To the Glory of God

Gordon Street Baptist Church
Golden Anniversary

1907 1957

October 13
ANNIVERSARY PROGRAM
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13 THE ANNIVERSARY DAY

Morning Worship: Baptist Heritage and History
  Sermon by Dr. Pope Duncan, Professor of Church History, Southeastern Seminary

Evening Worship: Pageant of Gordon Street Baptist Church
  Written by Mrs. W. L. Blankship

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15 THE HOMECOMING NIGHT
7:30 p.m. Film: Our Church Life In Pictures
9:00 p.m. Reception in the New Building

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16
8:00 p.m. Church Music in Life of Gordon Street
  The Music Department

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17
8:00 p.m. Sermon on Christian Education and Evangelism

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20 THROUGH SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27
Revival meetings every night at 8:00.
Evangelist: Dr. Searcy S. Garrison
  Executive Secretary, Georgia Baptist Convention

The Church owes real gratitude to Mrs. W. L. Blankship who wrote the Pageant. This difficult assignment was accepted gladly as is typical of Mrs. Blankship. Equal gratitude is due Mrs. Myrtle Belle Price for the long and arduous task of making the Picture Story of our church, and to Mrs. Sarah Allen who gave valuable assistance.

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear friends:

This is a most happy occasion for this great church—made great by the lives of those who preceded us. The world would be much the poorer but for the dedicated Christians spiritually born and nurtured in this church—those who remained to serve here, and those who moved into sacrificial service in churches in other cities.

The future is unknown — but that future is in the hands of God who works through the devoted and dedicated lives of the members of this church. Let us use this occasion not only to give credit to those who in the past deserved it, but to so live and serve that greater credit will be brought upon them by our excellently completing what they so well began.

Let the Golden Anniversary inspire every member to real Christian living, true loyalty to the church and its work, and to a more definite dedicated stewardship of money and possessions that will provide generously for the work of the church and the extension of the Kingdom of God. Thus will the coming years be worthy of Christ who gave Himself for us.

Your friend and pastor
D. J. Evans
THE STORY OF OUR CHURCH

BIRTH

On Sunday afternoon, October 13, 1907 a group of Baptists, nine in number, formed a new Baptist Church. Located near an historic spot in the Battle of Atlanta, the church was named the Battle Hill Baptist Church. The moderator of the presbytery was Dr. John F. Purser, and the clerk was Rev. R. L. Motley. Mr. George W. Andrews, Secretary of the Georgia Baptist Sunday School Department, led the devotions.

The charter members were as follows: Mr. and Mrs. M. M. Anderson, Mrs. Leila Higgins, Mr. and Mrs. J. N. Landers, Mr. W. P. Little, Mr. J. A. Northcutt, Miss Willie Pace, Mrs. S. R. Spinks.

The first clerk was Mr. J. A. Northcutt. The first Sunday School superintendent was Mr. M. M. Anderson. The first music director was Mr. J. N. Landers. The first pastor was Rev. M. L. Keith elected on January 26, 1908. Immediately succeeding pastors were Rev. J. A. Goss (1908-1909) and Rev. W. A. Babb (1909-1911).

NEW LOCATION

A significant ministry was provided by Rev. William M. Sentell (1911-1917). The church moved on March 10, 1911 to the corner of Wellington and Gordon Streets. A tabernacle type church building was built in one day under the direction of Mr. J. N. Landers. At this time the name was changed to Gordon Street Baptist Church.

PRESENT LOCATION

In February, 1912, the church moved to the corner of Gordon Street and Lucile Avenue, where a red brick building was erected for the use of both the Church and the Sunday School. At the time it was considered to be one of the most beautiful and conveniently arranged buildings of its kind in the city. It is still used. During this ministry church membership grew from 86 in 1911 to 675 in 1917, and the offerings increased from $1500 to $6000. About 1914 the Baptist Young People’s Union was formed under the direction of the late beloved Mrs. B. C. Smith, then Miss Nell Wheeler.

Rev. J. H. Coin became pastor on December 30, 1917 and served till 1921. The church grew from 675 to 821. Offerings increased from $6000 to nearly $10,000. For a year the church was without a pastor and the Rev. C. F. J. Tate, then a member of the church, served most acceptably.
On July 1, 1922, Dr. William H. Faust assumed the pastorate. Begun in 1923, the present auditorium was dedicated in 1926 at a cost of $90,000. A further indication of growth was the erection of the four-story elementary building in 1930. For the first time the church had a graded and departmentalized Sunday School. In 1927 the first Vacation Bible School was held. In 1929 the “Christian Index,” the Georgia Baptist State Paper, was placed in the church budget.

