

First Baptist Church Hardesty – History – 1929 to Present

The First Baptist Church of Hardesty, Oklahoma, was organized as a Missionary Baptist Church, July 21, 1929, following a revival by Rev. Matthew Doyle at the Meadow View Schoolhouse. The Church was organized that those of like faith might assemble themselves together and it was felt that the time was right. The Rock Island Railroad had forged its way from Amarillo, Texas, to Liberal, Kansas, and the new town of Hardesty was being outlined and businesses were building.

Charter Members were: Pastor, Rev. Matthew Doyle, and Members, Mr. & Mrs. T. J. Dye, Mrs. Maggie Johnson, Mr. J. G. Etter, Leona Talcott, Tressie Johnson, Dorothy Dye, Ward Williams, Mr. & Mrs. John Williams, Mr. & Mrs. C. M. Hawkins, Mr. & Mrs. R. E. Spragins, Mr. & Mrs. Clarence Dry, and Mr. & Mrs. Alex Dye. It was the hope and prayer of those early members who launched out so bravely to meet the challenges of the Gospel and spread the Good News, that they would be able to bear testimony unto a “Field White Unto Harvest.”

The Church Building was dedicated March 16, 1930, on the site where it now stands. The Church was blessed in those early years by the attendance of young people, particularly at the Baptist Young Peoples Union, held on Sunday evening, ahead of the preaching service.

There was a tremendous dedication to financing the building and maintaining it. Hardesty became a consolidated school with a huge district, extending west several miles, bordered on the North by the Beaver River, on the South by Texas, and on the East to Beaver County. Since there was no time to erect all of the school buildings, The Baptist Church was used for the first year as the High School Study Hall.

The Depression and drought of the 1930's dealt the Church a severe financial blow. One member mortgaged all his land (80 acres) to ease the strain. The Church, as all churches do, had its mountain top experiences as well as its valleys of despair. There have been times when one, two or three would come and read their Bibles on Sunday Morning – no pastor – no organization – just humble Souls who loved God and wanted to draw nigh unto Him.

The Church joined the Southern Baptist Convention as it spread across the United States and has been a staunch supporter of this Common Cause of shedding the light of Divine Love around the world. The Church survived the lean years, as well as the prosperous ones (that are sometimes harder to survive), because of

God's Blessings and a demonstration of Faith, Hope and Love. This Church has demonstrated many times that it believes in "Now Time." "Do it now because that is the only time that we have."

Several remodels have taken place over the years, including the addition of a 'Log Cabin' Parsonage in the early 1980's, and a church remodel in the 1970's which included the beautiful mural which graces the pulpit to this day. And because of the vision of a few committed souls, Mike Wilkins, Jesse Martin, Larry Parker and Bob Sanders, the most recent change was in 2006 with the addition of a large fellowship hall which is currently used primarily for GULP (God Using Little People). Sunday School and Church Services continue with GULP on Wednesday Evenings with an average attendance of 12-14 children. God's Word continues to be shared through these walls. Only He knows to what future purpose!

Although membership today is small, the work this small church continues to do for the Lord is mighty. Our God is truly AWESOME!

Summarized from the:

Hardesty Extension Homemakers Group

Hardesty History 1974 Book

Updated & Submitted by:

Linda Paul, FBCH Treasurer 2013

PBA Historian