

Donivan Church

There is a small log church, painted white with a green metal roof, standing on the west side of Bella Vista at the corner of Highlands Blvd and Rocky Dell Hollow Road. It is now called the Donivan Church.

In the early 1930's, local resident Frank Hacker had a vision...it came to him that he should build a church that looked like a cross, a shape that (if he counted both inner and outer corners) would give it twelve corners, to represent the twelve apostles and the twelve tribes of Israel. He enlisted the help of Fred Reese, and they became the founders of the church.

Ground was broken on October 3, 1934, with the first service held on June 9, 1935. The church stands not far to the southwest of the site where the old Donivan school was located, which had been previously used for church services.

Although Hacker called it the "Church of the Kingdom of God," it soon became known as the "Blackjack Church," because of the blackjack oak logs used in its construction. Several years ago, the congregation changed the name to the Donivan Full Gospel Church, to keep the Donivan community name alive.

Two pot-bellied wood-burning stoves heated the church through the 1940's, later replaced by a propane gas stove. In the early 1950s, electricity was added. In the late 1990's, the gas stove was removed, and the church was outfitted with central air and heat, with carpet on the floor for the first time.

A second building was built for Sunday school classes in the 1960's, now called Fellowship Hall. Two out-houses stood at the rear of the property until the 1970's, when porta-potties were set up. Bathrooms were added to the Hall in the late 1980's.

Several logs on the church building were replaced over the years, but a few years ago, a major renovation was undertaken. Some of the logs were bulging out, and that was cracking the sheet rock on the inside of the building. All the lower logs were replaced, a foundation was added, tiles were removed from the original ceiling which was then whitewashed, and a metal roof was added.

Sunday school is held every Sunday morning at 10 a.m., with worship following at 11 a.m. Sunday night services stopped being held around 2000, and Wednesday night services stopped before that, in the late 1980's. The congregation formerly

met also every Saturday night, but stopped that in the late 1970's. Now once a month on Saturday evening, visiting preachers and singers are invited for a service, which is followed by a pot luck dinner in Fellowship Hall.

Church co-founder Fred Reese died in 1970 but his great-grandson Jody Hingle has followed in his footsteps and is now the church's pastor. Although the congregation is small, they are enthusiastic and committed. The Donovan Full Gospel Church of the Kingdom of God is obviously a vibrant and thriving church!



When first built, the church was called the "Church of the Kingdom." Local young men sawed down blackjack oak trees in the nearby woods while a man named John Golden, who had a large team of mules and a wagon, hauled the logs to the sawmill to be cut to the proper dimensions and then back to the church site. Mr. Golden's funeral was the first one held in the church, in 1937. Photo provided by Sharon Herrington.



Today the church is painted white and has a green metal roof.



A bird's eye view of the building makes obvious the equilateral cross design.

Source: <http://gis.bentoncountyar.gov/parcels/>



Picture 3: Frank Hacker and Fred Reese greet visitors not long after their new church was built. Photo provided by Sharon Herrington.



Picture 4: In addition to preaching, Pastor Jody Hingle and his wife Elaine also provide some of the music during worship services. The altar and pulpit are original to the church, made by Mr. Hacker in 1935. Photo courtesy of Xyta Lucas.