

Rev. Rupert Jefferson Rousseau

"Brother Jeff and Mrs. Preacher," as Rev. and Mrs. Rupert Jefferson Rousseau were affectionately known, came to Olive Baptist Church in Pensacola, Florida on January 25, 1955. For almost 17 years, they served the growing congregation, loving the people and being loved in return.

They began their ministry in the T-shaped building that faced Olive Road. On January 25, 1959, their fourth anniversary, a new sanctuary was dedicated. That building was named Rousseau Hall in 1974 in honor of the man they called "our beloved former pastor."

Rupert Jefferson Rousseau was born February 18, 1918 on a farm in the Finch community of Greene County, Arkansas, about ten miles from Paragould. He was the second of four sons born to Carl Baker Rousseau and Malvina "Mallie" Jane McClure. In August 1934, while attending a revival, Jeff clearly understood that his life's work was to preach. Two months later, at age 16, he preached his first sermon.

As a high school student he pastored small country churches, as many as five at one time. At age 20 he preached a revival in Milligan Ridge, Arkansas, and met Audrey Ona McCann. He said to his parents when he returned home the following week, "I met my wife!"

Audrey Ona McCann was born in Mississippi County, Arkansas on May 16, 1922, one of nine children of Searcy Lee McCann and Hattie Roberson McCann. Her home was near Manila at Lost Cane on the banks of Little River. On September 3, 1938, ten weeks after Jeff and Audrey met, they were married. For 59 years she was his helpmeet, and in Jeff's words, "my constant partner and best friend."

Brother Jeff and Audrey graduated from Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Missouri. After attending Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Ft. Worth, Texas, Jeff earned a ThM degree from Luther Rice Seminary in Jacksonville, Florida.

In addition to Olive Baptist Church, Brother Jeff and Audrey pastored in Arkansas, Illinois, Oregon, Utah, New Mexico, and New York. In 1980, they retired to Pensacola at the invitation of Olive Baptist Church, and Brother Jeff was named pastor emeritus. In the next 17 years they served 15 interim pastorates, including Lakeview, East Brent, Poplar Dell, Brownsville, Highland, Scenic Heights, Heights, and Ferry Pass Baptist churches.

On August 1, 1993, Olive Baptist Church hosted an open house and dedication of the new home the church provided for Brother Jeff and Audrey. That same year Brother Jeff was honored by Pensacola Bay Baptist Association by being named the recipient of the dedication page of the annual.

Brother Jeff preached his last sermon, "Grace, Mercy, and Peace," on June 13, 1997. He died October 4, 1997. He was age 79. In 63 years of ministry he and Audrey had served in 22 states and several foreign countries. The number of persons blessed by the lives of "Brother Jeff and Mrs. Preacher" could never be counted.

Judith Richbourg Jolly (2002)

Florida Baptist Historical Society

Published in *The Heritage of Escambia County, Florida* (2004)

ct/Local Program:
Environmental Protection
District Office
Central Center
Tallahassee, Florida 32301-5794
Tel: 904/444-8300
117

The project file includes the DRAFT Permit, the application, information submitted by the responsible official, exclusive of records under Section 403.111, F.S. Interested persons may contact M. Sheplak, P.E., at the above address, or call 850/488-1177 for additional information.

October 6, 1997

interests and abilities as they relate to employment in various occupational areas

Psychological evaluations

WAGES activities have been reviewed and approved by the Escarosa RWDB. All activities will be funded through WAGES dollars and all approved services must be provided in accordance with federal, state and local regulations and policies. Proposals will cover contracts to begin December 11, 1997 and end June 30, 1998, with a possible extension for up to one year to encompass PY 1998-1999.

Interested bidders must submit a written letter of intent to bid by October 22, 1997, or attend a bidders meeting to begin at 3:00 p.m. on Octo-

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call 435-8616.

PNJ 10/6/1997

**MOBILE MEMORIAL GARDENS
ERIAL HOME** is in charge of
ngements.
he family wishes to thank Dr.
Dixon, Dr. John Feldman, Dr.
Russell, the staff at Mobile In-
ry Medical Center and the Infr-
Home Health Agency for the
and care extended to Mrs.
during this special time.

Pallbearers will be Jimmy Clark,
Bobby Cumbie, Donald Pendleton,
Daniel Pendleton, Don Czarnecki,
Chris M. Pendleton, D. Chris Pen-
dleton, Danny Rawson and Jason
LaBerge.

**BAYVIEW FISHER-POU CHA-
PEL** is in charge of arrangements.
The family will receive friends
from 5 to 7 p.m. Monday at the fu-
neral home.

Friends may call at the fune-
home from 5 to 9 p.m. Monday.
In lieu of flowers, memorial co-
tributions may be made to Hospi-
of Northwest Florida.

ARTHUR RAY RUSTAND
Arthur Ray Rustand, 67, of Pe-
sacola died Friday, October 3, 1997.

Mr. Rustand was a native
Wendell, Minn., but had been a re-
sident of Pensacola since 1973. He
was a professor at P.J.C. and Tr
State University in the Business E-
ducation Department. He was
member of the Gadsden Stre
United Methodist Church, where
sang in the choir. A lover of clas-
cal and opera music, Mr. Rusta-
devoted a lot of his time to the Pe-
sacola Choral Society. A love of
education, he was a mentor
Brownsville Arts and Science Aca-
emy. He was an avid sports fan.

He was preceded in death by his
sister, Elaine Gingerich.

Survivors include his wife
Jeanne Rustand; daughter, Whitn
Leigh Rustand; two sons, Jon Arth
Rustand and Timothy Ray Rustan
two sisters, Katherine Schneeberg
and her husband Lorr, and lo
Aamoth and her husband Cliff; h
very special dog Truly and cat Ca

Funeral services will be at 7 p.
Tuesday at Harper-Morris Memora-
Chapel with the Rev. C. Edwar
Britton officiating.

