

Pioneer Pastors

The First Eight Pastors of Elim Baptist Church

The earliest information about Elim's pastors is derived from the article "History of Elim Baptist Church" written by Brother William Byron "B" Way around 1925, in Elim Baptist Church's official membership book. In the article, he listed the names of the Pastors who had served Elim Baptist Church. During these years circuit-riding preachers would serve several churches in the area. They would rotate the Sundays of the month. They usually traveled by horseback with their Bible in their saddlebags or by train. On Sundays that a preacher was not at Elim Baptist Church, oftentimes a layperson would lead the congregation in worship. Information was from the book, "A History of Jones Creek Baptist Church, Long County, Georgia, 1810-1985" by Elmer Oris Parker; census records; family records, and the book, "A Century of Christ, First Baptist Church, Ludowici, GA" written by Malcolm Chapman, 1983; and The Christian Index 1822-1879.

Brinson, Isaac J.
(1858)

Dr. Isaac Brinson is credited as the first pastor of Elim Baptist Church. He was born in Jefferson County, GA, in 1827. He was married to Rebecca from Columbia, GA. He would have been a young man to the ministry. In 1857, he was thirty years old. Brother Isaac and Rebecca had one daughter. He was also a farmer. He died in Thomson, GA, on August 20, 1867.

Darsey, William Oscar
(1866)

Reverend William Oscar Darsey was born on December 18, 1840, at Taylors Creek, the son of William Baillie and Naomi Smart Darsey. Brother William was the second pastor of Elim Baptist Church. He served the church in 1866. As a young man, William attended Taylors Creek Union Academy and later Mercer University in Macon, Georgia. He was licensed to preach and then ordained. He married Ann A. "Mackey" Miller. He also was a pastor of Jones Creek Baptist Church. He died on March 29, 1913.

Butler, William Thomas Elias
(1867)

Reverend William T. E. Butler was born on February 24, 1837, in Liberty County, GA. He was the son of Jess Butler and Margaret Rebecca Cassels of Liberty County, GA. He lived most of his life in Waynesville, Georgia, and later Jesup, Georgia. He married Sarah and they had eight children. One can assume that he rode the train into Johnsons Station (Ludowici), then was picked up by members of the church in order to be able to preach at Elim Baptist Church.

Price, Jr. Lewis
(1828-1894)



Rev. Lewis Price

Reverend Lewis Price Jr. (1828-1894) was the son of Lewis Price, Sr. and Mary Hope. He married Sarah Frances Geiger (1840-1890) on December 23, 1858. Sarah Frances Geiger was the daughter of David Geiger and Martha Slater. After Sister Sarah's death in April 1890, Rev Price married Ellen Eugenia Canuet on December 3, 1890. Rev Lewis Price Jr. and Sarah Frances Geiger Price had two daughters: Susan Price and M. F. Eugenia Price (1876-1892).

Daniell, David Gornto
(1868-1874)



Rev. D. G. Daniell, D.D.

Reverend David Gornto Daniell was born in North Carolina on May 18, 1808, a son of George W. and Mary Gornto Daniell. In 1829, he married Mary J. Bettison (about 1795-1881) and they had five children. He was baptized in January 1833 in the Savannah Baptist Church. He was ordained in 1835 at Bethany Church in Washington County. Rev David Daniell was the pastor of Elim Baptist Church from 1868-1874. In his later years, he settled at Walthourville, Ga.

Parker, Jr. William Hall
(1873)



Rev. William H. Parker, Jr.

Reverend William Hall Parker, Jr., was the son of William Hall Parker (1765-1838) and Anna Susannah Hiers (1791-1857) of Colleton County, SC. William Hall Parker, Jr. was born on June 30, 1811. His sister, Catherine Parker Brewer (1821-1896) was a charter member of Elim Baptist Church. He married Sarah Jane Carter (1814-1900). They had 11 children and he survived all but two of them. He was ordained a Baptist minister in 1844 and resided on a plantation in Liberty County. He was the first station agent at the Savannah, Albany & Gulf Railroad depot when it was established in 1857 at Johnsons Station (Ludowici). When Federal troops invaded Liberty County in December 1864, he was beaten by the troops on the front porch of his home for refusing to provide information they sought. He was one of the organizers in 1866 of the New Sunbury Association, and a member of Altamaha Lodge No. 227, Free and Accepted Masons. On the 1880 census, he is living with his son, Solomon M. Parker, and is listed as partially paralyzed. He died on November 16, 1887.

Atkinson, William Dawkins
(1877)

Reverend W. D. Atkinson was born on November 17, 1818 in Greene County, GA. He served in the Indian War under Captain William Dawson and also Rev. William D. Atkinson served in the Confederacy. He married Elizabeth Jane Loyall. He died on October 17, 1879, in Blackshear, Pierce County, Georgia. On the 1870 census, his occupation was listed as minister-teacher.

Norris, John Gordon
(1889)

Reverend John G. Norris was born in 1842. He was baptized into Savannah Baptist Church on March 25, 1866, in his 24th year. He began his ministry on April 17, 1870 at South Newington Church, Chatham County, GA. Widely known as the blind preacher, he served as pastor of Elim in the 1880's and also served as a pastor to other churches in the area. He married Sarah in 1876. Brother Norris and Sister Sallie had two children.