

The First Baptist Story

The Faith and Fruit of our Covenant Community

Volume 1 - 1851 - 1971



First baptist church
of corvallis

Foreword

The First Baptist Church of Corvallis has now come to the one hundred twentieth anniversary of her founding. As the hymn writer has written, the "Church's One Foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord." And it is because Jesus Christ is the foundation upon which this church has been built that we are able to celebrate this occasion.

Our church is more than the building we occupy or the new one we will soon enjoy. It is more than our programs or budgets. It is people--a fellowship of baptized Christians who have banded together for worship and service here in Corvallis.

And there have been many who have gone on before us. This history is a partial record of those people and I would encourage you to read it. It is the story of the visions those early pioneers had for establishing a strong gospel witness in Corvallis. It tells of the problems they faced, the joys they experienced, and the spiritual fruit God has seen fit to produce in this church.

As you read this history, keep in mind the many children, students, and adults who have found the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour because of the faithful witness of this church. Let your heart echo the same refrain as the Psalmist when he wrote "Praise him for his mighty acts; praise him according to his excellent greatness." (Psalm 150:2)

Reverend John B. Houser, D. D.

Pastors' Directory

The years 1851 to 1855

Reverend James Isaacs

Reverend Reuben C. Hill

Reverend Ezra Fisher

Reverend William Sperry

Reverend John Rexford

The years 1856 to 1882

Reverend W. F. Boyakin

Reverend J. I. Taylor

Reverend F. P. Davidson

Reverend G. W. Black

10. Reverend W. D. Riseley March 1893 - November 1893
11. Reverend W. H. Dorward July 1894 - July 1895
12. Reverend Mark Noble October 1895 - September 1905
13. Reverend F. W. Carstens, D.D November 1906 - August 1907
14. Reverend W. W. Davis December 1907 ~ May 1909
15. Reverend A. F. Bassford November 1909 - April 1912
16. Reverend Daniel Dunkin August 1912 - May 1913
17. Reverend J. Sherman Wallace, B. D. . May 1913 - October 1913
18. Reverend Edker Burton November 1913 - April 1918
19. Reverend George R. Varney, D.D. . . July 1919 - July 1920
20. Reverend William A. Waldo, Ph.D. . . September 1920 - June 1922
21. Reverend Daniel Bryant, D.D. September 1922 - April 1929
22. Reverend Frank B. Matthews, D. D. . November 1929 - June 1936
23. Reverend Edward B. Hart, D. D. . . . September 1936 - May 1950
24. Reverend Rodney C. Gould, D.D. . . September 1950 - November 1954
25. Reverend Frank L. Waaser, Th.D. . . April 1956 - December 1957
26. Reverend John B. Houser, D.D. . . . May 1958, -

Assistants

Up to 1937, most of the ministers' wives served as Christian Education Directors to the students, but with the growth of the church, the need for an assistant became obvious.

1. **Reverend Kenneth A. Tobias,**
Minister to StudentsOct. 1937 - Sept. 1941
2. **Reverend John W. Tabor**
Minister to StudentsOct. 1941 - 1944
3. **Reverend Olaf Olsen**Christian Ed. Director 1944 - May
1947
4. **Miss Nina Asbahr**Christian Ed. Director 1947 - 1949
5. **Reverend Victor Ernest**
Assistant PastorJuly 1949 - Oct. 1950
6. **Reverend Harry Wildeson**
Assistant Pastor.Jan. 1951 - Oct. 1952
7. **Reverend Leonard Thompson**
Assistant PastorDec. 1952 - Jan. 1956
8. **Reverend Kenneth Baldwin**
Christian Education Director . .Jan. 1956 - Aug. 1956
Assistant Pastor..... Aug. 1956 - Sept. 1958
9. **Reverend Harold Westing**
Christian Education Director . .Nov. 1958 - Sept. 1962
10. **Reverend David Harmon**
Christian Education Director . .May 1963 - Jan. 1967
11. **11. Reverend James R. Beck**
Christian Education Director . .Sept. 1967 - Aug. 1969
Associate Pastor for Christian Education Aug. 1969
12. **Reverend Robert Mc Kinnon**
Associate PastorSept. 1969

The secretarial help for the church has been as follows:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Miss Francis Triplett | 2. Mrs. Lila Wint |
| 3 .Miss Carolyn Borgard | 4. Miss Julia Owens since 1948. |

One Hundred Twenty Years

The First Baptist Church of Corvallis, Oregon

The Early Baptists Of Oregon

Much history has been compiled about the early pioneers of the Willamette Valley of Oregon; now let us take time to briefly review the facts about the early Baptist Churches. Due to the pioneers' Puritan heritage, religion meant a lot to many. Sometimes without a minister or deacon a church was organized, as was the First Baptist Church in the Oregon Territory at West Union in Washington County about six miles north of Hillsboro in 1844.

"The basic documents of a Baptist Church included a church covenant, articles of faith, and 'rules of decorum' (or 'rules of order'). Some churches wrote their own covenant and compiled their own articles of faith, but most churches adopted the widely circulated covenant and articles published in 1833 by the New Hampshire Baptist Convention and later revised by J. Newton Brown."¹

At first, worshiping was usually held in the cabins of the settlers, in a grove of trees, or the school house. The earliest structures were log cabins or a simple rectangular wooden building with or without plain glass windows, puncheon (logs cut in half with the flat side up) or board floors, and roofed with shakes. Furniture at first was nearly non-existent or simple benches facing a raised platform containing a simple stand and chair or bench. Candle holders were placed along the side walls and homemade tallow candles provided the little flickering light. One had to be careful to not sit under the dripping tallow.

Baptists were known for being afraid of going into debt on a church building. The early churches were built with donated labor and lumber supplies or what could be termed a "church raising." The only cost involved was for such supplies as windows.

Most services with preaching were held once a month. To the isolated and socially starved pioneer, any service was of great importance. Not only members, but other Christians and nonmembers attended. "Two classes of ministers served Oregon Baptist during the pioneer period. Some, primarily from the North, were in the tradition of the New England pastors--men of education with some cultural attainment. Others were of the farmer-preacher type, who first appeared in Virginia and North Carolina and migrated with the moving frontier. The second type predominated of the early Oregon Baptists."² Many ministers traveled around by foot or horseback and served three and four churches.

Still in the late 1840's and early 1850's the men and women of the congregation would sit on opposite sides of the building. When the churches were small there were no musical instruments until later when more settlers arrived bringing organs. Singing was an important part of the service in which their whole soul was put into song. In some churches weekly prayer service was held.

The Baptists enjoyed revivals or the “yearly meetings,” held over a period of several weeks or more. Usually other ministers would come to help the regular preacher during these services. They would vividly describe hell and brimstone. The preacher would urge the sinner to repent of his awful sins and come forward to the “mourner’s bench” for prayer with other Christians.

Baptists believe in immersion. There were no baptistries in those early days. Candidates were immersed in rivers, creeks, lakes, or wherever there was enough water to conduct the rites. The meeting, conducted in the open, was often a time for great public testimony.

At first there was no set pattern as to how often to observe the Lord’s Supper, some churches doing it monthly, quarterly, or less. Baptists at that time believed in closed communion - only fellow Baptists in full fellowship with some Baptist Church could partake.

The pioneer church was essentially for preaching, but with the beginning of Sunday school, the church became an educational institution. It wasn’t until the late 1870’s and 1880’s that a great upsurge in Sunday school activity began.

Baptists believed in disciplining the pastor and laymen in the local church meeting. The purpose of discipline was to mold Christian character through training and instruction, and then to be corrective. Basic standards did not allow dancing, intoxication, betting, gambling, fighting, and sexual immorality. Private difficulties were settled individually and usually without a moderator. In public offenses the accused was questioned, asked to confess and repent of his sins, and sometimes to ask the forgiveness of the church body. If the sinner did not correct his worldly ways, usually he was excluded from the church.

The use of smoking and chewing tobacco was a generally accepted habit. This custom was so common that a correspondent to the Corvallis Religious Expositor wrote in 1856,

... This thing of having a decent church all over besmeared with tobacco spittle is an outrageous shame! A decent man ought to be ashamed of himself for such an act as that of going into the house of the Lord on the holy Sabbath, and spitting his filthy splutter all over everything; and a member of the church ought to be disciplined for it.¹

In 1885 the Corvallis Association passed a resolution that if he must use tobacco, then the offender must lay aside and give to the foreign missions as much as he spent on tobacco.

