

First Baptist Church of Allerton

by
Rev. Peter Thomas



Allerton Baptist Church (1908)

On September 5, 1876, in Allerton, Iowa, a little group of Baptists met in the home of Rev. Wm. Sturgeon for the purpose of organizing a Baptist Church. Those enrolled as charter members were; Rev. Wm. Sturgeon and wife, Mr. and Mrs. G.M. Gillette, Dr. and Mrs. B.S. Everett, and Mr. and Mrs. F.L. Nelson. The organization was given the name of First Baptist Church of Allerton. They voted to adopt the articles of Faith and church covenant contained in the Baptist Church Manual, edited by Newton Brown. At this meeting they decided to ask for admission into the Eden Association.

Rev. Wm. Sturgeon was the first pastor and he resigned Nov. 25, 1876. Brother J.M. Nelson supplied for a time preaching in the town hall. In 1877 Rev. A.C. Edwards was pastor. The records show there had been no preaching from 1878 until they called Rev. Edwards as pastor in 1880 for one-fourth time.

A union meeting was in progress, closing without visible results, but deacon James Knapp came out of these meetings filled with the Holy Spirit and took it upon himself to go from house to house, talking and praying with the members. God heard his prayers and the church was revived. In a few days of prayer and thanksgiving, five were added to the church and others were received by letter and baptism.

Prayer meetings were held in the homes, preaching in the town hall and later in the Presbyterian Church. In June 1880, Rev. Clayton E. Higgins was called as pastor, but he resigned a year later, then Rev. J.F. Moody became pastor. The Christian Church donated their house of worship and June 13, 1880, the first Sunday School was organized.

On January 22, 1881, Mary M. Lane deeded to the Baptist Church Lots 7-8, Blk 18, Original town situated on Wayne Avenue in Allerton, Iowa. A building committee composed of Dr. Everett, Henry Lewis and A.M. Tate was appointed. The church building was completed in the fall of 1881 at a cost of \$2,800.00 and was dedicated soon after.

The church entertained the Eden Association in 1882 and Rev. M.W. Akers was pastor in 1883. The church was closed from about 1886 to 1890.

At a meeting conducted by Rev. Eldridge and Rev. Foskett it was decided to call a pastor for one-half time, and Rev. Long was called. The Sunday School was reorganized Jan. 21, 1891. Sometime later Rev. Long began a series of meetings. He was assisted by Rev. A.E. Clemens, resulting in one of the greatest revivals in the history of the church. In March 1891, Rev. Long resigned and Rev. A.E. Clemens became pastor. Since then the church has had its times of discouragement and encouragement, its gains and its losses. Sunday School has always been maintained.

Those going from the church into the ministry are; Rev. B.S. Knapp, Rev. Lyn Richie and Rev. F.A. Lowery, who was ordained Aug. 5, 1917.

Pastors since 1891; Revs. A.E. Clemens, G.F. Assither, C.E. Heady, Wm. Hoover, S.P. Shaw, R.R. Sadler, J.H. Perry, J.P. Woods, Ward Bailey, Jack Riley, J.P. Thomas, W.B. Hutchinson, W.L. Anderson, H.J. Shutts, C.G. Johnson, D.W. Killoren, J.W. Neyman, Mrs. Neyman, Ewing Holland, Rev. Peter Thomas (1934), Rev. Valentine Hites 1935 for about eight years. His death was a severe blow to the church, but Mrs. Valentine Hites took up her husbands work and continued from 1945. Clayton W. Stineman 1951-52; Edward Redfield 1953-54; A. Van Benschoten 1955; Richard Smith 1958, Calvin Peterson 1960, Daniel Bean 1961-2-3-4-5-6-7. Sammy Valentine 1968-9-70-1, David S. Leeper 1971-2.

"The Lord heareth the prayers of the righteous."
Proverbs 15:29.

In 1968 the Baptist church of Allerton, by vote of the members changed their name to Independent Baptist. They voted to build a new addition to the church and work was started on the north side of the church, making a room 15 ft x 60 ft. This was May 1969. This is the first addition since the church was built in 1891.