

Zachariah N. Morrell, assisted by Thomas Horseley and Rev. Benjamin Fry, organized FBC of Huntsville on September 16, 1844, with eight charter members. Z.N. Morrell was an ordained Baptist minister and missionary who traveled about Texas organizing churches. He was often referred to as "a man sent from God." The church was originally called Huntsville Baptist Church. The old minutes say, "At a meeting held in the school house in the town of Huntsville, Montgomery County, Republic of Texas, on Monday, the 16th day of September, A.D., 1844, for the purpose of organizing a Baptist church the following proceedings were had, to wit."

1844

The old church bell was molded in Troy, New York at the request of Sam Houston. It was commonly rung to call the membership to worship. On June 26, 1888, a Dedication Service was held for the historical bell which was placed on the corner of 13th and Avenue J.

1853

The Baptist State Convention of 1850 was held in Huntsville. It was also hosted by Huntsville in 1853, 1857, 1861, and 1864.

1850

1855

December 16, 1855, Sam and Margaret Houston and two servants joined FBC from the church in Independence. Many of the early baptismal services were held in the pool at the Houston home.



George W. Baines was the third pastor 1859-1860. He was editor of the *Texas Baptist*, the first Baptist paper in Texas and was president of Baylor University for two years (1861-1862). He was the great-grandfather of Lyndon Baines Johnson.

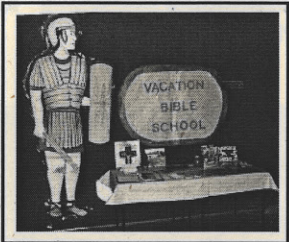
1859

The "colored friends" who were members were granted letters of dismissal to form their own church. Later the First Missionary Baptist Church on 10th Street was established.

1868

Dr. H.D. Bruce was the 28th pastor, serving 1933-1938. It was during his ministry and due greatly to his hard work that the church debt was finally paid. He served as president of East Texas Baptist College at Marshall from 1942-1950.

1933



FBC helped several Hispanic families establish Faith Memorial Baptist Church.

1930s

June 1926, FBC was the first church in town to have a Vacation Bible School. It was under the direction of Mr. Henry Smith, educational director.

1926

During the twenties, the WMU worked hard to help pay the church debt. They held bazaars downtown and served dinner for different organizations. Sometimes these women were up at midnight washing dishes.

1920s



On February 6, 1952, FBC voted to buy the Krumnow home at 2014 Ave. N 1/2 for use as the church parsonage until 1969.

1952

The church mortgage from the 1924 building was burned during an evening service.

1938

H.M. Ward was FBC's 30th pastor from 1941-1951. During this time the church was remodeled and painted inside and outside. During the war years, Dr. Ward saw to it that our members serving in the military received a bulletin each week. Dr. Ward is the father of Houston TV newscaster Dave Ward.

1941

January 24, 1954, shortly after Sunday morning services were over, a fire of undetermined origin broke out. Fire departments from Huntsville and surrounding towns valiantly fought the blaze until late afternoon, but the inside of the building was destroyed. Tragically, a college student, E.V. Davis, was killed by falling timbers while helping remove books, records and furniture from the burning building. Dr. Clinard, who was pastor at the time, felt it was essential that an evening service be held. The high school auditorium was secured for that service.

1954

FBC voted to purchase a Baldwin Electric Organ Model 10 on September 10, 1952. The organ was dedicated on October 5, 1952. It was saved by church members during the tragic fire in 1954, and was replaced by a new organ in the 1970s.

August 17, 1977, the Child Development Center opened. It closed on September 4, 1992.

On September 18, 1977, for the 133rd anniversary celebration the historical marker was unveiled by the Texas Historical Commission.

1977

In July 1974, a prisoner at the TDC Walls Unit, Fred Carrasco, held twelve employees hostage. Since the church adjoins the prison property, members found themselves surrounded by armed guards and television cameramen. One of the hostages, Mrs. Ann Fleming, was a church member and Sunday School teacher.

1974

In 1969, FBC purchased a new parsonage at 220 Willowbend in Forest Hills while W.Y. Pond, Jr. was serving as the 32nd pastor.

1969

First Baptist began its Prayer Ministry.

1984



1985

On May 5, 1985 a Dedication and Celebration Banquet was held for the Family Life Center. The work on this facility began on March 23, 1983, when the Family Life Center Building Committee was approved by the membership. On October 23, 1983, FBC voted to approve the plans presented for the building and for remodeling the education building. Dr. Gary Bonner was pastor at the time this building was conceived, completed and dedicated.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH HUNTSVILLE, TEXAS TIMELINE 1844-2000

...1844...1850...1860...1870...1880...1890...1900...1910...1920...1930...1940...1950...1960...1970...1980...1990...2000...

