

MAY 27, 1984
Winifred Skene

A BRIEF EYEWITNESS HISTORY
OF
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF WINDSOR

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Rev. William Troy, our founder and first pastor as well as the fifth pastor of Detroit's Second Baptist Church, was born in Virginia. As a young man he moved to Windsor and became involved in our church life here in 1853. Our services were held in a home on the west side of McDougall Street north of Albert (now University Street). In 1854 he went to England securing from Queen Victoria the granting of a land charter for our church. Thus First Baptist had its beginning on McDougall Street.

Forty-Eight years and twenty-one pastors later through progress and strife we come to the twentieth century beginning in 1902 with Rev. R. L. Bradby.

During the pastorate of Rev. R. L. Bradby, 1902 until 1909, outstanding milestones were: a great revival in which many were added to the church through the evangelistic efforts of Rev. T. Morris, the ordination to the ministry of S. L. McDowell, C. L. Wells, C. Lawrence, and J. Moody, the organization of the B. Y. P. U. and Literary Society, and the renovation of the church basement. The parsonage next to the church was purchased.

From 1909 to 1914 the services of a very able, intelligent man of God, Rev. E. E. Thompson, marked a period of success in many ways. His ability to preach ranked second to none in our community. He divided the church into twelve groups to raise money for a building fund. Out of these groups five organizations came into being. The ordination of Rev. Conquest took place at this time.

Our next pastor was a native of Windsor, Rev. C. L. Wells. He had plenty of vision and Christ-like zeal. His earnestness was shown in his untiring efforts to assist and guide the church in a re-location venture. Under his leadership the present edifice was erected to the glory of God. The cornerstone was laid May 24, 1915, and in October we were able to occupy our new church edifice in a membership march from the first location on McDougall Street to the present place here on Mercer Street. The present parsonage and the other homes, one on Mercer Street and the duplex on Tuscarora were purchased as part of the parcel of land on which the church stands. The rent from these homes would be applied to the church mortgage. During this period Rev. H. L. Talbot was ordained. In 1920 the church granted Rev. Wells permission to attend Lynchburg College in Virginia. While there he resigned in 1922.

In 1922 - 1925 during the short pastorate of Rev. Talbot, who had been supplying the pulpit during the absence of the former pastor, quite a number were added to the church, and work continued with Mr. I. C. Parker, Chairman of the Deacon Board.

Rev. H. L. McNeil, 1925 - 1927, established a Community Forum, and a Bible Class for young converts. He resigned in 1927 to accept a charge in Toronto.

Rev. A. R. James accepted this charge in 1927. His short pastorate, until 1931, proved rather stormy.

In August 1931 Rev. Randall came to us but for a brief stay. In 1933 he resigned.

In 1934 one of our earlier pastors, the Rev. H. L. Talbot was recalled. During his second pastorate Mr. Roy Dungy preached his trial sermon, few were added to the church. Our country was experiencing turbulent financial times which brought on the great economic depression of the 1930's. Rev. Talbot rallied the congregation together during the terrible times of these depressive economic years. He gave the congregation hope and vision for the future thru trust and faith in God as we looked for better and brighter days ahead. He resigned from Windsor First Baptist Church in 1937.

In the fall of 1938 the church recalled Rev. C. L. Wells to return as pastor, to guide the congregation in saving the church from a threatening mortgage fore-closure which would mean the loss of our church property. With renewed spirit the congregation took on new hope and determination to survive. All the outstanding debts were paid and a regular fifty dollar payment on the principal was established. A new cement floor for the entire lower auditorium was the last work in which the pastor was engaged. In April, 1944 he answered to the call of his Master, and First Baptist Church was once again without a pastor, but not without hope in God by Christ who said, "...I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." With faith seeking and peaceful determination the congregation advanced under the leadership of the Deacons Board and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

