

## **Ward Prairie Baptist Church (1986)**

**Marker #: 9911**

**Marker Text:**

### **Ward Prairie Baptist Church**

Ward Prairie, named for an early pioneer family, was the site of Lake Chapel Methodist Church as early as the 1860s. The chapel, on land donated by another pioneer family, was used as a meeting place for other denominations, as well. Ward Prairie Baptist Church, officially organized in 1869 under the direction of the Rev. J. C. Averitt, met in the Methodist Chapel until 1893, when land two miles south was given to the church by the J. W. Grand family. The Lake Chapel Methodist congregation had been consolidated with another area church in the mid-1880s, and, according to local tradition, the chapel building was moved here and became the Ward Prairie Baptist Church. Membership in the church has varied over the years. Originally meeting only once a month, the congregation held services twice monthly beginning in 1952, and soon began to worship together each Sunday. Various events have combined to change the structure of the Ward Prairie community, but this church has continued to survive despite economic difficulties and area population shifts. A good example of a rural Texas church, Ward Prairie Baptist Church has been an integral part of the community's heritage for over a century. Texas Sesquicentennial 1836 – 1986

**Directions:** Located about 3.5 mi. north of Fairfield on FM 488 (west side of road)

**Address:** 341 FM 488, Fairfield, TX 75840

**GPS:** N 31° 45.968 W 096° 08.307

**PHOTOS:** By Linda Mullen on April 8, 2023



### WARD PRAIRIE BAPTIST CHURCH

WARD PRAIRIE, NAMED FOR AN EARLY PIONEER FAMILY, WAS THE SITE OF LAKE CHAPEL METHODIST CHURCH AS EARLY AS THE 1860s. THE CHAPEL, ON LAND DONATED BY ANOTHER PIONEER FAMILY, WAS USED AS A MEETING PLACE FOR OTHER DENOMINATIONS, AS WELL. WARD PRAIRIE BAPTIST CHURCH, OFFICIALLY ORGANIZED IN 1869 UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE REV. J.C. AVERITT, MET IN THE METHODIST CHAPEL UNTIL 1893, WHEN LAND TWO MILES SOUTH WAS GIVEN TO THE CHURCH BY THE J.W. ORAND FAMILY. THE LAKE CHAPEL METHODIST CONGREGATION HAD BEEN CONSOLIDATED WITH ANOTHER AREA CHURCH IN THE MID-1880s, AND, ACCORDING TO LOCAL TRADITION, THE CHAPEL BUILDING WAS MOVED HERE AND BECAME THE WARD PRAIRIE BAPTIST CHURCH.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHURCH HAS VARIED OVER THE YEARS. ORIGINALLY MEETING ONLY ONCE A MONTH, THE CONGREGATION HELD SERVICES TWICE MONTHLY BEGINNING IN 1952, AND SOON BEGAN TO WORSHIP TOGETHER EACH SUNDAY. VARIOUS EVENTS HAVE COMBINED TO CHANGE THE STRUCTURE OF THE WARD PRAIRIE COMMUNITY, BUT THIS CHURCH HAS CONTINUED TO SURVIVE DESPITE ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES AND AREA POPULATION SHIFTS.

A GOOD EXAMPLE OF A RURAL TEXAS CHURCH, WARD PRAIRIE BAPTIST CHURCH HAS BEEN AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE COMMUNITY'S HERITAGE FOR OVER A CENTURY.

TEXAS SESQUICENTENNIAL 1836 - 1986

