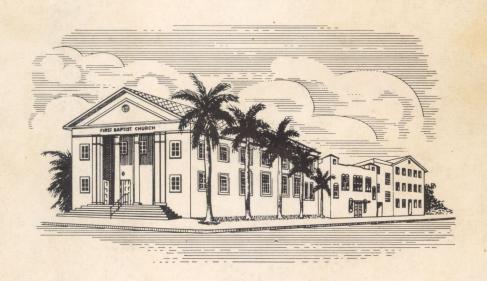
AN HISTORICAL REVIEW COMMEMORATING THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

OF

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH



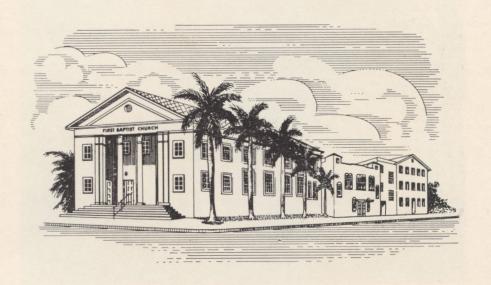
HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA

1909 - 1959

AN HISTORICAL REVIEW COMMEMORATING THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

OF

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH



HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA

1909 - 1959

1912



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Built about 1913 at the corner of Krome Avenue and Third Street.

1959



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Erected in 1944

FOREWORD

The occasion of this record of the First Baptist Church, Homestead, Florida, is the observance of fifty years of history. The Church was organized September 5, 1909.

The Church is indebted to Mrs. J. Tom Vann, Church Clerk, for much of the research work done in getting this history together. She has been untiring in her efforts to locate and secure the exact data needed. In the compilation of the history for this record, she has been ably assisted by Mrs. T. D. Smith, Sr., who was our Church secretary for many years. They have given as accurate a history of First Baptist Church as is possible from written and verbal records.

We had hoped to include a biographical sketch and photograph of each of our pastors, but due to lack of information and pictures this could not be done. We have treated the ministry of each pastor in relation to this Church and all photographs obtainable are included.

Through the years many men and women have labored long and faithfully, and many who are still living are doing a great work. It would take a volume far beyond the scope of this booklet to give the credit that each one deserves.

Committee:

Wilbur Caves, Chairman Mrs. Jack Barnes Alvin E. Campbell Mrs. Gordon Ivey Mrs. J. R. Rutland Francis Reynolds Mrs. Francis Reynolds Mrs. Alva Williams

OUR PASTOR



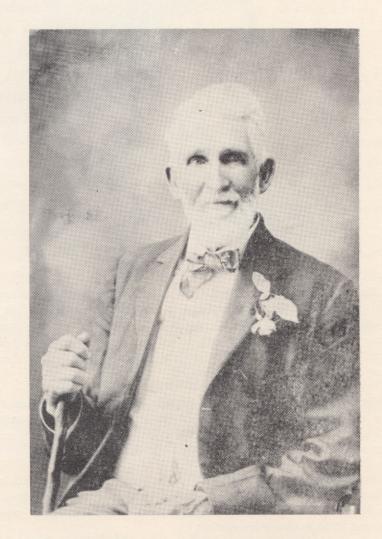
LUTHER A. KEY

Mr. Key came to Homestead from a successful associate pastorate at Central Baptist Church in Miami. He is a native of Alabama but from early childhood grew up in Northwest Florida. He ha₃ held pastorates in Alabama as well as in Florida. He is well-prepared, having received his training from the University of Minnesota, Howard College and the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

He has been actively engaged in radio and television religious broadcasting and has served as President of the Greater Miami Ministerial Association and is at present serving as President of the Greater Homestead Ministerial Association.

Rev. Key is intensely interested in community and civic affairs. He is a member of the Chamber of Commerce, serving on the Recreation Committee. Among other duties, Rev. Key spends many hours per week on family and child guidance counseling.

He is a well-qualified preacher, gentle and even-tempered and has had fine assistance from his consecrated wife. Only time can evaluate the result of the work accomplished by a good and competent man like Rev. Key. It is our prophecy that this will be a highly successful period of service for the First Baptist Church.



REV. HENRY HOWARD STURGIS 1909 - 1911

A TRIBUTE TO

REV. HENRY HOWARD STURGIS

A serene smile, a gentle spirit and a dauntless faith seem to depict the character of Henry Howard Sturgis. He devoted his entire adult life to organizing and strengthening the Church.

Brother Sturgis was a militant religious leader and a conqueror of sin. He traveled from Key West to New Smyrna Beach and left in his wake sixteen new and vibrantly growing churches. For sixty years, he worked unceasingly for the Church and his accomplishments are a living testimony to his past life.

Those who remember him best like to think of him in his Confederate uniform which he proudly wore whenever the opportunity arose. His love of the South was second only to his love of the Church.

It can truly be said of Rev. Henry Howard Sturgis, founder of First Baptist Church, Homestead, Florida, that his life was dedicated to the glory of God.

THE HISTORY OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH 1909 - 1959

This brief sketch is prepared for the Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration of the First Baptist Church on July 31, 1959. Before considering the Church from the date of organization, a few facts about the town of Homestead are given.

The end of the 19th Century probably saw no white people living within the precincts of the present town of Homestead. The term Homestead was first applied to the Redland District in general, due to the fact that land in this locality was opened for settlement by the United States Department of the Interior, who deeded these settlers small land grants or "homesteads" as an inducement to prospective citizens. These grants were given after a specified length of time and residence, labor and improvements, on such tracts were completed.

