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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Sweat, John is a native of Clay County, Florida. He served as pastor of Celebration Baptist Church, Middleburg and Crossroads Baptist Church, Doctor's Inlet.



The Florida Times-Union
Sat, Dec 10, 2005 · Page 140

Clip

Church sings praises of new pastor

The Rev. John Sweat took over the pulpit at Celebration Baptist in 2004.

By MARY MARAGHY
Clay County Line

Celebration Baptist Church in Middleburg hopes to break ground in 2006 on its first sanctuary.

Meanwhile, members said they're already happy with their new pastor and they continue to celebrate him. They rave about the Rev. John Sweat, who in 2004, took over the pulpit of the 10-year-old church, which began as a mission of Fleming Island Baptist Church. The 110-member congregation meets Sundays at RideOut Elementary School on Appalachicola Boulevard.

"I think the Lord sent him to Celebration Baptist," said Audrey Fonvielle, a charter member. "He's a great preacher. He works well with everybody: youth, adults, children, whatever. He's easy to talk to. He's great."



MARY MARAGHY/staff
The Rev. John Sweat took over as pastor of Middleburg's Celebration Baptist Church in 2004.

Sweat, a 35-year-old Clay County native and 1988 graduate of Clay High School, worked in construction before entering ministry. He, his wife, Ann, and their two sons live in a mobile home off County Road 218.

"He's a wonderful guy. He's full of knowledge," said church member Suzanne Barth. "God called him. He has a servant's heart, a heart of gold. He wants the word to reach everybody."

After growing up as a member of Russell Baptist Church, Sweat said he attended church semi-regularly as an adult. Then things changed, he said, in 1989, when he and his family began attending Oak Forest Baptist Church on Knight Boxx Road.

"I went from casual attender to really listening, studying my Bible and getting involved. I knew the Lord was moving in my life," he said.

Sweat said two pastors at the church, the Rev. Calvin Childers and later the Rev. Charles Price helped him understand, what he says was God putting a call on his life.

"After much time in prayer and counseling, I went forward and told the church I was surrendering to the ministry. Though I didn't know what exactly God wanted me to do, or when, but I was ready," he said.

In 1993, Sweat entered Tri-State Bible College and in 1994 the Rev. Ron Baker at Russell Baptist asked him to serve as his youth pastor. He stayed there until 2002 then traveled to Alabama to set up youth discipleship programs at various churches.

"It was then I realized my call was to preach," he said. "I had just a burning desire to preach the word."

In 2004, leaders at Celebration Baptist Church called him and asked him to be their pastor.

"God opened the door for me," he said.

Currently, Celebration owns property on Baxley Road and is developing a fund-raising campaign to build a sanctuary.

Church member Ray Eason said he's known Sweat for six years.

"I can't say anything but nice things about my pastor. I've been blessed to sit under his teaching," Eason said. "He uses plain simple language, to the point. He's a good communicator."

Sweat said he has mutual feelings for his congregation.

"Church family, to me, is like blood family," he said.

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Clergy corner

Church: Celebration Baptist Church
Membership: 110
Denomination: Southern Baptist
Services: 10:45 a.m., 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. Sundays at RideOut Elementary School, 3085 Appalachicola Blvd. in Middleburg.
Mission statement: To advance the kingdom of Christ through public worship of God, personal witnessing, preaching and teaching the gospel, consistent Christian living by members, personal evangelism, missionary endeavors and Christian education.
Phone: 282-6083
If you would like to nominate a pastor to be featured in the Clay County Line's Clergy Corner, contact staff writer Mary Maraghy at 278-9487, extension 19, or mary.maraghy@jacksonville.com

CROSSROADS, DOCTOR'S INLET (Black Creek)

PO Box 30546, Doctors Inlet, FL 32030-0546

Phone: (904) 264-5436

Senior Pastor — John Sweat (4)