

# 165 Years of Gospel Movements

Seeking to honor God by  
developing fully devoted  
followers of Jesus who love,  
live, and share Him

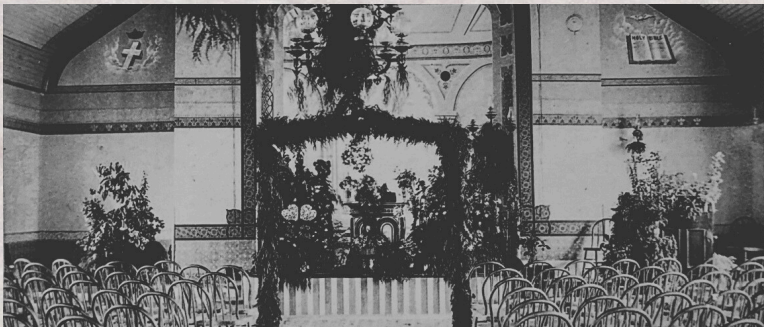
In the year of 1857, the region currently known as Waterville, Minnesota was settled. The village of Waterville moved progressively forward and the population continued to enlarge. A wide variety of businesses (furniture making, ice harvesting, clothing manufacturing) and the good fishing drew a growing population base.

In 1925, the first  
daily Vacation Bible  
School was held at  
First Baptist Church.



These pictures are of the original First Baptist Church, which was built in approximately 1882 for \$325 including one coat of paint. The church was located on East Paquin Street where Traditions is now located. The original church was razed in 1913 and a new basement was constructed. In 1955 the two towers were removed and the building was remodeled. The stained glass windows in the hallway came from the old building's auditorium.

*“On September 2, 1860 a group of believers met at the school house with Rev. E.S. Smith in anticipation of organizing a church. Two weeks later, on September 16, 1860 while meeting at Paquins Hall these believers organized the First Baptist Church of Christ in Waterville, MN. This important event in Waterville came only two years after the MN Territory became a state in 1858. This event also preceded the election of this nation’s 16th president, Abraham Lincoln, November of 1860. This church was started during a period of American history plagued by inner turmoil. For the first four years of this church’s existence, the nation was racked by the perils of the War between the States which began on April 12, 1861, and ended on May 26, 1865. In addition to the heartache caused by the Civil War, on April 14, 1865, President Lincoln was assassinated at the hand of John Wilkes Booth. In the midst of all that had occurred, the truth of Daniel 4:32 remained; God was in control. In 1880 the church incorporated and the name was then changed to the First Baptist Church. Two years follow its incorporation, on August 11, 1882, it was voted to erect the original church building on the previous site, located on East Paquin Street. The building was to be 37 ft. wide by 56 ft. long with two 12ft. by 12 ft. towers in the front. The cost of the building, including one coat of paint, came to \$325....*



In 2007 the church began a construction phase to add nearly 5,000 square feet of much needed space. The portico was added along with several classrooms, additional restrooms, offices and the lobby quadrupled in size. Tucked in the southeast corner of the lobby The King’s Café was built as a small coffee shop complete with a corner fireplace. From its beginning, our church family has longed for all in this community to know God individually and journey through life in a personal relationship with Him. From early on through the present, the 41 pastors have been faithful to announce that every man, woman and child has suffered from a devastating disease diagnosed as rebellion. This rebellion was directed toward God Himself. You see, mankind rejected the leadership of God and chose rather to live in a kingdom where self was honored first. As a result of this choice, all kinds of sin and evil began to permeate our lives, families, communities, and world. What would be God’s solution?

This church acknowledges that God has provided in His son Jesus a solution to this spiritually fatal condition. The Gospel or the Good News is the message that Jesus is God’s Son. As God in the flesh, Jesus left heaven and came to planet earth and was born of a virgin named Mary. Jesus, both God and human, lived for approximately 33 1/2 years. During that space of time, He proved to all the eyewitnesses that He held power and authority over the natural world and the spirit world. During His stay on earth, He was exposed to temptations of every kind but He never caved and therefore lived a sin-free life. This enabled Him to fulfill the prophecies of old and provide the payment for our rebellion and evil through His sacrificial death on the Cross. The life of Jesus did not end in the grave. He defeated death three days later when He came back to life and exited the tomb. Then Jesus left an insurmountable amount of proof that He had been resurrected in His appearances, conversations and even evidence recorded for us in secular history.

To present this message to a constantly changing culture is the goal of our church family. Providing an environment for people of all ages to learn and grow in their relationship with Jesus is a personal responsibility of each one in our fellowship. Helping families raise children who make the choice to journey through life with Jesus as their King is our vision. When it all boils down, First Baptist Church is seeking to honor God by developing fully devoted disciples of Jesus who live for Him, love Him, and seek to share Him with others.

