

Aline Baptist Church celebrates 100th with Texas Marker

by [Michael G. Maness](mailto:Michael.G.Maness@www.PreciousHeart.net) ~ www.PreciousHeart.net
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Aline Baptist Church celebrated its 100th anniversary on Sunday, Aug. 21, precisely 100 years from its beginning on Aug. 21, 1916, with the dedication of a stone-encased Texas Historical Marker. Pictured (L-R) are Buddy McDaniel, DeWayne Ling, DeLois Griffith, Durwood Ling, Michael Pentecost, Evelyn Mahan, Bobby Pentecost, Sharon Pentecost, Wayne Pentecost, Judy Mahan Brown and Texas Rep. James White. The marker project was mostly led by brothers Durwood and De Wayne Ling who live just a few stone-throws away.

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The outside dedication began at 10 a.m. with a program organized by Deacon Chris Martin. Texas House Representative James White helped dedicate with a few kind words, including, "Aline Baptist Church has been a pillar of faith for the Aline Community for 100 years."

All moved inside for the service, and the attendance rose to about 100 with standing-room only. After the congregation sang "This World Is Not My Home," Durwood took the podium to tell the story of Aline Baptist. Bro. David Bush and Bro. Buddy McDaniel told

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of their long history with the church. McDaniel was so honored to pastor for the last several decades, and he led in an invitation for anyone to accept Christ.

Misty Archer, who grew up in the church, sang two heart-warming songs, followed by several songs from The New Day Spirituals, a group led by local Elmer Adaway and six members of his crew.

Afterward, all were treated to favorite covered dishes from members and guests, including roast beef, ham, chicken; a load of desserts and salads; and two colorful 100th anniversary dedication cakes.

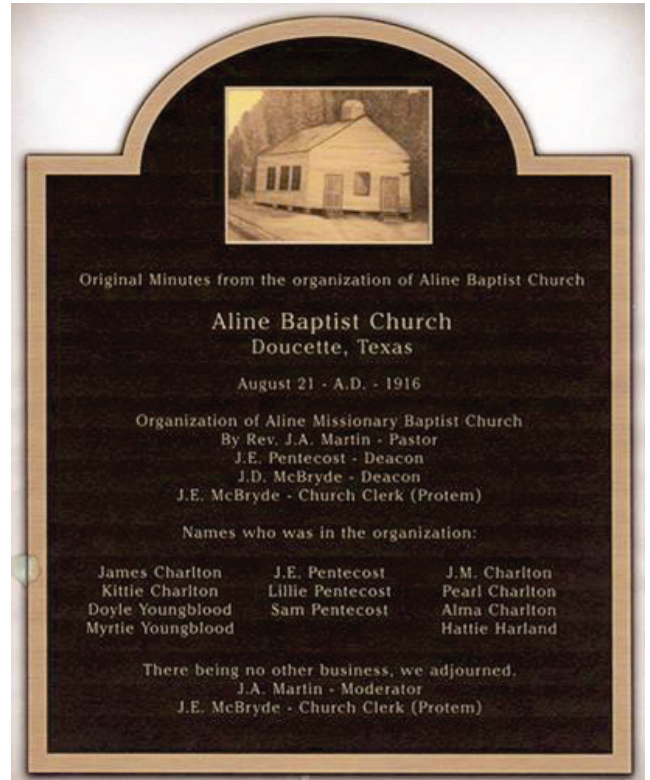
According to the hand-written minutes, on faded lined paper in blue ink, fragile and kept safe at the home of Durwood Ling, Aline Missionary Baptist Church, Doucette, Texas, met on "Aug. 21—a.d.—1916" with the following charter members to organize the church: founding Pastor J.A. Martin, founding deacons J.E. Pentecost and J.E. McBryde; founding members James and Kittie Charlton, Doyle and Myrtie Youngblood, Lillie Pentecost, Sam Pentecost, J.M. and Pearl Charlton, Alma Charlton and Hattie Harland. "There being no other business we adjourned," signed by J. A. Martin, moderator, and J.E. McBryde, church clerk (pro tem). Back then, they needed an organizing ordained pastor and deacon, Martin and Pentecost, and Pentecost became their first pastor.

That is the sum of the dedication on the official Texas Historical Marker plaque. According to the Texas Historical Commission, there were 16,265 markers at the beginning of this year with about 19 added each year and with 3,678 of those being buildings, like Aline Baptist (THC.Texas.gov).

On an exclusive tour of the church, Durwood Ling proudly showed photos and paintings of the first building that hang in the foyer. His great-uncle Jim Charlton gave the land to the church, as seen in the original deed, "in consideration of the sum of \$1.00 ... on Lucas league, on the Woodville and Colmesneil Road," signed in 1919. Standing on the front porch and looking left about 50 yards, you can see what is left of the old highway (old dirt road) that led left to Woodville and right to Colmesneil, roughly parallel to and perhaps 400 yards east of Hwy. 69.

The current church sits a few feet from the original building that began soon after they organized in 1916, and it took about two years to complete. The original was built by the members. Mr. Pentecost gave the timber, and Mr. Wilson cut timber for the first church.

On an old piece of faded notebook paper, Ling has kept track of all the pastors and preachers.



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The old is long gone, but just like the old, the all the wood for the new was cut and milled locally, including the stunning cedar behind the podium. Ling noted how he laid most of the brick, and, with several others, he and his brother built the restrooms. The cabinets in the fellowship hall were also made from locally cut and milled red oak.