One of the earliest pioneers to come to this section was W. D. Horne, who in 1904, came here from Miami, riding a bicycle when there was any sign of a trail. He, with his entire family, was destined to be the nucleus of the present Baptist Church in Homestead. He found Mr. and Mrs. W. A. King and their three daughters residing here. Soon after he was joined by Mrs. Horne and in 1906 their daughter Loretta was born.

Another early settler was Rev. Henry Howard Sturgis, a Baptist preacher, who took up a homestead settlement southwest of Homestead in a little town called Detroit - now Florida City. He was a "circuit rider" in a sense, preaching at various places in South Florida.

The first record we have taken from the record of the

Church was from the minutes, September 5, 1909, when a group of six Christian people met to establish a Church. After preaching by the Rev. Henry Howard Sturgis, and the reading of the articles of faith, as set forth by Hitchcock's Church Manual, the Church adjourned to meet on the first Sunday in October to complete its organization.

The members who entered into the covenant and became the charter members of the First Baptist Church were Rev. Henry Howard Sturgis, W. D. Horne, Mrs. W. D. Horne, T. A. Campbell, Mrs. T. A. Campbell, and Mrs. S. E. Livingston.

The first religious services outside of private homes, were conducted in the little frame schoolhouse, east of the Florida East Coast Railroad tracks, on the corner of what is now Northeast First Avenue.

Preaching services were held occasionally when a minister happened to be in the locality.



FIRST HOME OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

CUR FIRST PASTORS

Rev. Henry Howard Sturgis became the first pastor, serving the Church from the date of organization until 1911. Then the Church called Rev. J. W. White who served a little over a year. Here there is a break in the records, a silence of nearly two years. Following this, our records show that Rev. J. C. Rodgers of Live Oak was called as the pastor and served the Church until the following November. It was during his pastorate that the Church building was ready for use. It was still minus doors, windows, screens, lights, baptistry or pulpit but everyone was enthusiastic and worked toward its completion.

REV. M. M. BALES 1913 - 1916

In 1913, Rev. M. M. Bales became pastor and continued in this relation until October, 1916. During this interim, many improvements were made. The Church membership increased from 33 to 56, the Church building was completed, a baptistry installed, a lean-to on the back of the Church was built, the spire room added and the lights installed.

REV. W. J. BARTON 1916 - 1918

Following the termination of Rev. Bale's pastorate, Rev. W. J. Barton was called and continued as pastor until the spring of 1918. He was much loved by the young people and respected by everyone. While he served in this field, the first pastorium was built in the winter of 1916-1917.



DR. J. A. SUTTON

In the fall of 1918, Dr. J. A. Sutton was called to serve as pastor and was here for three years. He had been a teacher and was studying medicine before feeling called to preach. He had held active pastorates in the West before coming to Homestead and served in the Kissimmee and Orlando, Florida, area after leaving here until his retirement in 1936.

Rev. Charles M. White served the Church in 1921-1922. He was the son of Dr. J. L. White who was later to serve as Interim Pastor of the First Baptist Church in 1947-1948. Rev. White was ordained by the Vineville Baptist Church at Macon, Georgia on August 31, 1921, and his first pastorate was the First Baptist Church. He resigned in July, 1922 to enter the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he graduated in 1925. During World War II, he served as a chaplain in



CHAS. M. WHITE

the United States and abroad. At present Rev. White is serving as pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church in Trinidad, Colorado.



C. N. WALKER

On September 1, 1922, Rev. C. N. Walker came from Manchaug, Mass., to supply the pulpit for a month and was called as pastor October 4, 1922. He graduated from Newton Theological Seminary, Newton Center, Mass., in June and this was his first regular charge since he graduated from the Seminary.

It was during his pastorate that the partially completed Social Hall was transformed into a beautiful pastorium and the new educational building was completed.

Rev. Walker resigned October 25, 1938, to become pastor of the Bethel Baptist Church, Lakeland, Florida, thus ending a long and successful pastorate of 16 years. His length of service shows the love and esteem in which he was and is held. The following figures show partially the fruit of his labors. The Church received for baptism - 308 members, 396 by letter.

After the resignation of Rev. Walker, he was replaced by Dr. J. E. Johnstone in January, 1939. Dr. Johnstone was born in Knoxville, Tennessee, July 22, 1874, of pioneer stock. He received college and seminary training. His early pastorates were in Texas where he was recognized as a leader and preacher of decided ability.

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Dr. Johnstone served as pastor of several churches in the Miami Association. It was during his pastorate of the First Baptist Church of Homestead that the beautiful Church edifice which is



Dr. J. E. JOHNSTONE

here at present was built. The members of this Church will ever cherish the memory of this beloved man. He resigned July of 1943 to begin work as Superintendent of Missions in the Miami Association. He was forced to relinguish this important work because of failing health. Soon thereafter, he departed to be with Christ, on December 31, 1946.



GROUNDBREAKING OF NEW CHURCH

During the summer of 1943, Bob Willets, one of our young ministerial students, served as interim pastor.

thirteen



L. B. CRANTFORD

In August, 1943, Rev. Leonard B. Crantford of Chattanooga, Tennessee, was called to be pastor. It was not until October that he accepted the call. Rev. Crantford attended Locust Grove Institute, Locust Grove, Georgia, and Howard College, Birmingham, Alabama. He had held pastorates in Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee before coming to Homestead.

Much progress was made under the supervision of Rev. Crantford. During his pastorate the new and beautiful auditorium das dedi-

1-1-60

cated. For the first time a Youth Revival was held and a Young People's Choir was formed. Plans were made to build a new educational building and a new library was started. The Church membership increased to 456. Rev. Crantford resigned September 7, 1947, to serve at Okeechobee, then Orlando, Fla., where he retired in July, 1953.