Waterville, Mn had been in existence for only 3 years before First Baptist Church was founded. Many buildings have come and gone through the years but FBC has grown and flourished. God has been so faithful and we are so very thankful!

These two stained glass windows originally pictured below were installed in The King’s Café coffee area and in the auditorium of the current building.



**Note from Pastor Bernard Frey at the 100th Anniversary September 1960**  
“...together we thank God for what has been done for the Master. We do know that there is a day coming when the Divine Record will be opened, and every one shall receive as their due or just share and part that we have had in the up-building of the Church of the Living God...  
...Our sincere prayer for you is that you may continue to walk in the truth by the power of the Holy Spirit until He shall come and receive us all to the mansion not made by hands, eternal in heaven.”





**E.S. Smith:** Sept. 1860- July 1863  
**A.D. Smith:** July 1867- July 1870  
**A.D. Luce:** Dec. 1870- June 1871  
**Ebenezer Thompson:** Oct. 1871- Dec. 1873 following is a list of these men.  
**John Hinton:** Sept. 1876- Dec. 1887  
**G. N. Annis:** May 1877- July 1879  
**J.S. Cox:** Aug. 1879- ?  
**N.E. Chapman:** Dec. 1885- March 1888  
**C. R. Upton:** July 1888- July 1891  
**G.E. Rowe:** April 1892- Jan. 1894  
**C.A. Reohr:** June 1894- Dec. 1896  
**S.E. Moon:** 1897- July 1901  
**Wm. Cowden:** July 1901- May 1903  
**C.H. Callahan:** July 1903- Sept. 1905  
**J.F. Hill:** Oct. 1905- ?  
**M. L. Reynolds:** Sept. 1908-?  
**Pastor Stockton:** April 1910-1912  
**Pastor Hall:** Oct. 1905-?  
**Joe Billman:** Dec. 1912- Sept. 1913  
**J.A. Downing:** 1914-1925  
**S. Billman:** Dec. 1912- Sept. 1914  
**Pastor Raher:** 1921-?  
**Edward Pearson:** ?- 1924  
**Ardell Look:** 1924- 1925  
**C.F. Wilson:** Jan. 1925-1927  
**Stanley Kreidler:** 1927- June 1928  
**Maurice M. Powers:** Sept. 1828- May 1931  
**E. Brandt:** June 1931- June 1932  
**Horace Smith:** Dec. 1933-1940  
**Oswell Summers:** 1940-1941  
**Andrew Nelson:** Nov. 1942- 1944  
**John Hill:** Sept. 1944- 1946  
**Henry Wiens:** 1946- 1951  
**John Polson:** Sept. 1951- 1953  
**Richard Krenz:** May 1954- Oct. 1956  
**Francis Grubbs:** May 1957- 1959  
**B.H. Frey:** June 1959- Sept. 1961  
**Oliver Sandahl:** Oct. 1961- June 1972  
**Eugene Green:** 1972- 1979  
**Randy A. Sanders:** April 1979- Aug. 1988  
**Eugene A. Witte:** Aug. 1988- Present

**First Baptist Church Pastors**  
Throughout the decades, many men of God have been used to shepherd the flock of believers here in Waterville. At the time of this printing, 41 men have been so used in this capacity. The following is a list of these men.



THE PAST 165 YEARS HAVE  
BEEN INCREDIBLE AND WE  
ARE LOOKING FORWARD  
TO WHAT GOD WILL DO IN  
THE NEXT 165!

Dont miss hearing him.  
Morning worship 10:30.  
Sunday School 11:45  
Evening service 7:30.

### Notes From Pastor Gene and Pastor Allen

First Baptist Church of Waterville has been around since it was organized on September 16, 1860...yay God! This church has weathered civil war, world wars, famine, local and national economic collapse, internal turmoil, broken hearted tears, peace, plenty, laughter, hugs and "high-fives." What is a church anyway? Is it a building? Is it a gathering of people? Is it a communion dispenser? It is a "spiritual program" vending machine? What is it? The local church is a gift from the living God to people in a geographic region. A “faith-family” consists of men, women, boys and girls who have come to a conclusion that they need Someone beyond themselves...JESUS. A man, woman, boy or girl gets Jesus when, with a brokenness of spirit and humble heart, he or she confesses acts of rebellion and evil against God, others and self, and receives the abundant and free gift of God's grace.