DeWayne Ling affectionately recalled how he and Durwood had been thinking about building a new church building for several years. When hurricane Rita came through in 2005 and tore the roof off the old one, the damage was too much, and so they set about building the new one.

The huge church bell located over the entrance is rung every Sunday by the pastor, bought by Durwood in Virginia. He said, “Just thought it would look nice there.”

A couple of stories circulate on the how the church got its name. A “Mr. Wilson,” Ling recalled, had a daughter named Aline, who married Chester Fowler. That is likely the best reason. Simon Meadows and Mr. Wilson started the Wilson-Meadows Saw Mill around 1912 or ‘13 between the Ira Belt and Henry Bendy places. John H. Kirby wanted Wilson and Meadows to cut limber on his property, so he sent a Mr. Steiger to purchase their mill. Their mill was too small to cut the big timber, so it was moved to the Henry Bendy place, enlarged, and became known as the Steiger Saw Mill.

“Most of the people went to church in the Egypt community,” reflected Ling. A good portion of the community was made up of the Pentecosts, Charltons and Poindexters, and they sensed God leading them. For about three years they held church in a tent at the mill. Building the first church was a family-community project.

Today, they do not take up an offering. At the entrance is a small wooden bucket. The wooden lid has a slit for people to deposit money. One of the framed signs at the entrance reads, “Live in such a way that those who know you, but don’t know God, will come to know God because they know you.”

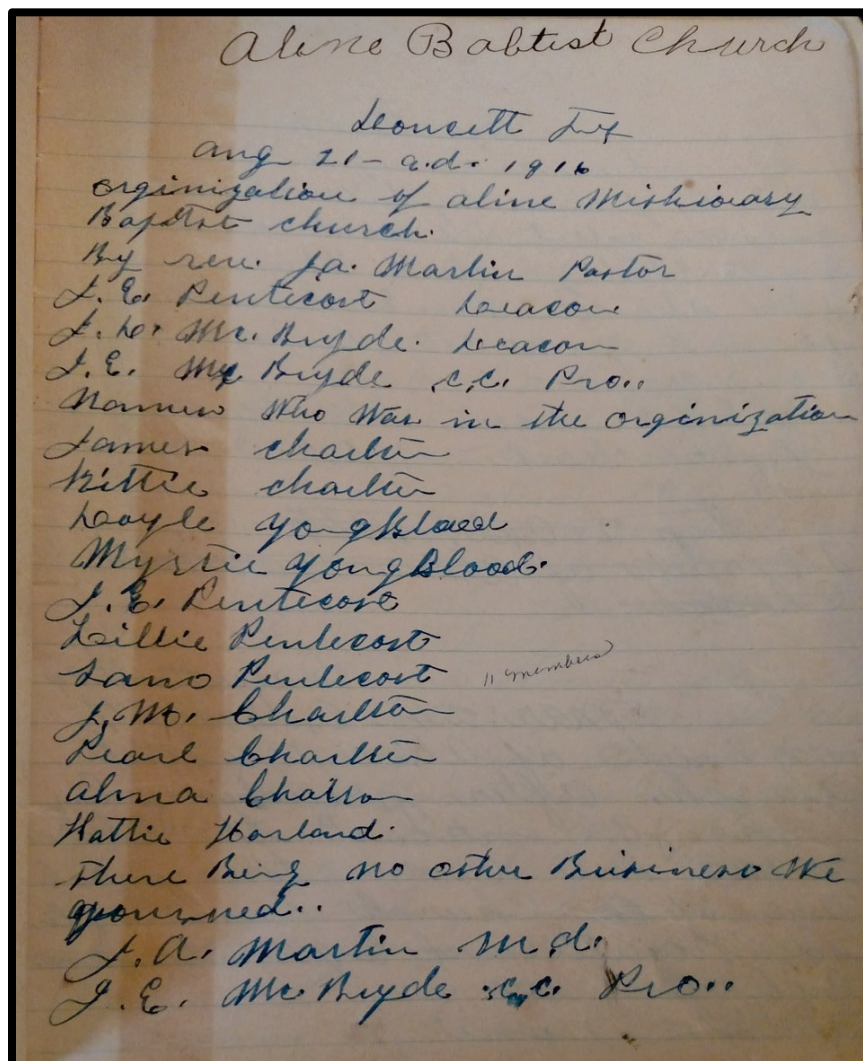
As Durwood Ling walks through the church, photos on the wall recall many years of affection. He pointed out where he and his beloved wife usually sit, and where several



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others have sat for many years. Memories of his father, grandfather, and uncles and aunts flood he thoughts. He knows every board and nail in this church, and was there when every board was nailed up.

In the captions of the many photos in the fellowship hall, there were notations of where this person lived, a few miles east or few miles west of the church. Aline Baptist was the center of the community for 100 years. The caption to the photo of one preacher, Rev. F.L. Campbell, read that they had standing-room-only crowds in the 50s and 60s. Though the regular attendance has dwindled, the affection for their old country church continues in their robust hearts. Indeed, Ling cemented large rounded river stones into a six-foot frame holding their precious historical marker, a permanent monument of this church's beginning that continues today in the gleam in the eye of Ling and other members—it's all to God's glory in His church house.



Copy of Original Minutes, Aline Baptist Church, Aug. 21, 1916

Online at www.PreciousHeart.net/message/Aline-Baptist-100th.pdf

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