Burial will be in Minnesota.
**HARPER-MORRIS MEMORIAL
CHAPEL** is in charge of arrange-
ments.

M. LOUISE JOSEPH

M. Louise Joseph, 91, went
to rest on Friday, October 3, 1997.
She was born in Elizabeth, Ky.,
September 5, 1906. She moved to
Pensacola in 1913. She was a
member of Myrtle Grove Baptist
Church.

She was preceded in death by
her husband, E. Avery Joseph; and
her son, E. Gene Joseph.

Survivors include her daughter,
Frances Watson; sisters, Evelyn
Thompson and Ruth Marley;
son, Glen Bryant; five grand-
children, Donald Pendleton and his
wife Fayette, Daniel Pendleton and
his wife Karen, James Joseph, Mi-
chael Joseph and Avery Joseph;
granddaughters, Peggy Antone
and Louise Joseph; 21 great-grand-
children, four great-great-grandchild-
ren and a host of nieces, nephews
and friends.

Funeral services will be held at
7 p.m. Tuesday at Bayview
Memorial Chapel with Pastor Ron
Edwards officiating.

Burial will follow in Bayview
Memorial Park.

REV. JEFF ROUSSEAU

Rev. Jeff Rousseau, 79, of Pen-
sacola died Saturday, October 4,
1997, at his home.

Rev. Rousseau was Minister
Emeritus of Olive Baptist Church.
He had received degrees from
many seminaries and had pastored
churches for over 60 years.

Survivors include his wife of 59
years, Audrey Ona Rousseau; two
brothers, Carl and Joby Rousseau;
and several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services will be at 1 p.m.
Tuesday at Olive Baptist Church
with Dr. Elton McConn, the Rev.
Guy Kellern and the Rev. Eugene
Steele officiating.

Burial will be in Bayview Memo-
rial Park.

Active pallbearers will be Jim
Gallups, Cliff Fulford, Don Weidner,
Jim McGee, Roy Wilcox, Danny
Powell and alternate, Tom Stewart.

Honorary pallbearers will be the
deacons of Olive Baptist Church.

**FAITH CHAPEL FUNERAL
HOME** is in charge of arrange-
ments.

Churches, colleges host special meeti

Florida Baptist Theological College in Graceville is hosting a Prayer for Spiritual Awakening Conference Oct. 14-17. Speakers are Tom Kyzer, director of Prayer for Spiritual Awakening for the Florida Baptist Convention; Chuck Kelley, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary; Ed Johnson, pastor of First Baptist Church in Ocala; and Ron and Pat Owens of the North American Mission Board. Worship services are Oct. 16 at 7 p.m. and Oct. 17 at 10 a.m.

"How to Lead Successful Small Groups," a Pilgrimage/Navpress workshop, will be held Nov. 1 at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Topics include trends in society, elements of healthy small groups, cultivating a caring atmosphere, enabling small group members to discover and use their spiritual gifts, and more. Tuition cost is \$69 per person before Oct. 17 or \$79 after that date; group rates are available. For more information, contact Pilgrimage Training, P.O. Box 3373, Littleton, CO 80161-3373; phone 800-477-7787; fax 303-727-7622; e-mail 222.pilgrimage.org/training/.

Church news

Christy Neuman, 1997 Miss Florida, will visit **Skycrest Baptist Church, Clearwater**, Nov. 2. She will share her testimony in Bible study departments at 9:30 a.m. and in the 10:45 a.m. wor-

ship service. The church is located at 125 N. Belcher Road.

Mount Olive Baptist Church in Live Oak will host homecoming and revival services starting Oct. 26. Homecoming is on Oct. 26, with Sunday School at 9:45 a.m. and worship services at 11 a.m. A covered-dish noon meal will be served in the fellowship hall. Jeff Helms of Apopka will be the guest speaker for homecoming and for the church's fall revival, which begins Oct. 26 and continues Oct. 29 at 7 p.m. each night. The church is located at 5314 98th Terrace.

Obituaries

Jeff Rousseau, minister emeritus of Olive Baptist Church, Pensacola, died Oct. 4 at his home. He was 79. Rousseau had been a pastor for more than 60 years. Survivors include his wife of 59 years, Audrey Rousseau; two brothers, and several nieces and nephews.

Homecomings

First Baptist Church of Greensboro will host its annual homecoming Oct. 19 with Reneau B. Dominey, former pastor, as guest speaker. After a covered-dish dinner, there will be a praise and worship service led by "Glorybound."

First Baptist Church of Baldwin, 97 South Center St., will celebrate

homecoming Oct. 19. Bible study is at 8:30 a.m. and morning worship is at 10 a.m. The morning speaker is D.J. Abernathy, a former interim pastor. Dinner will be in the church's new Family Life Center.

Eden Baptist Church in Brooksville, 22308 Lake Lindsey Road, will celebrate homecoming Oct. 19 with guest speaker Perry Remick.

First Baptist Church, Lynn Haven, will celebrate its 85th anniversary with homecoming Oct. 19. "High Attendance Day" Sunday School will begin at 9:15 a.m. A combined morning worship service will begin at 10:30 a.m., featuring guest speaker J.W. Dubose. Dinner on the grounds will follow the service. Dennis Pledger will preach during a 6:30 p.m. service.

Highland Baptist Church, Molino, 6240 Hwy. 95-A North, will celebrate its 78th anniversary with homecoming services Oct. 26. The theme is "Sweet Memories Homecoming '97." Services will include Bible study at 9:45 a.m. and worship at 11 a.m. Guest speaker will be J.W. Dubose, former pastor. There will be lunch in the fellowship hall. For more information, call the church office at (850) 587-5174.

