

INTRODUCTION

First Baptist Church of Guilford is the 15th oldest church in Columbia, Maryland. First Baptist is one of fourteen churches in Howard County that dates back to the late 1800's and early 1900's.¹ The original church was built in 1903. By 1916, a larger church was completed to house the expanding membership. The construction of the third and current church began in 1944 and was completed in 1970. The current building is again experiencing growing pains. There are currently two services each Sunday to accommodate the constantly increasing membership. Based on the present needs of the members and the surrounding community, the Architectural Building Committee and their consultants have drafted a program for their fourth facility which would have the capacity to seat 1,500 members during any service.

Based on the program and scale of the proposed church, a new site has been proposed which is seven miles south the existing sanctuary. Relocation would allow the sale of the existing church and the Dora Mack Center Christian Center. The Dora Mack building was the church previously completed in 1916. The relocation would afford the opportunity for a design that is not bound to the previous buildings. The new location is in the neighboring community of Clarksville, Maryland. Both Columbia and Clarksville are in Howard County. The Clarksville site would allow easier access due to its proximity to Interstate 96 and Route 29.

REGIONAL HISTORY

The area known today as Howard County was initially the farming and hunting grounds of Native Americans until 1608. Established in 1650, Howard County, MD is located in the heart of the nation's fourth largest consolidated market, the Washington-Baltimore corridor. Howard County remains as somewhat of a blend of the old and the new with urban and rural regions. Several areas in the county are still designated for farmland use while other parts, specifically Columbia, have become metropolitan centers. The county is home to approximately 300,000 residents according to the U. S. Bureau of Census.²

1. *The Oldest Black Churches and Homes in Howard County*: Howard County Historical Society, Columbia, 1998

2. *Howard County MD Brief Economic Facts*. Division of Business Development, MD, Dept. of Economic & Employment Development, Maryland 2005

SITE

Clarksville is still regarded as a farming community by many although scores of the farms have gradually vanished due to increased development. The proposed site for the new church is on existing farm land. Developers have long sought the property for rural development based on its proximity John Hopkins Laboratories and Interstate 95. The property is also highly valued due to its serene and convenient location within the metropolitan area. The proposed location for the new facility is off of Old John Hopkins road. The desired lot sits atop a hill, about twenty feet above street level. Some grading would be required to prepare the site for the new chapel.

PART I

As a member of the First Baptist Church of Guilford Architectural Committee, I often met privately with the pastor and select members of the committee to aid in the development of the church program. In discussions with Reverend John L. Wright, three specific objectives were realized. The first of which was to restore the symbolic act of Baptism to a visual part of the service which would increase its significance. The second objective was to further examine and enhance the spatial relationship between the pulpit and choir, the choir and congregation, and the pulpit and congregation. The last of the three objectives was to address the fundamental role of today's church. Community outreach programs play a large role in the weekly activities of the church, but space is limited in the current facility. The Architectural Program must incorporate the necessary meeting and exercise spaces to facilitate the needs of the church members.

The primary design scheme for the new Baptist church must accommodate the requirements of the committee and the church members whom they represent. To successfully complete the task, special attention must be paid to the liturgy, spatial relationships, ecclesiastical artifacts and the choice of materials. Among the more important considerations is the ability to house 1,500 members while allowing a significant amount of natural illumination during the morning services. The sanctuary should be free of structural elements that could inhibit the view of altar from any location during services. The altar should be in close proximity to the congregation to foster spatial intimacy between the speaker and the listeners. For the sense of intimacy to exist, the altar must allow a certain degree of mobility by the speakers or ministers. He or she must be free to move about the podium and altar to maintain vocal and eye contact with those in the congregation. One of the most common but subtle problems experienced at First Baptist just before and immediately following church services is the bottleneck at the lobby. Sufficient room must be provided for people to congregate and for those who are disabled to move about with relative ease.

The first step in preparing a church building program is for its members or associated committees to conduct a thorough investigation of their theology, doctrines, and liturgy. The architect will be required to have a basic understanding of all three so as to understand how the church functions. The resulting synthesis of research is then used by the architect and church committee(s) in the formulation of a program.

The role of symbology plays a significant role in the appearance, feel, and operation of every church. Symbolic references are one of the primary areas where churches visually differentiate themselves from each other and other buildings. Symbolism has historically manifest itself in a variety of ways ranging from the selection and placement of a cross, bell towers, baptismal pools, stained glass, robes, candles, carpet colors, podiums, table cloths with religious insignias, communion equipment, and so on.

Liturgy also varies among churches. Liturgy can however be borrowed from one geographic region or religious group and incorporated into others. Southern Baptist and Northern Baptist worship in a similar manner but there are subtle differences. The same can be said of African Methodist Episcopal and Southern Baptist Churches. Having parents that were members of each denomination, I witnessed the diversity of the services at each church. The liturgy must be given careful consideration due to its impact on the unique requirements, furnishings, and the ecclesiastical artifacts found in a church.

