

FBC CONWAY



Homecoming 1975

(Rev. Terry J. Rhodes, 1976-1981)

Terry Rhodes came to us with the quote, "If we know God, we can do what we please." His first message, "Look to the Open Door of Today", John 20: 16-18, bore fruit as 91 persons united with our fellowship since January 4, 1976 - the date of the beginning of his pastorate. We are grateful for his leadership and tireless teaching, visiting, and "love for his people" He encouraged the flock to heed the advice given by Vance Havenor - "Be big enough, to be little enough, to let God have control of our lives and show us what He can do for us." The Church came to know that "prayer is the power of God that frees us from the struggles we are in" and that "with God's strength behind us, we can face that task ahead."

Through Brother Terry's leadership, we called a part-time Minister of Youth, Greg Champagne who was a student at Stetson University. Greg endeared himself to us in his work with our youth. His humorous approach to, and yet deep conviction for, a Spirit-filled life a key radiated through his unending efforts with our youth, who could truly claim Phil. 1:3A. On September 8, 1976, we called Preston Greene, a student at Florida Technological University, as a part-time Minister of Music. He often said, "It thrills my soul when I see people giving of their talents to raise an offering to God". When Greg left for Southern Seminary in 1977, Preston became the full-time Minister of Music and Youth. He and his new wife, Janet (Farabee) left us in 1978 to continue their preparation for the ministry - also at Southern Seminary. The Spirit of God moved through the youth group during this era, and several were called into full-time Christian ministry:

- Wesley Lawson went to Southern Seminary in Louisville, KY, earning his Master of Church Music Degree. He is Associate Pastor of Rosemont Heights Baptist in Waynesboro, GA.
- Jimmy Hill went to New Orleans Baptist Seminary and is Pastor of Glendale Baptist Church in Hattiesburg, MS.

FBC Conway

- Keith Yarborough graduated from Southwestern Seminary in Dallas and is serving as Youth Pastor of First Baptist Church of Winter Garden.
- Warren Chesser earned a graduate degree in Theology from Southwestern Seminary and is currently serving as Pastor of Forest Grove Baptist Church in Alachua, FL.

On February 15, 1981, Brother Terry resigned as pastor of the Church. The last lines of his resignation letter say it best: "We must do the will of the Father. In Him, our love shall continue to grow, though apart. On March 4, 1981, with Pastor Terry Rhodes serving as the moderator, the Church organized a pulpit committee. Greg Champagne returned and carried the church through this time, serving as associate pastor. The minutes of May 6, 1981 include an announcement that "President Ronald Reagan has proclaimed Thursday as American's National Day of Prayer and has asked all Americans to pray for guidance for our land and leaders. Religious Heritage of America is asking churches across the United States to ring their bells at noon, calling people to stop where they are and pray." Our church sanctuary remains open each year to observe the national day of prayer.

(Rev. Roderick N. Lawson, 1981-1983)

On July 12, 1981, the Church called Dr. Roderick Lawson as Pastor. He and his family were received as new members on September 9, 1981. Sunday School enrollment at that time was 324. Brother Lawson resigned on August 21, 1983. Sunday School enrollment at the end of 1983 was 51.

(Rev. Fayette L Hall, Sr., 1983-1985)

The Church called Brother Fayette Hall on October 5, 1983, from College Park Baptist Church. He agreed to serve as "long term interim pastor." He was a true man of God and a leader in the Baptist faith, having served as First Vice President of the Florida Baptist Convention from 1956-57. With wisdom and determination, he graciously led the Church through a dark period, and steered its course to God's plan for Conway First Baptist Church.

(Rev. Robert W. DeCorah, 1985-1991)

On July 15, 1985, Pastor Robert DeCorah began his ministry here at Conway First Baptist Church. He came to us having served as the Assistant Pastor at Lockhart Baptist Church. Average Sunday School attendance was 63. In February of 1986, the Postmaster requested the Church move the mailbox from Conway Road to Gatlin Ave. With the impending construction involved in widening Conway Road, the Postmaster had great concern for the safety of the mail carriers. In May, 1987, the renovation committee began work on the sanctuary and educational wing. The extensive renovation was completed in the fall. Brother DeCorah is responsible for the stained glass windows we enjoy in the sanctuary today. In July, 1987, the Church licensed Butch Hall as a chaplain. In October of 1997, through the leadership of the pastor's wife, the Church began operating a Mother's Day Out program on Tuesdays during school months. It proved to be a great ministry to the community. The Church hosted a "Sunday School Revival" to build membership. The youth group traveled on mission to Key West and to British Columbia. In June of 1989, along with Killamey Baptist church, the church voted to co-sponsor a mission church west of Hiawasse Rd. and north of Colonial Drive on Good Homes Road. On August 9, 1989, Rev. Paul Vernon Howell was appointed for the position of pastor for the Good Homes Road Mission. Near the end of 1989, the Church purchased the Allen Organ we still use today for \$22,000.00. According to the census of 1990, the population of Conway was 13,159. There were 1,022 members on the Church roll, with 179 active in Sunday School.