Corvallis Beginning

In 1850 J. C. Avery donated acreage and laid out the town of Marysville. One year later, the First Baptist Church of Corvallis was organized by the Reverend R. c. Hill and the Reverend James Isaacs on December 25, 1851, with three charter members, and the meeting continued with three uniting by letter, and three by baptism--one of the latter was J. F. Slater who later became an United States Senator from Oregon. This was the eleventh Baptist Church to be organized in Oregon Territory. The first meeting house was built in 1852, believed at Third and Jefferson Streets, which was the second Baptist structure erected in Oregon. There is no written description about the building, so it is assumed that the structure was like the other pioneer buildings. It is known that the baptismal services took place on the north bank of Mary's River off of what is now Brooklane northeast of Avery Park.

In 1853, the name of Marysville was changed to Corvallis ("heart of the valley"). In the same year, this Corvallis church organized a mission Sunday school, six miles out in the country at Mountain View, with C. H. Mattoon as superintendent. From December 1851 to June 1854 the church was often without a pastor, but enjoyed the labors of the Reverends James Isaacs, Reuben C. Hill, Ezra Fisher, William Sperry, and John Rexford.

The Reverend Reuben C. Hill brought his family from Missouri to Corvallis. Besides being a preacher he was the first physician for Corvallis. Sometimes after practicing late on Saturday night as a doctor, frequently he occupied the pulpit on Sunday morning with no preparation except a prayer to God for divine help with a message. It is said that Reverend Hill was a very able speaker and fund raiser. Later on in his career, on two occasions charges were brought against him for preaching on "political subjects" and being a "proponent of slavery." In both cases the Corvallis Association publicly asserted its disbelief of the accusations.



The Reverend Ezra Fisher was born in 1800 in Massachusetts, was converted in 1818, a graduate from Amherst College in 1828, and at Newton Theological Seminary until ordained in 1830. In 1834 he is noted in Baptist histories for the Sunday school which he directed while a pastor in the Baptist Church at Indianapolis, Indiana. There were one hundred scholars and a "respectable, well-organized Bible class." This was at a time when much opposition was being made against Sunday schools because it was a "wicked innovation" and "new fangled notion."



Reverend Ezra Fisher came to Oregon in 1845 and was the first Baptist "itinerant" or general missionary in Oregon in the employ of the Baptist Home Mission Society. After several months at the David Lenox home, he

moved to Astoria and established the Clatsop Plains Church and assisted in the organization of the South Yamhill Church. When he reached his log cabin without a pane of glass in Astoria, his household effects were three chairs, three stools, a small pine table, two old trunks, a few cooking utensils, two teacups, and four saucers. No more could be had at any price.

In his report to the Home Mission Society he describes his trip and first winter in Oregon thus: "After a protracted journey of more than seven months and a distance of more than 2,500 miles we find ourselves situated in the lower part of Oregon in the midst of an extremely interesting country but in all the rudeness of nature."

"After seven and one half months I arrived with my family at the Tualatin plains about the fifth of December, after traveling in the rain about fifteen days. You will not be surprised, when you learn that I walked farther than would cover the whole journey, bearing my full proportioned part of the services of the company and that neither myself nor family laid off our clothing during the night, more than four or five times during the whole journey, always sleeping in our tents or on the ground. But a merciful Providence has sustained us all the way through the wilderness and blessed us with more than a usual measure of health and strength. Yet the last month I found my strength gradually yielding; and on our arrival, although we were greeted with kindness by the few brethren we met, we did not find our lot cast in the midst of wealthy churches. We were however kindly received into the cabin of Brother Lenox, where we have resided up to the present time, although his house contains but one room, about 18 x 22 feet without a single pane of glass, and his family consists of thirteen souls and almost every night one or two travelers, and my family consists of six souls, we have passed the winter quite as pleasantly as you would imagine under the circumstances and probably more so than that of a large portion of the immigrants, although perhaps a little more straitened for room."

Reverend Fisher explored the surrounding country preaching every Sunday in the homes and teaching a Sunday school of twenty-five pupils when at home.

While Reverend Fisher was in the mission work in Oregon he served as moderator of the first Baptist Association, the first Baptist Convention, the first Ministerial Conference, and the first Council ever held by Baptists in Oregon.

Reverend Fisher's wife died in January 1854, just nine years after his arrival in Oregon: later he married Mrs. Amelia Millard of Oregon City. Both wives entered heartily into his work as a missionary and were true helpmates in all his labors. Both endured great cares, trials, sacrifices, and hard work for the advancement of the Lord's cause in Oregon.

In June, 1854, following a meeting conducted by Reverend David Hubbard, there were twenty-five additions to the Corvallis church, and during that associational year forty were added to the membership. From this membership two men named Goold and Tolbert Carter were licensed to preach.

"Ruralism perpetuated the irregular ministry of farmer-preachers and hindered

development of strong stable churches. Once-a-month preaching meant that churches obtained pastoral service about two days a month, plus the time required in traveling to appointments. In 1854 the Willamette Association committee recommended assignment of Baptist ministers to their towns. Of the thirteen towns mentioned by the committee only Oregon City, Corvallis, and Table Rock had churches. It was a 'painful fact' that no Oregon Baptist Church had a full-time minister,"¹

In 1856, some significant events happened in the Corvallis church. In February, the Reverend W. F. Boyakin, of Portland, settled in Corvallis and preached three Sundays each month for the church. Since travel was difficult in those days, it was decided that for the convenience of members living north of town a new church would be organized, called the North Palestine Church. A building, later occupied by this congregation, still stands in north Benton County. This division weakened the Corvallis congregation.

In July 1856, a committee from the church was appointed to make plans for a school and to solicit land and money. Reverend W. F. Boyakin was the principal. In September a "good primary school" was in operation with the prospect of a very liberal patronage by the community. Later in the fall a

Baptist High School started with a select number of young ladies. The large meeting house was well-ventilated and lighted. Later, plans were made and abandoned for a college and seminary.

The August 2, 1865, Corvallis Religious Expositor states Reverend W. F. Boyakin would soon begin a Sabbath evening series "The Elements of Early History." "This is a subject, the proper knowledge of which affects over-confidence in the Bible. Skeptics are frequently caviling at alleged errors of Hebrew chronology. Let all attend." After leaving Corvallis, Reverend Boyakin went east to be chaplain in the Union Armed Forces.

In February, 1966, a heavy snow caused the church roof to collapse. The debris was sold for fifty dollars which was given for missionary purposes. Then meetings were held in private homes, preaching being done by passing ministers. Membership was so scattered that the church almost became extinct.

Later Developments

The Reverend A. J. Hunsaker reorganized the church in December, 1876, with nineteen members who were unable for a time to support a pastor. In April, 1878, the Reverend J. I. Taylor settled near Corvallis and preached for the church. Mrs. Linda Goldson organized the Sunday school.

The church minutes show that the congregation adopted the following covenant at this time:

Having been led as we believe by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour; and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized into the name of the Father; and of the Son,

and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into the covenant with one another, as one body in Christ,

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world, to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Saviour.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; and cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Saviour, to secure it without delay.

And we moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible, unite with some other church, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's word.

In March of 1880 the First Baptist Church of Corvallis united with the North Palestine church in calling the Reverend F. P. Davidson as pastor for both churches. Reverend Davidson put forth every effort to raise money for a new building, even appealing in vain for help from the state denomination. Then unrealized expectations cooled the ardor of some and Reverend Davidson became discouraged and resigned.

A few months later the Reverend G. W. Black, the ninth pastor, took up the work under the appointment of the American Baptist Home Mission Society. He was born in Benton County, Missouri, attended William Jewell College in Missouri, and was ordained in 1872 at Mountain View Church, Missouri. He tried hard to secure money to go on with the church building, but failing, he resigned in 1882, and the building enterprise was abandoned.

In February, 1892, another effort was made to re-establish a Baptist church and an organization was perfected with a membership of ten. The Reverend E. G. Wheeler of the chapel car presided. "The American Baptist Publication Society took advantage of the extensive penetration of the railroad by developing railroad chapel cars for missionaries. Railroads pulled the cars over their lines without charge, and after arriving at its destination, the car

remained on a railroad siding”¹ It was a longer railroad car, about eighty feet long and eleven feet wide. One end was fitted with oak pews, organ, pulpit, and blackboards, which would seat approximately one hundred people and at the other end living quarters were provided for the missionary.

