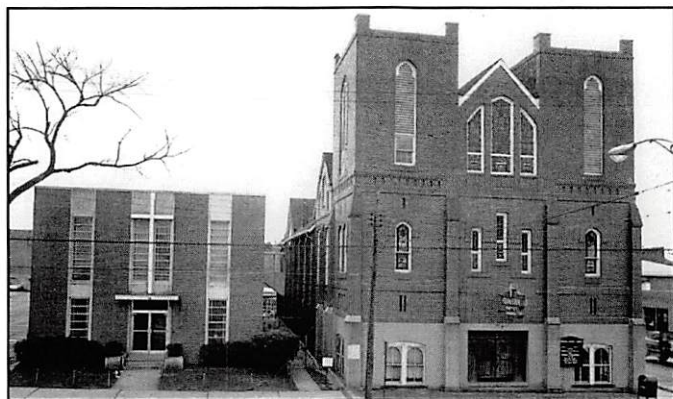




Ebenezer Baptist Church



Ebenezer Baptist Church in the 1960's (NPS Collection)

Reverend John A. Parker founded Ebenezer Baptist Church with thirteen members in November 1886. The church called itself “Ebenezer” meaning “the stone of help” from the Old Testament, First Samuel, 7:12. Reverend Adam Daniel (A.D.) Williams, maternal grandfather of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., became pastor in 1894. In 1922, the congregation moved into their permanent church location at 407 Auburn Avenue. Reverend Martin Luther King Sr. (Daddy King) became assistant pastor in 1927. Daddy King assumed the responsibility as senior pastor in 1931 after the death of his father-in-law, Reverend A.D. Williams.

In 1960 Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. joined his father as co-pastor of Ebenezer. Due to Dr. King’s leadership in the Civil Rights Movement, Ebenezer was often the site of many meetings and rallies, including organizational meetings that led to the founding of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in 1957.

Reverend Alfred Daniel King, Daddy King’s youngest son, served as co-pastor in 1968, until his death in 1969. The last co-pastor was Reverend Otis Moss Jr. in 1971. After forty-eight years of service, Daddy King retired in 1975.

Reverend Joseph L. Roberts Jr. followed Daddy King as senior pastor in 1975 and continued its historic tradition of service to the community. Under his leadership and commitment to Ebenezer the congregation moved into its new worship home, the Horizon Sanctuary, across Auburn Avenue on March 7, 1999. In 2005 when Reverend Dr. Joseph L. Roberts Jr. retired, Reverend Raphael G. Warnock became the fifth senior pastor of historic Ebenezer Baptist Church.



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. preaching at Ebenezer Baptist Church, ca. 1963
(Photo Courtesy of Ebenezer Baptist Church)

Facts about Ebenezer

- 1934** Martin Luther King Jr. was baptized on the same Sunday as his sister, Christine.
- 1948** Martin Luther King Jr. was ordained to the Baptist ministry at age 19, the same year he graduated from Morehouse College.
- 1960** Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. served as co-pastor at Ebenezer Baptist Church until his death on April 4, 1968.
- 1968** (February 4) - Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his renowned sermon (eulogy), "The Drum Major Instinct."
- 1968** (April 9) - Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s funeral was held at Ebenezer Baptist Church. A second funeral was conducted on the campus of Morehouse College.
- 1974** Mrs. Alberta Williams King (Mama King) and Deacon Edward Boykins were fatally wounded during morning worship service.
- 1999** (March 7) - The congregation opened its new home, the Horizon Sanctuary. The once active 1922 sanctuary (Heritage) became a historic museum, managed by the National Park Service.
- 2001** The Heritage Sanctuary closed for structural repairs during Phase I of the restoration project. It reopened in 2002.
- 2006** (February 6) - Public viewing of the body of Mrs. Coretta Scott King occurred in the Heritage Sanctuary. A memorial service and musical tributes to the "First Lady of the Modern Day Civil Rights Movement," were held in the Horizon Sanctuary.
- 2007** The doors to the Heritage Sanctuary were closed to begin Phase II of the restoration project. The mission: to restore the sanctuary back to its 1960's appearance when Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was co-pastor.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Artist's Rendering of the Heritage Sanctuary
in the 1960's. (NPS Collection)