



TABERNACLE BIBLE CHURCH

THE CHURCH WITHOUT WALLS



Since a small group of Christians came together in 1881, forming the nucleus of what is now Tabernacle Bible Church, the Lord has used this church in incredible ways to share the gospel and shape the lives of many, all to the glory of God. Throughout our rich history, Tabernacle continues to be a "Beacon of Hope" on the hilltop in our community. We have walked with Christ for more than 140 years, and the history of TBC is our Legacy of God's faithfulness.

“The Early Years” (1881 - 1954)

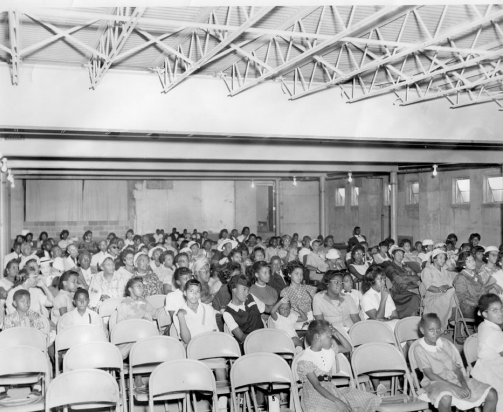
In 1881, a small band of believers, led by Rev. J. Countee, migrated to Kansas from Louisiana and Tennessee, seeking greater religious expression and economic and social opportunities. While some in the group, including Rev. Countee, settled in other parts of Kansas, the remaining members of the group continued their journey and settled in Wichita.

In 1883, Rev. Countee joined the group for a period of time to formally organize the church. The name Tabernacle, interpreted as “A Haven of Rest,” originated from the mother church in Memphis, Tennessee, now called Beale Street Baptist Church (established in 1869). As a newly formed congregation located at 900 N. Water in Wichita, Kansas, Tabernacle Baptist Church was housed in a two-story residence, which Rev. Countee had rented for the group prior to his coming to Wichita. The house served both as a sanctuary and a parsonage for Rev. R.C. McTurner, the young minister sent by Rev. Countee to pastor the church.

In 1887, Rev. R.C. McTurner went home to be with the Lord and Rev. Porter was called to be the next pastor. The church continued to grow in size and outreach efforts. The house on N. Water served the congregation until 1897 when Rev. John Van Leu, who was appointed by the National Baptist Convention as General Missionary for the State of Kansas, donated two lots to the church at 8th and Water Street. The first building was constructed on these two lots and was later known as the “Little White-Washed, Weather-Beaten Church”. A three-room educational unit and new parsonage were also constructed in 1897. During 1898 – 1938, Tabernacle was established as a city-wide witness, resulting in more members being added to the church. There are few written records of the early period prior to 1940, but we owe a great debt of gratitude to several pastors who served during this period, including: Rev. Reason Turner, Rev. Albert Mays, Rev. Tilmon, Rev. Marshall, Rev. Nails, Rev. W.M. McElveen, Rev. Brannan, Rev. Gorham, Rev. Van Lou, Rev. J.D. Wilson, Rev. J.W. Johnson, and Rev. Mitchum. In 1939, Rev. M.J. Johnson was called as pastor and a financial secretary was elected to meet the needs of the growing congregation.

In 1940, Rev. F.K. Simon was called to pastor the church. Early in his pastorate, a sound budget/financial system was instituted, auxiliaries were organized and expanded, and the Southern Airs singing group was organized. Later in the year, the first church anniversary and homecoming was celebrated in October 1940, and the church’s first radio program was aired on KFHH. In 1951, plans were drawn up for a larger building, and in 1952, the groundbreaking ceremony was held, but only the basement was completed. The building program had to be discontinued because of dissension amongst the membership.