The three primary doctrines of the First Baptist Church of Guilford are **Communion, Baptism, and Community**. Church doctrines are not shared to the same extent between denominations, as the liturgy may be, however the design of the church and its program must reflect the liturgy while acknowledging the doctrines of the denomination.

Baptism is frequently under represented from a visual perspective in smaller and older Baptist churches. The baptismal pool has been buried in basements, constructed outside of the church allowing full exposure to weather conditions, omitted from the church property entirely, and performed in neighboring rivers. On occasions when the baptismal pool has been incorporated into the sanctuary, the detailing and installation are often devoid of a component worthy of a church home whether for financial reasons or the unavailability of ecclesiastical designed fixtures. The baptismal pool used at the F.B.C.G. is housed in basement floor of the much older Dora Mack building.

“The symbolic significance of baptism has not lost its significance, but perhaps the manner in which it is performed today has, as indicated by Dr. Reverend John L. Wright, pastor of F.B.C.G. It is no secret that members are more apt to remember the times when they and others were dipped in the pool, in what was then our new church,” according to Reverend Wright.

The current church is without a baptismal pool and consequently the ceremony may now be associated with something from the past. The spirit of rebirth can be recaptured by relocating the baptismal pool to a visually prominent area of the new facility. One such location may be inside the sanctuary where the baptistery could be easily viewed by all.

LOCAL CLIMATE (1971-2000)³

	<u>January – December</u>		<u>12 Month Average</u>
Normal Max. Temperatures	41.2	87.2	65.1
Normal Min. Temperatures	23.5	65.8	44.2
Normal Temperatures	32.3	76.5	54.6
Normal Precipitation	3.02”	3.98”	4.94”

Extreme Max. Temperatures (1971 – 2000)= 77 to 105 degrees⁴
Extreme Min. Temperatures (1948 – 1998)= -7 to 50 degrees

Average Snow Fall (1961 – 1990) 22.8” Annually

SOLAR ORIENTATION

The building will be positioned on site facing towards the East to take full advantage of the morning sun. Traditionally Baptist churches have faced the east which allows the sun to illuminate the three stained windows that frequently located often at the rear of the church. The three windows represent the Trinity or the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. An Eastern facing church will allow the sun to bring to life the form, color, shadow, and texture of the building’s interior.

Other considerations when reviewing the building orientation include how the building would be viewed from the street and the view of the community from within the church. While the Eastern facade will be the most prominent to the community based on its proximity to the road, the Western facade will serve as the primary entrance for the building. The Western elevation will be required to incorporate ways to limit solar gain so as to lesson the impact on the building’s mechanical systems. Large glazed openings can open a room to a broad panoramic view by allowing light to enter the building. The influence of which will have a profoundly positive effect on the service and church occupants by allowing the warmth of God’s light to infiltrate the building.

3. MD Climate Data. MD State Climatologist Office – University of MD, Dept. of Atmospheric and Oceanic Science, College Park, 2006
4. MD Historical Weather. MD State Climatologist Office – University of MD, Dept. of Atmospheric and Oceanic Science, College Park, 2006

BUILDING PROGRAM

A. Sanctuary: 12 sq. ft. per seat including the altar, choir, and musicians

1,530 active X 12 sq. ft. = 18,360 sq. ft. required

B. Parking: @ 1 space per 100 sq. ft. of floor area of assembly space open to the public

18,360 sq. ft. = 184 spaces required
100 sq. ft.

1,300 spaces actually provided to allow for future expansion and new buildings

C. Sunday School/Study Rooms	<u>Quantity</u>
1. Nursery & Pre-Kindergarten	2
2. Kindergarten & 1 st Grade	3
3. 2 nd – 3 rd Grade	2
4. 4 th – 6 th Grade	2
5. 7 th – 9 th Grade	2
6. 10 th – 12 th Grade	3
7. Adults	3
8. Seniors	3

D. Day Care

E. Library

F. Bathrooms 4

G. Kitchen

H. Lobby & Narthex

I. Elevator & Elevator Machine room/closet

K. Pastor's Office Quantity

L. Pastor's Secretary Office

M. Mechanical Rooms 2

N. Reading Area

O. Sunday School Seating/Waiting Area

P. Storage 2

Q. Baby Changing Room

R. Sound & Light Control Room

S. Church Welcoming Office

T. Church Information/Weekly Itinerary Office

U. General Offering Office

V. Tithe Collections

W. Baptismal Pool

X. Post Baptismal/Drying Room

Y. Post Baptismal/Groom Room

Z. Balcony

PRECEDENTS

First Baptist Church of Guilford of Columbia, MD

The church is a two story linear brick building with a steeple as its most prominent exterior visual feature. The three windows at the rear of the building offer a subtle reference to the Trinity. The choir loft shares space with the altar. The choir section is jammed with musical instruments and audio equipment. The lobby is an extremely confined space that is accessed through a single pair of doors. The lobby, approximately 12'X12', is the location of regular bottleneck conditions.