Hebron Baptist Church, Brooksville, will celebrate its 114th anniversary Oct. 26. Services include Sunday School at 10 a.m. and worship at 11 a.m. with former pastor Roy Silvers.

There will be dinner in hall and a gospel service. The church is located at 1030 Citrus Way, two miles r

First Baptist Church will observe its 71st birthday Oct. 26 with Sunday School at 10:30 a.m. and worship at 10:30 a.m. Layfayette Walker will be the guest speaker. There will be dinner following the service. The church is located at 166 W. Third St. For more information, call the church office at (904) 749-2204.

Heckscher Drive Baptist Church, Jacksonville, will celebrate its 100th anniversary Oct. 26. The church will provide chicken and biscuits for guests should bring old-fashioned tent meals. There will be entertainment through the night. The church is located at 166 W. Third St. For more information, call the church office at (904) 749-2204.

Revolutions

Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, Jacksonville will host its 100th anniversary Oct. 26-29 with Rogers. Service times are 7 p.m. on Oct. 26. Services on Oct. 27 and 28 are at 7:30 p.m. Tented three miles south on County Line Road. For more information, call (904) 454-2161.

North Main Street Baptist Church, Jacksonville will observe its 100th anniversary Oct. 26-29, beginning Oct. 26 at 7 p.m. each evening. The church will be John Boone of the Florida Baptist Convention. Teaching-Preaching Music evangelist will be minister of music for the church is located at the intersection of Main and Main streets. For more information, call the church office at (904) 765-5502.

Cedar Bay Baptist Church, Jacksonville, 11553 N. Main St., will observe its 100th anniversary Oct. 26-29. The evangelist will be Evangelist Jim McNeil. There were 114 professed converts and 142 rededications.

Staff changes

Hickory Hill Baptist Church has called Ian F. of youth. He is a student at Baptist Theological Seminary. Harp is a former pastor of Grove Baptist Church in Cove Springs.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

CHURCH NEEDS

FOR SALE-98 Murphy choir robes. Washable pebble crepe, rust color #5539 with ivory trim. Matching stoles. Great condition. \$15 each or best offer. Contact Bill Bradshaw, Trinity Baptist Church, (407) 886-2966.

EMPLOYMENT

SMALL GROWING COUNTRY CHURCH with nice living quarters, looking for bivocational staff person or persons. Youth/music/education/clerical-administration or combination. Send resume to Friendship Baptist Church, 5700 Palmer Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34232 or call (941) 371-2301; 371-0804; 371-1421.

LOCATED IN AN AREA FOR POTENTIAL GROWTH, with a Sunday School attendance of 150-200, Davenport First Baptist Church is accepting resumes for a **full-time pastor**. Please send resume and tape of your most recent sermon to Davenport First Baptist Church, Attn: Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 685, Davenport, FL 33836-0685. All resumes will be considered.

PART-TIME MUSIC DIRECTOR-Walton Road Baptist Church, Port St. Lucie, has bright future and wants God's man to lead worship (hymns, choruses) and choir. \$75-100/week. (561) 337-1467, e-mail: WaltonRoad@aol.com

MUSIC DIRECTOR-needed for church in S.E. Orange County. Bivocational. Contact Shenandoah Baptist Church, 7308 East Pershing Avenue, Orlando, FL 32822-5796.

YOUTH MINISTER-(Part-time/bivocational heavy discipleship emphasis) for growing youth group. Contact Randy Berry (561) 567-3335 First Baptist, Winter Beach, or sent

see Baptist Association, Flint, Michigan may be mailed to Chairman, Roy G. Adams, 10158 S. State Rd., Goodrich, MI 48438. Include cover with resume. Nominations will be received through Dec. 1, 1997.

ATTENTION! Pastors, Ministers of Music, Ministers of Education, Ministers of Youth and all other staff members. Hundreds of churches each month call us looking for a pastor or staff member. Call (800) 917-9599 for your confidential information packet. Southern Baptist Ministers Staffing Service, P.O. Box 198726, Nashville, TN 37219-8726. Regional Office-New Orleans, La. <http://www.ministerservices.com>

BAPTIST HOME FOR CHILDREN/JACKSONVILLE-Live-in houseparents to provide care for dependent school-age children, 8 days on and 4 days off. Salary and excellent benefits. Call (904) 721-2711.

FINANCES

BUILDING MONEY FOR CHURCHES-Over 33 years experience. Hundreds of personally served churches for references. **Tom Stricklin, Rives Leavell Company** (800) 826-4813.

INSURANCE

FOR YOUR INSURANCE NEEDS-Life, health, retirement and church. Call Ron Roberts (904) 269-3377 or (800) 241-8882. Agent for the Preferred Risk Group.

CHURCH INSURANCE PROGRAMS-Anywhere in Florida-property, liability, buses, vans & workers comp. Competitive rates-Mel Himes & Associates-(800) 329-3031.

Christmas or any special occasion. We do fund raising. For catalog, call (904) 764-3186 or write James May, 5831 N. Pearl St., Jacksonville, FL 32208.

BIBLES REBOUND-Other valuable books restored. **Specialty Bookbinding, 709 Magnolia Ave., Gadsden, AL 35903. Call toll-free (800) 631-5015.**

SBC YOUTH GROUPS NEEDED: Spring/summer missions-Atlanta, Baltimore, Branson, Buffalo, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Washington, El Paso, New Orleans, Philadelphia. Package includes most meals, housing. For cost, information, call Youth on Mission, (800) 299-0385.

