

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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Smitty, W. H. was ordained by McGregor Baptist Church, 1962.
He served as pastor of First Baptist Church, Marco Island and Eastside Baptist Church, LaBelle.

History of First Baptist Church of Marco Island

FBC Marco began in the early 1960's in the small fishing village of Goodland. The first service was held on September 13, 1964 under the direction of Pastor Dale Vessel. The small congregation of 25 worked and gave toward the church's first sanctuary, located on Mango Avenue. This small chapel was opened on March 13, 1966.

Various pastors and interim ministers served the congregation as the Marco Island area went through phases of growth and decline. The mid-70's were a difficult era for the church, and under the direction of Rev. W.H. Smitty, the congregation determined a need to move onto Marco Island proper, in order to meet the growing needs of what was quickly becoming a retirement and resort community.

In January of 1976, the congregation began holding services at Tommie Barfield Elementary School on the Island, until such a time as their own facility could be built. Land for the church was donated by the Island's developer, Deltona Corporation. Late in 1976, the church began selling bonds, raising funds,

In September of 1979, Jack Huguen became the church's full-time pastor, and remained in that role for 20 years.

By 1980, both the sanctuary and the education building had been completed, and a daytime child care center was begun with the mission of providing quality care for Marco kids and equipping them with the basic Bible knowledge necessary for a spiritually-successful life.

In the early 80's the church continued to work on landscaping and general set-up, and also was host to Marco Island Christian Schools, offering Marco students pre-school, middle school, and high school classes.

First Baptist of Marco Island, throughout the 1980's and 1990's, was the church home to many families and the day care facility for many children. As a member of the Florida Baptist Convention, the church also was active in giving resources, prayer, and help to other churches and missionaries worldwide.

To meet the rising demand for increased Learning Center and Sunday school space, the church built a large addition for that purpose which opened in 2000. Under the direction of Judy Elliott and other longtime child care center staff, the First Baptist Learning Center became the Island's largest child care facility.

In the Spring of 2003, Pastor Timothy Neptune answered the call to lead FBC Marco to the next phase of its mission, to strategically impact Marco Island and the surrounding areas by training leaders, implementing a vision of future-oriented growth, and centering the church on the practical application of God's Word.

FBC Marco has undergone many changes since that warm September day in 1964, but one thing remains constant: a commitment to preach, teach, and live the message of the Bible -- the foundation of any God-honoring church and the hope of all people.

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BOND DRIVE WEEK at the Eastside Baptist Church of LaBelle will be observed June 17 through 21 to raise funds for the new sanctuary to be located on Highway 80 at Cypress Street. According to the **Rev. William Smitty** \$7,950 in bonds was raised last March, with commitments for an additional \$4,000. A balance of \$8,050 is needed. A fellowship supper at the present church site is planned Wednesday night.

Outline of the Bible

The **Rev. William Smitty**, a winter resident who served several Southwest Florida churches in the 1960s and 1970s has just had his third book of sermon outlines published by Broadman Press, the Southern Baptist publishing house.

"150 Sermon Outlines from Revelation" goes through the apocalypse verse by paragraph, with an eye to a pre-tribulation rapture of the church and a premillennial return of Christ. **Smitty's** previous books were "300 Sermon Outlines from the Old Testament" and "300 Sermon Outlines from the New Testament."

Smitty was ordained at McGregor Baptist Church in 1962 and served Southern Baptist congregations in LaBelle, Bonita Springs and Marco Island before moving to Cleveland, Tenn. He is now working on "400 Sermon Outlines from the Bible," which draws from every book in the Bible.

Smitty is available for guest preaching and speaking while he is in Southwest Florida. He can be contacted at P.O. Box 51333, Tice, Fla., 33905.

Ann Rodgers-Melnick is a News-Press staff writer.

The turbulence exceeded the plane's stress limits and the craft broke up, it added.

Bonita Pastor Is Recovering From Surgery

BONITA SPRINGS — The Rev. George Dunn, pastor of the First Baptist Church here, is recovering from extensive surgery to his face after he was injured during a softball game last Thursday night.

Rev. William Smitty, associate pastor of the church, said Rev. Dunn suffered severe damage to his nose and one side of his face. Rev. Smitty said Rev. Dunn was in surgery for some two hours.

He also said Rev. Dunn is "doing fine", and is in good spirits.

Rev. Dunn is confined at Naples Community Hospital and visitors are limited to members of the immediate family.