

First Baptist Church Ahoskie, NC

Church Profile



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Who We Are

We come from all walks of life. We are doctors, lawyers, farmers, school teachers, administrators, housewives, students, and business people. We are first, however, Christians and God called us to serve Him in whatever our vocation is.

Historical Sketch

An interesting historical fact about First Baptist Church of Ahsokie is that for eighty-five years the name “Ahsokie” referred to the church. There was no Town of Ahsokie. However, in 1889 a post office was opened one-half mile west of the church building and was given the name “Ahsokie.” The rail station located near the post office was then named “Ahsokie.” From that time forward there would be a distinction between “Ahsokie” the church and “Ahsokie” the town. The Town of Ahsokie was incorporated in 1893.

First Baptist Church of Ahsokie began in the latter part of 1804. Throughout its more than 200 year history the church has been and continues to be an integral part of the fabric that is the Town of Ahsokie and surrounding community. Now in its fifth physical facility, First Baptist is led by Interim Pastor Dr. Paul (Trey) Gilliam III with the assistance of Associate Pastor, Rev. Anita D. Thompson and Minister with Youth, Clair A. Saunders. Rev. Dr. Jesse J. Croom serves as Pastor Emeritus. From its beginning until now, First Baptist has had twenty-four pastors with seven pastors serving since 1925.

Since its beginning with sixty-seven charter members, First Baptist has grown in size and membership. Throughout its existence, the heart and soul of the Church has resided in worship, fellowship and service to the community.

Sunday School began in 1844 with ninety students and thirteen teachers to lead Bible study. Women’s Missionary Society which was organized in 1899 with seven charter members has grown in membership and service. The Church has been involved with local, state, national and international missions since 1853.

Emphasis on missions continues today through a robust missions education program for all ages, beginning with preschoolers. First Baptist members, both youth and adults, have served as mission volunteers in Antigua, England, Jamaica, the Czech Republic, Montreal, Chicago, New York City, West Virginia, Washington DC, New Jersey, Vermont, and numerous other places around the globe.

Another important aspect of First Baptist Church is its storied music ministry. Beginning with graded choirs in 1948, the music ministry has grown. First Baptist has been blessed with the leadership of well-trained ministers and musicians who have led the church in choral and instrumental music education involving children, youth and adults in several choirs. The beautiful Zimmer pipe organ was dedicated in February, 1966. A rededication and recital service was held in February, 2017.

To date, First Baptist Church of Ahsokie has had the privilege of ordaining six of its members (two of them women) to the gospel ministry. In 1920, First Baptist elected its first two women to the diaconate. Since that time both women and men have served alongside one another as deacons and in numerous leadership positions within the church.

In 1993 following a lengthy study of denominational relations, the church membership voted to sever relations with the Southern Baptist Convention and to unite with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. While hundreds of other churches have chosen to take this step, First Baptist Church of Ahsokie was the first church in North Carolina to do so. First Baptist continues to support the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and CBF-NC.

For over 200 years, First Baptist Church of Ahsokie has been known as a community of faith committed to following Christ and sharing His love in our community and around the world. Building upon a rich heritage of ministry, we are seeking to grow into the church God desires us to be for today and tomorrow.

Community Sketch

First Baptist Church of Ahoskie is located in Ahoskie, North Carolina on the corner of Main Street and West Street. The church membership comes from throughout Hertford County and surrounding counties.

Demographics of Hertford County

As of the 2010 U. S. Census, the population of Hertford County was 24,669 people; this represents a 9.2% increase over the 2000 census. According to the 2010 census, there were 8,953 households and 6,240 families residing in the county. The racial makeup of the county was 35.6% White, 60.5% Black or African American, 1.1% Native American, 0.5% Asian, and 1.0% from two or more races. 1.4% of the population were Hispanic or Latino of any race.

Of the 8,953 households, 30.00% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 45.80% were married couples living together, 19.50% had a female householder with no husband present, and 30.30% were non-families.

