

Years Of Development - 1924-1958

During these 34 years the church was served by a total of only 4 Pastors. Other than John Reinert, who served from 1945-1947, their tenures averaged 10 years. This was a time of development as the church grew, sent out its first missionaries, withdrew from the Northern Baptist Convention, and became involved with the Regular Baptist movement.

Dr. H. K. Finley (December 28, 1924 - November 1, 1933)



H. K. (Harry) Finley was a businessman from the steel industry in Lorain. He would go to various communities and hold Bible studies, including a weekly study here in Wellington. With the resignation of Pastor Ford, the church asked H. K. Finley if he would consider coming as Pastor. He began his ministry on Dec 28, 1924, and was ordained on Jan 4, 1925. During the first year of his ministry, 52 were added to the church, 40 by baptism and 12 by letter. The church continued to grow under his ministry, resulting in 165 members by the end of his tenure.

Dr. Finley was truly a man of the Word of God, and he was not afraid to lead the church in whatever direction the Bible dictated. He taught the church the Biblical truth about church finances, and led the church to rely on God and the free-will offerings of God's people rather than fundraisers, dinners, and bake sales (which had been the church's practice up to that point).

Dr. Finley was strongly involved in the controversies over modernism in the Northern Baptist Convention. He did all he could to keep modernists from impacting churches in our area. In 1927 he led the church to send \$25 to help the Baptist Bible Union purchase Des Moines University and make it a Christian College. In April of 1929 led the church to withdraw from the Northern Baptist Convention, along with its state and regional affiliates.

Dr. Finley was instrumental in the formation of the Regular Baptist Churches of Ohio (now the OARBC), and the local Hebron Fellowship. He was also vitally involved in forming a Women's Missionary Society to replace the Ladies' Aid Society. In 1931 he became editor of the state magazine, which became known as the *Ohio Independent Baptist*. He resigned from our church to devote more time to these state organizations. In 1935 he was chosen to be President of the Ohio fellowship. Dr. Finley continued as Editor of the *OIB* until his death in a car accident in 1957.

In June of 1931 **Ruth Hege** was set apart as the church's first missionary. She was a graduate of Wheaton College and had been serving as a public school teacher. She felt the Lord's call to missions, and left for the African Congo in January of 1932. She served under Baptist Mid-Missions in the Congo and in Venezuela for a total of 40 years. It was during an uprising in the Congo in January of 1964 that she and her missionary partner, Irene Ferrell, were attacked by rebels. Irene was killed, and Ruth was left for dead. God graciously preserved her life and protected her until she was able to reach safety. Ruth has told her story in a book titled *We Two Alone*, published by Thomas Nelson & Sons.



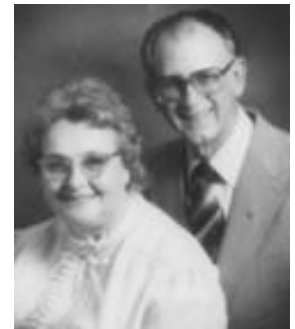
John Green (December 1933-1944)



Pastor John Green saw the need for a larger building, and began a building fund. The church membership grew to 171, and four of our young people went into full-time Christian service during his tenure as pastor. He also served as president of the Hebron Association from 1934 to 1944.

John Green had a great heart for young people. He formed the young people into a society of their own which met every Sunday evening one hour before the evening service. He also taught these same young people in a Sunday school class. He became the director of Young People of the Ohio Association of Regular Baptist Churches and remained in that position for 8 years. In this capacity he organized a camp program for young people. Since church camps were unheard of in those days, a campground belonging to the Salvation Army in Delaware, Ohio was rented for one week every summer for several years. Young people from all over the state of Ohio attended this camp. Hundreds of them dedicated their lives to the Lord for full time Christian service. Pastor Green was also involved with the beginnings of Camp Patmos, an endeavor that Dr. Finley was also involved with.

Bob and Irene Rodgers became our second missionaries in 1939, serving in Venezuela under Baptist Mid-Missions. An interesting side-note is the fact that Bob Rodgers was John Green's brother-in-law.



John Reinert (1945-1947)



Pastor Reinert's ministry at First Baptist was fairly brief, because he left Wellington to join the staff of Piedmont Bible College in Winston-Salem, North Carolina in 1947. He was greatly aided in his ministry by his wife and daughter, both of whom were accomplished pianists.

During his tenure **Harold and Thelma Jackson** went to Australia with New Tribes Mission. They served in Australia, Japan, and New Zealand before returning to the United States to serve in the home offices of New Tribes.



Carl and Ruth Ziegler also left for the mission field during this time frame. They served for twenty years in Bolivia under New Tribes Mission.

Dr. Howard G. Young (October 6, 1948 - October 29, 1958)



Dr. Howard Young came to First Baptist with a goal of building a new church building to replace the overcrowded facility on East Herrick. It took a decade of hard work, but eventually the church was able to move to our current location at 125 Grand Ave. A groundbreaking service was held on Oct 28, 1956, and the cornerstone was laid on March 24, 1957. The church was formally dedicated on Oct 26, 1958, just prior to Dr. Young's departure.