

West Dallas Church of Christ

1872-1985

also known as: *the Christian Church, Mount Airy Christian Church, Western Heights Church of Christ*

James D. Barnes, 13th January 2026 –last revised 15th January 2026

Founding members of this Church of Christ (Christian Church) included children and grandchildren of William Coombes. It was probably the first permanent White Settlement organized religious institution on the William Coombes Survey. It dates its first gathering to year 1872, twenty-years after the arrival of William Coombes -- after his death and the deaths of each of his wives.

In 1881 land was deeded to this congregation as a location for its church building and as a cemetery (today's Western Heights Cemetery). ¹ Though the congregation eventually built on another nearby site, the histories of the cemetery and this church remain closely intertwined.

Written histories about this church already exist; and rather than repeat them, their texts are linked separately:

1933: Maybelle Robinson; *Pioneer Church of Christ Still in Use*, 1 page, Firm Foundation (14th November 1933).

1987: Sue Churchill Krayer: *Western Heights Cemetery*; 13 pages.

The original land deed for this church site was a donation from James and Mattie Crawford for a lot, 45' x 65', which they conveyed to Elders Barcus and Grasby for "one dollar and the further consideration of the erection of a church building by the Mt. Airy West Dallas Christian Church".²

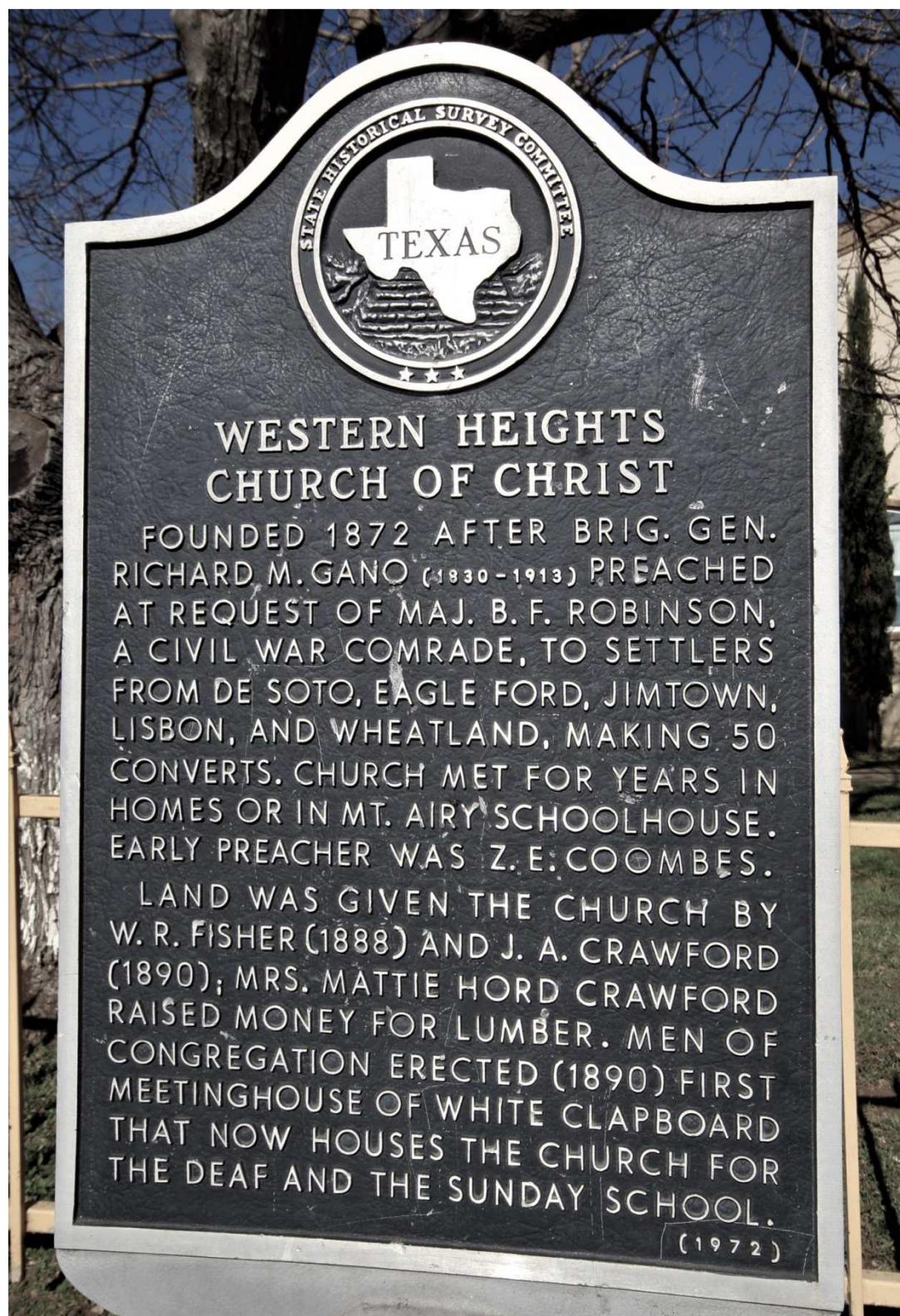


This 1890 building for the West Dallas Church of Christ has been altered and enlarged several times.

1912 North Winnetka; Dallas, Texas 75208 -- 32.77°N; 96.84°W -- photo taken in January 2026



Western Heights Church of Christ constructed this new sanctuary building, south of the original building, in 1951³
Today both buildings are owned by the congregation of Iglesia De Cristo -- photo taken in January 2026



*1972 historical marker, facing Walmsley Avenue, in front of the 1951 church building
[A discussion about a trivial issue with the words on this marker follows below.⁴]*

(End)

FOOTNOTES

1. *Dallas County real estate deed records*; Vol. 51, Page 62-63, 14th February 1881; cemetery site deed from B.M. Bradford to W.R. Fisher and Z.E. Coombes, trustees of the Christian Church.
2. *Dallas County real estate deed records*; Vol. 126, Page 604, 5th June 1890; church building site deed from J.A. Crawford and wife to W.F. Barcus and C.Q. Grasby, elders of the congregation.
3. 1951-January-3rd; *Dallas Morning News*; page 3; 54 Churches Began \$3,208,653 Worth of Building
4. **A Problem:** The existing cast metal historical marker for *Western Heights Church of Christ* includes the following statement: "*Land was given the Church by W.R. Fisher (1888) and J.A. Crawford (1890)*".
