



Brief History of Word of God Fellowship, established April 16, 1989

In late 1988, four families felt the need to leave the fellowship they had been associated with for many years. These families, some of which had helped build that fellowship, were the Tony Blalocks, the Bob Justices, the Terry Ricklefsens, and the David Shows. A few days later, they were joined by the Carley Family.

Having left after a Sunday Night service, we all met the following Wednesday in the house of Terry and Regena Ricklefsen for a prayer meeting and to discuss our new direction. We decided to visit different churches in the area and see where God led us. For about three months, our group, including new additions to the fellowship Rev. W.B. Shows and his wife, traveled to several churches from Galena Park to Houston to Rock Island, Texas. After visiting many churches during this period, we all agreed we needed to settle in one place and establish ourselves if we wanted to accomplish anything for the cause of Christ.

Mary Ricklefsen, mother of Terry, had a two-story house, and she graciously offered to allow our small group to meet in that second story until we could find another place to worship. Accepting her offer, we met in her "upper room," as it was affectionately called, for almost a year. During this time, on Easter Sunday March 26, 1989, we had our first official service as a church. On April 16, 1989, we adopted the Constitution and By-Laws of Word of God Fellowship and were officially established as a church in good standing with the state of Texas.

The members on April 16, 1989 were as follows:

Darena Blalock
Tony Blalock
Owen Gene Carley
Velma Carley
Bob Justice
Regena Ricklefsen
Terry Ricklefsen
David Shows
Shirley Shows
Kimberly Shows (now Brown)
Wendy Shows (now Hemenes)
Nathan Shows
Gloria Shows
David Stroud
Patricia Stroud

A Panel of Elders, consisting of the heads of the five families who established the church, became the governing body of the fellowship. They were responsible for the financial, legal, and spiritual direction of the church until a Pastor was called. This panel consisted of Tony Blalock, Gene Carley, Bob Justice, Terry Ricklefsen, and David Shows.

During this time of worship in the "upper room," the church was always looking for a permanent facility. After about six months as a church, we inquired into an 8,000 square foot former bar and dance hall that had been shut down for some time on FM 2218 in Richmond, Texas. After

contacting the bank that owned the property, we learned their asking price was \$100,000. Since we had only been established for six months and were a small group, we had to decline the offer. We continued to worship in the "upper room" and were joined by visitors and new members. The Stelma Family came and worshipped with us for some time in the "upper room" and even later in our new building, helping us to begin a Kid's Crusade that we had each summer for several years.

Six months later, after being in the "upper room" for almost a year, we once again approached the bank about the property on FM 2218. Their asking price had come down to \$80,000. At this time, the Panel of Elders made an offer to the bank of \$60,000, and we ultimately settled on a payment of \$70,000 for the 8,000 square foot building and accompanying 2 ¼ acres of land. In 1990, we finally had a building to worship in.

The entire church worked on the building for a month to prepare it for our first worship service. Blue jean curtains were taken down, 4x8 sheets of mirror were removed from the walls, platforms that formerly held tables and the performers were knocked down, blackened toilets were scrubbed, concrete floors were cleaned and painted, and folding chairs were brought in. Our first service in our own building was held in 1990.

During 1990, others had joined the membership of Word of God Fellowship.

Samuel Cortez
Jennifer Justice
Benny Philipp
Verosa Philipp
David Philipp
Mark Philipp
Thomas Philipp
Mary Ricklefsen
Rev. W.B. Shows
Elnor Shows
Daryl Stroud
Deborah Stroud

Over the years, the Lord has blessed us financially and spiritually, allowing us to pay off the \$70,000 loan in less than 10 years. We were also able to do extensive remodeling work over the years to get rid of all vestiges of the saloon and dance hall. In addition, we have been able to support missionaries and missionary projects ever since the church's inception.

Many others have joined our fellowship over the years.

Elon Banks joined in 2000 and is now living in east Texas
Kevin Blalock, after becoming of age
Kevin Brown
Brenda Brown (no longer active)
Kyle Brown
Craig Burt (no longer active)
Donna Burt (no longer active)
Mike Hammond
Vicki Hammond (no longer active)
John Hemenes
Roeanna Ivey
Phil Martin
Willie Mae Martin
Kandi Blalock (now McWhorter), after becoming of age
Will McWhorter
Rosa Navarro (no longer active)
Benjamin Philipp, after becoming of age
Jennifer Philipp
Lee Ramirez

Ryan Ricklefsen, after becoming of age
Leah Shows
Dallas Stroud, after becoming of age
Dustin Stroud, after becoming of age
John Rodgers (no longer active)
Linda Rodgers (no longer active)
Phil Sexton
Laura Sexton
Greg Zamora (no longer active)
Michelle Rodriguez

Others have been with us for years although never becoming members, and many young people have grown up and are growing up in the church. When they become of age, we trust they will become members as well.

We have lost five members during our twenty-one years as a church family.

Bro. Gene Carley, one of the original elders, passed away in 1999.
Sis. W. B. Shows (Mawmaw) passed away in 2000.
Bro. Mike Hammond passed away in 2002.
Rev. W.B. Shows, our church father, passed away in 2004.
Sis. Patricia Stroud passed away in 2007.
Sis. Roeanna Ivy, though not a member at the time, passed away in 2009.

The Panel of Elders has changed over the years as well.

Bro. David Stroud was selected to replace Bro. Carley.
Bro. Daryl Stroud was selected to replace Bob Justice.
Bro. Kyle Brown was selected to replace David Shows when he became the Pastor.
Bro. Mark Philipp was selected to replace Bro. David Stroud, who stepped down.
The Panel now consists of Daryl Stroud (Presiding Elder), Tony Blalock, Terry Ricklefsen, Kyle Brown and Mark Philipp. Rev. David L. Shows has been elected as Pastor.

Missionaries: At present we support the following:

Janie Kincaid
Jacob's House
Eli Gautreaux
Joshua Bell
Colin Hurt
Wycliffe Translators

For twenty-one years, God has allowed us as a group to worship as Word of God Fellowship, and He has blessed far above anything we could have ever imagined. We are **a small church with a big heart and a big God**, a close-knit fellowship of believers. It is a privilege, a blessing, and a joy to be part of a group of people that love one another as they love God. May we encourage one another, may we love one another, and may we continue to spread the gospel as effectively as we can and try and bring others in His kingdom in the time we have left before the Lord returns and takes us all away to the place He is preparing for each of us.

Easter Sunday, April 3, 2010

