

## Major Church Fires in Raleigh?

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Including this morning's fire on Sanderford Road, how many major church fires have happened in the Capital City? Here's what's found in my records, and includes a narrative from this morning. [See more photos](#) from Sanderford Road. Readers, are any other major church fires (or "regular" working fires with significant damage) missing from this list? Please advise! Click to enlarge:



*Top to bottom, left to right: June 3, 2015 - Mike Legeros photo; March 6, 1992 - Jeff Harkey photo; December 12, 1983 - News & Observer photo; February 3, 1980 - News & Observer photo; September 5, 1962 - Courtesy Hayes Barton Baptist Church*

June 3, 2015	Gethseame Seventh Day Adventist church	2523 Sanderford Road	Reported by passing motorist. Located three-tenths of a mile from Fire Station 10, though Engine 10 was already on another call. Engine 3 arrived and found heavy fire venting through the roof of a one-story, wood-frame building with 9,114 square feet. Built 1981. Fire in sanctuary. Interior attack using portable monitor while aerial ladders were positioned, Ladder 4 in rear (Division D) and Ladder 8 on right side of building (Division C). Aerial operations for about twenty minutes (?) and contained majority of fire, with interior operations for extinguishment and overhaul. Three hydrants used with engines boosting pressure including Engine 2 and Engine 10. Dispatched 2:54 a.m. Controlled 4:30 a.m. Cause determined as accidental, started by pipe soldering, as building was undergoing renovations. Two firefighters transported to hospital with injuries, for chest pains and injuries from fall. Included E12, Sq7, E3, E1, L4, L8, R1, B2, B3, C420. Working fire: A1, C20, C401. Added to call: E10. Special call: E1 and E11, E21. Plus Car 5, 4, 2. Medical: EMS 1, EMS 18, EMS 19, EMS 39, D1, D7, M92, T1. Coverage included L7 to Sta 1, E11 to Sta 12, E21 to Sta 12, E17 to Sta 7.
August 12, 2000	First Baptist Church	99 N. Salisbury Street	Two alarms. Code 3. Fire in two different locations, in room housing church's clothing ministry and in office of child care center director. Started before dawn. Intentionally set. Two men subsequently arrested and charged on federal arson charges.
August 17, 1993	Hayes Barton Baptist	1800 Glenwood Avenue	Two alarms. Dispatched about 3:30 p.m. Started when workers accidentally cut a propane line fueling a blowtorch. Arriving units found flames "shooting form the roof" and "smoke rolling out so thickly they couldn't get a good view of the church" reported the next day's News & Observer. All

