

Historical Marker - - Fountain Street Baptist Church/Fountain Street Church (Marker ID#:))



NO PHOTO AVAILABLE

Front - Title/Description

Fountain Street Baptist Church

In 1869, the Reverends Nathan A. Reed and Isaac Butterfield merged their two churches into the Baptist Church of the City of Grand Rapids. The Reverend Dr. Samuel T. Graves served as pastor until 1885, when he left to lead the Atlanta Baptist Seminary, a school for African American men. The original church on this site, built between 1871 and 1877, became commonly known as Fountain Street Baptist Church in the 1880s and burned down in 1917. This Romanesque church, designed by the Chicago firm Coolidge and Hodgdon, was completed by 1924. In 1930 the church dedicated a room at the base of the tower to the Kent County soldiers who died in World War I. Interior renovations made during the 1950s and 1960s included a chapel designed by Alden B. Dow and a mezzanine.

Significant Date:

Industry and Invention (1875-1915)

Registry Year: 2019 ***Erected Date:*** 2019

Marker Location

Address: 24 Fountain Street NE

City: Grand Rapids

State: MI ***ZipCode:*** 49503

County: Kent

Township: Grand Rapids

Lat: 42.96537100 / ***Long:*** -85.66688200

Web URL:

Back - Title/Description

Fountain Street Church

Led by the Reverends J. Herman Randall (1897-1906) and Alfred W. Wishart (1906-1933), Fountain Street Baptist Church encouraged diverse viewpoints and became increasingly liberal in its theology. As a result, in 1961 the Michigan Baptist Convention excluded the church from membership. Guided by the Reverend Dr. Duncan E. Littlefair, the church adopted bylaws in 1969 that declared its denominational independence. The church has long served as a venue for controversial public dialogue, hosting such speakers as Winston Churchill in 1932, Eleanor Roosevelt in 1958 and Malcolm X in 1962. The congregation has funded social action grants, volunteered locally and supported the arts. Dave Brubeck, B. B. King and Ella Fitzgerald are among the musicians it has welcomed.