Second Baptist Church (SBC)

Great things often begin with small steps. Ordinary individuals can achieve extraordinary results. There is nothing that can prevent us from being eligible to accomplish significant tasks. The Bible references ordinary flawed people that God used to fulfill his mission:

* Noah drank too much. But God used him to build an ark to save the world, Genesis 6-9.
* Abraham and Sarah, were old, seniors in their lifespan, but God used them to build a nation, Genesis 11-25
* Joseph was an entitled teenager. God used him and put him in positions to be taught and trained to save Egypt and Israel, Genesis 37-50.
* Moses stuttered. God used him as His spokesperson, Exodus 3-4.
* Peter was a quitter whom God brought back to start the Kingdom. Matthew 26, John 21, Acts 1-2.
* Paul was the enemy, God used him, and he became the most prolific Christian in the New Testament. Acts 26:12-23

**History**

Throughout the bible, there are examples of how God used ordinary people to fulfill His purpose for this world. Likewise, the founders of Second Baptist Church (SBC) were ordinary people. God chose eighteen men, women, and children to fulfill His purpose of organizing a church. These members and their families were previously members of New Hope Baptist Church located in the neighboring community. The initial meeting with the purpose of organizing a church took place in the home of brother and sister Lewis Rawlings on January 11, 1957. The founders came into agreement and voted to call their new church Second Baptist. Officers were elected and or appointed: Deacon Lewis Rawlings was appointed chairman of the Board of Deacons, Deacon Curtis Campbell was elected Superintendent of Sunday School, Brother Joe Turner, Chairman of the Building Fund, Sister Ella Mae Grundy, Director of Baptist Training Union (BTU), Sister Minnie Sabbs, President of the Women’s Missionary Unit (WMU), Sister Lena Beckton, President of Usher’s Board and Pastor’s Aid Club (PAC), and Sister Blanche Johnson, Church Clerk. Meetings and church services took place in the Rawlings’ home as they continued to seek direction from God for His new church.

**1957**

On January 21, 1957, Rev A. P. Poindexter was called to Secord Baptist Church as the first Pastor. SBC joined the Jefferson Springs District (Arkansas Baptist State Convention), February 1, 1957.

After a time, the congregation outgrew the Rawlings home. Deacon Rawlings owned a boarding house (chickens) which he allowed to be renovated, by men in the church and community, for a suitable place to worship and accommodate the growing church. This facility was used (rented) as a worship facility for approximately six years.

Sister Pauline Worthy, President of the Willing Worker’s Club (WWC) raised the first $125 that was used as down payment on two lots owned by Deacon Rawlings. The lots were located at 3900 Tatum Street.

**1958**

On September 4, 1958, Rev. Poindexter resigned as pastor. Rev. James Bell became the second Pastor of SBC on October 4, 1958. December 4, 1958, under Pastor Bell’s leadership, a contract was written to purchase the two lots located at 3900 Tatum Street. Workers started to construct the church on June 6, 1960. The WWC with Sister Elizabeth Robertson as President purchased widows for the church. SBC joined the Union District Baptist Association in 1963. On March 17, 1963 (3rd Sunday), the first worship service was held in the new facility. Three new deacons were ordained: Elmer Wilson, Mal Daniels, and Jack Wade. Later that year, three ministers were licensed: Ministers Mal Daniels, David Terry, and Jesse Ware. SBC continued to grow spiritually and financially.

**1964**

On April 5, 1964, Pastor Bell resigned. Rev L Lowe was elected as the third pastor of SBC on July 21, 1964. During Pastor Lowe’s leadership pews and pulpit were purchased. Sister L. M. Wheeler president of the WWC planned programs that netted money to purchase a piano and communion table. During this time, three men were in preparation to become Deacons: L. W. Nichols, James Land, and Curtis Wheeler.

**1968**

On February 4, 1968, Rev. Lowe’s term as pastor was terminated. On March 17, 1968, the church ordained Rev Mal Daniels and Deacon L W Nichols. On May 13, 1968, Rev H A Bates was elected as the fourth pastor. Under Rev Bates’s leadership, the floor was tiled, and carpet laid in areas of the building; the annex walls were erected, and file cabinets and mimeograph machine were purchased. On December 3, 1971, Rev Bates’s term as pastor was terminated. Rev Mal Daniels served as intermittent pastor during SBC’s absence of a pastor.

**1972**

Brother Willie Blevins was ordained as deacon on December 5. 1971. On March 3, 1972, Rev Jake Hall became the fifth pastor of SBC. Under his leadership, the roof was put on the Annex on September 16, 1972. Rev Hall resigned on June 30, 1976. Until a new pastor was called, Rev Daniels and Rev. Billy Simmons led the church.

