

Providence Baptist Church	Original use: church
526 15th Street, SE.	
Square: 1076	
Razed: 2005	Architect: Walter. R. Metz
Building permit #: 5719	Owner: 15th Street Christian Church (later Providence Baptist Church)
Permit issued: December 28, 1922	Builder: 15th Street Christian Church
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In 1890, five members of the Disciples of Christ began a Mission Sunday school near 12th and E Streets, SE. In 1900–1902, evangelistic meetings were held in a tent at 13th and G Streets, SE, and in 1902, they began to plan a permanent church. The Fifteenth Street Christian Church was founded by the Disciples Christian Endeavor Union of the District (comprised of the Christian Endeavor Societies of Ninth Street, Vermont Avenue, H Street, Whitney Avenue and Thirty-Fourth Street Christian Churches). In 1904, the trustees of the Vermont Avenue Christian Church obtained a building permit for the new church, on the corner of 15th and D Streets, SE (401 15th Street, SE, demolished). The cornerstone was laid on October 2, 1904. The new congregation grew and began to search for a new church site.

In 1922, the congregation purchased the lot at 526 15th Street, SE (526 Kentucky Avenue) for \$2,500. On Thanksgiving Day, 1922, 26 bricklayers volunteered their services to help build the foundation, and the cornerstone was laid on December 22, 1922. This was not a rich church; as of fall 1922, the building fund had only 24 cents. The new church was dedicated on November 24, 1923. The new church was 55 feet wide, 78 feet long, and three stories. The estimated cost was \$50,000. Although there are no drawings with the building permit, the sketch in the Washington Star shows the building as it was to be when completed. It was three stories high in red brick with wood and stone trim. The ground floor was partially below grade. A broad flight of stairs, approximately 20 feet wide and 22 steps high, led to two massive columns supporting the recessed porch. On the south side of the two pillars were two brick piers. The large central doors had four lights each with a transom above. Over the door was a fan light. At some point between 1950 and the mid-1980s, the church was painted white. A granite retaining wall set off the church from the sidewalk. By 1956, the church's membership declined as members moved out of the city. The church moved to Silesia, Md., and sold the church building.

Providence Baptist Church was founded in 1891. Twenty-six members of the Virginia Avenue Baptist Church secured letters of dismissal from that church. After meeting in a member's home, they decided to form a new church. The new congregation met at 308 G Street, SW, the Friends of Zion Hall. They chose the name "Providence." A council of white and black churches recognized the new congregation. On September 17, 1891, Rev. C.C. Meadows preached the first sermon, joined by Rev. E. E. Never (chaplain of the Senate). At some point before 1939 Providence Baptist Church became an African-American congregation. The church's first permanent home was at 491 M Street, SW. In 1943, a serious fire damaged the

church building. By 1952, the church had 450 members. In the mid-1960s, Providence Baptist Church purchased the building at 526 15th Street, SE from Fifteenth Street Christian Church. In the 1980s or 1990s, an education building was added next to the church. The church held many fellowship celebrations, serving food, because according to one of its pastors, "it is a part of the black church experience" and "a conveyance of fellowship ...and a chance to know one another and express love." In the 1980s–1990s, Providence Baptist Church also hosted many community meetings in its education building. Providence Baptist Church moved out of the city and sold the building in 2003–2004. In 2005 the church building was demolished, and the large spruce in front was cut down. New row houses were built on the former church site. The granite retaining wall is the only remainder of the church.

"Church Corner-Stone Laid: Disciples of Christ to have a new edifice in South Washington," *Washington Post*, October 3, 1904, 12. "Christian Church To Be Dedicated," *Washington Star*, November 24, 1923.

