

Eldorado Universalist Church
Brief Church Minutes
1907 – 1992

June 1855. First Ohio State Convention held at the Monroe Church.

June 1892. Ohio State Convention held at old church building in Eldorado.

November 17, 1907. On Tuesday evening, a gavel made from a piece of timber from the old Monroe Church was presented to the church trustees. One was also presented to the Montgomery Associates. They were made by Joe Sterling.

The last preaching services held in the old brick Church was on the third Sunday of **June 1908**. Morning service conducted by Rev. J.A. Stoner; Evening J. H. Blackford, son of Rev. J. H. Blackford.

On **June 24, 1908**, J. H. Morgan, Inspector of Public buildings for the State, condemned the old church as unsafe for public use.

Held our services in the Kimmel Hall from June 1908 – Oct. 1909. Cornerstone of new church laid Sunday **June 6, 1909**. A good crowd in attendance. Song “Congregation,” “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name.” Prayer by Rev. J. H. Blackford. Scripture reading, Rev. Sara L. Stoner, the Pastor. “The Basic Principles of Universalism” was given by Dr. B. F. Beane. Address “Cornerstones & Foundations” by Rev. Sara L. Stoner. After singing by Y.P.C.U., a historical sketch of the church was given by Rev. J. H. Blackford, who was the loved pastor for nearly twenty-five years. Cornerstone was next laid by the Y.P.C.U. by placing numerous articles in the cornerstone.

The Montgomery Association and Dedication of the new church convened from **Oct. 7 to Oct. 10, 1909** inclusive. Sunday Oct. 10 being the Dedication.

The entire indebtedness on the church was more than raised. Everybody felt very happy to think we had such a beautiful little church and were very thankful to all those who were so generous.

It was a day long to be remembered.

October 16, 1910. We held our first anniversary of the Dedication of the church. Very impressive services, appropriate for the occasion, were held in the forenoon.

Dinner was served in the basement of the church, of which over one hundred members and friends partook. The afternoon was spent in a social way and short talks and songs.

The evening was spent socially and with short talks and music.

In **June 1912**, the 3rd Ohio State Convention was held in Eldorado. Over 200 delegates were present during the week.

In **October 1914** the Montgomery Association was held. A good crowd and a fine program throughout.

In **January 1915**, Rev. Ira McLeaughin of Springfield helped the pastor, Rev. Sara L. Stoner in a week's meeting. A number of members received.

In **December 1915**, Rev. F. B. Bishop of Columbus assisted in a week of meetings. Two members received.

In **January 1917**, two-weeks of Evangelistic Services were held. The pastor, Rev. Sara L. Stoner, was assisted by Rev. F.B. Bishop, State Superintendent, of Columbus, Rev. Rowland of New Madison, Rev. J. H. Blackford, and Albert N. Leindsey of Philadelphia, who had charge of the music. It was said by many to be the best meetings ever held in Eldorado. Three members were received.

October 28, 1917. Held Home-Coming. a large crowd in attendance. A fine time. About 150 took dinner. This service closed the pastorate of Rev. Sara L. Stoner, which covered a period of 14 years.

An Easter Service and Dedication of Service Flag was held at the church on Sunday evening **March 31, 1918**. A patriotic cantata "America's Easter Guest: The Cross Beside the Flag" was rendered in a splendid manner. The service flag contained seven stars for the following boys in the service: Hale Agler, Eddie Kimmel, Harry Juday, Robert Wellbaum, Carrol Shewman, Charles Blackford and Lee Knapp.

Other names added to the Service Flag were: Floyd Knapp, Chester Blackford, Lee Johnson, James Johnson, Robert Ritz, Charles Stayton, and Mrs. Hattie Bidwell (nee Rule), Red Cross nurse.

Hale Agler, Eddie Kimmel, Robert Wellbaum, Carrol Shewman, and Charles Blackford all served “overseas” for several months.

An appropriate service was held on Sunday evening **July 20, 1919**, by Rev. Thomas Murray, pastor, to demobilize the Service Flag.

Rev. Thomas M. Murray began his pastorate on Sunday, **July 6, 1919**. An all-day service was held at the church with basket dinner at the noon-hour. The day was greatly enjoyed by all.

A two-week service of Evangelistic meetings were held **June 4-18, 1920**. The pastor, Rev. T.M. Murray, was assisted by Rev. F. B. Bishop, State Superintendent, Rev. Miller of Chicago, and Rev. Rowland of New Madison.

On Sunday, **October 3, 1920**, we held a Home-Coming and Rally Day. The services were well-attended and greatly enjoyed by all who were present. The pastor, Rev. Murray, preached two fine sermons on “A Worthwhile Religion” and “The Two Voices.”