**1976**

On August 6, 1976, SBC elected Rev Billy Simmons as pastor. Pastor Simmons became the sixth pastor of SBC. Pastor Simmons immediately began work to complete the church. On July 14, 1976, five new members were baptized. Of the five members baptized, one of them, Master Gerald Johnson, was called to the ministry. Master Johnson preached his first sermon and was licensed on August 15, 1976. Under the leadership of Pastor Simmons, the church completed the installation of the new baptismal. Brother Lee Vorn Anderson was the first to be baptized in the new pool on November 17, 1976.

Pastor Billy Simmons was instrumental in getting the pulpit and choir stand built as well as installation of carpet in those areas. He facilitated the construction of a kitchen and equipped it with the necessities, men and women restrooms and ladies lounge were constructed, and the pastor’s study was carpeted. Four classrooms and central heating were added to the church. Pastor Simmons also facilitated getting the church plumbed for water.

By the end of 1976, the church was mostly complete with necessities. However, work had just begun. In 1977, SBC officially ordained two young deacons: Brothers Leslie Shorter and Lee Vorn Anderson, recognizing their outstanding and faithful service. Brother Willie Blevins was called to the ministry during this time. Church membership increased by sixty-seven. God continued to bless SBC to make improvements: installed central air, painted church’s exterior, installed a steeple, added a concrete sidewalk, purchased a piano, added church vestibule, paneled interior walls, and membership tithes and offerings increased more than in the history of the church. The Willing Workers Club, under the leadership of Sister Grace Washington, purchased pulpit furniture, stained glass windows, hot water heater for the baptismal pool, and beautiful potted palms. The Pastors Aid Club, under the leadership of Sisters Gloria Butler and Bonnie Cole, purchased a desk for the pastor’s study. The Youth Department purchased the Christian flag and the United States flag.

In 1979, Brother James Turner was placed on trial for deaconship and later ordained. Deacons Tommy Jackson and Leslie Shorter were called to the ministry. They both were ordained in 1980.

On July 25, 1980, Pastor Billy Simmons submitted his resignation. Again, Rev. Mal Daniels stepped in to serve SBC until God sent another pastor,

**1981**

Rev. Duggar Johnson became the seventh pastor of SBC on January 4, 1981. After only two months of becoming pastor, Rev. Johnson began work toward negotiating the purchase of land on 40th and John Barrow Road. Under Pastor Johnson’s leadership, four deacons were ordained: Brothers Joe Smith, Enoch Tims, Bobby Smith, and Tommy Bass.

Deacon James Turner was called to the ministry in October 1982. Rev Turner preached his first sermon and was licensed on October 24, 1982. Brother Walter Seals was added to the Board of Deacons in January 1982.

Pastor Duggar Johnson resigned on November 27, 1983. Rev. Andrew Robertson along with Rev James Turner oversaw the pulpit in the absence of a pastor.

**1984**

With prayer and the aid of the Holy Spirit, on February 5, 1984, The SBC family called on the former pastor, Rev Billy Simmons. He accepted and returned to the SBC family.

Upon returning to SBC as pastor for the second time, Pastor Simmons’ first goal was to make sure that love and unity abided in the church. Then he began working to secure a means of financing the property located at 40th and John Barrow Road. In April 1984, Pastor Simmons negotiated with Bob Hess for SBC’s financial needs. In January 1985, the property was financially secured through a local bank.

On August 17, 1987, God gave Pastor Billy Simmons a revelation to begin negotiations to purchase the church located at 1709 John Barrow Road. The first worship service at this location was held on December 13, 1987. Pastor Billy Simmons resigned in 1998.

**1999**

In 1999 God sent Rev. Kevin A. Kelly to SBC as the nineth Pastor. In a short time, the church outgrew its worship facility. The mortgage was paid off in October 2001 and the church celebrated eliminating the mortgage with a burning ceremony on Watch Night, December 31, 2001. Under Pastor Kelly’s leadership, an expansion to add 350 seats was completed. Pastor Kelly was a visionary, and goals were set annually to accomplish these visions. Pastor Kelly revealed to the church a vision to construct the Family Life Center (FLC), to serve the church and community. Groundbreaking for the FLC was held in October 2001 and construction was completed in December 2002.

On September 22, 2004, the congregation unanimously voted to purchase property located at 6111 West 83rd Street, Little Rock, Arkansas. Thus, the phrase, “One church, two locations” was coined. This purchase included property in the Southwest Little Rock community which encompassed a school and sanctuary.

The church continued to grow, and God continued pouring blessings and resources for needed maintenance, and renovations. There was also an expansion of additional classrooms. This venture was completed in August 2006. The vision of our current worship facility (The Dome with extended seating capacity) was presented to the church in October 2008. Construction of the Dome was completed in January 2014. The Dome not only included a magnificent worship sanctuary, but it also included the Taste of Glory Café, Vision Print, added rooms for meetings, media, and a parking garage.

Subsequently, SBC was able to acquire surrounding land for parking. Later, SBC leased a facility in Maumelle, AR to offer worship services for that community.

