
1817: First Baptist Church of Carlinville is formed by Rev. William Jones.

1834: Presbyterian Church formed.

1838: Presbyterian Church building is erected. First pastor is the Rev. S.E. Blackburn, son of Gideon Blackburn, founder of Blackburn College.

1838: First Baptist Church building is erected.

1865: First Baptist Church moves to new building.

1914: Möller pipe organ installed.

1939: Fellowship Hall and kitchen added to First Baptist Church.

1928: First attempt to form federated congregation.

1942: Second attempt to form federated congregation.

1947: Both congregations vote to merge, forming the Federated Church.

1977: Sunday School classrooms and church offices added.

Federated Church History

The First Baptist Church of Carlinville had its beginnings in 1817, when Rev. William Jones preached in the home of John Coop. This practice of preaching in the homes of parishioners continued until 1838, when they built their first church in the second block of South Broad Street. This building was used until 1846, when it was sold to the Methodists. In need of a new building, the Baptists purchased two lots on East Second South (site of the Federated Church today). They paid \$400 for the lots in 1856. In 1865, they built a one room church at a cost of \$6000 on this site (present sanctuary). Through the years this building has been remodeled and enlarged.

Renovations were made in 1903-04 when a kitchen and Sunday School rooms were added. At this time, the platform in the sanctuary was raised, the floor canted, and the stained glass windows added. Additional renovations in 1914 included installation of the Möller pipe organ, still in use today.

The 1920's and 30's brought more changes to the First Baptist Church, as it had been called since 1890. The first such change was an attempt to change its affiliation from Northern (American) Baptist to Southern Baptist. The congregation was split and as a result Emmanuel Baptist church was formed, giving Carlinville a northern (First Baptist), as well as a Southern (Emmanuel) Baptist church. During the following difficult economic years the First Baptist congregation was successful. They turned down a letter proposing a unity with the Presbyterian Church in 1928.

More construction took place in 1939. The fellowship hall and the present kitchen added. After this, the First Baptist Church began to struggle through hard times. It would be shortly after this that they and the Presbyterians would Federate.

The beginnings of the Presbyterian Church in Carlinville dates to 1834. Its history closely correlates with that of Blackburn College. Both the Church and College were founded by Gideon Blackburn, a Presbyterian minister. His son, the Rev. S.E. Blackburn, was the first pastor. In 1838, the Presbyterians built a church in the third block of East Main. The Church thrived in its early years. Through the years they always managed to maintain a close relationship with the College.

By the year 1928, the Church was facing difficulties, and therefore, sent a letter to the First Baptist church proposing unification. The proposal was rejected. Blackburn College then assumed the responsibility of filling the pulpit each Sunday.

In 1942, once again, there were discussions on the feasibility of

joining the two congregations for worship. Committees were appointed to study the proposal, but it was rejected by just a few votes. Just a year later, in 1943, more committees were appointed for “Unity of Effort in Service.”

Finally, in 1947, both congregations voted favorably to try federation for a year. It was decided to use the Baptist Church for worship, since the building seemed to be in better shape and had a baptistery for adult baptisms. The Presbyterians then sold their building to the Free Methodists. The Federation became permanent in 1948.

At the time of Federation the first pastor was Rev. Gayle Barnett, a Presbyterian. Thereafter, the new pastor would alternate between the two denominations. In November 1953, The Federated Church dedicated new Sunday School rooms and an addition to the kitchen. The organ was rebuilt, and the console moved to the main level of the sanctuary floor. The last major addition to the church was added in 1977. At a cost of \$125,000, more Sunday School rooms and church offices were added. This new annex was occupied in 1978.

The two denominations of The Federated Church have successfully maintained a close knit federation. Today few members are aware of who are Baptist and who are Presbyterian.

The church is currently searching for a new pastor, which according to the tradition of the church will be an American Baptist (USA) since the pastor just departed was Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).