In 1945 our present pastor, Rev. M. Brown, was called to the pastorate of this church from a vibrant three-point Church pastorate in Chatham and in Chatham Township. Under his helpful leadership and guidance for the last thirty-nine years we have come a long way. Many additions have been made to our membership and congregation. The influence of our spirituality has reached far and wide in service. Peace, joy, and goodwill, is alive and extended throughout our City and Community in fellowship with all Churches and Communions. In 1975 the Baptist Convention of Ontario & Quebec honoured Rev. M. Brown in recognition of his 40 years (which is now 49 years) as a Dedicated Ordained Minister. During the pastorate of these years we have not built buildings of stone and mortar, but Christian character in the total whole in extending the Kingdom of Christ. The membership has greatly increased. In 1950 the long standing mortgage was liquidated, in 1959 the Hallman Concert electronic organ was installed. Decorations, repairs, and upkeep of all properties carried on several times, together with the re-wiring of all revenue properties. The parking lot directly to the south of us was

secured by our able and energetic Trustees Board who have been most progressively active currently under the leadership of Mr. Alton C. Parker, C.M., O.M.C. The parsonage was repaired both inside and out, church tower repaired, the building insulated, ceiling fans installed, the parking lot fenced in and etc. Most recently through the efforts of Mr. Parker we were able to purchase the two properties south of our parking lot on Mercer Street extending our holdings from Tuscarora to Cataraqui on the east side of Mercer and back to the alley. Our insurance coverage is kept adequate based on replacement cost. Our Finance Committee has our financial status in a very good position. Many great and fine services have been carried out by the Deacon Board and the Pastor up through the years.

Small in number, but fervent in the business of the church's mission for Christ we have not only maintained the work at home, but contribute well over 3,000 dollars annually to denominational Missions besides other annual periodic givings and services to our local community.

Time and records do not permit me to list the hundreds of souls saved through the work of this great institution, the hundreds baptized, the baby dedications, the marriages performed, the names of the ministers ordained here, the personal counselling and encouragement given others to carry on, the hands outreached in friendship or the list of organizations that supported each pastor as he served the mission of this church.

Our Out-Reach includes representatives and members in the Windsor Baptist Council, the Inter-Church Council of Women, the Amherstburg Regular Missionary Baptist Association, the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, the Canadian Baptist Federation, the Windsor Baptist Council, Windsor Baptist Men's Association, and others.

The present active organizations under Rev. Brown are:

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|-------------------------------|--|
| The Deacon Board | Women's Missionary Circle |
| The Trustee Board | Usher Boards |
| The Executive Board | Envelope Clerks |
| The Deaconess Board | The Willing Workers |
| The Senior Choir | The Sunday School |
| The Finance Committee | The Baptist Young Peoples' Union |
| Pastor's Aid Committee | Love and Service Group |
| Church Clerks | Evelyn Parker Community Friendship Group |
| Historian | Inter-Church Council of Women |
| Mission Stewardship Committee | |

Mrs. Cuzzens, our Church Clerk, has in her 1983 report given such a beautifully thorough report that I would like it to be attached herewith that it may be included in our history records and that others may read and enjoy it.

Quote from Pastor Brown, "No visible history in the work of the kingdom of God through the visible Church is complete. There are hidden values, and successes and saved personalities one must wait to behold after Christ's great and certain return."

