

Lake County Association 1984

approved on a do it yourself and pay as you go basis. It was weathered in by Easter and at the close of the church year, September 30th it is within two to three months of completion.

LAKE OLA BAPTIST CHURCH — Homecoming was observed October 1, 1972, and will be observed each year on first Sunday in October. Called Reverend Max Horten as pastor effective August 5, 1973.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, LEESBURG — Celebrated Centennial Anniversary. These four former pastors participated: Carl Howell, Carl Bates, Beryl Roberts and James Graves.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF TAVARES — Brother David Gross, Minister of Music and Youth resigned October 29, to become effective December 1, Jim Cole called July 29, to become effective August 11th.

WESTSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH, LEESBURG — Three men surrendered their lives to the ministry and are now in school preparing for their respective ministries. This makes a total of five who are now in school. Opened a youth outreach ministry, "The Ark", in downtown Leesburg. The purpose of this ministry is to reach youth for Christ and then teach them in the Word. Several young people from Westside serve as counselors.

14- Rev. Preston Devall read the brief history of the host church Fruitland Park First.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF FRUITLAND PARK, FLA.

In the afternoon of the first Sunday in June, 1956, a group of people led by Rev. Beryl Roberts, Pastor of First Baptist Church of Leesburg, worshipped in the Community Building of Fruitland Park. This was the beginning of a mission sponsored by the First Baptist Church of Leesburg that now constitutes one of the flourishing Southern Baptist Churches of Lake County.

Laymen from the Mother Church together with Rev. Connie Hargrove of Tavares and John Howell did the speaking until August when Rev. Paul Lupo was called to supply the pulpit. On December 26, 1956, he was called as Pastor and served until Easter Sunday of 1960.

On April 26, 1957, the McDowell property, which consisted of approximately 7½ acres with a small orange grove and a house, was purchased for \$20,000.00. Down payment was \$2,500.00 and payments were to be about \$40.00 per month. The Mother Church paid \$1,750.00 and the mission itself paid \$750.00. From then on the mission made the payments.

As of January 1, 1957 there were 17 persons on the mission membership roll that were not from the Missions Committee of the Mother Church.

January, 1958 showed Sunday School enrollment of 100 with average attendance of 74, Training Union enrollment of 57 with average attendance of 30.

A Building Fund was started and on June 30, 1958 there was \$3,613.13 in this fund which grew to \$27,160.21 by October 31, 1960.

Groundbreaking for a two story building with temporary auditorium on top floor, was held on May 17, 1959. Excavating was done in July and actual construction was begun in September 1959. Cost of the building was \$21,000.00 with furnishings donated by the Mother Church.

The first service was held in the new building on December 27, 1959.

Rev. Paul Lupo resigned on Easter Sunday 1960. Rev. Charles Rector came as Supply Pastor on June 27, 1960 and was called as

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Pastor on October 20, 1960 and served until the last Sunday in December 1961 when he resigned due to ill health.

On January 1, 1961 the Mission assumed full financial responsibility for the work.

Rev. Benny Walker was called as Pastor and arrived on field February 4, 1962.

By August 1962 the enrollment of Sunday School grew to 192, Training Union to 79, and WMU to 19. At this time the mortgage was cut down to \$9,128.11.

On Sunday, September 16, 1962 there was a meeting with 104 present in which the Mission was constituted in The Fruitland Park Baptist Church, voluntarily associating itself with the Lake County Baptist Association, The Florida Baptist Convention, and The Southern Baptist Convention. At the time of this meeting there were 135 charter members.

On January 2, 1963 a Building Fund Savings Account was started. The church continued to grow. Rev. Benny Walker resigned the last Sunday in December 1964.

Rev. Connie Hargrove was called as Interim Pastor and served until Rev. Thomas Cleary was called on the first Sunday of June 1965. He remained until January 1969 when he resigned. During this time the temporary auditorium was air-conditioned and the church continued to show steady growth.

After Rev. Cleary resigned the church again called Rev. Connie Hargrove as Interim Pastor until April 20, 1969 when Rev. Preston Devall was called as Pastor.

The Building Fund showed \$4,363.19 in July 1969.

Homecoming was established in 1970 as the Third Sunday in September each year to celebrate the organization of the church.

At Homecoming service on September 20, 1970, the mortgage on the property was burned and we were free of debt for the first time in the history of the church.

An Organ Fund was started July 15, 1970. One was purchased in 1971 (February) at a cost of \$1,550.00 and paid off in February of 1972.

On January 30, 1972 the church voted to incorporate itself as The First Baptist Church of Fruitland Park, Inc. and on this same date R. T. Denson, Sr. was licensed to preach the gospel.

In 1972 the need for a new auditorium became acute. Angus McRae was secured as architect. The church entered into a \$60,000.00 Bond Program with the Florida Baptist Convention to finance the building program which consisted of building a new auditorium, renovating the present building, and paving the driveway and parking lot. The bond program was initiated on February 15, 1972 and will be paid off February 15, 1987. The church pays \$130.00 per week into this sinking fund to pay off the bonds.

Groundbreaking services for the new auditorium were held on March 26, 1972. As of April 1972 there was \$12,320.04 in the Building Fund.

Maxie Sumner was hired as contractor and work began on the new auditorium in April, 1972. Mr. Sumner was hurt shortly after that on another job and had to discontinue with our building. J. E. Scott & Son were hired as our building supervisor in the last part of August, 1972. Work continued on the building and it was completed in February 1973 at a cost of approximately \$64,000.00. This included central heat and air-conditioning.