Nomination of Historic Building, Structure, Site, or Object
Philadelphia Register of Historic Places
Philadelphia Historical Commission

Submit all attached materials on paper and in electronic form (CD, email, flash drive)
Electronic files must be Word or Word compatible

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1. Address of Historic Resource *(must comply with an Office of Property Assessment address)*

Street address: 1800-04 Wilmot St, Philadelphia, PA; 1808-1812 Wilmot St, Philadelphia PA

Postal code: 19124

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2. Name of Historic Resource

Historic Name: Second Baptist Church of Frankford

Current/Common Name: Same as above

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3. Type of Historic Resource

☑ Building ☐ Structure ☐ Site ☐ Object

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4. Property Information

Condition: ☐ excellent ☑ good ☐ fair ☐ poor ☐ ruins

Occupancy: ☑ occupied ☐ vacant ☐ under construction ☐ unknown

Current use: Church

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5. Boundary Description

Please attach a narrative description and site/plot plan of the resource's boundaries.

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6. Description

Please attach a narrative description and photographs of the resource's physical appearance, site, setting, and surroundings.

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7. Significance

Please attach a narrative Statement of Significance citing the Criteria for Designation the resource satisfies.

Period of Significance (from year to year): from 1924 to c.1990

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: 1924-1925 (historic); 1991 (non-historic addition).

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: R.R. Neely Sr., and E. William Martin (historic)

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: Jones & Williams (historic)

Original owner: Second Baptist Church of Frankford

Other significant persons: n/a

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:

The historic resource satisfies the following criteria for designation (check all that apply):

- ☐ (a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or,
- ☐ (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- ☐ (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,
- ☐ (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,
- ☐ (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- ☐ (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or,
- ☐ (g) Is part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif; or,
- ☐ (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; or,
- ☐ (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- ☑ (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Please attach a bibliography.

9. NOMINATOR

Organization: Philadelphia Historical Commission staff Date: 8/12/2026

Name with Title: Joshua Schroeder, Historic Preservation Planner Email: joshua.schroeder@phila.gov

Street Address: 1515 Arch Street, 13th Fl. Telephone: 267-865-3076

City, State, and Postal Code: Philadelphia, PA 19102

Nominator ☐ is ☑ is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: 8/12/2026

☑ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete Date: 8/13/2026

Date of Notice Issuance: 8/14/2026

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: Second Baptist Church of Frankford

Address: 1800-04 Wilmot Street

City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19124-3310

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: 9/16/2026

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: 10/9/2026

Date of Final Action: 10/9/2026

☒ Designated ☐ Rejected

Nomination of 1800-04 Wilmot Street and 1808-12 Wilmot Street to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places

The Second Baptist Church of Frankford

built 1924–1925

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

OPA Account #: 778333000 (1800-04 Wilmot St, Philadelphia, PA 19124-3310)
OPA Account #: 778333005 (1808-12 Wilmot St, Philadelphia, PA 19124)

Image 1. Aerial view of Second Baptist Church of Frankford, with historic church building at 1800-04 Wilmot Street outlined in blue, and non-historic addition at 1808-12 Wilmot Street outlined in yellow. Basemap source: atlas.phila.gov.

"ALL THAT CERTAIN lot or piece of ground, SITUATE in the 23rd Ward of the City of Philadelphia, described as follows, to wit: -

BEGINNING at a point of intersection formed by the Northeasterly side of Meadow Street (40 feet wide) and the Southeasterly side of Mulberry Street (40 feet wide).

THENCE extending Southeastwardly along the said Northeasterly side of Meadow Street the distance of 105 feet more or less to a point; THENCE Northeastwardly 57 feet more or less to a point on the Southwesterly side of Wilmot Street (40 feet wide); THENCE Northwestwardly along the said Southwesterly side of Wilmot Street 104 feet 11 inches more or less to a point on the said Southeasterly side of Mulberry Street; THENCE Southwestwardly along the said Southeasterly side of Mulberry Street 56 feet 2 inches to a point on the said Northeasterly side of Meadow Street, being the first mentioned point and place of beginning."

Boundary description from deed documentation. PhilaDox Document ID: 45090085

The Second Baptist Church of Frankford occupies what was originally four adjacent parcels, which were acquired by the church from 1899 through 1956. The historic church building occupies the original two parcels to the northwest with the address now known as 1800-1804 Wilmot Street. The 1991 non-historic addition to the church occupies the two parcels to the southeast with the address now known as 1808-1812 Wilmot Street.

Image 2. Parcels of land owned by Second Baptist Church of Frankford and acquired from 1899–1956. The historic church building occupies parcels 088N200130 and 088N200006. A non-historic addition occupies 088N200158 and 088N20000. Source: atlas.phila.gov

088N200130 – Robert Blum Builders Association to Second Baptist Church of Frankford. Date of deed, 5 Oct 1899; recorded 19 Oct 1899, J.V. book 92 / p. 138.

088N200006 – Frank Stewart, et al, to Horace Givens, et al, trustees of the Second Baptist Church of Frankford. Date of deed, 1 Nov 1920; recorded 29 Nov 1920, JMH book 1029 / p. 232.

088N200158 – Andrew Harvey, et al, to Second Baptist Church of Frankford. Date of deed, 10 May 1946; recorded 20 Aug 1946, CJP book 1398 / p. 397.

088N200001 – Mabel Thomas to Second Baptist Church of Frankford. Date of deed, 21 May 1956; recorded 23 May 1956, CAB, book 295 / p. 41.

6. DESCRIPTION

The Second Baptist Church of Frankford is situated on the southeastern side of Mulberry Street, between Meadow Street to the south and Wilmot Street to the north. The historic church building, constructed in 1924-25, sits on the parcel known as 1800-04 Wilmot Street. A 1991 non-historic addition sits on the parcel known as 1808-12 Wilmot Street, which is included in this nomination as a non-historic part of the church complex. The historic church is a gray granite stone building, with a main floor and a partially below-grade basement floor, with a front gabled roof with asphalt shingles. Despite the address, there are no primary entrances into the building on Wilmot Street. A square stone tower sits at the building's eastern corner (intersection of Meadow and Mulberry Streets). A noticeable change in the color of the exterior stone can be seen on all facades, but most clearly on the Mulberry Street façade. The lowest few feet of stones are larger and darker than those above, perhaps the result of salvaged stone from the earlier church on the site.

The non-historic addition, completed in 1991, is attached to the historic building's southeast side wall and is constructed of CMU and has a flat roof. The addition contains the church's main entrance from Meadow Street.

The historic building contains a total of 20 stained-glass windows. Records of their manufacture and installation are not known, but they appear in a 1938 interior photograph and were likely installed when the church was constructed. Stained glass transom windows are present over the doorways at the southwest and northwest bases of the tower. The majority of the stained glass windows are single-hung with a fixed upper portion, though there are also a few fixed transom and semi-circle stained glass windows. All the stained glass windows are behind a protective metal screen, except for the window on the northwest face of the tower. See the "Stained Glass Window Inventory" at the end of this section.

Southwest Façade, Meadow Street (primary)

Image 3. Southwest facade (Meadow Street). Photograph taken by nominator, June 4, 2026.

Second Baptist's southwest façade, considered to be the primary elevation, fronts onto Meadow Street and spans approximately 50 feet in distance. The front gable is interrupted by a stone tower on the left (as viewed from the street), the height of which is approximately even with the gabled roof's peak. This façade appears to be divided into two parts, one defined by the tower and the other beneath the gabled roof, visually demarcated by a downspout. At the base of the tower portion is one of the church's main entryways. The entrance features a concrete step, a non-historic metal and glass double door, and stained-glass transom window, all set within a pointed arch doorway. Next to the entrance is one side of the cornerstone, with the construction date of 1924 engraved (Image 7).

Directly above the doorway is a pointed arch stained-glass window. Like the window similarly placed on the northwest tower face, this window is intended to be viewed from the outside, with "Second Baptist Church" prominently featured across the top. Towards the top of the tower are four openings. The lower two openings are filled with glass block while the upper two openings have a siding as infill, though earlier photographs show louvres in these openings. The tower has a flat roof, a modest parapet with merlon-like features at the corners and centered

on each wall (except for the southeast side which has either been removed or was never installed). The primary portion of the façade is dominated by a row of three pointed arch stained-glass windows. Below, yet not quite aligned, are three basement window openings with glass block infill. Centered directly below the gable peak is a diamond-shaped opening, also once holding a louvre but now paneled over, and a semi-circle transom window.

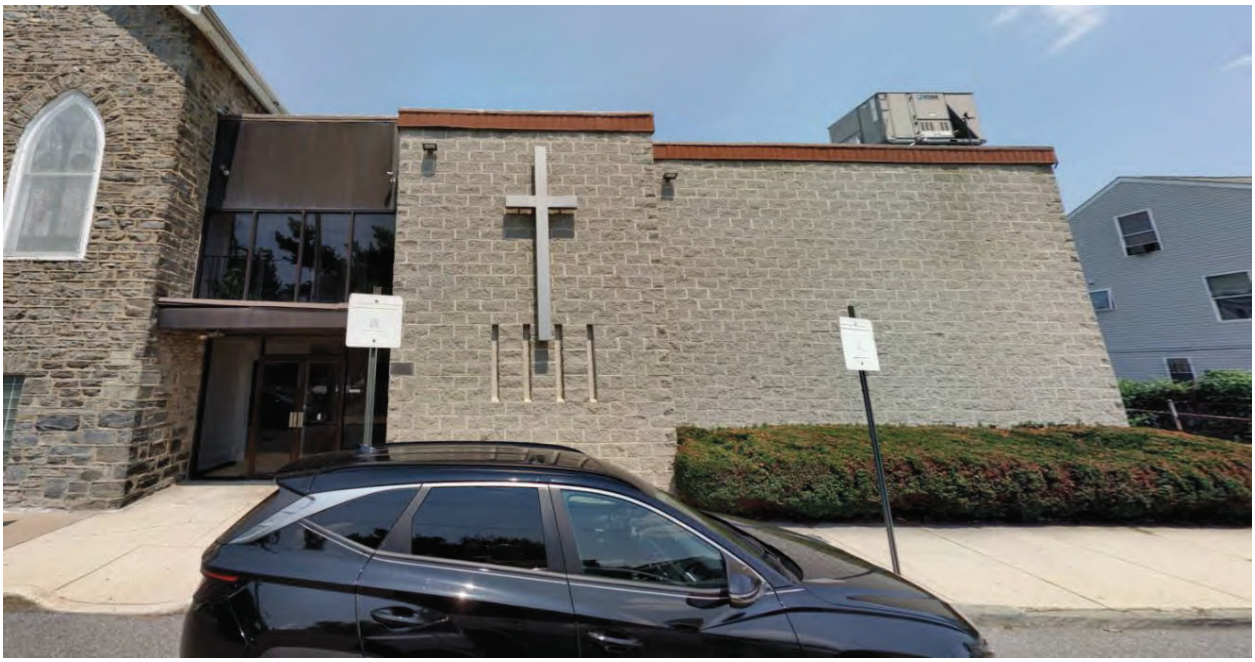


Image 4. Non-historic addition, southwest façade (Meadow Street), August 2025 image, cyclomedia.gov.

The non-historic addition, completed in 1991, holds the church's event space and offices. Its exterior is predominantly composed of CMU block with a flat roof with fascia along the roofline. Visually connecting the historic church building with the addition is an entryway composed of a metal and glass door and window system set back from both adjacent walls and the exterior above. A projecting canopy divides the two floors. To the right of the entryway is a simple metal cross affixed to the exterior over four vertical grooves. This portion of the exterior is set forward from the remainder of the addition to the right.

Northwest Façade, Mulberry Street (side)

Image 5. Northwest facade (Mulberry Street). Taken by nominator, June 4, 2026.

Second Baptist's northwest (side) façade runs approximately 56 feet along Mulberry Street. The tower's façade is nearly identical to that facing Meadow Street, except that the doorway is infilled with a faux door holding information (Image 8) and features the other side of the cornerstone (Image 9). The rest of the façade is dominated by three pointed arch stained-glass windows. There are two basement window openings infilled with glass block. A secondary entrance into the building is at the far left. It is nearly identical in appearance to the other entrances, though the doorway itself is narrower.

Image 6. Showing northeast side of tower, as viewed from intersection of Mulberry and Wilmot Streets. Photograph by nominator, June 4, 2026.

Two openings are present on the tower's northeast façade of the tower (more easily visible from Mulberry Street than any other viewpoint). One is a glass-block infill. Above that is a panel-infilled opening centered under the tower's roofline (Image 6).

