

# **Ebenezer Baptist Church**

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## **A Brief History**

Ebenezer was founded in 1886, nine years after reconstruction began. A band of 13 faithful people united under the leadership of the Rev. John A. Parker. Rev. Parker served as Ebenezer's first pastor at the original site on Airline Street from 1886 to 1894.

On March 14, 1894, the Rev. Adam Daniel Williams was called to pastor Ebenezer, a struggling church with seventeen members on the roll. During his first year as pastor he was responsible for adding approximately sixty-five members to the church. Rev. Williams liquidated the mortgage, purchased land near downtown Atlanta on McGruder Street and built a new church. With the continued growth of the congregation, the church on McGruder Street soon became too small. The membership moved their worship services to a storefront at 444 Edgewood Avenue while construction began on the Auburn Avenue site. The current church on Auburn Avenue was completed in 1922.

As pastor of Ebenezer, Rev. A.D Williams promoted black businesses, urged his congregation to become home owners, and "get a piece of the turf." He led them in the battle for adequate public accommodations for blacks, despite Jim Crow segregation laws. Rev. Martin Luther King, Sr. served as assistant pastor to Rev. Williams from 1927 to 1930. Rev. King, Sr. became pastor of Ebenezer in 1931, following the death of Rev. Williams.

During Rev. King, Sr. tenure as Pastor of Ebenezer he had three Co- pastors. In 1960 his oldest son, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., joined his father as Co-Pastor, giving Ebenezer international stature. Following the assassination of Dr. King, Jr. on April 4, 1968, his younger son, the Rev. Alfred Daniel Williams King, replaced his brother as Ebenezer's second Co-Pastor. Rev. A. D. King's tenure came to a close at his death in 1970, and was followed by Dr. Otis Moss in 1971.

The Rev. Martin Luther King, Sr. retired on August 1, 1975 after forty-four years of tremendous service to Ebenezer and the world. Guided by Dr. King's suggestions, the congregation of Ebenezer called Dr. Joseph L. Roberts, Jr. to be its fourth Senior Pastor.

Dr. Roberts has recently completed his twentieth year of service. He is currently leading the congregation in the construction of a new sanctuary directly across the street from the historic Ebenezer site.

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