

SHORTER AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH

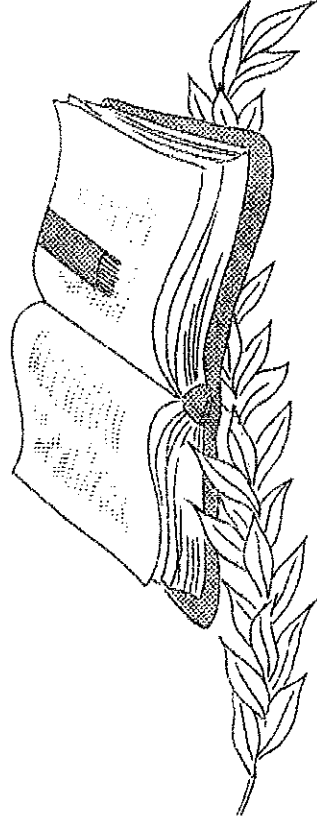
1410 SHORTER AVENUE

ROME, GEORGIA

234-8266

CHURCH HISTORY

1932 - 1980



GERALD ROGERS, PASTOR

"SHORTER AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH AT A GLANCE"

The Bible states that "where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18). We are truly grateful for the truth of that statement, for we believe that it was because of a vision for lost souls that this church stands as a source of moral and spiritual strength for this city, and as a servant and ensign-bearer of our glorious God.

In October of 1932, the need for a revival in this area was felt by Reverend K. C. Baker, who, therefore, conducted a revival in a rented building at the church's present location. Following a very successful three weeks, Reverend J. W. Southerland, then pastor of the Maple Street Baptist Church, expressed the need for organizing a Missionary Baptist Church at this place. Such a Church was organized on October 23, 1932, and was named "The Tabernacle Baptist Church." It was also referred to as "Baker's Barn" and "The Billboard Church" in honor of Reverend Baker, who held the first revival and became the first pastor, and the first billboard placed at the sight of the church.

Reverend J. E. Smith was elected Moderator, and J. N. Crozier was named as Clerk. The Presbytery was composed of the following pastors and deacons from other Baptist Churches:

J. W. Southerland, J. N. Crozier, S. A. Monk, and R. N. Wimpee, Maple Street Baptist Church, Paul Morris, H. N. Bradshaw, J. E. Smith, and R. H. Smith, Pleasant Hope Baptist Church, J. T. Wallace, Fellowship Baptist Church, J. E. Lovell, Pleasant Valley Baptist Church, J. F. Butler, DeSoto Park Baptist Church, and K. C. Baker, Lakeview Baptist Church.

An invitation was given for membership in the new Church, and the following people, bearing letters in proper form, presented themselves for membership:

Mrs. C. B. McEllen, Miss Ruby Brock, Miss Annie Lee Milligan, Luther O. Goodwin, Jr., Mr. & Mrs. L. O. Goodwin, St., Mr. & Mrs. Jim Brock, Miss Helen House, Mr. & Mrs. Ralph White, Mrs. Emma G. House, Miss Estelle Payne, James Goodwin, Mrs. Eva Payne, Guy Goodwin, Mrs. Laura Fairchild, Miss Margaret Goodwin, Miss Ella Dean Goodwin, and Mr. & Mrs. R. G. Atkins.

The above mentioned persons constituted the new Church. The invitation was extended and forty-two more united with the Church. Reverend K. C. Baker was called as the first pastor and served approximately two years. The first deacons were E. L. McGill, Chairman, F. J. Wallace, W. E. Childress, Carl Edwards, and R. L. House. The first officers elected to serve the Church were: C. A. Green, Clerk; R. G. Atkins, Superintendent of Sunday School; R. L. House, Church Treasurer; and W. E. Childress, Chalk Director.

The stone building in which the church was meeting was purchased at a cost of \$1,350.00. Payments were \$13.50 per month. Such an amount was difficult to come by, and many of the payments were donations solicited by E. L. McGill in house-to-house canvas.

In 1933 application for membership in the Floyd County Baptist Association was made by Reverend K. C. Baker on behalf of the Tabernacle Baptist Church. The application was submitted to a committee for investigation. The committee reported favorably that the Church was of true Baptist faith—the Church was, therefore, accepted and received by motion into the Floyd County Baptist Association on September 7, 1933.

