



Allison Bible Church History

Allison Bible Church began when three families from the Allison area, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Hoodjer, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kruse, and Mr. and Mrs. Daryl Schmidt, stepped out in a venture of faith and started what was known as the Open Door Christian Youth Center and Book Shop.

The vision for the Youth Center came after a group of youth sponsored a Billy Graham film in the High School auditorium. After the film showing, as a “following-up”, the youth showed a desire for a home Bible Study which was held in the Charles Kruse home with Charles Kruse and Daryl Schmidt leading the study. It was this group of young people who shared their desire for a Christian Youth Center.

After prayer and seeking out God’s will it was decided to open the Center in the American Legion Building in Allison. A small Book Shop was provided for by a \$500 gift donated by Stanley Tam, author of the book “God Owns My Business.”

The Youth Center was open two nights a week, Wednesday and Saturday evenings. Christian activities were held regularly and included youth Bible Studies and pizza parties. A Child Evangelism Club was held every Thursday after school throughout the school year. Many young people came to know Christ as their personal Savior through this ministry. There were also weekly ladies and men’s Bible studies, Christian films and Christian singing groups.

The first meeting to be held in the Youth Center in 1973 was that of evangelist Brother Sadler who was a twentieth century plantation slave and author of the book “The Emancipation for Robert Sadler.” During the summer of 1974, Hal Miller of Campus Bible Fellowship (CBF) at UNI in Cedar Falls, held Bible studies.

One evening after a youth night in the fall of 1974, the three families were sitting around a visiting when the subject of the Lowell Lundstrom Crusade was brought up. It was discussed how exciting it would be to have the crusade come to Allison. Bob Hoodjer stood up and said, "Why don't we give them a call?" They told us they were booked but would keep us in mind. Shortly thereafter, Bob received a call saying there had been a cancelation and they would be able to come. Needless to say, this caused much excitement and plans were made to hold the Crusade in the Allison High School gym. That night over 1,800 people packed the gym. Trained counselors were on the hand and many came to know Christ as their personal Savior that evening.

After three years, it became evident there was a need for a local Bible believing church in Allison. One of the first things decided was to inform the Calvary Baptist Church in Greene (which the three families attended) of the burden they had for establishing a church in Allison. Another family, the Butch Sawyer's from the Dumont area, heard of this and desired to be part of the venture of faith. Meanwhile, Calvary Baptist Church was kept informed of all the details concerning progress. The next step was that of writing letters to families of the Allison area who had shown an interest in starting a church.

Meetings of prayer and discussion were held regularly in order to seek God's will for a pastor who would be willing to take the step of faith with the new congregation. In the meantime, Brian Kruse was attending Ontario Bible Church while in school at Iowa State University in Ames, IA. It was through his pastor, Oren McConnell, that the group heard of Pastor Dave Den Hartog who was a colleague of Pastor McConnell.

More meetings of prayer and discussion were held by the four families and they felt the Lord leading them to call and support Pastor Den Hartog. After feeling led to come, Dave and his wife Beth drove to Allison to meet with the four families for prayer and discussion of the details. After much prayer, the families received the glad news that Dave and his family would come.

The Allison Bible Church held its first service October 17, 1976 at the rural home of Bob Hoodjer with seven families present. Dave Den Hartog, the new pastor-teacher, delivered a sermon from James 5:16-18 "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Two practices were started that day. No offering plate was passed but a box in the foyer of the church was used for the

collections. This practice has continued to the present. The second practice was the observing of the Lord's Table each Sunday with only men contributing to the service as each is led by the Holy Spirit. This practice has been changed throughout the years.

On the second Sunday, services were moved to the Allison Community Hall, then later to the basement of the Butler County REC building. The REC said their facilities could be used for church services as long as the church was moving toward a building program so a place to build was prayed for regularly. Then one day a group of men who were returning from Waverly after signing the church incorporation papers turned into a pasture driveway where Casey's is now located off of Cherry Street. They prayed for land to build on at the entrance to the pasture. In the process of time, God gave us the land that was directly north of where the men met to pray. The church met at the REC until it moved into its own building on September 8, 1978.