Image 7. Cornerstone for 1924 construction of historic church. Photograph by nominator, June 4, 2026.

Image 8. Infilled doorway, northwest facade at base of tower. Photograph by nominator, June 4, 2026.

Image 9. Cornerstone for 1924 construction of historic church. Photograph by nominator, June 4, 2026.

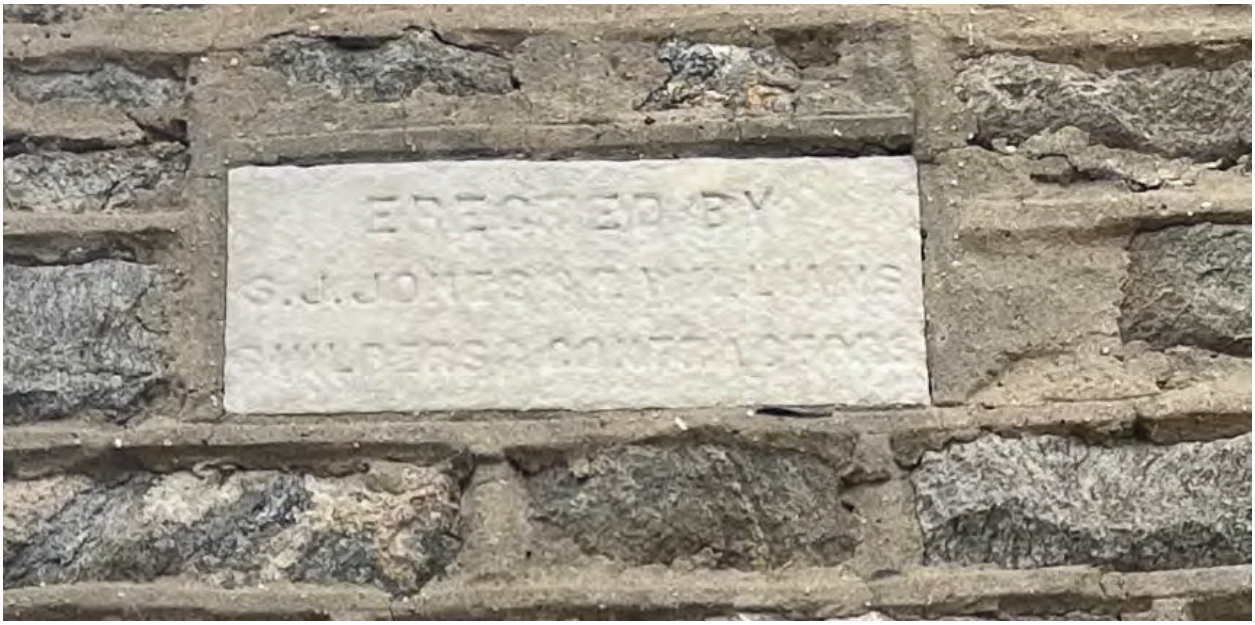


Image 10. "Cornerstone" noting Jones and William constructed the church.

Northeast Façade, Wilmot Street (rear)

Image 11. Northeast facade of historic church building (Wilmot Street). Photograph by nominator, June 4, 2026.

The northeast façade of the historic church building, which could be considered the rear, spans approximately 50 feet along Wilmot Street. The building jogs out several feet below the eave of the gable. Four arch pointed stained glass windows dominate this façade. Five openings line the basement level. Three are infilled with glass block, one with a panel infill, and another infilled with masonry. A small, eight-pane window is situated in the extension. Beneath the roof peak are four openings, two with fixed windows and two infilled with panels, which previously contained louvres.

Image 12. Northeast facade of non-historic addition (Wilmot Street). Photograph by nominator, June 4, 2026.

The non-historic addition portion of the façade is slightly set back from the historic exterior. An otherwise blank CMU-faced wall is interrupted by two small windows and a plain service door at the far left of the elevation.

Southeast Façade (side)

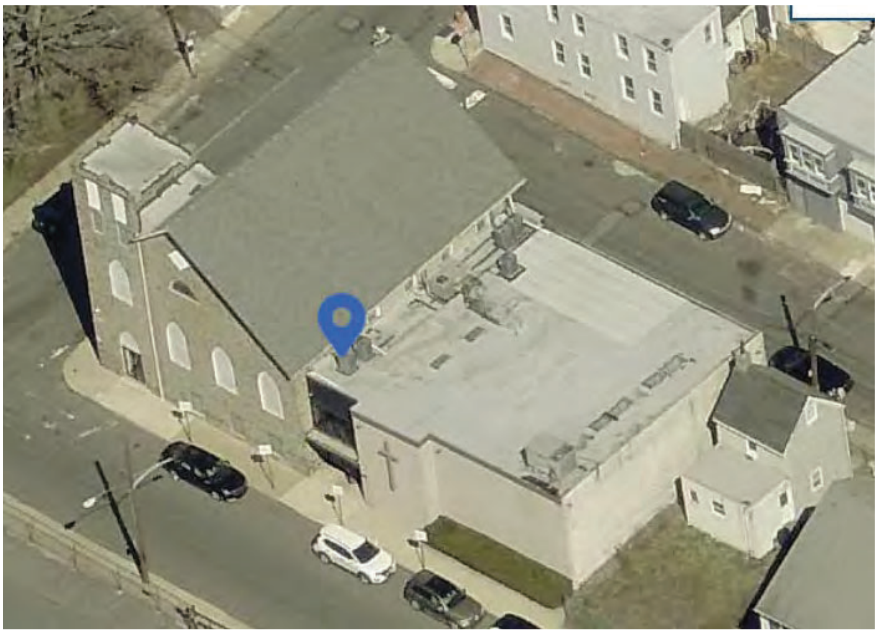


Image 13. Aerial view of southeast elevations, showing extent of encapsulation of the historic wall in the 1991 addition. Image from March 2025, pictometry.phila.gov.

The southeast wall of the historic church building is almost entirely encapsulated by the 1991 addition, as seen in the aerial photograph above. Four stained glass windows are present just below the roof eave over the addition. The southeast façade of the non-historic addition runs along the property line of 1816 Wilmot Street. This façade is a blank stucco wall.

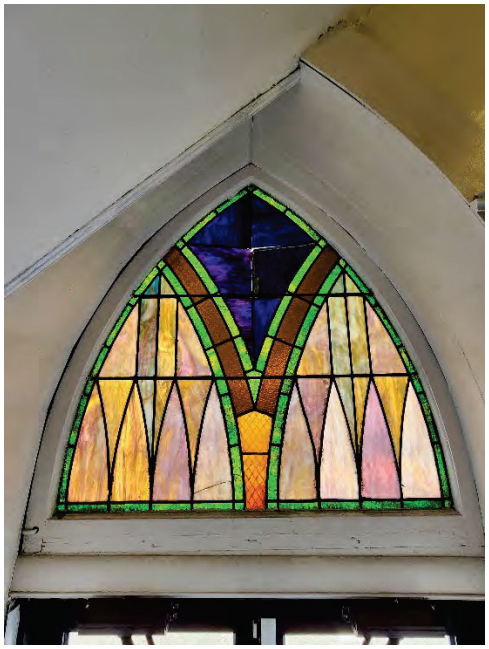
Image 14. Southeast facade as viewed from Meadow Street. Image from July 2025, cyclomedia.gov.

Stained Glass Windows at Second Baptist Church of Frankford

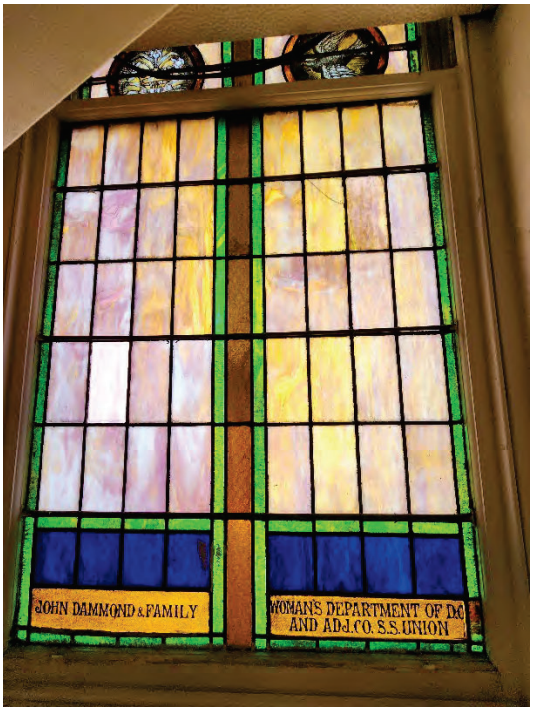
Most of the stained glass windows' detail is only easily visible from the interior. They are often obscured by objects, balconies, and other items requiring multiple photographs. The alphanumeric label corresponds to its exterior position. See labeled exterior facades.

