



**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
HILLSBOROUGH, NORTH CAROLINA  
EST 1853**

# **First Baptist Church Hillsborough, NC Overview and Timeline 1845 to 2026**

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First Baptist Church Hillsborough  
North Carolina  
August 2025**

## **Organizing and Steadfastness**

### **1845**

Rev. Elias Dodson purchases old wooden courthouse to use as Baptist meeting house in Hillsboro.

### **1848**

Hillsboro Sabbath School reports 28 pupils:4,800 Bible verses are memorized during the year.

### **1853**

Presbytery meets to organize the Baptist Church of Hillsboro; founding members are from Mars Hill Church; Susannah Washington Graham, wife of W.A. Graham, former Governor of NC, is one of them.

The church is admitted to Beulah Association.

### **1856**

First African American, Sondo, slave of S. Moon, is received into membership; an additional 19 "servants" from Mars Hill Church are received into membership soon after.

### **1858**

Building committee and trustees receive a deed from W.J. Freeland for a lot on which to build a new Baptist church edifice; lot bordered by King Street (north), Wake Street (east) and Margaret Lane (south).

### **1860**

Corner stone is laid for new church brick building.

### **1862**

Church sells their meeting house to George Bishop of New Bern

Church votes to give bell to the Orange Light Artillery to be cast into cannon for use by the Confederate States Army

White and African American congregations move into basement of unfinished brick building; Whites worship on Sunday morning while African Americans worship in the afternoon.

Construction on church building is halted due to poor brickwork; funds are withheld until work is rectified; work ceases and funds remain invested in Hillsboro Savings Institution

### **1864**

Church loses funds deposited in Hillsboro Savings Institution after it is forced into failure by outcome of Civil War

### **1868**

African American congregation voluntarily withdraws their fellowship to form a church of their own; later to be known as the Mount Bright Baptist Church

Romanesque style brick sanctuary is completed by John Berry and a dedication service is held on October 27th.

The Baptist State Convention meets in Hillsboro on October 28<sup>th</sup>.

**1869**

Arbitrators award contractors \$1,107 for brick work done in 1862; church members can raise only \$300; Mrs. Grahams writes letter appealing for assistance from community to liquidate the balance.

**1870**

Church meets with 12 other churches to form the Mount Zion Association; Church leaves Beulah Association to join new Association.

**1872**

Mrs. Graham gives a verbal report to the church that the last dollar of the original church building debt was paid.

**1889**

Church raises \$130 to have windows refurbish and walls strengthen by inserting bolts through the rafters.

**Providing a Firm Foundation**

**1900**

Church membership dwindles to less than 30 individuals; preaching services held only once per month in morning and evening.

**1901**

Charles E. Maddry becomes 15th pastor of church; membership begins to grow from 21 members to 300 in 1915.

**1906**

Charles Maddry marries Emma Parker of Hillsboro at the church on May 2nd; She was the church's organist.

**1916**

Electrical lights are installed in the church.

**1917**

A Presbytery of elders from Hillsboro, Mars Hill and Cane Creek meet on April 27th at the Hillsboro Church to organize the West Hillsboro Baptist Church.

**1923**

The original pointed spire that covered the Church's north bell tower deteriorates and is taken down but not replaced.

**1926**

Rev. Cantrell remodels and enlarges the wooden-framed parsonage located at the corner of Wake Street and Margaret Lane.

**1939**

Outdoor baptismal pool is erected behind church building and named in honor of Dr. Maddy who is serving as the executive secretary of the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

**1949**

A disagreement among church members results in a number withdrawing and joining the new Fairview Baptist Church located north of town.

**1951**

Dr. Charles E. Maddy called to serve a second pastorate; rotating deacon board established; women elected and ordained as deaconesses; campaign launched to build new education building and remodel sanctuary.

**1952**

Cornerstone laid for new education building, R.R. Markley Architect, Roy D. Crawford, Builder.

**1953**

Church celebrates 100th anniversary; new education building is dedicated.