DEDICATION OF CHURCH

fourteen

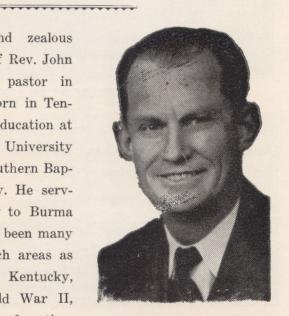


J. L. WHITE

Dr. J. L. White was engaged as interim pastor for the period of 1947-1948. Dr. White was born in Winston-Salem, North Carolina in 1862 and received his education at Wake Forest and Stetson University. While Dr. White was pastor of the First Baptist Church of Raleigh, North Carolina, he preached the sermon at the first Baptist World Alliance in London, England. He held a pastorate for twenty years in the old First Baptist Church of Miami, during which time it became one of

the leading missionary churches of the South.

An earnest and zealous preacher in the person of Rev. John Howard Whitt became pastor in 1948. Rev. Whitt was born in Tennessee and received his education at Carson Newman College, University of Tennessee, and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He served as foreign missionary to Burma in 1927. His charges have been many and varied, including such areas as West Virginia, Illinois, Kentucky, Florida and during World War II, the European Theatre of action,



the European Theatre of action, JOHN HOWARD WHITT where he received combat stars for the Battles of the Bulge, the

Rhine, and of Central Germany. He was called to the First Baptist Church in June, 1948 and served until February, 1954.

It was during Rev. Whitt's pastorate that the newest Educational building was partially completed and the Modello Mission was begun, to be organized a year later into a full-time, independent cooperative Baptist Church.

In October of 1953 the Keys Chapel at Islamorada was started and although faced with many adverse circumstances, has a record to show much accomplishment.



PASTORIUM AT ISLAMORADA

It was during this period that the Married Young Peoples Department was organized and the initiating and putting into operation of the rotating system of Deacons was begun.

In 1956, Rev. Whitt was honored with a Doctor of Divinity degree by Pioneer Theological Seminary for work done as a teacher, foreign missionary, pastor, chaplain and home missionary.

Dr. B. A. Bowers served as supply pastor form February 21, 1954, until late spring, when Rev. Edmund H. Rice became interim pastor.



E. H. RICE

Although born in Texas, Rev. Rice's untiring efforts for his "adopted state" have earned for him the respect and love of large numbers of people in Florida. Rev. Rice was licensed to preach in 1909 and ordained in 1919. He received his education at Baylor University.

After serving with the A. E. F. during World War I, he accepted his first call as pastor of the First Baptist Church in Key West, Florida. After his resignation there, he served in eight other Florida churches,

including the First Baptist Church in Homestead.

During his pastorate, the Church was incorporated, the newest Educational building was completed and a third story added, and the lovely pastorium on Northeast Seventeeth Street was built and occupied by Rev. and Mrs. Rice.



PASTORIUM OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

After the resignation of Rev. Rice, the Church called Rev. Luther A. Key, the present pastor. Rev. Key began his duties on April 1, 1957. During the early part of Rev. Key's pastorate the residence of the Minister of Music and Education was purchased. This residence is located at 1340 Northeast Twelfth Street in Sky Vista.



RESIDENCE OF MINISTER OF MUSIC AND EDUCATION

Thus far we have dealt almost exclusively with the Pastoral leadership. It probably is well to mention at this point other events in the life of the Church.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 1957 - 1959

Early in 1957 Rev. Rice indicated his intention to retire from the active pastoral ministry. The Church appointed a Pulpit Committee to seek a successor who would continue to lead the Church in a great, far-reaching ministry. The Committee began functioning and on March 27, recommended that Rev. Luther A. Key, then Associate Pastor of Central Baptist Church, be called as pastor. The Church approved the recommendation on Sunday, March 31, and Rev. Key assumed the pastorate on April 3, at a special inaugural service presided over by the retiring minister.

There have been many significant accomplishments since that time. Some of these accomplishments were, the launching of an Advance Program throughout the Church, increasing the Church staff, including the first full-time Minister of Education and Music. Rev. Lawrence Stewart filled this position until he resigned to continue his education at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Mr. Gratten E. Tomlinson assumed the position early in 1958. With a Minister of Education and Music being added to the staff, the Church purchased a new house to be used as a residence by the new minister. The first Financial Secretary, Mrs. Charles Martin, joined the staff in 1957. A policy governing relations between the Mother Church and its missions was developed, which made the existing mission, Keys Baptist Chapel, a part of the Church. The organization of another mission, the Naranja Park Chapel, became a reality in April of the present year. Rev. James W. Justus, Jr. was called as Assistant Pastor in charge of the new Chapel prior to the new mission's organization.

In the Fall of 1957, the Church adopted the "Forward Program of Church Finance" as its program of Church finance. This

resulted in an increase in the Church budget from \$49,965 in 1957 to \$84,441 in 1958. The current budget is \$89,441.

To facilitate and coordinate the rapidly growing activities, a "Correlated Church Program" went into effect in September 1958. This provided for many activities to be held on the same day.

The Music Department as well as the Department of Religious Education has shown a considerable increase during the past two years. Two additional choirs bring the Music Department enrollment to approximately 130.

Each department of the Church has shown an increase, but most noticeable of all is the Church membership. Since April 1, 1957, 578 people have united with the Church. Of these, 224 came into Church fellowship by profession of faith and baptism.

