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.

Visit our website at FloridaBaptistHistory.org

Smith, Truett graduated from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He served as pastor

of First Baptist Church, Sopchoppy, 1954; White City Baptist Church, Fort Pierce (now Sunrise Baptist Church), 1954-1959; Clearlake Baptist Chapel, Cocoa, 1960; First Baptist Church, Seffner, 1963; Gladeview Baptist Chapel, 1965 -1974; Bardmoor Baptist Chapel, 1976; and First Baptist Church, Miami Beach 1983-1985. Smith and his wife, Sarah had two children.

HISTORY OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF SOPCHOPPY

Wakulla 1988 Now in Florida Association

This Church became the Mt. Beasor Missionary Baptist Church in 1873 when 80 members withdrew from the Mt. Beasor Primitive Church which was constituted in 1853. The first church building was erected on a site in West Sopchoppy in 1873 and remained there until 1906 when Mr. John C. Hodge gave a lot in the present City of Sopchoppy and a second church building was constructed. The site was moved to the present City of Sopchoppy because of a shift in the communtiy growth. The building erected in 1906 remained until the present building was constructed in 1967. The church went by the name of Mt. Beasor Baptist Church until 1942 when it was changed to the First Baptist Church of Sopchoppy. In 1964, the first gifts were made to a building fund for the present church building on this third site. In 1965, the church voted to build, and on December 17, 1967, the first service were held in the new building. However, Sunday School and Church Training were not held in the new building until February 11, 1968, when every part of the building was completed. The present building was dedicated on February 25, 1968. The new educational wing was completed the first part of 1982 and was dedicated on March 21, 1982.

Wakulla 1988

PASTORS WHO SERVED AT SOPCHOPPY FIRST
Approximately 1900 - 1983

Rev. Lewis Roberts (Mr. Johnnie Roberts Uncle)	
Rev. Steve Revell	
Rev. Judah	1921-1923.
Rev. O. N. Revell(son of Rev. Steve Revell	1924-1927
Rev. G. E. Holified	1927-1928
Rev. Frank Bancroft	1928
Rev. O. N. Revell (Former Pastor)	1929-1934
Rev. L. E. Goodgame	1935-1936
Rev. A. V. Pickern	1937-1938
Rev. O. N. Revell (Former Pastor)	1938-1942
Rev. Homer Duggar	1942-1943
Rev. Virgil T. Smith	1944
Rev. C. J. Johnson	1945-1946
Rev. John E. Pelham, Sr.	1947
~~Rev. Ralph Rittenhouse, Sr.~~	1948-1953
Rev. Truett Smith	1954
~~Rev. DeWitt Cox~~	1955-Sept. 1957
Rev. Homer Duggar (Former Pastor)	Oct.1957-Oct. 1960
Rev. Ted Rodda	1960-1962
Rev. O. G. Hall	Feb. 1963-Sept. 1969
Rev. Glenn Lawhon	June 1970-Aug. 1977
Rev. D. O. Goss	March 1978-Oct. 1982
Rev. Harold J. Crosson (interim)	Nov. 1982-Apr. 1983
Rev. Darrel Smith	May 1983-June 1986
Rev. Henry Jones	April 1987-Present

Tallahassee Democrat
Friday, October 29, 1954 5

Florida Baptist Group Will Meet

The Florida Baptist Association is holding its union meeting of churches Saturday and Sunday at the Shady Sea Baptist Church at Spring Creek. The Rev. Lawrence Stewart will be host pastor.

The Rev. Truett Smith of Sopchoppy First Baptist Church, delivers the doctrinal sermon at 11 a.m., Saturday, and the missionary sermon will be given at 11:30 a.m., Sunday by the Rev. Cicero Tucker.

