

Local Baptist congregation marks 125th anniversary

Written by Molly Brandt

First Baptist Church kicks off month of celebration

Over 250 community members and visitors gathered in a gorgeous new church at 1000 E. Johnson St. Sunday, March 3 to celebrate the 125th anniversary of First Baptist Church of Holyoke.

Giving the message, "More Than a Bunch of Names," based on Romans 16, was Pastor Joe Stewart. He served First Baptist Church of Holyoke from 1975-1983 and again in 1985. Prior to giving his message, Stewart received many laughs from the congregation as he shared numerous pleasant memories from his time in Holyoke.

Stewart, joined by his wife Bonnie and son Andy, referenced many of the church's humbly-serving members that he remembered. Among the names were Merle Foster, Bruce Webb, Clara and Henry Harvey and Grace Blank. Very few in the audience were around with these individuals, but for those who were, it truly was a celebration of people who have faithfully served the church over the years.



Pastor Joe Stewart, who served First Baptist Church of Holyoke in the 1970s and '80s, returned last Sunday to serve as guest speaker at the church's 125th anniversary celebration.

Local Baptist congregation marks 125th anniversary

Written by Molly Brandt

—Enterprise photo

Current Pastor Gordon Penfold welcomed the congregation of over 200 people, a combination of the church's three usual services.

First Baptist Church holds a "Vida Abundante" service with Pastor Ismael Lopez on Sunday evenings, a contemporary "Vintage" worship service on Saturday nights and the traditional Sunday morning service with Pastor Penfold and Associate Pastor Chad Rozelle.

Those in attendance rejoiced in song with the enthusiastic praise team consisting of pastors Penfold and Rozelle, Arlan and Laurie Scholl, Laura Schroetlin, Barb Neugebauer, Beverly Atkins, Terrie Hansen, Dave Colver, Ivan and Julie Wiebke, Ron Koch, Jim and Susan Kienholz, Rosie Detwiler and Harold Fraizer.



Among the special music providers at last Sunday's 125th anniversary celebration at First Baptist Church of Holyoke are a portion of the group, pictured from left, Terrie Hansen, Beverly Atkins, Barb Neugebauer, Laura Schroetlin, Pastor Gordon Penfold (in background), Julie Wiebke and Arlan Scholl.

—Enterprise photo

On the keyboards were Laurie Scholl and Mary Bohlender.

Minnie Rodriguez shared her touching story of coming to Christ and that impact on her life.

Local Baptist congregation marks 125th anniversary

Written by Molly Brandt

Attendees enjoyed a catered meal and viewed scrapbooks, photos and other memorabilia of the past 125 years in the church. Following the meal, members shared fond memories of the church.

Special services in March

With the kickoff being the 125th anniversary service, the whole month of March is dedicated to celebrating the 125th anniversary and building dedication with special services and events.

Sunday, March 10 will honor first responders and medical responders in the community, while the March 17 service will be dedicated to teachers and educators.

Sunday, March 24 is set for the new building dedication. Former pastor Gary Jones will be present and Dr. Paul Borden, RMCN director, will be speaking that week.

Pastor Penfold encourages the community to join in their celebration each and every Sunday this month.



Local Baptist congregation marks 125th anniversary

Written by Molly Brandt

Church photos, scrapbooks and other memorabilia from First Baptist's 125-year history were displayed at last week's celebration. —Enterprise photo

Each week, someone will share their unique story of how Jesus Christ has touched their life. In addition, praise teams from Vintage and traditional service will both share their musical talents throughout the month.

Services start at 10:30 a.m. with a potluck following each Sunday through March 24. Because of all the activities planned, Vintage will meet only during the usual Sunday morning service, resuming on Saturday, March 30.

March 31 is Resurrection Sunday, with a sunrise service followed by breakfast and Easter morning worship at 10:30 a.m.

Holyoke Enterprise March 7, 2013