

God has sustained and blessed Second Baptist Church for the past one hundred thirty-one years. Since 1872, the members strive to fulfill the scripture to “Go ye therefore and teach all nations....” (Matthew 28:19-20). Second Baptist Church demonstrates faith, hope and love by continuing to do God’s Will. We pray for God’s “showers of blessings” on the present fellowship while serving the Lord God Almighty. Thank God for those who came before us with their vision and for God’s vision in those who follow in the future.

On the March 23, 1872, a council of the following ministers convened at the Baptist Church of Bloomington to constitute the Second Baptist Church of Bloomington. The ministers consisted of Rev. Phillip Simcoe, Rev. William Singleton, Rev. John Ghan, and Rev. William Lyon. The group elected Rev. William Singleton as the Moderator and Mr. H.T. Tourner as the clerk and recorder. The following men became the deacons of the newly organized church: Brothers Doc Wilson, Dennis Roberts, Milton Norris, James Wilson, Alfred Freeman, and Andrew Henson. They adopted the following church covenant. It stated:

We whose names are undersigned, being desirous of being constituted a church of Jesus Christ in this place, and having due knowledge of each other in point of a walk of grace in our hearts; religious principles and moral character and being desirous of enjoying the privileges that appertain to the people of God in a church relation, do in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, voluntary [sic] and freely give ourselves to the Lord and to one another according to his word, to be one body, under one head, jointly to exist and act by the bonds and rules of the gospel and do promise and engage to do all things, by Divine assistance in our different capacities and relations, that the Lord has commanded us and requires of us, particularly to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Him, keep the faith, assemble ourselves together, love the brethren, submit to one another in the Lord, care for one another, hear each others burdens, endeavour [sic] to keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace. This is the covenant, we solemnly enter into, in fear of God humbly imploring the Divine assistance and blessing that we may be built up and established to the glory of God, the advancement of the Redeemer’s kingdom and the comfort and edification of our own souls, thro [sic] the infinite riches of free Grace, which is in honor and glory and obedience rendered now and evermore, Amen.

Done at the Baptist meeting House in the town of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana on Saturday, March 23rd in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy two. H.P. Tournier, clerk protem

Signatures on the document were: Doc Wilson, Dennis Roberts, Milton Norris, Andrew Henson, James Wilson, Adam Gray, Allen Nelson, Eliza..., Susan Nelson, Harrison Hammon (sp). One name is scratched out.

According to the papers filed at the clerk's office, Patrick Higgins sold the land (located on the northeast corner of 8th and Rogers Streets) on October 18th, 1873, for one hundred fifty dollars to the Second Baptist Church. Even though the land was purchased shortly after the settlers came together, they worshipped in the homes of interested persons for eighteen years. In 1890, they built a frame structure on the northeast corner of 8th and Rogers Streets. Rev. Henson was called to be the first pastor in 1890.

Excluding Rev. Henson, twelve ministers served the church as pastor until 1907. Each contributed to the spiritual and numerical growth of the church. They are: Reverends John Ghan, Phillip Simcoe, J.R. Miller, Revels, Green, William Arnold, E. Price, Clark, Clay, J.E. Rogers, C.H. Reed, and M.C. Elzy. Mrs. Amanda Ghan, mother of Deacon Emeritus Dwight Ghan, was the first candidate for baptism and was baptized in a pond west of Bloomington. She, too, became one of the charter members.

Reverend Moses M. Porter, pastor of the Second Baptist Church, Bedford, accepted the "call" from the Second Baptist Church, Bloomington and became the pastor in 1907. In 1913, Pastor Porter lent the church \$4,000 of his personal funds to assist the small faithful congregation in the purchase of the property on the southwest corner of 8th & Rogers (the present location of the church) and led in the building of the beautiful stone structure at a cost of \$40,000. It was the first church built of stone by African Americans in Indiana. Samuel Plato, an African American from Louisville, Kentucky, was the architect. John Chandler plastered the interior, and Lawrence Evans did the cement work. Thomas Gordon donated and hauled (by horse and wagon) the stone. Reverend Porter baptized Mr. Evans (the first person baptized in the pool in the church) and Mr. Gordon (at the age of ninety-five). After repaying Rev. Porter the \$4,000, the church built the parsonage at 509 West 8th Street. Under Rev. Porter's leadership, a new furnace was installed, interior redecoration completed, and restrooms placed in the basement. Forty-five years of service with many achievements came to a close in 1952 with the passing of Rev. Porter.

In 1954, Rev. Marvin Chandler became pastor and served until 1955. During his pastorate, an electric organ was purchased and installed. Music was his primary focus and in 1955, he resigned to continue his study of music and theology. Rev. M.R. Edwards was “called” to the pastorate and served four years (1955-59).

In August 1959, Rev. E.D. Butler, who was pastor at the Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Connersville and the First Baptist Church, Noblesville, accepted the “call” to pastor Second Baptist Church, Bloomington. Rev. Butler brought new concepts, new organization, new boards and committees, and a new thrust of influence on the total Bloomington community including the campus of Indiana University. Additionally, under the leadership of Rev. Butler, the exterior of the existing building was refurbished, the annex was completed, and plans for the renovation of the existing structure were created. Rev. Butler baptized Idris Harris, the grandson of Doris Batson and the great grandson of the late Nellie Dearing, as the first candidate in the new baptismal pool.

Rev. Dr. E.D. Butler and Mary, his wife, as committed servants of God, served Second Baptist Church, the City of Bloomington, the State of Indiana, students at Indiana University, and countless others for over 43 years. On Sunday, October 20th, 2002, Rev. E.D. Butler delivered his final sermon as pastor of Second Baptist Church at the 11:00 a.m. service. Many presentations were made to Rev. and Mrs. Butler at the retirement program and reception in the newly erected Fellowship Hall. The theme was: “The steps of a good man [woman] are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way” (Psalm 37:23-24). Rev. Butler was named the first pastor emeritus of Second Baptist Church until his death in April 2003. Mrs. Mary L. Butler succumbed one month later.

In March 2003, Reverend Bruce R. Rose accepted the position as interim pastor for Second Baptist Church. While ministering to the congregation, Reverend Rose found a revelation in 1 Kings 17:9 that immediately encouraged him to consider the possibility of becoming pastor of Second Baptist Church. In June 2003, the Church selected Reverend Bruce R. Rose as the pastor. On September 28th, 2003, Reverend Bruce R. Rose, Mrs. René R. Rose, and Ashley Rose became the first family of Second Baptist Church, Bloomington, Indiana.

On November 9, 2003 the first service was held in the newly remodeled sanctuary.