Reverend W. M. Slaughter and Reverend Clairo Peek each served as pastor between 1934 and 1936, with the Reverend H. F. Joyner serving a short term as interim pastor.

In 1936, Reverend S. M. Smith was called as pastor and served for one year. It was during his ministry that plans were made to erect the first church building.

In 1937 Reverend W. O. Denson was called as pastor. During his ministry several Auxiliaries were organized: B.Y.P.U., with 32 enrolled; W.M.U., including the Y.W.A.'S, G.A.'s, R.A.'s, and Sunbeams, with a total enrollment of 94. Mrs. Essie Johnson was elected the first W.M.U. President. In 1939, she was replaced by Mrs. F. S. Ramsey, who served until 1947. In 1943, a Brotherhood was organized with 38 members, and Q. L. Middleton was elected its first President.

The first Vacation Bible School was conducted in 1944 with 59 participants.

The indebtedness of the first church building was paid in 1944, and on the last day of the year the mortgage was burned.

In 1945, the 53rd session of the Floyd County Baptist Association was held here. There were many visitors, and a wonderful meal was served to all. Reverend O. E. Rutland served as Moderator and Reverend J. H. Holcomb served as Vice Moderator.

During the ministry of W. O. Denson, the baptismal services were held at Denson's Lake and at Derlington School. It was at this time that the largest baptismal service in the history of the church took place, with a total of 62 candidates.

Sunday School was conducted in the auditorium of the church, which was divided into sections by means of blue denim given to the church by Peppercell Manufacturing Company. During Brother Denson's ministry, however, 10 Sunday School rooms were added on to the church.

In August of 1967, the church voted to change the name of the church from Tabernacle Baptist Church to Shorter Avenue Baptist Church. Also during Brother Denson's ministry, plans were begun for a new and larger auditorium. The new auditorium was not completed, however, until the ministry of Reverend J. H. Holcomb, who served the church from 1952 to 1963.

It was during Brother Holcomb's ministry, too, that the first parsonium, located at 112 Dellwood Drive, was purchased for \$7,250.00.

The auditorium began during Brother Denson's ministry was completed in 1954, and now serves as our Fellowship Hall. Marvin Rogers was chairman of the building committee and Ike Armstrong, supervised the work, which was done primarily by the men of the Church. W. H. Aston donated the labor for all electrical work. In 1957, an addition to the educational building was completed, and several tracts adjacent to the original building were purchased for parking areas.

The record attendance in Vacation Bible School was reached in 1956, with 271 present.

In June of 1960, a Mission was organized which is now known as the Wilkerson Road Baptist Church.

During Brother Holcomb's ministry, the church organ was purchased and the first paid church secretary was employed.

In 1963, Reverend James Agan was called as pastor, and he served until June of the following year. During his ministry, the church paved the parking area and purchased a dwelling adjacent to the church at a cost of \$11,500.00. It was also during this time that the Youth for Christ was organized.

From June to October of 1964, Reverend S. H. Pendley served as interim pastor.

In 1961, the parsonium at 112 Dellwood Drive was sold and the present one at 38 Weatherwood Circle was purchased. Reverend Holcomb was the first of our pastors to reside in the new home.

In October 1964, the church called Reverend Max Tucker of Fort Payne, Alabama, to serve as pastor. During his ministry, the church debt was paid in full, 11 years prior to retirement; the remainder of the parking area was paved; additional parking area was purchased; and there were 300 additions to the church.

In 1966, the 74th session of the Floyd County Baptist Association was held here. Also in 1966, the church office and part of the educational building was destroyed by fire, resulting in over \$8000.00 worth of damage. In 1969 the church purchased additional property for parking and paid for it in full. The church indebtedness was also paid 11 years in advance. Plans were begun for the construction of a new sanctuary.

The present sanctuary was constructed in 1970 at a cost of \$136,499.44, and has a seating capacity of approximately 700. It is cooled by 30 tons of air-conditioning equipment, and has an omnipresent sound system comprised of University and Altec-Lansing equipment. It was designed by H. G. Turner; contractor was A. D. E. Church Builders, Inc., of Marietta, Georgia. The new sanctuary was dedicated on March 21, 1971. Also during Brother Tucker's ministry a new organ and a baby grand piano were purchased.

In November of 1971, John I. Smith, an evangelist, was called as pastor of Shorter Avenue. It was during his ministry, in 1972, that the bus ministry was begun and the bus was purchased. Also in 1972, a minister of music was added to the staff of the church. Dave Hudson was elected as the first music director.

