

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

Stevens, Alton served as pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, St. Augustine, First Baptist Church, Flagler Beach, River Road Baptist Church, 1956-1957, First Baptist Church, Pierson and Florahome Baptist Church, 1963. He and his wife Martha had two sons.

and three interim pastors. Present pastor John Pelham, came to First Baptist Church in March, 1963.

The church continues to minister in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ with emphasis upon its ministries.

RIVER ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH

Palatka, Florida

"One of 30,000"

On January 29, 1956, a group began worshipping in the home of Willie and Stella Roberts. The first two meetings were held in their living room and then moved into the garage of their home. This new work was called the River Road Baptist Chapel and was sponsored by the First Baptist Church of Palatka, Florida.

Among those serving on the mission committee were Dr. H. K. Mastella, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Carl Rivers, chairman, Frank Boutwell, Jack Scurry, and Claude Conway.

In March, 1956, the men of the congregation built a wooden frame building, consisting of four classrooms and an auditorium. The building was constructed on the land given to the chapel by Willie and Stella Roberts. This is where they worshipped until the present building was constructed in 1960.

The first regular speaker was Bro. Charlie Taylor, a layman from the First Baptist Church of Palatka, Florida. The first pianists were Mrs. Helen Wycoff and Mrs. Vivian Rivers, both of the First Baptist Church, and Ted Norris. The first song leaders were Joe Baggerley, Ted Norris, and Randell Driggers.

As the congregation grew, more space was needed for classrooms. The young people of the chapel moved their Sunday School classes to a wooden frame building near the chapel. This building belonged to James and Evelyn Bradshaw.

The first pastor called to serve was the Rev. **Alton Stevens**, from Flagler Beach, Florida, on December 31, 1956. Rev. Stevens and his wife, Martha, had two (2) sons. Rev. Stevens resigned on August 11, 1957.

In January 1958, Bro. James Bradshaw donated a new pulpit and several new pews to the chapel. Later, Bro. Bradshaw built a communion table, chairs, and smaller tables for the chapel.

The second pastor, Rev. Charles Smith, was called in April, 1958 from the Pine Grove Baptist Church, Gainesville, Florida.

Rev. Smith, his wife Laura, and daughters Sandra and Diane served here until May 15, 1960. During his ministry, construction of the present building was begun and the pastorium was purchased. Rev. Smith performed the first wedding to be held in the Chapel. Those married were Charles and Toni Hall on September 26, 1958.

On January 4, 1959, Bro. Harvey Cannon was ordained as deacon. Bro. Cannon was the first deacon to be ordained in the chapel. Those assisting in the ordination included: The late Rev. Marvin Stedham, Field Secretary of the Florida Baptist Convention, District No. 6, who gave the Charge to the Deacon; The Rev. V. J. Major of East Palatka Baptist Church, who gave the Charge to the Church; The Rev. C. E. Faulk, Lundy Baptist Church, who gave the Ordination Prayer; The Rev. Kenneth Hansen, pastor of the First Baptist Church, led the Examination of Deacon, assisted by Bro. Carl Rivers and Bro. John Barrantine, deacons of the First Baptist Church. The Benediction was given by Bro. Carl Rivers.

On July 10, 1960, the Rev. C. Ronald Cumbie was called from the Union Baptist Church, Defore, Kentucky as the chapel's third pastor. A native of Georgia, and a graduate of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, he came with his wife Rosemary and daughter Pamela. Later that year, their son, Perry, was borne.

During his stay, the present building, consisting of an auditorium and thirteen (13) classrooms, was completed. The building was built by the men of the congregation with the late Harley Driggers as general contractor. The building was dedicated in October, 1960.

In February, 1963, Rev. Cumbie was called to pastor a church in Wauchula, Florida.

Rev. Edward M. Straner, a native of Clearwater, Florida, and a graduate of Stetson University and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, was called and preached his first sermon, June 23, 1963. Rev. Straner came from Belle Glade, Florida where he had

HISTORY OF OAK AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH
Formerly
Florahome Baptist Church and First Baptist Church, George's Lake

The Florahome Baptist Church was received into the St. Johns River Baptist Association at the Annual Meeting at Providence Baptist Church, October 16, 17, 18, 1901. They were represented by Rev. W.M. Simmons, pastor, and Mr. J.F. Plauch, layman from Florahome. There was no record of the church after 1904. Apparently the church ceased to exist until January 4, 1954 when Rev. Matthew Greer came down from North Carolina, set up a tent and held a revival for about four weeks. Several people were saved and some rededications were made. After the revival Mr. and Mrs. Clifford G. Miller opened their home and regular services were held each Lord's day.

