

First Baptist Church of Dixon

by John Groves

Almost all churches start from meager beginnings and the First Baptist Church of Dixon is no exception however, to find the start point of a church that has been around as long as FBC, you have to dig into its history files. The best way to begin such a daunting project is to talk to someone or several someone's who can tell you how things began. One such person is Jerry Milligan who has been a member of the First Baptist for all of his life, beginning from birth.



Jerry is one of those gems that is rarely found in today's society that can recall topics and minutiae down into the core of a subject. While speaking to him, you see the gleam in his eyes that he loves talking about his church and recalling years gone by and people who he loved dearly.

In talking to him and asking questions as to the beginning of the church, it is like stepping into a time machine with Jerry

at the controls as he takes you through layers of people and events with unbelievable accuracy.

The First Baptist first began its existence in 1897 when it was started by approximately 20-25 people of the community who felt there was a need for a Baptist Church in Dixon. The person(s) who raised the issue of a church was, Mr. Chris Veasman and Mr. George Franklin. These two men and several others met to establish the church properly and in doing so they elected Rev. H.M. Sutton as the first Pastor who, was a college Professor

called to preach at age 50.

A lot was purchased at the church's current location for \$204.65 and plans for a building that was 24 by 26 feet were put into motion and the results of those actions was the dedication of the church building in 1899. The first Sunday School was established on May 20 1899 and the first Women's Missionary

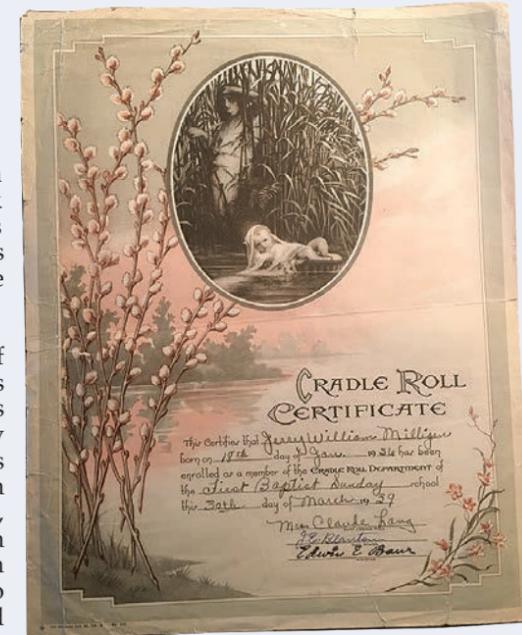
Society was formed April 14 1900.

The next 30 years saw several Pastors take over the reins of the church until in 1931 Rev. E. E. Baur who became the Pastor and would hold that position for 33 years. The church population continued to grow reaching a peak number of attendance of 400 members in the 1960's. The current building was built in February 22, 1953, when the first services were held.

When walking down the path of information, Jerry brought out his Cradle Roll Certificate that showed his induction to the church on his first day on this earth, 18 January, 1937. Jerry's father and mother came to Dixon in the early 1930's where his father, Dr. Kenneth Milligan was the town doctor. He and his wife had come from Kewanee IL. The family would grow to three children who were all introduced into the church.

The Milligan family currently has four generations of family members who are involved in the church. Jerry was baptized into the church in 1947 and served as a Deacon from 1976 and is the true Ambassador of the church, giving praise to all who all have gone and those who or still attend the church.

Considering Dixon was only a town of approximately 500 in 1897 and as years passed, there were approximately 10 other



churches in area, the First Baptist grew at a rapid rate. When asked what the strong points of the church were that caused it to grow so rapidly, Jerry said "Teaching our youth in Sunday School". He said we sent out the youth to the cities like Las Vegas NV, Springfield MO, and other towns to help the young people in those cities and teach them the word of God. He said there were approximately 6 youth in 60 years from FBC that became ministers of notoriety in the nation.

Jerry said "We are currently in the throes of rebuilding the church using the original mandates as a Christian Entity. Many churches in the United States are seeing a decline in attendance and with the advent of television, people can watch church services from home, thus reducing the numbers of attendance.

You can look in Jerry's eyes and see that twinkle as he explains that the church is just in the building stage again, just as it was back in the beginning of the church. Jerry said "We are only as strong as our congregation is willing to move forward and we are up for the challenge just as my parents and the twenty or so people who met back in 1897 that started this fine institution. God has always provided a path and given us guidance, I don't see that changing.



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF
DIXON

(573) 759-7911
Pastor:
Jack Caple

We invite you to be our special guest on Sunday mornings.

Sunday School - 10:00 A.M.
Sunday Worship - 11:00 A.M.

First Baptist Church is a group of people who have found that life is worth living when you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We aren't perfect, but we have found real answers to life's toughest questions.

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