CHILDREN'S GIFTS-Perfect for birthdays or Christmas! **Personalized** Christian children's books-as seen in the Baptist Book Store, Jacksonville. ("God's Special Gifts to Me;" "Precious Moments"-A child's first year; "Noah;" "My Book of Prayers;" "The Story of Christmas." FREE brochure, call (800) 722-8756.

BIBLICAL GREECE AND TURKEY-March 7-17, 1998 including a 3-night cruise. Optional 3-night Istanbul extension. Special lecturer: Dr. Raymond Bailey. Travel arrangements by Dehoney Travel. For further information, contact Rev. H. Kendall Smith, 4001 Hendricks Ave., Jacksonville, FL 32207, (904) 396-7745, ext. 307.

REAL ESTATE/RETREATS

CHRISTIAN BOOK STORE and other Smoky Mountain businesses and properties for sale. Call Richard Stevens, broker, First Choice, Dillsboro, NC, (704) 586-0067.

WHY PAY MORE FOR LIFE INSURANCE?
VERY LOW RATES

Florida Baptist Witness
Oct. 16, 1997
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H

istory

When Jeff and I came to Olive in 1955, the church was in dire need of space in both buildings and land (*We were parking on someone else's property*). So it was in that same year that a building program began. In those days, money was hard to come by. Olive was a country church with people of a rather limited salary base, but the church decided to trust God and start building. Everyone pitched in with what God had blessed them with. They never looked back but kept looking to the future.



Audrey Rousseau,
Wife of Jeff Rousseau,
pastor from 1955-1971

I can't remember a time in our ministry at Olive that Jeff and I have not been in some kind of building program. As we gave, God blessed us materially and spiritually. God blessed us so much that Jeff and I decided to give a second tithe to most of these programs. Since Jeff's homegoing I still do what I can, knowing God will bless every effort. This has not been just for us, but for those who will come after.

Thanks to our blessed Lord with unspeakable joy,
Audrey Rousseau

Significant Investments in Olive's Ministry

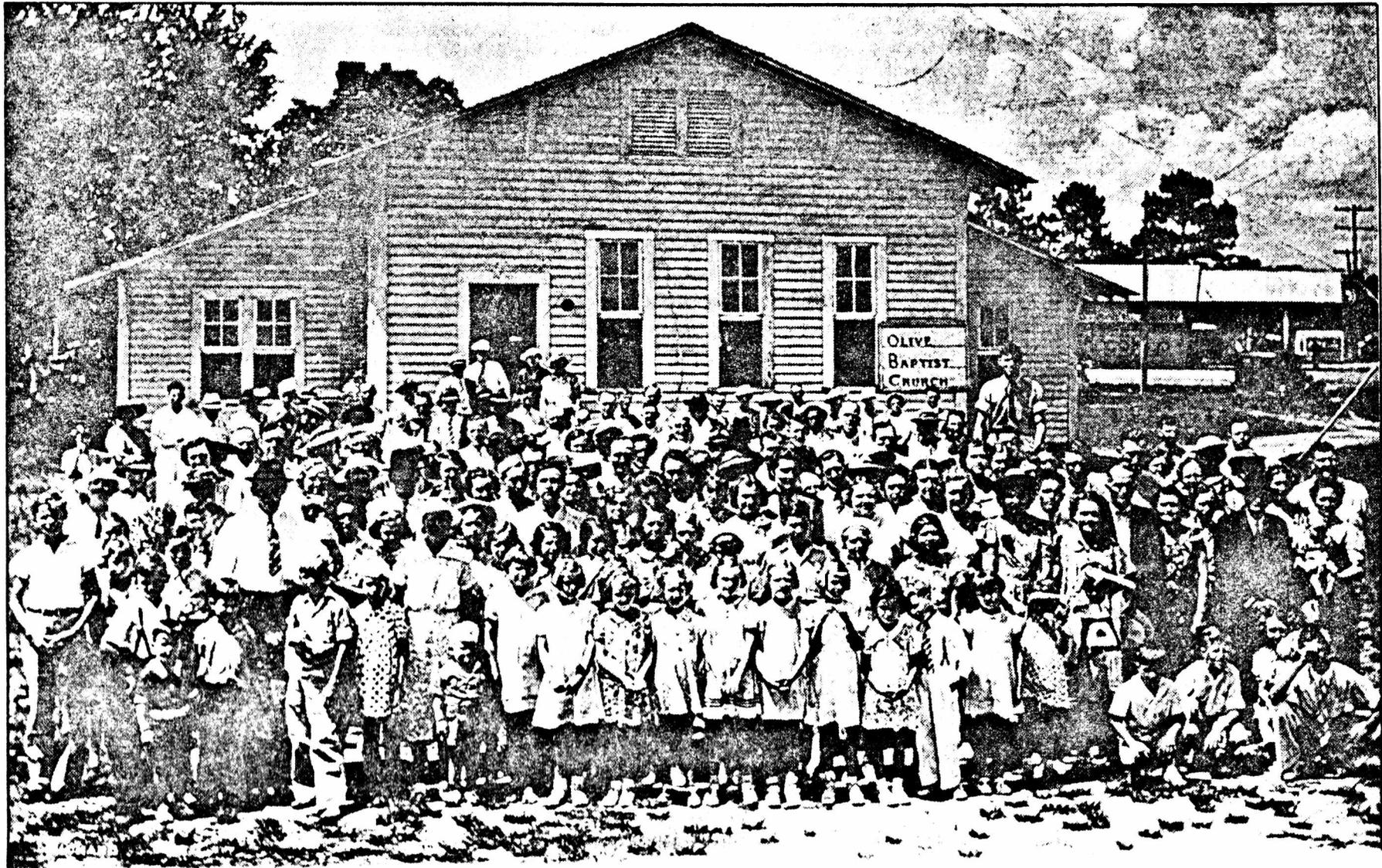
- 1949 Two Story White Building \$75,000
- 1955 Single Story White Building \$15,000
- 1959 Rousseau Hall \$90,000
- 1974 Passmore Hall \$310,000
- 1976 Purchase Wiggins Property \$233,000
- 1979 Howard West Annex \$1,000,000
- 1984 North Wing and ROC \$3,000,000

