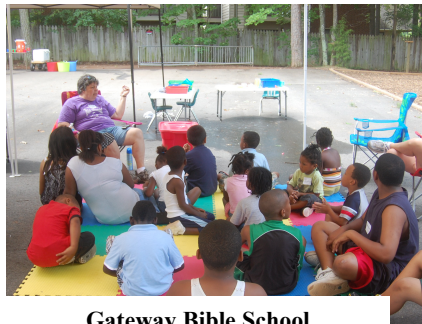


## 2000's – Growing and Acting on Faith

The Church welcomed Dr. Jeff Porter to the pulpit in 1996. The Baptist men's group launched "Operation Inasmuch" in October 1997 using the talents of church members to build ramps, make carpentry repairs, cleanup yards and weatherize homes in the area. In June 1999, a group made their first trip to Venezuela to partner with and assist the Luz y Verdad (Light and Truth) Baptist Church in Maiquetia to construct a new building. Additional trips have been made routinely. The prison ministry expanded to purchase Christmas gifts for inmates to give to their children and money was raised to build a religious service center on the prison campus. On October 22, 2000, the church voted to establish two back-to-back Sunday Schools to meet the growing needs of children and young adults. In 2001, the church began a major restoration of the sanctuary, adding new carpet, refurbishing woodwork and chairs, replacing balcony and choir seats, installing a sound system and having a mural painted in the baptistery by Peggy Lee Mead. A new organ was purchased and dedicated during this time. In 2002 the church voted to pave the remaining gravel parking lots, to remove two trees in front of the building, to purchase a "lift" to provide better access for handicapped to enter the sanctuary and landscape grounds in preparation for the Church's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. On March 20, 2002, Peggy Berryhill developed and launched the church's first website.



**Baptistery Mural**



**Gateway Bible School**

Randy D. Carter was called as minister in August 2003. Amy Hardee, one of our most vocal advocates for foreign and home missions, was ordained into the ministry on September 28, 2003. The historic sanctuary brick was re-mortared and sealed to keep out moisture and the grounds re-landscaped for the church's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration held November 15-16, 2003. Four former pastors participated in the celebration. They were Bruce Cresson, Thomas Denton, Brightie White and Jeff Porter. During the past eight years outreach ministries expanded to include feeding the hungry, refugee relieve, habitat for humanity,

Gateway apartment ministry and bible classes for after-school elementary students. The church began to sponsor a Memorial Day and a Halloween trunk and treat fellowship for the community each year. In 2011, a Hispanic congregation began holding weekly worship and bible study meetings at the church.

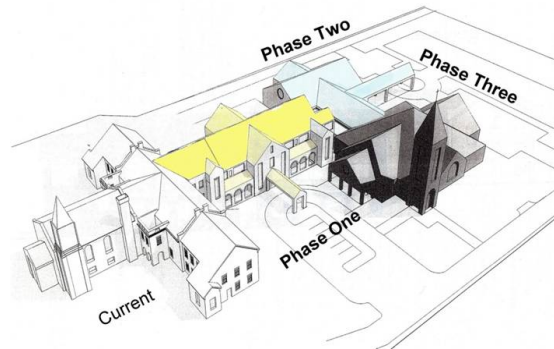
Because of growth in membership, the church decided to conduct two Sunday Schools in addition to two morning worship services. In April 2007, the deacons appointed a space assessment team to study current and future needs. The team recommended that the church hire the architectural firm of Tise-Kiester to develop a facility and land use master plan for the church. Handicap accessibility was deemed a priority for both existing and new space. A master plan for a three-phase expansion was presented to the church on April 19, 2008. The church approved the master plan in concept and the team's recommendation to appoint a



**Hispanic Congregation**

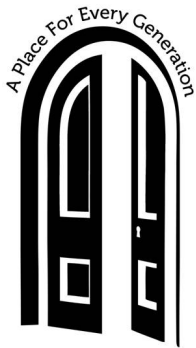
building committee to develop construction drawings and a capital campaign committee to secure funds to begin phase one renovations and construction.

Because of a major economic downturn, the church delayed appointing the committees until the end of 2009. Cargill Associates were hired to help the capital campaign committee conduct a pre-campaign feasibility study. Based on the feasibility study presented by Cargill to the church on April 6, 2010, the building committee continued to develop with Tise-Kiester a baseline renovation and construction project for a cost not to exceed \$1.5 million dollars. The building and capital campaign committees presented their findings and recommendations to the church in conference on May 2, 2010. The church approved hiring Cargill associates to help



**Church Master Plan**

conduct a capital campaign during the fall and to provide funds for Tise-Kiester to develop systematic drawings to renovate the sanctuary and educational building and to construct a new addition with an elevator and two new classrooms. A capital campaign was conducted from September to November 2010. The campaign's logo depicted the open doors of the church with the inscription "A place for every generation." The capital campaign received three-year commitments and additional contributions from church members of over \$600,000. The cost for the renovation and construction that began in October 2011 was \$1.43 million. To provide more educational space in the renovated facilities, the church's offices and library were relocated to the parsonage which was vacated by the Carter family in September 2009. The parsonage was renamed the Annex.