LILLIAN PALMER
HISTORIAN - FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
DISTRIBUTED MAY 27, 1984

First Baptist Church Pastors and Visiting Elders

| | | |
|----|--|-------------|
| 1 | * Rev. Wm. Troy - Founder | 1853 - 1858 |
| 2 | * Rev. Supply Case | 1858 - 1860 |
| 3 | * Rev. Thomas F. Scott | 1861 - 1868 |
| 4 | Rev. J. O. Bonner | 1870 - 1872 |
| 5 | Rev. Cole, Assistant Pastor | 1872 |
| 6 | Rev. Faulkner | 1873 |
| 7 | Rev. Gibbs, Assistant Pastor and Clerk | 1874 |
| 8 | * Rev. S. H. Davis, Visiting Elder | 1875 |
| 9 | Rev. Hansbrough, Assistant Pastor | 1876 |
| 10 | Elder Binga, Visiting Elder | 1877 |
| 11 | Elder Bonner, Assistant Pastor | 1879 |
| 12 | Rev. T. C. Johnson | 1880 |
| 13 | Rev. J. W. Redd) | |
| 14 | Rev. T. J. Henderson)- | 1883 - 1890 |
| 15 | Rev. M. Browning) | |
| 16 | Rev. Rickman | 1891 - 1893 |
| 17 | Rev. Hugh Larter, Assistant Pastor | 1894 - 1895 |
| 18 | Rev. J. H. Rockhold | 1895 - 1896 |
| 19 | Rev. Hayden | 1896 - 1898 |
| 20 | Rev. T. J. Henderson | 1898 - 1899 |
| 21 | Rev. J. W. W. Brown | 1900 - 1902 |
| 22 | * Rev. R. L. Bradby | 1902 - 1909 |
| 23 | Rev. Elmer Thompson | 1910 - 1914 |
| 24 | Rev. C. L. Wells | 1914 - 1922 |
| 25 | Rev. H. L. Talbot | 1922 - 1925 |
| 26 | ** Rev. H. L. McNeil | 1925 - 1927 |
| 27 | Rev. A. R. James | 1927 - 1931 |
| 28 | Rev. Arthur Randall | 1931 - 1933 |
| 29 | Rev. H. L. Talbot | 1933 - 1937 |
| 30 | Rev. C. L. Wells | 1938 - 1944 |
| 31 | Rev. M. Brown | 1945 - ---- |

* Indicates those ministers who were pastors at Second Baptist Church.

** Rev. McNeil was Associate Pastor of Detroit's Second Baptist Church.

*Julian Palmer
Historian*

The Report of the Church Clerk

To: Rev. Brown and Members at The Annual Business Session, February 23, 1984
For Year 1983

The Church year 1983 was ushered in with a Watch Night Prayer Service, a Week of Prayer, and a Revival Meeting conducted by Rev. Stacey Williams, Pastor of Peace Baptist Church, Detroit. Rev. Brown and Dr. Williams exchanged pulpits on January 16th.

The Missionary Society held it's 41st Annual Pew Rally on the 30th of January. Rev. Henry Delaney, Pastor of St. John's Christian Methodist Episcopal Church and one of his choirs provided the service.

First Baptist Church hosted the Annual Winter Rally of the Amherstburg Baptist Association in February. Rev. Banks Clark, Moderator, presided.

We opened the doors of the Church to the Inter-Church Council of Women for the World Day of Prayer Service in March.

The Good Friday Three-Hour Service on April 1st was held at First Baptist Church.

On April 8th the Church hosted a Seminar sponsored by Christian Blind Mission International.

Our Sunday School as usual took part in the city wide Baptist Sunday School Rally held at Temple Baptist Church May 1st.

We celebrated our 130th Anniversary on May 22nd. Guest Speaker was Dr. Henry L. Cody of Wayside, New Jersey, who was in Windsor attending the National Baptist Men of North America Convention being held at Windsor University. Two of our members, Mr. Phil Alexander and Mr. Robin Shoulders, attended this convention.

On Educational Day, June 19, our guest speaker was Dr. David T. Shannon, president of Virginia Union University, Virginia.

A few of our members attended the Annual Freedom Festival Service of Worship at Cleary Auditorium in June.

A successful Vacation Bible School was conducted by the Sunday School in July with Mrs. Irene Scott in charge. Money collected was donated to the Christian Blind Mission International.

Deacon-Trustee Alton C. Parker, C.M., O.M.C., and daughter Freida attended by special invitation from Premier Davis and the Executive Council of the Province of Ontario, The Investiture of the "Ontario Medal of Good Citizenship" in the presence of His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario. Congratulations.

Our Church was well represented at the Amherstburg Baptist Association held in Chatham in July. Rev. Tatsu, pastor. This is the first church in the Association to have an air condition system.

We were present when Prince Albert Church celebrated it's 83rd Anniversary.

We hosted the Scholarship Rally of the Amherstburg Baptist Association in August. Deacon Norman Simon, Chairman.