recent projects

- 1990 Purchase 22.5 acres from Enterkin Family—\$650,000
- 1995 Worship Center—\$11,000,000
- 2000 Simmons (Children's) Building—\$4,500,000
- 2001 Jernigan Property—\$475,000
- 2001-02 Capital Improvements—\$1,175,000
(heating and a/c upgrades, parking lot,
broadcast and sound equipment, etc.)

...preparing for  Olive's future

A Century of Growth



Built in 1918 with lumber salvaged from a hurricane-battered building, this frame tabernacle was used by the Olive Baptist congregation for more than 30 years. A two-story building which housed Bible classes still stands. This picture, taken from an old photocopy, is the last remaining likeness of the early church.

Retired pastor leads centennial trip down holy road

By Winnie Hu
News Journal

As Olive Baptist's new pastor in 1955, the Rev. Jeff Rousseau walked the first of many, many miles to find worshippers. With a Bible and a hand-drawn map, Rousseau would set off down the "holy road."

"We had to go way off everywhere to get them. It was country then," he said.

"Olive Road was paved from Davis Highway to Old Palafox, but the other end, that was the 'holy road.' It had so many holes you could bury a Volkswagen."

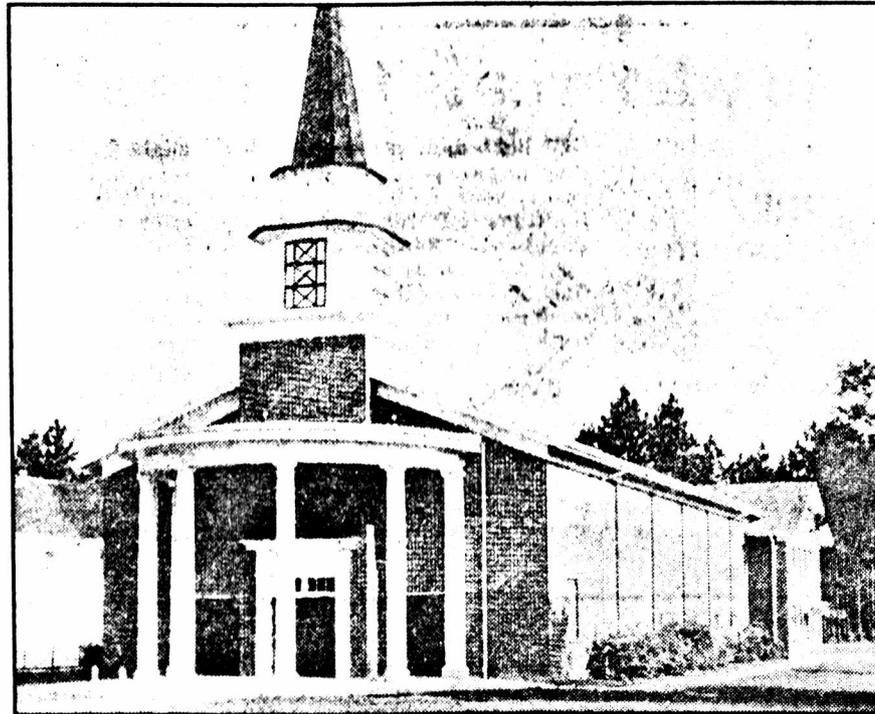
Rousseau's shoes had nearly as many holes as the road. But these days, the retired pastor doesn't have to walk far to find worshippers. His small country church has grown to 6,000 members — the largest congregation in Pensacola.



Rousseau

This Sunday night, Rousseau will host "One Hundred Years of Memories," the first of five special programs commemorating Olive Baptist's 100th anniversary on Oct. 2. The Rev. Jerry Passmore, who served after Rousseau, and the Rev. Ted Traylor also will share some of the church's history.

Unlike many centurial churches, Olive Baptist has flourished in old age. An average of 500 new worshippers file into the



Olive Baptist Church's Rousseau Hall, named after Rev. Jeff Rousseau who came to the church in 1955, served as the main auditorium from 1959-74.

pews each year. Ministries help members cope with modern ills such as unemployment, divorce and drug and alcohol addiction. An \$8-million,

3,400-seat sanctuary for worship services is under construction.

But despite the bustle of activities and the fancy building, Olive Baptist is not

IF YOU WANT TO GO

WHAT: "One Hundred Years of Memories"

WHERE: Olive Baptist Church sanctuary, 1836 Olive Road

WHEN: 6:45 p.m. Sunday

DETAILS: 476-1932

that different from the church that Rousseau served in the 1950s. The church's mission, then as now, is to reach non-Christians in the community. No matter how much the congregation grows, there's always room for one more.

"We get our mission from the Scripture, and Jesus told us that we're to go and make disciples of all nations," said Traylor, the current pastor. "That was the mission of the church a hundred years ago, and it'll be the mission of the church a hundred years from now because the mission and the message of the church never changes."

