

Celebrating 150 Years

First Baptist Church of Fort Worth

Connected to Christ



Founded on truth. Discipling generations.  first baptist
FORT WORTH

*Historical Commemorative Book
1867-2017*

First Baptist Church of Fort Worth is *Celebrating 150 Years*

throughout the month of October with Great Music & Special Guests

Worship Service @ 11:00 am*

October 1

Dr. Don Wills

Senior Pastor

First Baptist Church of Fort Worth

October 15—Guest Speaker

Dr. Jim Richards

Executive Director

Southern Baptists of Texas Convention

October 8—Guest Speaker

Dr. Paige Patterson

President

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

October 22—Guest Speaker

Dr. D.L. Moody

President

Arlington Baptist University

***Connect Class for all ages @ 9:30 am**

Join us for Homecoming Sunday at 10:30 am

Sunday, October 29, 2017

Dr. Bill Ramsey, Pastor of FBCFW 1984-1992

We will have a catered lunch, special music, and a time of fellowship as we reflect on the heritage of our church.

Purchase tickets for luncheon no later than October 15 at 150.fbcfw.org



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Dr. Don Wills

Senior Pastor
First Baptist Church of Fort Worth

Speaking October 1st

Beginning his ministry as a full-time music evangelist with the Bob Wills Family Singers from 1976-1980, Pastor Don surrendered his heart to the ministry and began his journey to the pastorate.

He continues to use his musical talents as part of The Inspirational Quartet, which was founded in 1958 and managed for 40 years by his father, Bob Wills. Rev. Wills is a member of the Southern Gospel of Texas Music Hall of Fame.

He has been on staff at First Baptist Church for 35 years, serving in a wide variety of roles – from Janitor to Youth Pastor to Music Minister. In 1997, he received the call as Senior Pastor. During his time as pastor, he has continued the tradition of the pastors before him by playing an active role locally and globally through First Baptist Church. He served as President of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention Pastors Conference from 2006-2007, and his wife, Brenda Wills, was the first female Recording Secretary for the SBTC in 2005. Rev. Wills has also had the privilege to serve on various missions teams during his tenure, speaking to groups in Canada, Mexico, Brazil and Africa, both in Kenya & Tanzania. He holds degrees from Liberty University and Louisiana Baptist University.

Rev. Wills and Mrs. Brenda have 3 sons who all currently serve with their families in ministry; his oldest son Don Wills, Jr. serves in the music ministry at First Baptist Church, middle son, Aaron, as Pastor of Bellview Baptist Church in Midland, TX, and youngest son, Devon, on staff at Liberty University. They have 4 grandsons and 1 granddaughter.



Dr. Paige Patterson

President
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Special Guest Speaker, October 8th

Dr. Patterson was born in Fort Worth in 1942 while his father, T.A. Patterson, was completing his Doctor of Theology degree under W.T. Conner at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. After

graduating from Hardin-Simmons University, Dr. Patterson completed the Master of Theology and Doctor of Philosophy degrees at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. For almost 18 years he was President of The Criswell College in Dallas, and he served for 11 years as President of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina, before assuming his current position at Southwestern. Selected as the eighth President of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 2003, he carries more than four decades of experience in educating pastors and missionaries.

His wife, Dorothy, currently serves as Professor of Theology in Women's Studies at Southwestern, but she sees her most important role as that of wife, mother, and grandmother. Their son Armour is a writer and, together with his wife Rachel, lives in Melissa, Texas. Their daughter Carmen is married to Mark Howell, pastor of Hunter's Glen Baptist Church, Plano, Texas.

Since playing an active role in the Seminary's relocation to Fort Worth in 1909, First Baptist has maintained a close relationship with the Seminary – partnering with them through such programs as the Daily Bread and Angel Tree ministries to support students and their families far from home.



Dr. Jim Richards

Executive Director
Southern Baptists of Texas Convention

Special Guest Speaker, October 15th

Jim Richards was saved and answered the call to preach at age seventeen. He pastored for twenty-one years in Louisiana, later serving as Director of Missions in Bentonville, Arkansas. He has traveled

and ministered in all 50 states and 19 countries.

Dr. Richards holds two undergraduate degrees, a Master of Divinity from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and a Doctor of Ministry from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis. He is a Distinguished Alumnus of both seminaries. The Criswell College in Dallas awarded Dr. Richards the Doctor of Divinity in 2013.

A prolific author, Dr. Richards has authored the books, *Revelation: The Best is Yet to Come*, *Embracing the Ends of the Earth*, and *Encouraging Words for Difficult Days*, as well as being a contributing author in *The Mission of Today's Church* and *Messages for the Journey*. He writes a regular column for the *TEXAN* news magazine and has contributed to numerous periodicals and newspapers.

When the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention was formed in November of 1998, Dr. Richards became the first Executive Director. He has served the SBC on various committees and boards, including being elected First Vice President of the Southern Baptist Convention in 2007. Dr. Richards and his wife, June, have three children and three grandchildren.



Dr. D.L. Moody

President
Arlington Baptist University

Special Guest Speaker, October 22nd

Dr. Moody became President of Arlington Baptist University in May 2009. He was formerly Pastor of Pleasantview Baptist Church in Arlington, Texas and former President of the World Baptist Fellowship.

He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Arlington Baptist College, Master of Ministry from Moody Graduate School of Chicago, and a Doctor of Ministry from Covington Theological Seminary.

During his tenure as President, Dr. Moody has continued the tradition of excellence and of spreading the gospel worldwide begun by Dr. Norris and Dr. Entzminger when they first opened the doors of the Fundamental Baptist Bible Institute (later changed to Bible Baptist Seminary) at First Baptist Church Fort Worth in 1939. After the Seminary relocated to Arlington and became Arlington Baptist College, it has continued to grow and prosper, and under Dr. Moody's leadership recently became Arlington Baptist University, offering a wide variety of degree programs and ministry opportunities to students.

He and his wife Sherry have been married for 37 years and have two grown children. Dr. Moody is a nationally known speaker, author, as well as a singer and musician.



Dr. Bill Ramsey

Senior Pastor
The Met Church

Special Guest Speaker, October 29th

Dr. Ramsey was born in 1958 and is a native of Fort Worth, Texas and the son of a Baptist minister. Dr. Ramsey graduated from Metro City Christian High School in 1976. He received a Graduate of

Theology degree from North Texas Baptist College; a Bachelor of Arts in Biblical Studies from Sacramento Baptist College, Sacramento, California; a Master of Arts in Bible from Baptist Christian University and a PhD in Theology from Louisiana Baptist University. In addition, Baptist Christian University conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. He also attended The Criswell Center for Biblical Studies in Dallas, Texas, and Liberty University of Lynchburg, Virginia.

Dr. Ramsey served on the ministry staff of First Baptist Church of Fort Worth for over twenty-two years, over twelve of which he served as Senior Pastor. In 1990 he led First Baptist Church of Fort Worth in a historic return to the fellowship with the Southern Baptist Convention. In August 1996, he led the church to begin an extension that soon became a mission church called the Metroport Cities Fellowship or The Met Church in Southlake, Texas. For six months, he preached in both locations every Sunday until he resigned from First Baptist in February 1997 to give his full-time commitment to The Met.