The baptismal pool is housed in the basement of the older church on site which was renamed the Dora Mack Center. The D.M. center is primarily used for weekly meetings on the upper floor and food preparation services in the basement.

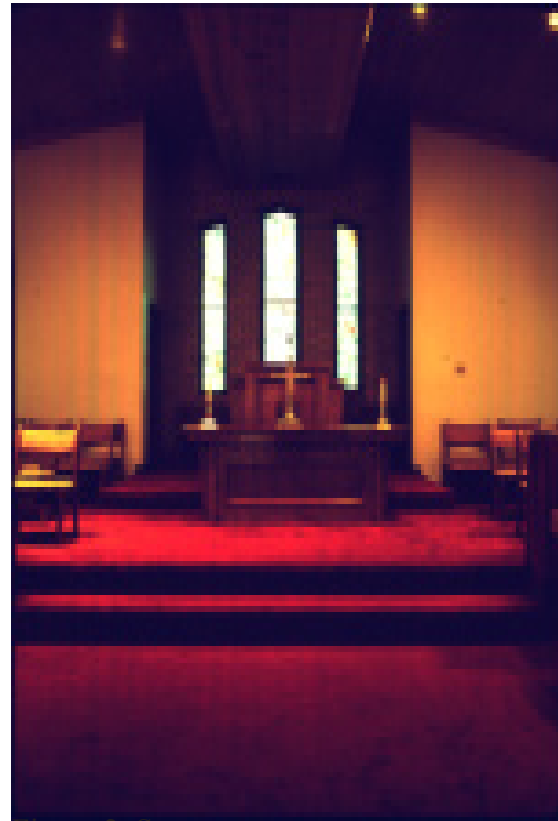


Figure 2, Sanctuary

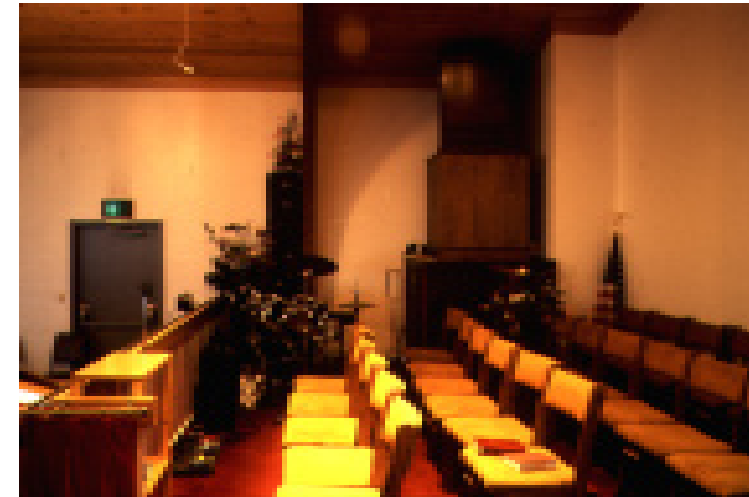


Figure 3, Choir Seating

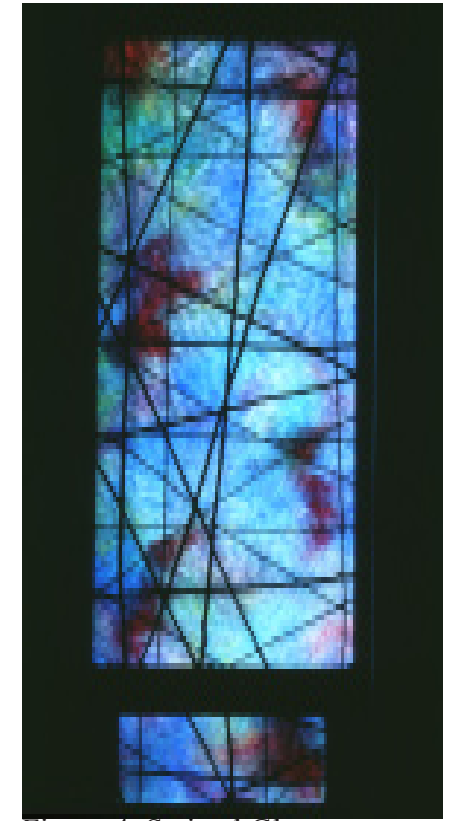


Figure 4, Stained Glass



Figure 5, Front Elevation



Figure 6, Rear Elevation



Figure 7, Side Elevation



Figure 8, Rear Interior View