SW1

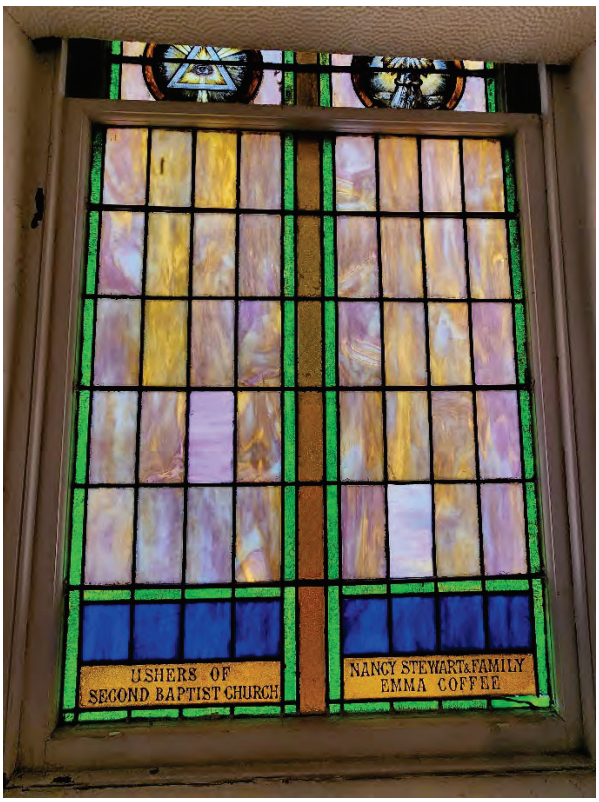
SW2

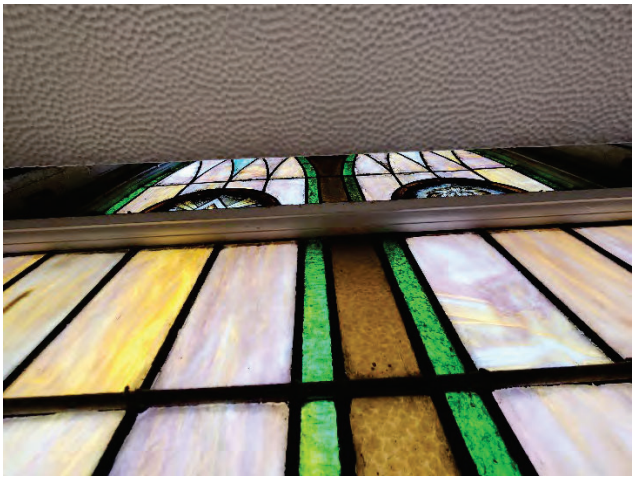


SW3

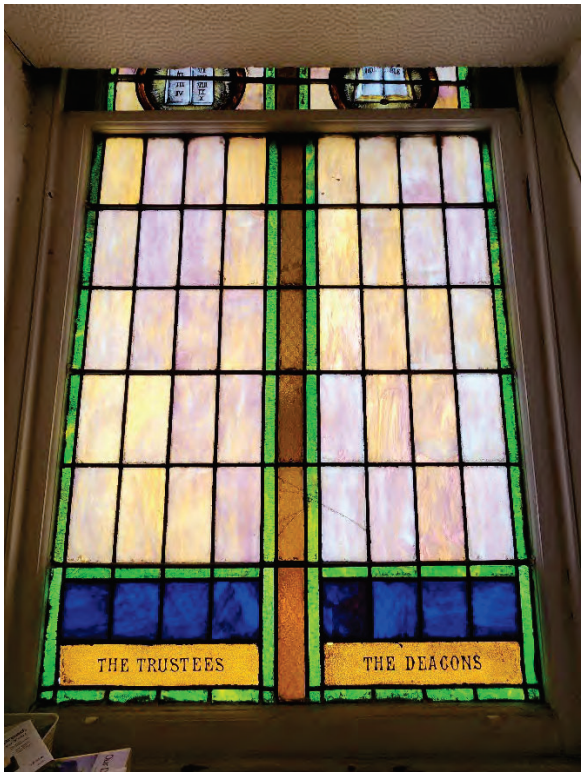

JOHN DAMMOND & FAMILY
WOMAN'S DEPARTMENT OF DC
AND ADJ. CO. S.S. UNION

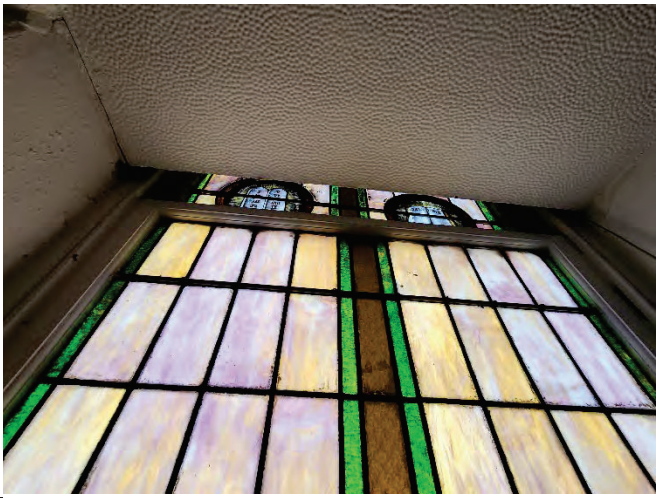
SW4


USHERS OF
SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH
NANCY STEWART & FAMILY
EMMA COFFEE



SW5


THE TRUSTEES
THE DEACONS



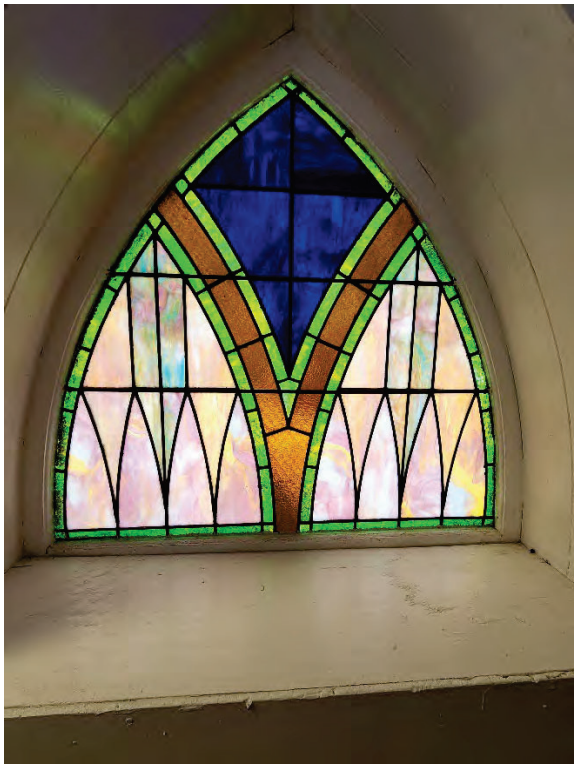
SW6

DELEWARE CHESTER
COUNTIES SUNDAY
AND ADJOINING-
SCHOOL-UNION

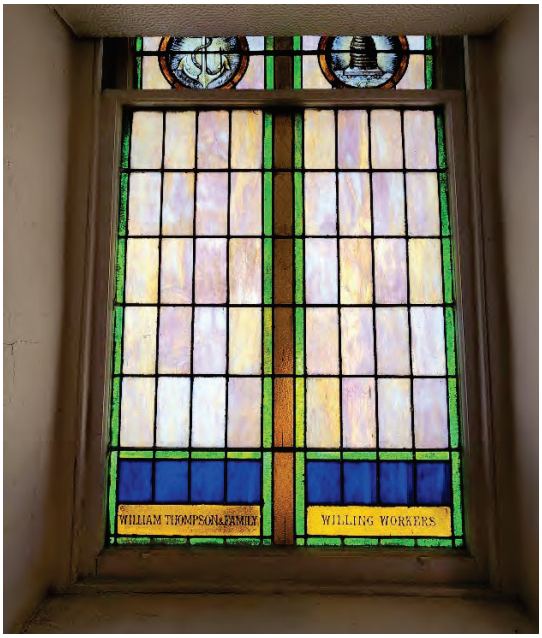
NW1

SECOND
BAPTIST
CHURCH
A.W. ROBINSON & FAMILY
SISTER WASHINGTON'S
DAUGHTER

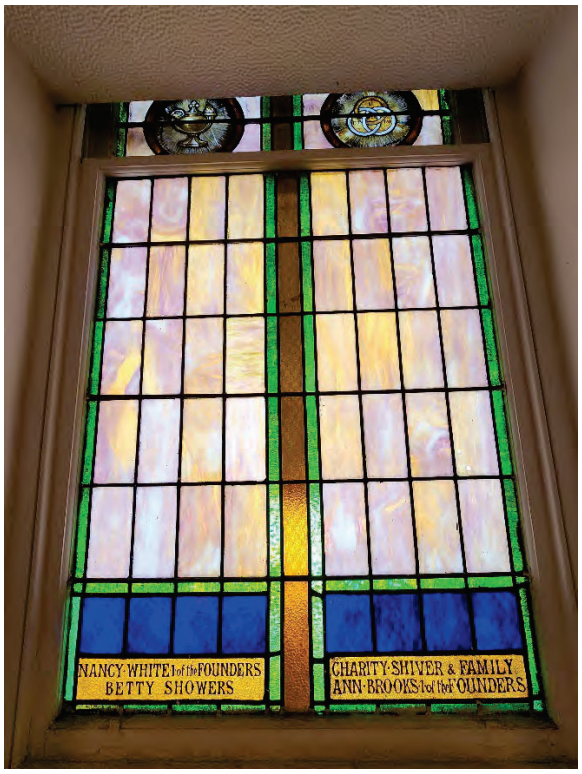
NW2



NW3


WILLIAM THOMPSON & FAMILY
WILLING WORKERS

NW4



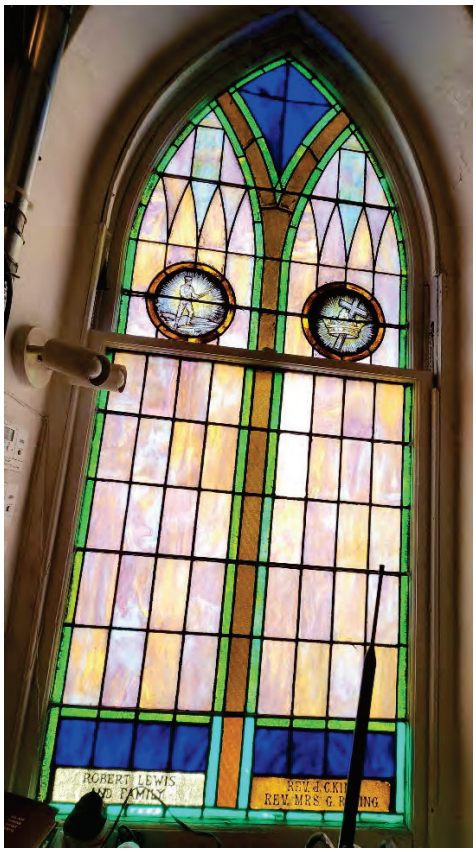
NW5

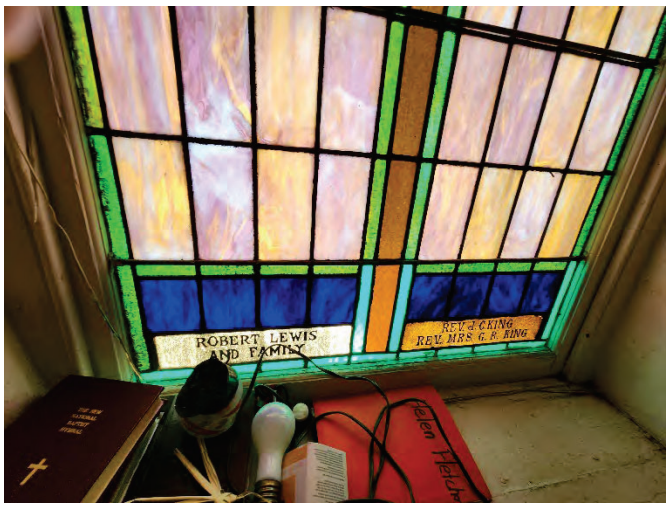
SW6: No interior photograph available.

NE1

J. MARKUS LODGE 100F
ELKS OF FRANKFORD
SAMUEL MITCHEL&WIFE

NE2


ROBERT LEWIS

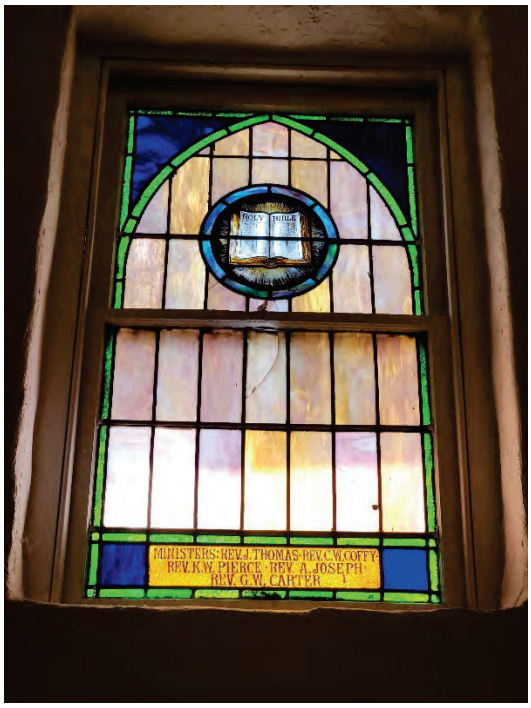

ROBERT LEWIS
REV. & CKING
REV. MRS G. R. KING

NE3

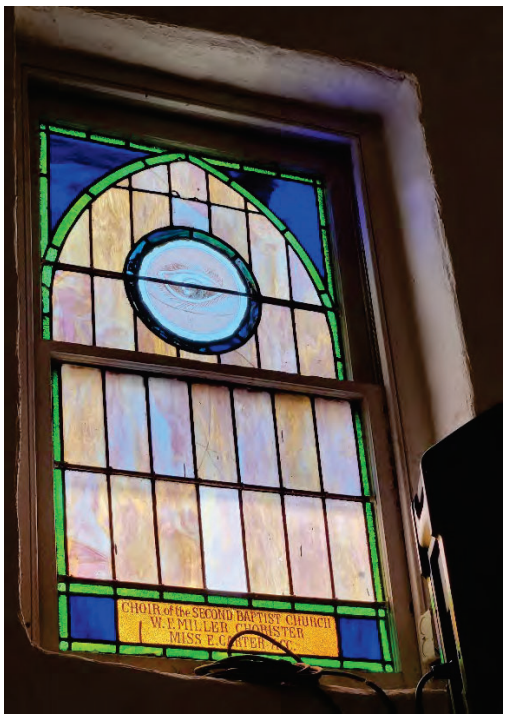
This window is entirely obscured by the organ.

NE4

SE1



SE2



SE3

SE4

STAINED GLASS KEY – NORTHWEST (NW) AND SOUTHWEST (SW) FAÇADES

STAINED GLASS KEY – NORTHEAST (NE) FAÇADE

STAINED GLASS KEY - SOUTHEAST (SE) FAÇADE

Section 7 – Significance

Criterion J: Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

The Second Baptist Church of Frankford at 1800-04 Wilmot Street is one of the oldest active Black churches in Frankford, having originated as a mission church in 1869. Since then, the church has served as one of the cornerstones of Frankford's Black community, serving the religious needs of the neighborhood while also taking a leadership role in the political, social, and economic needs of the community. Like other historically Black churches, Second Baptist served as more than a place of worship. With much of the public sphere restricted to Black Americans, if not off limits entirely, at various points throughout American history, churches took an outsized role in Black communities. The activity of Second Baptist's ministers and congregants have changed according to the prevailing needs of the community. As a result of Second Baptist Church of Frankford's long and active role in Frankford's history, it possesses significance as defined under Criterion J, exemplifying the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community and should be listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, pursuant to Section 14-1004(1) of the Philadelphia Code.