The church dedicates the fellowship room in memory of Fred Blake who chaired the building committee.

**1959**

The *Messenger*, the Church's newsletter, is published for the first time; Calvin Ray sells church lot on south side of West King Street to build a future parsonage.

**1960**

Church holds note burning ceremony for education building.

**1963**

Rev. E. Glen Holt holds an open house in the new parsonage at 223 West King Street on June 16th.

**1974**

Dr. Thomas Denton begins a 13-year ministry.

**1976**

Cornerstone laid for new educational wing; Jon A. Condoret, Architect; Bob Hardee, Chairman of Building Committee.

**1977**

New educational wing is dedicated.

**1978**

Steeple is installed, replacing the one taken down in 1923 and is dedicated in honor of Mr. John Clayton.

Church celebrates its 125th anniversary.

**1979**

A childcare program begins at church and continues until 2003.

**1983**

Church purchases the Gordon-Barfield property on West King Street; Wanda Hardee Kidd is ordained by church and becomes first women recommended for ordination by the Mount Zion Association.

**1984**

Orange Congregations in Missions (OCIM) is organized from discussions held earlier by men's prayer group.

**1985**

James Rae and Jamie Freeland purchase and give the Collin's property on Margaret Lane to the church providing adjoining land for parking and future growth.

**1989**

Several valued members withdraw membership to help Dr. Crawford, the church's associate pastor, establish the Hillsborough United Church of Christ south of town.

**1991**

Church holds note burning ceremony for educational wing; church withdraws from Mount Zion Association and joins Yates Baptist Association.

**1993**

Church becomes incorporated for legal protection.

**Growing and Acting in Faith****1997**

Baptist men's group launches Operation Inasmuch as outreach ministry to community.

**1999**

First trip made to Luz y Verdad Baptist Church in Maiquetia, Venezuela to assist with construction of church building.

**2002**

The sanctuary is renovated and restored with a new carpet, chairs, sound system and baptistery mural painted by Peggy Lee Mead.

Peggy Berryhill develops and launches the church's first website.

**2003**

Church celebrates its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary with four former pastors, Bruce Cresson, Thomas Denton, Brightie White and Jeff Porter, assisting current pastor, Randy Carter, with services.

**2007**

Church hires the architectural firm of Tise-Kiester to develop a facility and land use master plan for the church.

**2010**

Church hires Cargill Associates to help conduct a pre-campaign feasibility study to build phase one of the master plan; project is down-sized based on study and church

launches capital campaign to obtain commitments of \$600,000 – about half of the cost to renovate existing structures and add a connector with elevator for future expansion.

### **2011**

The parsonage, vacated by the Carter family in 2009, is renovated to house the church's administrative offices, library, archives and meeting room. The parsonage is renamed the Annex.

Hispanic speaking congregation meets first time on March 13<sup>th</sup> to worship in church; they name their mission, Mision Bautista Cristo La Solucion (Christ the Solution Baptist Mission)

Work begins to renovate sanctuary and education building to improve handicap accessibility and add a connector with elevator for future construction of an education building.

### **2012**

A Leadership Renewal was held on Saturday, August 25<sup>th</sup> to launch the new church year; plans are to hold it annually.

The renovation and elevator tower addition are dedicated during services conducted on September 16<sup>th</sup>. Betty Ann Dickerson chairs the building committee with Tise-Kiester as architects and C.T. Wilson Construction Company as builder.

### **2013**

Deacons hold retreat to rethink the role of deacons as leader servants who assure that the church is unified in God's purpose. Committee structure replaced by foundational and ministry teams.

A three-year Capital Campaign ends, exceeding its goal of \$600,000. A Pay-Off-the-Debt-Early campaign is launched to pay down principle to save on interest.

### **2014**

Church celebrates Rev. Randy Carter's and Rev. Bill Nordan's tenth anniversary on staff.

Youth Minister, Jesse Jaquez, is ordained into the ministry by church.