A week of Evangelistic meetings closed on Sunday, **Dec. 5, 1920**. A basket-dinner was a feature of the meeting on Sunday, Dec. 5. This was given in honor of the pastor, Rev. T. M. Murray, who left on a trip to England on Dec. 7. The different organizations presented Mr. Murray with some valuable presents. During his absence, Rev. F. W. Millar, D.D. of Chicago, will take charge of the work.

The pastor, Rev. Murray, closed a two-week’s service on **Feb. 19, 1922**. Good meetings were held, although many things detracted from the meetings. Four members were received.

Rev. J. H. Blackford, pastor emeritus, died at his home in Eldorado, **July 6, 1922**. His life and influence were greatly missed in the community and church. The large funeral testified to his many friends both far and near. The funeral services were conducted by Rev. Sara L. Stoner, former pastor, and Rev. Thomas M. Murray, pastor.

Montgomery Association was held in church **October 6, 7, 8, 1922**. Fine meetings were held. The church had been all newly decorated and made a fine appearance for the occasion.

Held all-day service in church **Jan. 7, 1923**. Good attendance.

Hattie Wellbaum, who had been clerk for about 15 years, passed away **Feb. 25, 1923**, after a week's illness. Her funeral was conducted by her pastor, Mr. Murray, who spoke of her faithfulness to duty. She will be missed, and her place will be hard to fill.

June 1938. Ohio State Convention held in Eldorado.

June 1945. Ohio State Convention held in Eldorado.

1947. Parsonage purchased by Ohio State Convention.

1 st Cost	\$3600.00	by convention
1 st Remodeling	\$1600.00	by convention
Solicited Funds	423.00	(by Mr. Hartley) & all members Eldorado Church
<u>2nd Remodeling</u>	<u>\$2774.69</u>	
Total	\$8397.09	

The value of the property was appraised at \$6000.00 and church purchased it from the State, the church paying for the share of expense that State owed—namely \$3760.00. It was voted to pay \$25 per month—interest at 3% annually. At the convention in Akron in 19__ before the merger of the Unitarian and Universalist groups became effective [in 1961], the Ohio Universalist Convention presented the Eldorado Universalist Church the deed for the parsonage, debt-free.

(According to the *Eldorado Bee*, Oct. 1909, original cost of church building constructed in 1909 was \$6500.00.)

June 1, 1954 Basement and church remodeling and repair

June 1 through June 30, 1956	Basement	\$9605.69
	Restroom	\$2384.55

1953 – 1956 Rev. Wells Behee came to Eldorado from Woodstock, O. bringing a wife, Mary, and two young daughters. He also served our sister

church at New Madison, and he and his wife created our first & joint newsletter christened “The Leaf,” which has become very popular.

1956 Rev. Joseph F. Nerad came to Eldorado with family, wife, two sons. He also ministered to the New Madison church as well, teaching school at Monroe for one term; later resigned and moved to Oxford, he & his wife both entering Miami University.

June 1958. Ohio State Convention held in Eldorado.

1960 – 1964 Rev. George LaPoint & family, including wife and two sons, ministered to our group. He was a former college professor. Came with the intention of retiring, but later took a pastorate in Orange, New Jersey.

Sept. 18, 1962 Request for aid to churches
from Ohio State Convention \$3000.00

1965 Parsonage 3rd Remodeling before the Michel family moved in. Total cost \$645.90 donations borrowed [sic]. **1966-1968** Additional basement remodeling.

1965 Rev. Raymond Michel and family, a wife, son & daughter. A former minister in Preble County (Christian at Campbellstown) Mr. Michel arrived as the minister of both Eldorado and New Madison. There were approximately 10 people in attendance at each church in September of 1965. Soon there were nearly 100 at each church service with youth groups, junior and senior choirs, and large church school attendance of around 50.

Rev. Michel also served as the Director of Programs at the ball park. Under his leadership participants in programs increased from about 50 to over 400. He directed men’s and women’s programs as well as children and youth.

For 26 years of his ministry, there was always a harmonious relationship between the church and the community. There was always an amiable experience among all church people and groups. A harmonious relationship existed between the Eldorado and New Madison church people.

Rev. Michel always preached a liberal message that became attractive to not only theists but atheists. He said he was proud to be an atheist but was also proud to work graciously with theists.

No congregation could have a more beloved wife of a minister than Beth. She was brilliant, observant, gracious, very generous in every way and extremely understanding. All this, plus a tremendous sense of humor.

She edited “The Leaf.” It was acknowledged to be one of the finest newsletters of our whole denomination.

Ray and Beth retired as of **September 1992**. It was a 26-year ministry of which the positive and caring shared between the minister and the people will be a long-lasting influence