100 Years of Pastors' Leadership
First Baptist Church of Cocoa

Rev. F. M. Ross	*1910 - 1911*
Rev. Robert Jones	*1911*
Rev. J. R. Parsons	*1912 - 1914*
Rev. J. M. Springfield	*1914 - 1915*
Rev. W. Ira Sanders	*1916*
Rev. J. C. Kazee	*1916 - 1918*
Rev. W. Ira Sanders	*1918 - 1920*
Rev. H. S. Howard	*1920 - 1922*
Rev. O. L. Riggs	*1923 - 1927*
Rev. Charles M. White	*1927 - 1931*
Dr. John C. Sycamore	*1932*
Rev. Claude L. Bridges	*1932 - 1935*
Rev. J. Ray Garrett	*1936 - 1940*
Dr. James A. Sawyer	*1940 - 1967*
Rev. James T. Dunnam	*1968 - 1978*
Dr. Frank H. Thomas, Jr.	*1979 - 1985*
Rev. W. Henry Green	*1986 - 1993*
Dr. William R. Marr	*1994 - 2007*
Dr. O. Charles Horton	*2007 - Present*

Present church Staff

Dr. Charles Horton	*Pastor*
Dr. Alan Foster	*Assistant Pastor*
Barry Aymond	*Minister of Music*
Jeb Godbout	*Minister of Students*
Eve Reeves	*Church Administrator*
Cheryl Beck	*Pianist*
Myrna Mason	*Organist*

The Evening Tribune
Fri, Jan 22, 1926 -Page 10

THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF BAPTIST PASTOR

Last Sunday marked the third anniversary of Rev. O. L. Riggs as pastor of the First Baptist Church of Cocoa.

A large congregation gathered for the 11 o'clock service, at which time the pastor spoke of the achievements of the past three years. In doing this Rev. Mr. Riggs explained that he was not speaking in order that he might receive credit, but asked that he as an individual might be forgotten and that the church review its record to be inspired to do greater things in the future.

These are some of the attainments of the church during the past three years: There have been 117 accessions to the membership. Gifts to missions have increased 300 percent. The church budget has increased 100 percent. The B. Y. P. U.'s have gone from one to three. Property acquired by the church during this time has netted a gain of $25,000.00, and the new pastorium would be a credit to any church. The Sunday school has been graded but is badly handicapped for lack of equipment

The pastor also spoke of the good feeling of brotherhood and co-operation which now exists among the churches of Cocoa and Rockledge—a thing which could not be said three years ago. He expressed his appreciation of the fellowship of the several ministers of the towns and considered it a privilege to work with them.

In view of these things the pastor's message was, "Go Forward!" He urged the church to press the great building program which has been launched. A strong appeal was made for support from every member, and at the close of the service the majority of the great number present stood as evidence of the fact that they were in sympathy with the message and desired to help bring about a greater future for the church.

New Church Fills Hopes Of 35 Years

COCOA — When members of the First Baptist Church of Cocoa meet for their first worship service in the new sanctuary Sunday at 10:30 a.m. elder members of the congregation will be experiencing the fulfillment of hopes and dreams for a new house of worship that go back more than 35 years.

The first plans to replace the original meeting house originated during the ministry of the Rev. O. L. Riggs who became pastor of the church in 1923. Cocoa and the whole state of Florida was in a state of economic expansion commonly colled the "boom."

The First Baptist Church was 12 years old when Rev. Riggs came. The membership had passed the 100 mark, and the financial ability of the church showed a marked increase. Many new people were taking up residence in the area.

The church laid plans to erect a new and handsome edifice on the site now occupied by the Trade Winds Cafeteria, for which the present church site at Brevard and Oak St. had been exchanged. Plans for the proposed new church building were executed.

The church was never built. Older residents of Florida remember how quickly the bottom dropped out of the boom. Real estate values fell, banks closed and people left the area by the hundreds to find employment and security elsewhere. Many returned to their former homes

THE FIRST Baptist church emerged from the tragedy without a church home, a vacant lot and some forlorn hopes. Many of the members were deeply discouraged, but none gave up.

In 1930 the congregation repurchased the church building located on the northeast corner of Brevard Ave. and Oak St. Upon obtaining possession of the building they vacated a frame structure called the Tabernacle, in which the congregation had been meeting while the proposed new building was erected.

New Church Fills Hopes Of 35 Years

During the depression years, 1930-1939, the church experienced severe times often cutting operations back to the bone. By 1939 conditions improved sufficiently and some additions were made to the original sanctuary. In later years the growing educational needs saw the erection of the Carmichael educational building in 1949, a new pastorium in 1951, the development of the King Street Chapel in 1953, and the sponsorship of Fronetenac Chapel in 1953. Cocoa Beach Chapel was launched in 1955.

ADJACENT property to the church was purchased a few years ago for parking and more buildings. In 1957 the 212 Oak St. educational facility was launched at a cost of $150,000. Still the church had no adequate sanctuary.

On July 10, 1961, Eugene Kelsey and Son, general contractor, began construction on the sanctuary now completed and ready for occupancy.

It is modified Georgian colonial in style and will seat 926 worshipers. The pews are oak and finished in driftwood to match all the woodwork on the interior. The ceiling is of wite acoustical tile and the walls are pink. Royal red carpets cover the first floor level. Two inch foam rubber pew cushions with nylon covers match the carpets.