C. T. Wilson Construction Company was hired as the builder and renovations and the addition of an elevator tower began in November 2011. The renovation was done in phases to allow the congregation to continue worshipping and holding Sunday School and mid-week services. Some Sunday School classes meet in the Annex while others meet in off-campus facilities. The basement, sanctuary and educational wings built in the 1950s and 1970s undergo major renovation with new plumbing, duct work, ceilings and lighting. The work was completed in September with dedication services held on Sunday, September 16, 2012. Betty Ann Dickerson, chair of the Building Committee, expressed her appreciation to the congregation, Tise-Kiester, architects, and C.T. Wilson, builder. The \$600,000 first 3-year loan was paid off on time by donations given to the capital campaign.

Youth Minister, Jesse Jaquez, was ordained into the ministry by the church in 2014. Church members begin to support two ministries to help refugees; (1) Marc and Kim Wyatt efforts to establish a Welcome House in Raleigh and (2) Chaouki and Maha Boulos ministry in Lebanon primarily to reach and help Syrian refugees. Teams of volunteers begin to travel to Lebanon annually to help with worship, teaching and other outreach programs. In 2016, a Security Team was formed to safeguard church members during Sunday and Wednesday bible study and worship; coded push button locks are placed on



outside doors. The same year, Bill Nordan was called as full-time Associate Pastor. In 2017, English as a Second Language classes begin at the church. A Debt Retirement Campaign was approved by the church in 2019 with the slogan “Faithfully Finish & Faithfully Forward.” Church members’ commitments exceed \$300,000 to pay off debt in three years. Dr. Randy Carter resigns his pastorate at First Baptist after serving 15 years and 5 months.

Rev. David Morton’s two-year ministry as the church’s Interim Pastor began in May 2019. The church reexamined its affiliations with the North Carolina Southern Baptist Convention (NCSBC) and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) and decided to continue to support both organizations’ missions. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the church suspended all gatherings in the church’s facilities and a Regathering Task Force was appointed to monitor and set conditions for reopening the church’s facilities for worship, bible study, meetings and other related activities. In the interim, Zoom conferencing software was used effectively for worship, bible study and meetings. In April 2021, the church paid off the building loan seven months ahead of the November 2021 deadline goal set for the Debt Retirement Campaign. Regardless of the pandemic, the church’s outreach ministries continued, and budgetary needs were met. With input from the congregation, the pastor search committee created a one page “Who We Are” statement to share with candidates for the position of senior pastor. The last sentence stated, “We are a Christ-centered, mission-minded, ministry-driven, loving, giving and diverse church that strives to be a “Place For Every Generation.” On Sunday March 28, 2021, the church called Dr. Matthew Riggsbee as senior pastor. His first sermon is delivered by Zoom on May 1, 2021.



In 2021 the church installed a video system in the sanctuary to broadcast sermons live and to save them on You Tube. On Founder’s Day, members assembled on the front lawn of the church for a note burning ceremony. TV sets with internet connections were installed in each classroom and an invitation was sent to Marc and Kim Wyatt to use the church Annex (old parsonage) for “Welcome House Hillsborough.”

In 2022, the church renovated two classrooms on the ground level into “Community Grounds” as a coffee-social gathering and small meeting area. In March, the diaconate decided that the church would return to pre-pandemic events, “while watching levels and responding accordingly.” The congregation had not met in person for almost two years. In December the church voted to continue being an Encourager Church for the Lebanon ministry of Chaouki and Maha Boulos.

In 2023, a FBC Connections Team was appointed by deacons to assess the health of the church and develop strategies and methods to help revitalize the church as we move forward. Time was spent in prayer, reading and exploring the attributes of a “revived church.” To improve communication, transparency and efficiency, the deacons formed servant leadership teams. The church’s outreach ministries continued unabated, and a renewed spirit of unity saw a steady increase in attendance and membership.

In May 2024, the church formally decided to submit a letter of disaffiliation to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in response to an upcoming vote restricting the roles of pastor or deacon in local churches to men only. Due to fewer members after Covid, deacons were reduced

from 16 to 12 and their term shortened from 4 to 3 years. On October 6, 2024, Dr. Riggsbee notified the church of his decision to accept a position at the First Baptist Church of Southern Pines, NC. In his letter, he expressed appreciation for his time serving alongside members of the church.

Dr. Jerry Harper began serving as interim pastor on February 16, 2025. Due to insufficient federal funding, Welcome House Hillsborough (WHH) suspended operations in August 2025. Since 2021, WHH served 168 people from 27 families originating from countries including Afghanistan, Sudan, Malaysia, Congo, Syria, Burma, Colombia, Venezuela, and Pakistan.

The Rev. David Morton was appointed senior pastor on February 8, 2026. Most church members are familiar with him, as he previously served two years as interim pastor during the Covid pandemic. Welcome House welcomes newly arrived immigrants from South Africa.

*Last Updated: February 24, 2026*