He married Cindy in 1977. Together they have 2 children—a daughter, Shannon, who is married to Dr. Rick Townsley, and Billy, a professional drummer, who is married to Whitney. Shannon gave birth to their first grandchildren in April 2011, a set of twins, Sam and Emma.

THE YEARS OF FOUNDATION

1867-1908



1867

1873

1876

1883

Fort Worth Baptist Church
Founded by Rev. Mitchell & Rev. Fitzgerald

Name of church changes to First Baptist Church of Fort Worth

Construction of first church building begins on Jennings Avenue

Rev. Wells becomes Pastor & the first Moderator of Tarrant Baptist Association

- 1867

Fort Worth Baptist Church is established by Rev. W.W. Mitchell and Rev. A. Fitzgerald
- 1871

Rev. Meredith H. Neal succeeds Rev. Fitzgerald as Pastor
- 1872

Rev. Swindell succeeded Rev. Neal, and was replaced before year's end by Rev. Lockett
- 1873

Rev. Masters and Rev. Gough led a revival of the small congregation, and changed the name to First Baptist Church of Fort Worth
- 1876

The construction of the first church building on Jennings Ave. began on land donated by Hyde Jennings
- 1877

Rev. Renfro was called be serve as Pastor, but was replaced by Rev. Gillespie after only one month
- 9 1883

Rev. Murphy and Rev. Tynes succeed Rev. Gillespie



1888

1890

1891

1905

Construction begins on the Third & Taylor Campus

Third & Taylor Campus is dedicated

Southern Baptist Convention is held at FBCFW

Rev. Daniels assumes leadership of FBCFW

- 1886

Rev. J. Morgan Wells assumed leadership of First Baptist and also became the first Moderator of the newly established Tarrant Baptist Association the same year
- 1888

The building on Jennings Ave. was sold and construction began on the Third & Taylor Campus
- 1890

The new building was dedicated with 1,250 attending
- 1891

First Baptist hosted the Southern Baptist Convention during which Baptist Sunday School Board was established
- 1896

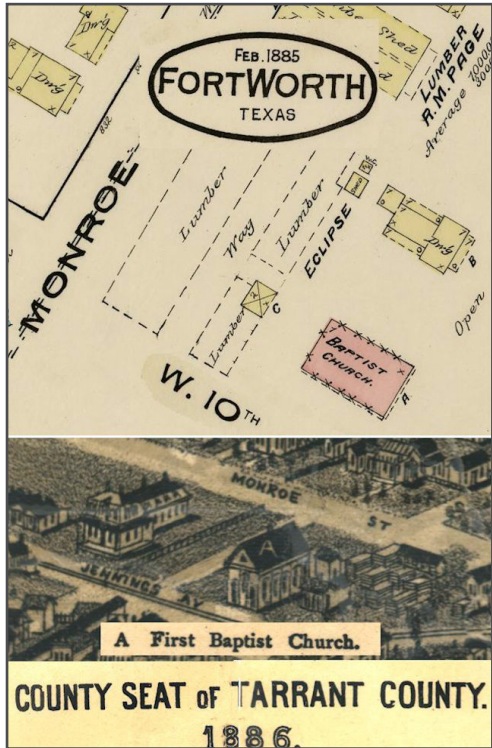
Rev. Wells passed away after a stroke and was succeeded by Rev. McGaha
- 1897

Rev. McGaha was succeeded by Rev. Little
- 1905

Rev. Charles Daniel assumes leadership

Twenty-five years after Stephen F. Austin established Austin Colony in East Texas, another Missourian entered Texas. John Allen Freeman, age 24, crossed the Red River into Texas and settled among friends from Missouri in southern Denton County. On February 21, 1846, Freeman, meeting with twelve other Baptists in the log cabin of Charles Troop, organized the Lonesome Dove Baptist Church. Revs. John Freeman & Joshua Hodges alternated preaching in various homes until 1847, when a church building was erected near Grapevine in Navarro County. Then, in 1849, Major Ripley Arnold established Fort Worth on the banks of the Trinity River.

The Texas Legislature created Tarrant County, taking in part of Navarro County – which included the Lonesome Dove Church. Major Arnold invited Reverend John Freeman to conduct services at the new fort,



and in July 1850, he preached the first sermon in this new frontier outpost. Reverend Freeman was a church planter, and also organized the Mount Gilead Baptist Church, the Bear Creek Baptist Church, and the Birdville Baptist Church. The first church to be established in Fort Worth was the First Christian Church, organized in 1855. The second church established in Fort Worth was the Fort Worth Baptist Church, in 1867, two years after the conclusion of the Civil War. Revs. W.W. Mitchell & A. Fitzgerald led in the establishment of this great church. Reverend Fitzgerald was a controversial

man, who often found more reasons to disagree than to agree with those of like faith, and the young church became weakened as a result.

Soon Reverend Meredith H. Neal succeeded Reverend Fitzgerald as Pastor in 1871, but he would leave before the year ended, and in 1872 Reverend D.D. Swindell became pastor. He, too, remained for a short tenure, and Rev. T.F. Lockett assume leadership of the struggling church. In 1873, it seemed the church would not survive the difficult days and hard times when only a handful of people met to worship and pray; then Revs. J.R. Master and W.M. Gough challenged that faithful handful (approximately twenty-six people), to what God could do through their church if they were willing to recommit themselves to the task. So revived and reinvigorated, they changed their name to The First Baptist Church of Fort Worth on September 12, 1873. Reverend Masters served as Pastor until 1874, and then Reverend Gough served until 1877.

The church worshiped in the Masonic Lodge until 1875, then moved to the Court House until it burned in 1876. At this point, the church built their first permanent building on land donated by Hyde Jennings. Former Confederate Army Chaplain, Henry C. Renfro was called as Pastor in 1877, but served only one month; the church then



The Masonic Hall at Belknap & Jones

called Reverend J.S. Gillespie, who led them until 1883. Reverend Gillespie left to accept the Pastorate of the Southside Baptist, which later became Broadway Baptist Church. Revs. J.D. Murphy and Walter E. Tynes would serve as pastor until 1885. The First Baptist Church entered a new era of promise, prosperity, and popularity under the capable leadership of Reverend J. Morgan Wells. Reverend Wells,

