

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name New Rising Star Baptist Church

other names/site number N/A

### 2. Location

street & number 3104 33<sup>rd</sup> Place North, Collegeville

N/A  not for publication

city or town Birmingham

N/A  vicinity

state Alabama

code AL

county Jefferson

code 073

zip code 35207

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William A. Brown  
Signature of certifying official/Title

March 3, 2005  
Date

State Historic Preservation Office, Alabama Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet

determined eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other,

(explain:)

Jur  
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Daniel J. Vivian

4/19/05

New Rising Star Baptist Church  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, Alabama  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

Birmingham Civil Rights Movement, 1933-1979 MPS

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGIOUS: church  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGIOUS: church  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

No style  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete;  
walls Stone; weatherboard  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof Asphalt Shingle  
other Metal; Wood; Glass  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheets.

New Rising Star Baptist Church  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, Alabama  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**  
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**  
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)  
Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** moved from its original location.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**  
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Areas of Significance**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Social History  
Ethnic Heritage: African American

**Period of Significance**  
1958-1963

**Significant Dates**  
1958

**Significant Person**  
(Complete if Criterion B is marked)  
N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**  
N/A

**Architect/Builder**  
Unknown

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

- Previous documentation on file (NPS):** N/A
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
  - previously listed in the National Register
  - Previously determined eligible by the National Register
  - designated a National Historic Landmark
  - recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
  - recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State Agency
  - Federal Agency
  - Local Government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: Birmingham Historical Society,  
Birmingham Public Library; Birmingham Civil Rights Institute

New Rising Star Baptist Church  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, Alabama  
County and State

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property** Less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>16</u>	<u>518610</u>	<u>3712780</u>	3	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	4	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title Carroll Van West, with earlier material by Linda Nelson and Marjorie White  
organization Center for Historic Preservation date March 25, 2004  
street & number Middle Tennessee State University—Box 80 telephone 615-898-2947  
city or town Murfreesboro state TN zip code 37132

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets****Maps**

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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**Property Owner**

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(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name New Rising Star Baptist Church (Rev. George E. Pruitt, Jr., pastor)  
street & number 3104 33<sup>rd</sup> Place North, Collegeville Telephone 205-849-6426  
city Birmingham state Alabama zip code 35207

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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New Rising Star Baptist Church, Jefferson Co., AL

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## VII. Description

New Rising Star Baptist Church is an unassuming church building set within a working class domestic environment in the Collegeville neighborhood of north Birmingham. The church is a small, low-eaved gable-front building with frame walls, covered with a varitone red brick veneer with a modern squiggle finish. It has an asphalt shingle roof and concrete foundation as well as an exterior brick baptismal font on its south elevation.

The east facade is defined by a central double-door entry with metal-frame commercial type doors, installed for security c. 1980. Above the doors is a plywood panel that rises to the gable peak; directly above the doorway letters spelling out New Rising Star has been glued onto the plywood. There is a shallow brick stoop leading to the entrance, which is also under a shed metal awning, installed c. 1980. A small cross surmounts a wigwam stick frame at the roofbeam.

The north elevation has seven bays, with the sixth bay being a side entrance with a brick stoop; the door is a six-panel metal door installed c. 1980. The windows vary in size but are generally symmetrical in their arrangement. Two small casement windows light the vestibule, while three larger metal-frame two-over-two double hung slag glass painted green windows light the sanctuary. Another single two-over-two double-hung window lights the rear of the building. Also visible on this elevation is the gabled rear addition, c. 1980, which rises slightly above the main roofline and also extends slightly to both sides, creating small ells toward the rear. The addition is faced with lapped composition board on a block foundation. A side entrance door of metal, with a concrete stoop, provides access to the addition on this elevation.

The south elevation is similar, except at the southeast corner, where an exterior baptistery, an open brick tank with a plywood cover, projects out from the wall under the vestibule windows.

The west (rear) elevation is the rear wall of the c. 1980 addition. It is frame, covered with composition board on a concrete block foundation. At the northwest corner is another six-panel entrance door, with a wooden stoop. North of the center of the elevation is a metal frame one-over-one double-hung window, that now contains an air conditioning unit in the bottom half.

The vestibule is a small space with restrooms on either side of the open space. Original wooden double doors lead into the sanctuary. The walls are covered by original faux wood paneling. The floor is hardwood, covered with carpet in the aisles. The room has a semi-barreled low ceiling in which fans with light kits have been installed, c. 1980. A central carpeted aisle leads to the communion table; the dais and central pulpit are on a raised platform, with choir seats located behind. The dais area is narrower than the sanctuary due to the presence of an enclosed room on the north side (to the north from the pulpit). This serves as the pastor's office. There is a partition on the south separating the chancel area from another door to the rear. The walls at the front of the room are plastered rather than paneled.