Dr. Faust was an outstanding preacher and church builder. The Sunday School grew to 1600 and church membership to 1800. The offerings increased to so great an extent that all church indebtedness was met by the close of his ministry on March 1, 1937.

During this period brother Wiley M. Moore, recently deceased, furnished money and materials in generous amounts toward all the church projects. In addition, in 1932, he presented the church with its first pipe organ.

At the time of the completion of the auditorium it was recorded that Deacon J. N. Landers was the only remaining male charter member in the church. Of him it was said, “We doubt if anyone has worked harder and made greater sacrifices than brother Landers. He has always been under the burden, and ready to lend a helping hand at all times.” He is the chairman of the Building Committee.

Dr. Thomas F. Harvey began his ministry on April 25, 1937 and served till ill health caused his retirement on April 7, 1946. The church budget system was adopted in 1937. Following a fire in 1938 the choir loft, previously at the left of the pulpit, was changed to its present location, and the pastor’s study and church office was added.

In 1941 the church pastorium (now the church cottage) was purchased, the old pastorium being needed for the Sunday School. The Sunday School sponsored the church library in 1942, with Mrs. H. H. Cathcart as the librarian and Mrs. A. R. Anderson as assistant. In 1943 the War Memorial Plaque was installed in the auditorium. Church membership grew to 2200. The Sunday School enrollment was 1600 and the Training Union 376. Dr. Harvey led the church to a profound appreciation of reverence and Bible teaching.
In October, 1946, Dr. D. J. Evans accepted the call to become pastor. Born in Wales, he had come to this country as a young man. He was a coal miner till he answered the call to become a minister of the gospel. A spirit of love has characterized his ministry. The Sunday School reached its highest point with an enrollment of 1746. Church membership also attained its greatest with 2370 members. In 1951 a new pastorium was obtained on Westridge Road so that the old one could be used for the Sunday School.

About this time the church found itself facing a much decreased geographical area due to a rapid and definite change in the type of population. There was great discouragement which was reflected in all areas of the church life.

With a resurgence of vitality and dedication plans were launched in 1954 for a new education building. This building was dedicated on March 4, 1956. The cost for building and equipment was $190,714.28. Extensive renovations were made in the old building at a cost of $18,454.78.

Many have given most generously for this venture, and are still giving. There is no place to mention all. A Hammond Organ Console was given for the chapel by brother B. C. Smith and the family in loving memory of the late beloved Mrs. B. C. Smith. Brother and Mrs. Hugh Sheats gave a Tone Cabinet for the organ in loving memory of the late Mrs. Corinne White Sheats. A Tone Cabinet was also given by Miss Lil Connell in loving memory of her mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Connell. The pulpit furniture was the gift of Mr. and Mrs. R. J. Haynie in loving memory of their son, Willie Haynie.

The general chairman of the Building Committee was Mr. T. D. Mann who instilled a spiritual vision into the whole project. The Planning Committee chairman was Mr. Forrest Gee, the Finance Committee chairman was Dr. T. E. Clyatt, the Equipment Committee chairman was Mr. Arnold Vickery, and the Construction Committee chairman was Mr. Clark Landers.

During 1955 and 1956 the church was among the first twenty churches in the Georgia Baptist Convention in gifts to all denominational causes. The increasing missionary concern is shown by the following figures:

- 1947: $11,067.37
- 1948: $13,121.92
- 1949: $16,896.37
- 1950: $18,335.15
- 1951: $18,769.37
- 1952: $20,908
- 1953: $22,866
- 1954: $23,346
- 1955: $25,303
- 1956: $27,041

These do not include Association Missions.

The present church membership is 2117. The Sunday School enrollment is 1613. The Training Union is 349. The W.M.U. is 345. The Fellowship Club is 168. Baptisms from 1946 to 1957 are 595. The number added by letter and statement is 842.

Among those deeply remembered as chairmen of the Board are John Hudson, J. N. Landers, and J. N. Smith. The present chairman, who is serving his second term, is brother Clarke Landers, Sr. He has shown a most genuine interest in all his responsibilities. The spirit and loyalty of the Board could never be better. In this they have followed those who served so gloriously in the past history of the church.


FELLOWSHIP CLUB

In 1923 thirteen men gathered at the home of John W. Dalhouse to form an organization for Christian men. It was called the Laymen’s Union. Of this number there remain with us B. C. Smith, C. T. Knight, and John T. Marler. Later the name was changed to the Fellowship Club.

It has been a great influence in keeping men informed as to their responsibility as church members, and also as to their place in the community. It has stood behind every program of the church. It has provided hospital beds, and rolling chairs, and crutches for temporary use in homes where they were needed. This has been a great blessing to many.