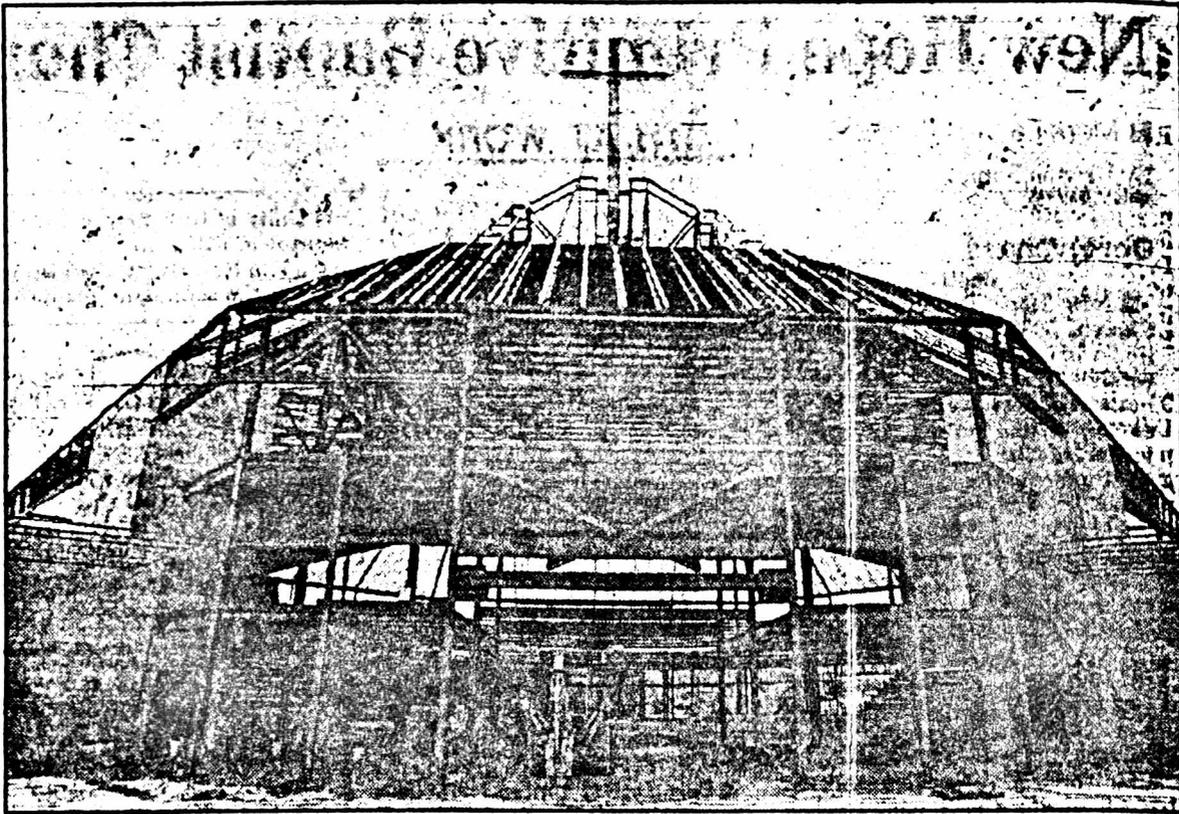
In Rousseau's day, however, reaching the lost was a matter of putting on walking shoes and knocking on doors. During his 17 years as pastor, Rousseau visited with thousands of folks. He performed more than 850 baptisms. He was chased away only once by a man with a shotgun.

"There were a few like that, but most people would invite you in, and we'd sit and talk," Rousseau said. "It was

See CHURCH, 3B

From Audrey Rousseau file - nd

LIFE



Charlie Steed/News Journal

Construction continues on Olive Baptist Church's new \$8 million sanctuary which will seat about 3,400 people. The new cross atop the building was recently added.

Church works to reach new members one step at a time

FROM 1B

time-consuming, but it was worth it because later on people came to church. If you go after them, they'll come."

Although Traylor also drops by people's homes, he often doesn't get past the front door. Working couples may not have time to chat, while others are suspicious about letting a stranger into their homes. Some people openly reject religion.

"In the world in which we live today, there are people that have no clue about Jesus Christ and what he is," Traylor said. "I think



Traylor

it's the greatest day to live to preach the gospel because of the need and the intolerance and the rebellion."

Traylor uses other approaches to spread God's message. His practical ministries — the job transition ministry is the latest — have attracted troubled people seeking support and guidance.

Traylor also spends \$27,000 annually to woo new members with catchy, upbeat ads in the media. "The media helps us, but it's still one man telling another man and sharing the message," he said.

Equally important, Traylor is passing on the church's mission to a new generation of worshippers sitting in the pews.

"The key to our growth is that we have transferred to the next generation this mandate that God has called us to do, to continue to reach out to the people around

us," he said. "Brother Rousseau taught young people that are some of our readers now and senior adults, and I'm teaching their children, and we'll teach their children's children."

Rousseau, the pastor emeritus, still watches over Olive Baptist's mission — from his armchair. Rousseau and his wife live in an \$80,000 house built for them by the congregation last year. They have lived on church property since 1980, but two earlier residences were demolished to make room for parking lots.

"We lived in a brick home, and it was good enough for us, and then they moved us into another brick home, and it was a little newer. And then they moved us over here and this one was brand-new," he said. "I never dreamed we'd get to live in a house like this."