The land for the chapel had been purchased by the church in the fall of 1977 from Mr. Chris Hoodjer of Clarksville. Construction of the chapel was begun in June, 1978. The building is situated on 1.8 acres of land. Total cost of the project was \$80,000 with indebtedness of \$42,000 on the building. The difference between total cost and indebtedness was furnished through the gifts of our people and friends of the church. An organ was donated by one of the attending families. The chapel was dedicated on March 18, 1979. The note on the building was paid off in December, 1985.

After the church started, Mike and Linda Nemmers drove up from Ankeny every week to help with the services. After graduating from Faith Baptist College, Mike felt the call of the Lord to work with the youth in the area until he enrolled in Dallas Theological Seminary.

Dave Den Hartog was pastor-teacher until November 29, 1981. Ken Whitted was called August 22, 1982 and left December 8, 1983. Rich Toliver came in April, 1984. On August 29, 1982 the church purchased the Den Hartog house to be parsonage for our pastor.

Three undergraduates from Dallas Theological Seminary came to serve as interns in Allison Bible Church. Mark Wilson in the summer of 1978, Mark Carey came in 1979, and Gary Starbuck in 1980.

A bus was purchased in 1979. That summer it was used for transportation of the young people to a camp in the Black Hills of South Dakota and the following summer to Dallas, Texas. It has been used to take our church families to camps at Pine Lake near Eldora and one near Decorah and to the East Iowa Bible Camp at Deep River.

In the early years of the church, the children and young people presented an interesting Christmas program. Thanksgiving has been observed with a potluck supper for which a turkey is furnished individuals. This tradition has continued to the present. A New Year's Eve service and celebration has also been held every year. In the early days, a chili supper and oyster stew was served on New Year's Eve. Restaurants in the area have been used for our sweetheart banquets around Valentine's Day.

Earlier in the church history, an annual banquet to honor the graduating seniors is sponsored by the church. Now they are presented a gift. Each year the men would also have a pork feed for an outreach and the ladies a luncheon, inviting friends. Now the men have a father/son campout and the women have a mother/daughter tea. A continuing tradition has been to hold services for the residents at the Allison nursing home when it is our turn.

ABC has had many Bible conferences over the years with the following speakers: Bob Salstrom, Ron Blue, Jim Christiansen, Sam Dalton, Dr. John Walvoord, Dave Stockland, Harley Laflen, Dr. Leslie Madison, Dr. Harold Freeman, and Robert Congdon. Lenny Seidel also came and conducted a music seminar.

Each summer a week was devoted to children's work. Five day clubs were originally held in different homes of our people in the towns around Allison. Later, Daily Vacation Bible School was held at the church building (called the chapel) using the bus to bring youngsters from the surrounding towns.

Two deaths occurred earlier in the history of the church, Harvey Christopherson and Tjadia Lindaman. There have also been several weddings that have taken place in the chapel—Denise Kampman and Jerald Heuer, Jodi Boettcher and Jeff Best, Becky Klooster and Bruce Crane, Teresa Klooster and Rod Van Raden, Dawn Hoodjer and Jon Wiegmann, Tammi Schmidt and Bryan Freese, Marcy Pruisner and Dale Capper, Josh Miller and Rebekah Currier and Micah DeJarnatt and Sarah Currier.

In January 1984 our fellowship was granted membership in the Independent Fundamental Churches of America. A missions program was adopted in 1985 using the faith promise plan for the support of missionaries. The sum of \$451 was promised. ABC started supporting three missionaries—Gary Sabin, who started a church in Anamosa; Paul Pillai in India; and Marie Zimmerman in Peru. Presently the church supports Josh and Rebekah Miller who serve in Utah ministering to Mormons and the Abuhls who serve in Vanuatu. Two missionary conferences helped to increase interest in missions. Speakers at the conferences were Roger Walcott, George St. Garmain, Abe Van Der Puy and Gary Sabin. The women of the Church started Maranatha Circle in 1986. The missionary circle met on the second Wednesday of each month in homes. Each month the gifts were brought for a missionary cupboard from which items were given to visiting missionaries. In 2007, Troy Shick started an evangelistic outreach ministry to the town of Allison. The town was canvassed over a two year period and every house was contacted. The ministry was continued in 2009-2010 by Tim Cornelius and other church members who covered the town of Dumont. There was minimal response by residents of Allison and Dumont with one family getting saved.