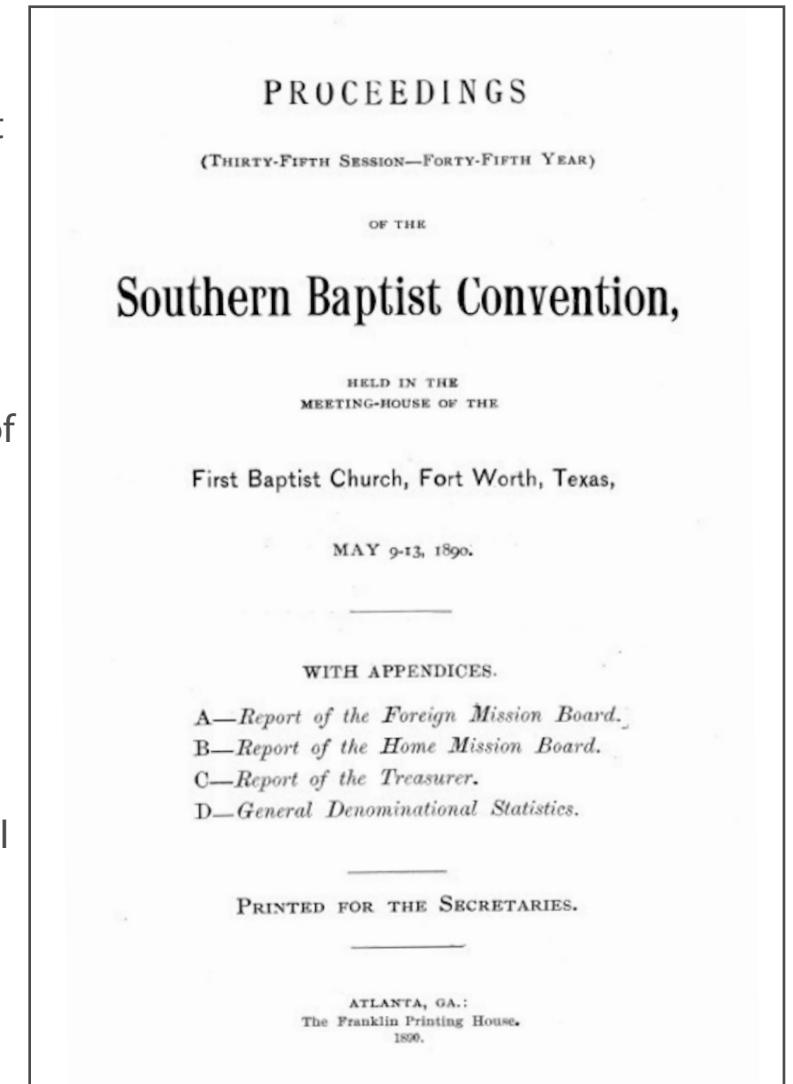
a brilliant orator and tireless worker, was the first Pastor to lead the church to take truly bold steps of faith. He became the first Moderator for the Tarrant Baptist Association when it was established in 1886, and later led the church to sell their structure on Jennings Avenue in 1888 to the city for a co-educational school. This site would become the first home of Fort Worth High School, the first city-owned, co-educational secondary school. This move was warranted because of the constant distractions and discomfort of being located next to the main cattle thoroughfare into the city – one can only imagine the



*Dedicated September 1890
3rd & Taylor, Downtown Fort Worth*

noise, dust, odors and sounds of loud cowboys and livestock on their northward journey to the railhead in Dodge City and Abilene, Kansas, that filled the church each Sunday. The church moved to a temporary location in a wood-frame building on Second and Jones Streets, while the new building was being constructed on Third and Taylor. Finally, in September 1890, one thousand, two hundred fifty people attended the dedication services for the new facility.

Reverend Wells became famous for his ability to raise funds, accepting money for the Lord's work from gamblers as well as church attenders. In 1890, the church hosted the Southern Baptist Convention, who, while in session here, completed the preliminary work for the establishment of the Baptist Sunday School Board. Then in 1896, at the age of 41, Reverend Wells suffered a stroke and died. He was buried under a window at the church property, but was later interred at Greenwood Cemetery. Reverend Arthur W. McGaha served the following year until he accepted the pastorate of First Baptist Church of Waco. Then Reverend Luther Little became the pastor in 1898, and served for twenty-five years. Reverend Little was followed by Reverend Charles Daniel, who served until June 1909, when he accepted the call to the First Baptist Church of Atlanta.



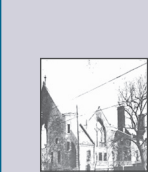
*A page from the 1890 SBC Annual Meeting
Held at First Baptist Church of Fort Worth*

THE YEARS OF INNOVATION

1909-1952

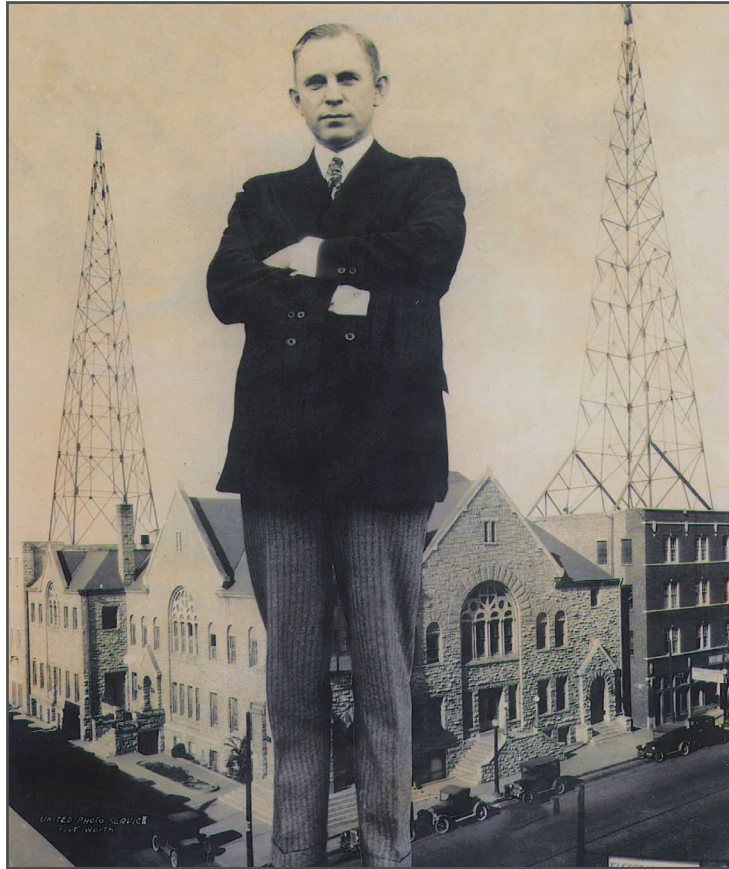


1909	1911	1912	1913	1920
Dr. J. Frank Norris assumes leadership & begins to raise funds for Seminary	Campaign against Hell's Half Acre begins	Two arson fires occur within a few months, the second destroys the building	One of the first Church Bus Ministries begins at First Baptist Church	New building at 3rd & Taylor is dedicated
1909	J. Frank Norris accepted the call as Pastor of First Baptist Church of Fort Worth			
1909	Dr. Norris began a campaign to raise \$200,000 for Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary; he realized this goal in November of the same year			
1910	Dr. Norris became known as the Texas Tornado			
1911	Campaign against Hell's Half Acre began			
1912	Arson fire at church causes in excess of \$100,000 in damage			
1912	A second arson fire leaves the church building unsalvageable; the parsonage is also destroyed in a separate fire the same night			
15 1912	Services were held in a tabernacle at Lamar & 7th			



