

Growth, a Second Church Building, and World War I

Rev. Samuel Mitchell, the first resident pastor, served from 1870-75. In those early years, there was already a strong connection with the State Farm and College. I. P. Roberts, superintendent of the college farm who lived in the Farm House, served as Sunday School Superintendent and drove a wagon to church each Sunday, bringing others with him. Professor C.E. Bessey, head of the Botany Department, taught a Sunday School class.

Rev. Mitchell was followed by a succession of pastors. Through these years, the church continued to grow. Even in the midst of difficult financial times, the church was one of the more generous congregations in the Iowa Baptist Convention in regard to supporting mission work.

Rev. W.D. Weaver served as pastor from 1880-84, and during this time the church purchased a parsonage, a small house on Douglas Avenue. For the first time, the church also voted to grant the pastor a vacation.

Rev. A.C. Blackman served as pastor from 1896-1901. At the end of his pastorate, Rev. Mitchell, now retired and living in Ames, served as supply pastor for several months. Later that year, John Chandler became pastor of the church. While he was pastor, the parsonage was sold, with proceeds set aside to be used toward a larger building.

Walter Fowle became the twelfth pastor of the church in 1904. Following his graduation from seminary, he had taken a trip to Europe, working on the boat to earn his travel, and received his call from our church while in Europe. He came as a single man but was married in 1905 to Caroline Engberg of Kiron, Iowa. In 1906 a new parsonage was built just north of the church at a cost of \$3000.



second building, 1910

By now, the church building was too small for the congregation. An additional 25 feet of property was purchased to the east of the church. The existing building was moved to the east and was used as part of the new building built at the same location, at the corner of Fifth and Kellogg. The building, featuring a distinctive dome, cost \$18,000 and was dedicated in 1910.



Work group on the day of the dedication of the new church at K.W. Brown house, 1911. Rev. Fowle is on the porch, holding a coffee cup. Capt. K.W. Brown is on the bottom step and his wife Margaret Brown is on the second step, holding a child.

In the summer of 1912, the church held a Vacation Bible School for the first time, a comparatively new thing at the time. The week included clay modeling, map drawing, sewing, making scrapbooks, music and more, along with religious instruction.

Rev. A. W. Caul came as pastor in 1914. While some church records exist before this time, we have more complete records of the church beginning that year. Attendance at BYPU (Baptist Young People's Union) was as high as 75. Outreach to the students at Iowa State College was a high priority. In 1916, the church added an Assistant Pastor for Student Work, Charles Smith, who was appointed by the Iowa Baptist Convention. He served for two years before going to the Congo as a missionary. In 1917, church member Lydia Brown graduated from Oberlin College and went as a missionary to teach at Ginling Union College in Nanking, China.

While the church ministered to students, the war took a toll both on university enrollment and on the church. The 1916 church directory listed among its members two serving in Company I of the Iowa Volunteers, stationed in Brownsville, Texas. One of them, Snedden Winter, died on the battlefield in France. In the 1918 Annual Report, it was noted:

The past year has brought many changes to our church but we feel that God is blessing us and lifting us to higher ground through experiences that are not of our own choosing.... The ranks of our BYPU and Sunday School have been greatly depleted by the response of thirty-seven young men to their Country's call but the remaining ones are increasing their efforts to strengthen and build up the work.

The 1919 annual report noted that the outstanding event of the year was the loss of many leading members including the pastor, who left for another call. Over the previous year, the church had a net decrease of 31 members. Professor F. P. Fogdal served as interim pastor, and it would be 16 months before a new pastor was called.

While the war years had been difficult, the church's focus on missions and on ministry with students remained strong. Following the war and with the coming of a new pastor, the church was ready for a new era.