

Aldie Presbyterian Church

Meetings are 1st 3rd and 5th Sunday of the month, 9:45 AM

The Aldie Presbyterian Church had its origin in the Middleburg Free Church in the early 19th century. On April 27, 1809, the Middleburg Presbyterian Church was founded and held one service per month in the Free Church Building (now Middleburg Baptist, ed.) It was the last church to leave that building, moving in 1848. Prior to 1844, each denomination: Baptist, Methodist, Episcopal, and Presbyterian supplied the pulpit for one Sunday each month. Members of all congregations were welcome to attend all services. From 1844-1848, Baptists and Presbyterians shared the church on an assigned basis.

In 1848, the Presbyterian congregation moved to a similar Free or Community church in Aldie but continued to use the name Middleburg Presbyterian Church. The building and land on which the Union Free Church stood were transferred November 9, 1848 by William Nolan and Catherine, his wife, to John Moore, Thomas M. Boyle, Robert A. Ish, Hamilton Rogers, William Rawlings, and their successors forever, as Trustees. The building was to be used as a House of Public Worship, free to Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians and the lot to be appropriated for and used exclusively as a graveyard. No picture or plans of the church exist but it is recorded as being a brick church. Each denomination supplied the pulpit for one Sunday each month.

Church records were lost or destroyed during the War Between the States. The minutes of September 19, 1869 record: "The church was without a pastor at the close of the war and had been without any regular preaching during the war." As with most other churches, the Union Free Church in Aldie was used as a hospital during the war. A number of Union soldiers were buried in the lot behind the church, their graves marked by field stones which have since been removed.

In 1865, the church was reorganized and the congregation used the Union Free Church jointly with the Baptists and Methodists, having services the third Sunday in each month. Reverend Dr. A.D. Polloch was invited to preach as the stated pastor, and though never installed, ministered faithfully to the congregation until ill health compelled him to give up preaching. Dr. Polloch passed on to his reward in April 1873.

In July, 1874, the session called Rev. Henry Branch to preach one Sunday each month at a salary of \$100 per year, which was always paid in full. The members were twelve in number, headed by Colonel Hamilton Rogers. In the minutes of the session there is a statement that "there is no Sunday School, there being no material for the formation of

one..."

In February, 1876, a very interesting meeting was held by Reverend Dr. William Dinwiddie of Alexandria, Virginia. Session minutes record, "[his] preaching made a deep impression upon the large and attentive congregation which attended all the services." Several new members joined the church during this meeting.

In 1882, Colonel Hamilton Rogers, who had long been an Elder in the church and universally beloved and respected in the community was "called up higher". In 1883, Mr. J. E. Douglas was elected Elder in his place. Through the next fifty-three years, Mr. Douglas labored zealously and unceasingly in the interest of the church and all Christian and community enterprises. Though pastors came and went, his beloved church was always Mr. Douglas' especial charge.

In 1891, the picturesque and interesting old building was condemned and all three denominations erected new church buildings. On November 29, the congregation of the Middleburg Presbyterian Church adopted the following resolution: "resolved, that the Moderator (Rev. A.B. Carrington) appoint a committee to take the necessary steps to try to get possession and good title to the property and then to take the necessary steps to try to build a House of Worship on the lot." The Moderator appointed as the committee J.E. Douglas, D. Bruin, E.G. Gibson, and N.P. House.

By a deed dated February 24, 1892, the property was sold by the Trustees of the Union Free Church to the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Aldie for \$5.00. On March 18, 1892, the Building Committee met and decided to raise money for the building fund through subscriptions. Minutes record: " It was resolved that we do not begin to build until we ascertain about the amount of money we can raise and then build so as not to contract debt."

Plans for the church were selected, funds raised, and the building proceeded expeditiously. The total cost of purchase and construction of the new church came to \$1701.52. Dedication services were held in the new church on November 27, 1892, led by Rev. T. H. Rice of the Second Presbyterian Church of Alexandria, VA.

In spite of its heroic achievements in obtaining clear title to the land, raising funds to build a new church, and completing the structure in less than one year, there were periods of discouragement for the Presbyterians. In its annual report to the Presbytery is the following notation: "We would ask the prayer and sympathy of the Presbytery for our beloved pastor, Rev. A.B. Carrington, who has been sick almost the entire winter, and is now absent from home in hope of regaining his health, and also for our little

church in its destitution.”

