https://fbcdunnellon.com/staff/

Russ Randall grew up on a farm in Lavonia, Georgia. He attended Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, where he accepted Christ as his Savior at the age of 12. Russ graduated from the University of Georgia with a Bachelor of Science degree in Education in 1984. He married his college sweetheart, Priscilla, in 1985, and they moved to Dunnellon, FL.

Russ taught at Dunnellon High School until June 1996, at which time he joined the First Baptist Church staff as Administrator of FBCD's Dunnellon Christian Academy. In January 2010, Russ became the pastor of First Baptist Church of Dunnellon and continues to serve here in that capacity.

Pastor Russ is the past president of the Florida Agriculture Educators Association, past State Secretary of the Georgia FFA Association, and was a finalist for Marion County's Golden Apple Teacher of the Year Award. He is a former member of the Southern Baptist Association of Christian Schools and has served on the ACSI regional council. Russ is a member and past president of the Marion County Farm Bureau. He is also a member and president of the Southeastern Youth Fair Executive Board.

In May 2014, Russ graduated with a Master of Divinity degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He and Priscilla have one daughter, Janna. Russ and Pris (as he lovingly calls her) are the grandparents of Cooper John Alt (born 2012) and Gracie Anne Alt (born 2014).

Russ also has several fascinating animals at his home, including sheep and a peacock. Many of these animals are also used as humorous sermon illustrations. For instance, ask Russ about the border collie he used to have named "Blue," and then get ready to laugh!

Faith Fellowship Ocala Off To Great Start

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Written By: David Moore
August 2, 2019
Categories: Archive, North, Stories
Tags: Faith Fellowship Ocala, FBC Dunnellon, John Ryman, Russ Randall

When First Baptist Church of Dunnellon began to pursue a new church plant, Pastor Russ Randall wanted to get 100 percent participation from members in launching the new church known as Faith Fellowship Ocala.

"We thought anyone who understood missions, who understood what the great commission is, would have a desire to participate at some level," Randall said.

FBC Dunnellon came up with three levels of commitment for members to consider in supporting the new church plant:

Level 1 – I am willing to pray for this endeavor. Over 400 people agreed to this level.
Level 2 – I am willing to pray but also willing to commit for one year a monthly gift of up to $25. "We were not interested in big gifts, we were interested in a large number of people participating," Randall said. "We had hoped to get 30 or 40, we got about 150."
Level 3 – We will give one year of missionary service to this church. This meant attending the church, tithing and giving your talents and abilities to the church for at least one year. Hoping for 10 or 12, they got 26.

That core group of members began meeting and planning 18 to 20 weeks before the soft launch of the new church on July 21. Services are now being held at 5 p.m. Sunday at FBC Dunnellon. At its first service, there were about 85 in attendance, a great start for this new church.

The church plans to begin holding services in its own building in October. It will be located along State Road 200, a populous road between Dunnellon and Ocala. A developer bought a tract of land that included a vacant church building but had no use for that building. He offered it to the church for a "fraction of the cost" of similar spaces in the area.

"It's definitely a benefit," said John Ryman, pastor of Faith Fellowship Ocala, about the great location. "We want the location to be beneficial for us but it's not the be-all-end-all of where we start to gather on Sundays."

Like its multigenerational core group, the church hopes to attract people of all ages to the church. Despite the presence of many retirement communities nearby, demographics show the median age in the area is 49.

“One of things that really encouraged my wife and I was to see the generational difference of the core launching team,” Ryman said. “We’ve got everything from 3 months old to 83 years old and probably an equal category of each generation.”

Both Ryman and Randall are excited and encouraged about Faith Fellowship Ocala and the impact it can have on the community.

“We’ve done the demographics and there is a huge need there,” Randall said. “With the folks we have in place, we’re just confident that God is going to bless the efforts there.”