Page 4 NEWS-TRIBUNE, Fort Pierce, Fla., Sunday, June 15, 1958

Rev. and Mrs. Truett Smith and children, Paula Jo and Willis will leave Monday for Miami, where the children will spend the next two weeks with their grandparents. Rev. and Mrs. Smith will then go on to Mississippi to visit his parents, Mr .and Mrs. E. P. Smith. From there, Rev. and Mrs. Smith will attend the Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly at Ridgecrest, N. C. They will be there for Foreign Brotherhood Mission Week.

St. Lucie News Tribune April 30, 1994, p. 24

Parkview Baptist Church

Bible study classes for all ages will be at 9:30 a.m. Sunday. The Rev. Truett Smith, former pastor of Sunrise Baptist Church in Fort Pierce and a graduate of New Orleans Theological Seminary, will speak at the 11 a.m. and the 7 p.m. Sunday services. The Rev. Smith and his wife, Sarah, now reside in Punta Gorda. Senior

Hall of the Salvation Army; Rev. Truett Smith of Clearlake Baptist Chapel, and Rev. James E. Bart-

FT. PIERCE — The Rev. Truett Smith, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Seffner, Fla., will be the speaker at the annual youth night program for the training union department of the Indian River Baptist Assn.

Gladeview Service Set

Members of Gladeview Baptist Chapel will hold a constituting service at 11 a.m. tomorrow in the Village Green Community Center at which time the chapel will receive full mission status.

The general officers and Sunday school workers will also be elected and the chapel will observe its first Lord's Supper.

A 2½ acre plot for the new congregation has been purchased at the corner of SW 122nd Avenue and 26th Street where an $80,000 building is expected to be erected in the near future. Plans are now being drawn for the church by Lloyd Vann and Associates with George Sparling, the contractor.

The chapel is a mission of Central Baptist Church. The Rev. Truett Smith is the pastor.

Clergy Prospects Dim

Two of this year's graduates of Florida Memorial College here are planning to enter the ministry and there are 11 undergraduates among the 865 students who have indicated a commitment to a church-related vocation.

Neither George I. Bradley, who graduated in February and lives in Bradley, and James A. Jones were available for interviews. The latter is student body president of the predominantly Negro, Baptist-related college where he has been avoiding outside contacts because of the tense situation on campus.

The Rev. Truett Smith, a white professor who heads the school's religion department, said that the ratio of graduates going into the ministry is about what it has always been. "But they are a little better educated," he added. "Most of them now are going to seminary instead of going right into the pastorate."

Chapel groundbreaking

"To worship; to proclaim; to educate; to minister." With this as a program emphasis, the ground will be broken for the new **Bardmoor Baptist Chapel,** on the corner of Starkey Road and 102nd Ave. N., Seminole. Sponsored by the parent church, **First Baptist Church** of Largo, this is to be a church mission and the beginning of a complex estimated to cost $200,000. The chapel, designed by local architect William Weber, will be followed by buildings housing educational and administrative personnel.

The Rev. Truett Smith will be the pastor of the chapel.

Cross sculptures

Mission impossible?

Not for the Rev. Truett Smith. He's rescuing the Beach's foundering Baptist church.

By LAURA MISCH
Herald Staff Writer

About as rare as Florida panthers, Miami Beach Baptists were in danger of extinction — until a Mississippi-born minister came to town.

The Rev. Truett S. Smith, 57, had a reputation for being a Baptist troubleshooter. So his bosses sent him to the Miami Beach First Baptist Church, a struggling Protestant enclave in a community where Baptists make up only .05 per cent of the population.

The little white-steepled church at 28th Street and Sheridan Avenue had had several pastors come and go within a decade. And for one two-year period, it had no pastor at all.

When Smith took over a year and a half ago, its membership had dwindled to about 105. "The Lutherans gave up on the Beach, the Presbyterians gave up," the hearty-voiced Smith said. "The general conception is that Miami Beach is all Jewish, or all Jewish and Spanish."

Since Smith took over, the church has gained about 25 new members and another 25 who regularly attend services but haven't joined.