1921	1929	1932	1952
Dr. Norris begins the first regular radio broadcast ministry	Fire destroys the 3rd & Taylor building	New building at 4th & Throckmorton is dedicated	Dr. Norris passes away
1913	First Baptist started one of the earliest bus ministries		
1920	The new church building at 3rd & Taylor was dedicated, the second at this location		
1921	Dr. Norris began the first regular radio broadcast ministry		
1924	First Baptist Church became disassociated from the Tarrant Baptist Association and later the Baptist General Convention of Texas		
1929	Fire once again destroyed the church building		
1932	Church building at 4th & Throckmorton was dedicated		
1948	First Baptist Church became disassociated from the Southern Baptist Convention		
1952	Dr. Norris passed away in August		

The church then embarked upon her most colorful, celebrated, and controversial period of history. A young 32-year-old preacher named J. Frank Norris accepted the call as pastor. Dr. Norris was a Baylor graduate and had completed his studies at Southern Seminary in Louisville before coming to Fort Worth. He had previously served the McKinney Avenue Baptist Church in Dallas. Under his leadership, the church became owner and publisher of the *Baptist Standard of Texas*. He and Dr. B.H. Carroll were among the primary driving forces behind an effort to bring the Southwestern Seminary from Waco to Fort Worth. Using the *Baptist Standard* as a vehicle to promote this



A promotional postcard used to advertise the first regular radio ministry in the country broadcast from First Baptist Fort Worth.

idea and leading the First Baptist Church to raise a large sum of money, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary came to Fort Worth. This occurred over the objections of a number of influential leaders and planted seeds of discontent with this young pastor as well. First Baptist later became the first church in America to own and operate their own religious radio station, according to Ed Brice of the *Star-Telegram*. Norris was later called "The Texas Tornado"

because of his tirades and sermons against any and every establishment, personality or philosophy that didn't see eye to eye with his view of Scriptures or his methods; yet no other organization in the city did more to feed and care for the people than the church under his leadership.

Enemies to Norris' work began to increase as the church was instrumental in closing several popular gambling and prostitution establishments. On January 12, 1912, fire tore through several rooms at the rear of the church, causing damage in excess of \$10,000. On February 4 of that year, arsonists struck again, this time succeeding in setting fire to the beautiful stone facility, leaving nothing to be salvaged from the ruins. That same night, the home of Dr. Norris and his family was also set alight, and like the church, was totally destroyed. The church met temporarily in a crudely constructed wooden tabernacle at Lamar and Seventh Streets, on a parcel of land now known as Burnett Park. The old Byers Opera House, which was later the Palace Theater, was also utilized for worship during this time. Eight years later the new church was completed, with a seating capacity of thirty-five

hundred. One of the first concerts of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra was given in the Auditorium of First Baptist Church, and the Symphony's founding Director, Brooks Morris, became Minister of Music and served in that capacity for over thirty-five years.



The ruins after the second 1929 arson fire.

Dr. Louis Entzminger also joined the staff, accepting Dr. Norris' challenge "to build the largest Sunday School in the world!" Looking back on that era, Dr. Bill Taylor from Prestonwood Baptist Church in Dallas said, "First Baptist Church of Fort Worth became the first mega-church of the twentieth century!" The church was burned for the second time in 1929, and was rebuilt at the corner of Fourth and Throckmorton. Trouble began to brew when a young Baylor



New Campus at 4th & Throckmorton

student brought irrefutable evidence of evolution being taught in Baylor University. Not everyone shared his view that a drift in the denomination could begin at Baylor, and when others attempted to quiet Norris on these issues, he became more vocal. Finally, in the early 1920s, the Tarrant Baptist Association voted to disassociate with Dr. Norris and the church. Undaunted by this action, yet unsuccessful in reversing their decision, he pressed on. Then, in 1924, The Baptist General Convention of Texas voted to deny recognition of messengers from First Baptist Church, yet Dr. Norris continued his support of the Cooperative Program until 1948, when the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Memphis passed a resolution aimed at denying recognition of the messengers from the church. That was the final severance with the Convention of which Dr. Norris had been a part of for his lifetime. One member recalled those days and said "those were not days of celebration and joy, but were days of sadness and sorrow."

The First Baptist Church of Fort Worth never voted to disassociate with the Southern Baptist Convention, leading J. Frank Norris Jr. to say, "my dad died a Southern Baptist, he never really regarded himself otherwise!" However, during those days of ministry outside of the Convention, Dr. Norris led in forming the largest Independent Baptist Fellowship in the world. With the benefit of radio, and his new paper *The Fundamentalist*, Dr. Norris attracted hundreds of Bible students to his Fort Worth Bible Baptist Seminary, and sent out hundreds of preachers and missionaries. Few Baptists have not heard of Norris. In March of 1935, Dr. Norris was called to become the Senior Pastor of Temple Baptist Church of Detroit, Michigan, and commuted between the two churches until 1950, when failing health forced him to resign the Pastorate of Temple Baptist. The combined membership of these churches – averaging twenty-six thousand by 1946 – was the largest of any evangelical congregation in the world. Following a stroke in 1950, his Independent Fellowship divided, and J. Frank Norris died in August of 1952. Friend and foe alike respected him, and regarded him as one of the most powerful preachers of our time. One newspaper columnist said, "there is an eleventh commandment in Fort Worth, thou shalt not mess with J. Frank Norris."

CHURCHES

THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

FOURTH AND THROCKMORTON

One Block from Westbrook Hotel

THE CHURCH THAT IS DIFFERENT

THE PREACHING THAT IS DIFFERENT

THE MUSIC THAT IS DIFFERENT

THE WELCOME THAT IS DIFFERENT

Services

Sunday School 10 A. M.

Preaching--11:00 A. M.

7:30 P. M.

Daily Noon Prayer Meeting --12:15-12:45

Wednesday Night Prayer Service --8:00 P. M.

