These are records of the First Presbyterian Church at Rolla, Missouri. Included are minutes of meetings of the church Session, membership and marriage records, minutes of meetings of the Board of Deacons and the Board of Trustees, and church bulletins.

Under the direction of Rev. A. T. Norton, district secretary of Presbyterian Home Missions in St. Louis, the First Presbyterian Church of Rolla was organized on 14-15 May 1864. Twelve persons made up the congregation, which met in a former army quartermaster’s building also being used as a public schoolhouse. The first public services were held in the Phelps County Courthouse. The first members were Theophilus D. Griffith, Mrs. E. B. Lamb, Mrs. M. E. Faulkner, Mrs. G. E. Mountforth, Mary P. Guy, Martha F. Guy, Mrs. Amelia S. Perry, William H. Hazzard, Livonia E. Hazzard, Henry A. Robinson, and Daniel R. Parsons. Other important early members included George W. Wilson, Thomas Q. Emerson and William B. Tallman.

The earliest years of the church were difficult. Rev. Williston Jones, sent from St. Louis to take charge of the church in May 1865, found only three of the original members still in Rolla. Jones himself died at Rolla in November 1865. Despite early difficulties in maintaining membership and securing permanent pastors, the congregation erected its first building in 1869. The frame building at the corner of 6th and Olive streets was enlarged and remodeled in 1942. It served the congregation until 1963, when a modern brick building on east 10th Street was dedicated. The new facility included a large annex used for educational and social purposes. The church opened Rolla Presbyterian Manor, a retirement home, in 1974.

The First Presbyterian Church of Rolla was initially a part of the St. Louis Presbytery. It is now associated with the United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., and is a member of the Synod of Mid-Missouri (Kansas City), and John Calvin Presbytery at Springfield. The Chamberlain, Chapin, Dunavin, Farris, Followill, Heimerberger, Hirsch, McCaw, Parsons, Seese, Soest, and Van-Wormer families have been prominent members of the church. More recent church officials and long term pastors included Hugh Berry, John Heagler, Carl L. Sadler, Edward Sowers, Rev. G. Scott Porter, and Rev. Warren H. Rutledge.

The records consist of minutes of meetings of the church Session, Board of Deacons, and Board of Trustees. Minutes of the Session begin with the organizational meeting in May 1864 and continue through December 1994. There are no Session minutes from 1878 to 1923. Volumes 1-2 contain membership records, but volume 8, the Church Register, is the most complete record of church membership in the collection. Other records include minutes of meetings of the Board of Deacons, 1968-1996; minutes of the Board of Trustees, 1987-1997;

Volume 1: Record book, 1864-1878

14-15 May 1864 Organizational meeting at “school room.” [“Ministerial history of church” says this was a former army quartermaster dept. building on Block 56, County Addition to Rolla. See 25 Oct 1868 for reference to services at “Mr. Allen’s school house”] A. T. Norton, district secretary of Presbyterian Home Missions, was elected moderator. Twelve persons made up the first congregation. Theophilus D. Griffith was ordained the first elder of the congregation.

15 May 1864 Public services then held at the Phelps County Courthouse. Name: “First Presbyterian Church of Rolla, Missouri” Ask to be received into the St. Louis Presbytery.

6 May 1865 Williston Jones arrived to take charge of church by direction of Rev A. T. Norton. Found that elder and all but three of original congregation had moved away.

20 Nov 1865 Rev. Williston Jones, pastor, died at his home.

Pulpit filled temp by Rev. S. B. Shaw of Cuba; and by Rev. Philander Read, sent by StL Presbytery, until Feb 1867. In July 1867, Rev. W. L. S. Clark came from Little Piney to preach three times each month.

Nov 1867 George W. Wilson elected elder. Thomas Q. Emerson, clerk of session. H. W. Werth and H. Beal were elected as deacons; Thomas Q. Emerson elected elder.


[pp. 169-170 missing]


14 April 1878—end of minutes. Records inspected and approved by Presbytery in St. Louis, 17 April.

[pp. 174-191 blank]

Church register [separately paginated—only the following pages have been filmed:]
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These are records of the First Presbyterian Church at Rolla, Missouri. Included are minutes of meetings of the church Session, membership and marriage records, minutes of meetings of the Board of Deacons and the Board of Trustees, and church bulletins.

Volumes 1-8: Minutes of Session and church membership records, 1864-1994

Volume 01: Minute book, 14 December 1864—14 April 1878 (membership records are at the back of the volume)
Volume 02: Minute book, 15 May 1923—25 March 1945 (membership records are at the back of the volume)
Volume 03: Minute book, 1 April 1945—14 December 1958
Volume 05: Minute book, 4 August 1968—19 December 1982
Volume 08: Church Register, ca. 1880s—1970s

Volumes 9-10: Minutes of meetings of the Board of Deacons, 1968-1996


Volumes 11-12: Minutes of meetings of the Board of Trustees, 1987-1997


(indexes are at the front of volumes)
Volume 13: Record of Marriages Solemnized, 1948—1955
Volume 14: Record of Marriages Solemnized, 1956—1963
Volume 15: Record of Marriages Solemnized, 1963—1979


Folder 1: Presbyterian Progress, 1954-1964
Folder 2: The History and Highlights of Recent Events at the First Presbyterian Church, 1976

r747 8 February 2000 First Presbyterian Church of Rolla Loaned for microfilming

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