New life came to the Fellowship Club when it recently took over responsibility for the Royal Ambassadors, formerly sponsored by the W.M.U. The Club has expended time and money and leadership for these boys. Deserving great commendation for this practical leadership are W. B. Moore, Roy Head, Harry Hall, and Norman Smith.

The present Fellowship Club Organization:

President, Mr. A. R. Anderson; Vice-president, Mr. Hugh E. Sheats; Secretary, Mr. Glenn Taylor; Treasurer, Mr. H. H. Cathcart; Assistant Secretary and Treasurer, Mr. Leon Colby.
TRAINING UNION

The first organization of this kind in the church was the Baptist Young People’s Union in 1914. Its moving spirit was the late Mrs. B. C. Smith (Miss Nell Wheeler). Active also was brother Leonard Satterfield. By 1933 it was one of the larger organizations of its kind in the city. It later became known as the Baptist Training Union with an appeal for all ages.

Among those who have meant a great deal to the advance and influence of the Training Union have been Mr. George Caldwell (now secretary of the Training Union Department of Alabama), Mr. Courtland Sorrells (now Minister of Music at the Sylvan Hills Baptist Church), and Mr. Forrest Gee, the present director.

Under Mr. Gee’s leadership there has been consistent advance in numbers and quality of work. The present enrollment is 349. The largest single church group at the Training Union week at Ridgecrest in 1957 was Gordon Street. There were 37.

THE PRESENT TRAINING UNION ORGANIZATION:

Director, Mr. J. Forrest Gee; General Secretary, Miss Elizabeth Ligon; Director Nursery, Beginner, Primary, Mrs. Arnold Kennedy; Nursery Leader, Miss Norma Brain; Beginner Leader, Miss Elaine Briscoe; Primary 1, Miss Julia Hall; Primary 2, Mr. Arnold Vickery; Junior, Mr. W. W. Still; Intermediate, Mr. James Kelly; Young People, Mrs. Faye Watson; Adult 1, Mrs. J. G. Barrow; Adult 2, Mr. Arnold Kennedy.

THE WOMEN’S MISSIONARY UNION

Soon after the church was organized the women met to pray and to do mission work. At first called the Ladies’ Aid Society, it later became the Women’s Missionary Society. Under the guidance of deeply consecrated women it grew until it had created all the organizations that entitled it to become the Women’s Missionary Union. These organizations are: The W. M. S., Young Women’s Auxiliary, Girls’ Auxiliary, Sunbeams, Business Women’s Circle, and the Royal Ambassadors.

In 1921, while a member of this church, Miss Leita Hill was appointed by the Mission Board to serve in Japan.

In 1946 the W. M. U. assumed responsibility for a foreign missionary over and above the gifts to the church and the cooperative program. At present, they support Miss Clifford Barrett in Formosa, as well as Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Back as Home Missionaries in Cameron, Arizona.

The present president, Mrs. William Collins, has put herself wholly into this responsibility and has provided a most competent leadership. In addition to the usual groups there are now two Round Tables, meeting each month for a study and review of some useful book in the field of missions. Mrs. T. E. Clyatt has given much time and effort to this project.

THE PRESENT WOMEN’S MISSIONARY UNION ORGANIZATION:

President, Mrs. W. S. Collins; First Vice President, Mrs. H. A. Ware; Second Vice President, Mrs. H. H. Cathcart; Assistant to Second Vice President, Mrs. J. M. Reeves; Recording Secretary, Mrs. Earl Landers; Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. S. C. Donehoo; Treasurer, Mrs. Joe Carlee; Assistant to Treasurer, Mrs. V. W. Chambless; Auditor, Miss Myra Haynes; Young People’s Director, Mrs. C. E. Rogers; Assistant to Young People’s Director, Mrs. C. C. Camp; Business Women’s Advisor, Mrs. Myrtle Alexander.
THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

From the very earliest, Christian Education was conceived to be exceedingly important. Men like M. M. Anderson, L. A. Witherspoon, J. P. Bonner, B. C. Smith, and others, made a definite contribution to growth and efficiency.

Especially significant was the leadership of B. C. Smith who laid a permanent foundation for the best type of Sunday School work during his 23 years of service as superintendent. In 1930 the Sunday School was departmentalized and graded, becoming a standard Sunday School in 1933. In 1941 two adult departments were organized.

Upon this foundation Mrs. W. L. Blankinship, who became Education Director in 1946, built an enduring vision of the true meaning of Christian Education. In 1948 the Sunday School was again standard, and almost reached the advanced standard. Mrs. Edith Barwick (Miss Edith Hayes) continued this fine work through her versatile, competent and deeply dedicated leadership.