On August 1, 1959, the Church completed installation of the latest, most modern air-conditioning and heating equipment available in its main auditorium. In addition, the second floor of the Center Educational Building has just been rearranged and remodeled to provide two additional departments, which are more convenient and more comfortable for elementary age children. The Dining Room has been completely renovated, and more equipment added to the Church kitchen.

These building improvements reflect the primary highlight of all since 1957, which is a deeper consecration and a stronger desire to win the lost to Christ and Church membership.

HIGHLIGHTS OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

MEMBERSHIP

Although we should feel a great sense of humility, we can look with justifiable pride at the membership growth which our Church has enjoyed throughout the past fifty years.

From September 5, 1909, through September 1, 1959, a total of 1,261 members have been added through baptism and a total of 2,895 added by letter.

TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Our membership through the past years has been endowed with the knowledge that the nourishment of the Church also comes from material contributions. Our financial records are not available from September 5, 1909 to October 1, 1935, but from 1935 to July 31, 1959, the total contributions for the twenty-four year period were \$563,996.00. Of this total, \$78,755.00 was contributed to missions. This was an average of \$3,281.45 per year. Today the Church has property valued at \$286,000.00.

ORGANIZATIONS

It was during the pastorate of Rev. Sturgis in 1907 that our first SUNDAY SCHOOL was organized. Attended by both Baptists and Methodists, it had grown by the year 1913 to an enrollment of 84, the entire population. By 1921, the enrollment had grown to 154 and the second pastorium was built and used temporarily as a Social Hall and Sunday School Classroom. For many years this was sufficient, but as the Sunday School grew, the need for additional space became more acute and it was September, 1926, during the pastorate of Rev. Walker that the new Sunday School building was completed.

Our records show a total of 84 members in 1907 in contrast to a total membership of 1,345 in 1959, with Mr. James Roberts as Super intendent.

It was in 1913 that the Baptist Improvement Society, forerunner of the WOMEN'S MISSIONARY UNION, was organized with seven charter members. In 1917, under the leadership of Mrs. W. J. Barton, it became the duly authorized organization of Women's Missionary Union that exists today. It has been a vital part of the Church life the past forty-two years, sponsoring particularly the missionary program, both at home and abroad. Mrs. W. B. Caves, Sr. is the present President, and the enrollment is 151.

The BAPTIST BROTHERHOOD was organized in 1952 and has had an active organization for the past seven years with the exception of the years 1955 and 1957 when the organization was inactive. In the past two years the organization has flourished and now has an enrollment of eighty members under the leadership of W. M. Elmore. With an organization of this character undergirding the Minister, great good should follow and the whole Church meet the challenge of a new day.

The former Baptist Young People's Union, now the TRAIN-ING UNION, was organized in the Church as early as 1912 under the leadership of Mrs. S. E. Livingston. Truly no organization in our Church has had any greater influence or potential to influence the lives of our young people as has the Training Union. At present, with a membership of 342, under the capable leadership of T. D. Smith, Jr., it is being enthusiastically supported and shows promise of a highly successful period for the next fifty-seven years as it has for the past forty-seven.

LOCAL MISSIONS

After a survey had been conducted and many hours spent trying to locate an appropriate site for a long desired mission, the Church opened its first mission Sunday School on Sunday, June 22, 1952, in a shell factory on Highway 1. The mission progressed and by the fall of 1953 was organized into a full-time Baptist Church, with a membership of 56. It was during the year of 1954 that the Church building was completed and the first services held in the new building.



MODELLO BAPTIST CHURCH

Although one mission had already been established, the Church still felt the acute need of the people of the Florida Keys for a Church to minister to their spiritual needs. Consequently, on October, 1953, another mission was started, this time the Keys



KEYS CHAPEL

twenty-three

Chapel at Islamorada, 45 miles from Homestead.

Many adverse circumstances caused the Church to have a slow beginning; services had to be held in the U. S. Coast Guard building and Rev. Whitt gave the sermon in the afternoon after completing his duties here. Finally the work flourished with the coming of a full-time pastor and the acquiring of land and a building. Enthusiastic, now that they had a building to work on, the people went to work and the result was a lovely, suitable building and an increase in the attendance during 1956 to 1959 from 15 to 75. Rev. Lynn M. Powers is present pastor of the Keys Chapel.

Realizing the need for a Church in Naranja, an area adjacent to the city on the Northeast, a survey was made in 1958. The survey was conclusive proof of not only the need, but that the residents of the area wanted a Church in their area. After careful preparation the Church, under advisement of its Local Missions Committee, called Rev. James W. Justus, Jr., former pastor of Cutler Ridge Chapel, as assistant pastor to establish the mission. On April 19, 1959, the first sermon was held in the Masonic Lodge Building on Coconut Palm Drive, East of Highway 1. Although inadequate facilities and hinderances have existed, much progress has been made. Suitable property and buildings will be forthcoming and a great Church will rise from this small beginning.

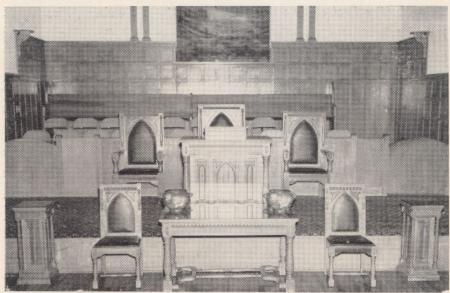


FIRST MEETING PLACE, NARANJA PARK CHAPEL

GIFTS AND MEMORIALS TO THE CHURCH

In June, 1911, during the pastorate of Rev. White, the Sullivan brothers, David, Homer and George donated the property on which the present auditorium now stands. The lumber for the first Church was donated by Gaston Drake. After the building was complete an organ was given by Mrs. W. D. Horne and the first pulpit used was a gift from E. E. Collins. In May, 1925, A. R. Pratt donated the property for the pastorium and Ben W. Morris gave \$1,750 toward completing the pastorium.