William R. Fisher had no participation in the 1890 land given for the church by James and Mattie Crawford. The problem then is: if W.R. Fisher gave land to this congregation in 1888, why was it never used? Why was a second land donation necessary in 1890?
The archives of the *Dallas Public Library* preserves the 1972 application for this historical marker. It includes historical background material: "*Prepared by Mrs. Graneta Bilbo Goodwin*". Her presentation's Article III, item 1.: "*Note: Copy of deed dated March 29, 1888. W.R. Fisher gave the land 'as property of the Church of Christ for the purpose of worshiping in West Dallas'.*" I am not able to find a copy of this deed.
In its Index of Real Estate Deeds for Dallas County, I can find no deed whereby W.R. Fisher granted any deed, anywhere, to anyone, on that date of March 29th, 1888. Perhaps it was never filed, or wasn't filed until years later. That I can't find it doesn't mean that Mrs. Goodwin didn't have it. W.R. Fisher filed hundreds of deeds.
After some consideration of this predicament, I believe the key to understanding this dilemma is in knowing that during that spring of 1888, the *West Dallas Church of Christ* was splitting apart due to internal disputes. (1888-March-25; *Dallas Morning News*, page 4; *Church Difference in West Dallas*). Those disputes involved making a selection of a location for their new church building, resulted in one pastor, "Weeping Joe" Harding, breaking away and leaving to start a new congregation on the floodplain, below the hilltop to the east. W.R. Fisher was among Harding's followers. I think the Fisher deed might be a land arrangement for Harding's new church site below the hilltop. The larger remainder of this congregation stayed with another pastor, Reverend C.M. Wilmeth, up on the hilltop, still meeting in the *Mount Airy Academy* building. "Weeping Joe" Harding left Dallas in March of 1889. (1889-March-20; *Dallas Morning News*, page 5, *West Dallas*). Rival pastor C.M. Wilmeth then left Dallas in the fall of 1889, taking his *Nazareth University* with him to Arkansas. (1889-September-29th; *Dallas Morning News*, page 3; *West Dallas*). So, it's possible – though I have no document about this – that the two congregations had reunited by June of 1890, when the new land was donated and this church building was finally built. If that is true, then the statement on the historical marker is a faint remainder of an ancient division and reunion of the congregation of the *West Dallas Church of Christ*. It is noteworthy, in this respect, that the funeral for W.R. Fisher was held in this *West Dallas Church of Christ*. (1900-October-19th; *Dallas Morning News*; p. 4; *Died.*) – the quarreling factions of 1888 had settled their arguments and rejoined.

(End of Footnotes)