New Rising Star Baptist Church meets the registration requirements for church buildings as listed in the Birmingham's Civil Rights Movement, 1933-1979 MPS. It retains a high degree of integrity in setting, location, exterior materials, interior materials, workmanship, and association. The addition of the unadorned education building to the rear of the sanctuary does not lessen the building's sense of time and place, since its mass, style, and materials do not overwhelm or detract from the older building. The interior spaces of the church remain much like they were in 1958; the major changes being the fellowship hall addition and the creation of an office for Rev. George H. Pruitt, Sr., who was one of the original founders of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights.

### Archaeological Component

Although no archaeological survey has been conducted, there is potential for subsurface materials.

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New Rising Star Baptist Church, Jefferson Co., AL

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VIII. Significance

The New Rising Star Baptist Church is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its social history associations with the Civil Rights Movement in Birmingham, from 1958 to 1965, and for its significant associations with African-American ethnic identity in the Collegeville neighborhood of Birmingham.

The working-class character of the membership of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights is no where better expressed than with this assuming brick-veneered building in the middle of the Collegeville neighborhood. New Rising Star Baptist Church was the home church of Rev. George E. Pruitt, Sr., who established the church and served as its pastor from 1958 to 1986. At the time he established the church, Rev. Pruitt was a recognized and loyal leader of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR). He had been one of the five original ministers who had met in June 1956 and issued the call for the creation of the ACMHR. The other four ministers—Revs. Fred Shuttlesworth, Nelson H. Smith, Jr., T. L. Lane, and Robert L. Alford—led much larger, more established Baptist congregations. But from 1956 forward, Rev. Pruitt, who served on the ACMHR advisory committee, and his New Rising Star congregation were stalwarts of the Movement. They held many meetings at the church from 1956 to 1965 where such civil rights issues as police brutality, voting rights, the Selective Buying Campaign of 1962, the Project C demonstrations of 1963, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 were discussed and reactions were planned. Rev. Pruitt was a particularly trusted lieutenant of Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, and he drove Shuttlesworth to several of the movement's early demonstrations and events. In 1963, he worked on all phases of Project C, even putting up his own savings to help post bond for the students and other demonstrators arrested during that event. Pruitt became, in the words of historian Glenn Eskew, part of the "core group of activists [who] had made the difference. Compared to the overall black population in the city, they were only a handful of individuals, but in the end they made it all possible." (Eskew, 297)

While many of his members were from humble circumstances, Rev. Pruitt was from the middle class. In addition to his duties for his church and for the ACMHR, he owned and operated the Pruitt Service Station at 3101 Huntsville Road (US 31) in the Collegeville neighborhood. He was known as a powerful speaker, and services at the church were powerful, emotional events. In this way, Rev. Pruitt was typical of the devoted ACMHR ministers. Historians of the Civil Rights Movement have long discussed the intersection of faith and activism in the mass meetings held at various Birmingham churches. In assessing the influence of mass meetings on the Civil Rights Movement in Birmingham, historian and Baptist minister Wilson Fallin, Jr., emphasized: "The meetings were very emotional with much shouting. . . The emotionalism of the mass meetings, as in an African-American church, provided not only emotional release but also the courage to fight the forces of segregation in a hostile environment." (Fallin, 15-16)

Furthermore, the mass meetings were important tools of oral communication for a society that had few other public options, since open discussion of civil rights strategies over the airwaves or in print could provoke severe reactions from white extremists. Furthermore, activists knew that to reach the core working-class residents of their neighborhoods, meetings in the churches were much more effective venues than print or electronic media. It was thus at the churches such as New Rising Star Baptist where activists, often a combination of local ministers, community leaders, and the occasional visitor from another Civil Rights hotbed, relayed the important messages and key strategies to be debated and carried out. The churches were safe havens in an often hostile environment.

New Rising Star Baptist Church meets the registration requirements for Criterion A as listed in the Birmingham's Civil Rights Movement, 1933-1979 MPS. The church was an important strategy center for the Movement as it hosted meetings of the ACMHR and since its founder and pastor, Rev. George E. Pruitt, Sr., was one of the founders of the ACMHR, a trusted member of the ACMHR leadership hierarchy, and an important individual in the Movement from 1956 to 1965.