Mr. and Mrs. Miller donated some land and a church building was started, and temporary officers were elected: Rev. Matthew Greer, pastor; Mr. Clifford Miller, Rev. Greer, and Raymond Winters were elected Trustees. The people started working on the building immediately, and paying for material as they went. The women did their part also by helping build pews. In May 1954, the church building was completed enough to hold services. In August 1954, Rev. Dean Gatch was called as full time pastor. On August 29, 1954, the church was organized as the Florahome Baptist Church. Twenty-two came requesting membership as Charter members. Due to conflict of beliefs and outside influence not conducive to the beliefs of the Southern Baptist Convention, the church did not grow from 1956 until January 1963.

In January 1963, the church was reorganized with the help of the Association. Rev. **Alton Stevens** served as pastor from January 3, 1963 until July 28, 1963. Rev. James Thompson was called as pastor on August 4, 1963. During this time the church built two Sunday School rooms and two rest rooms. In October 1963, the church sent a Petitionary letter to the Association requesting membership. They were received into the Association.

Pierson
METHODIST —Second Ave.,
Rev. Gene Carter.
FIRST BAPTIST—First Ave.,
Rev. Alton Stevens.
COMMUNITY METHODIST —West High Banks Road. **Rev.**
Cecil N. Ogg, pastor.
FIRST BAPTIST — Shel
Road **Rev.** Hubert M. Thomas,
minister.
PRESBYT
Hotel, **Re**
Hendry.
FIRST
125 Ridge
ther Moore
FRANKI
TIST CHU

3.00-3.75; contenders 3.50-
air quality 2.50-3.00.
4 bushel crates domestic
5-2.75; red type few 2.25;
0-3.50.
ch crates pascal type fair
Flagler Beach Baptist, special
solo by Mrs. Russell Improtio; **Rev.**
Alton Stevens, pastor, will preach
on "The Risen Lord".

Flagler Beach
By MARY HART
Special To The News-Journal
FLAGLER BEACH — Mrs. Joe
Dillard, Greenbrier, Tenn., has
announced the marriage of her
daughter, Naomi D. Hindman, to
Earl G. Nicholson, Palatka, at 9
p. m. Saturday, July 16. The
couple was married in Kingsland,
Ga., by a justice of the peace.
They were accompanied there
by Mrs. Myrtle Streeter. Mrs.
Nicholson is a nurse with the
State Board of Health in Flagler
County. Mr. Nicholson is an at-
torney in Palatka. Mr. and Mrs.
Nicholson are residing at the No-
lan Apartment, Flagler Beach.
The **Rev. Alton Stevens**, Toc-
coa, Ga., has accepted a call
to become pastor of First
Baptist Church and expects to
be here July 31. The **Rev.**
Charles Rogers, Daytona

**Several Services To
Be Held At Calvary
Baptist On Sunday**
Sunday services at Calvary Bap-
tist Church will be held as fol-
lows: 8:15 a.m., broadcast service,
A Gospel Church; 9:45 a.m. Sun-
day School; 11 a.m. morning wor-
ship, The Righteous and the Wick-
ed; 7 p.m. BTU; 7:45 p.m. young
people and adults Prayer Bands,
and evening worship, The Return
of the Lord, at 8 o'clock.
Calvary Baptist Church is lo-
cated at 37 Arenta Street and the
pastor is the **Rev. Alton Stevens**.

By ALMA L. HALLMAN

Special To The News-Journal

PIERSON — Rev. Alton Stev-

ens, pastor of the First Baptist Church, is in Jacksonville this week attending the 102nd annual session of the Florida Baptist state convention. The convention is in the First Baptist Church, Jacksonville. Theme for the session is "Abounding in the Work of the Lord" . . . The Lutheran Church Men met at the church Sunday evening with E. T. Peterson and James McGinnis as the hosts.

* * *