Dave Stockland served as pastor from the early 1990s to the fall of 2001. He started and developed ACB's camp ministries including a junior camp, teen camp and family camp. He also started gospel sings every year before family camp as well as a ministry to Haiti which he served in for several years. The gospel sings featured several groups including the Franz Family and sometimes lasted as long as 10 hours. In the fall of 2001, John Currier was called as pastor and served until August 2010. Pastor Currier helped develop the church's focus on building Christ centered families and continued the family camp ministry. He was also involved in organizing the church's marketing and web presence which has been continued and updated by Tim Cornelius.

Though the church has changed throughout the years, we stand firm on the Word of God. It is the belief of those who started the church that baptism by immersion is a testimony of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Through the years there have been many who have professed their faith by following our Lord's command through obedience to this ordinance. As we look to the future, we want our church to be known as a place where saints are edified and the lost are told of God's plan of salvation.



ALLISON BIBLE CHURCH IN 2008

Below is a timeline concerning the starting of Allison Bible Church.

June, 1976—Letters were sent to people who could be interested in starting a church in Allison.

June, 1976—Around 40 people met in the Open Door Book Store to discuss the possibility of starting a work in Allison.

Subsequent meetings followed during the summer. Mr. and Mrs. Bob Hoodjer, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kruse, Mr. and Mrs. Butch Sawyer and Mr. and Mrs. Daryl Schmidt met each week for prayer.

August, 1976—Dave and Beth Den Hartog came from Sioux City to look over the field. He gave a Bible Study on the local church.

September, 1976—Three elders from the cedar Valley Bible Church, Cedar Rapids, met with interested persons at the Charles Kruse home to answer questions about starting a church. The following Thursday night a pot luck supper was held at the Charles Kruse home. Dave Den Hartog was interviewed about coming to be pastor.

October 17, 1976—Seven families met in the Bob Hoodjer home to begin services. Dave gave a Sunday School lesson on Elijah and preached from James 5:16-18. The sermon was titled “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

That evening we had a pot luck supper, observed the Lord's Supper and shared blessings with one another. The following Sunday we met in the Community Hall which God opened up for us. The men met each Wednesday evening to study the different phases of a New Testament Church. Names were submitted for the church and Allison Bible Church was chosen. We had enough children and young people to have four Sunday School classes. The adults met in the Open Door.

November 14, 1976—Our first baptismal service was with the Bob Hoodjer Family and Teri Sawyer being baptized.

December 19, 1976—We had a Christmas program with eighteen taking part. Mike and Linda Nemmers were in charge.

February, 1977—There was a fire in the Community Hall. God opened up the REC building for us to meet where we had more facilities for more people. The last week of February, Dave and Beth moved into their new home.

April 17, 1977—Lee and Sheryle Hutchison were baptized in Grace Baptist Church, Waverly, Iowa. Mike and Linda Nemmers felt the call of the Lord to work with the youth in our area while waiting to go to Dallas Theological Seminary. They moved to Allison in May.

September 11, 1977—Charles Kruse and Daryl Schmidt were ordained as elders. A picnic dinner was held at Lake Considine, followed by a baptismal service. The following were baptized following their testimony: Mr. and Mrs. Mike Key, Mrs. Jim Klooster, Becky, Teresa, Melinda, and Sandra, Tammi and Kristi Schmidt, Mr. and Mrs. Gary VanderWilt, Teresa Haugstad and Janelle Maifield.

September 18, 1977—Butch Sawyer and Larry Pruisner were ordained as deacons.

October 9, 1977—Bob Hoodjer was ordained as elders and Steve Clark as deacon.

October 16, 1977—There was a pot luck supper in observance of the first anniversary of the church.