

Woodlawn Crestview

Rev. Presley resigned in 1963 in order to return to seminary and further his education. Rev. Ottis Mann, a student at Baptist Bible Institute, Graceville, FL, served as Interim pastor. The pulpit committee began its search for a man who would provide competent leadership for a congregation that was ready for growth. God led the committee, after much prayer and consideration, to Rev. Warren F. Whitmore.

The church called Rev. Whitmore to become its pastor on November 10, 1963. He graduated from Carson Newman College, with a Bachelor of Arts Degree, and a graduate of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, with a Master of Divinity degree. He and his wife, Shirley, have two children, Steven and Deborah.

Rev. Whitmore was a man who had concern and compassion for lost people and stressed "togetherness" among the flock. He made it known that fellowship among the members was of vital importance. After contacting Jeanette Horne with these thoughts, planning began immediately. Jeanette spread the word by phoning other members saying, "Freddie wants a party." Thus was born the first church-wide fellowship called "Woodlawn Roundup." This event also kicked off the new church year with much success. As a result of this spirit of fellowship, the church broke all attendance records in Sunday School, Training Union and Vacation Bible School. During his ministry there were 136 additions to the membership. Many improvements were made on the educational building, new furniture was bought, the first choir robes were purchased, the first paid nursery worker was hired and the log cabin was torn down. Bro. Whitmore allotted time during the Sunday morning worship hour for a "Children's Sermon." He called this group of children his "Preacher Pals." These "sermons" were mutually rewarding for the children and adults alike.

Due to the tremendous growth during this time there was a need to build a new sanctuary to meet the needs of the congregation and also minister to the community. Serving on the building committee were: L. C. Youngblood, chairman, Jim Barfield, Colin Martin, J. W. Brown, Billy Gordon, Howard Hardy and W. H. Jones. The furnishings committee consisted of J. T. Phillips, chairman, Tommy Horne, Gervis Jones, Ruth Casey and Bobbie Brown. The new sanctuary was built at an approximate cost of \$75,000.00. Services were held in the new auditorium the first Sunday in July 1966.

After a successful ministry at Woodlawn, Rev. Whitmore resigned July 23, 1967, to move to another field of service. It was his desire to be remembered as a loving and caring pastor. His availability and ministry to the people of Woodlawn, or anyone else for that matter, earned him this legacy.

Following the resignation of Rev. Whitmore the church called Dr. Thomas D. Lide as Interim Pastor. He served very effectively from August 23, 1967 until December 10, 1967. His many years of experience in the ministry and his vast knowledge of the Bible were most beneficial. The church enjoyed a time of growth in spirit and fellowship under his leadership. Bro. and Mrs. Lide both had such loving, outgoing and positive personalities that it literally "rubbed off" on others.

They were truly loved and live on in the hearts of many Woodlawn folks.

The pulpit committee in search of a pastor was led to Rev. John Holley of Pensacola. He began service December 10, 1967. During the ministry of Rev. Holley, the pastorium was built at a cost of approximately \$20,000.00. Once again the men of the church did most of the construction on the pastorium in order to cut costs. Under his leadership, the church membership grew from 277 to 369. He resigned August 20, 1972 to ministry in another area of service.

In 1969, the church called Mr. Gene Tagert as Minister of Music. Bro. Tagert was the first paid music director and his beginning salary was \$20.00 per week. He served bio-vocationally as he was also the band director at Baker High School. He and his wife, Connie, had one child, Stacy, while serving at Woodlawn. Bro. Tagert was a most capable leader in the field of music, and as a result the entire music program of the church was enhanced. Under his direction, the youth choir grew to approximately 45. Martha Jones served as the pianist and a backup band included Steve Brogan, Bill Smith, Dewayne Adams and Richard Jones. This group prepared a musical, "The Lively Ones" and thus had the opportunity to minister through their music in many churches in and around northwest Florida and south Alabama. They were outstanding in their yellow shirts with the musical title insignia printed on the shirt. Also, choir robes for the children's choir and uniforms for the youth choir were made. A "sewing party" was organized and a number of women from the church met at the home of Gervis Jones to accomplish this project. An organ was purchased at an approximate cost of \$4,000.00, which added much to the quality of the music program.

Bro. Tagert resigned in 1973, to attend New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisiana, to further his education in Sacred Music.

Following the resignation of Rev. Holley, the church turned again to Dr. Lide as Interim Pastor. Bro. Lide once again brought wise leadership to our church, and a time of stabilization and spiritual growth was enjoyed. Bro. Lide reached his "Golden Anniversary" of service in the ministry during this second tenure at Woodlawn. A church-wide celebration was held in recognition of this event. For this occasion Bobbie Brown, Therla Brogan and Frances Martin baked and decorated a cake to honor them. Upon completion, however, it was "too big" to be transported to the church in a car. This hurdle was of course overcome and the celebration was a tremendous success. Another blessing added to this day was that Bro. C. B. Raley began his service as pastor.

Bro. Raley and his wife, Sally, began the first Sunday in January 1973. Woodlawn once again experienced growth under his leadership. There were a record number of baptisms in a single year, and church membership increased from 369 to 558. In addition to his preaching ability, he had a "pastor's heart" and made himself available to help meet the needs of others.