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## First Baptist Church Montmorenci in Aiken turns 150

By Miguel Legoas

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Having spent all 78 years of her life at First Baptist Church Montmorenci, Elizabeth Martin was an ideal candidate to help ring in the Aiken church's 150th birthday.

"We have such great history and such a loving church, and I'm so happy to be a part of it," Martin said.

She and her fellow congregants met outside the chapel to mark the occasion with a sunny Sunday service complete with doughnuts, live music and worship.

Martin took delight in highlighting the church's past and what brought it to this point during the service. As both a historian and someone whose children and grandchildren have been raised in this church, Martin said it has been a true joy to watch its growth.

"I'm just proud of the church, proud of the people. We are very congenial; we all get along," she said.

South Carolina Baptist Convention director Gary Hollingsworth was happy to help celebrate this milestone.

"There is so much gloom and doom and despair and fear," he said. "But the very word 'gospel' means 'good news,' and so we want to stay focused on the good news. There is always still some good news, even in the midst of a lot of people hurting and suffering, but you can always find at least something to be thankful for."

The church was organized Dec. 19, 1870, by members dismissed from the Darian Baptist Church of Christ, according to a historical account in Sunday's missal. Music director Logan Ford said the church decided to celebrate the milestone

during its October homecoming, one of the church's larger events. He said with the pandemic affecting attendance and families having Christmas plans in December, coupling the events just made sense.

"It was wonderful to hear about the history of the church and how the church has changed and evolved through the years to meet the changing climate of our community," church member Angela Moore said.

"That was even shown today," church member Kelly Martin said. "Instead of being in the sanctuary, we were outside and we had so many people ... that we wouldn't have been able to have that inside under normal circumstances."

The church is located on Old Barnwell Road in Aiken. Sunday services are livestreamed at 11 a.m. on the [church's Facebook page](#).