

²⁹¹ Bethel Baptist Recognizes 100th Birthday Sunday

Bethel Baptist Church of Hays observed its 100th anniversary with a special old-fashioned day and services at the church Sunday, May 3.

The Rev. D.C. Miller, one of the oldest members of the church, delivered the 11 a.m. message. The

Rev. Mr. Miller, 83, was ordained by Bethel Church in 1929.

Overalls were worn by several of the men and ladies wore long skirts, shawls and bonnets. Ann Owens wore a bonnet over 100 years old that had belonged to her husband's aunt.

During the musical hour the church choir sang the old hymns without accompaniment. Adult choir leader Robert Jenkins sang "There Is A Fountain."

Joel Clonch, 1-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Clonch, was the

youngest person attending. The oldest was the Rev. Mr. Miller.

Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Rhodes had all four children and their families present, including five grandchildren.

Many special services and events are planned at the church throughout the year.

Church History

Bethel Baptist Church, located along Mountain View Road, was organized in February 1887. The 12 charter members were James N. Owens, Jacob C. Elledge, Joseph P. Elledge, Pauline Elledge, Matilda Rhodes, W.A. Wiles, John M. Ballard, N.S. Elledge, B.F. Rhodes, M.J. Wiles, Rebaca M. Wiles, Elisabeth Elledge, Sarah Owens, Emaline Ballard, Pauline Rhodes, V.J. Jennings and M.M. Owens. The first church clerk was J.P. Elledge.

Many of their descendants are still active members of the church.

Bethel Baptist was started as a Primitive Baptist Church. The church elected pastors for 12 months and had multiple pastors at one time. All church conferences were on Saturday nights and during the 1800s and early 1900s, the church had footwashings.

On Saturday, June 3, 1889, Bethel Church voted to set aside a week in August of each year for communion season and footwashings. The communion season is what is today called revival week. Bethel Baptist still has a revival week in August, in addition to a spring revival and a winter revival.

A study of the church minutes shows that the year 1914 is omitted. This is the first year of World War I.

On Sept. 2, 1910, Bethel Baptist Church asked to be dismissed from the Primitive Baptist Association.

Philo Rhoades was elected to care for the church cemetery during the church conference held in May 1944. His son, Clyde Rhoades, is today the janitor of the church and cares for the cemetery.

In 1953 Bethel Church postponed the regular August revival because of the polio epidemic.

For 93 years the church met on Saturday nights for the regular church conferences. In 1980 the

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Members of Bethel Baptist Church dressed in clothing from the old days Sunday in recognition of the the 100th anniversary of the church.



A Century Old

Bethel Baptist Church of Hays celebrated its 100th anniversary this past Sunday with an old-fashioned day. Other activities are planned throughout the year.

(Staff Photo)

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Bethel Baptist

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church voted to hold church conferences on the second Wednesday night of each month.

The church was remodeled in 1986. That work included the installation of new stained glass windows, construction of a new roof, padding the church pews and adding carpet. Many church members used vacations and many Saturdays to help complete the work.

The following have served as pastors of the church since 1887: G. W. Adams, S. S. Jennings, J. M. Owens, J.C. Elledge, Eli Sebastian, J.N. Brooks, W.F. Gregory, Milton

McNeil, Jearns Wood, J.O. Wood, A.B. Hayes, W.W. Myers, J.A. Blevins, J.A. Jordan, Andrew Blevins, D.A. Adams, S.L. Blevins, J.S. Bryant, Ernest Blevins, W.B. Luffman, Albert Pruitt, D.C. Miller, Ivan Dameron, Wayne Blevins, Earl Adams, Hillery Wood, Bobby Brown, and Kenneth Wiles.

Mrs. J.G. Mayberry has been a member of the church longer than any living person. Mrs. Mayberry is still faithful to her church and attends services when she is able, said a church spokesman.

Mrs. Louise Rhodes Bowers has been church secretary since she was elected to that position in May 1956.

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Withdraw. Rem. independent 1/7