



# SPECIAL EDITION

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## Town of Capitol Heights Spotlight

### First Baptist Church of Capitol Heights: A Welcoming Beacon within a Changing Community.

First Baptist Church of Capitol Heights is dedicated to making strong new connections to support the Town of Capitol Heights residents. It is in high gear, focusing efforts in 2020 to demonstrate the importance of residents registering to vote and being included in the Census count (#CountMe) to make their collective voices heard. If you've driven down Old Central Avenue and looked across from Town Hall, you've seen a local church with a long history of serving residents and those in the surrounding areas. The present building was dedicated in 1952 as the church sought to be "the neighborhood church, even throughout the racial and ethnic changes of the 1960's."



Led by the Rev. Harold L. Dugger, Sr., he stepped up to serve in August 1999 as the associate pastor (and was later elected as the pastor in 2000). As the church wrapped up another decade of serving the community, 2019 served as a special year where their members successfully accomplished every goal set, from serving those in need through multiple weekly food distributions coordinated by the Food Ministry, to providing young high school men and women with free prom attire via the boutique clothing giveaway program coordinated by the Clothing Ministry.

Moreover, with a deep desire to be even more socially conscious to care for "the most vulnerable of us residents, the church supported SEND Relief—a collaborative effort to help churches engage in relief work and to support

those in crisis through prayer, finances, and volunteer efforts. In addition, voter registration drives were initiated as volunteers helped registered many new voters.

However, through all its successful endeavors, it was the formation of the partnership between First Baptist Church of Capitol Heights, Georgetown University, developers, engineers, county, community and administration of Capitol Heights that was "undoubtedly our proudest accomplishment," stated Reverend Dugger. "The decision to

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**Mayor & Council**

**Shawn Maldon,** Mayor & Chair of the Planning & Economic Development Committee (PEDC)

**Faith Ford,** Councilmember & Chair of the Communications & Outreach Committee (COC)

**Elaine Williams,** Councilmember & Chair of the Community, Health & Environment Committee (CHEC)

**Caroline Brown,** Councilmember & Chair of the Education/TV Committee (EC/TV)

**Renita Cason,** Councilmember & Chair of the Ethics & Legislative Affairs Committee (ELC)

**Rhonda Akers,** Councilmember & Chair of the Neighborhood Services & Safety Committee (NSSC)

**LaTonya Chew,** Councilmember & Chair of the Parks and Recreation Committee (PARC)



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## Town of Capitol Heights Spotlight (Continued)

collaborate and move forward with renovating and developing the property is by far our most memorable moment of 2019. The conversations, perspectives, relationship building, and most of all, excitement of moving forward to elevate our church, the neighborhood, community and town made each accomplishment that much more meaningful,” he added.

Reverend Dugger believes “the Town is on the verge of becoming an infinitely progressive area that will house an array of individuals of all ages, races and professions and that his church is in the heart of the community. Therefore, are well-positioned to assist the town towards progression in the direction and the progress of the surrounding areas.” In addition, he invites new and long-time residents to drop by for fellowship, provide input concerning their enhancements and projected community advancements, and to grow with them. “The opinions and concerns of our CommUnity (Common-Unity) count, and our voices deserve to be heard,” he added.

For more information, visit <https://fbccapitolheights.org> or call 301-336-0722.

### **Offered by the Church**

#### Food Distribution

The Food Ministry is requesting non-perishable donations in support of its community distribution program. Food distributed on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Clients whose last names begin with A – M will be served on Tuesday. Clients whose last names begin with N – Z will be served on Thursdays.

#### Fellowship Transportation

If you would like to attend service and don't have transportation or are unable to drive, please contact the church at (301) 336-0722 by 5:00pm on Saturday to make transportation arrangements.

*By Janice M. Ford, Vice President of TOCH Communication and Outreach Committee [COC]*

## Town of Capitol Heights Spotlight

**Beloved Resident: Willie E. Drew**

**Over 50 Years as a Resident and Behind the Scene Town Supporter**

From a chair in his dining room, a vintage room that holds memories and other remnants collected over the past half-century, he has a great view of the Capitol Heights Metro Station as he shared his story. William E. Drew, 86, has been a resident in the Town of Capitol Heights since he and his wife purchased a house in March 1968. He was one of three African-American residents who purchased in his neighborhood. It was a place that didn't allow people who looked like him to buy homes only years earlier. Previously, he was only allowed to visit the town to work, shop, and eat.

With a deep desire to raise a family on the other side of Southern Avenue, they waited patiently to purchase their dream house. They longed for the quietness, greenery, and spaciousness of the town "right next door." It would still be years after President John F. Kennedy mandated an end of housing discrimination in 1962 that he would read a note on a bulletin board in an A & P Store in Seat Pleasant, MD, of a house for sale in Capitol Heights for \$13,000. At the time of their start as new residents in 1968, the Capitol Heights Metro Station was nothing but "a wooded-area scattered with worn-down houses and a small church."

He knew of the mayor and town council but initially didn't feel comfortable attending meetings due to the racial composition of the all-white administration. However, it was the news about the plans for the new metro station that moved him out of this comfort zone to attend a meeting. He had to "see what was going on and the impact it would have on his home and family." He recounted that it was a council member named William A. Devin, who warmly welcomed him at the meeting, and overtime, provided support to him and his family. In return, he became more engaged in the town but initially "as a behind the scene engage resident."

Mr. Drew was instrumental in helping with neighborhood clean-up projects and assisting with the upkeep around the Town Hall. He contributed to keeping the community clean by cutting grass and providing other lawn care services. He proudly proclaimed that he has "cut the grass for all of the houses on Tunic Avenue." Also, he has provided transportation services in his 15-passenger van for council members and others to special events.

After his wife of 50 years passed away in 2008, past-Mayor Vivian M. Dodson (and the first African-American and female mayor for the town) visited him. She asked Mr. Drew to "do her a favor, come out of retirement for a bit to drive the Town's Call-a-Bus." He agreed to help out for only one year. That one year turned into a 9 1/2-year engagement allowing him to meet and provide a service to help many residents, especially other seniors.

Furthermore, Mr. Drew has seen many changes over the past 50 years and stated he would like to see more. "The town needs to advance in the way it operates. Development is happening all around the town, but unfortunately, we haven't kept up with neighboring cities and towns," stated Mr. Drew. "A first step is to start attracting more businesses and helping the residents to advance academically," he added. He shared his vision of the Town of Capitol thriving with a robust main street, great places to eat and shop, and even a hotel built near the metro.

Mr. Drew has been excited to see more council and committee activities listed on the Town Hall's digital bulletin board. In addition, he knows that for the growth of the town, it takes engaged residents. His advice to new and established residents is, "attend meetings and become involved. If our residents visit towns of similar sizes that have great offerings in education or business, try to meet with their town administrators and learn what they do. And, then, they should bring that information back to our elected officials. However, don't just bring new ideas and the ways to do it, but be dedicated to making sure they get done," he added. With a bit of a grin, Mr. Drew concluded, "The town needs to be ready to meet the demands for the 21 century and beyond. We just need more cooperation and commitment. I believe in you, the Town of Capitol Heights."

*By Janice M. Ford, Vice President of TOCH Communication and Outreach Committee [COC]*

