

Fourth Avenue Church of Christ Franklin, TN
By Hart Johnson - 1986
“A Treasury of Tennessee Churches”



In 1830, when the temperature was near zero, Alexander Campbell preached in the Baptist Church, the Presbyterian Church, and the Masonic Hall where Episcopalians were worshipping. In 1833, **Joel Anderson** and Andrew Craig preached in Franklin, and later that year, Absalom Adams and Tolbert Fanning organized the Church of Christ in Franklin with seventeen members.

In 1836 a building lot was purchased: the deed was registered in 1838. The first house of worship was begun in 1851, and the first service was held there September 5, 1852. Two sermons lasting two hours were delivered to four hundred listeners.

The building was made of brick and featured arched windows, a bell tower, and two front doors. It was damaged during the Civil War by Union troops, who used it for barracks and a hospital. It was not restored until 1885.

In 1914, the building was renovated and a larger one created. It was an unusual style with a long octagonal tower and arches on the front. It was damaged by a tornado in 1926 and razed in 1927. The third church, on the same site, was built in a vernacular Greek Revival style and served the congregation until 1978, when the present building of modified Greek Revival style was completed and the old one was demolished. The stained glass windows originally installed in the 1928 one are now in the present church.

The bell which hangs in a small tower in the present church hung in the original church built in 1852 and in the second building of 1914. While the third building was under construction in 1927, the bell was sold and the proceeds placed in the general fund. In 1930, members expressed a desire to locate the bell and place it in the church again. Dr. Horace German led a search for it and a Mr. Fox, who had purchased it, gave it to the church.

During the influenza epidemic of 1918 when indoor meetings were banned, the members of this church met regularly for worship on the front steps.

This church has been known as Franklin Church of Christ, Downtown Church of Christ, Christian Church, and, since 1950, Fourth Avenue Church of Christ.

*See Family Line of Joel B. Andrew Anderson – Chapter 3.

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