

A Brief History of Union Grove Free Will Baptist Church

Union Grove Free Will Baptist Church was organized as the Pleasant Grove Church, with members borrowed from the St. Joe Free Will Baptist Church, in August 1899, in the Economy Community.

The Pleasant Grove Free Will Baptist Church was moved to a Brush Arbor in the Union Grove Community, three miles east of Atkins, in October 1912. At this same location a Tabernacle was built, in which the church worshipped until 1926. During this time, W.H. Haralson and others raised funds to construct a church building at the church's present location.

Sunday School was first organized on April 5, 1913. Classrooms were added during Rev. Dewey Kinder's pastorate in the 1940s. More classrooms were added during the pastorate of Rev. Henry Hill. A parsonage was built during the 1950s, with Rev. Henry Hill becoming the first full time pastor of Union Grove Free Will Baptist Church. In April 1974, work commenced on a new auditorium, with completion and dedication taking place in November of that same year. In 1981, the parsonage underwent a complete remodel and addition. In 1987, the original church building was removed, and a new auditorium was constructed. The existing auditorium was transformed into a fellowship hall and classroom, and several new classrooms were added to the building. This construction brought the seating capacity of the sanctuary to approximately 200, and provided ten classrooms for education. In the spring of 2003, the church voted to remove the parsonage from the church property, and construct a new building that would include a sanctuary with seating for over 400, 22 new classrooms, several offices, and a family life center. This building sustained extensive damage when it was struck by a powerful tornado in February 2008, and was rebuilt shortly after.

Throughout its history, Union Grove has been dedicated to the Lord's Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-40), and his Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). Hundreds of people have been won to Christ, baptized, disciplined, and launched into ministry through the church. The church has long been an ardent supporter of denominational missionary efforts, and remains committed to taking the gospel into the community, the nation, and the world.

Union Grove is a member in good standing with the National Association of Free Will Baptists, Arkansas Free Will Baptists, and is a founding member of the Fellowship District Association.

The following ministers have served in leadership at Union Grove:

- J.T. Burris 1899
- J.A. Stark 1899
- Arthur Reed 1912-1913
- R.E.L. Duvall 1914
- Fred Duvall 1915

- Joe Venable 1916-1918
- Arthur Reed 1918-1919
- R.M. Johnson 1919-1921
- T.H. Dixon 1921-1922
- E.L. Hill 1923-1929
- W.R. Jobe 1930-1933
- John Reel 1933-1942
- Dewey Kinder 1945-1956
- Henry Hill 1956-1962
- Tommy Brashear 1962-1963
- Tommy Day 1963-1965
- Rayburn Teague 1965-1967
- Jimmy Lee Chronister 1967-1972
- Lewis Barker 1972-1975
- David Bishop 1975-1981
- Denver Robinson 1981-1983
- David Copeland 1983-1986
- David Bishop 1986-2015
- David Anderson 1993-2001 (Youth Pastor)
- B.J. Duvall 2002-2013 (Youth Pastor)
- Zach Parent 2014-2015 (Youth Pastor)
- Scott Warren 2015-present
- Clayton Brixey 2016-present (Youth Pastor)

Last updated: June 2016