In the county, the population was spread out with 25.30% under the age of 18, 7.80% from 18 to 24 years old, 26.30% from 25 to 44 years old, 24.80% from 45 to 64 years old, and 15.80% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 39 years.

The median income for a household in the county was \$26,422, and the median income for a family was \$32,002. The per capita income for the county was \$15,641. About 15.90% of families and 18.30% of the population were below the poverty line, including 21.30% of those under age 18 and 21.00% of those age 65 or over.

Demographics of Ahoskie

Based on the 2010 U. S. Census, the town of Ahoskie had a population of 5,039 people which was an 11.4% increase over the 2000 census. According to the 2010 census, there were 1,991 households. The racial makeup was 28.1% White, 66.6% Black or African American, 1.5% Native American or Alaska Native, 1.3% Asian, and 1.1% from two or more races. 1.6% of the population were Hispanic or Latino of any race.

The town had 7.4% of its population under the age of 5 years, 25.7% under the age of 18, and 19.8% who were 65 years of age or older.

Of persons 25 years or older, 72.7 % were high school graduates and 16.9% held a bachelor's degree or higher.

The median household income was \$28,438, and the per capita income was \$17,648. About 26.4% of the population were below the poverty line.

Schools

Hertford County Public Schools consist of one PK-3 school, one PK-6 school, one 4-6 school, one middle school and one high school. The minority enrollment is 85%, and the graduation rate is 75% which is within 1% of the state graduation rate. Based on 2016 end of grade tests, the elementary schools performed 12% to 20% below the state average performance. The middle school and high school performed approximately 25% below the state average. There is also Hertford County Early College High School.

Other schools in the county include Ahoskie Christian School which is PK-12 and Ridgcroft School, a PK-12 college preparatory independent school.

Post-secondary educational institutions in the county include Chowan University and Roanoke-Chowan Community College. There is also an affiliation with East Carolina University in Greenville, NC with an ECU dental clinic located in the county.

Worship and Ministries

Worship is the heart of who we are as a church. We gather each Sunday in the sanctuary and via radio broadcast to praise God, and in doing so, we are reminded of God's love for us, and therefore, our call to love and serve others in the name of Christ.

Our worship services may be described as "traditional" in nature. They are shaped by the Christian Year and the Revised Common Lectionary. That is, we experience worship through hymns, responsive readings and prayers, scripture readings from the Revised Common Lectionary, musical meditations by our various choirs and instrumentalists, testimonies of faith, and preaching from God's word. Men, women, teenagers and children provide worship leadership alongside our ministers.

Bible Study

It is our hope that Bible Study and Faith Formation permeates every aspect of ministry at First Baptist Church of Ahooskie. As Christians of all ages, we are life-long students, striving to "grow up in every way into Jesus Christ, who is the head, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love." (Ephesians 4:15-16)

Sunday School

Meets each Sunday at 9:45 am

Classes are offered for all ages, Birth – Adults.

Adult Sunday School Classes

Please note that ages are approximate; all adults are free to attend a class of their choice regardless of age.

Adult I (Women and men, College-age through 30's) Room 307

Adult II Co-ed (Women and men, 30's through 50's) Room 300

Hannah Brown (Women, various ages) Room 209

Edith Freeman (Women, various ages) Room 304

Sarah Raynor (Senior adult women) Room 208

Genesis (Men, various ages) Room 302

Youth Ministries

Our youth ministry is focused on providing a welcoming community for students where they can develop in their relationship with God and with each other. Through our ministry to students, we desire to lead students into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. We believe that that relationship will be evidenced in a deepening faith in God, community with fellow Christians, and a desire to serve others. Above all, we seek to foster an environment of spiritual growth through discipleship, fellowship, and service.

Sunday School for Youth – 9:45 am to 10:45am

Located in the Youth Building across the street from our sanctuary.

During this time, we focus on lectionary-based Bible study that corresponds with the worship service at 11am.