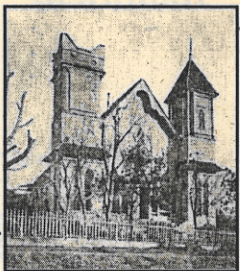
1848

From 1848-1859 J.W.D. Creath served as the second pastor of FBC. S.J. McClenny served as joint pastor.



J.W.D. Creath came to Texas from Virginia. He had been appointed a missionary by the Domestic Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. He served as General Agent for the Baptist State Convention for twenty years and later became its president. It was during his pastorate that the first building was constructed.

Rev. Rufus Burleson also dedicated the second building erected in 1891. In 1904, two Sunday School rooms were added to the west end of the building. In 1911, due to continued growth, an addition was constructed to be used by the Sunday School. By 1915, the church membership had grown to 450 and need for a larger church plant was becoming evident. This building was torn down in 1924 and replaced by a larger brick facility.



1891

1852

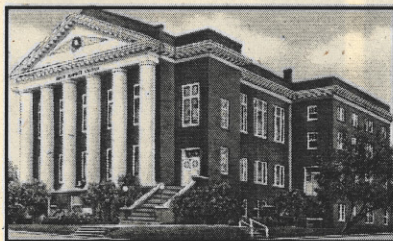
The first services were held in Dean School House. On November 24, 1852, FBC purchased three lots on the corner of Avenue J and 13th Street. Two lots were from the estate of James McGown and one lot from the estate of R.B. Martin. Four buildings have been erected on this location. The actual date of the first building is unknown. Rev. Rufus Burleson gave the dedicatory sermon.

1889

Jeff D. Ray was the 13th and 17th pastor of FBC. Dr. Ray came to Huntsville from Baylor University in 1882. He remained as pastor until 1885. In 1889 he came back to Huntsville as pastor and remained until 1895. He later became the head of the Department of Homeletics in the School of Theology at the Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth.

1894

On January 7, 1894 a committee was appointed to see about putting electric lights in the church.



struggle for the church to pay off the building debt. Mr. Josey said he would give \$25,000 if the people would raise the remainder. This was done.

Z.N. Morrell said in his book, *Flowers and Fruits in the Wilderness*, "But few churches in the history of Baptists have maintained their organization so long and amid so many trials as the church in Huntsville...at different times it has passed through ordeals that tested severely the faithfulness of its membership. Under it all, and through it all, it lived, and yet lives, to bear testimony for Christ."

1924

The third building which was brick, was constructed in 1924. C.F. Andrews was the 25th pastor at that time. Mr. Robert Josey of Houston was a Huntsville boy who became quite wealthy but never forgot his hometown or his parents' church. During the great depression it became an almost impossible struggle for the church to pay off the building debt. Mr. Josey said he would give \$25,000 if the people would raise the remainder. This was done.

1955

After the third church building burned in 1954, it was discovered that the outside walls of the structure remained in good condition and so it was remodeled into an education building and a new sanctuary was erected on the north side of the church property. The congregation continued to meet in the high school auditorium until the fourth building was dedicated on December 11, 1955.



1952

Dr. Gordon Clinard was 31st pastor from 1952-1955. From 1955-1966 he was Professor of Preaching at Southwestern Baptist Seminary in Fort Worth. Here he had a profound influence upon young men who later filled countless pulpits. From 1967-1969 he was president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. He was serving as professor of Bible at Hardin-Simmons University when his life was ended by a tragic automobile accident.

FBC began a counseling ministry.

1975

The first annual Christmas Eve family candlelight service was held on December 24, 1976. Dr. C. Gary Bonner was serving as the 35th pastor of FBC.

1976

On August 8, 1971, a new Activities Building was dedicated. Dr. A. B. Mays bequeathed the funds to the church to be used in extending the church's ministry to the community. Dr. R. Byron Orand, the 33rd pastor of FBC, delivered the dedicatory address. This building burned on March 7, 1978.

1971

1956

First Baptist began a radio ministry which still continues today. Sunday morning services are broadcast on KSAM.

1981

On October 14, 1981, FBC voted to purchase a missionary furlough house at 618 Rolling Hills. Patsy and Ben Lawton, who were serving in Rivoli, Italy became the first residents in 1982. On May 11, 1983, FBC paid off the missionary furlough house indebtedness.

1979

February 14, 1979, FBC voted to pay off all indebtedness.

October 17, 1979 FBC voted to purchase a Christmas tree and the supplies needed to make the Christmas symbols to hang on it. In 1999-2000 three ladies of the church took on the project of repairing the symbols for future use.

1988



On February 14, 1988, FBC began an international student ministry led by Joyce and "Chili" Wagner.

1990

On February 18, 1990, a church steeple was dedicated in memory of Willis & Beulahree Floyd. A steeple was included in plans for rebuilding the church after it was destroyed by fire in 1954. Due to expense, the idea for a steeple was abandoned at that time. Thirty years later these plans were realized, due to donations made in the memory of Dr. and Mrs. Floyd.