Features

Free Instruction in Voice and Band Music

Largest Gymnasium in City

85,000 Gallon Swimming Pool

Free to All Who Attend Our Sunday School

J. FRANK NORRIS, Pastor

INTERIOR OF AUDITORIUM

Page from the 1920 City Directory

1909-1952

20

THE YEARS OF PERPETUATION

1952-2017

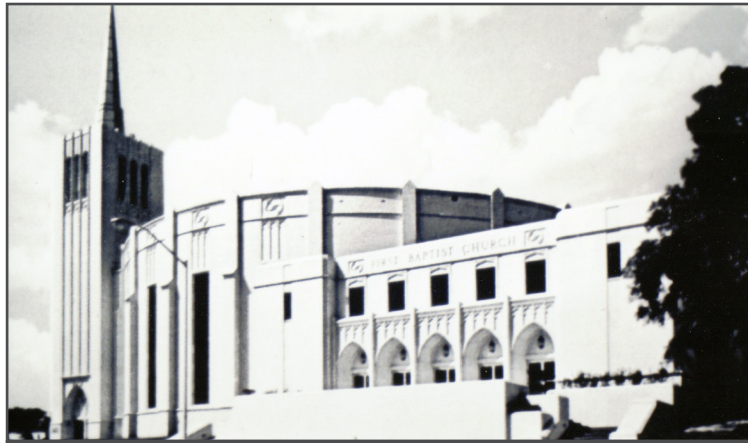


1952	1965	1979	1980	1981	1983
Homer Ritchie assumes leadership of First Baptist Church	The church relocates to 5th & Penn	30 acres are purchased in Northeast Fort Worth	Phase One is completed at new location	First Baptist merges with Rolling Hills, Dr. Johnnie Ramsey assumes leadership	Bill Ramsey becomes Co-Pastor with his father
1952	Homer Ritchie accepted the call as Pastor of First Baptist Church of Fort Worth				
1965	Rev. Ritchie relocated the church to 5th & Penn in downtown Fort Worth				
1979	A thirty-acre tract of land was purchased in Northeast Fort Worth				
1980	Phase One of the new facility was completed				
1981	First Baptist Church of Fort Worth merged with Rolling Hills Baptist Church				
1981	Dr. Ritchie retired and Dr. Johnnie Ramsey, Jr. assumed leadership of the now merged congregations				
1983	Dr. Ramsey's son, Bill Ramsey, became co-Pastor with his father				



1984	1991	1996	1997	2017
Dr. Johnnie Ramsey retires, his son Bill becomes Senior Pastor	First Baptist returns to full fellowship with the SBC	A satellite church is begun and Pastor Ramsey leads both campuses	Pastor Don Wills answers the call to lead First Baptist Fort Worth	Pastor Don Wills celebrates his 20th Pastoral Anniversary as FBCFW turns 150 years old
1984	Dr. Johnnie Ramsey, Jr. retired from the pastorate			
1984	A unanimous call made Bill Ramsey the new Pastor of First Baptist Church of Fort Worth			
1991	First Baptist Church of Fort Worth returned to full fellowship with the Southern Baptist Convention			
1996	Pastor Ramsey led First Baptist in starting a satellite campus in what is now Southlake; he served as Pastor both campuses			
1997	Pastor Ramsey felt led to resign from First Baptist Church in order to devote himself to growing the church now known as The Met Church			
1997	Pastor Don Wills answered the call to serve as Senior Pastor of First Baptist Church of Fort Worth; he recently celebrated his 20th Pastoral Anniversary			

Following the passing of Norris in 1952, Homer Ritchie, at the young age of 25, accepted the call as Pastor of First Baptist Church. He, as J. Morgan Wells and J. Frank Norris before him, led the church to new ventures in faith, relocating the church to Fifth and Penn Streets and commissioning the building of a beautiful two and a half million-



Downtown Campus at 5th & Penn

dollar facility in 1965. The church continued her leadership in reaching hundreds of people for Jesus, and in supporting countless numbers of missionaries and mission projects around the world.

Then, with the steady

move of people toward the suburbs, the church was faced with the reality of a declining membership, and plans to relocate out of the downtown area were discussed and agreed upon. The facility at Fifth and Penn was sold to Calvary Chapel in 1974, and remained in use until the year 2000, when an F3 tornado swept through downtown Fort Worth, causing extensive damage to the structure's foundations. After meeting in a temporary location in the Tandy School building the church built on a thirty-acre tract of land purchased in 1979. The first phase of the new facility in Northeast Fort Worth was completed in 1980. In 1981, Dr. Ritchie approached Dr. Johnnie H. Ramsey, Jr. about the prospects of merging the Rolling Hills Baptist Church into First Baptist Church. After merging congregations with Diamond Oaks Baptist Church several years earlier, Dr. Ramsey had led the Rolling Hills Baptist Church to relocate in the same area. After much prayer and deliberation, the church voted in favor of the merger, and Dr.

Ritchie retired after 29 years in the Pastorate of First Baptist Church. Johnnie H. Ramsey, Jr. had graduated from Norris' Bible Baptist Seminary in the 1950's, and was pastoring a church many believed started as a direct result of the influence of Norris and the First Baptist Church. Under his leadership the church built a new balcony, added parking lots, and constructed an eighty-foot sign complete with a computerized message center. The church enjoyed wonderful and continued growth. In 1984, after over thirty years in the pulpit, Dr. Ramsey announced his retirement from the pastorate. His son, Bill Ramsey, had served with his father for ten years, and in 1983 the church called him to serve as co-Pastor with his father. With his father's retirement, it was his desire for the church to vote on him becoming their pastor. So, in December of 1984 a unanimous call was extended to another young preacher (Bill was just 26 years old at the time), to become the Pastor of First Baptist Church. Under his leadership the church started an additional worship service to accommodate the growing congregation and began new adult classes as well. The church membership grew to over two thousand during this period. Like those before him, Bill Ramsey led First Baptist Church in another leap of faith. In 1992, after studying the historical position of the church in relation to the Southern Baptist Convention, and after a careful study of the Baptist Faith and Message, he felt the leadership of the Holy Spirit to lead the church back into full fellowship with the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention. This controversial proposal was met with stern opposition from some, but with enthusiastic approval from the majority of the church. One member who had been baptized by Norris said, "What this young Pastor has told you is the truth; it was a sad day when we were kicked out of the Convention. We wept when we left, but we will rejoice when we return!" Someone remarked, "History is still being made in the old

First Baptist Church of Fort Worth!” This was not an effort to burn bridges with old friends, but an effort to rebuild bridges with those who love the same inerrant Word, and who are endeavoring to reach this lost world for our soon coming King. The prospects for the future are bright because God is still on the throne, and the church is His divine institution, guided and guarded by Almighty God.

In 1987, Dr. Ramsey felt God calling First Baptist to embark on the task of ministering to “people who, in the past, would have never entered a church.” To this end, he continued in the rich tradition of the pastors before him, ministering to a growing congregation and overseeing a number of thriving outreach ministries that reached into the surrounding community of Fort Worth. After much prayer and consideration, and in view of God’s continuing guidance to reach the un-churched, Dr. Ramsey led First Baptist to start a satellite campus in what is now Southlake in August of 1996. Starting with services held in Carroll High School, the campus quickly grew, and in February of 1997, after pastoring two campuses for six months, Dr. Ramsey felt God calling him to resign as Senior Pastor of First Baptist Church and devote himself to growing what is now the Metroport Cities Fellowship (The Met Church).

Following Dr. Ramsey’s departure, a search committee was formed, and began reviewing resumes and praying for God’s guidance in seeking a Shepard for the church. After reviewing and interviewing several promising candidates, the church called Don Wills, then on staff as Music Minister, to become Senior Pastor. During his twenty-year tenure, Pastor Don has taken the mantle of those remarkable men who came before him, and has continued the rich tradition of spreading God’s word and ministering to the surrounding community. Under his leadership, a new sanctuary was built in 2003 to accommodate congregational growth, with the original building being converted

into the present-day educational building.

