

Florida Baptist Historical Society Biography Collection

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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, David L. (1934-2000) served as pastor of Hebron Baptist Church, Westside Baptist Church, Masaryktown Baptist Church, First Baptist Church, South Daytona and New Hope Baptist Church. He and his wife, Barbara Stephens had four children.

New Masaryktown Center Dedicated

By BETH HIBBS
Tribune Correspondent

ada, according to Mayor Steve
cinar.

Serving began at 11:30 a.m., and the dedication ceremonies were held at 1:30 p.m. Capt. William G. Byrns, a former prisoner of war in Vietnam, was a featured speaker, along with master of ceremonies James H. Kimbrough, the **Rev** Donald Bergdorf of the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, A. A. McKethan, Mayor Voscina, the **Rev** D. L. Stephens of Masaryktown Baptist Church, and the **Rev** Father Lawrence Kerich of St. Mary Catholic Church.

Tampa Bay Times
Sun, Jan 26, 1975 · Page 317

tte Brewer Memorial Funeral
ne Home with **Rev. David Ste-**
np phens, of Masaryktown Baptist
en Church officiating. Burial will
en. be in Brooksville Cemetery.
on:

First Baptist Of S. Daytona Doubles Membership, Space

By LOIS KAPLAN
News-Journal Staff Writer

A South Daytona church which has almost doubled the size of its congregation in seven years is completing the process of doubling its worship space and other facilities in a building campaign costing more than \$500,000.

Members of First Baptist Church of South Daytona expect to hold a dedication ceremony in February, when a new sanctuary, music room, full service kitchen, state of the art sound system, social hall, and enlarged parking area will be ready for their use. In addition, new classrooms for Sunday school and adult education will be created from the old sanctuary.

"The church is the hub of the community, and we see this building campaign as a means of reaching out to the World," said the Rev. David Stephens, pastor of this Southern Baptist church. "Some people think we're spending too much money on building, but without the building, you can't get the people."

Church members have raised \$575,000 in a campaign which began four years ago. During the first year, church members solicited money on their own, raising \$75,000. In 1982, the American Heritage Group, a professional church financing organization, took charge. The fundraisers set a goal

of \$160,000 in three years.

Contributors surpassed this goal in less than three years, raising \$275,000 before the "deadline."

In addition, a \$300,000 bond program was set up, and most of the bonds have been sold. They will mature in 15 years.

The overwhelming response reflects the membership's enthusiasm for the church's activities and missions, Stephens said. Membership has jumped from 346 when Stephens became pastor seven years ago to 730 as of October.

"Baptist worship is a fun, joyful celebration," he explained. "Music is bright and peppy, services are reverent but not solemn, interesting but not commercialized. The congregation is growing rapidly because of the stability people see in this church."

The church celebrated its 14th anniversary this week. It began as a mission of the First Baptist Church of Daytona Beach, which was built in 1881. The South Daytona mission became a church on Kenilworth Avenue in 1967, with average Sunday attendance about 80 people. It grew at a rapid rate, and there have been 482 additions to the building since the original chapel was built in 1962.

The challenge of expansion beyond current projections was taken into consideration by the building committee, which expects the

church's membership to continue to grow in the future. The new sanctuary will seat 450 people initially, and could expand to a maximum seating capacity of 650 if needed. A corridor surrounding the expansive octagonal sanctuary could be knocked down if additional seating becomes necessary.

"We're building so we can expand," Stephens explained. He said that psychologically, the current 400 people who attend Sunday worship services will feel more comfortable in a sanctuary that is appropriately sized, rather than too large.

Although two services had been held each Sunday for the past four years to accommodate the growing congregation, there will be one service each Sunday at 11 a.m. once the completed sanctuary is dedicated.

Members are waiting patiently for the seeds of their fundraising efforts to come to fruition. The additions and renovations are almost complete, and dedication plans are in the works. "We're waiting for some pews that haven't come in yet," said Joe McAdory, chairman of the building committee. "We're shooting for the first Sunday in February for the dedication, but no matter what happens, the ceremony will be sometime next month."



The Rev. David Stephens, pastor, in front of First Baptist of South Daytona

New Hope Baptist preacher dies of cancer

■ The Rev. David L. Stephens also hosted the *Hour of Power Baptist Hour* on WWJB-AM 1450.

By KATHERINE BLOK
Times Staff Writer

BROOKSVILLE — The Rev. David L. Stephens, a popular Baptist preacher who once had his own local radio show, died of cancer Wednesday. He was 66.

Mr. Stephens, known as "Brother Dave" to his congregation at New Hope Baptist Church, was "the greatest thing God ever blessed us with," said church secretary Diane Adams.

"He was a very well-loved, very well-thought-of man," Adams said. "He had a way of making people think he loved them a little bit more than he loved anybody else. He gave of himself a little bit more than anyone I've

ever known."

Mr. Stephens would have been with the almost 200-member New Hope Baptist Church 11 years in August, Adams said. During his tenure, he never asked for a salary, only expenses, and wanted only the opportunity to serve the congregation, she said.

"If you were to call him in the middle of the night, he would be there before you could hang the phone up, even when he should have been in bed himself," she said.

Before being diagnosed with cancer, Mr. Stephens suffered from asthma and emphysema, although his poor health never stopped him from living his life, Adams said, adding that Mr. Stephens was a fan of bluegrass gospel music and often gathered a group to play music together at the church.

"I'm sure he's in heaven playing the dobro and turning heaven's choir into a bluegrass gospel group," she

said, referring to Mr. Stephens' preferred instrument, a type of acoustic guitar often used in country music.

In addition to his pastoral duties at the New Hope Baptist Church, Mr. Stephens hosted a popular radio show on WWJB-AM 1450, the *Hour of Power Baptist Hour*, for 15 years, said Steve Manuel, general manager of the station.

"Every time there might be some technical problem with (the show) or if (Mr. Stephens) was not there, we would always get phone calls" asking why the show was not broadcast, Manuel said. The show "certainly had a good following."

Mr. Stephens also served as pastor at Hebron Baptist Church, Westside Baptist Church and First Baptist Church of Masaryktown and was chaplain of the Brooksville Road Prison.

Mr. Stephens is survived by his

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The Rev. David Stephens was called "Brother Dave" by the congregation at New Hope Baptist Church where he served almost 11 years.

Stephens

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wife, Barbara, three sons, Michael, Phillip, Alan and Timothy, a daughter Eva Lee Edwards, of Holly Pond, Ala., a stepson Ward Shughart, of Atchison, Kan., two stepdaughters, Kathleen J. Lewman, of Cummings, Kan., and Wyndlyn S. Miller, of Atchison, Kan., a brother, Gerald D. Bowen, of Oklahoma City, a sister, Rachel M. Larkin, of Texas, 20 grandchildren and one great-grandson.

The family will receive friends from 6 to 8 p.m. today at the Brooksville Chapel at 2 S Lemon Ave. The funeral is set for noon Saturday at New Hope Baptist Church, 15300 Wiscon Road.