Our present superintendent, brother J. B. Briscoe, is leading in a vital concern for the very best in the Sunday School. In 1956 he led in organizing new departments: Young Adult, a new Young People's, and Intermediate, and a Junior department. In all this he has been ably assisted by the department superintendents and teachers.

THE PRESENT SUNDAY SCHOOL ORGANIZATION:

GENERAL OFFICERS: General Superintendent, Mr. J. B. Briscoe; Associate Superintendent, Mr. J. C. Smith; General Secretary, Mr. R. H. Phillips; Assistant Secretary, Mr. Don McLean; Treasurer, Mr. H. H. Cathcart; Assistant Treasurer, Mr. H. P. Fuller.

SUPERINTENDENTS: Nursery 1-A, Mrs. J. S. Brown; Nursery 1-B, Mrs. J. E. Gibson; Nursery 2, Mr. Harold Haybes; Nursery 3, Mr. Arnold Vickery; Nursery 4, Miss Mary Sayer; Beginner 1, Mrs. C. E. Monfort; Beginner 2, Mrs. J. N. Smith, Sr.; Primary, Mrs. R. C. Branton; Junior 1, Miss Louise Davis; Junior 2, Miss Ruth Rauschenberg; Junior 3, Mrs. T. E. Clyatt; Intermediate 1, Miss Virginia Morgan; Intermediate 2, Miss Marie Cochran; Young People 1, Mr. W. M. Bagby; Young People 2, Mrs. Sara Allen; Adult 1, Mr. Clark Landers, Jr.; Adult 2, Miss Lil Connell; Adult 3, Mr. Elder Cochran; Adult 4, Mrs. G. D. Ragan.

MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Music has been very important in the life of the church. Two laymen are remembered for their contribution to this department: J. N. Landers as the first music director, and Earnest Allen who did much to lift up the standard of good church music with the church choir.

In recent years the Department has grown to equal significance with any other church organization due to the willingness of the church to support a full time Minister of Music. Among these the church remembers L. Vernon Martin and Jack Perkins. J. W. Work contributed a sincere service in building several choirs. Mr. Louis Montgomery inspired a concept of great church music, leading the department forward, especially among the Young People.

Mr. Glenn O'Bryan, the present Minister of Music, is already making his influence felt in the one year that he has been here. He has a large conception of the place of religious music not only in the church but in life. He is busily engaged in setting up a vital School of Music for all ages. At present there are organized the following choirs: Church Choir, Chapel Choir, Crusader Choir, Concord Choir, Carol Choir, Cherub Choir, and Beginner Music Activity.

During the period of the last two Ministers of Music the church has been blessed with an excellent organist, Mrs. Jo Cushman, who gives time and effort without reserve. During the interim between Mr. Montgomery and Mr. O'Bryan, she served as acting Minister of Music.
CHURCH DIRECTORY 1957

DR. D. J. EVANS
MR. GLENN W. O'BRYAN
MRS. H. L. CUSHMAN
MISS BETTIE BATES
MR. C. A. LANDERS, SR.
MR. H. H. CATHCART
DR. T. E. CLYATT
MR. J. B. BRISCOE
MR. FORREST GEE
MRS. W. S. COLLINS
MR. A. R. ANDERSON
MISS CLIFFORD BARRETT
REV. AND MRS. J. D. BACK

Minister
Minister of Music and Assistant to the Pastor
Organist
Church Secretary
Chairman, Board of Deacons
Church Clerk
Church Treasurer
Superintendent, Sunday School
Director, Training Union
President, W. M. U.
President, Fellowship Club
Missionary in Formosa
Missionaries in Arizona

MISS BETTIE BATES

Miss Bettie Bates came to Gordon Street as the Church Secretary in 1947 and has served with the utmost devotion in all her duties.

THE CHURCH COVENANT

Having been called, as we believe, by the grace of God, into the Kingdom of His Son, and having publicly professed our faith, by baptism into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we now enter into solemn covenant with one another to consecrate ourselves to the service of Christ upon the earth.

For this purpose we cheerfully engage, through divine aid, to strive for the prosperity of the church, by upholding its doctrines, its ordinances and its discipline; by a punctual attendance upon its solemn assemblies; by sustaining the various benevolent and missionary enterprises in which it is engaged; and by exercising toward each of its members a spirit of brotherly love. We also engage, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to cultivate personal piety in the maintenance of family religion and sobriety in our habits, integrity in our business, purity in our lives, and Christian courtesy in our deportment toward all men.

Moreover, we engage, by the grace of God, to keep the faith once for all delivered to the saints . . . .

—From "Manual of Gordon Street Baptist Church" 1919