Early Years – 1869 to c.1920

The current church building was constructed in 1924-25 on a site used by the church since 1905, and remains in use to the present, but the congregation's history dates to 1869. That year, a small group (between twelve and twenty-seven, depending on the source) of Black congregants at Frankford Baptist Church opted to form a mission church to serve Frankford's Black Baptist community.[1] While the stated motives for forming the mission church are not known, it was common in Philadelphia for Black church members to form their own congregations as they often experienced discrimination and marginalization within predominantly white congregations. Throughout the nineteenth and well into the twentieth

[1] Orrin Evans, "Second Baptist Church, Frankford…," *Afro-American* (Baltimore, Md.), June 6, 1933, p. 4; "Frankford Congregation Plans 100th Anniversary," *The Philadelphia Tribune* (hereafter, *Tribune*), April 12, 1969, p. 26; "Synopsis or Sketch of the History of the Second Baptist Church – 1869-1951," in 82nd Anniversary Pamphlet for Second Baptist Church of Frankford (1951), Second Baptist Church of Frankford collections (hereafter SBC); "History of Second Baptist Church, Frankford," in Centennial Pamphlet for Second Baptist Church of Frankford," (1969), p. 2, SBC.

centuries, Frankford's Black community was small and formed a small proportion of Frankford's overall population.[2] According to the 1870 U.S. Census, the Black population of the 23rd Ward (which includes Frankford) numbered only a little more 600 out of total of 20,000.[3] The desire for an independent church to serve Frankford's Black Baptists is not difficult to imagine.[4]

The mission church's earliest years are not well-documented. Some sources claim the church met at a house on Plum Street, while others claim congregants took turns hosting chapel meetings and services.[5] It is also unclear when the church had its own ordained ministers. It appears that Frankford Baptist Church's white minister, Reverend Thomas P. Coulston served the mission chapel for at least a few years. On July 30th, 1871, Coulston is reported to have baptized several new members of the Frankford Baptist Church as well as "four colored persons…into the fellowship of the Mission Church of Frankford."[6] In 1881, the mission church moved towards independence from Frankford Baptist. That year, members of the church acquired a plot of land on the present site of 4641 Mulberry Street, on which to construct a church.[7] Reverend Warrick Rhue began a ministry with the church on May 1st, 1881, possibly becoming the congregation's first Black minister.[8] Around this time, the church began using the name "Second Baptist Church of Frankford," though it was not formally incorporated until 1892.[9] Two years later, a "little

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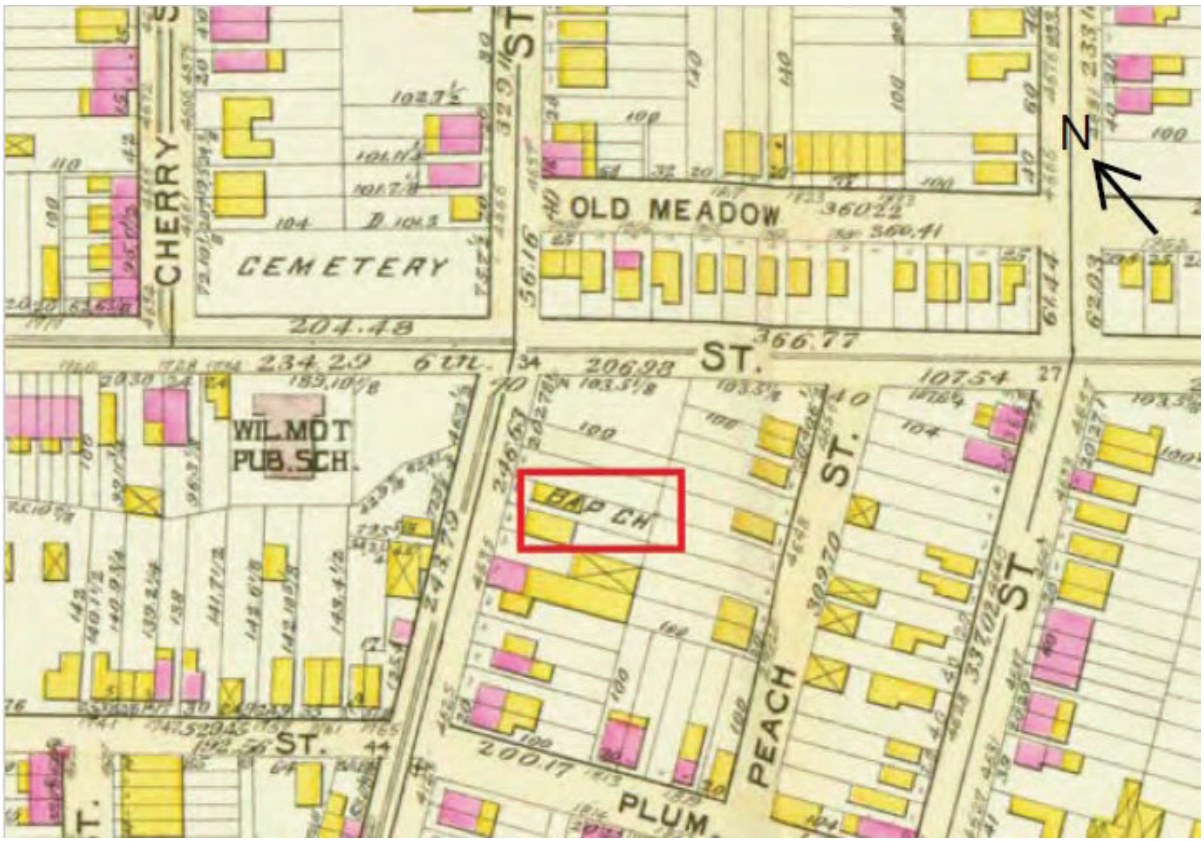
[2] Howard L. Barnes, ed., *A History of Frankford* (unpublished manuscript produced by Historical Society of Frankford, 1992), 176–179; Henry Willians and Robert Ulle, "Frankford, Philadelphia: A 19th Century Urban Black Community," *Pennsylvania Heritage* IV, no. 1. Philadelphia Historical and Museum Commission (1977): 2-8.
[3] Report of the Ninth Census – Volume I: The Statistics of the Population of the United States… (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1872), 254.
[4] For some general works on the history of America's and Philadelphia's early Black communities, see: W.E.B. du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1899); Gary B. Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720-1840* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 1988); Edward D. Smith, *Climbing Jacob's Ladder: The Rise of Black Churches in Eastern American Cities, 1740-1877* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988); Emily T. Cooperman and Matthew S. Hopper, NHRP Nomination, "African American Churches of Philadelphia, 1787-1949," 2010.
[5] "Synopsis or Sketch of the History of the Second Baptist Church," in 82nd Anniversary Pamphlet, SBC; "History of Second Baptist Church, Frankford," in Centennial Pamphlet, p. 2, SBC.
[6] *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (hereafter, *Inquirer*), August 5, 1871, p. 2.
[7] Deed, July 18, 1881, Thomas Castor to Edward, *et al* (trustees of Second Baptist), rec. July 13, 1883 in J.O.D., bk 136, p. 161. Unless otherwise noted, all deeds prior to 1974 obtained from City of Philadelphia Dept. of Records' Historical Land Records and Vitals database. All deeds 1974 and later obtained from City of Philadelphia Dept. of Records PhilaDox website, https://epayss.phila-records.com/web/.
[8] *Inquirer*, April 29, 1881, p. 2. Later articles and church pamphlets list names of other pastors, but their biographical details have not been researched.
[9] Date of incorporation included in, Deed, June 12, 1903, Samuel L. Washington, *et al*., to Second Baptist Church of Frankford, rec. June 27, 1903 in W.S.V. bk 184, p. 331.

chapel" was completed for Second Baptist on the Mulberry Street lot and was dedicated on 30 September.[10]



[11]

Image 15. 1894 Bromley Atlas excerpt showing location of "Little Chapel" used by Second Baptist from c.1883–1905 (philageohistory.org). Note: cardinal directions on all maps are approximate.

[10] "Religious Notes of Interest Concerning the Different Denominations," *Inquirer*, September 28, 1883, p. 3.
[11] Map excerpt from, George W. and Walter S. Bromley, *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia* Vol. 13 (Philadelphia: G.W. Bromley and Co., 1894), accessed from philageohistory.org.

[12]

Image 16. 1920 Bromley Atlas excerpt showing location of original church at 1800 Wilmot St location (philageohistory.org).

By the late 1890s, Second Baptist began its move away from the little chapel to its current location. In October 1899, Second Baptist purchased a lot at the corner of Mulberry and Meadow Streets (along Mulberry Street between Meadow and Wilmot Streets) for $700.[13] According to the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Second Baptist's Reverend J.W. Pierson presided over a groundbreaking for a new church at the lot on Thanksgiving Day of 1901. The prospective new

[12] Map excerpt from, George W. and Walter S. Bromley, *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia: 23rd & 41st Wards* (Philadelphia: G.W. Bromley and Co., 1920), accessed from philageohistory.org.
[13] Deed, October 5, 1899, Robert Blum Building Association to the Second Baptist Church of Frankford, rec. October 19, 1899, J.V., bk 92, p. 138.

church was reportedly intended to seat 700 congregants and cost $8,000.[14] However, that church building was apparently not built. According to the *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide* architect Herman Miller created plans for a one-story brick church for Second Baptist in 1904.[15] Builder James W. Orr undertook construction of a 30' by 54' brick church in 1905.[16] Beginning June 17th, 1906. Reverend John W. Coffey Jr., Second Baptist's pastor since 1899, oversaw a week's worth of dedication ceremonies which were attended by ministers from other churches throughout the city.[17] The church occupied the northwestern half, approximately, of the site on which the current church sits.

Image 17. Likely colorized print of photograph of 1905-06 building, under construction. c. 1905-06. Courtesy of Second Baptist Church of Frankford.

[14] "Broke Ground for Church," January 29, 1901, *Inquirer,* p. 2.
[15] *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide* (hereafter, *PRERBG*) v. 19, September 29, 1903, p. 621. All *PRERBG* citations accessed from https://philageohistory.org/BuildersGuide/.
[16] *Inquirer*, April 26, 1905, p. 6; *PRERBG*, v. 20, May 3, 1905, p. 283.
[17] "Dedication of Baptist Church," *Inquirer*, June 18, 1906, p. 16.

Image 18. Photograph of the completed 1905 Second Baptist Church of Frankford. Date unknown. Courtesy of the Frankford Historical Society.

Second Baptist was located squarely within the historic confines of Frankford's Black community, an area bordered roughly by Foulkrod Street, Kinsey Street, Tackawanna Street, and Paul Street.[18] Moreover, the church shared the intersection of Mulberry Street and Meadow Street with the Wilmot Secondary School–Colored, a Black public school often referred to simply as the "Wilmot School," the Free Burying Ground of Frankford, a burial ground for early Black residents of Frankford across Mulberry Street from the school.[19] Some early members of the Second Baptist Church were interred at the Free Burying Ground.[20] Second Baptist would go on to have a significant relationship with the Wilmot School. For a period of time in the early

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[18] Henry Willians and Robert Ulle, "Frankford, Philadelphia: A 19th Century Urban Black Community," *Pennsylvania Heritage* IV, no. 1. Philadelphia Historical and Museum Commission (1977): 5.
[19] Both the Wilmot School and Free Burying Ground are listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. See "Nomination of The David Wilmot Public School to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places," address 1736 Meadow Street, at Philadelphia Historical Commission (PHC) files, and "Nomination of The Free Burying Ground of Frankford to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places," address 1801 Meadow Street, PHC files.
[20] William Chippey, an early trustee of Second Baptist Church, was interred at the Burial Ground in 1891. See Free Burying Ground of Frankford nomination, p. 5.

twentieth century, the City of Philadelphia rented Second Baptist's basement for use by the Wilmot School.[21] Decades later, in the 1950s, Second Baptist would purchase the Wilmot School building, which it continues to own and use as a community center to the present. The Wilmot School was added to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places in 2016 and the Burying Ground was added in 2021.

J.C. KING PASTORSHIP AND NEW CONSTRUCTION

In 1916, Reverend John C. King began a tenure as pastor at Second Baptist Church of Frankford that would last until his death in 1957.[22] King was already an experienced minister, having already spent twenty-three years as pastor at St. Paul Baptist Church in West Chester, Pennsylvania. King was born in Maryland before moving to the Philadelphia-area in the late-nineteenth century.[23] Georgene King, his wife, also an ordained minister who maintained an active ministry at Second Baptist until her death in 1958.[24] Under the Kings' tenure, Second Baptist's congregation expanded and cemented an ethos of community service and leadership in Frankford that has been sustained to the present.

