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, William E., Jr. served as pastor of Beach Chapel, Port St. Joe.

BEACH BAPTIST CHAPEL

Being mindful of the Lord's command to preach the gospel in Jerusalem, in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth, the First Baptist Church of Port St. Joe purchased property on St. Joe Beach in 1961 for a future mission. In 1967 a committee was elected to look into the prospect of establishing a work in the area. The First Baptist Church secured a loan and donated available wooden buildings, which were moved to the present site and with the help of volunteers, these buildings were assembled. The loan was for a period of five years and was for $4,500. It was paid off in two years by contributions given through the work at the Chapel.

The first worship service was held December 3, 1967 at 9:30 A.M., with the Rev. C. Byron Smith, pastor First Baptist Church, leading the service. He continued this dual pastorate until October 9, 1968, when Rev. William E. Smith, Jr., was called to fill this place and has continued until the present.

Sunday School was held at 10:30 A.M. on that first Sunday with 27 in attendance. The present enrollment is 197. With the continued growth in Sunday School and other organizations, more room was required. Three wooden buildings were purchased and moved to the site in November 1973. These were paid for by the Mission. In fact, almost from the beginning, the Mission supported the work, while giving 10 percent to the cooperative program and one percent to Northwest Coast Baptist Association.

On March 3, 1974, the Chapel congregation submitted a request to the First Baptist Church for permission to become a church. This permission was granted on April 17, 1974, and on July 28, 1974, a constitution was adopted by the Chapel congregation, and on August 12, 1974, the name Beach Baptist Chapel was approved.

Always before the congregation was a vision of a building more suitable for the worship of God, and funds were set aside and added to as the weeks and months went by, and in 1977 work on the new building was begun. The first worship service was held in this new building on January 1, 1978, and at a dedication service on January 29, 1978, we were fortunate to have the Rev. C. Byron Smith bring us the sermon.

Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, devout people accepted the challenge of the Great Commission and so the Beach Baptist Chapel stands as a beacon to others who would have a vision and work to make that vision a reality.