The Corvallis church did not call a pastor until a place of meeting was secured. In March, 1893, the Oregon State Agriculture College Chapel was secured for services, and the Reverend W. D. Risley, the tenth pastor, was called as pastor, but he resigned in November of the same year. He was born in Blairstown, Iowa, was a student at Oregon State Agriculture College, Oregon State Normal School, McMinnville College, and ordained June 16, 1893, at North Palestine Church, Oregon.

The hotel parlor of M. W. Wilkins was secured for a meeting place in June, 1894. The Reverend William Hammond Dorward became the eleventh pastor of the church in July, 1894. He was born in Little Hampton, England, attended Fox Lake, Wisconsin, Shurtliff College, Illinois, and Hamilton Theological Seminary, New York, and was ordained in 1871 in the Bath on the Hudson Church, New York. On July 22, 1894, the church decided to build at Fifth and Jefferson.

The Reverend Mark Noble was the twelfth pastor, beginning in October 1895. He was born in Charlton, Kent, England. Through his effort, “The Little Brown Church” that stood on the corner of Fifth and Jefferson Streets was completed at a cost of \$1,500.00, and seated about two hundred fifty people. (Note: Through the generosity of T. J. Starker and Johns Brandis, the building has since been moved to the Benton County fair grounds on S.W. 53rd and restored.)

During this era, the Baptist Young People’s Union (B.Y.P.U.) was first organized with W. S. Gardner as secretary. Mr. Gardner was a local photographer.

At this time the church membership was small as well as the salary--about \$400.00 per year--one half to be paid by the Baptist Home Mission Society and one half by the church. Reverend Noble, true to his name, continued on under most trying circumstances. He was a quiet, unassuming man, and a faithful gospel preacher. He raised the standard of the church in the community and had several cheering revivals. In 1900 the membership was about sixty. The debt on the building was an annoyance and a continual cause of discouragement. The Home Mission Society assumed one half of the debt and the church secured the other half in 1899. Reverend Noble resigned in September 1905, having held the pastorate for almost ten years.

The Reverend McAllister supplied the church for a while and in November 1906, the Reverend Frederick Carstens of McMinnville College began a pastorate which lasted nine months. Reverend Carstens, the thirteenth pastor, was born in Nashville, Illinois, attended Baylor University, Texas, Shurtliff College, Illinois, and was ordained August 19, 1894 at Betheny Church, Illinois.

The Reverend W. W. Davis, the fourteenth pastor, began his duties in December, 1907. He was born in Wyoming County, Pennsylvania, was a student at Bloomburgh State Normal, Pennsylvania, and was ordained May 29, 1897, Alsea,

Oregon. He and his family lived on a farm at Alsea and he came on horseback (there being no paved highways and few cars at that time) to conduct the regular services. After a few months they moved into Corvallis. For several years he had taught vocal music, and now created in this church the first- real spirit of worship through music. His wife, two sons, and a daughter were good vocalists and a real force in choir work. Their interest in music attracted others of like interest and was a real boon to our church.

Reverend Davis was a strong man denominationally and very outspoken in his sermons regarding Baptist beliefs. Soon after his coming as pastor the interior of the church was refinished and the outside of the building was painted. This pastorate began a steady growth in the church, followed by regular and continued pastorates. Reverend Davis resigned in May 1909.

The Reverend Albert F. Bassford, the fifteenth pastor, of Chicago, began his work in November 1909. He was noted for his splendid teaching ability, and some departments of the work were reorganized. He introduced the duplex envelope system of weekly giving, and drafted the first written constitution of the church. Under his guidance the membership gained sixty per cent, benevolences doubled, and increased current expenses were cared for.

Reverend Bassford was a man of foresight and faith, and it was his efforts in laying the foundation that finally inspired the members to start plans for the present church building at Ninth and Monroe. He closed his pastorate April 1912.

Next came the Reverend Daniel Dunkin, the sixteenth pastor, who began his work in August 1912. He was born in Carroll, Indiana, attended Rochester Theological Seminary, 1897, was ordained June 16, 1897, Newark, New York. During Reverend Dunkin's pastorate the building of a new church was agitated, but nothing definite was done. He gave the church a vital spiritual life--his sermons were always deeply spiritual and evangelistic. The church was put on a stronger financial basis, the first regular giving being secured during this pastorate. Reverend Dunkin resigned in May 1913 having served as pastor less than one year.

The Reverend J. Sherman Wallace of McMinnville College supplied the church for the next five months as the seventeenth pastor.

The Reverend Edker Burton, the eighteenth pastor, was called and began his work in November, 1913. He was born in Mitchell, Indiana, was a student at Southern Indiana Normal School, attended Franklin College and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Indiana, was ordained July 2, 1897 at Mitchell, Indiana.

Reverend Burton was true to the gospel and faithful in his ministry. In the early part of 1916, the church decided a suitable building must be erected as the Fifth and Jefferson location was unsatisfactory. There were one hundred seventy-five members of the church at that time.

The first problem was a new site. Two were discussed: Fourteenth and Jefferson

Streets and Ninth and Monroe. The latter was chosen by a vote of thirty-one "yes" and six "no." Ninth and Monroe was non as the Blackledge property. The Fourteenth and Jefferson site is now in the middle of the campus.

The trustees were ordered to sell the old property for \$2,600.00 and buy the Monroe location for \$3,000.00. They made the transfer of proper papers, selling the Jefferson location of one and a half lots, paved on one side, with board sidewalks; and purchased the two Monroe lots, paved on two sides, concrete sidewalks, and with a clear title.

A building committee was selected to proceed with the work and actual building operations began July 6, 1916. The committee was composed by W. B. Anderson, Uriel S. Burt, Leland Corl, W. I. Loomis, A. J. Moore, F. S. Payne, J. R. Pruett, and Mr. and Mrs. F. A. Willert. The committee selected Mr. C. N. Freeman as their architect at a salary of \$100.00.

W. I. Loomis, L. Corl, and U. S. Burt were given the charge of excavation. The lowest estimate, not a bid, was \$295.00; the architect's estimate was \$326.80. Members of the church decided to do the work themselves. Mr. Willert went to the local saw mill and told them that they could get the lumber for the building outside of Corvallis for less than their bid or \$1,540, so the local mill reduced their bid five per cent making a saving to the church of \$77.00. These two examples show how the church proceeded with caution.

Through the efforts of Dr. C. A. Woody and Dr. O. C. Wright a gift of \$6,300.00 was secured from the Baptist Home Mission Society and Oregon Baptist State Convention, toward the building. During the time the congregation raised their \$6,000.00 for the construction, their yearly budget was \$1,200.00, \$800 of which was the pastor's yearly salary. Hence their investment in the building represented five times their yearly budget. The building was not complete when they moved in. Plastering in the balconies and basement was finished at a later time. Thus, in spite of many hindrances and unforeseen hardships imposed by war prices, the church was led by the grace of God to build this House. Due to the policy of the building committee, "Pay as You Go, the process of building was slow but the building was completed free of debt at a cost of \$12,000.00 in actual money and some donated labor. It was dedicated on September 22, 1917.

While the church was being built, they worshiped in the old Evangelical Church building on Harrison Street between Eighth and Ninth Streets. The social life of the church was developed and the work among college students, under the leadership of Mrs. Burton, was brought to a



high degree of efficiency. Many of the Sunday school parties and church socials were held in the home of Mrs. Mary Cyrus at Third and Washington Streets. Professor W. B. Anderson could always be counted on for transportation and help for chaperoning the young people's groups.

Mrs. Burton was a good teacher and a good speaker, often taking the pulpit when Reverend Burton was away. She directed the choir part of the time, taught the young men's Bible class, assisted the women in the missionary organization, organized the first World Wide Guild chapter in the church, and was first president of the State Baptist Young People's Union.

Mrs. Burton encouraged much interest on the part of young people in the State and General Missionary service. At different times, two of our young people, Kenneth Fendall and George Sutton, were elected president of the State Baptist Young People's Union. Miss May Murphy went as a missionary to the Baptist orphanage at Kodiak, Alaska. William C. and Leslie C. Whitaker with their wives (formerly Lois Payne and Gladys Salisbury) went as missionaries to Burma.

Mrs. Burton, as President of the State Baptist Young People's Union, took an active part in planning the first Summer Assembly for Oregon Baptists. The meeting was held on the State Fair Grounds at Salem in 1917. From this time on our church was represented by some of our young people and occasionally by some older members in the summer camping programs.