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[21] See David Wilmot School nomination, p. 35.
[22] *Tribune,* June 17, 1916, p. 7; "Synopsis or Sketch of the History of the Second Baptist Church," SBC.
[23] Details of King's birth date and place vary across the records. His gravestone and obituary provide a birth year of 1846, making him 111 years-old at his time of death. However, King according to the ages provided for him in the US Census in 1900, 1910, and 1920, King's birth year would be around 1865. He is also listed as 55 years-old in both 1920 and 1930. He is listed as 70 years-old in 1950, just 7 years prior to his death. Some sources imply, but do not confirm, that he may have been born into slavery: "Hear Philadelphia's Oldest Active Pastor: From the slave fields to the pulpit, Rev. Dr. J.C. King," *The Mercury* (Pottstown, Pa.), March 13, 1942, p. 11.
[24] "Rev. Mrs. King Feted on 25th Anniversary," *Tribune*, October 31, 1940, p. 15.

Image 19. Rev. Dr. John C. King (left) and Rev. Georgine R. King (right). Images from 1951 "82nd Anniversary" pamphlet, courtesy of Second Baptist Church of Frankford.

Reverend Georgine King helped institute many of the women-led activities of Second Baptist that are still in place. Her most lasting impact was the institution of an annual Women's Day at the church. The concept was first proposed by Nannie Helen Burrough in 1906 to the National Baptist Convention, whereby the women of each congregation would annually a hold a dedicated service and raise funds for the church. Reverend Georgine King is credited with having held the first Women's Day at Second Baptist in 1918.[25]

One of Reverend J.C. King's first major tasks was overseeing the construction of a new church building even though the congregation had invested significant time and money into a new edifice just ten years prior to King's arrival. In 1920, Second Baptist purchased the property immediately adjacent to the 1905-06 church on which to expand.[26] In 1923, Second Baptist's congregation hired architects R.R. Neely and E. William Martin to design a new church building. Initial bids for contractors specified the church would be constructed of brick and stucco with a

[25] "Seventieth Annual Women's Day Services," pamphlet, November 6, 1988, SBC.
[26] Deed, November 1, 1920, Frank Stewart, *et ux, et al* to Horace Givens, *et al* (Trustees of Second Baptist), rec. November 29, 1920, J.M.H, bk 1029, p. 232.

slate roof.[27] In August 1923, Felix Claro of 5349 Webster Street, Philadelphia, was reported to have obtained a contract to build the new church.[28] However, the details changed several times before construction began. In April 1924, it was reported again that Claro had a contract for the church, but it was now stone and stucco.[29] Finally, in October 1924, it was announced that the firm Jones & Williams of 72nd and Woodland Avenue, Philadelphia, had been contracted to construct the church, now described as 50' by 56' out of stone with slate roof.[30] It is unclear if these changes occurred prior to the start of construction or if the changes occurred at some point during construction. Construction began in 1924 and was completed the following year at a cost of $30,000.[31]

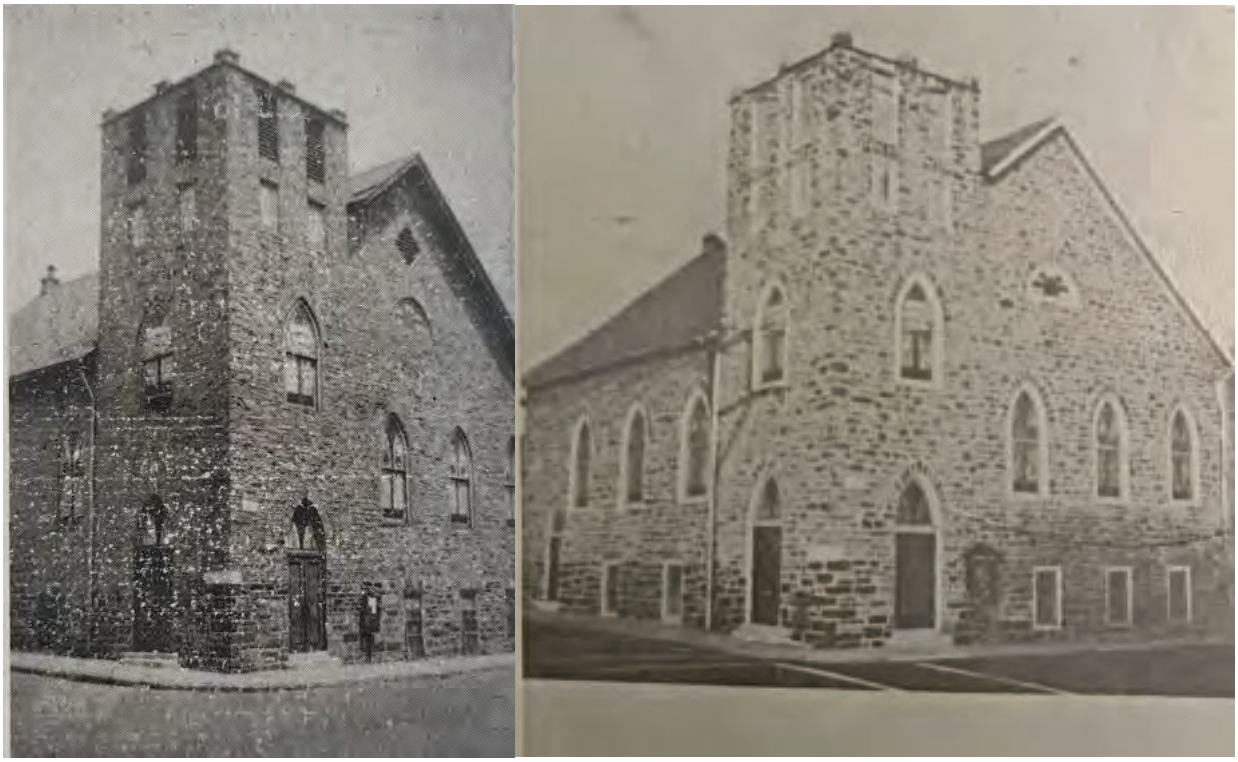

Image 20. Left is 2nd Baptist from 1951 "82nd Anniversary" pamphlet. Right is 2nd Baptist from 1969 "Centennial" anniversary pamphlet. Courtesy of Second Baptist Church of Frankford.

Although the new church was situated in the same location, the new edifice signaled the church's rising status in Frankford. Though it is of a relatively simple design with features

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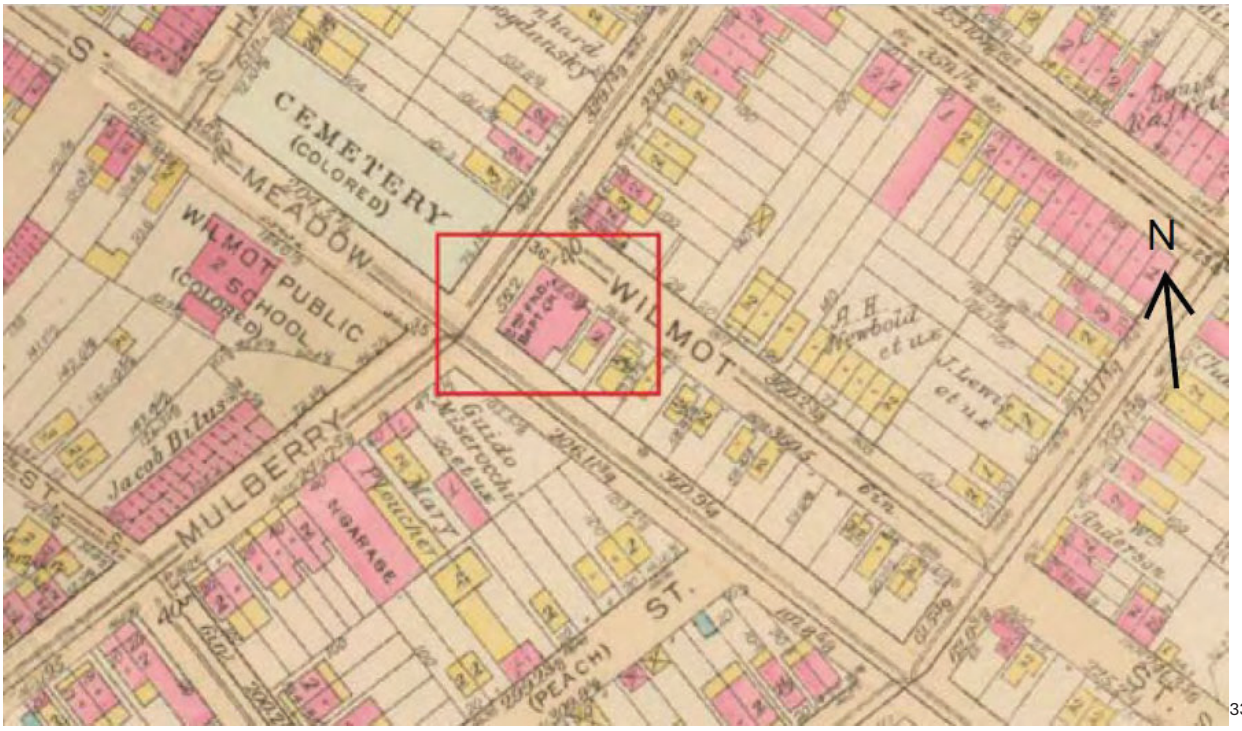
[27] *PRERBG* v. 38, July 4, 1923, p. 421; *PRERBG* v. 38, July 25, 1923, p. 469.
[28] *PRERBG* v. 38, August 29, 1923, p. 555.
[29] *PRERBG* v. 39, April 16, 1924, p. 246.
[30] *PRERBG* v. 39, October 1, 1924, p. 635.
[31] "Church Building for Year is Record," *Inquirer*, November 2, 1924, p. 50; "Frankford News," *Tribune*, February 7, 1925, p. 12.

common in church buildings, the tower, stone construction, and custom stained glass all signal an established church with intention to serve its community. Indeed, the stained glass serves as evidence of Second Baptist's commitment to its community. Most windows honor individuals and families who have served the congregation, including references to "founders," tributes to the church's deacons, trustees, and choir. Others demonstrate the church's connections to the wider Christian and Baptist community, such as the Sunday School Union. Some windows appear to commemorate congregants' military service. One window shows the name of Lemuel Clark with an image of a soldier. Clark served in World War I with the U.S. Army's 813th Pioneer Infantry Regiment, an all-Black unit that served in France in 1918.[32]



[33]

Image 21. 1929 Bromley Atlas map showing the 1924-1925 Second Baptist Church building (philageohistory.org).

[32] Veteran's Compensation Application, Lemuel Clark, February 15, 1934, provided by Ancestry.com. *Pennsylvania, U.S., World War I Veterans Service and Compensation Files, 1917-1919, 1934-1948* [original held by Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission]. Another window for "Robert Lewis & Family" has a similar image of a solider, while one for "William Thompson & Family" has a fouled anchor. I was unable to locate military records either of these individuals or family members.

[33] Map excerpt from, George W. and Walter S. Bromley, *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia: 23rd & 41st Wards* (Philadelphia: G.W. Bromley and Co., 1929), accessed from philageohistory.org.

Another testament to the church's importance to its community can be seen in the congregation's financing of the new church building. Fourteen individuals, forming ten households, are commemorated by a plaque in the church for having "Pledged Their Homes in 1924 to Make the Erection of this Church Possible." The plaque was dedicated in 1946. According to U.S. Census records, only one of the individuals was born in Pennsylvania. The rest were born in Maryland, Virginia, Georgia, and Kentucky, showing how Frankford was influenced by the migration of Black Americans from the southern United States.[34] The occupations reported in the census records also indicate an almost uniformly working-class group. The listed occupations include factory laborers and various types of domestic service.

[34] While it is tempting to simply attribute this to the Great Migration, well underway by the 1920s, many of the individuals listed on the plaque had lived in Frankford or the Philadelphia-region for decades. Complete biographical details of each individual has not been researched, but the birthplaces of these individuals shows how impactful the steady migration northward of Black Americans since the abolition of slavery had been on Frankford. See Willians and Ulle, "Frankford, Philadelphia: A 19th Century Urban Black Community," and Frederic Miller, "The Black Migration to Philadelphia: a 1924 Profile," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 108, no. 3 (July 1984): 315-350. For some works on the Great Migration's impact on Black churches and religion, see Milton C. Sernett, *Bound for the Promised Land: African American Religion and the Great Migration* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997); Stephen Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South, from Slavery to the Great Migration* (Cambridge, Ma: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003).

