

Bringing Faith to Life... Through a Legacy of Faith

“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church...” Ephesians 1:22

Bringing Faith to Life... an apt description of what the people of Grace Church have been doing for more than 80 years. By God’s sovereignty, what began as a home Bible study in 1928 has grown to a congregation of thousands.



The first chapel home of the France Avenue Mission—later renamed Edina Baptist Church

Our First Church Home

Two lots at 55th and France in Edina were purchased for the bargain price of \$800. Soon a white frame chapel (30 feet by 36 feet with a full basement, 19 pews, and bell tower) was erected for \$3,500. It was called the France Avenue Mission. Inadequate heating made the chapel an invigorating place in which to worship during cold weather—the choir had to keep their hats on while singing! Water was carried from nearby homes and church members brought wood with which to stoke the furnace.



Pastor Frank Shortridge

Our First Pastor

Frank Shortridge became the first pastor of the France Avenue Mission. In describing Pastor Shortridge, one church leader wrote that “Heaven

and earth could not stop him from the mission field!” Pastor Shortridge traveled to Morocco, Africa as the church’s first missionary.

Edina Baptist Church Is Born



Pastor Glen Anderson

Articles of Incorporation were filed on April 15, 1942, and the France Avenue Mission became Edina Baptist Church. Glenn D. Anderson, a young student at Bethel Seminary in St.

Paul, became the church’s pastor, first serving part-time. Upon completing his studies in 1945, he assumed the full-time leadership of the church. He remained as pastor for 21 fruitful years.



Pastor Anderson and Mrs. H.A. Hanson, in whose home the original Bible study had been held, participate in the ground-breaking ceremony for the new sanctuary.

The Chapel Gives Way to a Church Building

Property was acquired at 5300 France Avenue South in Edina, just two blocks north of the chapel building. On April 11, 1948, ground was broken for a marvelous, two-story sanctuary building that would seat 300 people for worship, with Sunday school in the lower level. The new church building was dedicated on Easter Sunday, 1950.



The new sanctuary's arches take shape

The 1950s and 1960s

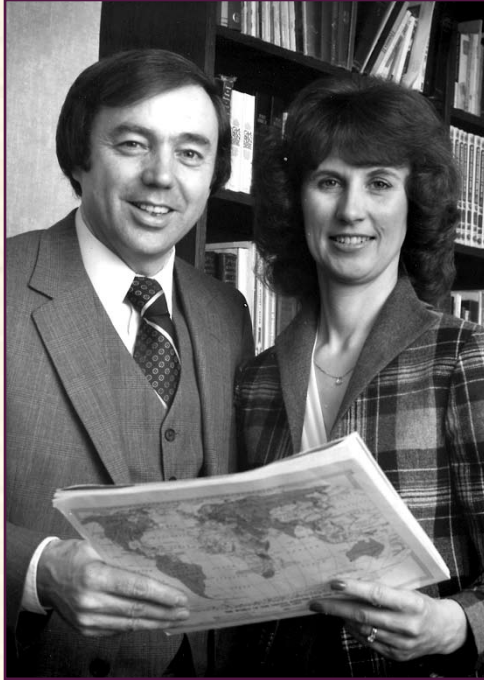
In 1955, a \$90,000 Sunday school addition began, which expanded those facilities to a capacity of 600 people. The Rev. Eugene B. McAllister, a traveling evangelist, became the senior pastor of Edina Baptist Church from February 2, 1964 until August 1967. During this time the church added a second worship service to accommodate the 400 who regularly attended, and plans were made to build a 500-seat sanctuary on land adjacent to the church. On February 4, 1968, Rev. Harold Carlson succeeded Rev. McAllister for a period of two years.



Rev. Eugene B. McAllister



Rev. Harold Carlson



Pastor Bob and Dee Ricker

The 1970s

In 1970, God called Pastor Bob Ricker from California to become senior pastor. Under Pastor Ricker's leadership, the church introduced Grace Groups, the tape ministry, a bookstore, Faith Promise Missions giving, Missions Festivals, and the church AWANA program. The church was renamed Grace Church. In 1974, a new 1,000-seat worship center was dedicated. And in 1979, Faith Promise giving increased to \$435,000, resulting in proportional increases in missionary sending and support. The Lord called Pastor Ricker to another ministry in 1982, but the fruit of his leadership is still evident. In recognition and appreciation of his faithful service to Grace Church, Pastor Ricker was given the honorary title of pastor emeritus in 2004.



The 1980s and 1990s

Following a brief two-year pastorate by Dr. Rick Yohn, the Lord called Dr. John Eagen as the next shepherd of Grace Church in March 1987.

During Pastor Eagen's 15-year pastorate, he refocused ministries around evangelism and missions, with a focus on Lima, Peru, the former Soviet Union, Vietnam, and Cuba. Significant expansion of the Edina facility took place, including a new worship center in 1992. Even so, the church campus was not large enough to hold the increasing numbers of people attending. God was leading the people of Grace to step out in faith as never before—to build and relocate to a larger church home that would provide for an unhindered expansion of the ministry.



Pastor John Eagen



A New Church Home

After three years of prayer, planning, and construction, the first services were held in the new church campus on Sunday, August 18, 2002—a beautiful 350,000-square-foot facility that included a 4,200 seat worship center. It was built on 62 acres of rolling prairie land in Eden Prairie, about 11 miles from the previous location in Edina.



Pastor Daniel Henderson

A Period of Transition

Not long after Pastor Eagen's resignation was announced on October 13, 2002, Pastor Bob Ricker returned as the interim pastor for 13 months. In February 2004 the Lord called Dr. Daniel Henderson to become Grace's next senior pastor. Pastor Henderson cultivated a culture of humble dependence on the Lord through prayer, with the introduction of 40-Day Spiritual Discoveries, worship-based prayer services called *Fresh Encounter*, and prayer summits. Worldwide outreach efforts continued with the construction of new sister churches in countries like Vietnam, Cuba, and Iraq. Pastor Henderson was called to full-time missionary service in June 2007.



Pastor Troy Dobbs

In August 2008, Pastor Troy Dobbs—a young, passionate preacher with strong vision and leadership ability—accepted God's call to shepherd Grace Church as its senior pastor. Pastor Troy continues an eight-decades-long legacy of *Bringing Faith to Life* at Grace Church, through faithfulness to God's Word, fervent prayer, and worldwide evangelism. To God be the glory!