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New Rising Star Baptist Church, Jefferson Co., AL

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IX. Bibliography

*Annual Report, 1958, Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights.* Birmingham: ACMHR, 1958.

Eskew, Glenn T. *But for Birmingham.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

Fallin, Wilson, Jr. "Rock Solid Faith: African American Church Life and Culture in 1956 Birmingham." Majorie L. White and Andrew M. Manis, eds. *Birmingham Revolutionaries: The Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth and the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights.* Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2000. 7-18.

Fieldwork notes. July 23, 2003. In possession of author.

Hendricks, Lola. Interviews with Marjorie L. White. 1999. Birmingham Historical Society.

Manis, Andrew M. *A Fire You Can't Put Out: The Civil Rights Life of Birmingham's Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth.* Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999.

McWhorter, Diane. *Carry Me Home.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.

New Rising Star Baptist Church Files, Birmingham Historical Society Civil Rights Collection-Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights and Civil Rights Churches Files, Birmingham Historical Society, Birmingham, Alabama. Files include Board of Equalization Records, City Directory Trace, and Photographs.

"1956-Eight Years of Progress-1964." *Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights, Inc., Annual Report.* Birmingham: ACMHR, 1964.

White, Marjorie L., *A Walk to Freedom-The Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth and the Alabama Movement for Human Rights.* Birmingham: Birmingham Historical Society, 1998.

X. Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

New Rising Star Baptist Church is at 3104 33rd Place North in the Collegeville neighborhood, identified as Lot 8, Parcel 11 Block 13, McCarty's addition to North Birmingham, as marked on the attached Jefferson County Tax Map 01-22-13-4, Sections SE ¼ 13, Township 17 South, Range 3 West. The nominated property includes all of the historic property associated with the New Rising Star Baptist Church.

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Photographs Page

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New Rising Star Baptist Church, Jefferson Co., AL

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Photographs

New Rising Star Baptist Church, Birmingham, Jefferson County, AL

Photographs (exterior) by: Carroll Van West  
MTSU Center for Historic Preservation  
July 2003

