey Cook

Following Sunday morning service, we will have a celebration dinner in honor of the past, present and future of Pitt Chapel Church of God. We like to invite everyone to come and fellowship and share your memories as we look toward the vision and future of our wonderful church.

STANDARD SCHEDULE

Sunday: 9:45am Coffee Shop Opens / 10:30am Worship Service /
11:00am Children and Toddler's Church

Monday: 6:30pm Intercessory Prayer in the Sanctuary

Wednesday: 6:00pm Dinner / 6:30pm Classes

Thursday: 9:30am Off-Campus Bible Study