Pastor Wills has guided the church in keeping close ties not only with the surrounding community of Fort Worth, through programs such as the Daily Bread and Food Pantry ministries, but to the world around it as well. The church has kept close ties with the Southern Baptist Convention of Texas, partnering with their global mission arm as well as other churches in the area, to send missionary teams throughout the world. Teams

have gone to Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Kenya, and Tanzania, as well as to help provide disaster relief in Haiti in 2014 after Hurricane Matthew. Ministries for all ages continue the legacy of sharing

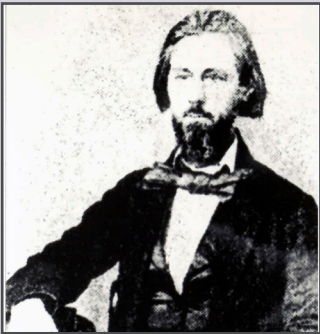


the gospel locally and globally in innovative ways. Through the Children’s Ministry, we use platforms such as Awana, VBS, Good News Club, along with partnerships with individual schools in Birdville ISD. The Student Ministry continues to reach out through Student Camp, DNow, and regular opportunities for missions and service. College and Young Adults seek to minister through sports, such as volleyball, and mid-week Bible Studies. The Legacy Adults use trips to share the gospel along with being actively involved in the community through Senior Centers and Senior Living Communities. We still continue preaching the gospel on Tuesdays—100 years after the Bible Study and fellowship was started by Mrs. Norris to facilitate outreach.