During the COVID pandemic, the southwest location was sold, and the Maumelle location closed permanently. SBC’s one location, 1709 John Barrow, Little Rock, AR, showed continued growth.

Pastor Kevin Kelly resigned as pastor August 11, 2021. During the absence of a pastor, the church’s Board of Elders took responsibility for the church and pulpit inviting great Pastors from local and out of state churches to come and preach God’s word.

**2022**

God sent another great shepherd to lead SBC. Dr. Maurice Watson joined SBC as Senior Pastor in September 2022 and was installed in December 2022. His first goal was to restore unity and transparency. Pastor Watson diligently leads, teaches, and preaches, establishing citywide communications and collaborating with local pastors and community leaders for improvements.

**2023**

In 2023, Four Hundred Eighty-six (486) new members were added to the church congregation with one hundred (100) baptized. Tithes and offerings increased, and several major projects and improvements were completed:

The church Bi-laws and Constitution was revised; a Board of Trustees assigned to maintain church policies and ensure compliance was appointed, building maintenance projects, which included roof repairs, plumbing repairs in the South Wing, drainage and sewage repairs, sidewalk repairs, and replacement, and maintenance of air conditioners were completed. Golf carts were purchased to aide in parking and escort members to worship facility, parking was modified to add additional spaces for people with disabilities, visitors, and Mother’s Ministry members with mobility issues. A twenty-one-passenger bus was purchased, the security and alarm systems were updated with a new key policy implemented to enhance security measures, broken and outdated microphones and soundboards were replaced, jumbotron/digital signage display system was purchased. An external audit firm was hired with audit ongoing. To enhance worship experience, a Director of Worship and Arts Minister was hired. An open position for Accounts Payable was filled, a trip for NexGen young and young adults was planned and implemented, vacation bible school commenced for the first time since COVID. The church had its first annual church picnic since COVID, First Response Sunday was implemented to recognize those serving as first responders in our city, the first Mothers’ Ministry Conference was successfully implemented inviting Mothers’ Ministries from churches in the surrounding Arkansas areas. The Outreach Ministry expanded the pantry to better aid families in the community. The ministry helped with disaster relief cleanup efforts with financial support to families impacted. Outreached worked with the Arkansas Food Bank to support our community and city. There was continued support with HBCUs by providing recognition and financial aid.

**2024**

In 2024, under Pastor Maurice Watson's leadership, SBC advanced in kingdom building, preaching and teaching, and outreach. The church gained 346 new members and baptized 102. Membership grew by 803 from December 2022 to December 2024. New members were oriented with SBC ordinances and constitution. After completing training, they were welcomed with the right hand of fellowship. In November, Pastor Watson initiated a Generosity Initiative focused on Christ, our church, our children, and our community.

The church held its second annual Revival on Wednesdays (ROW) in October. ROW was introduced in 2023 as an annual event and successfully continued in 2024. Efforts were made to strengthen partnerships with sister churches through the annual New Year's Eve services, which brought together approximately 1200 believers both in person and online. Two ministers, Rev. Michael Johninson and Rev. Mary Jones, received their licensed and was ordained by Pastor Watson.

Outreach efforts extended across the John Barrow Community, Ward 6, Little Rock, North Little Rock, and surrounding areas, distributing approximately 18,000 pounds of food. SBC extended support to organizations that assist individuals dealing with substance abuse and other difficulties, such as Our House and Jericho Way, in addition to families experiencing significant hardships.

SBC continued its community services, with volunteers dedicating time to the Arkansas Food Bank preparing food distribution packaging and other tasks. In collaboration with the Youth and Young Adult Ministries, the church supported local schools such as Brady, JA Fair, and Dunbar through a back-to-school fair that featured games, food, and student necessities. Over 300 pairs of new sneakers and 450 backpacks filled with supplies tailored for specific grade levels were distributed to students. Twenty-six scholarships were awarded to SBC youth graduating high school. SBC also supported the four Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the area. Pastor Watson joined forces with local activists and other pastors to focus on voter registration with the launch of “Pastors at the Polls" initiative. This year SBC celebrated Black History Month by hosting the Annual Martin Luther King service and celebrating with other local churches.

Starting in 1957 and throughout the years, God has continued His assignment of great men to conduct their God given assignments, Grow Second Baptist Church. The church continues to grow under the leadership of our senior pastor, Dr Maurice Waston. Dr Watson’s favorite phrase is “Let’s Grow Together,” emphasizing unity in the church and community.

***Jeremiah 3:15: “And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.”***

**Pastor Service Years**

A P Poindexter 1957 - 1958

James Bell 1958 - 1964

L Lowe 1964 - 1968

Mal Daniels/H A Bates 1968 - 1972

Jake Hall 1972 - 1976

Billy Simmons 1976 - 1981

Duggar Johnson 1981 - 1984

Billy Simmons 1984 - 1998

Kevin Kelly 1999 - 2021

Maurice Watson 2022 -