In the dedication service in 1944, Rev. Crantford dedicated the memorials presented to the Church. The pulpit furniture and the Christian and American flags were given by Mr. and Mrs. A. D. Smith and their daughter Barbara Jean, as a memorial to Mr. Smith's brother Earl. The landscape oil painting which forms the background for the baptistry was presented as a gift by the West family and the H. Collier family. The addition to the original scene was painted by Mrs. W. B. Caves, Sr. The vases were given by Mrs. E. L. Lawrence and Mrs. T. C. Seifert. The pulpit lamp was a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Harry Cooper.



MEMORIALS

twenty-five

Later the Piche family presented the Church with a beautiful mahogany table in memory of their son, Joseph, who was killed in action.

A sound film projector was given by Mr. and Mrs. L. H. Dawson and a public address sound system was given by Mrs. Homer Davis and her daughter Comer, in honor of the late Homer J. Davis.

A memorial stand and lamp for the Visitor's Register Book was presented to the Church by the family and close friends of Mrs. Julia Polk. Orvil Irwin presented the Church with the water fountain and the wrought iron support railing at the front of the Church.

MUSICIANS

The First Baptist Church can boast through the years of a high type of music, both instrumental and vocal. Individual participants cannot be mentioned; exception is made in regard to two phases, namely the beginning and the present.

The first choir consisted of only three members, Mrs. W. D. Horne, Miss Nellie Moon, Mrs. S. F. Matthews, with S. L. McClanahan as Director and Miss Myrtle Moon, Organist.

For many years, Mrs. Loretta Lawrence was the faithful organist and then Mrs. George Maurer was called by the Church as the Church staff organist and assumed the duties Mrs. Lawrence had so ably accomplished. The list is not complete but it is known that among those serving this Church as organist can be listed the following - some for a short time, others for longer periods: Mrs. Stanley Matthews, Miss Myrtle Moon, Mrs. Nina Strickland, Mrs. Loretta Lawrence and Mary Helen Sprinkle.

In January, 1958, Gratten E. Tomlinson was called as Minister of Education and Music and served in this position until June 21, 1959. The Department of Music, under Mr. Tomlinson, grew to an enrollment of 141 with four choirs. He has made an outstanding record with this Church in its musical program. It is indeed with sorrow that we saw him leave to go to another Church in Hialeah.



ADULT CHOIR, FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

ORDAINED AND LICENSED MINISTERS

The Church has ordained and licensed during the past fifty years, five men to the Gospel ministry. Rev. George Allen West, Jr., in May, 1937, Rev. Lynne Irwin in June, 1945, Rev. B. H. Stevenson, licensed in December, 1950, James E. Anderson, licensed June 17, 1959, and Russell Pinder, licensed June 17, 1959 at Keys Chapel, Islamorada, Florida.

Rev. George Allen West, Jr. is present pastor at the Woodmont Baptist Church, Nashville, Tennessee; while Rev. Lynne Irwin is pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, Pensacola, Florida.

Rev. Stevenson was licensed in this Church and was later called to Lakeland.

Mr. Pinder is the first one to be licensed at the new mission Church at Islamorada. He was formerly a licensed member of the Methodist Church.

Mr. Anderson came into the fellowship of our Church early this year. At present he is with the Air Force.

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY PLANS

Early in the fall of 1958, the Church began to make plans for the Golden Anniversary during the week of August 30 - September 5, 1959.

On June 21, 1959, the following members, Wilbur Caves, Mrs. Jack Barnes, Mr. Alvin E. Campbell, Mrs. J. R. Rutland, Mrs. Gordon Ivey, Mr. and Mrs. Francis Reynolds and Mrs. A. E. Williams were appointed as the "Golden Anniversary Steering Committee".

MRS. J. TOM VANN By Mabel H. Crawford

No history of the First Baptist Church of Homestead would be complete without paying tribute to the quiet, gentle spirit of Mrs. J. Tom Vann. Mrs. Vann, known to her intimate friends as Nell, has contributed of her time and talents in so many ways that the space allowed is totally inadequate to discuss them. To list only a few of her accomplishments, Mrs. Vann has served as clerk for seventeen years, initiated the Cradle Roll, organized and served as President of Improvement Society - forerunner of W. M. U., taught Sunday School for twenty-five years, both primary and beginners, President of W.M.U. and also found time to serve as pianist for the various groups when her musical talents were needed.

We owe to Mrs. Vann a great debt of gratitude, for it is largely through her painstaking efforts that the grueling task of keeping and recording the history of our Church's growth has been accomplished.

Mrs. Vann began writing the Church history as a hobby. Having been in the First Baptist Church since she was a young girl, she has seen it grow and has lived with the history as it was made. In the last few months she has been assisted in her task by Mrs. T. D. Smith, Sr., who served as Church Secretary for many years and who has found time to teach a Sunday School Class for the past ten years and give her singing talent to the choir.

In 1934, during the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary, Mrs. Vann was called upon to recount the chief historical events of the Church in its early years.

Through all the years of her service she has performed her duties faithfully and loyally. Her shy, unassuming nature is truly a living lesson in humility to anyone who is fortunate enough to know her.

CHALLENGE

Jesus, Himself, indicated the starting point of a Church's missionary outreach when He said, "But ye sha'l receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

The Holy Spirit is upon us now to lengthen our reach in Homestead and unto the other areas of the world.

