

Fellowship Church

Joaquin, TX
(Shelby County)

31°56.144' N 94°01.521' W

Organized 1839

First pastor Wyatt S. Childress

Current pastor Mike Fodge

Fellowship Church, Joaquin, located just off FM Road 139, began with early immigrants to East Texas in the 1830s. The church has a recorded history back to 1839. It was established and pastored by Wyatt S. Childress, who had arrived in the community in 1836. Fellowship is the oldest Baptist church in Shelby County, and the oldest living Baptist church in Texas in association with the American Baptist Association.

It is understood by common reason that most of the new settlers that came into the territory of Texas crossed either at an Arkansas border or a Louisiana border. Since many of the new people came from Alabama and Georgia, that meant crossing the Sabine River from Louisiana. There were ferries that provided safe crossings for families and livestock.

There are indications that a few settlers had arrived as early as 1818, but they were scattered so that it was not really a community and no church was started. However, the area of Logan's Ferry had many springs of water, and families found this to be a good place to settle. It was across the river at the Logan Ferry landing that the community of Joaquin was established. Many families just barely got across into Texas and settled near the many springs. While there are no records available to give the exact date of the organization of Fellowship Baptist Church, there is proof of full operation by 1839.

One of the pioneer families was the Childress family. They had at least two sons, George C. and Wyatt S. Childress. George C. Childress is credited with being the main author of the Texas Declaration of Independence. There is a larger than life statue of his likeness at the main entrance to the Five Star Museum at Washington-on-the-Brazos historical site.

The earliest reliable records indicate that Wyatt S. Childress was the first pastor and even as late as 1879, he is listed in associational records as the pastor.

The early buildings were hewn logs, dirt floor, eight foot fire place, and split log benches with peg legs. After saw mills were brought into the community, a new building, even with plank flooring and benches with backs were erected.

The Fellowship Baptist Church of Joaquin, Texas, is the oldest, continually active church fellowshiping with Missionary Baptist Association of Texas. The list of pastors who have served the church



this building built about 1950



Current Building (2009)

looks like a Who's-Who list. The church now worships in a very nice comfortable building.

See historical marker on next page



State Historical Marker