The Church finishes paying off 3-year \$200,000 installments to the Bank and begins a 10-year loan agreement to be renegotiated in 10 years.

### **2015**

The church begins to develop a partnership with missionaries Chaouki and Maha Boulos in Beirut Lebanon to meet the physical and spiritual needs of Syrian refugees. Several Lebanon Mission Trips to help with refugee work are undertaken by members of the church in the following years.

Church restores equipment and begins erosion control work on the playground in memory of Miriam Dobbins who directed the church's children ministry for several years.

## **2016**

Security Team formed to safeguard church members during Sunday and Wednesday bible study and worship; coded push button locks placed on outside doors. Church partners with Lebanon mission; first team of volunteers travel to Lebanon to assist the Boulos' work with primarily Syrian refugees.

Old hand-written Red Journal containing church conference minutes from 1853 to 1947 are donated to the Wake Forest University Library and Archives for preservation and safe keeping.

The offices are moved from the Annex back to church to allow the Annex (former parsonage) to be used as housing for furloughed missionaries or Duke ministerial students.

Bill Nordan is called as full-time Associate Pastor.

## **2017**

Dr. Randy Carter surpasses Dr. Thomas Denton's pastorate of 13 years.

Second volunteer group travel to Lebanon to participate in "Jesus Celebration." The church votes to be an "encourager church" for the ministry.

English as a Second Language classes begin at the church.

## **2018**

Church begins to have booth at "Last Friday" community event held on the courthouse grounds to invite people to church, especially children and youth activities.

Church approves and begins a 3 year "pay off the debt campaign" to eliminate the church's building loan by November 2021. Church members commit to donating \$300,000 over three years for this purpose. The campaign's slogan is "**faithfully finish** what we started and then move **faithfully forward** to do God's work here in Hillsborough and beyond."

Third volunteer trip is made to Lebanon.

## **2019**

Church members' commitments exceed \$300,000 to pay off debt in three years.

Randy Carter resigns from FBC Hillsborough in February to become pastor of New Hope Baptist Church in Raleigh. He was pastor for 15 years and 5 months - the church's longest serving minister.

## **2021**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the church closes its facilities in April for public worship, bible study, on-site meetings and other related events. Worship Service, Bible Study and RA events continue via Zoom conferencing software.

The "Pay off the Debt" campaign is successful. The building loan is paid off seven months ahead of schedule in April.

Dr. Matthew Riggsbee is called as senior pastor. His first sermon was delivered via Zoom on Sunday May 2nd. He leads the congregation in a “note burning” ceremony held outside on Founders Day.

Marc and Kim Wyatt are invited to use the church Annex (old parsonage) for “Welcome House Hillsborough.”

## **2022**

Two classrooms on the ground level are renovated into “Community Grounds” as a coffee-social gathering and small meeting area.

Being unable to meet in-person for two years, the church returns to pre-pandemic events with reasonable precautions.

The church renews its 5-year commitment to be an Encourager Church for the Lebanon ministry of Chaouki and Maha Boulos.

## **2023**

Strategies and methods are adopted to help revitalize the church post pandemic. Outreach ministries continue unabated and a renewed spirit of unity and commitment to develop Holy relationships moves the church forward.

Integrated Wildlife Management is hired to exclude and remove bats from belfry with understanding no pups involved, bats are a protected species.

## **2024**

The church formally decides 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.

Dr. Riggsbee notified the church of his decision to accept a position at the First Baptist Church of Southern Pines, NC.

## **2025**

Due to insufficient federal funding, Welcome House Hillsborough (WHH) suspended operations in August 2025. Since its inception, 150 immigrants have used the Welcome House during their transition to the USA.

The Church’s Bylaws were modified to allow more flexibility in policy requirements for those teaching Sunday School classes.

## **2026**

The Rev. David Morton is called as senior pastor of the church. He served as the church’s interim pastor during Covid. He began his tenure in February.

Welcome House reopens with 3 male immigrants from South Africa.

***Last Update: April 5, 2026***