

History of “The Roosevelt Missionary Baptist Church”

1898 – 2003

(Written in 1998 for the Church’s 100th Year Celebration)

(Updated in 2003)

In the late 1800s, people were moving around and settling in new areas for various reasons. The government was granting people land for services rendered during The Civil War. News of the discovery of gold was calling some people to head west and some families would stop here along the way. The areas along Fourteen Mile Creek and Ten Mile Creek offered good places to make homes. Also, there were several excellent springs of water that afforded good places to live. This area was becoming a new settlement of very nice families. A school was established for the children. Will and Joe Hammond were very interested in schools and they gave land and helped to build the school building.

As was the custom of the day, church services were held in the school building in the early 1890's. In 1898, a church was organized. Pleasant Plains (known then as Fairview) was the nearest settled community, at about four miles to the north. The church there extended an arm and helped to organize the new church. Bro. Robert Middleton did the preaching and Bro. S. D. Vick assisted in the organization service. The church was named 'The Macedonia Landmark Missionary Baptist Church' at that time. It continued, however, to meet in the schoolhouse until 1902.

Mr. Al Collins had been left by his father in the care of Captain McCauley of Fairview after the death of his mother while their tribe was on the 'Trail of Tears' passing through Arkansas. After he had grown up and married, he and his family moved into this area. He had a sawmill, a cotton gin, a blacksmith shop, a gristmill, and a country store. In 1902, he donated some land for a churchyard adjacent to the cemetery. He also gave material to build a church building on the present site. The following year the community was granted a United States Post Office. It was named 'Roosevelt' in honor of Teddy Roosevelt, who was President at that time.

In October of 1951 the church, in regular conference, changed its name to 'The Roosevelt Missionary Baptist Church'. Ernest Beaver and Frank Babb served as Deacons for many years. Dwight Stephens and Reggie Heidelberg are the active Deacons at this time (December 1998). Frank Babb has been deceased for several years. However, Ernest Beaver is still involved in the church, but for health reasons is no longer an active Deacon.

The first church building was unique. It had two front doors. The pulpit was between the doors as you entered the church. The congregation faced the big road and the preacher faced the west. In 1948, a new building was built. Later, in 1961, major improvements were made. Those improvements included a new concrete floor, wall paneling, gas space heaters, and an acoustic tile ceiling. A foyer and a classroom area were added still later. In 1997, the auditorium and classrooms were redecorated with new carpet, drapes, etc. In 1998, a fellowship hall addition was constructed. The various members of our church did these improvements.

Our pastor in 1998 is Bro. Sammy Bennett, and this year we have received 26 new members: 16 by baptism, and 10 by letter or statement. Attendance is good.

The following is a partial list of former pastors, albeit not in any particular order:

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| Preacher Bryant | Carrel Heidelberg |
| Don Hook | Bobby Joe Maddox |
| Bro. Blanton | Austin Cook |
| Joe Shultz | Kenneth Marlin |
| Conrad Smith | Billy Bonner |
| Bro. Wilkerson | Jerry Miller |
| Daryl Harris | Maxie Altom |
| Ernest McCain | Clyde Sterling |
| Leon Jarry | Charles Sellers |
| Jerry Hensley | Johnny Sloate |
| Charlie Perry | Leslie Rae |
| Leroy Goodson | Sanders Payne |
| Jimmy Jack Waire | John Swann |
| Alvis Wood | Verlon Wood |
| Bill Covington | |

Since the Roosevelt church was, and still is, a small church, it has been the first pastorate for many of the preachers listed above. The current pastor, Sammy Bennett, is serving in his fifth year in this, his first pastorate as well.

This account by Averil Beaver, read before the church in regular conference on December 27, 1998, is adopted by the church, 'The Roosevelt Missionary Baptist Church', as its official historical record and is hereby filed with the Church Secretary for future reference.

Postscript written for the March 30, 2003, dedication of a new auditorium.

The beautiful auditorium was completed and put into use in 2002. It includes a baptistery, the first one for Roosevelt Missionary Baptist Church. This wonderful facility was made possible through hard work and prayerful sacrifice,