Sunday Youth Group – Middle school (6th – 8th grades) meet 5:00 pm to 5:45 pm

Snack supper for all youth (6th – 12th grade) is served 5:45 pm to 6:30 pm

High school (9th – 12th grades) meet 6:30 pm – 7:15 pm

Youth desperately need a place to talk about incorporating their faith into everyday life. On Sunday nights, we have fellowship, play games, build community, and discuss how we can make the decision to follow Christ every day. We encourage our youth to think about their faith, and we do this through discussion-based Bible study. In addition, we have monthly fellowship opportunities for youth to build friendship and community.

Children’s Ministries

It is our belief that children need a space to explore God’s world, to learn of God’s love for them through Jesus Christ, to ask questions, to express their faith, and to feel loved. The Children’s Ministry of FBC seeks to provide this space through Bible study, choirs, missions, and worship experiences. These ministries are designed to guide children to grow in their faith and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Fellowship and special events are another aspect of our Children’s Ministry. Each year we share in family oriented events such as First Wednesday Fellowship, Trunk or Treat, Birthday Party for Jesus, and an Easter Egg Hunt. Each summer, children enjoy extended learning through our annual Music Day Camp and Vacation Bible School. Older children (completed grades 3-6) also have the opportunity to participate in **Passport Kids**, a four-day summer camp experience.

Sunday School for Children – 9:45 am to 10:45 am

Grades 1-3 Room 104

Grades 4-6 Room 103

Sunday School for Preschooler’s – 9:45 am to 10:45 am

Babies Room 107

Ages 1 & 2 Room 106

Ages 3, 4 & 5 Room 105

Wednesday Ministries for Children – September to May 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Music & Mission Friends (Ages: 3, 4, 5 & K), Room 104

Children Choristers & Children in Action (Grades 1-6), Music Suite

Other Educational Opportunities

Sunday afternoon Bible studies and discipleship classes are offered for adults Fall through Spring. Times, leadership, and meeting places vary.

Music Ministry

The music ministry of FBC Ahsokie engages everyone! From congregational singing to choirs for every age, everyone is involved in some aspect of the music ministry.

The music of our Sunday morning worship services covers a wide range of musical styles—from traditional hymns accompanied by the pipe organ and grand piano to contemporary songs accompanied by guitar and/or percussion, choral music, instrumental music, and so much more.

Sanctuary Choir

The Sanctuary Choir is our primary worship leadership choir. They sing a variety of sacred music styles and enjoy preparing music for specific seasonal services during Advent, Christmas, Holy Week, and Easter. Membership is open to all adults and high school students. Rehearsals are on Wednesdays from 7:00-8:00 pm.

Vocal Ensemble

The Vocal Ensemble is a group of auditioned adults and high school singers who provide worship leadership once or twice a month and for special services throughout the Christian Year. Their repertoire consists of a variety of musical styles. Rehearsals are on Wednesdays from 8:00-9:00 pm.

Chairo

Chairo is an intergenerational music ensemble which learns contemporary praise & worship music as well as sacred multi-cultural/world music. Chairo sings for worship every six to eight weeks. Membership is open to all adults and students beginning with grade 6. They rehearse on Sundays from 5:00 – 6:00 pm. (Chairo is a transliteration of the Greek word for *Rejoice!*)

Children's Choirs

We offer children's choirs for two age groups: **Music Friends** for age 3 through kindergarten and **Children Choristers** for grades 1-6. Rehearsals include learning anthems to sing for worship, learning hymns of our faith, music education, fun songs and activities, playing of Orff instruments, and ringing choir chimes and handbells. Our Children's Choir Ministry and Missions Education Ministry are integrated each week. The children's choirs meet each Wednesday from 5:00 – 6:00 pm from September through early May.

Roanoke Chowan Christian Women's Job Corps

Roanoke Chowan Christian Women's Job Corps provides life skills and work skills classes needed to help participants achieve self-sufficiency. The purpose of this ministry located in our church Fellowship Hall is to provide a Christian context in which women in need are equipped for life and employment. The classes, Bible study, mentoring, fellowship, and training take place in an atmosphere of women helping women toward a better life with a Christian focus.

