

History of Rosanky Baptist Church

Information regarding the early history of Rosanky Baptist Church up to 1971 was recorded in a small booklet entitled History of Rosanky Baptist Church by Bro William E. "Bill" Ehrke, who became the church's pastor in January 1970. The booklet describes Rosanky, Texas at the turn of the century and chronicles the birth and growth of the church through 1971. The condensed history up to 1971 presented in this narrative is based entirely on Bro. Ehrke's booklet

The Beginning

Rosanky, Texas grew with the presence of the railroad which pushed through the area near the end of the 19th Century. It was a rough and tumble community—not a place for the faint of heart. As people settled in the community, two needs became apparent: a school and a church. The first preacher came to town before the turn of the century and held services in a brush arbor. These early preachers were tough, blunt-spoken men and represented several denominations, though the majority are thought to have been Methodists and Baptists.

Rosanky's original school building was completed near the end of the century. It became the center of community activities and was the site of the first indoor religious services. It was located where the present parsonage stands. One specific date was found on the flyleaf of an old ledger book which identified the document as the "Missionary Baptist Church Book, Rosanky Texas, Organized July-31-1904". Unfortunately, the book contained no further records pertaining to this first Rosanky church. It is known that religious services in the early 1900s were held in the school building whenever a preacher came to town and it is probable that one of these traveling preachers started this church. Baptists in the community date their organized work from this point.

The old 1904 record book mentioned above was pressed into service in 1916 to record the outcome of a "meeting" to recognize the organization of the Rosanky Baptist Church, July 30, 1916. The first people were enrolled as "persons qualified to go into a church organization". The church was opened and the following day, July 31, 1916, three persons were received on confession and baptized. Thus begins the history of Rosanky Baptist Church.

Shortly thereafter, the church elected its first pastor, Bro. W. A. Barclay. Definitive records are sketchy for these early years of the church. Bro. Barclay resigned on September 2, 1917. A Bro. Miller was called on December 2, 1917 and church officers for 1918 were elected. Unfortunately this is the last written record available until after the 1920s. It is presumed that the first structure which was to become Rosanky Baptist Church was begun in 1916 or 1917. Progress was slow, and the framework was apparently used before there were any interior walls or a ceiling. It was a simple one room structure, built by local men and boys. It was heated by a wood stove in the middle of the room and lighted with lamps and lanterns.



Hard Times

Although Baptists built the structure, it was open to preachers of every denomination. The church had no pastor in the 1920s, but the faithful gathered whenever a preacher came to town. Rosanky remained a rough town during these years, with several saloons, no law, and plenty of workers, ranch hands, and mean local boys who often received preachers with considerably less hospitality than the worshippers. Stories are told of one wise old preacher who conducted his services with his six-shooter lying on the pulpit to ensure a quiet and orderly service. This is but one of the stories told of the wide variety of preachers traveling through Rosanky and the experiences they encountered in this still “wild” community.

Times were hard in Rosanky in the 1920s. 1925 was exceptionally dry and many families were ruined. Crops failed and cattle were turned loose because they could not be fed. The church building fell into disrepair and planks had to be nailed over the door to keep wandering livestock out. 1929 saw the formal beginning of the “Great American Depression”; however, in the midst of their despair, it seems that the people of Rosanky were ready for their church to open again.

Bro. M. A. Gary, a former Austin Association Missionary, adopted the church as his special project. In July 1930, a 12-day meeting was held in the community and the church was reorganized. New members joined and modest repairs began so that the church could be reopened. The church struggled with few funds and irregular services, but the members persevered. Throughout the 1930s the church had several pastors, serving in a part-time capacity, and the membership grew, but funds remained scarce. In the spring of 1942 the church reported to the Austin Association that it met on the first and third Sundays of the month and that its total budget for 1941-42 was \$306.00. During these years the church might not have survived without the faithful support of Methodists in the community. It has been reported that the pastor, Bro. Fisher, ate and slept in Methodist homes more often than with Baptist families.

In the late 1930s or early 1940s a small store building was given to the church and was moved to a location behind the auditorium by mule teams, becoming the first “Educational Building” or Sunday School Annex. Electric lights were finally installed in the church in the early 1940s.

Improvements and Growth

By the mid-1940s, the church was in serious need of repair. The foundation, having been repaired in 1937, was failing again, as was the structural integrity of the building, putting the structure in danger of collapse. In 1948 the church house received a major structural overhaul and church services were moved to the schoolhouse during the repairs. Footings were leveled, framing was braced, some siding was replaced, rotten wood was replaced as necessary, and new windows were installed. The building was re-roofed in 1951.