"That church is doing better than it has in a long time," said Dr. Conrad Willard, pastor of Central Baptist Church, a church that helps support First Baptist. "He's really doing an excellent job."

Smith had already helped rescue seven financially troubled churches. The Beach church offered a new challenge.

"This church was in need of someone to help it grow. It needed leadership. People had come and gone here without much success," he said.

Founded in 1927, First Baptist began with

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MICHEL duCILLE / Miami Herald Staff
The Rev. Truett Smith already has helped rescue seven financially troubled churches.

Minister doubts church can be self-supporting

BAPTIST */ From 3*

a core of affluent members, hopeful pioneers who envisioned a strong Protestant presence on the Beach. It didn't happen that way.

As the Jewish — and later Hispanic — population of Miami Beach grew, the few Protestant churches in the area scrambled to find and keep members. At least two churches folded. There are just five Protestant churches left on the Beach, including First Baptist.

In order to survive, First Baptist became a mission church, relying on Central Baptist and several Southern Baptist organizations for financial support. About $25,000 of the $88,000 annual budget comes from Baptist sources outside the church.

By the 1970s, most of First Baptist's original congregation had died, changed churches or moved away from the Beach. A new and very different congregation took its place.

There were more Hispanics, more poor people. To meet the needs of the fastest-growing segment of its congregation, First Baptist hired a Cuban-born pastor in 1978 — in addition to the regular pastor — and began holding separate English and Spanish services.

"Today, nine out of 10 of our members live on substandard wages or a fixed income," Smith said. "Ninety per cent come from south of 17th Street. Very few of our people are reachable through the normal channels of the Baptist church. We have to evangelize to draw new members."

Most Baptist churches, Smith said, are established in middle-class communities, where the same families belong to one congregation for generations. In contrast, First Baptist has only seven English-speaking nuclear families and only three families that own their own homes. Most of the members are young and single or elderly. At Sunday services, the faces in the pews change almost weekly.

"These are the loneliest people in the world," Smith said.

The parish, he said, is the opposite culturally and financially from the average Baptist community.

The church now has 120 English-speaking and about 60 Spanish-speaking members. Many of the Hispanic members come from Central and Latin America. There are a few Mariel refugees.

"This is like a foreign mission church," said Gail Mathews, Smith's secretary and a church employe for 10 years. "It has almost become two churches. The neighborhood has changed, everything's changed here."

Smith does not speak Spanish.

"For them to learn English is more important," he said. While Smith delivers his sermon on Sunday, the Rev. Natanael Vazquez is in another room preaching a different sermon in Spanish. They tried using a translator for a time, but it didn't work out. Sunday school classes are in both languages. There are two choirs, one in English and one in Spanish.

A Haitian pastor with a congregation in Miami has asked to come under the auspices of First Baptist, but church officials have not made a decision. If they approve, First Baptist will find itself with 50 new people. They all speak Creole.

Sallie Warrick has belonged to First Baptist since 1941. Her two daughters grew up in the church. She has been a member of the church longer than anyone else.

"You could go all over the world and find people who have gone to First Baptist," she said. "We always served tourists, the military during World War II. From one year to another you'd find a different congregation."

Warrick teaches Sunday school to Hispanic children. She does not speak Spanish.

"The kids learn quickly; they have to," she said. "No matter how much things change, the purpose of the church remains the same — to reach out to people and do the Lord's work."

To attract new members, Smith has inaugurated weekly evangelical visits, a common practice among Southern Baptists. Armed with Baptist literature, a group of members visits selected "prospects" on Thursday nights.

"If anybody makes any Protestant noises, we consider them a prospect," Smith joked.

Program for Constitution of White City Baptist Church on Sunday Afternoon Is Announced

Program for the formal constitution of the White City Baptist church was announced today by Rev. Truett Smith, pastor of the present White City chapel since its establishment under the co-sponsorship of Park View and First Baptist churches here.

The organizational sermon will be preached by Rev. Clyde Duncan, associational missionary.

