

Florida Baptist Historical Society Biography Collection

This link provides the specific resource information which documents and undergirds the biographical resource information on a specific Florida Baptist pastors, church staff or significant laity leaders.

The link you have chosen connects to the specific individual's resource files that provide the basis for information which the Historical Society has used to develop the respective biographical profile. The sources attached may include copies of articles gleaned from back issues of the *Florida Baptist Witness* and other news publications. Other resources include books, historical journal articles and church histories that are cited as documentation for the biography.

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Simmons, W. M. served as pastor of Paran Baptist Church, Grandin (1903-1904) and Florahome Baptist Church, St. Johns River Association.

Paran Baptist Church, Grandin

E.B. Timmons.....1856....1862
 Richard M. Perry..... 1862....1864
 Samuel Timmons.....1864....1866
 William Johnson..... 1866....1868
 M.N. Strickland.....1868....1875
 E.B. Timmons.....1875....1878
 M.N. Strickland.....1878....1879
 E.B. Timmons.....1879....1880
 B.W. Becks.....1880....1882
 G.W. Hall.....1882....1883
 E.H. Robinson.....1883....1884
 B.R. Mosley..... 1884....1891
 E. Trices.....Dec. 1891....Oct. 1892
 B.R. Mosley..... Oct. 1892....Oct.1894
 W.E. Stanton.....Nov.1894
 N.T. King.....Dec. 1894..... 1895
 B.R. Mosley.....1895....1903
 W.M. Simmons1903....1904
 G.W. Riles.....1904....1905
 W.M. Simmons.....1905....1906
 Marshal Strickland Mar.1906 Sept. 1906
 W.M. Simmons..... 1906 July 1907
 B.F. Green.....Nov. 1907..July. 1908
 M.N. Strickland Aug. 1908 Sept. 1909
 B.R. Mosley.....1909....1910
 Frank Strickland.....1910....1911
 B.R. Mosley.....Aug. 1911 Apr. 1914
 S.S. Proctor.....1914....1915
 J.F. McBride..... 1915 Jan..... 1916
 T.E. WaldrypFeb. 1916 July 1916
 F.M. Strickland.... Oct. 1916 May 1918
 A.M. Yarbourgh.....May 1918 Dec. 1919
 W.R. Wilkerson.....Dec. 1919 July 1921
 Ivan Bohannan.....Aug. 1921 Nov. 1922
 W.G. Doyle.....Dec. 1922.....
 R.D. Bevis.....Mar. 1925.....
 T.D. Denman.....Aug. 1931.....
 L.R. Brothers.....Dec. 1935 Sept. 1936
 Dan Smith.....Oct. 1936 Oct. 1937
 F. Warren Capell Oct. 1937 Aug. 1939
 C.R. Robinson.....Sept. 1939 May 1942
 J.P. Sullivan.....June 1942 April 1944
 V.J. Major..... May 1944 Sept. 1949
 Bro. Squires.....Oct. 1949 Dec. 1949
 John Strickland....Jan. 1950 Aug. 1950
 R.C. Gray.....Aug. 1950 May 1954
 C.E. Underwood June 1954 To Date

HISTORY OF OAK AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH
Formerly
Florahome Baptist Church and First Baptist Church, George's Lake

The Florahome Baptist Church was received into the St. Johns River Baptist Association at the Annual Meeting at Providence Baptist Church, October 16, 17, 18, 1901. They were represented by Rev. W.M. Simmons, pastor, and Mr. J.F. Plauch, layman from Florahome. There was no record of the church after 1904. Apparently the church ceased to exist until January 4, 1954 when Rev. Matthew Greer came down from North Carolina, set up a tent and held a revival for about four weeks. Several people were saved and some rededications were made. After the revival Mr. and Mrs. Clifford G. Miller opened their home and regular services were held each Lord's day.

Mr. and Mrs. Miller donated some land and a church building was started, and temporary officers were elected: Rev. Matthew Greer, pastor; Mr. Clifford Miller, Rev. Greer, and Raymond Winters were elected Trustees. The people started working on the building immediately, and paying for material as they went. The women did their part also by helping build pews. In May 1954, the church building was completed enough to hold services. In August 1954, Rev. Dean Gatch was called as full time pastor. On August 29, 1954, the church was organized as the Florahome Baptist Church. Twenty-two came requesting membership as Charter members. Due to conflict of beliefs and outside influence not conducive to the beliefs of the Southern Baptist Convention, the church did not grow from 1956 until January 1963.

In January 1963, the church was reorganized with the help of the Association. Rev. Alton Stevens served as pastor from January 3, 1963 until July 28, 1963. Rev. James Thompson was called as pastor on August 4, 1963. During this time the church built two Sunday School rooms and two rest rooms. In October 1963, the church sent a Petitionary letter to the Association requesting membership. They were received into the Association.