In 1971, the 79th session of the Floyd County Baptist Association was held here.

In 1972, a 54 passenger bus was donated to the church by Mr. Clyde Chester. The church also had the first unified budget.

From May, 1973, to June, 1974, Reverend A. B. Cash served as interim pastor. Following his resignation, Raymond L. Harvey and H. E. Elliott served as supply pastors. In September of 1974, Comer Gerald Rogers, then pastor of the Union Hill Baptist Church in Cleburne County, Alabama, was called to serve as our pastor. In the first seven months of his ministry, some 60 new members were added to the church.

In 1975 the first pictorial directory was made. There was also an additional storage area added to the pastorium.

There were many happenings during 1976. The pastor, Gerald Rogers, was named, "Pastor of the Year" by the Kiwanis Club of Rome; Mrs. Elsie Stowers was elected as the first Hospitality Chairman; the paving at the rear of the church was completed; the church sponsored a trip to the Holy Lands for the pastor and his wife; the church purchased May Street and Dempsey property on Piedmont Avenue with the Piedmont Avenue house being sold and relocated; the Cooperative Program offering was increased to 5% of tithes and offerings; the halls of the educational building were carpeted; a "Golden Age" club was organized for the senior members of the church and the church began sponsoring a Wisconsin Mission.

In 1977 the first "Judas Day" offering was held with a total received of \$2,659.94. Mr. Pat Zondervan, owner of Zondervan Publishers, donated "Great Gospel Hymnals" to the church. The church also began sponsoring a Cub/Boy Scout Troop. The youth of the church held a week long summer camp at Tanner's Beach and in December attended the first youth Evangelism Conference in Atlanta, Ga. Also in the year of 1977 Mrs. Nell Stansell gave a donation to the church to construct wheel chair ramps for the church.

The 86th Session of the Floyd County Baptist Association met here in 1978 with our pastor, Gerald Rogers, being elected as Moderator of the Association. The church also began a radio ministry in 1978. The pastor, Gerald Rogers, participated in a revival crusade in Korea with 781 conversions under his preaching. The recreation area on Piedmont Avenue was paved during this year and the church also constructed a utility building at the rear of the church.

1979 shows the largest Lottie Moon offering received in the amount of \$1000.00. The Acteens and their leaders, Mrs. Diane Swafford and Mrs. Gwen Cordle, attended the National Acteen Conference in Kansas City, Mo. during the summer of 1979. Mr. Stanley Smith was ordained to the Music Ministry also in 1979.

In addition to its other activities, Shorter Avenue Baptist has licensed a number of young men to the ministry;

1957	Billy Coulter
1958	Roland Pearce; Frank Ford
1962	H. E. Elliott; B. J. Chapman; R. M. Smith
1966	John C. Hicks; William Young, Jr.; Bobby Stowers
1967	Ray Baldwin; Marvin Horn; Michael Freeman
1973	Milton Graves, Jr.
1974	Robert Weaver; James Gaylor, Sr.; Jerry Little; Randy Hardin
1976	Gary Swtrich; Ray Tolbert; David Hyde

In addition to licensing a number of young men to the ministry Shorter Avenue has ordained two men to the gospel ministry:

1977	Walter Alexander
1978	Jerry Little

As we enter 1980 we are looking forward to many great events taking place at Shorter Avenue. We have already hired the first paid Youth Director, erected a new sign in front of the church, installed a new intercom system and are in the process of reconstructing the front of the fellowship hall. We are looking for great years ahead of us.

For all the blessings this church has received "To God Be the Glory, Great Things He Hath Done".

The following is a list of baptisms and the year for the Shorter Avenue Baptist Church:

1933	27	1957	24
1934	22	1958	56
1935	5	1959	44
1936	6	1960	35
1937	0	1961	53
1938	23	1962	26
1939	30	1963	16
1940	25	1964	7
1941	8	1965	37
1942	12	1966	40
1943	35	1967	46
1944	2	1968	32
1945	13	1969	47
1946	12	1970	23
1947	33	1971	28
1948	14	1972	92
1949	17	1973	27
1950	16	1974	4
1951	35	1975	30
1952	8	1976	24
1953	43	1977	20
1954	17	1978	11
1955	45	1979	13
1956	50		