At its April, 1893 meeting, the Presbytery changed the name of the church to Aldie Presbyterian Church. In May, 1894, a new pastor, Rev. I.N. Campbell was called to preach at the church and continued to do so for the next thirteen years. A number of new members were enrolled during this period.

Prior to 1892, there had been no Sabbath School. Children were instructed at home in Bible and Catechism. In its April, 1892 report to the Presbytery, the church noted that a Sabbath School had been organized and listed an enrollment of 25 scholars and 4 teachers. It was also noted that: “the school was only conducted for seven months. It is the first Sabbath School in connection with the church of which we can find any record and it has been conducted with remarkable success when we consider the obstacles in the way.”

Membership in the Sabbath School fluctuated between 19 and 26 until 1917, when no Sabbath School was again reported. In 1919, a Union Sunday School, attended by children from the Protestant churches was organized and met in the Aldie Presbyterian Church until 1962. By that time, each of the other denominations had organized Sunday Schools within their own churches and the Presbyterians had no young children to instruct.

As an adjunct to the Sabbath School, youth groups and women’s organizations were a part of church life. In 1936, the Women of the Church was organized and though small in number, was active for several decades. In addition to studying the Bible, the group contributed regularly to the Presbyterian Church projects and missions as well as to local charities.

From time to time, memorial contributions have been made to the church in honor of deceased members. In 1976, the Women of the Church was authorized to use these funds to purchase stained glass windows for the three round windows in the building. Mrs. S. Gilberson Pruitt submitted designs and was asked to install the windows. The windows were dedicated “to all persons who have been instrumental in the life and work of Aldie Presbyterian Church” in a service held on October 17, 1976. The themes of the windows depict the Resurrection (the Risen Lord is represented by the lily), the Trinity (its symbol is intertwined with that for eternity), and the Written Word depicted by the open Bible).

On July 2, 1989, a fourth stained glass window over the entrance to the church was dedicated to the memory of Dr. James Gibson. This window incorporates the Celtic Cross (frequently used as a symbol of the Presbyterian Church), a dove of peace, and a

deer. It was designed and installed by Mr. Charles Benanti, formerly of Leesburg, Virginia.

Throughout its history, Aldie Presbyterian Church has used several approaches to supplying the pulpit. At various times, pastors have been shared with Floris, Waterford, Delaplane, and Ashburn Presbyterians Churches. Students from Union Seminary in Richmond served at times between 1951 and 1965. Since 1970, chaplains based in Washington, D.C. with the Chief of Chaplains Office, U.S. Navy, have come to Aldie on the first, third, and fifth Sundays of each month.

A partial list of pastors.

(No records of pastors exist for the period before the War Between the States. Records until 1925 are incomplete. There are a few gaps after 1937.)

1865-1873 Dr. A.D. Polloch

1874- ? Rev. Henry Branch

?- 1893 Rev. A. B. Carrington

1894- 1903 Rev. I. N. Campbell

1925-1927 Rev. L. R. Alexander

1928-1937 Rev. Joseph Hagins

1946-1948 Rev. Henry L. Willis

1950-1952 Rev. Smythe

1956-1961 Rev. Barton Helmuth

1962-1963 Rev. Frank L. Arnold

1965-1969 Rev. J. B. Shackelford

1969-1972 Chaplain Richard G. Hutcheson (later Deputy Chief of Navy Chaplains)

1972-1973 Chaplain Holly

1973-1974 Chaplain Herbert Goetz

1974-1975 Chaplain George Alexander

v1974-1976 Chaplain David White (later Chief of Navy Chaplains)

1975-1976 Chaplain George Scheeley

1980-1981 Rev. Roger Verley

1981-1982 Chaplain Richard Black
1982-1983 Chaplain Carroll Barthlomew

v1984-1985 Chaplain Eli Takesian (The Chaplain, U.S. Marine Corps)

1988-1989 Chaplain Robert Duke

1990-1991 Chaplain Steve Rimmer

1992-1993 Chaplain David Shaffer

1994-1996 Chaplain Robert Williams

1996-2001 Chaplain Jack Lea

2001- Chaplain Gil Gibson