The Men's Brotherhood was first organized and J. R. Pruett was elected president.

Reverend Burton closed his pastorate here in April 1918. He had accepted the pastorate at St. John's Baptist Church of Portland, Oregon, later going to Moscow, Idaho, where he passed away.

Dr. George R. Varney, the nineteenth pastor, was born in East Sumner, Maine, attended Sioux Falls University, South Dakota, University of Rochester, and Rochester Theological Seminary, New York, and was ordained May 27, 1897, Walnut Hills Church, Cincinnati, Ohio.

During the First World War, Dr. Varney was called to take up the pastorate in July 1919, after having supplied the church for several months. In one year one hundred seven members were received into the church, twenty-six of these by baptism.

The New World Missionary Movement campaign under the direction of Dr. F. H. Divine was launched. A second



Oregon Baptist Student Summer Assembly - 1917

campaign to acquire enough funds to complete and equip the building was begun.

Dr. Varney was the first pastor to receive no aid on his salary from the Home Mission Society or Baptist State Convention. Since 1919 the church has been independent of outside aid on the pastor's salary. The first church bulletins were printed during this time.

Dr. Varney was very dignified in manner, precise, and convincing in his delivery. He resigned in July 1920, to become a teacher at Oregon State Agriculture College.

Dr. William A. Waldo, the twentieth pastor, was born in Burritts Rapids, Ontario, Canada, attended Des Moines College, University of Chicago, and Baptist Union Theological Seminary, was ordained July 7, 1891 at Crystal, North Dakota. Dr. Waldo held the Ph.D. which he earned in philosophy. He began his work in September, 1920. During his pastorate one hundred sixty-two members were received into the church, forty-nine of these coming by baptism.

A parsonage was purchased in April, 1921, at a cost of \$7,500.00. The church received \$5,000.00 or this amount from the Oregon Baptist State Convention. Dr. Waldo and family were the first to occupy the new church home.

During this time, William C. Whitaker was licensed to preach, and Reverend J. R. Parker received his ordination.

Dr. Waldo encouraged studies in Christian Education and presented credit certificates to a large class, mostly young people, for their work.

Dr. Waldo resigned in June 1922.

Dr. Danie] Bryant began his pastorate in September 1922, the twenty-first pastor, preaching under scaffolding all across the platform, which was being remodeled and fitted with a new baptistry.

He had been a missionary in Basuto-land, South Africa, for an independent Faith Mission, and returned to America for health reasons. He was a man of great faith, a preacher of the Word, evangelistic in message, and a missionary enthusiast.

He loved music, playing the flute himself, and promoted a fine church orchestra directed at first by Professor McCurley, band director of Corvallis High School and later by his son, Dan.

During this pastorate the church Missionary and Benevolent fund increased to \$2,169.00 in 1924, the highest point in the history of the church up to that date.

Church membership increased from 339 to 554 in May 1926 when we found 145 were non-resident members, and a committee was appointed to work on revising our church roll. After considerable correspondence with few responses 81 names were dropped from the roll.

During the early part of Dr. Bryant's pastorate he edited the Bible School lessons for classes above the Junior department, the teachers of these classes using the Bible only as a textbook for the class period. The Bible school increased

greatly in enrollment and interest growing from 372 to near 800 including Cradle Roll and Home Department. Lower departments of the Bible School were graded. Bible School Worker's Conference was well attended and active.

Student work was under the direction of Mrs. Bryant, the Baptist Educational Board assisting financially. Mrs. Bryant led the students in Bible study and taught dramatics to both College and High School students, assisting them in presenting several dramas--Biblical, Missionary and Temperance. There were two BY's, one for College age and one for High School age, both very active.

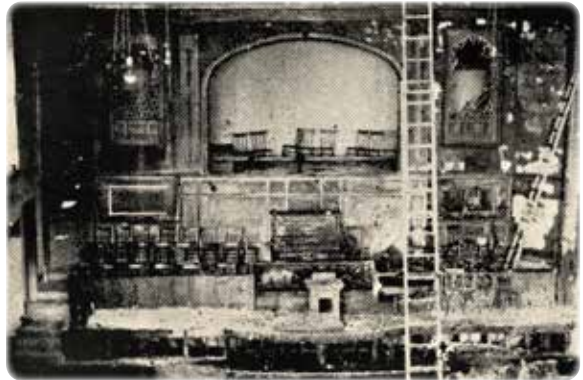
Some 40 girls of Junior High School and Senior High School were organized into World Wide Guild chapters, and did much Missionary reading and White Cross work.

For a short time there was a boys' organization of Royal Ambassadors but this was changed to Boy Scouts.

A Committee for Gospel Team work organized a Bible School at the Sunnyside School house in the Fairplay, community using the same plan of Bible study as used in the church.

Daily Vacation Bible School was held each year with good attendance.

A shocking incident that happened during this pastorate was the church fire on Sunday morning--8:45 o'clock--November 4, 1923. The fire ruined most of the interior of the building, but the most serious damage was to the main auditorium and center of the building. All the other churches of the city offered every possible



assistance, and extended most cordial invitations to worship with them. The first invitation was accepted and accordingly our morning and evening church services were held in the basement of the First Presbyterian church where Dr. Bryant comforted his flock with the Word and a fine sermon in which he admonished the church to continue faithful during this time. of trial, making our disappointment turn for the glory of God.

By the next Thursday night we began holding our services in our own church basement with a carpet of sawdust on the floor. Chairs for seating were secured from the College. Damage assessed by the insurance company was \$6,440.60.

The front part of the auditorium was remodeled in the repairing, and a new heating system installed. The re-building and remodeling cost considerably more than insurance received, and required the raising of more funds, only part of which was pledged. A mortgage was carried for some time on the

property but was gradually paid off. The re-built auditorium was dedicated April 6, 1924, with Dr. F. E. Dark preaching the sermon and Dr. O. C. Wright offering the prayer of dedication.

The following message was written by Dr. Bryant for the seventy-fifth anniversary of the First Baptist Church of Corvallis, December 25, 1926.

Three score and fifteen years ago, three souls, redeemed through the precious Blood of Jesus, met and united their lives in a Divine organism known as the First Baptist Church of Corvallis, Oregon. What is today a city adorned with boulevards and made more wonderful by streets filled with eager students from all parts of the nation and the world, was then but an unpromising village of few buildings and streets often deep in mud.



But these three were inspired by two prophets and seers in their midst. Before their vision the years gave up its secrets. Into their listening ears, the rising tide of human progress, poured its story. They saw the coming city with its hurrying multitudes and made ready the Bread of Heaven for hungry souls.

Always through difficulties, sometimes through differences of opinion, but ever through strength and grace, their numbers multiplied and their power increased. Like a well fed, well nourished sturdy youth, the church has grown to manhood, and rejoices today as a strong man to run a race,

Seventy-five years of sacrifice and prayer. Seventy-five years of meetings and partings, of joy and sorrow. But as Heaven called for this faithful one and that whose labors were ended, fresh recruits occupied places made vacant, while many pressed forward eager for the fellowship and service. Today we are a large, happy, united family, bending the knee together before the Father of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. And the spirit of prayer and sacrifice, of faith in the Bible and its crucified Lord, in which the three seers brought forth the church, still rests upon the work as an abiding cloud of glory.

During the year 1928 the east and west galleries were seated with opera chairs, having been only partly seated before with old church benches.

Dr. Bryant closed his pastorate May 12, 1929, to accept the pastorate of Eagle Rock Baptist Church, California.

Dr. Frank Matthews, the twenty-second pastor, began his pastorate November 1929. He was born in 1870, Mackinaw, Illinois. He attended the University of

Oregon in the spring of 1894 when the first University of Oregon football squad played a game against Albany College. Dr. Matthews barked the signals as the team's quarterback and captain. After graduation from the University of Oregon he attended Rochester Theological Seminary.

He was an energetic Gospel preacher with unusual interest in the sick, the afflicted, and the sorrowing where death had entered a home. When accepting the pastorate he stated that he would take it as an insult if any member of his church offered him pay for conducting a funeral. In the beginning of his ministry he stressed the importance of the Bible School and worked not only with the college students but with the High School and Juniors as well. He stressed Christian teaching and training in the home.

He was a man interested in civic affairs as well as his pastorate, and was frequently called on to speak before Service Clubs and to assist in Red Cross projects.