Our Church has been and is now becoming more favorably known for its Kingdom building. It is our duty to launch out upon a publicity program of radio, television, newspapers, personal visitation and witnessing, reaching the maximum number of people for Christ.

Our present facilities are completely inadequate for accommodation of the swelling prospective membership. The sanctuary presently seats less than 600. Expansion needs to be made so that at least 1,200 of our Church family can be assembled at one time with every comfort possible. Our Educational Buildings have a maximum capacity of about 750. These units should be expanded, allowing our Sunday School to accommodate 1,800 souls every Sunday. This means new furnishings and equipment, more parking space, and additional teaching personnel, and more Church staff members are necessary for continued growth.

While all of these advancements are being made in our home Church, the missionary program should be steadily accellerated. An increase should be made to the Cooperative Program. For our Home Missions, the Keys Chapel is to be organized into a strong Baptist Church. The Naranja Park Chapel needs the first unit of their Church plant immediately and this work should be organized as quickly as possible into a self-supporting Church.

Nearer home, we need to sponsor another new work in the Northwest section of Homestead. This field presents a great challenge to us.

Let is be recalled that it was in the context of His declaration, "I will build my Church," that Jesus announced the basic life-principle: "For whosoever would save his life shall lose it and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it." Applied to a Church, this principle means that a Church lacking in missionary outreach and passion, seeking to save its life rather than losing it in an abandon of self-giving, is a dying Church, and ought to die.

In pushing aside everything of lesser moment, let us put always at the center, that which Jesus counted of supreme importance when He said, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

May the First Baptist Church march on in carrying out this order of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

BIOGRAPHICAL TABLE

PASTORS OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

*Henry Howard Sturgis	1909-1911	*J. E. Johnstone	1939-1943
*J. W. White	1911-1912	Bob Willets 1943	(Interim)
*J. C. Rodgers	1913	Leonard B. Crantford	1943-1947
*Milton M. Bales	1913-1916	*J. L. White	1947-1948
*J. W. Barton	1916-1918	John H. Whitt	1948-1954
*J. A. Sutton	1918-1921	Bartlett A. Bowers 1954	(Interim)
Charles M. White	1921-1922	Edmund H. Rice	1954-1957
Charles N. Walker	1922-1938	Luther A. Key	1957

^{*}Deceased

CLERKS OF THE CHURCH

Name	Years Served
W. D. Horne	4
O. L. Strickland	1
R. E. Edwards	28
Mrs. J. Tom Vann	17

TREASURERS OF THE CHURCH

Name	Years Served	Name	Years Served
Mr. Bishop	3	R. E. Edwards	7
T. A. Campbell	4	E. L. Lawrence, Jr.	1
S. L. McClanahan	2	J. H. Drawdy	1
O. L. Strickland	2	J. R. Pope	3
J. T. Vann	3	Mrs. Charles Martin	5
Mrs. Neva King Cooper	6	Ivan S. Cason	2
A. E. Campbell	12		

DEACONS OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

The first reference shows the following:

W. D. Horne	1910	S. A. King	1915
T. A. Campbell	1910	A. R. Pratt	1915
G. W. Moon	1914	L. B. Gandy	1915
S. L. McClanahan	1914	S. H. Fitch	1920
R. E. Edwards	1914	Dr. John B. Tower	1920
O. L. Strickland	1914		

Other Deacons elected through the years:

A. J. Campbell	1926	W. R. Cheshire	1933
Fred H. Trato	1926	George M. Frick	1934
Joel Lewis	1926	T. C. Shackleford	1937
Rev. Noah Peterson	1930	A. D. Smith	1940
Ralph Musselwhite	1930	J. R. Byrum	1940
Frank L. McIlwain	1930	S. L. West	1940

DEACONS (Continued)

J. L. Scott	1940	Willard Lewis	1949
D. R. Snyder	1940	Bill Cornelius	1950
J. Q. Caldwell	1940	W. E. McMichael	1950
A. E. Campbell	1940	Charles Schaffer	1950
Harry Shawberger	1940	T. D. Smith, Jr.	1950
E. H. Collier	1940	Jay Newton	1950
H. M. Holding	1940	J. H. Drawdy	1950
J. Leroy Kulp	1940	R. N. Caldwell	1950
J. R. Pope	1945	V. C. Kerley	1951
W. T. McConnell	1945	A. E. Smith	1951
D. H. Dellinger, Sr.	1947	T. D. Smith, Sr.	1951
R. R. Schowalter	1947	Roy Foster	1951
Wilbur Caves	1949	W. B. Caves, Sr.	1952
Earl Lee	1949	Burkett Berry	1952
Paul Cox	1949	John Campbell	1952
Clyde Bowden	1949	Lewis Callahan	1952
D. H. Dellinger, Jr.	1949	Harvey Newton	1952
B. H. Stevenson	1949	John Hargrave	1953
James Roberts	1949	Gene Cone	1953
Orvil Irwin	1949		

Beginning with 1954, the rotating deacon system was adopted.

William O. Tanner	1954	A. G. Longworth	1956
F. M. Payne	1954	Walter Bell	1957
Roy N. Smith	1954	Ivan S. Cason	1957
John Degelman	1954	W. A. Anderson	1957
Cliff Acuff	1955	Major J. M. Hays, Jr.	1957
Frank Robinson	1955	Walter S. Harless	1957
Millard J. Gaddis	1955	Keith A. Lewis	1957
Harry E. Cooper	1955	W. A. Hills	1958
W. M. Elmore	1956	Robert E. Peterson	1958
Lansing Gordon	1956	Earl Byrd	1958
Jessie Hendley	1956	Major R. N. Snell	1959

Deacons elected at Keys Chapel, October, 1956, Charles J. Woods, Henry E. Albury and Leonard Martin.