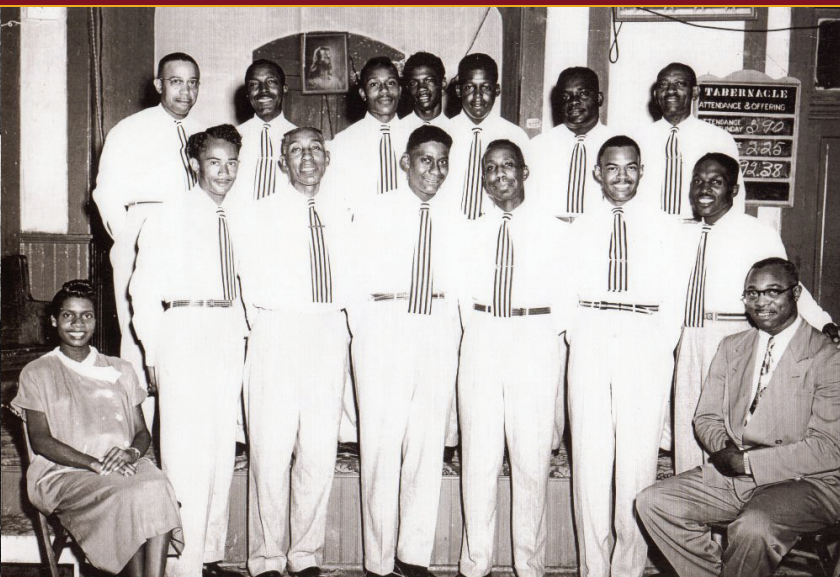


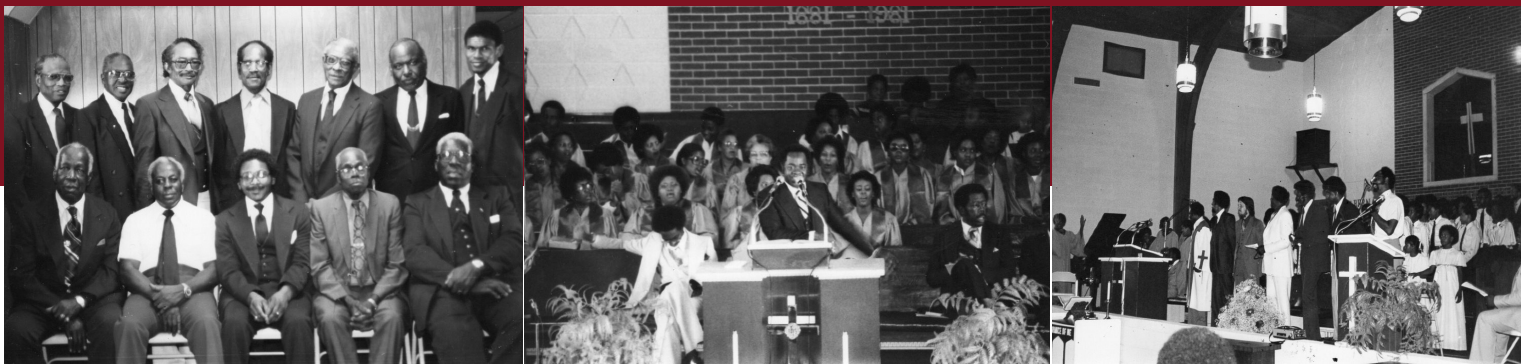
“The Golden Years” (1955 - 1967)

In 1955, as the church was on the cusp of a restructuring period, Rev. U.W. Barron was called as the new pastor. The years of his pastorate became known as “the Golden Years” of the church. During his first year, all of the church debts were paid, and a new parsonage was purchased and furnished. By the end of 1955, the church membership had outgrown the existing building. A recommendation was made and approved to purchase property at 17th Street and Volutsia, and later to expand the church.

Thus, “Operation Hilltop” was launched. In February 1956, Tabernacle Baptist Church moved to 17th and Volutsia. In 1957, the church purchased additional property north of its property line for parking. The membership continued to grow, and in August 1958, a recommendation was made and approved to build a new sanctuary. The debt for the building and property was paid in full on April 5, 1959, and the groundbreaking ceremony for the new sanctuary was held on July 19, 1959. In March 1961, the 1,000 members of Tabernacle Baptist Church entered the new sanctuary.

During Rev. Barron’s pastorate, several auxiliaries of the church were established and strengthened, particularly the youth and children’s departments. Additionally, a church cafeteria and credit union were established. In 1967, as a result of a car accident, Rev. U.W. Barron, beloved pastor of Tabernacle, was called from labor to reward.





“The Formative Years” (1968 – 1986)

In 1968, Rev. Wallace S. Hartfield accepted the call to be the next pastor of the church. Under his pastorate, the church’s mortgage was paid and a new parsonage was built. Additionally, the Hostess and Scholarship Committees were organized, other auxiliaries were expanded and strengthened, and a bowling league was established. In 1972, Rev. Hartfield resigned to return to the Metropolitan Baptist Church, in Kansas City, Missouri.

In 1973, Rev. Willis C. Thomas, Jr., noted preacher and evangelist, accepted the call as pastor. Under his pastorate, a church office was built and equipped; the pastor’s office was remodeled; the mortgage on the parsonage was paid; and twelve men acknowledged their call to the ministry. In 1976, Rev. Thomas resigned to accept the call to pastor Unity Baptist Church, in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Rev. John Edwards served as interim pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Church from 1976-1977. Under the leadership of the Rev. Edwards the church continued to grow, a 15-passenger van, choir robes and new carpet for the sanctuary were also purchased.