First Baptist Church of Fort Worth

Pastors

Through the Years



D.D. Swindall
1871-1872



W.M. Gough
1874-1877



J.S. Gillespie
1878-1882



J.D. Murphy
1883



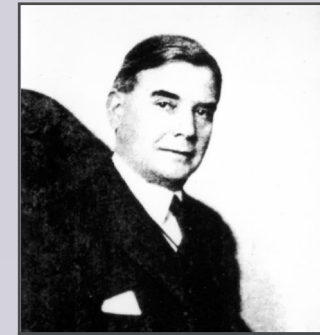
W.E. Tynes
1884-1885



J. Morgan Wells
1886-1896



A.W. McGaha
1897-1898



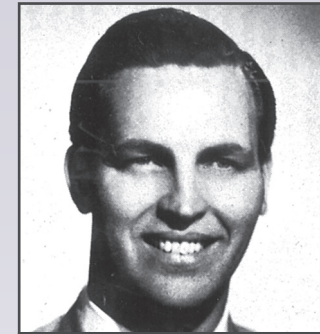
Luther Little
1898-1905



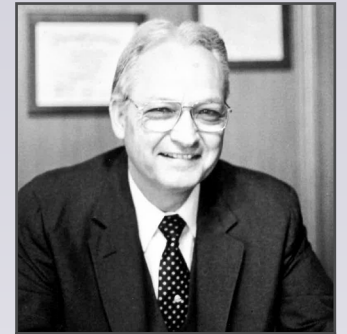
C.W. Daniel
1905-1908



J. Frank Norris
1909-1952



Homer G. Ritchie
1952-1981



J.H. Ramsey, Jr.
1981-1984



Bill Ramsey
1984-1997



Donald J. Wills
1997-Present



Connected to Christ
150
Founded on truth. Discipling generations.  firstbaptist



Fort Worth Gazette, 1889



Early Bus Ministry, ca. 1913



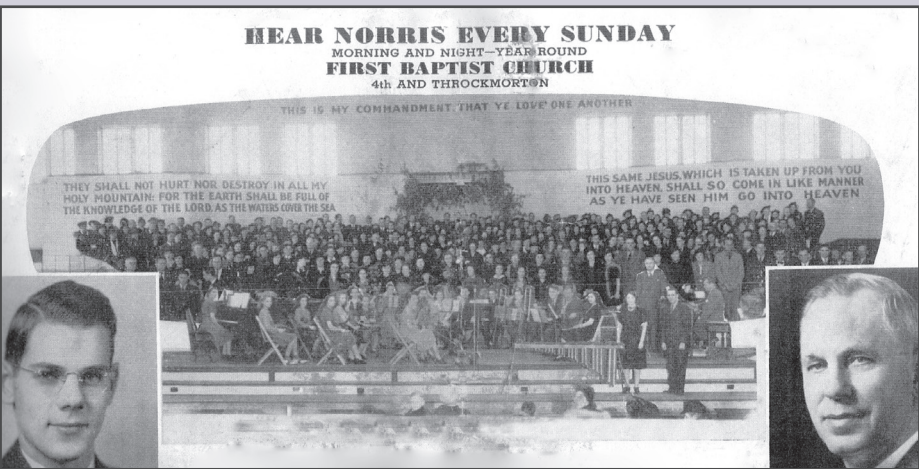
Full auditorium at 3rd & Taylor in 1925



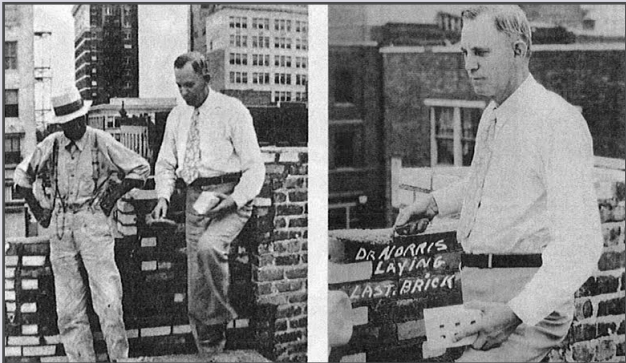
Brooks Morris Leading Music, ca. 1920s



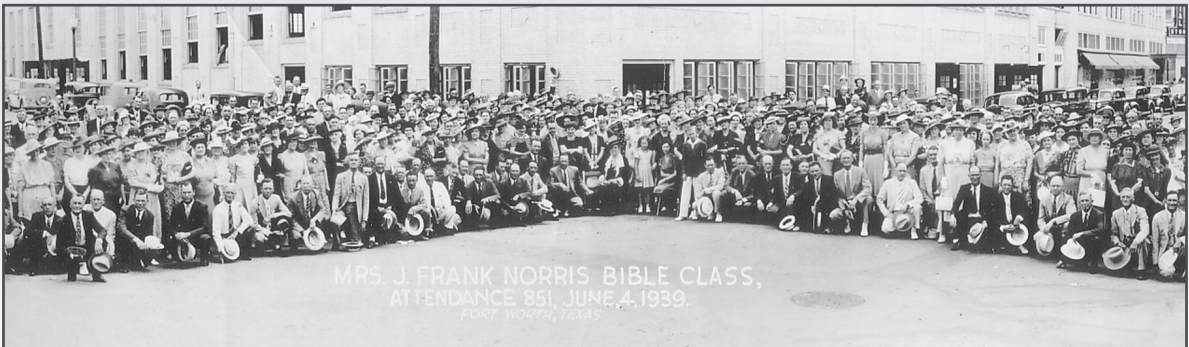
Radio Broadcast Ministry



George and Frank Norris with FBC Choir



Dr. Norris helps set the final brick in 1929



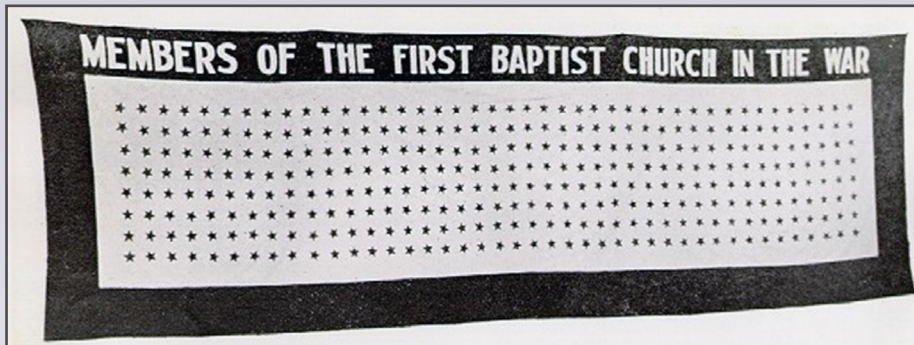
Mrs. J. Frank Norris' Bible Class, Attendance of 851 on June 4, 1943



Seminary at First Baptist Church Fort Worth



Israel bound



World War II Church Member Service Flag



John Birch Hall



The FBC Band directed by Mr. Riggs



4th & Throckmorton Campus Downtown



Celebrating 100 Years



Inside Sanctuary at 5th & Penn



Current Campus, ca. 1980s



Original Sanctuary at Current Campus

First Baptist Church of Fort Worth
Pastoral Staff



Donald J. Wills
Senior Pastor



Dave Rutherford
Executive & Children's Minister



Mike Neal
Legacy Adult Minister



Brack Buckles
Student Minister



Ricky Johnson
Worship Minister

First Baptist Church of Fort Worth
Support Staff



Left to Right

Kathy Oatman

Administrative Assistant to Ministerial Staff

Barbara Wellman

Contributions Secretary

Jennifer Marks

Administrative Assistant to Senior Pastor

Barbara McKnight

Support Admin (Senior Pastor's Admin 23 years, Retired 2017)

Ron McKnight

Accountant

Celebrating Pastor Don Wills'

20th Pastoral Anniversary



Pastor Don and Mrs. Brenda were the Guests of Honor at a Surprise Celebration of his 20th Pastoral Anniversary. The reception was held at Diamond Oaks Country Club and attended by many current and former members.

We thank Pastor Don and Mrs. Brenda for their many years of faithful service to our church, and to our Lord.



20th PASTOR DON WILLS
ANNIVERSARY



First Baptist Church of Fort Worth

Deacons



Back Row, Left to Right

Kevin Anderson
Gary Matlock
Walt Stokes, Chairman
Mike Barber
Bob Oatman
Dan Lewis

Front Row, Left to Right

Mark Knotts
Roger DeWeese
R.W. Stewart
Fulton Cook
Curtis Elkins
Josh Lewis

Pictured Separately

Rusty Owens, L
Charles Marks, R



First Baptist Church of Fort Worth

Church Officers



Stewardship Committee, L to R

Dan Lewis, Steward
Walt Stokes, Trustee
Kevin Anderson, Steward
Gary Matlock, Trustee
Mike Barber, Trustee
Blakely Cabano, Treasurer*
Rusty Owens, Steward*



Gifts of Grace Committee, L to R

Pam DeWeese
Gyrene Kennedy
Tari Barber
Hugh Hillaker, Chair
Charles Marks
Gary Matlock*



Church Clerk
Barbara McKnight

*not pictured



Personnel Committee, L to R

Mark Knotts
Vivian Sutherland
David Worley, Chair

First Baptist Church of Fort Worth

Greeters & Watchmen



Back Row, Left to Right

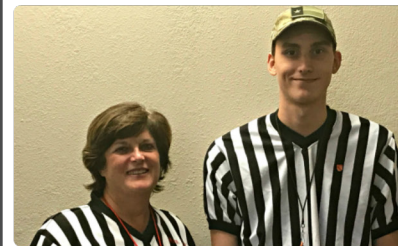
Gary Matlock
Ragaee Azab
Walt Stokes
John Hulkenberg
Jimmy Dalton
Kevin Anderson

Front Row, Left to Right

Pam DeWeese
Merri-jo Hillaker
Joyce Farmer
Roger DeWeese
R.W. Stewart

Watchmen, Left to Right

Walt Stokes
Damon Harvey
David Worley
Mark Knotts



 Thank you MOPS & MOMSnext for your help this year.



A MINISTRY FOR LEGACY-BUILDING AGES 55+



Join us weekly at 10:45am for our Legacy Adult Tuesday Meeting & Luncheon
• Day Trips • Game & Movie Days • Annual Trip or Cruise •

impact.fbcfw.org

FBCFW Worship

We have a place for everyone, come be part of our Worship Ministry.

- Worship Choir
- FirstMedia Team
- First Worship Band & Orchestra

*O sing unto the Lord a new song;
for he hath done marvelous things ...
Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth:
make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.
Psalm 98:1, 4*

worship.fbcfw.org



A MINISTRY FOR CHILDREN BIRTH TO 6TH GRADE

Our purpose is to teach kids about how to love and follow Jesus through a safe, loving environment and with high-energy activities — while walking with the family through every aspect of their child's life, from preschool to preteens.

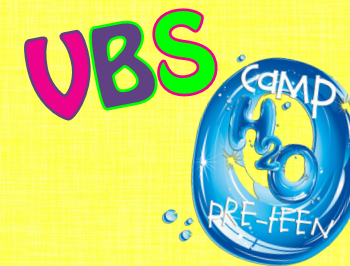
Sundays

- 9:30am— Bible Study for all ages
- 10:45am— Kids Church Worship (age 4 - 2nd grade)
- 10:45am— BeTween Worship (3rd - 6th grade)
- 11:00am— Extended Session (Birth - age 3)

Wednesdays

- 6:30pm— Awana, Fall-Spring (age 2 - 6th grade)
- 6:30pm— KAZ Kids Choir, Summer (age 3 - 6th grade)

kaz.fbcfw.org



GROUND STUDENT MINISTRY

A MINISTRY FOR STUDENTS FROM 7TH TO 12TH GRADES

We welcome you to be a part of our Student Ministry.