We congratulate Mr. Dennis Scott, a former Moderator of our Association, upon becoming 2nd Vice President of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec.

From October 19-24th Rev. Brown conducted a very successful Church Fellowship Cultural Tour of the city of Montreal, Quebec, and the Laurentian Mountains.

The Willing Workers of First Baptist Church, organized on August 20, 1983, held a banquet in the Skyline Room of Cleary Auditorium in honour of Deacon-Trustee Alton C. Parker, C.M., O.M.C. on October 30th. The speaker was Mr. Parker's nephew, Dr. Joseph Roberts, Pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia. Rev. Martin Luther King pastored this church at one time. The proceeds will be used to build an Annex to the Church

Miss Geraldine Sims, president of the B.Y.P.U. chaired a Vesper Service in December. Guest speaker was Rev. Ron Nelson of Detroit. "The Voices of New Life" from the Ontario Church of God in Christ, Bishop A. Harrison, pastor, were a joy to listen to.

Annual Advent Services, conducted by Rev. Brown and Mrs. Irene Scott, and the Annual White Gift Services under the auspices of the Women's Mission Circle of our Church led us to a joyous Christmas Service on Christmas Day.

The Sunday School presented its concert on December 22nd.

We congratulate the following members for special services rendered:-

Dr. Thomas Posey who spoke to us in the absence of Rev. Brown. His subject was, "Christianity in the Market Place."

Mrs. Claudia Posey who spoke on "Volunteer Service."

Dr. Charlotte Perry who wrote "One Man's Journey."

Mrs. Dorothy Shadd Shreve, Member of the Amherstburg Regular Missionary Baptist Association who completed the book "The Afri-Canadian Church - A Stabilizer."

Mrs. Bette Talbot who is always prepared with an original poem for special services

Dr. Brenda McCurdy became our full-time organist this year. Mrs. Gloria Roby, and Mrs. Wauneta Howe fill in for her when she is absent, which is seldom.

Our Choir, under the direction of Mr. Arthur Maxey renders beautiful music each Sunday Morning.

Mrs. Lillian Palmer, Historian, represented First Baptist Church, Windsor, at the One Hundred and Forty-Seventh Anniversary Service at Second Baptist Church, 441 Monroe Street, Detroit, Michigan.

There were ten baptisms in 1983. Many babies were blessed. Charles Levi Wells IV was dedicated on May 1st. Mr. & Mrs. Leroy Shreve became members on their Christian experience.

We regret the passing of three devoted members, Mrs. Daisy Shreve, Mrs. Elsie Montague, and Mr. Daniel Warren. Also the passing of Rev. Gordon Jones, member of First Baptist Church before moving to Dresden, Ontario. Mrs. Verna Alice Chatters, Rev. Berry, Minister and Rev. Banks Clark, Moderator of our Association.

We thank Mrs. Ileene Jones, daughter of the late Mrs. Lavine Lucas for some of the carpeting done in the Church. We also thank the Wells girls, Lillian, Claudia and Cora for carpeting and railings on the outdoor steps leading to the Sanctuary.

We thank those who donated money and services to the Canadian Red Cross and the Goodfellows.

We are happy to have the Evelyn Parker Community Friendship Group who meet regularly in the lower auditorium.

On Palm Sunday each year Mrs. Dorothy (Jackie) Milburn White supplies the palm leaves, symbol of peace for our Palm Sunday Service. This is a tradition started by her mother the late Mrs. Geneva Cross (Louis) Milburn.

We pray for our sick members who are unable to attend services. Mrs. Eloise Taylor, Mrs. Bartelza Dungy, Mrs. Della Kezsm, Mrs. Annie Sims, Mrs. & Mrs. Ed. Earll.

Sometimes in writing church reports names of devoted members are not listed. Do not fell left out, for you are the backbone of the Church - the ones who attend church regularly attend the sick, look after the needs of the Pastor, and carry out every day Christian devotion to God, humanity, and the Church. God bless you.

Respectfully submitted,
Beulah Cuzzens, Clerk