The early 1950s saw Rosanky Baptist Church become a “full-time” church. More building repair and renovation took place in the mid-1950s. The Sunday School Annex was disassembled and some of the material salvaged from that building was used in making a one-room addition behind the auditorium which was subdivided into classrooms by curtains. The full-time schedule was discontinued and services were conducted on the second and fourth Sundays. By the late 1950s more improvements were made to the building including hardwood flooring over the original wood planks, sheet rocked walls, and a “shed-type” roof over the entrance. By 1959 the budget had grown to \$125.00 per month

The church’s history during the 1960s reflect continued building improvements, growth in membership, and extension of its spiritual ministries. In 1961 a house was purchased and moved from San Marcos to serve as the church’s first parsonage. The Rosanky Community Club offered the church approximately one acre of land (the site of the first school) for \$1.00 and the house was moved in August, a most arduous task accomplished by Rosanky’s men. In 1963 the underpinning of the church building was examined and re-worked. More electrical work was performed and the porch roof was rebuilt to match the appearance of the rest of the building and to cover new concrete steps. Various improvements continued for the church building, Sunday School space, and the parsonage. In the late 1960s the church moved its membership



to the Gonzales Baptist Association on the grounds that it had more in common with other small towns and rural areas than with the churches in Austin.

1970 saw a surge in membership with a record 80 in attendance for Sunday morning worship and 44 in Sunday School. Building improvements included air conditioning for the auditorium and installation of a steeple with electronic chime equipment. The educational building was constructed in 1972 and the church was bricked in 1979. Total offerings in 1981 totaled \$30,268.00.

The Second Church Building

The early 1980s saw such growth in Sunday school and worship service attendance that it was clear a larger church would soon be needed. In 1984 four acres along Highway 535 was granted to the church with a stipulation that work on a new church facility would begin prior to 1986. Remodeling of the original church continued in 1985. In addition, a mobile home was purchased for additional Sunday school space and nursery, and was placed on land loaned by the Meuth family. A work day was scheduled for October 5, 1995 to begin clearing the new church property.

Additional clearing of the church property continued in 1986 and plot plans for the new church were adopted. The church was beset with budget problems in 1987 which led to budget cuts and postponement of construction. On September 7, 1988 a bank loan for \$100,000 was signed. Groundbreaking ceremonies for the new church soon followed and Baptist Builders arrived in October. The steeple was raised in two weeks after construction began and Baptist Builders left by November 1st. The new church was occupied on December 18, 1988; the dedication ceremony was held on March 12, 1989. Rosanky Baptist Church continued to grow. Total offerings in 1989 were \$124,616.00. By the end of 1990, plans for further expansion were being considered. Offerings for 1991 totaled \$177,371.00.

The 1990s brought continued growth to the church in membership, attendance at Sunday school and worship services, and ministries. By the turn of the century the church had nearly reached its capacity. Bro. John Abraham was called to pastor the church, arriving late August 2000. The Rosanky Christian Academy (RCA) opened in September 2001.