He had able assistance from Mrs. Matthews, who became director of Student and Youth work giving special emphasis to the High School Baptist Young



People's Union and the World Wide Guild work among the girls. Interest in College and High School B. Y. continued good; later a Junior B. Y. was organized. Missionary reading and programs continued and the girls prepared and sent supplies to Missionaries in, both the Home and Foreign fields.

The orchestra continued under the leadership of Lucelia Bates, Howard Halbert, Cassius and Robert Beardsley.

Dr. Matthews stressed the necessity of a working, witnessing membership not depending continually on outside help to bring in the harvest of souls, but applying ourselves to the opportunity and duty. A special plan of district visitation was worked out by Mr. E. P. Jackson, and placed in the hands of the Deacons and Deaconesses, and many calls were made throughout the membership. Dr. Mattheus urged for more personal work through the week and a seeking out of indifferent members. As long as this plan was worked it proved to be beneficial in the in gathering of souls. For a period of four months there were confessions of Christ every Sunday, but there was a continual coming and going among our membership, and at three different times during this pastorate our church roll was partially cleaned up of non-resident members, the total number dropping to 131. This proved one of our great problems.

In May, 1931, due to disturbed industrial conditions of both our community

and state our operating budget had to be reduced by \$2,000.00, \$200.00 of this amount taken from Pastor's salary at his own request. This pastorate was truly during a time of depression as one trustee expressed in his report, "We have passed through a year such as none of us has ever experienced before.

Dr. Matthews carried the office work without secretarial help, but mentioned frequently his need of a secretary only to add that he knew funds could not afford the help. Our giving to Missions gradually went down year after year from \$1,700.00 in 1930 to \$344.26 in year 1935-36. The one pocket envelope for offerings had been adopted and missions placed on a percentage basis. This plan was not helpful to missionary interests.

In October, 1935, due to a defect in the fireplace chimney and an overabundance of paper thrown into the fireplace following a church supper, the building was again damaged, mostly by smoke, to the amount of \$978.50 from a quickly extinguished fire. The building required retinting but the expense was mostly covered by insurance.

Professor Callaway continued to lead in the Boy Scout work. The Troop had become self-supporting mainly through their Christmas tree project, which they still continue. Plans for a Scout cabin were promoted and later realized.

The Brotherhood and Women's Missionary Union continued with usual interest and attendance,

Membership enrollment, although increased considerably at time by reception of members by baptism and letter, remained almost stationary due to frequent roll revision.

This church was well represented in Summer Camps, conventions and rallies and shared with other churches in entertaining these groups from time to time •.

For many summers during the Broughers vacation at the coast, father, Dr. James Whitcomb Brougher, Sr., and two sons, Dr. James Whitcomb Brougher, Jr., and Dr. Russel Brougher, would be guest speakers in the pulpit.

Dr. Matthews resigned his pastorate here in April 1936 to accept the pastorate of the Highland Baptist Church of Portland, Oregon.

Dr. Edward B. Hart, the twenty-third pastor, began his pastorate September 20, 1936, coming from Denver, Colorado. He was born in 1895, at La Junta, Colorado, attended Bible Institute of Los Angeles, University of Colorado, received a Doctor of Divinity degree from Western Baptist Theological Seminary, Portland, Oregon, and did graduate work at Pasadena College, California. He was ordained in 1917, in Denver, Colorado.

His pastorate of thirteen. years and eight months was the longest in this church's history. Dr. Hart was a devoted evangelistic pastor, upholding a truly gospel ministry. He encouraged his membership in better use of the Bible, urging the memorizing of the Scriptures, the use of the Bible in the regular Services, and a general witnessing with the Word in personal work. He early sought and obtained increased attendance in the Weekly Prayer Service, and

promoted plans for more visitation throughout the church and Bible School membership.

Dr. Hart came to this church when finances were at a low ebb, following the years of financial depression. Very soon the Church returned to the Duplex Envelope system for offerings and in 1941 Dr. Hart insisted on banishing the pledge system for church support, and going on a free-will basis, encouraging tithing as the only correct system of support for Christian work. His plan was adopted and finances began to improve. With the steady rise in wages and the increased-sale price of all commodities the offerings increased in proportion for both current expense and missions. In 1942, Professor F. O. McMillan, trustee, reported that year as the best financially in the history of the church.



Dr. Hart was an enthusiastic supporter of missionary work, and stimulated his flock to better support of all benevolent enterprises. He also encouraged the dedication of life for full time service on the part of young people, and greatly rejoiced when a life commitment for service was made. During this pastorate the following named persons have gone into full time Christian service: Mrs. Edna Russell Davis, Mrs. Evelyn Russell Hamm, Mrs. Vivian Crist Sandow, Miss Margaret Leonard, Miss Nina Asbahr, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. C. Whitaker, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Price, Dr. and Mrs. Don Morril, Mr. Ralph Pfrehm, Reverend Monteith Whitwell, Mr. and Mrs. Carl ton Meade, and several others. They did take or were taking training for better Christian work and full time service.

Dr. Hart took an active interest in the life of the College students, teaching the Fidelis class (young married students) for several years. Through much of his pastorate he was aided by a minister to students or an assistant pastor, namely Reverend Kenneth Tobias, Reverend John Taber, Reverend Olaf Olsen, Miss Nina Asbahr, and Reverend Victor Ernest.

College young people were active in their work and part of the time carried on Gospel team work going to Westwood, Arboretum Civilian conservation Corps Camp, Orleans, and Hoskins.

Part time secretarial help began to be used in 1938, and Miss Francis Triplett was employed as full time secretary in 1943.

Daily Vacation Bible Schools each year and Christian Education classes continued with good-interest with a Committee on Christian Education in charge of general oversight.

The years 1941 through 1943 saw many enlisted men and Army personnel from Camp Adair present in our services, and this church joined with other churches in helpful plans and entertainment for our soldier boys away from home. Reverend Carmen and Reverend Loyal H. Vickers were employed for

a short time to direct our work with the soldiers. The church basement was used for a game and reading room until the Boy Scout cabin could be finished for such use. By, May 1942, about thirty of our own young men were in the Service. Our church furnished a Dayroom at Camp Adair and assisted with some other furnishings.

In January, 1941, plans were adopted to broadcast our Sunday morning services, and that has continued to the present time.

In March 1942, Reverend Donald Davis was ordained in this church shortly before he and Mrs. Davis (formerly Edna Russell) left for Peru as missionaries under the American Baptist World Evangelism Board.

In October 1943, a gift of the pipe organ was gratefully received from the F. S. Payne family as a memorial to their parents, Mr. and Mrs. F. S. Payne, long time active members in this church. Other gifts of great benefit were the walnut pulpit, Communion set, and the Memorial Communion table honoring the memory of Mrs. Richards, mother of Mrs. Hart. Other improvements were the completion and furnishing of a Ladies' Parlor, carpeting the auditorium, seating the back gallery with opera chairs (\$400.00 of this a memorial gift from Mrs. Jettie Stahl, gas range gift, and raising the northeast and northwest corners of the church roof to permit the building of two more class rooms for Bible School.

In May 1944, the church purchased the property immediately north of the church building, and in September the trustees were instructed to select a building committee and proceed with plans to start building the Christian Education Unit. The Building Committee was L. P. Arnold, chairman, Frank Hughes, Professor F. O. McMillan, W. F. Payne, Miss Mildred Pimm, and Mrs. J. L. Whirry for secretary and treasurer of the committee. Mr. J. L. Whirry was appointed by the trustees for the special duty of raising funds for the new building, the work to proceed only as fast as the funds came in, no pledges to be taken and no debts to be contracted far ahead of funds. Much volunteer service was given on the building. However, the building was completed and dedicated in May 1950 with a debt of \$1200.00 secured by promissory notes to men of the church.

In 1945 the Women's Missionary Union was reorganized under the Circle Plan which proved a benefit to our work. Three groups of Youth Fellowship have been active, the College students, the High School group and the Junior age, and also three chapters of the King's Daughters, Senior, Intermediate and Junior. A fine Scout troop has been active for several years, non under the leadership of Mr. Percy Blackstone. Professor Callaway was Leader of Boy Scout work for several years and will long be remembered by young men who were trained by him in Scout work. The Brotherhood of the church sponsors the Boy Scout work, and some mission work at Mt. View and Westwood, and have contributed for two native Christian workers on the Bengal Orissa Mission Field under the direction of Dr. W. C. Osgood. Delegates from this church have attended National Conventions, State Conventions, Associational Rallies and

Summer Camps, and have shared in entertaining them at times.

