



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
GRAND PRAIRIE SIGNIFICANT LANDMARK
Site Medallion No. 8
301 East Church and NE 2nd Street

In the summer of 1880, a brush arbor meeting was in progress in downtown Grand Prairie. From this revival meeting, the First Baptist Church, 122 NE 2nd Street, was organized to minister to the converts. Rev. J.F. Elder, the revivalist, was called as the first pastor of the church.

The church has seen many changes since 1880 and is considered to be the first house of worship in the city. Its original one-story frame building was constructed on the corner of what is now East Main and Northeast 2nd Streets.

In 1908 the church started a campaign for the erection of a new church. \$201.66 and a diamond ring constituted the proceeds to start the fund. The larger building was located on the present site.

A small building was added in 1920 to house part of the growing Sunday School, with church worship attendance at 250. A tabernacle was built to accommodate revivals and to serve as a more comfortable meeting place during the summer months.

Tragedy struck on January 7, 1929, when the church building burned. On August 5, 1929, following a baptismal service at the gravel pit, members reassembled to break ground for a new building, turning the first spade of dirt to begin what would some day reach the dream of a three story brick building. A basement floor was built as the Depression came.

In 1938 the membership grew and another story was added to the basement floor. Before long a third story was added, much of the construction work being done by members.

In 1943 bonds were sold for construction of the long planned auditorium and by 1948 church membership had reach 1600 and Rev. James W. Taylor was called as pastor. The annex behind the original building was added.

A week of special services was held in June 1950, when the church occupied the new, spacious auditorium, which included a balcony.

Plans began for the building of a new educational building in 1952, a three-story brick structure south of the auditorium, and in 1955 the Taylor Educational Building was dedicated. Its basement floor was designed as a recreational hall.

In 1963 a new children's building was dedicated.

It has been through continuing labor and sacrifices of its thousands of members through the first one hundred years that First Baptist Church has grown in strength and spirit. It is to these who have served faithfully that a Centennial Directory was dedicated at the Anniversary Celebration held in October 1980.

Documentation from Centennial Edition 1880-1980 of the Church Pictorial Edition.

Recap: Ruthe Jackson