Building for Kingdom Growth

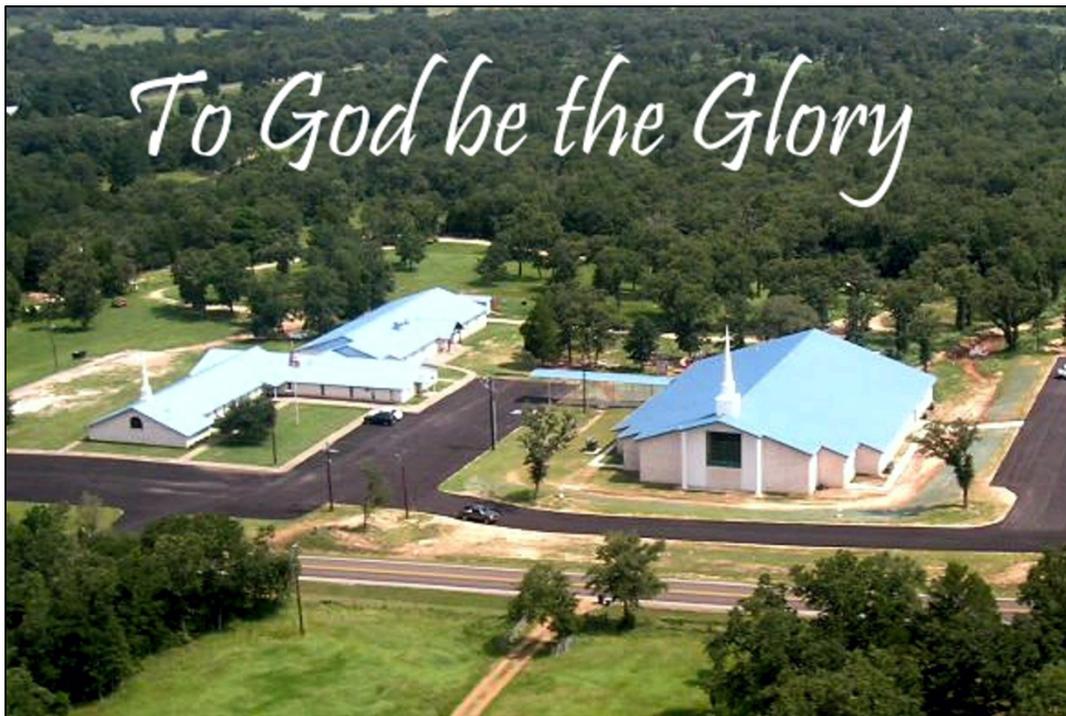
By 2003 it was clear that a larger facility was needed to house this growing church. *Building for Kingdom Growth* was the building campaign initiated to raise the funds needed to build a new facility adjacent to the church which would house the sanctuary, Sunday school classrooms, and church offices, leaving the previous church facilities to house a growing Christian school. By October 2004 the building fund balance exceeded \$107,000 and RCA was in a strong financial position with 43 students enrolled. A year later the building fund had grown to more than \$230,000. A building Committee was formed and began soliciting bids for the new building and its subsystems. At the December 2005 business meeting the church approved a motion to seek a construction loan of up to \$600,000 for construction of new facilities. In January 2006 the church approve a budget of \$950,000 for this project. Preparation for the slab had begun and the church was committed to this ambitious venture.

By June 2006 the building fund had surpassed \$300,000 and erection of the building was expected to begin in early August. In November 2006 the church agreed to accept a sale offer by Mrs. Gladys Meuth, a local member of the church, of 4 to 6 acres of land adjoining the church property for the price of \$5,000. Work on the church proceeded rapidly over the next several months, with much of the work being completed at the hands of church members. By May 2007 work was nearing completion and June 10, 2007 was officially scheduled as the first service date, with a dedication service to follow on August 26th.

The final budget of the church for the new facility had been increased to \$1,020,000; the total spent was \$1,037,212; and the estimated value of the completed facility was over

\$2,000,000. Construction was accomplished with much prayer, careful oversight by the building committee, and countless hours of labor graciously contributed by many church members.

Rosanky Baptist Church continues to serve the surrounding and outlying areas. Its local outreach ministry includes a food bank for needy families (twice monthly) and services at local nursing homes in Bastrop and Smithville. Additionally, the church continues to support a robust worldwide outreach program with monthly mission contributions. God has had His hand on this church from the very beginning and continues to nurture it with grace and love. To God be glory!



**Pastors
of
Rosanky Baptist Church**

October 1916	Bro. W. A. Barclay
December 1917	Bro. Miller
1920s	(Unknown)
July 1930	Bro. M. A. Gray
1931 to 1932	Bro. C. C. Larrison
November 1932	Bro. Otto Swartz
June 1933	Bro. Hubert Stockman
June 1934	Bro. L. A. Well
Spring of 1937	Bro. Skinner
November 1937	Bro. Rufus Ramsey
October 1940	Bro. I. L. Rogers
Spring of 1942	Bro. Henry Fisher
1942 to 1943	Bro. J. A. Harvey
1943 or 1944	Bro. E. M. Mobley
October 1950	Bro. Bob Scarborough
June 1951	Bro. Joe Chaney
February 1952	Bro. Glen Walker
February 1953	Bro W. S. Sutherland
August 1954	Bro. Tommy Lee
August 1956	Bro. John Bird
January 1961	Bro. C. E. Spiars
August 1962	Bro. Bob Wilson
January 1970	Bro. Bill Ercke
November 1971	Bro. Ken Dewey
June 1972	Bro. David Miller
September 1972	Bro. Albert Elam
June 1974	Bro. Leslie James
June 1976	Bro. David Mills
June 1978	Bro. Albert Elam
December 1981	Bro. Y. J. Jimenez
1997 to 1998	Bro. Jacky Stanfield
August 2000 to Present	Bro. John Abraham