

newspaper
article
entitled
"Church to close
doors for good"
dated Feb. 3, 1984

Church is to be sold because of the 4-lane Presidential Parkway, the competition of other Baptist churches in the area, & mounting mortgage bills. Church is connected to a three-story, 12,000 sq. foot English Tudor mansion. The home once belonged to Atlanta streetcar magnate Preston Arkwright. A sign naming the 67 year old estate - Pinebloom - hangs out front. The carriage house is still out back. Church has had 3 locations since it was founded in 1896. The great Atlanta fire in 1917 destroyed original church at Jackson Street & East Avenue, where Dr. Bapt. Hospital now stands.

(continued)

The church moved to Boulevard } Jackson Hill Baptist
& Rankin for 31 years. In 1957 the } Church
neo-Gothic structure on Ponce de
Leon & Fairview was built.

Church

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bership has not decided yet whether it will continue in a different, smaller sanctuary.

The great Atlanta fire in 1917 destroyed most of its members' homes and the original church at Jackson Street and East Avenue, where Georgia Baptist Hospital now stands. The congregation held services under an oak tree for months.

That high hill where the church now stands in the Druid Valley National Historic District is not Jackson Hill. That hill is at the original site.

The church moved to Boulevard and Rankin Street for 31 years. In 1957, the neo-Gothic structure on Ponce de Leon and Fairview was built. The cornerstone laid then says, "Christ himself being the chief corner stone. Other foundations can no man lay."

Since then, the church membership has not grown. Webb said only a half-dozen young people have joined the church; most choose instead to attend churches in the suburbs.

"It seems ironic that large structures are going up in the suburbs when so many have vacant space in inner-city churches like this," said Webb, who lives in Marietta. Most of his commuting congregation travels up to 15 miles to church, he said.

Although the church would have been paid off in two years, the congregation no longer can afford the \$1,100 monthly utility bills and \$1,488 in monthly mortgages, said church treasurer John Lovejoy.

The 12 acres and three buildings could bring \$2 million, Webb said. He said the

money from the sale might be used to relocate the church, or donated to a mission. Either way, his congregation will split up.

"I don't have a car. I won't be able to go anywhere else," said Marie Willoughby, who lives next to the church and has been gardening there and cleaning the grounds for years. She said she doesn't want the church to move.

"We're faced with unanswerable 'ifs,'" Webb said. "We have an obligation to bloom and blossom. Since we can't, we must close."

"We just can't carry on with the expense and the membership," added Ruby Williams, a member for more than 70 years. "I just hate to leave. I'd just hate to move again," she said.

"It has been one of the foremost churches in Atlanta," she said. "It just outlived its time."

Some of the walls are peeling in the church, some pipes are burst in the estate, some windows are broken in the carriage house, but otherwise it's all in good shape. The chandeliers, the wooden carvings on the walls and the gargoyles outside could offer many new possibilities.

A school? Conference hall? Broadcast station? Hotel? Restaurant? Theater?

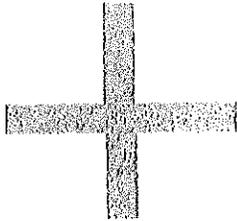
Webb cringes at the thought of all uses other than religious, but he realizes that his 88-year-old church is dying. He shakes his head at the thought that more than a third of the 12 acres may be paved for the Presidential Parkway.

"That will mar this impressive structure," Webb said. "Our blood and sweat is in here."

Subject File: Churches
Jackson Hill Baptist
Church

For the Glory of God

For the Good of Man



Jackson Hill Memories



COMMEMORATING 64
YEARS OF SERVICE
AND DEDICATION OF
THE NEW CHURCH
HOME

JUNE 9-16, 1957
JACKSON HILL BAPTIST CHURCH
1585 PONCE DE LEON AVE., N. E.
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Anders. 0