That these individuals risked their modest personal property demonstrates the importance that the congregants placed in supporting the church.[35]

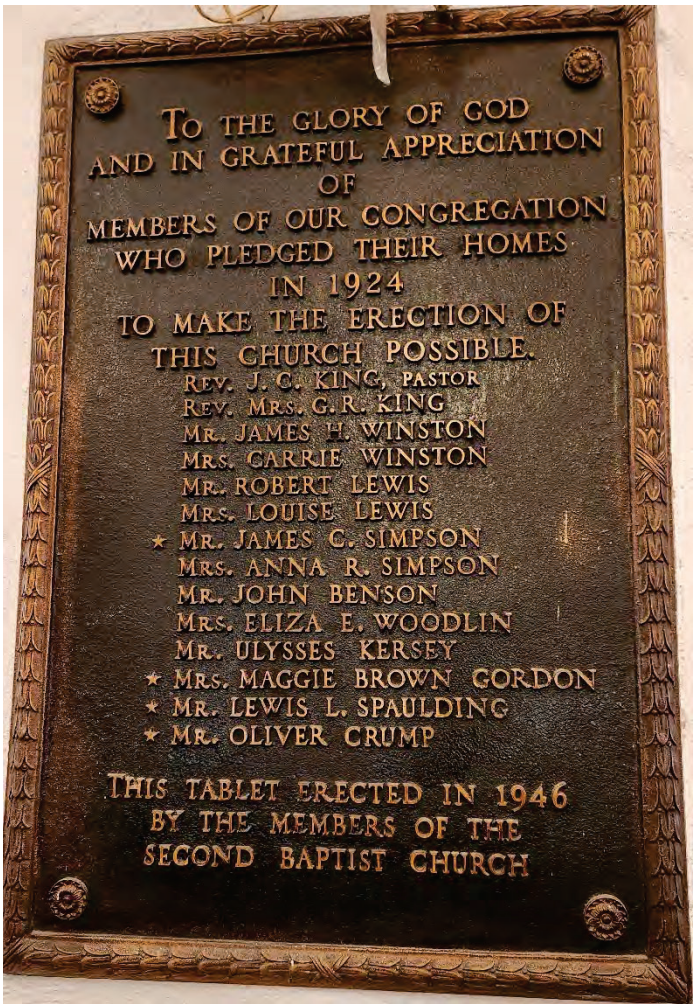


Image 22. 1946 plaque commemorating the congregants who helped finance the construction of Second Baptist in 1924. Photograph by nominator, 2026.

[35] Biographical information drawn from 1920 and 1930 U.S. Census, provided by Ancestry.com.

Image 23. John Benson (left) and Carrie Winston (right). Both were among those who pledged their homes in 1924. Dates unknown. Courtesy of Second Baptist Church of Frankford.

Image 24. Anna C. Simpson (left) and Maggie Brown Gordon (right). Both were among those who pledged their homes in 1924. Dates unknown. Courtesy of Second Baptist Church of Frankford.

After the church was completed, no bank would provide a permanent mortgage using the church itself as collateral, leaving the congregants homes in jeopardy should the church's

finances suffer. Amid the turmoil of the Great Depression, the First National Bank of Darby, who held Second Baptist's loan, closed during the banking crisis in 1933 without clarity about the bank's future. Second Baptist decided to keep making regular payments on the loan until the bank's affairs were sorted out. Second Baptist's treasurer, James H. Winston, was able to negotiate a one-time final payment of $6,000 to settle the $32,000 debt remaining. Winston claimed that the church had built goodwill with the bank's receiver by continuing to make payments. The negotiation ensured the financial stability of both the church and its congregants.[36]

Image 25. James H. Winston, date unknown. Image from 82nd Anniversary pamphlet. Courtesy of Second Baptist Church of Frankford.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Second Baptist was active in partisan politics. In 1927, Second Baptist held a public meeting in support of Black politician Edward W. Henry's retention as a city magistrate.[37] In 1928, Emma B. Jordan sponsored a meeting, held at Second Baptist, of the

[36] "Synopsis or Sketch of the History of the Second Baptist Church," SBC; "Church Honors Veteran Deacon on Retirement," *Tribune*, December 14, 1954, p. 12.
[37] "Henry Gains Endorsement of "Gang,"" *Tribune*, September 15, 1927, p. 1; "Edward W. Henry; Retired Philadelphia Magistrate was a Negro Political Leader," *New York Times*, February 4, 1946, p. 22.

"Women's Division of the Active Republican Workers Association" in support of Herbert Hoover's presidential campaign.[38] Two years later, Reverend J.C. King was a member of the Minister's Division of Gifford Pinchot's reelection for Pennsylvania governor. Church treasurer and deacon James H. Winston led a meeting to support Pinchot's campaign on behalf of the Minister's Division at the church.[39]

Outside of political activities, Second Baptist was active in various social and community events. The church often hosted musical performances, often from its own choir though performers from throughout the region commonly performed. The church regularly participated in Emancipation Day events (in this case in January, in commemoration of President Abraham Lincoln's issuing the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863), often in coordination with other churches. As part of Emancipation Day celebrations in 1935, the church hosted Nannie Helen Burroughs, of the National Training School for Women and Girls, of Washington, D.C., and reportedly collected substantial donations for the school. The school was founded by Burroughs under the National Baptist Convention's auspices in 1909 to provide general and vocational education to Black women.[40]

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[38] "Women's Division Very Active in Hoover-Curtis Campaign," *Tribune*, October 11, 1928, p. 1.
[39] "Sees Upset in Election in This City," *Tribune*, October 23, 1930, p. 1.
[40] "Emancipation Observed in Ceremonies Throughout City and State of New Jersey," *Tribune*, January 3, 1935, p. 10. https://www.nps.gov/places/national-training-school-for-women-and-girls.htm.

Image 26. 1938 photograph of candlelight service at Second Baptist Church. Courtesy of Second Baptist Church of Frankford.

During the 1940s, Second Baptist made several changes to accommodate the church's growth and prosperity. In 1944, the existing pipe organ was added as was a balcony and additional pews.[41] Two years later, the church purchased the lot, 1808 Wilmot St, immediately adjacent to the church.[42] The church purchased 1812 Wilmot St in 1956 as well.[43] Both were acquired to allow for possible expansion of the building, though it would be decades before an addition was ever constructed.

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[41] "Synopsis or Sketch of the History of the Second Baptist Church," SBC.
[42] Deed, May 10, 1946, Andrew and Zelle Henry, and Melchior Henry to Second Baptist Church of Frankford, rec. August 13, 1946, C.J.P. 1398, p. 397.
[43] Deed, May 21, 1956, Mabel Thomas to Second Baptist Church of Frankford, rec. May 23, 1956, C.A.B. 295, p. 44.

The Second Baptist Church of Frankford underwent a significant generational change during the 1950s. James H. Winston, a longtime deacon and treasurer of the church, stepped back from his leadership roles.[44] Reverend Georgine R. King died in 1956.[45] Reverend J.C. King, the pastor since 1916, stepped away from active ministerial duties in the early 1950s before passing in 1957.[46] According to his obituary, he lived to be 111 years-old, although records detailing his age throughout his life varied widely.

Reverend J.C. King's death prompted some turmoil in the church. Reverend William H. Anderson had been effectively leading Second Baptist after King stepped back. After King's death, Anderson assumed the role as King's successor, but a substantial portion of the congregation opposed his ministry. They held Anderson responsible for a drop in attendance and claimed he responded to criticism with threats of violence. The congregation moved to hold a vote to oust Anderson and select a minister. Anderson filed a lawsuit to oppose the move.[47] In the end, a court-appointed master oversaw an election whereby Anderson was removed from the pulpit, by a vote of 260 to 82.[48] Despite the decisive election result, Anderson's supporters believed the ouster unfair and a number of them left the congregation. They went on to establish Northeast Baptist Church, which still operates in Frankford to this day.[49] Turbulence within the congregation at Second Baptist did not last long, however. Reverend George N. Kenner took over the church in 1958 and remained there until he retired in 2006.[50]

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[44] "Church Honors Veteran Deacon on Retirement," *Tribune*, December 14, 1954, p. 12.
[45] Obituary, "Rev. Georgine Rice King," *Inquirer*, December 14, 1956, p. 56.
[46] "Fete Pastor On Birthday Anniversary," *Tribune*, April 4, 1953, p. 5; "Washington Pastor Eulogist for Veteran Fkd. Pastor," *Tribune*, October 19, 1957, p. 8; "John Charles King, 111, Frankford Pastor, Dies," *Inquirer,* October 11, 1957, p. 44.
[47] "Pastor Stands Pat as 350 Members Seek to Bar Him From Taking Pulpit," *Tribune*, February 11, 1958, p. 1.
[48] "Pastor Voted Out Pulpit Needs Blood in Hospital," *Tribune*, March 22, 1958, p. 1.
[49] "Hundreds at Recognition Ceremonies of Northeast Bapt. Church in Frankford," *Tribune*, June 14, 1958, p. 9.
[50] "Frankford Pastor Marks First Year," *Tribune*, July 18, 1959, p. 9.

CHURCH FIGHT GOES TO COURT: These church members are but a few of the more than 100 persons who packed Common Pleas Court No. 5 last Friday. The Rev. William H. Anderson, pastor of Frankford's 2nd Baptist Church, was seeking an injunction to prevent certain members of his congregation from holding an election in an attempt to vote him out of the pulpit. Members opposed to the Rev Mr. Anderson claim they could muster more than 350 votes out of the 450-strong congregation to oust him from the pulpit.

Pastor Stands Pat As 350 Members Seek To Bar Him From Taking Pulpit

Image 27. Philadelphia Tribune excerpt, February 11, 1958.

LEADING FRANKFORD THROUGH THE 1950s – 2000s

Under Reverends Anderson, and especially Kenner, Second Baptist's role as a community leader evolved in response to new challenges in Frankford. When King took over in 1916, Second Baptist dealt with a period of growth and community formation as the congregation steadily expanded. By the 1950s, church leaders became active in solving community challenges related to urban redevelopment and revitalization, civil rights initiatives, and rising crime and poverty. Church leaders became *de facto* political leaders and community

representatives often speaking on behalf of Frankford's Black community, not just their congregants.[51]

Image 28. Rev. George N. Kenner, 2nd Baptist pastor from 1958 - 2007. Image from 1979 anniversary pamphlet, courtesy of Second Baptist Church of Frankford.

In 1953, the Philadelphia Housing Authority released plans for the Whitehall public housing project in Frankford, which called for extensive demolition of houses along the 4700 block of Tackawanna Street, just two blocks to the northeast of Second Baptist. Reverend Anderson, still an associate pastor at Second Baptist, led a community group in opposition to the project. The group claimed that the Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA) had not been

[51] For some work on the role of Black churches in civil rights in the mid-to-late 20th century see C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1990); Cooperman and Hopper, "African American Churches of Philadelphia, 1787-1949," 2010; Kendra H. Barber, "Whither Shall We Go? The Past and Present of Black Churches and the Public Sphere," *Religions* 6, no. 1 (2015): 245-265.

transparent about the process, had not provided adequate assurances about compensation to those displaced from their homes, especially for homeowners, and the group objected to the fact that nearly all of house's slated for demolition belonged to Black owners, many of whom were residents. In response to the opposition, the PHA scaled back the scope of the development and pledged to utilize more vacant properties.[52]

While Second Baptist had supported and hosted meetings and events for community benefit, the congregation drastically expanded its role in the community with the purchase of old Wilmot School in 1957.[53] Second Baptist had become involved in neighborhood efforts to confront youth "delinquency" and crime.[54] Initially, Second Baptist considered selling the school to another community group for use as a community center but eventually renovated the space itself.[55] The new center was dedicated in 1960 and became known as the J.C. King Community Education Center, in honor of Second Baptist's former minister. Within months of its opening, the center was praised for having already proven valuable to Frankford's youth, already hosting several scouting groups and forming other groups to provide activities for children. The center was also used to provide services and recreation for older Frankford residents.[56] In 1961, Myers and former Second Baptist minister Anderson claimed that Christian Education programs, such as those held at the J.C. King Center were responsible for a reported eighteen-percent drop in juvenile delinquency in Frankford.[57]

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[52] "Frankford Residents Fighting New Project," *Tribune,* February 14, 1953, p. 14; "Frankford Housing Project Faces Cut Due to Protests," *Tribune*, February 28, 1953, p. 3.
[53] Deed, August 28, 1957, John M/ Marquess, Lodge No. 1017, I.B.P.O.E. of W. of Frankford Inc. to Second Baptist Church of Frankford, rec. April 7, 1958, C.A.B. 767, p. 589.
[54] "Frankford Joins in Delinquency Fight," *Tribune,* September 14, 1957, p. 20.
[55] "Citizens Band to Gain Center," *Inquirer,* July 20, 1958, p. 42.
[56] "Church Center Fills Void in Frankford Area," and "Boy Scout Charter for Frankford Church," *Tribune*, January 21, 1961, p. 8.
[57] "Church Programs Pace Drop in Youth Crime," *Tribune*, June 27, 1961, p. 3.