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At the Heart of Things

A Centennial Celebration History

of the

**Olive Baptist Church
1894-1994**

by

Judith W. Steele

Editors:

Gene and Carole Dunn

*Olive Baptist Church
Pensacola, Florida*

Chapter 3: 1955-1971

- 1957: New Public library opened at Spring and Gregory Streets
- 1963: University of West Florida was founded; first students in 1967
- 1967: Westinghouse began construction on Scenic Highway
- 1970: Cordova and University Malls opened

1950-1960: Acquiring Additional Property and Building a New Sanctuary (Rousseau Hall)

~~*~~ *Reverend Jeff Rousseau*

For almost seventeen years (1954-1971), Reverend Rupert Jefferson Rousseau, affectionately known as "Brother Jeff" to the Olive family, led Olive Baptist Church in unparalleled evangelistic efforts which resulted in a spiraling growth pattern from a church membership of 600 in 1955 to 1400 in 1971. Reverend Rousseau was born February 18, 1918, on a farm about ten miles from Paragould, Arkansas. His testimony is that he was born again in August of 1934 during a revival at Alexander Baptist Church in Paragould. He was ordained to the ministry by the same church and began preaching on October 13, 1934, when he was sixteen. Reverend Rousseau is a graduate of Southwest Baptist College, Bolivar, Missouri; he also attended Southwestern Seminary for a summer, and received his Master of Theology from Luther Rice Seminary in Jacksonville, Florida.

On September 3, 1938, Reverend Rousseau married Audrey Ona McCann, known to the Olive family as "Mrs. Preacher." They have been married over fifty-five years

AT THE HEART OF THINGS
Olive Baptist Church 1894-1994

now. It is the great privilege of Olive Baptist to have Brother Jeff and Mrs. Preacher currently living on the church property on Olive Road in a newly-built 1850-square-foot home provided for them by their church family who loves them dearly. Brother Jeff still ministers to the people of Olive as the church's pastor emeritus in addition to his work serving area churches by supply preaching and serving as interim pastor. Mrs. Preacher serves as a teacher in the Senior Adult Division at Olive.

The Call: November, 1954

The church minutes of late 1954 certainly testify to the fact that the call of Brother Jeff to Olive Baptist was God-ordained. On November 21, 1954, in the evening service, Bill Parazine brought a recommendation from the pulpit committee and deacons that Olive should extend a call to Brother Jeff Rousseau, and that the vote would take place the following Sunday morning. On November 28, 1954, Brother Ed Rose, Sr., restated the motion concerning calling Brother Rousseau as pastor. The minutes read: "The church heartily accepted the motion with a rising vote of 102 in favor of the motion, and none opposed." On December 5, 1954, the church was again called into special conference. According to the minutes,

Bro. Ed Rose, after expressing the convictions of the pulpit committee and deacons that they felt the Lord was in the action taken by the church in the call of Bro. Rousseau and inasmuch as he had declined the invitation, brought the following recommendation. "That Bro. Rousseau be called by

telephone again today and informed of our present convictions in the matter; that this call be followed immediately with an airmail letter expressing our convictions; that Bro. Rousseau be informed that Olive Baptist Church is holding prayer meeting every night of the week praying for the Lord's leadership and guidance; and that Bro. Rousseau be contacted by telephone again on Saturday evening, Dec. 11, for his answer as to whether or not he will accept the call as pastor of this church."

In a meeting on December 12, 1954, Bill Parazine read a letter from Brother Jeff Rousseau concerning the action taken by the church on Dec. 5. Brother Rousseau agreed to become pastor of Olive effective Feb. 1, 1955, if the church "felt led of the Lord" to "give him a unanimous call after hearing the contents of the letter" he had written. A motion was made by Joe Jones to extend a third call to Brother Rousseau. "There was a unanimous response with 116 voting in favor of the motion, none opposed." Therefore, Reverend Jeff Rousseau came as the pastor of Olive Baptist Church from First Church, Bonne Terre, Missouri. Brother Jeff's first Sunday was January 25, 1955. He notes that there were 225 in Sunday School and 103 in Training Union, a good attendance considering that it snowed that day! The church bulletin of January 23, 1955, contained the following welcome:

Today marks an outstanding date in the history of this church inasmuch as it heralds the arrival of our new pastor, the Reverend Jeff Rousseau and his helpmeet, Mrs. Rousseau. It would be difficult,

indeed, or well nigh impossible to say with what joy we welcome them to our midst, but we do take this opportunity to pledge Brother Rousseau our wholehearted cooperation, that we might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.

Leading the church in new growth

Having been a pastor for eighteen and a half years, Brother Jeff used his experience to lead the church into a growth phase. In June of 1955, Olive borrowed \$10,000 toward the cost to build a new educational building. According to church records, a new \$15,000 educational unit was built, and the pastorium was converted into an educational unit with five nursery and beginner departments. (Some of the white buildings--West Wing--still exist.) The pastorium, at that time was located on the west side of the church near the Simmons' property, facing Olive Road. Mr. and Mrs. Linzy Simmons gave additional property to the church for this educational expansion (warranty deed dated September 21, 1960).

On October 15, 1955, the East Nine Mile Mission (begun as a mission Sunday School of Olive in 1952) was formally organized as the Hillcrest Baptist Church, with the dedication service being moderated by Reverend Jeff Rousseau.

In June, 1956, Olive voted to purchase new property east of the church belonging to Mrs. Ethel Parazine and Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Stinson. According to Brother Rousseau's bulletin comments of July 1, 1956, the total cost

of both pieces of property was \$8,000. The lot was comprised of 45 feet frontage from Mrs. Parazine and 104 feet frontage from the Stinsons. Brother Rousseau remarked in the bulletin:

Perhaps most of you thought the church owned the parking lot east of the church, but we don't. Mrs. Parazine has been letting us use it free of charge. We owe her a special thanks for this kindness. Now that we have bargained to buy these two pieces of property, we will need about \$4,000 additional money to pay for them. We need \$2,000 at the end of 6 months. That will give us 6 months to raise the money. I feel sure that all of us will want to have a part in paying this debt off.