Since 1948, this church has affiliated with the Conservative Baptist organizations, and with the National Association of Evangelicals.

In 1949 payments on the parsonage debt were completed and the mortgage released.

All-church Missionary Fellowship suppers were held at stated intervals with a Missionary speaker or picture, and this church cooperated in Missionary conferences held in churches of neighboring towns.

Evangelists have rendered much service in several series of Revival efforts-the most outstanding being conducted by the late Dr. Kallenbach. Others were Dr. Arthur I. Brown, Dr. Russell Brougher, Reverend Burke, Dr. Grimes, Dr. McGinlay, Colonel Miles, Reverend Shogren and Reverend Guber, Reverend and Mrs. Archie McNeil and Dr. Dewhurst.

During this pastorate there were received by baptism 487, by letter 508, and by experience 131 for a total of 1126, but the loss was by letter 468, by death 70, and dropped 129. This made a net gain in membership in almost fourteen years or 459. The average per year in baptisms was 35 plus. May 1, 1950, membership was 1090.

March 19, 1950, Dr. Hart resigned to accept the pastorate of the Immanuel Baptist Church of Pasadena, California, closing his work the end of May 1950.

The Reverend Victor Ernest, assistant pastor, did fine work during the three months interval between pastorates, securing increased interest and attendance to an all-time high in the weekly Prayer Service, the Youth Fellowship and Youth Choir on Sunday evenings with a large number of young people in regular attendance.

In July 1950 Wm. C. Whitaker, Jr., was licensed to preach.

Reverend Ernest resigned in October 1950 to enter Evangelistic work,

The Reverend Rodney C. Gould, the twenty-fourth pastor, came to this church as pastor September 1, 1950, from Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He was born in 1899, at Sundusky, Ohio. He attended Mount Union College, Oberlin College, University of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania School of Music and Industrial Arts, University of Chicago, and the Northern Baptist Seminary.

Reverend Gould began his 'Gospel ministry with a series of sermons from Paul's letter to the Philippians and continued this series in the Sunday morning service through January 1951. He was adept at presenting a Bible book in its entirety making it stand out as a treasure chest of good things.

An all day of prayer, led hour after hour by some group in the church, was held one Thursday of each month.

The Reverend Harry Wildeson began his work as Assistant Pastor January 1, 1951, and during this month the second parsonage property was purchased by the church to be used as the home for the assistant pastor.

In May 1951, the trustees reported the generous release of the promissory notes which made our church building and furnishing free of debt. This was a most praiseworthy gift greatly appreciated by the church.

A series of revival services was held in the early part of 1951, with-Dr. E. J. Daniels as evangelist.

The Reverend Kenneth Price and the Reverend Harry Wildeson were ordained July 15, 1951, to the gospel ministry.

The church carried on an extension work in Philomath with Mr. Milton Cunningham of Western Baptist Theological Seminary as pastor. (This work is now an independent church.)

This church was the recipient of a goodly sum bequeathed in the will of Miss Merlie Gilliam who was an active member of the church for several years, and departed this life in October 1951. A gift of a refrigerator was also greatly appreciated and adds much to our kitchen equipment.

The First Baptist Church of Corvallis, Oregon, completed one hundred years of service for Christ in December 1951, and the one hundredth anniversary program was held January 17-19, 1952.

Reverend Harry Wildeson resigned as assistant pastor, effective October 9, 1952, to accept the call to become pastor of the First Baptist Church of Gladstone, Oregon.

During 1952, there was a greatly increased missionary vision through a missionary conference with Dr. Oswald Smith of Toronto, Canada. The church took on the partial support of sixteen more Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society Missionaries.



First Baptist Church building in '50's with neon sign on corner.

Evangelistic meetings with Evangelist Jim Mercer were held in March, 1952, with one hundred fifty coming forward to register decisions, seventy of these for salvation. Another revival campaign, sponsored by the young people, was held October 19-25, 1952, with "Bud" Peterson of Omaha, Nebraska, as evangelist.

The Reverend Leonard Thompson of Iowa City, Iowa, was called as assistant pastor, and began his duties the last week in December 1952. A strong youth program, and a greatly enlarged choir program was developed, with two new choirs and a ladies' chorus being started.

In February 1953, the Reverend David Hood of London, England, prominent young Irish evangelist, came to our church to conduct special meetings.

Fourteen of our members helped form the First Baptist Church of Philomath, the second Baptist church in Benton County. Members of our church also figured prominently in the organization of two other Baptist churches in Benton County--the Mountain View Baptist Church and the Alsea Baptist Church.

Dr. Bob Jones, Jr., President of Bob Jones University, conducted evangelistic meetings October 13-25, 1953, and was instrumental in reaching many of the college students.

In January 1954, a profitable teachers training course was started, with Dr. Walter Wessel and Professor Paul Finlay of Western Seminary coming down from Portland for ten Monday nights. They taught courses on The Epistle of James and Teachers' Methods.

An inspiring commissioning service for Ray and Doris McCready, missionary appointees to Okinawa, was held January 17, 1954.

A Bible conference with Dr. Vernon Grounds of Denver was held April 11-18, 1954.

The Reverend Armin Gessrein held meetings November 7-21, 1954, speaking on revival and the Christian life.

The Bible School, under the supervision of Mr. Paul Claussen had an enrollment of 938 including the Cradle Roll and Home Department, and had an average attendance of about 460. A nursery was maintained for the Bible School and also for the Sunday morning and evening services under the direction of a Registered Nurse assisted by women of the church.

During the past four years of Dr. Gould's ministry many things have been accomplished. Partial support for twenty-four new missionaries was subscribed to by the church, making a total of thirty-two missionaries at that time. Giving to missions had increased substantially. During this time 407 members joined the church.

The interior of the church sanctuary was redecorated and new wiring was installed throughout the building. A new grand piano was the most recent improvement in the church.

Dr. Gould was well known in the Conservative Baptist Association of America, and had served two full terms on the Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society and one term on the Conservative Baptist Home Mission Society. He was vice president of the Conservative Baptist Fellowship, and had just completed a third term as trustee for the Conservative Baptist Association of Oregon at the time of his resignation. Dr. Gould received a Doctor of Divinity degree from Western Baptist Theological Seminary in Portland on May 23, 1952.

Dr. Gould resigned as pastor on November 7, 1954, due to ill health, and Reverend Leonard Thompson carried on the pastoral work.

A new piano for the auditorium was purchased with funds from the Merlie Gilliam estate and dedicated at the time of the Christmas choir concert in December 1954.

Opera chairs were placed under the back balcony and a modern fold door was installed to replace the wooden folding doors between this room and the auditorium.

An eight-week Loyalty Crusade was held January 16 to March 16, 1955. Purpose of the crusade was to enlist the loyalty of all church members and interested friends in being loyal to God and the church by attendance, at the morning, evening, and prayer meeting services; by prayer; by giving of financial means; and by work--four nights of visitation were scheduled. The response to this challenge was very good and the results were beyond Reverend Thompson's expectations. There were four nights of visitation during the crusade, with a total of approximately 275 people making about 600 calls in the homes of members and prospects. Special speakers during the crusade included Dr. Torrey M. Johnson, founder of Youth for Christ, Dr. Charles McKoy, missionary to Formosa, and Red Harper, converted movie cowboy of Hollywood, Special music was provided for some of the services by the Salem Singers, the male choruses of the First Baptist Church of Albany, and the First Baptist Church of Eugene.

The Loyalty Crusade closed with a Bible conference by Dr. Vincent Bennett of England, which was held February 27 to March 6, 1955.

During Reverend Thompson's ministry new classrooms were added to the Primary Department and older ones remodeled~ At this time the largest number of college age young people to attend a retreat went to Suttle Lake in January 1954, with eighty-five present.

An Evangelistic campaign with Guy Libbey was held October 16-31, 1955.

In November 1955, Reverend Thompson submitted his resignation as assistant pastor to take effect January 20, 1956, having accepted a call to become assistant pastor at the First Baptist Church of Tucson, Arizona.

At this time Mr. Kenneth Baldwin was called as temporary Christian Education Director. His ministry began on January 18, 1956, and was to close on August 31, 1956. However, the church extended the invitation to Mr. Baldwin to become assistant pastor, and on August 1, 1956, he began his duties in that capacity.

