

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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Stephens, Brian served as pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Milton.

CALVARY, MILTON (Santa Rosa)

5405 Calvary Church Rd, Milton, FL 32570-9670

Phone: (850) 623-6569

Senior Pastor

Brian Stephens

Calvary marks a century

Church hosts centennial celebration today

Carmen Paige
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Families and friends will be coming home today to Calvary Baptist Church in Allentown for its centennial celebration.

"Our centennial is an acknowledgment of the glory of God," said the **Rev. Brian Stephens**, the church's pastor. "We want to be careful of not simply celebrating that Calvary has been here 100 years, but that God has been in Calvary for 100 years."

The occasion will be marked by a morning message from former pastor the **Rev. Alan Moore**, a luncheon, historical displays and an evening service. Members will receive a free booklet or compact disc on the church's history. On

See CALVARY, 2C



John Blackie/jblackie@pnj.com

The **Rev. Brian Stephens** preaches
at Calvary Baptist Church

LOCAL

Calvary

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sale will be a centennial-edition cookbook with about 500 recipes from members and a T-shirt.

Chicken and dumplings tops the list of favorites, followed by fried apple pies.

"No bad food comes out of our kitchen," said Dale McCreless, 78.

Calvary Baptist has come a long way from the early days of meeting in a small school. Additions include an education building, fellowship hall, prayer room and a media center.

This summer, new air conditioners and carpeting were installed, the fellowship hall and sanctuary were painted, and the pulpit and choir loft were remodeled.

For many members, the church is an important part of their lives.

"Me and my husband, Bluford, were remodeling the altar," said Betty Ward, 69. "I looked at him and said, 'Do you know where we were 51 years ago?' He didn't. I said, 'We were kneeling at this same altar getting married.'"

Calvary Baptist is about family, Barbara Vunkannon said. She has been the church's secretary for 25 years.

"The single thread throughout the years is this church is mission-minded," she said. "When needed, we do what we can to help."

Want to go?

■ **What:** Centennial celebration.

■ **Where:** Calvary Baptist Church, 5405 Calvary Church Road, off State Road 89, Allentown.

■ **When:** Today, 10:30 a.m. worship with the message by the church's former pastor, the Rev. Alan Moore; noon, lunch; 12:30 to 2:30 p.m., music and memories featuring worship by Ember.

Megan Kirchinger is the youngest granddaughter of Pauline Trawick, 76. Megan weighed 1½ pounds at birth and had to remain in the hospital four months. "This entire church rejoiced when Megan came to church on Mother's Day, just a few days after being released," she said. "She's now 10 years old."

The close-knit church family of 381 members believe in lending a hand whether cooking dinner following a member's funeral, or making quilts for the elderly and Christmas food baskets, lap robes for cancer patients and layettes for babies.

The majority of good works have not been recorded, James Lassiter, 77 and a deacon, said.

"To tell you have done a good deed destroys it," he said.

James Ward, 85, is the church's longest-serving member, having joined in 1940. His father, the Rev. J.B. Ward, was twice Cal-

Online

Find this story at pnj.com for special features:

■ Watch a visual history of Calvary Baptist Church, narrated by Betty Ward, the church's centennial historian.

■ Print and try sample recipes from Calvary Baptist Church's centennial cookbook.

■ Read church historical information and documents.

■ Look through current and historical pictures from the church.

vary Baptist's pastor.

"We had preaching once a month, and paid the preacher \$10," he said.

One-third of the church was used for children to sleep during worship, Ward said.

McCreless lives one-quarter mile from the church he has attended since age 5.

"I started coming to Sunday School and worship, and I've been coming ever since except for the 20 years I was in the service," he said.

His mother, Clara McCreless, has a special place in the memories of members. After she worked 20 years as a lunchroom cook, she devoted 30 years in the church's nursery, he said.

"Miss Clara had a special place she sat in church, and she had a special yellow blanket she put over her knees," Vunkannon said. "I believe it was buried with her."

The heart of the people is what makes Calvary Baptist special, the Rev. Stephens said.

"For a church to be successful, you have to have God, good leadership and a congregation that has a heart to be God's people," he said. "We are blessed we have all three elements."

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