December, 1942, Ralph Musselwhite* and W. D. Horne* were made Deacons Emeritus for life without active duties.

September 12, 1951, A. J. Campbell* was made Deacon Emeritus for life without active duties.

September 17, 1952 and September 16, 1953, Ralph E. Edwards and Frank L. McIlwain were made Deacons Emeritus for life without active duties.

^{*}Deceased

SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

Name	Years	Served	Name	Years	Served
W. D. Horne		3	Noah Peterson		2
L. S. Mowry		2	S. L. West		2
O. L. Strickland		2	R. G. Moon		1
S. L. McClanahan		2	T. C. Shackleford		2
S. A. King		2	D. R. Snyder		4
A. J. Drew		3	Mrs. J. Leroy Kulp		8
D. M. Bow		3	Paul B. Cox		4
S. L. McClanahan		2	Gene Cone		1
Mrs. Julia Polk		2	James Roberts		4
Frank L. McIlwain		1			

BROTHERHOOD PRESIDENTS

John Hargrave	1952-1953	W. M. Elmore	1956
William O. Tanner	1954	W. M. Elmore	1958-1959

WOMEN'S MISSIONARY UNION PRESIDENTS

Mrs. W. J. Barton	1917-1918	Mrs S. L. West	1943
Mrs. S. A. King	1919-1920	Mrs. L. B. Crantford	1944-1946
Mrs. Catherine Pickard	1921-1924	Mrs. R. N. Caldwell	1947
Mrs. Julia Polk	1925	Mrs. T. T. Bowen	1947-1948
Mrs. S. L. McClanahan	1926-1929	Mrs Gordon Ivey	1949
Mrs. Frank Hausman	1930	Mrs. B. W. Stevenson	1950
Mrs. F. N. Irwin	1931	Mrs. T. T. Bowen	1951-1952
Mrs. H. Collier	1932-1933	Mrs. F. N. Irwin	1953
Mrs. J. T. Vann	1934-1935	Mrs. T. T. Bowen	1953-1954
Mrs. R. E. Edwards	1936-1937	Mrs. Mrs. T. D. Piche	1955-1956
Mrs. H. Collier	1938-1939	Mrs. W. B. Caves, Sr	1957-1959
Mrs. F. N. Irwin	1940-1942		

TRAINING UNION DIRECTORS

Mrs. S. E. Livingston S. L. McClanahan A. J. Drew Mrs. L. P. Kendrick Mrs. R. E. Edwards Mrs. Bowling Dye Orin Smith James Wollam Bertha N. Hausman Rowe Snell Lidda Ann Lee Alvin E. Campbell Mrs. E. F. Flemming	Years	Served 2 5 2 2 1 1 1 1 2 4 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	Name Katherine Harper Ellen Vann Myron Grennell Charles Schaffer Lynne Irwin Douglas Dubose Mrs. A. E. Paul-Taylor Mrs. Roy Schowalter Frank N. Irwin, Jr. J. B. Sanders Mrs. John Hargrave T. D. Smith, Jr. W. E. McMichael	Years	Served 2 2 1 1 2 1 2 2 1 1 1 1 1 1 5 5 2
Mrs. E. F. Flemming Mrs. C. N. Walker Alva Taylor		1 1 1	W. E. McMichael T. D. Smith, Jr.		5 2

FULL-TIME CHURCH SECRETARIES

Mrs. T. D. Smith, Sr. Mrs. Ladd Smith 1949-1957 1957 Mrs. H. D. Kidd

1958-

STUDENTS FOR MINISTRY AND FULL TIME CHRISTIAN SERVICE

George A. West, Jr.
Lynne Irwin
Bob Willets
B. H. Stevenson
Ellen Vann Gravatt
Myrtle Moon
Wanda Smith
Vera Mae Anderson
Lillian Lewis
Sylvia Wing
James Bethune
James Anderson
Thomas Renfro
Ralph Leedy

Ray Armstrong
Ann Payne
Brenda Setzer
Linda Setzer
Sherry Terry
Randy Payne
Harry Salee, Jr.
Althea Wilt
David Newton
Mary Lee Walton
Dottie Cash
Marvin Horner
Carla Pamperin
Russell Pinder

A CONDENSED HISTORY

OF

"FIFTY GOLDEN YEARS" THE

FIRST BAPTIST CHAPEL HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA

No history of any Church would be complete without a brief foreword concerning the time, the place and the people before its inception.

The end of the 19th Century probably saw no white people living within the precincts of the present town of Homestead. The term Homestead was first applied to the Redland District in general, due to the fact that land in this locality was opened for settlement by the United States Department of the Interior. The Department deeded these settlers small land grants or "homesteads" as an inducement to prospective citizens after a certain specified length of time and residence, labor and improvements on such tracts were completed.

One of the earliest pioneers to come to this section was W. D. Horne who in September 1904 started from his home in Miami walking or riding his bicycle over areas where there was no sign of a trail.

The new railroad being built by Henry Flagler had reached a place now known as Homestead and Mr. Horne arriving here found one family, a Mr. and Mrs. W. A. King and their three daughters. Mr. King was section foreman over a crew of railroad workers. Mr. Horne looked for a suitable place to build a home and chose the site where the Redland Hotel now stands. He made arrangements with the railroad to bring the building material and supplies. His home being completed, his wife, Ida Virginia, in company with the railroad

agent, Hughlett Worrell, his wife and two small children, arrived on the first train to enter Homestead carrying a passenger coach. The date of their arrival was December 15, 1904. Their first child, Loretta, was born in Miami November 14, 1906. The same year Mrs. Horne's father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas A. Campbell, arrived in Homestead and erected a home on what is now North Krome Avenue. This family was destined to be the nucleus of the present First Baptist Church of Homestead.