In March, 1956, the church had purchased the Lamberton property at 1730 Beca Street for a parsonage, having sold the property formerly used as the parsonage at 304 S. W. 9th Street in 1955.

Dr. F. Carl Truex was the interim pastor of the church from January, 1956 to Apr11, 1956.

Dr. Frank L. Waaser of St. Louis was called as the twenty-fifth pastor, April 15, 1956. He was born in 1897, at Richmond Hill, Long Island, New York. He attended Colgate University in New York, Rochester Divinity School at Rochester, and Princeton Theological Seminary, New Jersey.

A Junior Church, for children ages 9-11, was organized in July 1956, in addition to the Children's and Primary church groups already functioning»

Reverend Baldwin was ordained to the gospel ministry-on November 11, 1956.

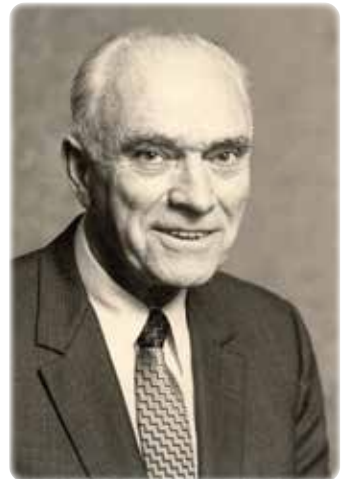
An outstanding event during 1957 was a Sunday School Clinic Conference held January 30-31, under the leadership of Mr. Dean Dalton, Sunday School Consultant for Baptist Publications, Denver, Colorado, Fourteen other Baptist churches in the area cooperated with us.

An United Evangelistic meeting, sponsored by the Evangelical Ministers Fellowship of Corvallis, was held in our church the last-week in February and the first week in March with Evangelist Phil Shuler.

In the fall of 1957, the adult-Sunday school department was reorganized and divided into classes on the basis of subject matter rather than age. Individuals selected the Bible centered class of their choice. Classes offered for the first quarter were: Basic Christian Beliefs, Everyday Christian Living, New Testament Survey, Bible Prophecy, History of Christianity, and Church Membership.

Beginning in 1958, the Reverend Kenneth Baldwin carried on the pastoral duties in the absence of a regular pastor.

Dr. John B. Houser, the twenty-sixth pastor, began his pastorate May, 1958. He was born in 1901, at Edinburgh, Scotland. He attended Wheaton College, University of Minnesota, Union Theological Seminary in Chicago, and Winona Lake School of Theology, Indiana. He was ordained as a Baptist pastor by the First Baptist Church of Minneapolis in 1941, after twenty years of ministry as a Presbyterian minister. Dr. Houser is a marvelous student and teacher of the Word, preaching it in language that everyone can understand. He can take the Old Testament and the New Testament and tie them together into "God's One Book." He is an inspiration and source of guidance to all through his own personal witness, able leadership, and counseling. During these years he has served faithfully and unselfishly in his ministry in all programs of the First Baptist Church as well as the community of Corvallis, Oregon.



Mrs. Houser takes an active part in the Sunday school as a teacher and leader of children's groups, in the Women's Union and Missionary circles. She lends a helping hand and encouragement wherever needed.

Some Highlights of the “Houser Years” at First Baptist Are:

The Reverend Baldwin resigned as Assistant Pastor in September 1958, thus leaving a vacancy on the staff.

The Reverend Harold Westing accepting the position of Christian Education Director November, 1958. A teacher training class was begun soon by Reverend Westing.

In 1958, services of worship were started on Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Eve .

The retail grocers had a meeting with some of the ministers of Corvallis stating they were working on the matter of Sunday closing of grocery stores. The church voted to commend this action and to encourage people to do weekday shoppings. Unfortunately, too much pressure was put on the stores and the actual Sunday closing of all grocery stores did not materialize.

The Eleventh Street parsonage was sold.

Reverend Westing sponsored a boys club with activities such as photography, electricity, model building, etc. The purpose was to provide an outlet for interests as well as guidance in Christian principles.

Troop Three, Boy Scouts of America, is sponsored by our church. This is an active troop which over the years assisted in community functions and has participated in many district and council events. This troop is self-supporting through its Christmas tree store and at different times has given large donations to worthy' causes or charities. The Scout cabin on Fifteenth and A Streets was sold for \$10,000.00 in 1968, and eleven acres on Allen Lane near Avery Park were purchased for \$20,000.00. The troop celebrated its fortieth anniversary recently. This outstanding group has been possible only because of the competent leadership of many scoutmasters over the years,

Other young people's groups are the Junior, Junior High, High School, and College Baptist Youth. These groups provide Christian training, fellowship, and socials with able sponsors. On many years these groups have enjoyed a weekend ski retreat at Suttle Lake with Bible study and playing in the snow,

The King's Daughters and King's Jewels are made up of Junior and Junior High girls who meet once a week for Bible study including Bible memory work, missionary lessons, stewardship, handcraft, and white cross work.

Intensive Bible study is part of the program provided during the Daily Vacation Bible School each summer for children from preschool age to teenagers.

The Women's Missionary Union is made up of the women in the six circles whose programs are composed of devotions and study, special needs of

missionaries, white cross, and local church needs.

The church choir provides a high standard of sacred music for the Sunday morning worship service and presents an annual Christmas and Easter concert.

During Dr. Houser's pastorate, great emphasis has been given to missions. The church contributes its support to many missionaries and endeavors to keep missions before the congregation. For example, prayer letters from missionaries are distributed, publications of the Conservative Baptist Mission Societies are made available, an annual week of Missionary Conference is held, and missionary speakers come to our pulpit and prayer meetings. This past year we have helped support forty-nine missionaries and, mission organizations. A total of nearly \$25,000.00 was given to missions through this church last year.

Devotional material has been made available for all members interested, with the idea of establishing family altars in the homes which do not now have them and to assist in bringing new material into those already established. The purpose is to have uniform devotional program throughout the membership. The devotional booklet now being used is, "Our Daily Bread."

The weekly broadcasting of the Sunday morning services of the church over KWIL provides a great outreach or extension for the church in this part of the state. A great number of people write and tell of the blessing the broadcast brings to them.

A new church bus was purchased in 1963 to help transport children to and from Sunday school, and for other church activities.

Various brochures have been made up to be given visitors telling about the church, its services, and activities. This has been greatly appreciated.

Through the recommendation of the Board of Deacons the procedure for dropping inactive members from the church roll was modified. Names are now dropped if people cannot be contacted or do not answer the correspondence relative to their membership status. The church roll is now a more realistic indication of the membership which at present is 817.

Over the years an extensive up-to-date library has been developed through donations, gifts, and purchases. This library has been put into active use by many of the congregation. To date there are approximately 2,100 volumes.

The annual Fourth of July all-church picnics are held at some convenient park such as Helmick, Avery, Cascadia, or Tadmor. This is a time for all members of the family and congregation to join together in play, food, and devotions.

Since 1961, the American Board of Missions to the Jews have held annual conferences in the church.

In September, 1962, Reverend Westing resigned to resume his education. The church called the Reverend David Harmon who served as Christian Education Director from May, 1963, to January, 1967. Reverend Westing now ministers in

Salem; and Reverend Harmon in Boulder, Colorado.

The Reverend and Mrs. Beck and family arrived in Corvallis and he began his duties as Christian Education Director, September 1, 1967. They are a great addition to the staff of the church and have the real spirit Of the Lord in helping others. He gives spiritual guidance, able leadership, teaches, is a good organizer, counselor, and a challenge to others in many of the youth programs. They as a team are untiring in all their church efforts and especially the work with the young people.

August, 1968, brought the Reverend and Mrs. Robert Howe and their children to Corvallis to work on the campus at Oregon State University. The Howes were appointed by the Conservative Baptist Home Mission Society.

In October, 1968, the First Baptist Church won the Governor's Trophy for the entry in the Oregon State University Centennial Parade. The entry consisted of fresh chrysanthemums in yellow, golds, and bronze with white forming an opened Bible on a pulpit in front of which rose a bronze floral cross. The float was led by a circuit rider in tuxedo riding dress and astride a palamino horse.

As Corvallis grew in size, Dr. Houser saw the need for another church in the north area of town. On November 1, 1968, a new Conservative Baptist Church located in the northwest part of Corvallis on Walnut Boulevard was formed. The name is Northwest Hills Baptist Church. Our Church voted to give every encouragement and support that we could.