Remember that God’s plan for the local church is two-fold: A beacon of gospel-light to the unbelievers and nurturing spiritual fellowship (koininia) to the believer. This fall we are soaking on the theme of movements of God fueled by the gospel. It is still true in September of 2025, “the gospel is bearing fruit and growing” (Colossians 1:3-8). The eternal, all-powerful, living God of the universe is moving His eternal plan forward and He always uses people in it. Since the early days of FBC on the frontier of southern Minnesota till today- God is moving. As the wise Old Testament character Job confessed, “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted”(Job 42:2). Thank you, God, that YOU ARE THE GOSPEL and we can anchor our lives in You with conquering assurance. God knows the future and everything that flows into our lives has first passed through His hands. As we look forward to the future, let’s keep it our aim to be a faith family that encourages both unbelievers and believers to take that next step toward Jesus or for Jesus. Today we are celebrating this amazing gift....the church...your church...your faith family...First Baptist Church of Waterville, Minnesota. Please know that each of you makes my heart smile...I love you. —Pastor

165 years... It’s difficult to envision what life was like then. For me I think about the journey that God has had me on just in the last 48 years. God spent years pursuing me when I didn’t know him, gave me a hug from heaven when I confessed my need for him and put my faith in him, and walked with me every step of the way. Like the entire Faith Family; he is preparing me to be a part of a Gospel Movement in Waterville, MN that in part was started 165 years ago. God had a plan. God HAS a plan. I am honored to be a part of God’s Gospel Movement. <sup>4</sup>“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. <sup>5</sup> You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. <sup>6</sup> And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. <sup>7</sup> You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. Dt 6:4–7....with God’s Grace and Peace. -Pastor Allen

## Anniversary Poem

In September, 1860  
A hundred years ago,  
A group of men and women met Who loved our Lord, you know.  
A Pastor, by the name of Smith Met with a group of eight  
At the schoolhouse in Waterville September second was the date.  
They talked about salvation - God’s love that satisfies,  
Of belief, and the Baptism, Then planned to organize.  
A Baptist Church in Waterville - With purpose strong and true,  
To preach God’s Word completely - And live it daily too.  
They talked, they prayed, the hour grew late They motioned to adjourn,  
To meet again the sixteenth, that God’s will they might discern.  
During this two week interval, We’re sure they met to pray  
And sought God’s guidance daily all along the way.  
They met again as scheduled - All brought their wives along.  
A church was born that evening ‘Mid scripture, prayer, and song.  
“First Baptist Church of Christ”, A title so impressive,  
Was chosen by this early group. Could it be more expressive?  
In 1882 they built the church upon the hill.  
And how they prayed and labored to try to pay the bill.  
The records list the Pastors, who loved and labored here.  
Of those who came and lingered to serve our Savior, dear.  
They had a missionary challenge, these fold at Waterville,  
And mothered a mission church at nearby Kinneyville.  
Through these hundred years the church stood firm and strong  
Spreading the Gospel message to all who came along.  
So today we honor those Godly saints of old,  
Who organized and built our church, and walk the “streets of gold.”  
The pastor and the people still strive the lost to win,  
By presenting God’s Word that cleanses from all sin.  
And so we labor on till our course is run;  
Giving God the glory, for great things He has done.  
Time marches on, ‘tis eighty-four and mighty changes come and go, But through it all  
God leads the way all we have to do is follow.  
In the year of nineteen eighty, We bought seven acres of land East of town on Highway  
Sixty, was a hillside of weeds and sand.  
It wasn’t much of a prospect, Because it meant a lot of work  
But the people of First Baptist may pause, but will never shirk.  
“Building on the Promises of God”  
Our motto was then selected.  
As we planned to build a new church with prayers, our plans were perfected.  
Today we dedicate our church as a witness from man to God  
For the victory accomplished as safely in His will we trod.  
The Bible is still our password, It is our daily guide, you see, So God will lead us forever  
Now and through all eternity.

-written by Cleo Vanderburgh who went to be with the Lord on June 16,1990



Edward Blaker, a friend of First Baptist Church, left a generous gift of \$65,000 to the church. With this gift, the church was able to proceed with its plans of building a new worship center. On May 1st, 1980 the present site of FBC was purchased. Plans for the new structure were made and on July 25th, 1983, ground was broken. In less than one year, the first service in the new building was held on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1984.

## Site purchased for new Baptist church

“Have Faith in God” is the theme of the First Baptist Church of Waterville. The people of the First Baptist Church are excited about the future site of their new church building. The church recently purchased seven acres of land located on Highway 60 just west of Smitty’s Auto Body. Presently, the building committee is working with the architects for the plans of the new facility.

The First Baptist Church stands on the Bible as the only rule for faith and practice. The pastor of the church, Randy A. Sanders, is pictured above.



Movements of God are evident in the history of FBC! Praise God for all He has done and all that He will do!!