

## **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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**Smith, Charles** served as pastor of Pine Grove Baptist Church, Gainesville and River Road Baptist Church, Palatka 1958-1960. He and his wife Laura had two daughters.

and three interim pastors. Present pastor John Pelham, came to First Baptist Church in March, 1963.

The church continues to minister in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ with emphasis upon its ministries.

### RIVER ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH

Palatka, Florida

"One of 30,000"

On January 29, 1956, a group began worshipping in the home of Willie and Stella Roberts. The first two meetings were held in their living room and then moved into the garage of their home. This new work was called the River Road Baptist Chapel and was sponsored by the First Baptist Church of Palatka, Florida.

Among those serving on the mission committee were Dr. H. K. Mastella, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Carl Rivers, chairman, Frank Boutwell, Jack Scurry, and Claude Conway.

In March, 1956, the men of the congregation built a wooden frame building, consisting of four classrooms and an auditorium. The building was constructed on the land given to the chapel by Willie and Stella Roberts. This is where they worshipped until the present building was constructed in 1960.

The first regular speaker was Bro. Charlie Taylor, a layman from the First Baptist Church of Palatka, Florida. The first pianists were Mrs. Helen Wycoff and Mrs. Vivian Rivers, both of the First Baptist Church, and Ted Norris. The first song leaders were Joe Baggerley, Ted Norris, and Randell Driggers.

As the congregation grew, more space was needed for classrooms. The young people of the chapel moved their Sunday School classes to a wooden frame building near the chapel. This building belonged to James and Evelyn Bradshaw.

The first pastor called to serve was the Rev. Alton Stevens, from Flagler Beach, Florida, on December 31, 1956. Rev. Stevens and his wife, Martha, had two (2) sons. Rev. Stevens resigned on August 11, 1957.

In January 1958, Bro. James Bradshaw donated a new pulpit and several new pews to the chapel. Later, Bro. Bradshaw built a communion table, chairs, and smaller tables for the chapel.

The second pastor, Rev. Charles Smith, was called in April, 1958 from the Pine Grove Baptist Church, Gainesville, Florida.

Rev. Smith, his wife Laura, and daughters Sandra and Diane served here until May 15, 1960. During his ministry, construction of the present building was begun and the pastorium was purchased. Rev. Smith performed the first wedding to be held in the Chapel. Those married were Charles and Toni Hall on September 26, 1958.

On January 4, 1959, Bro. Harvey Cannon was ordained as deacon. Bro. Cannon was the first deacon to be ordained in the chapel. Those assisting in the ordination included: The late Rev. Marvin Stedham, Field Secretary of the Florida Baptist Convention, District No. 6, who gave the Charge to the Deacon; The Rev. V. J. Major of East Palatka Baptist Church, who gave the Charge to the Church; The Rev. C. E. Faulk, Lundy Baptist Church, who gave the Ordination Prayer; The Rev. Kenneth Hansen, pastor of the First Baptist Church, led the Examination of Deacon, assisted by Bro. Carl Rivers and Bro. John Barrantine, deacons of the First Baptist Church. The Benediction was given by Bro. Carl Rivers.

On July 10, 1960, the Rev. C. Ronald Cumbie was called from the Union Baptist Church, Defore, Kentucky as the chapel's third pastor. A native of Georgia, and a graduate of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, he came with his wife Rosemary and daughter Pamela. Later that year, their son, Perry, was borne.

During his stay, the present building, consisting of an auditorium and thirteen (13) classrooms, was completed. The building was built by the men of the congregation with the late Harley Driggers as general contractor. The building was dedicated in October, 1960.

In February, 1963, Rev. Cumbie was called to pastor a church in Wauchula, Florida.

Rev. Edward M. Straner, a native of Clearwater, Florida, and a graduate of Stetson University and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, was called and preached his first sermon, June 23, 1963. Rev. Straner came from Belle Glade, Florida where he had