Image 29. The J.C. King Community Education Center, former Wilmot School. Image is from July 29, 2025, cyclomedia.phila.gov.

Aside from direct community service and recreation, Second Baptist became increasingly active in civil rights efforts. In 1964, Second Baptist hosted Cecil B. Moore, president of the Philadelphia chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), who addressed efforts related to integration in Philadelphia.[58] Two years later, Revered Kenner and Reverend Donis Myers, associate pastor at Second Baptist, joined a committee of twelve Frankford ministers in response to an incident of police brutality against Black citizens after Philadelphia police broke up a party in Frankford. The ministers demanded a more thorough investigation and reforms to policing, including assignment of more Black police officers to Frankford.[59] In 1968, Myers became the first president of the Northeast Philadelphia

[58] "Moore Explains Integration Plan for Northeast," *Inquirer,* May 25, 1964, p. 3.
[59] "Negro Clerics Pledged Report on Brutality," *Inquirer,* March 17, 1961, p. 61; "Melee at Interracial Party Topic of Frankford Meeting," *Tribune*, March 19, 1966, p. 5.

branch of the NAACP, which was created as the Philadelphia chapter of the NAACP was divided into five chapters so as to allow greater focus on local matters.[60]

Housing and revitalization of Frankford became major areas of concern for Second Baptist's community efforts. When Kenner was named head of the Frankford Ministerium (an interdenominational group of churches who collaborated on social work for the community and often held joint religious services) in 1963, he was named as head of the Frankford Ministerium. Kenner made combatting housing discrimination a top priority for the group. Before beginning a second stint as head of the ministerium in 1992, Kenner recalled being motivated by the experience of white realtors refusing to sell him a house in certain neighborhoods after he took over the pastorship of Second Baptist.[61] Going further, in 1964, Kenner and Myers helped found the East Frankford Civic Association, aimed primarily to address housing issues in Frankford, including discrimination, combat blight, and support renters' rights. The group was active in pressing officials to pursue useful redevelopment of Frankford.[62]

As chairman of the East Frankford Housing and Community Association, Kenner became intensively involved in housing and redevelopment efforts for Frankford. In 1969, Kenner led the association in the creation of a study and comprehensive proposal for Frankford's redevelopment to submit to government officials and guide businesses and non-profits. This proposal included items that Second Baptist had been involved in previously, such as more support for refurbishing vacant housing and building new housing on vacant lots to help low-income families. It also included actions that Second Baptist had undertaken itself, such as creating more recreational and community spaces for use by residents.[63] The association also collaborated with a non-profit created by the Abington Friends Meeting, in cooperation with the Northeast Chamber of Commerce, to take advantage of various government programs to construct new housing for sale to low-income buyers and to rehabilitate existing housing throughout Frankford.[64]

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[60] "First Meeting of Northeast NAACP Is Broken Up by Young Militants," *Tribune*, March 26, 1968, p. 24; "The NAACP, 21 years later," *Inquirer,* January 15, 1989, p. 4-NE; Obituary, "Rev. Donis Myers Sr., pastor in Frankford," *Philadelphia Daily News* (hereafter *Daily News*), October 13, 1998, p. 56.
[61] "Pastor who faced down bias takes reins again," *Daily News*, October 3, 1993, p. 13.
[62] "E. Frankford to Form Civic Group Tuesday," *Inquirer,* January 26, 1964, p. 14; "E. Frankford Civic Group Hears Panel," *Tribune*, February 4, 1964, p. 9.
[63] "Attack on Blight Being Formed in Frankford," *Inquirer,* January 12, 1969, p. 195.
[64] "East Frankford Hails House Improvements Outlined by Quakers," *Inquirer,* January 16, 1969, p. 55.

CITY SALUTES CHURCH CENTENNIAL—The 100th anniversary of Second Baptist Church of Frankford, 1801 Meadow st., is marked at City Hall as (from left) Deputy Mayor Charles Bowser presents citation to church committeewomen Mrs. Susie Lewis, Mrs. Ann Carter and the church pastor, The Rev. George N. Kenner.

Daily News Photo by Charles Myers

Image 30. The J.C. King Community Education Center, former Wilmot School. Image is from July 29, 2025, cyclomedia.phila.gov.

Kenner led the association during its involvement with the "Meadow Gardens" housing development (located along Plum Street, behind the J.C. King Center). The association coordinated with the HOPE Development Corporation to plan a series of single-family houses for sale to low-income buyers under Federal Housing Act guidelines. In 1970, Philadelphia City Council passed an ordinance allowing the Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA) to request funds to purchase land needed for the development. At the same time, Kenner was asked to form a committee of area ministers to serve as a screening panel for eventual homebuyers.[65] Eventually, the Philadelphia Housing and Development Corporation (PHDC) took over

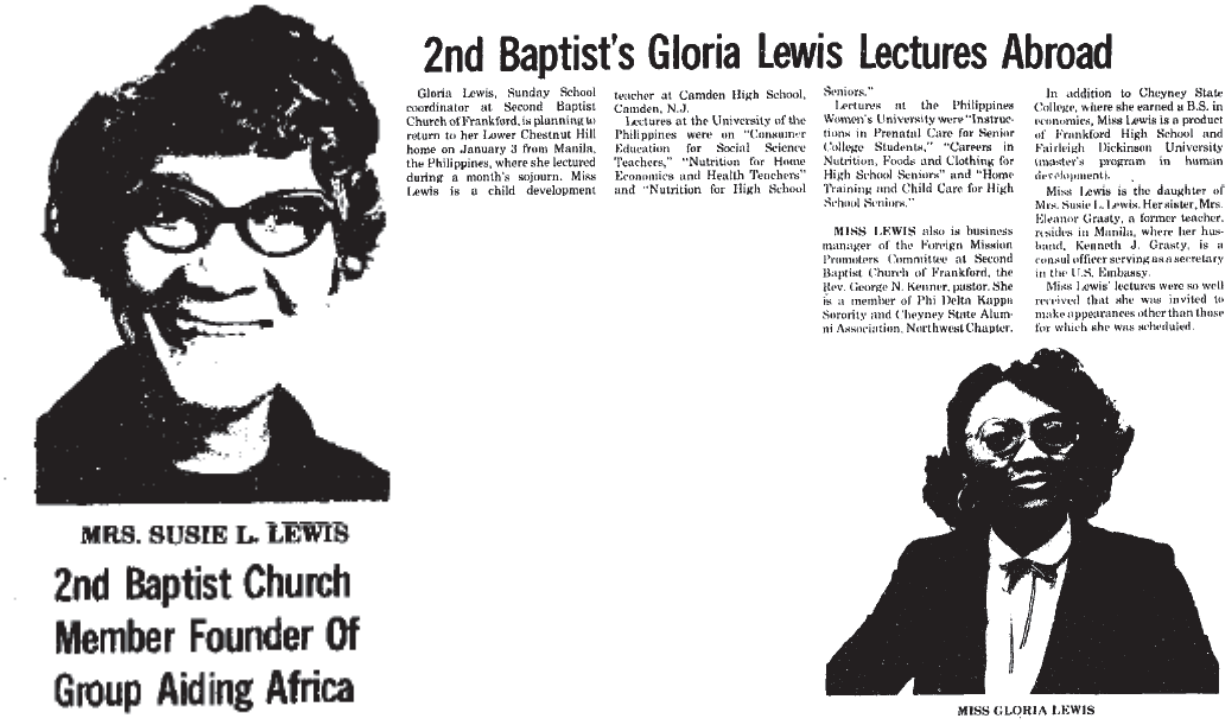
[65] *Inquirer*, March 19, 1970, p. 70; "East Frankford to Fight Council's Bill to Reduce Nonprofit Redevelopment," *Inquirer*, April 30, 1970; "Housing Association Forced to Regroup in East Frankford," *Inquirer*, May 21, 1970, p. 11; "Changes Sought in Design of Meadow Gardens Area," *Inquirer*, July 16, 1970, p. 64; "Plans to Be Shown Monday For Meadow Gardens Units," *Inquirer,* June 18, 1970, p. 76; "Frankford Gets Preview of Meadow Gardens Plan," *Inquirer*, July 2, 1970, p. 12.

development, construction, and sale of the properties, though Kenner and the association remained involved. The city's involvement reportedly came after recognizing unusually-stable homeownership among a core of Frankford's population. In 1975, Second Baptist sold the land immediately adjacent to the J.C. King Center to the PHDC for $10,000, on which several townhomes were built.[66]

Image 31. Excerpt, Philadelphia Inquirer, June 18, 1970.

[66] "$20,000 Houses Set for Frankford," *Daily News*, May 16, 1975, p. 50; "225-Year-Old Black Colony in E. Frankford," *Daily News,* July 16, 1976, p. 18.

Second Baptist Church also turned its attention farther afield. In 1970, Susie L. Lewis returned from a trip to Africa which inspired her to establish Second Baptist's Foreign Missions Promoters Committee. The committee was charged with raising funds to support the foreign mission activities of the National Baptist Conventions, mostly in Africa.[67] Susie's daughter, Gloria Lewis, also became involved in Second Baptist's Foreign Mission Promoters Committee as its business manager. Reverend Kenner also served on the National Baptist Convention's Foreign Mission Board, which helped steer the direction of funds.[68]



MRS. SUSIE L. LEWIS

2nd Baptist Church Member Founder Of Group Aiding Africa

2nd Baptist's Gloria Lewis Lectures Abroad

Gloria Lewis, Sunday School coordinator at Second Baptist Church of Frankford, is planning to return to her Lower Chestnut Hill home on January 3 from Manila, the Philippines, where she lectured during a month's sojourn. Miss Lewis is a child development teacher at Camden High School, Camden, N.J.

Lectures at the University of the Philippines were on "Consumer Education for Social Science Teachers," "Nutrition for Home Economics and Health Teachers" and "Nutrition for High School Seniors."

Lectures at the Philippines Women's University were "Instructions in Prenatal Care for Senior College Students," "Careers in Nutrition, Foods and Clothing for High School Seniors" and "Home Training and Child Care for High School Seniors."

MISS LEWIS also is business manager of the Foreign Mission Promoters Committee at Second Baptist Church of Frankford, the Rev. George N. Kenner, pastor. She is a member of Phi Delta Kappa Sorority and Cheyney State Alumni Association, Northwest Chapter.

In addition to Cheyney State College, where she earned a B.S. in economics, Miss Lewis is a product of Frankford High School and Fairleigh Dickinson University (master's program in human development).

Miss Lewis is the daughter of Mrs. Susie L. Lewis. Her sister, Mrs. Eleanor Grasty, a former teacher, resides in Manila, where her husband, Kenneth J. Grasty, is a consul officer serving as a secretary in the U.S. Embassy.

Miss Lewis' lectures were so well received that she was invited to make appearances other than those for which she was scheduled.

MISS GLORIA LEWIS

Image 32. Excerpts from Tribune, March 29, 1977 (left) and December 21, 1979 (right).

SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH OF FRANKFORD – STABILITY IN A CHANGING NEIGHBORHOOD

By the later 1980s, Second Baptist finally expanded the church, decades after purchasing land in 1946 and 1956 for that purpose. Since 1925, the church's own building held little space for events outside of the worship hall and some small basement rooms. Community events and

[67] "2nd Baptist Church Member Founder of Group Aiding Africa," *Tribune*, March 29, 1977, p. 18; "State Baptists Give Record Amount to Convention's Foreign Mission Board," *Tribune*, October 5, 1976, p. 6.
[68] "2nd Baptist's Gloria Lewis Lectures Abroad," *Tribune*, December 21, 1979, p. 19.