The program follows:

2:00 p.m . Council assembles This council is composed of ordained Baptist deacons and ordained Baptist ministers. They shall organize themselves; electing a chairman and a secretary.

2:15 p.m. Congregation assembles. The Council Chairman will preside.

Piano prelude, Mrs. Kirby Hayes.

Doxology, Charlie Curtner.

Invocation, Dr. Carl Campbell.

Hymn No. 66, "The Church's One Foundation", congregation.

Reasons why a new church is being constituted.

Roll call of charter members, Mrs. Jack Lewis.

Articles of Faith.

Reading of the Church Covenant.

Recommendation of the Council.

Motion to constitute, Kirby Hayes.

Recognition by Chairman of the Council.

Prayer of Dedication, Rev. Jack Nightingale.

Business session.

Offertory Hymn No. 9, "Onward Christian Soldiers", congregation.

Special music, "All On the Altar", Mrs. George Saleeby.

Organizational sermon, Rev. Clyde Duncan.

Invitation Hymn and invitation for membership in new church.

Hymn No. 8, "Stand Up, Stand Up For Jesus."

Hand of Fellowship to members of the new church.

Benediction, S. L. Eubank.

ORDINATION SERVICE

Ordination of three deacons, Robert Longbottom, Paul Combs and Frank DeStefano will take place at 3 p.m. Sunday at First Baptist Church here.

Participating in the impressive ceremony will be the pastor, the Rev. Ralph Acree, the Rev. William Carr, Associational Missionary, the Rev. Clyde Duncan, pastor of Westside church, Fort Pierce, and deacons from White City Chapel and Westside church. The public is invited.

NEW PASTOR ARRIVES — Rev. Truett Smith and Mrs. Smith of Kentucky have arrived in White City where they are occupying the Kerr home. Rev. Smith comes as pastor of the White City Baptist chapel. He has already begun his work and also spoke at the White City PTA Tuesday evening. Members of the chapel have given Rev. Smith a warm welcome and have already begun working with him. They are looking forward to Sunday, when he will begin taking over the preaching services and the duties of a pastor. Rev. J. C. Carr, who has been acting as pastor for the chapel and who is associational missionary, will next go to the Cocoa area, where he will begin a new mission.

First Baptists Active In Opening Of Missions

tional program.

White City Baptist Chapel

The First Baptist and Park View Baptist churches co-sponsored establishment of the White City Baptist chapel, opened in a tent in September of 1954, and located on Sunrise boulevard near Midway.

Under leadership of the Rev. Truett Smith, its only pastor, the church membership has increase to 125, with a Sunday school enrollment of 203, Training Union enrollment of 98, Woman's Missionary Union enrollment of 35, and a Brotherhood of 14.

The chapel is now engaged in a building expansion program to provide badly-needed additional facilities for its educational and other activities, it having long since outgrown its attractive original plant.

The chapel budget for the current year is $10,000 and it has had already this year 17 additions by baptism alone.

The chapel is very nearly self-supporting and with continued growth and support it hopes to attain full status this year as an independent church.

St. Lucie

Latest mission sponsored by the First Baptist church is St. Lucie chapel, located on Airport road just west of Casa Caprona apartments.

This mission was opened last September in a one-room building on Ridgehaven road, but recently was moved to its present location and an expansion program launched at once.

The Rev. J. E. Moak came here recently from Picayune, Miss., to be its pastor, and under his leadership the work is progressing steadily. The church attendance ranges up to 80, the Sunday school enrollment numbers 93, with an attendance of 55 to 75; Training Union attendance up to 18, and there is actively in W. M.U., Royal Ambassador and Girl's Auxiliary work.

The chapel has facilities to accommodate a Sunday school attendance of up to 100. Plans already are being launched for the early construction of a permanent building on the site.

All of these churches and missions have spacious ground areas for parking facilities and future expansion.

The mother church plans to establish other missions in the area as fast as practicable in order to provide convenient church-going facilities for the rapidly increasing population.