

WINFIELD FIRST BAPTIST *Newsletter*

Legacy Sunday 2026-From Susan Robertson and the Historical Committee

First Baptist Church of Winfield was organized in 1889 and began with the building of the first church in October 1889 by a small group of 31 members who wanted to see a Baptist church in the new town of Needmore, which later became Winfield. First Baptist Church has had an enduring legacy which has been intentionally handed down from one generation to the next. Although the early church struggled along for several years and had services once a month, on Saturday afternoon and again on Sunday, the Lord blessed us with wonderful, Godly pastors, staff, and deacons with vision and a zeal to serve. With gratitude, we look back at how our legacy began as we celebrate 137 years! The first church was a small, white wood-frame building set on pillars with no underpinning, and there was a belfry on top. The original church building sat on the same property where our church stands today. It was lit by several small, globed lamps with tin reflectors behind the globes, which were fastened to small shelves that lined both sides of the long, narrow church. Worship music flowed from an old-time organ that had to be pumped with the feet, and heat came from a pot-bellied stove that sat in the center of the church. In the summertime, fresh air flowed through open windows, and members stood to worship or brought their own chairs that were used in the wagons. They removed the chairs and brought them into the church for services, because there were no seats until 1892, when homemade benches were added. Mr. E. Z. Trull was the contractor, and the building was valued in the church minutes at \$100.



The first pastor of the church was Rev. Arthur Newton Reeves, the son of Andrew Jackson Reeves and Martha Ann Shirey Reeves. He was born February 11, 1861, in Fayette County, Alabama, where he spent his formative years. At 11 years old, he became a Christian and was baptized into the fellowship of Mt. Joy Church in Fayette, Alabama. Not long afterward, he was licensed to preach and ordained by the authority of the church at Winfield. On October 6, 1881, Rev. Arthur Reeves married Nancy Jennie Lawrence. They were blessed with several children and served in ministry together. He had an honorable reputation as a preacher and pastor and was well-known for his humility and untiring zeal. When asked what one thing had been the greatest factor in his life, he always answered, "By the grace of God I am what I am." His wife passed away on September 10, 1896, in Fayette, Alabama. Some years later, Rev. Reeves married Jerusha Isabel "Belle" Stewart. She was known as a good mother, and she and Rev. Reeves had additional children of their own. Belle passed away September 10, 1929, in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Rev. Arthur Reeves served as pastor of the Winfield church for a total of 11 years, but they were not consecutive years. He passed away on April 5, 1942, at the age of 81.

Jesse Washington McGaha was born July 3, 1858, in Winfield, Alabama, to Joseph Lister McGaha and Bethesda Jane Dickerson McGaha. The McGaha family is listed among the very earliest settlers of the Winfield area. Jesse's father, J. L. McGaha, had one of the first stores in Winfield. In 1887, when the railroad arrived and the post office was officially set up, J. L. McGaha became the town's first postmaster and operated Winfield's first post office out of his local general store. Jesse W. McGaha grew up in Winfield and was known as an American pioneer and farmer; however, the Lord had other plans for his life. In 1874, at the age of 17, he was ordained in the ministry. On June 13, 1875, Rev. Jesse W. McGaha married Mary Catherine Whitley. At the age of 32, he became the pastor at First Baptist Church, Winfield, and pastored here from 1890 to 1891. In 1891, Rev. Jesse W. McGaha left Winfield and moved to Texas. He pastored Canyon Baptist Church around 1900; he later founded Ira Baptist Church, and his other pastorate included the First Baptist Church in Fluvanna. On September 19, 1932, Rev. Jesse W. McGaha's wife, Mary Catherine, passed away. Years later, he married Laura Johnson of Ira, Texas, in December 1937. Rev. Arthur Newton Reeves, first pastor, his background and ministry. The first pastor of the church was Rev. Arthur Newton Reeves, the son of Andrew Jackson Reeves and Martha Ann Shirey Reeves. He was born February 11, 1861, in Fayette County, Alabama, where he spent his formative years. At 11 years old, he became a Christian and was baptized into the fellowship of Mt. Joy Church in Fayette, Alabama. Not long afterward, he was licensed to preach and ordained by the authority of the church at Winfield. On October 6, 1881, Rev. Arthur Reeves married Nancy Jennie Lawrence. They were blessed with several children and served in ministry together. He had an honorable reputation as a preacher and pastor and was well-known for his humility and untiring zeal. When asked what one thing had been the greatest factor in his life, he always answered, "By the grace of God I am what I am." His wife passed away on September 10, 1896, in Fayette, Alabama. Some years later, Rev. Reeves married Jerusha Isabel "Belle" Stewart. She was known as a good mother, and she and Rev. Reeves had additional children of their own. Belle passed away September 10, 1929, in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Rev. Arthur Reeves served as pastor of the Winfield church for a total of 11 years, but they were not consecutive years. He passed away on April 5, 1942, at the age of 81. Rev. Jesse Washington McGaha, his parents, background, and God's calling on his life. First Baptist Church members and recent descendants of Jesse Washington McGaha are Jerry Ray McGaha, his son Jerry Ray McGaha II, and Jesse Floyd McGaha.



Giving Updates

September 6, 2026

Reg. Offering: \$14,095.39

Bldg. Fund: \$528.48

September 13, 2026

Reg. Offering: \$21,698.88

Bldg. Fund: \$1,949.02

September 20, 2026

Reg. Offering: \$24,947.76

Bldg. Fund: \$1818.00

September 27, 2026

Reg. Offering: \$12,811.92

Bldg. Fund: \$1,250.48

Scripture Memory for the Week of November 4

Praise the Lord!

*Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever!
he turns it wherever he will.*

Psalm 106:1

 **church center**

Scan the QR code to get started and
connect with the life of your church.



SINGS

SENIORS IN GOD'S SERVICE

October Gathering

Tuesday, Oct. 13, 11 am
WFBC Activities Building

Grief Compassion Group

October 15,
9:30 AM