Missions

First Baptist Church is active in local, state, national, and international mission work through mission trips and hands-on mission engagement. Additionally, we give nearly 14% of our budget to missions causes outside the walls of the church. Such mission partners include:

- West Chowan Baptist Association
- Hertford County Food Pantry
- Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
- Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina
- Woody and Beverly Baker Mission Support
- Roanoke-Chowan Christian Women's Job Corps
- LaCount and Anna Anderson Mission Support
- Baptist Children's Homes
- Baptist Retirement Homes
- Baptist World Alliance
- Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty
- Baptist Center for Ethics
- Baptists Today
- Baptist Women in Ministry
- Baptist Women in Ministry of North Carolina
- Women's Missionary Union of North Carolina
(Projects include Christmas shoebox ministry, meals to community homebound, and other community missions)

We provide scholarship support to the following NC Baptist Colleges

- Chowan University
- Campbell University
- Gardner Webb University
- Mars Hill College
- Meredith College
- Wake Forest University
- Wingate University

Membership Profile

The following table summarizes **Sunday School** attendance over the past ten years.

Year	Average Attendance
2007	158
2008	145
2009	134
2010	134
2011	128
2012	116
2014	99
2015	94
2016	97
2017	89

While there are no official records documenting **Worship** attendance, the estimated attendance is 150 including children and youth.

Our membership is approximately 20% children 5% youth, 15% young adults, 25% middle age adults, and 35% senior adults.

Church Staff

Pastoral Ministry Team

▪ ***Rev. Dr. Paul R. Gilliam III (Trey), Interim Pastor***

Trey Gilliam was called to First Baptist Church of Ahoskie as interim pastor in February of 2017. Trey is an Associate Professor of Religion at Chowan University. He holds Bachelor of Arts and Master of Divinity degrees from Gardner-Webb University, a Master of Arts from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Edinburgh. He, his wife Lou Ann, and their daughter Matty Grace, are members of Murfreesboro Baptist Church.

▪ ***Rev. Anita D. Thompson, Associate Pastor***

Anita Thompson joined the staff of First Baptist Church of Ahoskie as Associate Pastor on April 15, 2002. An Ahoskie native, she is a graduate of East Carolina University (B.M.), the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (M.C.M.), and the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond (M.Div.). Prior to joining the staff of FBC Ahoskie, Anita served as Minister of Music, Minister to Children, and Minister of Youth for churches in Kentucky, Louisiana, Virginia, and North Carolina. First Baptist Church of Ahoskie had the privilege to ordain Anita to the ministry in 1997. Anita's household includes two canine pals, Carlton and Lucy, and one feline, Ashley. For personal enjoyment Anita loves to read, sew, and spend time with family and friends.

▪ ***Ms. Clair A. Saunders, Minister with Youth***

Clair Saunders joined the staff of First Baptist Church in September of 2015. A native of Ahoskie, her responsibilities include fostering an environment of discipleship, Bible study, service, and fellowship for middle and high school students. She is a student at Campbell University, and in her free time she enjoys making music, photography, artwork, spending time with her son, and renovating her new/old home.

▪ ***Rev. Dr. Jesse J. Croom, Pastor Emeritus***

Jesse Croom, a native of Burlington, NC, served as the 23rd pastor of First Baptist Church from 1991-2005. He was educated at Elon College, Wake Forest University, and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Dr. Croom has served six other churches in North and South Carolina. Dr. Croom and his wife, Mary Anne, now call Edenton, NC home. A beloved former pastor and mentor, Dr. Croom is honored to continue serving First Baptist Church as Pastor Emeritus.

Music Ministry Associates

▪ ***Mr. James H. (Buddy) Hyatt, III, Music Associate/Organist***

Buddy Hyatt graduated from East Carolina University with a B.M.E. in organ, and Master's Degree in Public School Administration. He and his wife, Nikki, live in Greenville, NC., where Buddy teaches music in Pitt County Public Schools.