Photographs (interior) by: Birmingham Historical Society  
January 2000

Negatives: Alabama Historical Commission  
468 S. Perry St.  
Montgomery, AL

East facade, facing west

1 of 14

East facade, detail of entrance, facing west

2 of 14

South elevation, facing northeast

3 of 14

South elevation, fellowship hall addition, facing northwest

4 of 14

West elevation, facing northeast

5 of 14

Baptismal font, facing northeast

6 of 14

East elevation, facing southwest

7 of 14

Church sign, facing north

8 of 14

East elevation, fellowship hall addition, facing southwest

9 of 14

Sanctuary, facing west

10 of 14

Sanctuary, pews, facing northwest

11 of 14

Sanctuary, pews, facing southwest

12 of 14

Pulpit, facing west

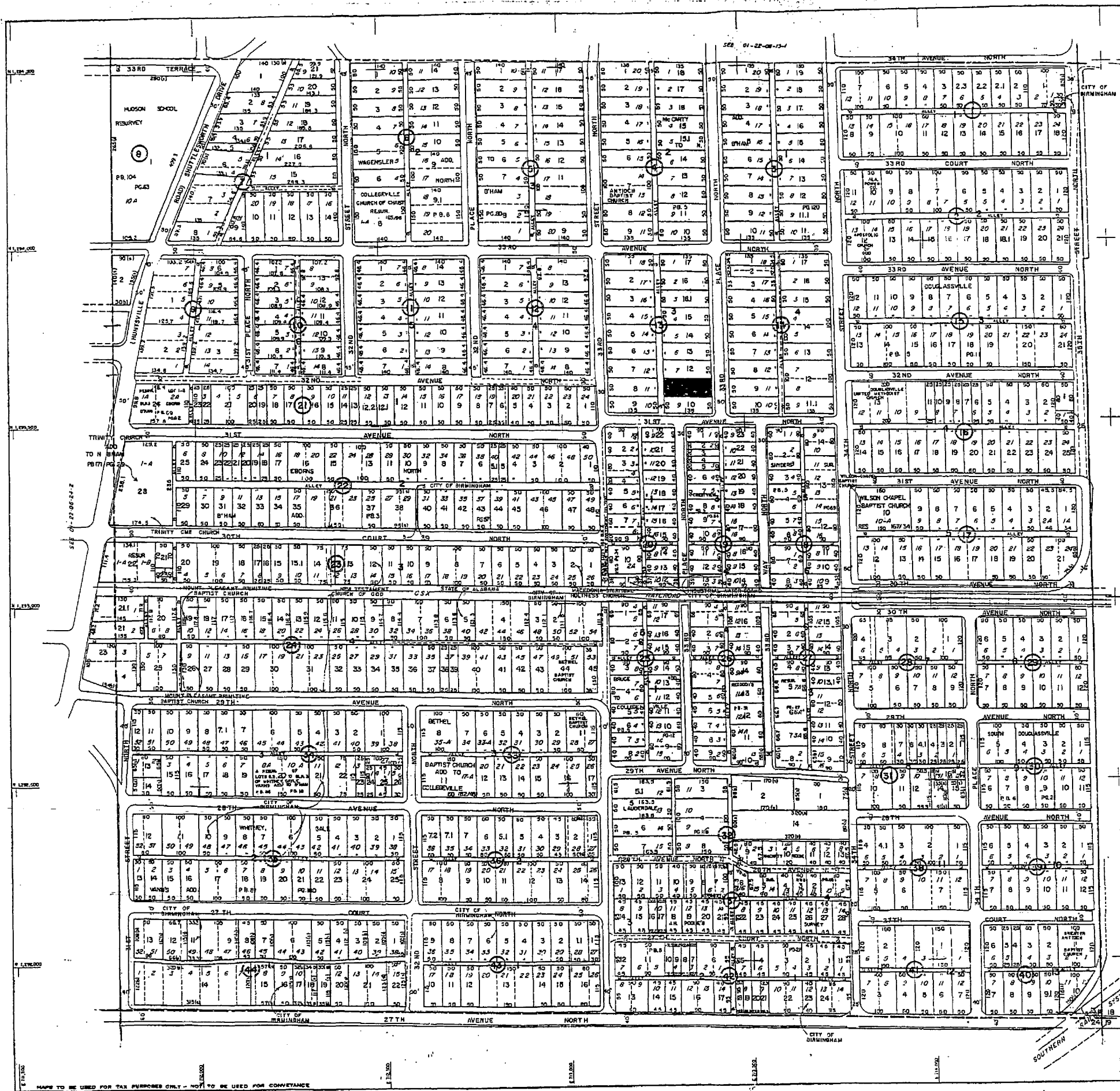
13 of 14

Sanctuary, from pulpit, facing east

14 of 14



New Rising Star  
Baptist Church  
3104 33rd Place No.



OWNERSHIP MAP  
COUNTY OF  
**JEFFERSON**  
PREPARED UNDER THE DIRECTION  
OF THE  
STATE OF ALABAMA  
DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE  
AD VALOREM TAX DIVISION

PREPARED BY  
COLE LAYER TRUMBLE CO.  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

TAX MAPPING DIVISION  
SCALE 1" = 160'  
DATE OF MAP 0-1-78 DATE OF PHOTOGRAPHY 12-8-77



COUNTY LOCATOR



TOWNSHIP LOCATOR  
(INDEX TO 1" x 1" 400' & 1" x 1" 200' MAPPING)

0	5	4	3	2	1
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36

SUB-SHEET INDEX

1-2	18-1	18-2
13-3	0-4	18-4
18-5	18-1	18-2

LEGEND

- STATE LINE ——— AREA (FROM DEED) 100 AC
- COUNTY LINE ——— AREA (CALCULATED) 100 AC (A)
- CORPORATION LINE ——— DIMENSION (FROM DEED) 160
- DISTRICT LINE ——— DIMENSION (SCALED) 80 (B)
- ROAD R/W ——— WATER
- TRAVELED ROAD VMT ——— INTERSTATE HIGHWAY
- RAILROAD R/W ——— U.S. HIGHWAY
- PROPERTY LINE ——— STATE HIGHWAY
- LAND HOOK ——— COUNTY HIGHWAY
- INTERIOR TRACT LINE OR ORIGINAL TRACT LINE ——— ROADS OR STREETS BY NAME
- SUBDIVISION LOT NUMBER 29 ——— MAJOR TRANSMISSION LINES (POWER, GAS, CABLE)
- MANGEL NUMBER 15 ——— SECTION CORNERS
- BLOCK LIMIT (WHERE APPLICABLE) ——— STATE PLANE COORDINATES
- OWNERSHIP MAP BLOCK (WHERE APPLICABLE) ——— CHANGES OR ADDITIONS
- CHURCHES, SCHOOLS, CEMETRIES, AIRPORTS, GOVERNMENT LANDS, ETC. ——— BY NAME

DATE	BY	REVISIONS

SECTIONS SE 1/4 13  
TSR 17 SOUTH, RANGE 3 WEST

01-22-13-4  
MAP NUMBER