Rev. J.D. Hersey, Jr., was called as pastor in 1966 and he served until March 1972. On April 16, 1972, Rev. Charles Litzell was called as pastor. In May 1972, through the effort of Rev. Litzell, the church acquired a house in Palatka, and moved it to Florahome to a lot in front of the church. During this time work was being done on the new auditorium. In September 1974, Rev. Litzell resigned, and Rev. Jim Blevins was called as pastor and served until September 1976, when he resigned. In January 1977, Rev. James White was called as pastor. Rev. White resigned as pastor in August 1977 and started the First Baptist Church of George's Lake.

In August 1977, Rev. Frank Fells was called as interim pastor and resigned in August 1978. Rev. Chuck Wilcox was called as interim pastor in October 1978 and served until November 1980 when he resigned. Rev. Leon Hurley was called as part-time pastor in January 1981, and in April 1982 he started as full-time pastor. Rev. Hurley resigned as pastor in November 1986 and Rev. O.D. Moore was called as interim pastor. Rev. Moore resigned as interim pastor in October 1987. In November 1987, Rev. Grady Darden was called as pastor.

In August 1987, the Florahome Baptist Church voted to merge with the First Baptist Church of George's Lake. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative. However, George's Lake voted 12 to 1 against uniting the two churches. In August 1990, a special called business meeting was called to discuss uniting the two churches. The churches agreed to meet together for worship service, and in September 1990, a covenant was made between the two churches. They were united. In October 1990, Rev. Darden resigned as pastor.

First Baptist Church, George's Lake

In January 1977, Rev. James White was called as pastor of the Florahome Baptist Church. Rev. White resigned as pastor of the Florahome Baptist Church and started a church at George's Lake, a community a few miles north of Florahome on George's Lake. They named this new church the First Baptist Church of George's Lake. At first, the church met in the George's Lake Fire House. On Saturday, August 25, 1978, they started building a house of worship on Wauhulla Street. On October 1978, the church petitioned the Association for membership. Rev. White became ill and resigned as pastor on November 6, 1978. Rev. R.V. "Buddy" Hogarth became supply pastor on November 22, 1978. Rev. and Mrs. Hogarth stayed until July 15, 1979.

On July 22, 1979, Rev. Warren Thompson was called as full-time pastor, and October 11, 1979, the church was accepted into the Association during its Annual Meeting at Peniel.

The church dedicated its new auditorium on April 6, 1980. Rev. Warren Thompson resigned July 16, 1980, and Rev. White returned as pastor July 17, 1980 and stayed until October 29, 1980 when he was again forced to resign because of ill health. Rev. Woody Graves was called as full-time pastor on November 2, 1980 and stayed until July 5, 1981.

Rev. Charles Litzell became pastor November 2, 1981 when Rev. Graves resigned. In August 1982, an educational building was started and it was attached to the back of the auditorium. Rev. J.W. Keen served as pastor from August 1986 until May 1988. Rev. O.D. Moore became interim pastor in August 1988. Rev. James Adkins served as pastor from August 1988 until December 1989. Rev. Keen was called back to serve as interim pastor until September 1991. Rev. Keen passed away June 14, 1992.

Oak Avenue Baptist Church

In 1990, there was a discussion about the First Baptist Church of George's Lake and the Florahome Baptist Church uniting. On August 29, 1990, the churches met together for services with that idea in mind. An agreement was made and executed on December 13, 1990. The Florahome Baptist Church was formally dissolved by way of an amendment to its Constitution.

Rev. Bob Cook, Director of Missions for the St. Johns River Baptist Association, served as interim pastor from May 1991 to September 1991, at which time Rev. Kenneth Tanner was called as pastor and served until February 1994. On August 29, 1993, the church started having all services at the old Florahome Baptist Church on Oak Avenue. In March 29, 1994, the name of the church was formally changed to Oak Avenue Baptist Church. Rev. Cecil Hess was called as bivocational pastor on April 10, 1994. The church was rededicated in May 1994 and a new sign was installed. A bell tower was installed and the bell played for the first time on August 21, 1994. Insulation was installed in the sanctuary, fellowship hall was covered and painted. Rev. Hess served until October 1, 1995. On December 20, 1995, Rev. Herbert Brownlee was called as interim pastor and served until April 20, 1996. The church installed a baptistry, purchased new hymnals, a T.V., and a V.C.R. Rev. Joey Floyd was called as interim pastor July 21, 1996 and served until September 18, 1996.

Rev. Mike Mallatt was called as pastor on November 1, 1996, and continues through the present time. Through the years Easter Community Services have been conducted at George's Lake beach. Since changing our name we have had 30 baptisms, 20 additions by letter, and two by statement. Although we have met with many obstacles in the past, through trusting in the Lord for leadership and help, the dedication and diligent work of a group of members we have and will continue to carry on.