

Spring Hope, First Baptist Church

Organized: 1889 Joined TRBA: 1890/1958 Mother Church: NA

Spring Hope Baptist Church began in December 1889, with four known charter members. At the Tar River Association in October 1890, Spring Hope reported thirteen members and worship services once a month, with Elder John A. Bridgers as pastor. Bridgers was ordained in 1891 and stayed with the church until 1892. Worship services were held in an unused building in the downtown area. Planks were placed over nail kegs for seats. Later services took place in a one-room school building on Walnut Street. Joint Sunday School was held there every Sunday afternoon for Baptists and Methodists.

By 1895 the church had acquired the property on Walnut Street where the present church facilities are located. A frame church with forty-two members was reported to the Association in 1895. When the Tar River Association was divided in 1907-08, Spring Hope Church became a member of the Roanoke Association. A new brick church was erected in 1909-10 with electric lights and a central heating system. Beautiful stained-glass windows were installed. This building is still in use today. The first electric organ was purchased in 1937.

The baptistery was installed during 1921-22. Prior to that, baptisms were held in the Tar River near Webb's Mill. An education building was erected beside the church in 1950, and in 1955 a parsonage was built. The church reunited with the Tar River Association in 1958.

The church library was established in December 1962. Beginning that year the church letter "Gabriel" was issued twice a month. Later the newsletter was renamed "The Letter" and became a weekly publication. The tape ministry for the homebound was started in 1973.

A new electric organ was purchased in 1976. The parking lot property was bought in 1981. The van and sound system were purchased in 1984. The grounds were re-landscaped in 1985.

In 1986 the church offices were moved from the second floor to street level for easier access and a new tradition, "Hanging of the Greens," began. Plexiglas was installed over the stained glass windows, and a stained glass window was placed in front of the baptistery.

The library was updated in 1987. Four brass chandeliers were installed in the sanctuary.

In 1974 the Jenkins property, which had been purchased in 1981 for use as a parking lot, was paved.

New pew Bibles were placed in the sanctuary in 1997 in memory of Mrs. Lela Neville.

On June 3, 1998, the church approved Russell Bettini for ordination. A new sound system was installed in the sanctuary in August 1998, and a new heat pump was installed at the parsonage in April 2000.

Following Hurricane Floyd the Baptist Men assisted in repairs caused by the storm. Then a new dining room suite was purchased for the parsonage in October 2001.

In April 2002, the Baptist Men assisted in installing sheet rock at the Kennedy Home in Kinston, additionally, that month the church voted to construct a new addition to the rear of the educational building with a new kitchen and bathrooms. The ceiling in the assembly room was lowered and doing away with the stage enlarged the space in the assembly room. The old kitchen, pantry, and bathroom were converted into an adult men's Sunday School classroom and a music room. The new addition was dedicated on homecoming Sunday, October 20, 2002.

A new stove, refrigerator, ice maker, china, and flatware were purchased for the new kitchen from funds donated to the Memorial Fund.

We celebrate the firm foundations begun by so many in our first 113 years. God bless First Baptist Church as we seek to continue the ministry of Jesus Christ in our community.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Cale

Spring Hope Pastors

J.A. Bridges	1890-1894
William Cullen Nowell	1892-1896/1907-1908
John William Powell	1897-1898
Joseph E. Hocutt	1898-1902
Albert G. Wilcox	1902-1905
D.F. Putnam	1909-1911
William Octavius Rosser	1912-1914
Oscar Whaley Sawyer	1914-1917
Hugh Benjamin Hines	1917-1919
John Carroll	1920
Benjamin Oliver Myers	1921-1923
James Ambrose Ward	1924-1929
Dr. Willis Richard Cullom	1929-1941
A. Lincoln Faulk	1942-1943
Millard M. Johnson	1943-1947

Harold L. Hawkins	1947-1951
Dr. James H. Blackmore	1951-1961
John A. Bracey	1962-1967
John Reinhardt Link	1968-1973
James Hopper	1973-1975
Allen C. Allen	1976-1982
James W. Creech	1983-1991
Joseph W. Griffin	1992-1998
Gregory M. Anderson	1999-2005

Individuals Licensed or Ordained by Spring Hope

James Calvin Daniel 1957
James W. Creech 1983
Russell Bettini 1998