

OUR HERITAGE

The vision for MFBC began in **1967** during family camp at Warm Lake. After realizing God's will for him was full time ministry, Pastor David Piper counseled with Pastor Lyle Bramblet from Whitney Baptist for direction. Pastor Bramblet then challenged him to start a church plant in Meridian., After much prayer, soul-searching, and Godly counsel, Pastor Piper stepped out boldly in faith to guide the start of the first Baptist church in Meridian.

On **February 18, 1968**, MFBC held its fist service at the American Legion Hall, with 33 people in attendance, where they would meet for the next 3 ½ years. The core group included the David Piper family, the Bill Farrow family, the Dale Maslonkas family, the Oren Mayers family, the Dan Quenzer family, the Harley Smith family, Mrs. Julie Cook, Mrs. Myrtle Cook, Mrs. Lula Frost, Mrs. Alta Hansen, and Marlene Swetland and her children.

Early church life included the set-up and take-down of chairs for each service, the choir vastly out numbering the remaining congregation, and the time Martha Smith found a fifth of whiskey in the oven – thankfully BEFORE she turned it on! Martha and others also worked faithfully to clean the kitchen and bathrooms before service each Sunday, including trying to eliminate the odor from the Legion Oyster Fry held each Saturday night! The group had potlucks with Pastor Dave asking each family to bring a “passing dish” – lingo for potluck Michigan style. Martha and Joyce Balderston were overjoyed when the first VBS had 50 boys and girls.

The next step of faith for this growing congregation was to search for property for a building. The Lord provided 1 ½ acres on Pine street for the “huge” sum of 7,000. Half of the \$35,000 building loan was raised from the Northwest Baptist Revolving Fund. Many individual from area churches contributed with \$500 and \$1,000 loans. Neal Kolbo drew the plans for the building, while Harley Smith and Don Eichelberger supervised 5 men and 21 women, and with prayer and sacrifice the construction began! The church moved into our new building on **September 19, 1971** with an attendance of 75. Praise the Lord!

The **5th anniversary** of MFBC was also memorable. A birthday cake was served between Church and Sunday School. The fervent (i.e. LONG) prayer of a righteous man (Bill Farrow) had more effect than anyone expected. Bill was asked to give the blessing and he thanked the Lord for so long that the candles burned down and set the cake on fire!

Over the next years, attendance increased into the 90's, and in the **summer of 1973**, the east wing was added to meet growing Christian education ministry needs.

We also supported our first missionaries, the Hortons, to the Philippines and the Lancaster's to Japan.

In **September of 1976**, Pastor Piper resigned, submitting to the Lord's will for him to start a work in Boardman, Oregon. Pastor Kenneth Dalton was called, but gave his resignation that December. The deacon board acted promptly in such a difficult situation and called Pastor Irving Frank (Dennis's dad) to be our interim pastor.

The church called Pastor Mel Frank (Dennis's brother) in **June, 1977**. He served until **June, 1985**. The Lord blessed during those years, and our church saw much growth. VBS grew almost every year, Ingathering projects added a paved parking lot, hymnals, Sunday School furniture, and the church sign. In **September, 1980**, AWANA was begun by Elaine Frank and leaders Darlene Little, Betty Corn, Joyce Balderston, Bill Farrow, Tom Ham, and others.

October 1982: church voted to pursue an associate pastor position. In **May, 1983**, Pastor Marshall Davis was called and he served until 1986 when he was called to a pastorate in Othello, WA.

July 1983: the church mortgage was paid off!! Years of faithful stewardship of our finances had enabled us to be debt free.

October 1984: Darlene Little resigned as church secretary to work for the Meridian School District and Pastor Frank asked Glenda Ham to take the position. Thank the Lord she said yes!

March 1985: Pastor Frank resigned. Pastor Davis continued to serve.

June 1987: Pastor David McElyea was called as our summer intern for youth.

July 1987: We called Reverend Ken Miller from Tillicum Baptist Church in Tacoma.

During **1988**, we celebrated our 20th anniversary and started our monthly service at the Boise Rescue Mission. We continue that relationship today in various ways including service and the AWANA program's annual pillow collection. Jim Law is currently on the board.

April 1989: Pastor McElyea became our Youth Pastor and the program grew with attendance averaging 60-70 teens each week. Pastor Miller resigned in **August 1989**, and Pastor Jim Wright filled in as interim pastor.

The **1989** Ingathering project was the purchase of a grand piano. Memorial funds from Laura Miller and Vern Everman were used to help buy this beautiful instrument.

April 1990: Reverend Eugene Beck was called, and he served until **May 1995**.

1992: Our first annual “Fall Round-Up” with Old Time Fiddlers as our guests, a new copy machine, and the Ingathering project of remodeling our sanctuary. We did it in six days!!

May 1995: Pastor McElyea resigned, but fulfilled commitments through **October**. Pastor Beck resigned.

September 1995: Pastor Robert Dyer, Sr. became our interim pastor.

April, 1996: Pastor Kevin Moyer was called from Salem, Oregon, and he and his family began their ministry with us on **August 11**.

Pastor Mark Chapman was our summer intern in **1997** and became our youth pastor on **July 1, 1998**. He and his family served through **July 2003**.

1998 was our 30th anniversary and Bill Miller honored us with a poem. These words are still fitting today:

Thirty years a long timer for some, not long for others to measure,

Serving, teaching, blessing, preaching, to exist solely for God's own pleasure.

Our work has surely just begun, great things we have yet to do,

I'm sure that these accomplishments will be met,

As long as God has people like you.

In the **spring of 2002**, we bought the house next door for additional classroom space. The Junior Sunday School teachers and parents completed the garage classroom in **October 2002**.

Pastor David Duron and his family were called to be our Youth Pastor in **2004**.

Pastor Kevin Moyer resigned in **September of 2007**.

We established an LLC and broke ground on our new classroom wing in the **spring of 2007**, and the wing was completed in **October, 2007**, just in time to have our Ingathering dinner!

Pastor Randy & Phyllis Cook were called to be our Senior Pastor in **2008**.

Pastor Virgil & Ginny Saltz joined our pastoral staff in **2009**.

Pastor Bill & Joan Toyer joined our pastoral staff in **2011** and stepped down **2015**