Jackson St faced city Peter Marshall's
(Now GA BAP Hosp) West - Pres
also burned

A Tribute - Requiem at Boulevard
at Rankin St

SIXTY-FOUR YEARS . . . SERVING GOD

Due to the fact that Jackson Hill Church and all the records were destroyed in Atlanta's great fire of 1917, it has been impossible to get accurate dates and particulars concerning the beginning of the church. However, the women in the community of what was then known as Jackson Hill, finding it impossible to get their children to Sunday School at the First Baptist Church, then located on the corner of Forsyth and Walton Streets, decided to have a Sunday School of their own in their immediate neighborhood. A small three-room house on Highland Avenue, just off Boulevard, was rented for \$7.00 per month. A little parlor organ was loaned on condition that it be returned when the group, meeting on Sunday afternoon for Sunday School, were able to purchase one of their own. The small group was not too long in purchasing an organ and so began Jackson Hill Baptist Church. From then ministers and many others became helpfully interested and the work grew rapidly; and the women decided to organize a Ladies' Aid Society. The first meeting was held at the home of Mrs. W. H. Clark in 1890. Mrs. Henry Lewis was the first Ladies' Aid Society President and dues were fixed at ten cents a month. At the first meeting seventy-five cents was collected and so began the work of the women of Jackson Hill Church. The Jackson Hill Woman's Missionary Society, formerly the Ladies' Aid Society, was one of the first societies to adopt the circle plan in about 1900. The organization, effected in 1894, grew so large that more men became active and larger quarters became necessary. A lot with a four-room house at the corner of what was then Jackson Street and East Avenue, was purchased with a down payment of \$500. The first donation (\$1.00) toward purchase of the new location was made by a Methodist.

Interest and activities continued until a beautiful edifice was dedicated in 1897. Subsequently a parsonage was built next to the church but that too was destroyed by the fire on May 21, 1917. The membership suffered the loss of their homes, too, and were scattered to every section of the city. In a few weeks after the tragic loss a few faithful members rallied to the cause and held a meeting under a big oak tree on the spacious lawn of the Nelson home where the Georgia Baptist Hospital now stands. A store just north of Highland Avenue on Boulevard, and the North Avenue School, known now as the Smilie School, were used for services until a small church was built on the former parsonage lot in 1920. This building was sold in a few years to the Glazener Primitive Baptist Church and the present church edifice of Jackson Hill erected in 1926.

The new home is the former Preston Arkwright estate (Pinebloom) and more recently the home of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The location is in the heart of beautiful Druid Hills in Atlanta. At the corner of Ponce de Leon Avenue and Fairview Road, it faces Ponce de Leon, with the property extending over 600 feet on Fairview. The address is 1585 Ponce de Leon Avenue, N. E. The lot contains 15 acres, most of which is beautiful woodland, abounding in dogwood, with a lovely fountain in the yard and the picturesque Lullwater Creek traversing the entire campus.

The beautiful gardens occupy about two acres directly to the rear of the building. The spacious and imposing building of Old English architecture contains over 12,000 square feet of floor space. It is full three stories, besides the basement, the lower half of which is brick and the upper English half-timber, with a life-time slate roof. The Arkwright building is used for educational purposes and a lovely chapel. The new sanctuary, of Old English architecture, is joined to the present edifice. This will seat 1000 people plus a large dining room, kitchen and recreation hall, containing over 22,000 square feet of floor space. There is abundant room for many outside sports for the young people, such as tennis, soft ball, etc. This is one of the outstanding locations in our city and is the largest church campus.

Beginning after the fire, the Pastors of Jackson Hill were: Dr. J. J. Bennett, the Rev. R. K. Redwine, Dr. R. C. S. Young, Dr. Wilburn Smith, Dr. A. T. Allen, the Rev. James Parker, the Rev. J. E. Dillard, Jr., Dr. Paul McCommon, and the present pastor, the Rev. Paul H. Cranford, and the Associate Pastor, the Rev. Quinn Pugh.—By Mrs. Fred Phillips.