In 1977, Rev. Dr. Lloyd D. Hall, Jr. accepted the call as the new pastor. Under his pastorate, the Baptist Training Union (BTU), Sunday School, Board of Christian Education, Music Department, Youth Church, Usher Board and Women’s Mission Union were strengthened. Additionally, during 1978-1979, the following improvements were made: construction of the walk-in chapel, remodeling of the U.W. Barron Memorial Chapel, and the restrooms, undercroft, kitchen, and dining areas were all upgraded. In 1981, Rev. Hall led the church in celebrating its centennial anniversary, 100 years, using the theme: *“We’ve Come This Far By Faith.”*

During this special celebratory occasion, he reminded us that it had been a long, uphill journey from 1881 to 1981.

“It’s a long way from a two-story house to a sanctuary which seats over 1,500 people. It’s a long way from oil-burning lamps to electricity. It’s a long way from no instruments to a grand piano and a twenty-five pedal Hammond Organ with two giant Leslie speakers. It’s a long way from pot belly heaters to central heat and air conditioning. It’s a long way from \$.25 to \$10 an hour. It’s a long way from overalls to Botany 500. It’s a long way from horse-drawn buggies to Cadillacs and Mercedes-Benz’s. The God who neither slumbers nor sleeps has led us every step of the way.”

In 1986, Rev. Hall resigned as pastor of the church.



"The Transforming Years" (1987 - Present)

Rev. Lincoln Eugene Montgomery, the assistant pastor, served as interim pastor until accepting the call to pastor Tabernacle Baptist Church, in August 1987. Under his pastorate, the church experienced a great spiritual awakening. Approximately 1,300 members were added, 19 men and women acknowledged their call to the ministry, and Tabernacle gave birth to a new, though ageless, paradigm. Clearly based on God's Word, it was one that focused not on auxiliaries and committees, but on the "call to ministry". It was grounded in the knowledge that each member of the body of Christ is endowed with God-given gifts, and since God is the gift-giver, it is God Himself who best determines one's ministry fit. As a result, members of Tabernacle were no longer voted into leadership positions but were placed according to their gifts, passion, and personal style.



Additionally, under Rev. Montgomery's pastorate, the Creative Communications Ministry and the Family Ministry (which included the Young Adults, Senior Adults, Singles, Couples and Parenting ministries, as well as several other Support Groups, and the Family Life Counseling Center), were established. Other existing ministries were restructured, expanded, and strengthened.

Recognizing the call of the church to minister to "the least, the last, and the lost," Rev. Montgomery led the church in setting aside 10% of its budget for benevolence, 5% for the Children/Youth Ministry, and 5% for the Senior Adult Ministry. Under the leadership of Rev. Montgomery, Tabernacle was blessed to be able to contribute over \$1.5 million over 13 years to national, state and local causes, emergency relief efforts and other mission areas. The church was also actively involved in local community outreach, with continued and focused evangelistic efforts.



In addition to on-going spiritual growth opportunities, the church also sponsored annual and biennial leadership workshops, conferences, and retreats. The Worship Arts Ministry was well-known for its original productions during homecoming celebrations and other special occasions, and in 2001, the youth choir released its first CD entitled, "Back to the Wall"!



Holding fast to foundational biblical teachings, Pastor Montgomery implemented some significant changes that would transform the church's focus to meaningful outreach and discipleship efforts. In 2009, the name of the church was officially changed from Tabernacle Baptist Church to "Tabernacle Bible Church – The Church Without Walls". Affinity small group bible studies were established and strengthened (men, women, senior adults, young adults, singles, couples, and youth). The Christian Leadership and Development Institute was launched in January 2013 as a satellite site of TUMI, offering in-depth, rigorous, seminary-level curriculum, designed to equip urban church leaders to advance the Kingdom of God. Approximately one million dollars was expended to completely renovate the existing building and upgrade necessary equipment.

Future plans call for the addition of a Family Life Center, to include a gymnasium, a counseling center, classrooms, a daycare center, and additional office space. The vision of Pastor Montgomery also includes aggressively reaching out to a troubled generation of young people and more effectively ministering to the needs of senior adults, in the form of housing and meeting social, as well as spiritual needs. The goal, according to Pastor Montgomery, "is to do nothing less than to be used of God to bring healing to a hurting world."

We share our rich history as a reminder of God's faithfulness towards us, and to pay tribute to the founding fathers of this great work. Their sacrifices will never be forgotten, and their unwavering faith will always be cherished. For the next generations to come, we are committed to evangelizing the lost, equipping new converts, and empowering believers to fulfill the mission and mandate of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20). We hope that you will join us as we shape the next chapters of our Legacy.

