

## Recent History

There have been several "significant " events that have occurred at Witt Church in the past few years. Following is a time line of those events. I want to start with the pastors that have been the shepherds since Ms. Rhoads compiled her book.

1978-1983 Jerry Heflin  
1983-1986 Clifford Haynes (Interim)  
1986-1989 Michael Brooks  
1989-1996 Mike Sullivan  
1996 1997 Steve Taylor  
1997-1999 Dr. Clyde Martin  
1996-2005 Dr. William Palmer  
2006-Present Dr. Doug Brown

The Deacon body that have faithfully served are:

In 1989 Herbert Collins was Chairman and served with Everett Purkey, E.L. Rhoads, Doug Rouse, Harold Rouse and Lynn Rouse.

Lynn Rouse served until his death in May, 1991

Tom Rouse served until his death in December, 2015

Everett Purkey served until his death in May, 2013

Harold Rouse served until his death in May, 2019

Jack Fleenor served until his death in July, 2020

Stanley Wilder served until his death in December, 2023

Tom Rouse, served as chairman until his death. In those intervening years deacon were:

Richard Stickley served as chairman following Tom's death. Deacons during those years were.

Rick Rouse, Jack Fleenor, Jim McKinney, Marvin Campbell, Harold Rouse, Everette Purkey, and Stanley Wilder, Ken Estes and Gary Templin. The current Deacon board consists of

Ken Estes – chairman, Marvin Campbell – treasure, Gary Templin, and Doug Rouse.

Christine Allen served as Church Secretary until 2003 when Elaine Estes assumed the duties.

- In 1991 the Lottie Moon Christmas offering goal was \$300. In 2006 the Witt Church Lottie Moon goal has improved so much that the church was #1 in Percapitia giving basis of 118.56 per member. In addition to the cooperative giving, the church gave \$11,977 to Lottie Moon, \$4,450 to the Annie Armstrong.
- A new Organ was purchased in 1993 but lighting destroyed it. In 2013 it was replaced and new speakers installed. The cost of the organ was around \$26,000.
- 1997 Ken and Elaine Estes purchased a new grand piano for the church. It was timed to be used by the composer Elmo Mercer at a concert he performed at Witt.

- A Church constitution prepared by Marvin Campbell.
- In the year 2000, Garrick Gunter performed an Eagle Scout project to erect a bell tower to house the original church bell.
- In 2003 we added a new steeple to the church and the old steeple was given to Midland Baptist Church in Shelbyville, TN. Several members also went to the church during the construction process to help in the building.
- 2003 A new bus was purchased for use by the youth and seniors for \$49,000.
- The Pauline People Kinnick family donated a carillon chime to the church in 2004 and it still continues to be a great addition to the Witt Community.
- In 2006 it was discovered that the rafters of the main part of the church were pulling apart and the walls were spreading apart. The chapel was abandoned for services and we met in the Fellowship Hall for several months while the walls were pulled back together and the roof repaired. During that time new carpet was installed, new shingles on the roof, a new audio system and video projectors were added to enhance the worship experience. The cost of the improvements was around \$82,000. God had financially already prepared the church for the crisis.
- Prior to the discovery of the roof structure issue the the church was considering purchasing some land behind the church to add to the cemetery and possibly expand the church building. When the roof failed we abandoned the plan, but without any contact except by the Lord the Lois Hill family called the church and donated the additional land to the church.
- In 2006 the Church began to sponsor a “Trunk of Treats” around Halloween as a evangelistic event and it continues today as a great attraction for children.
- In 2007 the Church began to participate in the Cancer Relay for life. We had several members that had been touched by this disease and the participation was driven by our member Cheryl Taylor. Cherry continued to lead the program until her death in 2018.
- A car show was started in 2010 as an outreach program and has proved to be a very successful event and the church has gained members as a result of this program.
- In 2011 a Rouse Road Christmas parade was begun and Witt Church participated with a float until the parade ended over a decade later
- Vacation Bible school has always been a big outreach event at Witt however in 2012 during VBS, the bus used to transport children to the church was parked on the hill. The brakes failed and the bus crashed through the west wall of the building.. One of the stained glass windows was damaged and when the wall was repaired covers for all the windows were added to protect them from damage.
- We started participating in the Christmas Shoe box outreach drive and help send numerous boxes to lost children around the world. More recently we have prepared backpacks for outreach to children in the US.

- Our bus ministry suffered a real setback in 2012, the church bus engine failed. The cost to repair the bus was estimated to be \$12,000. This was more than the bus was worth. We decided to not purchase another bus due to the cost and the extensive new laws put in place over church buses.
- In 2012 we added a covered picnic area and basketball court in the back to start an outdoor youth ministry. For a few years we participated in a program called Upward Sports. The event offered Basketball, Cheer-leading, Volleyball and even a horseback riding program.
- Music has always been a big part of Witt Church and the church has been blessed with many talented musicians. The Choir has been led in recent years by Linda Fleenor and for the past several years by Angie Stickley. We continued the tradition of a special music program at Christmas that continues to fill the church and she began another music program, called the “Hippie Halleluiah” It invites musicians from the community and the music is generally a more contemporary style that has a Christian Love theme.
- In 2020 the Covid pandemic hit our area and the entire church went digital for an extended period of time. Pastor used video technology and for several months the service was broadcast on line. When we resumed we no longer met on Sunday night or Wednesday night. Wednesday night prayer meeting stayed digital and we continued to broadcast the Sunday morning service. This has proved to be a great outreach and the numbers of watchers has been huge.
- Another building problem was discovered in 2022, when it was observed the main stained glass window was loose due to a sinking of the building. Contractors were hired and stabilized the building. The cause for the damage was the rain drainage system for the roof and it was replaced.