



In the 1970s, First Baptist Greenville made a visionary move from its historic location on McBee Street to open new doors for mission and ministry on the corner of Cleveland and Faris. In the 1980s, we opened a new “front door” to our current facility with the construction of the sanctuary. In the 1990s, we opened the doors of a new nursery wing, Carpenter Chapel, and the renovated fellowship hall. The vision to “open new doors” for mission and ministry in each of the last three decades has been a key to our congregation’s efforts to live out the mandate in our Mission Statement to “share the Good News through worship, education, ministries, and missions.” This vision reflects the core identity of our congregation as an open church made of people with open hearts and open hands for mission and ministry.

Those of us who are the beneficiaries of the vision of our congregation in the 1970s through the 1990s cannot imagine our church without our current facilities. They are an indispensable platform for the life and work of “The People of God at First Baptist Greenville.” Opening New Doors, our capital stewardship campaign, challenges us to make the most of a new decade by further expanding and enhancing our life and ministry as “a community of believers in God, as revealed in Jesus Christ as Lord.” Our life and ministry together in which each member is a minister reaches from the sanctuary to the ball fields, from Bible study to the mission field, from the fellowship hall to the soup kitchen, from the cradle to the columbarium.

Our current facilities, among the finest in Greenville, are superbly suited for supporting the ministries of a traditional Sunday-and-Wednesday Baptist church. But the vibrant church of the future that we are already becoming is an exciting seven-day-a-week center for ministry. Our magnificent “front door,” the sanctuary, is typically utilized only a few days a week. To be effective in reaching out to more people—both members and prospective members—we must develop stronger “back-door” and “side-door” ministries to complement and expand the reach of our impressive “front door.”

Opening New Doors will allow us to enhance and expand our mission and ministry through four key “back-door” and “side-door” components: 1) providing more accessible space for senior adults and community groups in a new wing that will allow us to reallocate existing space for our growing ministries to young adults and single adults, 2) beginning a fulltime childcare ministry for ages 6 weeks to 4 years to serve our congregation and community in addition to our excellent existing part-time programs, 3) upgrading our playgrounds for our internationally recognized kindergarten program and for our elementary-aged children, and 4) expanding our activities ministry through a new gym with spectator seating, a walking track and improved access to the ball fields.

Each of these four areas of expansion was identified as a high priority in a long and deliberate process involving hundreds of our congregation’s members and external consultants. In 2001, we began exploring our congregation’s “Hopes and Dreams.” We moved to “Strategic Thinking” in 2002, using our Strategic Plans of 1978, 1988 and 1998 as the starting point. We then pursued a comprehensive “Master Planning” process in 2003 that resulted in 29 mission-and-ministry recommendations, one of which was “Undertake a feasibility study for a Capital Campaign.” That study was completed in 2005, with a recommendation to proceed, approved by our congregation on May 22. Opening New Doors has been our congregation’s vision and identity for the last three decades, and it is our opportunity now as we celebrate the past, embrace the present, and prepare for the future of our congregation’s mission and ministry in our community and the world.