Pulpit seating includes two Sedelias and the choir will be seated in 58 individual cushioned chairs with music racks attached. The piano and the organ console are situated on each side of the pulpit with paneled dividers topped by plantes. The pulpit platform is reached by circular steps with an inset removable for the commuion table.

THE AMPLE, vestibule gives access to the starways to the large balcony. The floor is terrazzo marble with complementing lighting fixtures. Clear plate glass panels with draperies will separate the vestibule from the auditorium. An electronic control room on the balcony provides for complete control of present operations and is equipped for radio and telecasting.

. . . Mrs. C. Frank John service in Cocoa First Bapt tor Thomas O. Dekle look

Frank Loyd Vann of Miami is the architect.

Praise and Thanksgiving will be theme for the worship services

The Rev. James A. Sawyer, pastor will deliver the sermon on the theme On Joyful Wings Our Songs of Praise and Gratitude Ascend

The evening worship at 7:15 will conclude the inaugural services of the new sanctuary.

The First Baptist Church extends a cordial invitation to all friends, former members and vistors to attend the Sunday services.

1 of 12 matches

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Tue, Jun 07, 1960 · Page 4

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Greetings of Former Members To Be Heard by First Baptists

Members and friends of Cocoa's First Baptist Church will hear greetings from many former members and friends of the church Thursday night when the Golden Jubilee service of reminiscing takes place.

Among those sending greetings is Mrs. T. D. Simmons of Orlando, wife of the Rev. F. M. Ross, first pastor of the church. Mrs. Simmons lived in Eau Gallie with her huband, Rev. Ross, who served the Eau Gallie Baptist Church from May to November, 1910. Ross, who was present at the organization of the Cocoa Church and served as first pastor, died in 1923. Mrs. Ross later remarried. Now 85 years of age, she makes her home at 1116 Hardy Street, Orlando.

Mrs. Guilda C. Geiger, anniversary chairman, has announced that communications have been received from many people from across the nation who have been related to the church in years past. These will be included in the memorbilia presented Thursday night.

Approximately 300 reservations have been made for the Golden Jubilee anniversary dinner set for Wednesday night at 5:45 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall, first event in the anniversary schedule.

The historical pageant, "Building for Tomorrow on Yesterday's Heritage" will be presented at 7:45 p.m., following the dinner. Personalities and events in the church's history will be dramatized.

Friday afternoon from 2 to 4 p.m. the Woman's Missionary Society will honor special guests at a tea in the social hall.

It was learned with regret that the Rev. and Mrs. O. L. Riggs of Durham, N. C., would not be able to attend the Jubilee. Rev. R. Paul Kercher of Hickory, N. C., will preach at the 8:30 service Sunday. Kercher is a former youth director of the local church, and preacher for the Saturday night youth rally June 11th.

All former members and friends of the church are given a cordial invitation to join the First Baptist Church in their 50th anniversary observance.

The Durham Sun
Mon, Oct 11, 1937 ·Page 10

REV. O. L. RIGGS QUITS AS PASTOR

Tenders Resignation to Congregation of Morrisville Baptist Church

Rev. O. L. Riggs yesterday resigned as pastor of the Morrisville Baptist church, his resignation becoming effective January 10. He tendered his formal resignation at yesterday morning's service of the church.

The popular minister is ending his fourth year as pastor of the Wake county church. During the perio dof his pastorate the church has made excellent progress. Numerous additions have been made to the church's roster of members, and extensive improvements have been made on the physical structure.

Mrs. Riggs also has been a powerful factor in the successful presentation of the program of work presented at the Morrisville church during the years her husband has served the church as pastor. She played a major role in the organization of the Woman's Missionary society and served as its president for three years.

According to the statement made at yesterday's service, the Morrisville church is ending one of its best years. All financial obligations have been met.

In addition to serving as pastor of the Morrisville church, Rev. Mr. Riggs also serves the Red Mountain Baptist church at Rougemont, and Antioch church near Chapel Hill.

Dial F-115 for Newspaper Service

The Durham Sun
Sat, Nov 16, 1974 · Page 14

THE REV. O. L. RIGGS

The Rev. O. L. Riggs, 88, of 2705 Woodmont Drive, died at Watts Hospital Thursday after a one-week illness.

Surviving are his wife, the former Eula Roberts; a daughter, Mrs. H. C. Puryear Jr. of Raleigh; and four grandchildren.

Funeral services were conducted today at Westwood Baptist Church.

The Herald-Sun
Fri, May 26, 1944 · Page 3

Baptist Church Calls O. L. Riggs Of Durham

Action Announced By Rose Of Sharon

Rose of Sharon Baptist Church has called the Rev. O. L. Riggs as pastor of the congregation. He will assume his duties next Sunday afternoon at 3 o'clock, and will preach each second and fourth Sunday afternoon from now on, members of the church announced yesterday.

The Rev. Mr. Riggs succeeds the Rev. A. W. Icard, who resigned some months ago to accept work elsewhere.

For a number of years the Rev. Mr. Riggs has been pastor of the Red Mountain Baptist Church of Rougemont, and was at one time a general evangelist.

Educated at Wake Forest College and Trinity College, now Duke University, the Rev. Mr. Riggs has been pastor of a number of churches in North Carolina, and was for some time pastor in Florida. He has been a resident of Durham for several years where he has been engaged in business.