▪ ***Mr. W. Bland Baker, Music Associate/Pianist***

Bland Baker is an Ahoskie native who earned a degree in Psychology from East Carolina University. He serves as the Northern Regional Director for Trillium Health Resources. The father of two adult daughters, he and his wife, Nancy, live in Ahoskie.

Administrative and Facilities Ministry Team

▪ ***Mrs. Martie Tayloe, Church Administrator***

Martie Tayloe joined the staff of First Baptist Church of Ahoskie as Financial Secretary in July of 2004, after moving to the area from Richmond, VA. She and her husband Jack have three grown children, three grandchildren and three critters: Sarah and Atticus (canines) and Jo-Jo, the cat. The latter three still live at home. A native of Halifax, NC, Martie was raised in Richmond, and spent her college years in Colorado, but has always kept a strong connection to multi-generational family roots in Northeastern NC. She enjoys being closer to her large extended family now. St. Thomas Episcopal Church is the Tayloe's church home, where they are active members. She counts herself uniquely lucky to have two church families!

▪ ***Mr. C. Judd Byrd, Custodian***

▪ ***Ms. Wilhemina M. Sessoms, Custodian***

Financial Status

The following chart provides a summary of our annual operating budget, giving, and expenses or the past five years.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Budget Amount	460,897.77	462,376.84	460,644.66	459,591.47	459,131.28
Revenues	458,217.27	443,349.40	455,775.24	441,627.70	432,831.20
Expenses	446,770.42	440,813.47	455,728.51	439,080.72	423,995.42
Difference	11,446.85	2,535.93	46.73	2,546.98	8,835.78

In December 2016, the Church approved a two-year capital campaign to be implemented in two phases. The Phase 1 goal is \$350,000.

Facilities / Capital Campaign

First Baptist Church of Ahooskie is located in Ahooskie at the corner of Main Street and West Street. The total square footage of the church is 28,036. Construction on the church sanctuary building was begun in January 1928. This project was completed in April 1937. The sanctuary includes a balcony as well as a raised chancel. The chancel includes a choir, pulpit, a lectern and baptismal pool, and a Zimmer Pipe Organ which has enhanced our worship services for 50 years. The sanctuary is adorned with beautiful stained glass windows given in memory of previous members. Inclusive to all, the sanctuary is equipped for the hearing impaired and is wheelchair accessible.

Directly under the sanctuary is a fellowship hall and kitchen. In 1959, The church educational building was dedicated. This wing is three floors with two staircases and an elevator. Included in this wing are offices, several classrooms and restrooms, storage rooms, the nursery, preschool classes, the choir loft, and the R. P. and Emma Martin Memorial Media Center.

Adjoining the church building is a Columbarium which was completed in February 2017. In the mid 1970's, properties across Main Street from the church were acquired by purchase and gift. These properties are now used for parking. In recent years a house and lot across West Street from the church was purchased. The house was demolished and this property is now used for parking. Lots adjoining church property on the North and East have been acquired. On one lot a house has been demolished and on the other lot a house is being rented. A portion of an office building across Main Street from the church building has been purchased. One part of this building is being rented and another part of this property is used by the church youth as a meeting place.

In December 2016, the First Baptist Church of Ahooskie approved the two year Preservation and Preparation capital campaign. Two distinct but related categories for this campaign are seen. One category is "Preservation" of our beautiful church building and related facilities. Funds of \$165,000 are needed to replenish those monies recently expended for completed projects such as roof repairs, sidewalk and parking lot repairs, and purchase of adjoining property. Immediate additional needs estimated to cost \$185,000 have been identified. Thus, the initial "Preservation" Phase 1 goal for this campaign totals \$350,000. The Phase 2 "Preparation" portion of the campaign which will include our vision and mission for the future will follow the completion of Phase 1. As of April 1, 2017, \$22,000 has been raised in gifts and pledges toward the Phase 1 goal.