The Reverend and Mrs. Robert Mc Kinnon and family came to join the church staff in 1969, after having served as missionaries for ten years in Taiwan. He holds the office of associate pastor. His duties are several fold: to assist the senior pastor; to work with the college youth aiding the young people to grow spiritually and become mature Christians. In addition, he has provided leadership in the visitation program of the church, to meet the needs of the shut-ins, to call on new families, and to encourage the members of the church to participate in this most important ministry.

Mrs. Mc Kinnon assists in many ways and has been blessed with a sixth sense or "the gift of meeting people and making them feel at home."

In 1971, new hymnals were purchased and a new church-organ has been ordered.

Reverend Beck supervised the new Adventure Day Camp held this year at the Scout Cabin site for elementary age children. The purpose of such a camp is to provide campers with an enjoyable educational experience which is physically, emotionally, and spiritually profitable.

On August 29, 1971, Dr. Houser came before the congregation and read his letter of resignation effective June 30, 1972, which will complete fourteen years as our pastor. He plans to retire from the active pastorate, thus completing fifty years in the ministry.

Long Range Planning

The long range planning committee, with Dr. Houser's leadership, has kept making detailed studies regarding the growth of the church, its expected-needs, the growth of the community, and the possibilities for expansion, construction needs, or changing the location of the church. The congregation decided to concentrate on building in the present location. Various groups of the church were asked what should be incorporated into a new building.

Through these past years, the church has acquired either by purchase or by an option, all the church block except the lots occupied by the Sigma Nu fraternity at 143 N.W. 10th St. The church also holds the corner lots across the street from the church at Ninth and Jackson Streets. These properties have cost the church approximately \$185,000.00. The loan value on both the church sanctuary and the student center is \$350,000.00.

In 1969, the church architect, Chris Jeppsen, presented to the congregation, slides and illustrations of what a new addition could look like as well as suggestions for remodeling of the present structure.

February 14, 1971, was the big day for decisions. Professor Virgil Freed, chairman of the cabinet, presented a brief review of the ways the Lord had led in the acquiring of the various properties adjacent to the church and how each one seemed to be specially timed. He then said that in regard to the matter of securing a loan for the building program it appeared that the Lord had again timed the circumstances. He presented a challenge for our faith to move ahead. It was voted to proceed with the building of a new sanctuary to the west of the present building.

On April 18, 1971, the congregation voted to accept the bid of the Tee and Jay Construction Company and to carry out the building program developed after years of careful study, costing up to \$463,340.00.

On Sunday, June 27, 1971, after the morning service, the entire congregation went outside to the west lot where ground breaking services were held. The new sanctuary will be ready in the spring of 1972.

As Dr. Houser wrote in his annual report of 1959, "Much as we thank God for the past, we do not rest upon it. We face the future with its unlimited opportunities. Corvallis is growing and we are challenged thereby if we dedicate our lives completely to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. As we move on into the future, let us keep our eyes upon the Lord. Looking unto Jesus is our watchword. We can't look for Him unless we are looking unto Him."

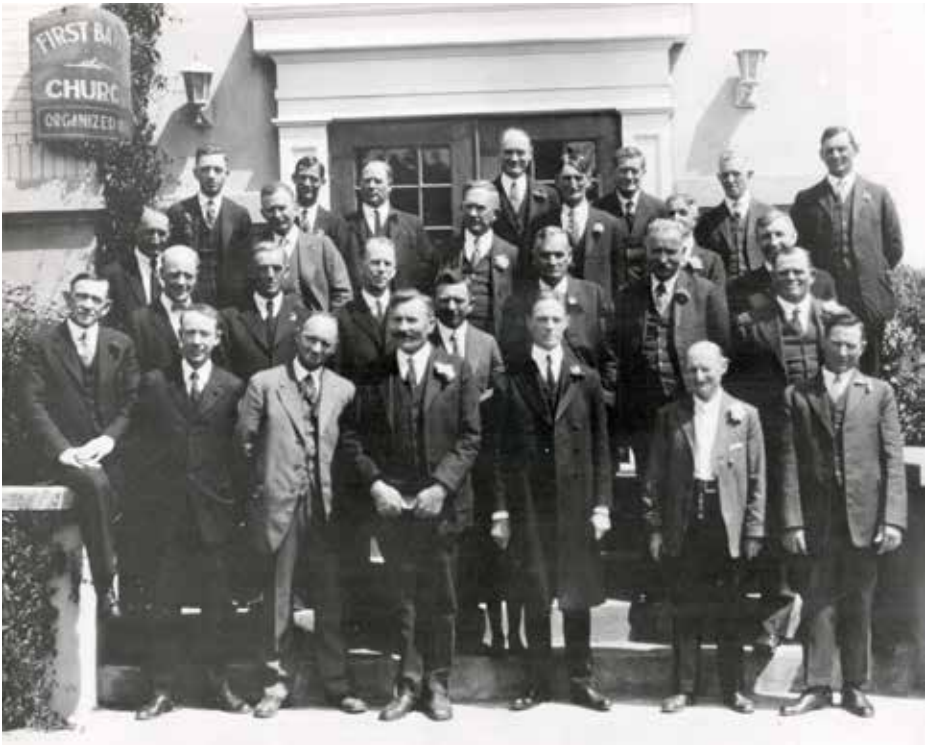
The First Baptist Church of Corvallis, Oregon, history was compiled from the following sources:

1. Lasher, George w., D.D., *The Ministerial Director of the Baptist Churches*, Ministerial Directory co., Oxford, Ohio, 1899.
2. Mattoon, Reverend c. H., *Baptist Annals of Oregon*, Volume 1, Telephone Register Publishing Co., McMinnville, Oregon, 1905.

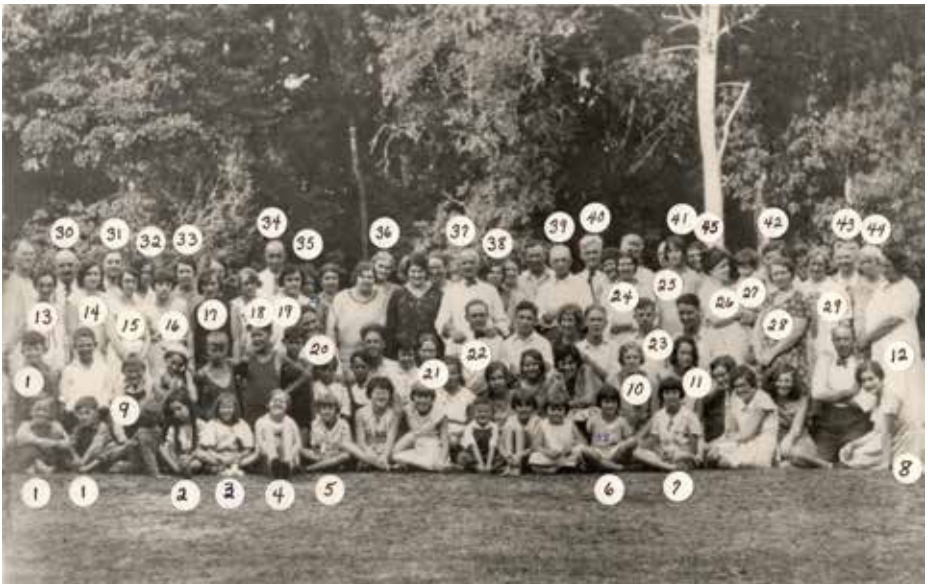
3. Miller, Clifford R., Baptists and Oregon Frontier, Oregon Baptist Convention, Portland, Oregon, 1967.
4. Wardin, Albert W. Jr., Baptists in Oregon, Judson Baptist College, Portland, Oregon, 1969.
5. The Church minutes.
6. The Church annual reports.
7. History written by Reverend Daniel Bryant, D. D., Uriel S. Burt, Miss Amy Cyrus, Mrs. Nell Whirry, Miss Julia Owens, Miss Edna E. Wiese, & Reverend James R. Beck.

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The one hundred twentieth anniversary committee was composed of Mrs. Virgil Freed, Miss Violet Bertsch, Miss Edna E. Wiese, and Reverend James R. Beck.



Men's Bible class - NW Monroe and 9th St. steps - 1926



First Baptist fourth of July picnic at Gellatly Grove - 1930's