	Church		roads leading to the Five Points intersection were closed for about a quarter-mile on each side as aerial apparatus were moved into position. Fire was controlled in about 25 minutes and contained to roof. Several workers were on the roof at the time of the blaze, but safely evacuated. One was treated for minor smoke inhalation.
March 6, 1992	Gospel Chapel Church	500 E. Franklin Street	Two alarms. Dispatched 0229. The church was built in 1935, with additions in 1955. Pastor John F. Gordon told News & Observer in March 6 story that the fire spread quickly into the attic, though "some pews, pulpit furniture, kitchen appliances, and computers may be salvageable." Church was valued at \$400,000, but damage estimates were not available. The 130-member non-denominational congregation was looking for interim site where they could meet. Church elders had "already begun to pray and consider" their options of rebuilding or relocating. Parishioners were "taking it well." Said Gordon, "Most of the people realize that the Lord allows these things for a reason and we accept it and go on." E3, E7, T1, R7, C52. Code 2 to Code 3 at 0247. E1, E13, T8, R6, C51, SR 1, C1, C2, C3, C5, C10, C12. E16 relief, E19 relief.
December 12, 1983	Lincoln Park Pentecostal Holiness Church	13 Heath Street	Started about 2:30 a.m. in the balcony near the church's organ. Fire through the roof as firefighters arrived just after 2:30 a.m. Fire controlled in about an hour, but church was destroyed. Possibly caused by electrical short. Third church on site, constructed started in 1974. First found in 1940, second building demolished in 1974. Split-level brick building constructed "piecemeal" over prior decade. E3, E12, T12, C52, E7, R6, T1.
February 3, 1982	Tupper Memorial Church	218 E. Cabarrus Street	Two alarms? Alarm time 1:44 p.m. Fire found in entrance and steeple area. Controlled in about 30 minutes. Church is one of oldest in Raleigh, built in 1906 and renovated in 1957, with a wing added in 1975. Damage \$69,000 building, \$2,000 contents. E3, E1, C2, T5, E13, T1, C3, R7.
February 3, 1980	West Raleigh Presbyterian Church educational wing	27 Horne Street	Two alarms? Alarm time 11:35 a.m. Fire starts during 11:00 a.m. worship services, destroying one floor of the wing. About 300 congregation members are evacuated in the middle of Rev. A. M. McGeachy's morning sermon. Blaze begins in paper-filled closet in a third-floor classroom. Six units respond to the call from four fire stations, with the first unit arriving within four minutes of the first alarm. Damage is \$150,000 building and \$14,000 contents. E5, E6, E13, C5, T5, T1.
September 5, 1962	Hayes Barton Baptist Church	1800 Glenwood Avenue	Fire reported at 6:03 a.m. from Box 622 by a passing congregation member. Fire is controlled by 8:45 a.m. The sanctuary and old education building are destroyed. Three firefighters are struck by parts of falling roof and transported to Rex Hospital for emergency treatment: George Coats, burned on right hand and slight scalp lacerations; Leland Frazier, first and second degree burns on both hands; and Reginald Poole, small scalp laceration. Loss to the 34 year-old building is \$477,455. E4, E6, T5, R1, Squad, E10, E5, E1, T1.
July 28, 1956	Edenton Street Methodist Church	228 W. Edenton Street	Lightning strikes cross-tipped, 200-foot steeple at approximately 7:05 p.m. Resulting flames causes steeple to collapse at 8:10 p.m., with fire spreading to rest of church and threatening other buildings. Loss is estimated as at least \$50,000. Building burned was built in 1881.
January 14, 1949	Fayetteville Street Baptist Church	751 Fayetteville Street	The 8:31 alarm is transmitted from box 321. Three lines and 1,650 feet of hose are used.
November 25, 1928	Church and two other buildings	600 block of Gaston Street	The 11:18 a.m. alarm is received by telephone. Four lines and 1200 feet of hose are used. Two residences and a church, all one-story frame buildings at 607, 609, and 611 Gaston Street are involved.
April 22, 1921	Pullen Memorial Baptist Church	Fayetteville and South streets	The Friday night blaze for a time threatens the Wake County clinic, Rex Hospital, and nearby residences. Aided "by wind and rain," firefighters "confine the flames to the church by some of the best firefighting seen in this city in some time." Damage is estimated at \$20,000.

March 3, 1914	Jenkins Memorial Chapel	Glenwood and Brooklyn suburbs	Fire is reported shortly before 11:00 a.m. as a small blaze in the rear of the roof. A misunderstood alarm signal sends firefighters to a different location at first. A telephone message brings another fire company to the correct location, but after the fire has gained headway. With only two streams and insufficient pressure to douse the flames, Chief Brockwell summons the steamer and sends a "motor car" back for it. The driving chain of the motor car breaks en route and horses must be located to bring the steamer to the scene. By the time the steamer arrives, the church is nearly entirely destroyed. Many spectators on hand, however, save all of the furniture, the organ, pews, and chairs. The cause of the fire is suspected as a defective flue. The church is insured for \$4,000. <i>The Raleigh Times</i> leads funds to restore the burned building.
July 5, 1909	St. Paul's A.M.E. Church	N. Harrington Street	Fire is reported about 11:00 p.m. Caused by a "fire balloon set adrift by some thoughtless person," which lights "on the shingle roof" and starts the blaze that destroys the building. Firefighting efforts endure "a tragedy of errors," including multiple box alarms that sends the Capital Hose Company "dashing" to a different box, delayed application of "direct pressure," and the absence of two teams of firefighters "now attending the Firemen's Tournament in Asheville" The building is described as "the handsomest colored church in the State and one of the handsomest in the South." Damage over \$50,000.
December 18, 1839	Methodist Church	Corner Edenton and Dawson	The alarm is sounded about 5 p.m. and in less than hour the entire building is consumed. Nothing is saved but a few benches.

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