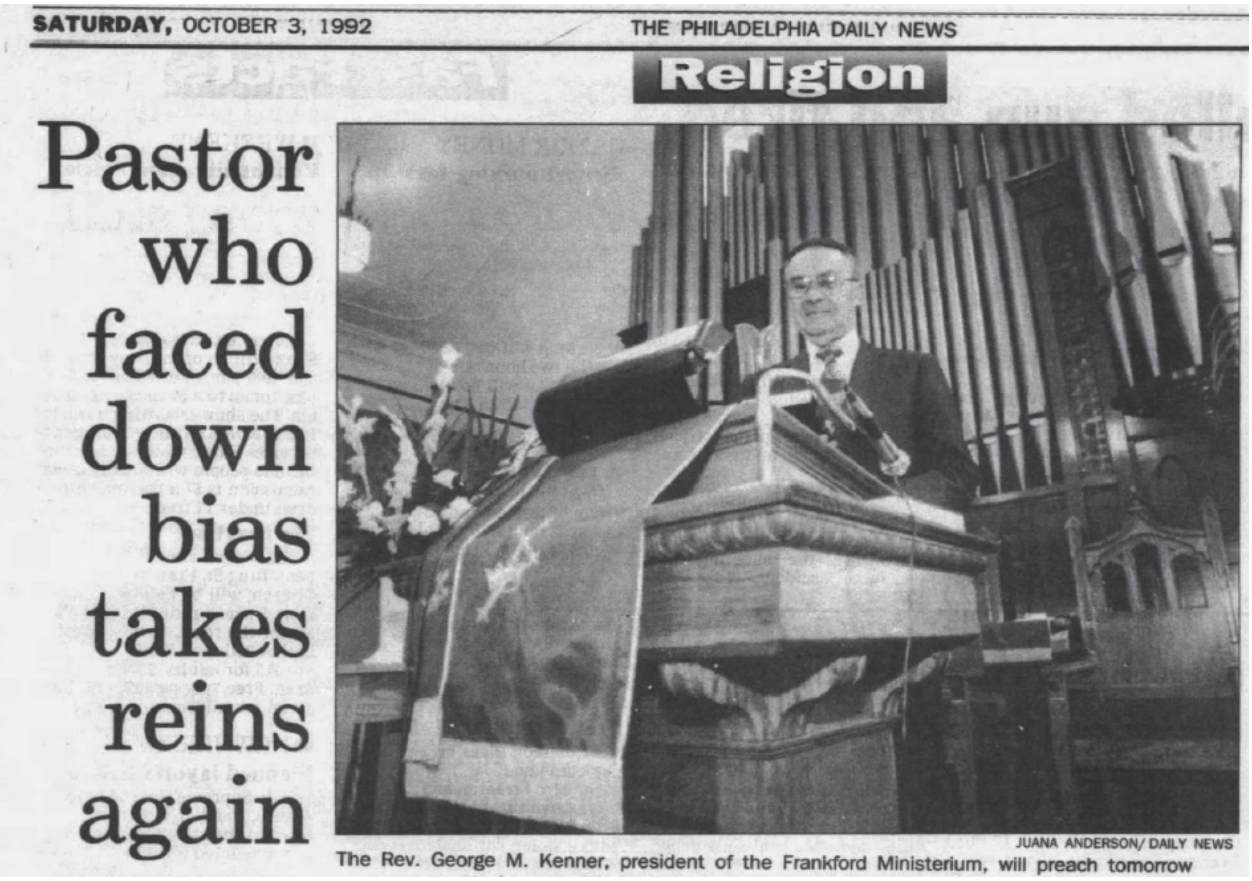
larger events often took place at the J.C. King Center. By the 1980s, the congregation decided the church itself could use more modern amenities. In 1989, construction was completed on a two-story addition, extending off the historic church's southeast façade, occupying 1808-12 Wilmot Ave. The addition provided additional offices, a kitchen, additional storage, and accessible entry into the historic church. It also included a new Fellowship Hall used for gatherings, meals, and other events. The extra space allowed for the church to hold additional programming, such as Sunday school and Bible study. As Second Baptist had done in the 1920, the addition was financed in large part by congregation members pledging their own homes to raise funds. A plaque honoring those who did so was dedicated in 1993.[69]

Image 33. 1993 plaque commemorating congregants who pledged their homes to fund the addition. Photograph taken by nominator.

The new addition did not represent an inward turn for the church. The church played a leading role in formal efforts to improve racial harmony in Frankford after a series of racist attacks on Black residents occurred in the late 1980s. It also undertook interfaith responses to drug addiction and crime that affected Frankford generally, especially with Reverend Kenner

[69] Second Baptist Church of Frankford 145th Church Anniversary, souvenir booklet, 2014, SBC; 1800-04 / 1808-12 Wilmot St, Zoning Archive records, PHC files.

again heading the Frankford Ministerium.[70] Other Second Baptist Church leaders, including associate pastor Darilyn Gordon and Donis Myers continued active work in community against issues such as law enforcement brutality against Black residents and drug addiction.[71] Additionally, the church directly provided social services to the community, including providing meals several times per month as well as transportation services for seniors.[72]



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 1992 THE PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS

Religion

Pastor who faced down bias takes reins again

JUANA ANDERSON/ DAILY NEWS

The Rev. George M. Kenner, president of the Frankford Ministerium, will preach tomorrow

Image 34. Rev. Kenner began a second stint at head of the Frankford Ministerium in 1992. Excerpt, Philadelphia Daily News, October 3, 1992, p. 13.

In 2007, Reverend George M. Kenner retired as minister of Second Baptist Church after forty-eight years as pastor.[73] Second Baptist Church of Frankford has prided itself as a source of stability and continuity in Frankford. By the end of Kenner's tenure, there had only been three

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[70] "Ecumenical service set," *Tribune*, October 2, 1992, p. 1C; "Pastor who faced down bias takes reins again," *Daily News*, October 3, 1992, p. 13.
[71] "At Whitehall, residents rally to fight drugs," *Inquirer*, March 10, 1988, p. 5-NE; "Glenn Thomas' murder raises a community's ire," *Tribune*, June 9, 1995, p. 5A; "Metro Police Briefs," *Tribune*, July 14, 1995, p. 4A.
[72] "Church opens doors to Frankford people," *Tribune*, October 5, 2003; "At 135, Second Baptist still home to many," *Tribune*, July 16, 2004.
[73] "Rev. George N. Kenner, spiritual leader," *Tribune*, May 11, 1968, p. 6-D.

head pastors of Second Baptist during the preceding 90 years. The stability at the top of the church reflects the congregation generally. Several current families trace their membership to the early twentieth century. Maggie Brown Gordon first joined the church around 1907 and was one of those who pledged their house in 1924 to construct the church. She remained a member until her death in 1944 and was the first of at least five generations of her family that continue serving the church to the present.[74]

Second Baptist is also considered the "mother church" of several churches in the area. These include the Northeast Baptist Church in Frankford, Mount Ephraim Baptist on West Tioga Street, and others.[75] While the formation of Northeast Baptist was the result of dissent within Second Baptist, the two churches continue to collaborate to the present.

Image 35. Northeast Baptist Church, 4744 Tackawanna St. in Frankford. Image from July 25, 2025, cyclomedia.phila.gov.

Kenner's retirement did not signal the end of Second Baptist's position as a leader in Frankford's Black community. The church continues to sponsor and support a litany of services ranging from charitable work, using its space for civic activities, and advocating for social justice

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[74] Centennial Anniversary Booklet, 1969, SBC; "Woman celebrates 97th with clan," *Tribune*, December 21, 1993, p. 3B; 135th Anniversary booklet, 2004, SBC.

[75] "History of Second Baptist Church, Frankford," in 110th Anniversary Pamphlet for Second Baptist Church of Frankford," (1979), SBC; "Mt. Ephraim Baptist Grew Out of Small '55 Sunday Mission," *Tribune*, March 12, 1960, p. 9. Second Baptist also claims to be a mother church for Firm Hope Baptist Church in Kensington, and the Second Baptist Church of Franklinville.

causes. The congregation of Second Baptist Church of Frankford has a long sense of history that drives the church's activities. When Second Baptist commemorates its anniversary each year, the celebration is centered on the church's role as an anchor of Frankford and Frankford' Black community.

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APPENDIX: TREASURE PHILLY! FRANKFORD COLLOBARATION
SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH OF FRANKFORD

Treasure Philly! is a new initiative from the Philadelphia Historical Commission to preserve cultural resources. The initiative promotes an interdisciplinary methodology to celebrate, document, and protect the city's diverse cultural traditions and community histories. The Treasure Philly! pilot project launched in the neighborhoods surrounding the Broad Street, Germantown Avenue, and Erie Avenue intersection in Summer 2023.

Treasure Philly! initiated engagement in Frankford in October 2025, in partnership with the Historical Society of Frankford, Frankford CDC, the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, and the Free Library of Philadelphia. We are working together to support community-led preservation of Frankford's cultural resources.

Treasure Philly! Frankford launched with two public events: an open house at the Historical Society of Frankford on October 4, 2025, and a walking tour of historic churches led by Gail McCormick (Historical Society of Frankford) on October 18, 2025. Building on community interest in the walking tour, the project team turned its focus to engaging local churches more than, or nearly, 100 years old. This engagement strategy recognizes Frankford's churches as sites of both history and community which are embedded throughout the diverse neighborhood. We are prioritizing listening to, and learning from, historic church representatives to develop supportive programs.

The project team met Pastor Lawrence C. Shuford, Jr. and Reverend Davitra Y. Smith to discuss the Second Baptist Church of Frankford's history, ongoing significance, and preservation for the first time in October 2025. Their thoughtful suggestions, challenging questions, and creative ideas played a pivotal role in the development of this initiative.

In January 2026, historic Frankford church representatives, project partners, Historical Society of Frankford board members, and staff from the Philadelphia Historical Commission, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, and Partners for Sacred Places convened for a discussion about historic preservation. Attendees expressed interest in learning more about designation. In response, we organized a meeting exploring historic designation in February 2026. The Historical Society of Frankford hosted both winter events. Our February meeting featured presentations by Philadelphia Historical Commission and Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office staff, followed by a discussion.

The February 2026 discussion informed the project team's decision to schedule individual site visits at historic churches to better understand their unique priorities while exploring designation and preservation-related programs. Our ongoing work seeks to strengthen relationships while collaboratively crafting a preservation strategy which celebrates and sustains Frankford's vibrant network of historic churches.

This is the first Philadelphia Register of Historic Places nomination to grow from the Treasure Philly! initiative. It is rooted in the meaningful relationships which animate the project and the vibrant church community. To center community engagement in the nomination process, Philadelphia Historical Commission staff worked closely with the Second Baptist Church of Frankford, the Historical Society of Frankford, and Frankford CDC to develop a Juneteenth Community Celebration. This joyful celebration of freedom, faith, family, and legacy followed the Second Baptist Church of Frankford's 158th anniversary. The event was filled with food, music, dancing, and fun. Highlights included live African drumming and a cultural presentation by African Griot, storyteller, and cultural educator Julani Ghana.

During the event, congregation and community members contributed to the church's history documented in this nomination by sharing stories, memories, and feedback. Attendees also expanded the church's archive by scanning or donating physical material in a process facilitated by the Historical Society of Frankford. As we celebrated the Second Baptist Church of Frankford's history, we heard stories about significant people, events, and places in the surrounding community. Important adjacent sites identified during the event and program development shaped our plans for field survey, which will begin in Fall 2026. This is an example of how our emphasis on listening and relationship building guides our approach to documentation.

This nomination is the result of community interest, leadership, and partnerships. The nomination process itself also nurtured our partnerships as we engaged in collaborative planning, research, and brainstorming. We are grateful for our partners' trust, dedication, and creativity. We look forward to continuing to celebrate history and expand preservation together.

The Second Baptist Church of Frankford Juneteenth Community Celebration. June 19, 2026. Photo by Bruce Bohri.

Volunteers serving refreshments at the Second Baptist Church of Frankford Juneteenth Community Celebration. June 19, 2026. Photo by Bruce Bohri.

Live performances at the Second Baptist Church of Frankford Juneteenth Community Celebration. June 19, 2026. Photo by Bruce Bohri.

Congregation members contribute to historical displays at the Second Baptist Church of Frankford Juneteenth Community Celebration. June 19, 2026. Photo by Bruce Bohri.

Congregation members and Philadelphia Historical Commission staff discuss history at the Second Baptist Church of Frankford Juneteenth Community Celebration. June 19, 2026. Photo by Bruce Bohri.

Congregation members and Philadelphia Historical Commission staff discuss history at the Second Baptist Church of Frankford Juneteenth Community Celebration. June 19, 2026. Photo by Bruce Bohri.

Historical Society of Frankford Board Members and preservationists discuss history at the Second Baptist Church of Frankford Juneteenth Community Celebration. June 19, 2026. Photo by Bruce Bohri.

Reverend Davitra Smith gives a collection of historical material to Philadelphia Historical Commission staff for scanning at the Second Baptist Church of Frankford Juneteenth Community Celebration. June 19, 2026. Photo by Bruce Bohri.

Attendees enjoy outdoor activities at the Second Baptist Church of Frankford Juneteenth Community Celebration. June 19, 2026. Photo by Bruce Bohri.