- Bible Study— Sunday @ 9:30am
- Grounded Worship— Wednesday @ 6:30pm
- DNow (Winter)
- Student Camp (Summer)
- Mission Trip (Summer)

*"... walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and
established in the faith, as you have been taught ..."*

Colossians 2:6-7

students.fbcfw.org



There are many ways to get involved in our Adult Ministries

Sundays

9:30am • Bible Study
11:00am • Worship Service

Tuesdays

10:45am • Legacy Adult Bible Study
& Lunch

Wednesday Bible Studies

6:30pm • Man Cave
6:30pm • Women in the Word

2nd & 4th Wednesdays

6:30pm • MOPS & MOMS Next

2nd & 4th Thursdays

6:30pm • Young Adult Co-Ed Volleyball

2nd Saturdays

8:00am • Men's Prayer Breakfast

3rd Saturdays

9:30am • Women in Prayer Fellowship

adults.fbcfw.org

Momming is hard.
You deserve a break.

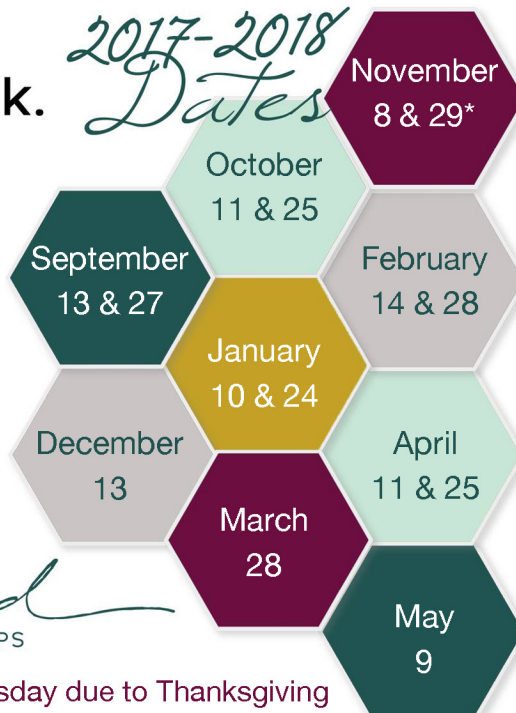
*2017-2018
Dates*

**MOPS
&
MOMS Next**

First Baptist Church of Fort Worth
2nd & 4th Wednesdays @ 6:30pm
mops.fbcfw.org

free indeed
MOPS

* 5th Wednesday due to Thanksgiving



*Congratulations on 150 years
of proclaiming the
Gospel of Jesus Christ.*



Birdi & Gary Blocker

In Memory of
Leon and Hazel Wellman



who would have loved to be
part of this celebration.

Leon served for years as Chairman of the
Deacons, and made copies of the services that
he mailed to Missionaries and shut-ins.

Hazel served in Sunday School, Visitation,
and made hundreds of popcorn balls for
Children's Church at Christmas time.

In Loving Memory of
Roy and Lucie McKnight



Over the years, Roy and Lucie served faithfully in many ministries
of First Baptist Church of Fort Worth including the Youth
Ministry, Senior Adult Ministry and Hospitality Ministry and
other areas as well. Roy served on the Finance Committee and
Lucie served in the Purpose of Heart Women's Ministry. They
dearly loved the Lord and First Baptist. Their legacy has impacted
their children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and generations
to come. We wish they could have been here
to participate in this memorable celebration.

Ron and Barbara, George and Sharon and the entire family.



In Loving Memory Of

Vera Edna Nimmo Lummus

December 27, 1908 - January 19, 2005

Founder Of Day Care Center Under J. Frank Norris

Paul and Mary Martha Russell

In Honor of My Parents

Edward and Mabelene Koonce



From 1948-49, they each taught a class of 8-year-old boys and girls in the Junior Department of First Baptist Church, downtown Fort Worth. Thank you for a legacy of service passed down to your four daughters and from them to their own sons, daughters, and grandchildren.

Gyrene Koonce Kennedy



In Honor of
JACK STOWE

for his many years of faithful service
to our Lord, our church, and our country.
An inspiration to many!



The Inspirational Quartet has a long history since 1958 of presenting gospel music with a cast of well known vocal artists down through the years. Bob Wills, who managed this group, has had some of the most amazing and talented singers who have left their mark on gospel music. Now, continuing the legacy, is Bob's sons; Bob Jr. (keys), Don (bass), Ron (baritone), along with Ralph Green (lead-who became an Inspirational in 1972), and Dan Keeton (tenor) is the latest addition and one of the finest tenors in gospel music today.



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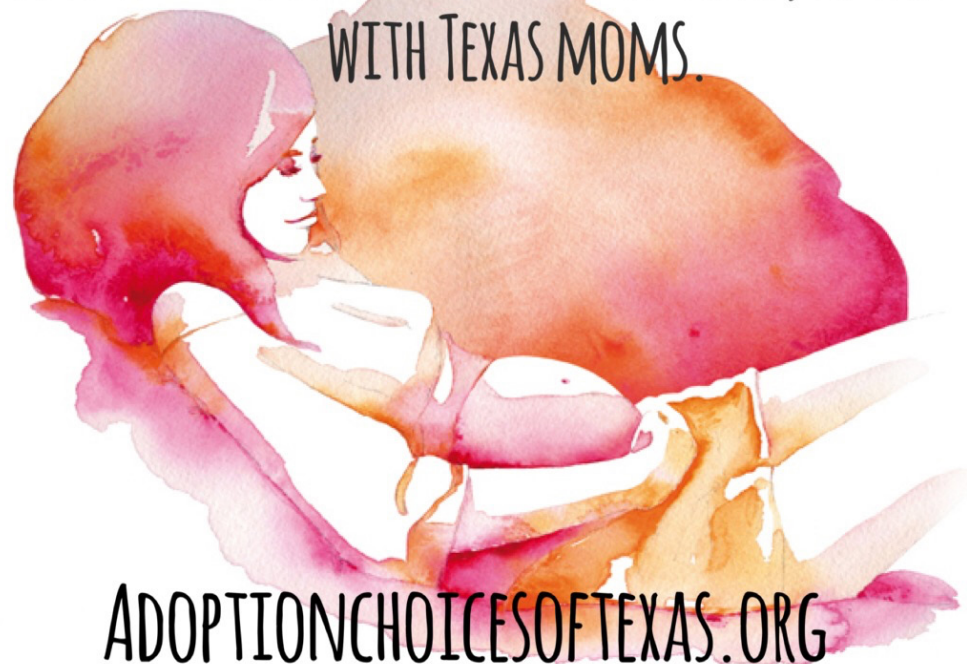
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La Dell Clowdus Perdue
was saved under
J. Frank Norris
Downtown
72 years ago



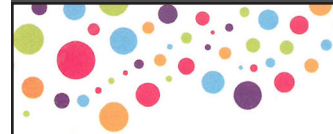
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Women's Ministry

PURPOSE OF
HEART
WOMEN'S MINISTRY

women.fbcfw.org

First Baptist Church
of Fort Worth
Men's Ministry

IRON
FBCFW MEN
SHARPENS
IRON
PROVERBS 27:17

men.fbcfw.org

First Baptist Church of Fort Worth

Wishes to Acknowledge

the contributions of the following among many others who made this possible:

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Memory Book & Supplies

Vivian Sutherland

Glass Etching of Pulpit

Mary Hensarling

Loan of Display Pieces

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