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Iuka Presbyterian Church, Iuka, Mississippi 38852

After many years of hard work among the few Presbyterians who came to Iuka in the early days after the Civil War, the first notice of the proposed building of a Presbyterian Church in Iuka came in the minutes of the Chickasaw Presbytery of the Memphis Synod as follows: "A meeting of the Iuka Presbyterian Church was held in Courtland, Alabama, in 1872." This was the initial planning of the church which was built that year.

The formation of the church was through the efforts of Mrs. Mary Lecky, who moved to Iuka, Mississippi, in July 1865, from Courtland, Alabama. Mrs. Lecky found a few citizens of like faith, and she immediately called them together. Sunday School was held in the Mayor's office for several years, and Mrs. Lecky made several visits to her former home in Alabama where she solicited funds for a church building in Iuka. Her Courtland friends were generous in their gifts of money, and by 1872, the land on the south side was bought from Col. Word for \$50. Work began on the frame church with a membership formed almost entirely of women namely, Mrs. Mary Lecky, Mrs. Jane Word, Mrs. Hooper Adams, Mrs. Lovella Ware, Mrs. Agnes Krause, Mrs. Ben Hodges, Mrs. Fannie Reid, Mrs. May I. Settle, Mrs. Addie Merrill, Mr. and Mrs. E. J. McCalla, and possibly Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Gregson, though they may have come later. Mr. McCalla came from the Bethany Church in which he had been a ruling elder, being one of the Paden family of which the Bethany Church was largely composed. The Iuka Presbyterian Church was called The Mary Lecky Church in the early days according to old books in the library, and it was composed of pioneers—some of them dating their church officials back to the Scotch Covenanters.

With a small membership, the church struggled for existence through the years, though it was often served by learned pastors. The frame church was erected through the efforts of that small band of women on the south side of town, but due to lack of funds, the builders were unfortunate in their choice of a location. The town creek overflowed many times each year and it slowly destroyed the church's foundation. In 1908-1909, John C. Gracey, an elder, donated land on the north side of town, and the church was put on rollers and rolled up the steep hill across the railroad and to its present location. Sunday School was held in the church during its change of location.

The church building was damaged in the move, and a general cry went up for a new church. In 1924, another building was built, but due to faulty construction, this building was torn down in 1954 to make room for the present facility—a brick-veneered building with handsome cathedral windows. The original building was designed by a famous architect, Mr. Beardsley, and it was built more like an Episcopal church than a Presbyterian church. However, with its tall belfry tower and beamed ceiling, it would now be a thing of beauty. Unfortunately, since the church's design was faulty, the building was pronounced unsafe, and another facility was built.

The Presbyterian Church as it stands today is a monument to generous citizens, Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Spinks of Memphis. The Spinks family moved to Iuka in 1954 from their Tennessee home and found the Presbyterian Church in a bad state of dilapidation. Mr. and Mrs. Spinks had the foundation made secure and replaced the brick veneer with a Tishomingo County stone base and included white asbestos siding. The interior was beautified and cathedral lights added, the handsome stained glass windows were replaced, and the church was an addition to the town and the street on which it stood.

Ruling elders who are remembered to have served the church through its years are E. J. McCalla, W. J. Gregson, Ben McGeehee, J. J. Coman, John Newhardt, J. C. Gracey, S. F. Howard, H. J. Williams, Godsey, Dr. R. R. Hill, Lyman Paden, E. R. Dugan, H. M. Rhine, and Lamar Cantelou. Deacons have been Lyman Paden, Jr., Harry Rhine, Jr., and Leon Phillips.

The church has rarely had a resident pastor, being often served by pastors from Corinth, Burnsville, Baldwyn, Tuscumbia, and other places. Ministers who have been remembered, including their previous places of residence, are Reverends Black, Florence, Ala.; Frierson, Florence, Ala.; Kimmons, Corinth, Miss.; M. C. Hutton, Corinth, Miss.; T. D. Lattimore, Corinth, Miss.; George Steen, Corinth, Miss.; J. H. Guillard, Baldwyn, Miss.; Osborne; Allen, Water Valley, Miss.; J. S. Park, Corinth, Miss., 1891-1893; H. M. Sydenstricker, Corinth, Miss., and West Virginia.; George Grille, Virginia; Leroy Phillips, Miss.; Griffin, Georgia; Charles Little, Charlotte, North Carolina; H. M. Jenkins, Miss.; R. C. Wilson, Sparta, Georgia; E. P. Craddock, Columbus, Miss.; R. W. Hardy, Pontotoc, Miss.; Charles Powers, Jackson, Miss.; John Redhead, Woodville, Miss.; Wm. Gardner, Saltillo, Miss.; Wm. Moreau, West Virginia; E. L. Gage, Tenn.; Blakesley, South Carolina; Ernest G. Smith, Booneville, Miss.; Gardein, Birmingham, Ala.; G. E. Tucker, De Kalb, Miss.; Howie, Tupelo, Miss.; De Young; Maynard Fountain; and Bernard Mungers.

Note: The above information was contributed by Webb Robertson, Iuka, Mississippi, on handwritten notes donated to the Tishomingo County Archives & History Museum in November 2005 along with miscellaneous letters and newspaper clippings. It was also compiled by Mrs. Lyla McDonald for *The Vidette (Iuka, Mississippi)* Centennial Edition, July 4, 1957.