At that same time (1955), Brother Jeff bought a piece of property himself at the north end of the strip of land owned by Mrs. Ethel Parazine Taylor. On this property, he built a 980-square-foot home, in which he and Mrs. Preacher lived until he resigned and sold the house to the church (1971). In 1980, Brother Jeff and Mrs. Preacher returned to the same home and lived there until 1993 when their new home, built by contractor David Miller (a young man who has attended Olive from his birth and was baptized and married by Brother Jeff), was finished. Brother Jeff remarks that he needed a place to live, but more importantly, he did not want the property to get away from the church; he says that at that time (1955), property around the church was very difficult to acquire because families had homesteaded the property for many decades and did not want to sell. Fortunately, people like the Simmons,

Stinsons, Parazines, Clarks, Rutherfords, Cannons, Purnells, Merritts, Enterkins, and others (along with their descendants and relatives) owned surrounding property and eventually donated the land or sold it to the church so the church could continue growing. Brother Jeff further notes that the land had been poorly surveyed at that time, and many difficulties arose defining property lines. Olive is fortunate that Brother Jeff had the foresight to buy the property at the end of the Parazine strip while the opportunity was present, and that he had the foresight to have all the surveying problems straightened out as land was surveyed and recorded at every purchase.

On that Sunday, July 1, 1956, there were 318 in Sunday School, 110 in Training Union, and an offering of \$699.63, which included \$96.43 which was collected in Vacation Bible School. (The Vacation Bible School offering was approximately 14% of the weekly offering!)

New Sanctuary (Rousseau Hall)

In February, 1957, the Sunday School enrollment was 614, and the attendance was 364. As the church continued to grow, Brother Jeff led the church in its largest challenge financially to that point--the building of a new sanctuary (today known as Rousseau Hall) at a cost of \$100,000; the building was designed to seat 700 people.

October 27 through November 3, 1957, was designated by the church as \$100,000 week. Reverend Aubrey C. Halsell, Director of Baptist Building Service, helped the church to organize to sell bonds. Brother Jeff Rousseau organized the church into 25 teams, and each team had the goal of selling \$2,950 of bonds, paying 5%

interest. Brother Rousseau listed the purpose of the bonds as follows:

1. To pay present indebtedness of \$9,500
2. To build a new air-conditioned auditorium
3. To convert present auditorium (Allen building/ South Wing) into a two-story educational building

The October 8, 1957, church minutes list the following people as members of the building committee and planning committee for the new sanctuary:

Building Committee

Ben Collins, Chairman
Conrad Noel
Ralph Sutton
Roy N. Harris
Aubrey Nelson

Planning Committee

Ben Collins, Chairman
J.S. Stewart
Herman Harris
Mrs. Trudie Owen
Mrs. Ruth Rose

According to Trudie Owen, the planning committee traveled two days a week looking at all kinds of churches, hoping to stay within their allocation of the \$100,000 budget. They looked at Warrington Methodist which had built an auditorium for \$65,000. The building at Warrington seemed to have everything the planning committee wanted, and Warrington had given the plans to the committee to study. The committee liked the plans, says Trudie, but the men said the bathroom area could be better used for storage or other uses, and that the people could easily use bathrooms in other buildings. The men felt it would be too distracting in the service for people to walk to the front for

the bathrooms. Trudie recalls that she and Ruth Rose had to disagree with any and everything the rest of the committee recommended until the men agreed to put in bathrooms. The stall doors were made by someone in the church, however, to avoid installing more expensive ones. One other problem Trudie reports about the building is that she advises never to ask the church or a committee what to put up for a curtain in the baptistry. The committee encountered much opposition about this problem, evidently. Some wanted only to dye sheets and hang them; some wanted to save the money and do nothing. Trudie and Ruth held out for something nice, however, and when the curtain was hung, everyone was pleased.

The October 8, 1957, church minutes report the planning committee's recommendations to accept the floor plans proposed by architect Richard A. Vander Sys of Mobile, AL, and to hire him at a fee of \$1,250 as architect as he had designed the Warrington Methodist Church which the new sanctuary was to be modeled after, and because he had also designed many other Baptist churches throughout the South.

The ground-breaking ceremony for the new auditorium was held March 31, 1958, and the building was completed in January of 1959. According to the August 3, 1958, bulletin, Brother Rousseau noted that Brother W.H. Hargrave of Heights Memorial Company, 1232 Pace Blvd., donated a marble cornerstone for the new auditorium. Brother and Mrs. Hargrave were members of East Pensacola Heights Baptist Church and were close friends of Brother and Mrs. Rousseau.

During the dedication ceremony of January 25, 1959 (Brother Jeff's fourth anniversary), the bulletin noted that

under the leadership of Brother Rousseau, the "church had experienced its greatest spiritual and financial growth." The membership on that date was 685, and the annual budget was \$45,000.

At the dedication of the sanctuary, which would be named Rousseau Hall in 1974, the church bulletin listed the following members as church officers:

<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Brother Jeff Rousseau</i>
<i>Minister of Music</i>	<i>Ben W. Northcutt</i>
<i>Secretary/Clerk</i>	<i>Lena Chavers</i>
<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Howard West</i>
<i>Sunday School Supt.</i>	<i>W.L. Parazine, Sr.</i>
<i>Training Union Director</i>	<i>Herman Harris</i>
<i>WMU President</i>	<i>Frances Harris</i>
<i>Brotherhood President</i>	<i>Ben Collins</i>

In a *Pensacola News Journal* article dated March 12, 1962, the writer, Ira Brock, noted: "Nearly every seat was taken in the church on Olive Road just off Davis Highway in Ferry Pass." The writer continued:

The striking, calm sanctuary was in modern splendor next to the frame church building it replaced about four years ago. The abandoned frame building is earmarked as an educational facility for the church. Six male voices and 18 feminine voices were in the maroon-robed choir of Olive Baptist Church yesterday. The pastor announced that the February