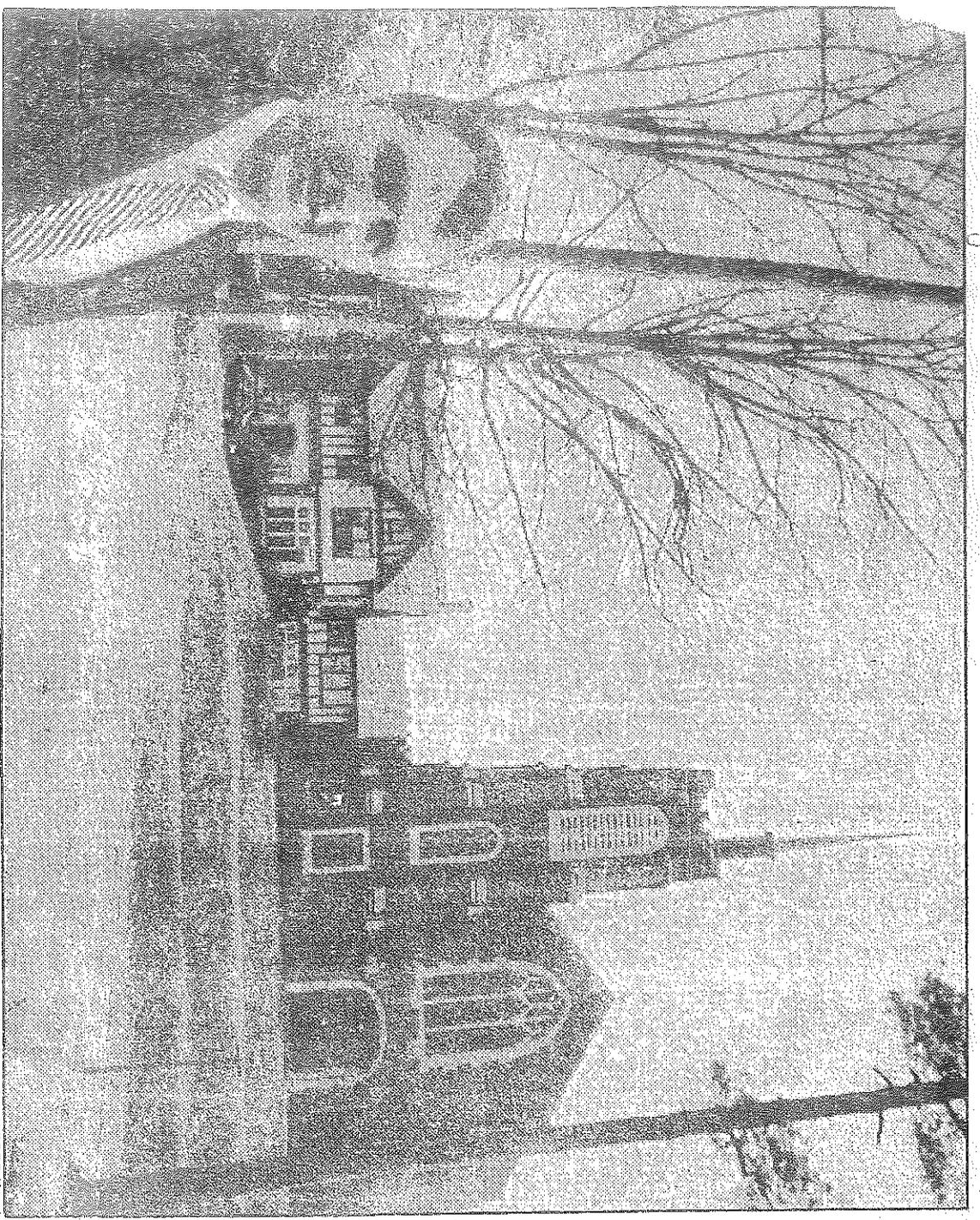
28 pastors
in all.

Paul J. Craven, Jr.
John Hamrick
Michael Warr
Guy Webb

Jerry Light

February 3, 1984
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BEVERLY STAWFORD/Staff

W. Guy Webb is pastor of Jackson Hill Baptist Church, which is threatened by mounting expenses.

Church to close doors for good

Jackson Hill Baptist must consider selling sanctuary

By Michael Szymanski □ Staff Writer

A church is for sale, stained glass, pulpit and all. Its mostly gray-haired, very loyal congregation may be forced to split up after three generations.

Competition with eight neighboring Baptist churches and mounting mortgage bills are forcing the Jackson Hill Baptist Church to pack up its hymnbooks for good.

And if that weren't enough, the proposed four-lane Presidential Parkway might slice away all of the Southern Baptist church's parking. The edge of the roadway, which still lacks final federal approval, could run 15 feet from the church's red-brick walls.

"We have a small congregation and an

enormous church," said Pastor W. Guy Webb. "We just can't last."

Many of the 110 members don't want to sell the church, but a vote this week showed that 65 percent conceded that it would be too hard to continue.

The roar of Ponce de Leon Avenue and the trickle of Lullwater Creek are within earshot of the tremendous church, tucked back among dogwoods and oaks, behind Candler Park.

The church is connected to a three-story, 12,000-square-foot English Tudor mansion. The home, now being sold with the church, once belonged to Atlanta streetcar magnate Preston A. Wright. A

sign naming the 67-year-old estate — Pinebloom — hangs out front. The carriage house is still out back.

All this is for a small congregation of mostly shut-ins. Fewer than half actually come to worship. They pray in the basement, rather than have to heat the spacious sanctuary with the high-vaulted ceiling and the great north window.

"What will become of it? What will become of us? We don't know," longtime member Fanny Lou Green asked at Wednesday's supper meeting.

Miss Green has belonged to the church since 1907, when she was 5. She remembers when the church had 600 members, seven choirs and big plans.

The church has had three locations since it was founded in 1896, and the mem-

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