Another early settler in this section was the Rev. Henry Howard Sturgis, who migrated to the East Coast of Florida in 1895 and homesteaded in a little town near Homestead named Detroit by a group of people who settled there from Detroit, Michigan. The town of Detroit became the present Florida City.

Brother Sturgis, a circuit rider, traveled up and down the State of Florida as far south as Key West and north to New Smyrna. He established 16 churches, one of which was the First Baptist Church of Homestead.

He was a great man of God, endowed with a winning personality and physical endurance, pioneering for Christ for sixty years.

The first written record of the Church is the minutes of the meeting dated September 6, 1909, when a group of five Christian people met to establish a Church. We quote from these minutes: "After preaching by the Rev. H. H. Sturgis and the reading of the articles of faith, as set forth by Hitchcock's Church Manual, the following brethren and sisters entered into a covenant to constitute a Baptist Church: Rev. Henry Howard Sturgis, William Dixon Horne, Thomas Alexander Campbell, Elizabeth Amanda Campbell, Minnie Tyler Livingston and Ida Virginia Horne. The Church adjourned to meet on the first Sunday in October to complete its organization."

After completion of the organization W. D. Horne was elected clerk and served four years.

The first religious services held, outside of private homes, were conducted in a little frame school house east of the Florida East Coast Railroad tracks. This school, built in 1907, was located on the corner of what is now Northeast First Avenue, and it was in this same little building that our first Sunday School was organized in 1907 by Brother Sturgis and attended by both Methodists and Baptists. L. S. Mowry, a Methodist, was the superintendent. The time of meeting was 3:30 P.M. By the year 1913 the whole population of 84 turned out for Sunday School. Later that same year, with the help of the Baptists, the Methodists organized their own Sunday School, which continued to meet at 3:30, and the Baptists changed their time of meeting to 10:00 A.M.

Preaching services were held whenever a minister happened to be in the locality. Among the earliest ones to serve in this capacity were the Rev. Edwards Bostick, Rev. Frank Keene, Rev. Henry Howard Sturgis, Rev. J. A. Edge, Rev. J. H. Rechter, Rev. Campbell and Dr. J. W. White. The exact dates and periods of service are unknown.

It will be noted that most of the membership of this small church, located in a veritable wilderness, were members of a family whose descendents in this section are now legion. The characteristics of Mr. and Mrs. T. A. Campbell, who were true pioneers and genuine Christians, live on and are shared by their numerous descendants, who now constitute a large portion of our present membership.

Their kindliness, patience, honesty, loyalty, neighborliness and deep love for church, home and children, are a precious heritage and the Church owes a debt of gratitude to this fine family who were its founders. Mrs. T. A. Campbell, lovingly called "Grandma Campbell", has often been termed "Mother" of this Church, a tribute she rightly deserved.

The first revival was held by Rev. J. S. Thrasher, pastor of the Church at Silver Palm, in September, 1910. The minutes of the clerk, W. D. Horne, concerning that meeting, are so charming and enlightening, that we wish to quote from them as follows: "Rev. J. S. Thrasher was invited to preach by T. A. Campbell and family for the Homestead Church. After services, a vote of the Church had the meeting continued as the interest manifested was fine, and up to Thursday night had received sixteen into the Church, ten by baptism and six by letter. Rev. Thrasher was asked to baptize the candidates, which he did. Our pastor did not attend but three or four times, because the roads and weather were bad. The names of those joining during the first of many great revivals were: Oscar F. Thomas, Mollie B. Thomas, L. E. Campbell, Ben King, Marie King, Joe King, Mrs. Fannie King, W. A. King, J. M. Fitzpatrick, who were baptized in a small pool in the Church yard. Miss Ollie Caves, Mrs. W. J. Owens, Alpha Houston, Mitta Norwood, Bird Fitzpatrick and Albert Cox joined by letter."

Others becoming members up to June, 1911, were as follows: (no specific dates given for most of these in the Church roll) Neal W. Campbell, O. L. Strickland, W. A. Frazeur, Mrs. W. A. Frazeur, Mrs. Maggie Hill, G. W. Lee, C. R. Williams and Mrs. C. R. Williams.

The first death recorded among the membership was that of Mrs. C. R. Williams. The Church roll gives no date. Early members recall her as a very devoted Christian and speak of her passing as a sad blow to all who knew her.

On June 10, 1911, the Church called Dr. J. W. White as pastor, who served a little more than a year. It seems he was the

first full-time pastor. At the same time this call was issued, W. D. Horne was asked to see about lumber to build a Church building, and so we know that hopes for a Church edifice were definitely in the minds and hearts of the members at that time. In this same year the Sullivan brothers, David, Homer and George, donated the real estate on which the present auditorium stands and plans were laid of the building of the first Church building. For about two years the Church records reveal little of its activities. Doubtless the Church held fairly regular meetings and conferences, but the minutes were probably lost or not copied in the Church book.

However, there are those who were here at the time who retain many mental pictures of the little town, its growth and steady progress. It was during this period, the fall of 1912, that the foundation for the Church was laid. The lumber was given by Gaston Drake of the Drake Lumber Company, Princeton, Florida and hauled by the members of the Church.

In recent years, Mr. Horne, when talking about building the Church, recounts that the first contractor, who had no time limit set in his contract, built the foundation but never completed the structure. The Church, after a long delay, procured the services of a second contractor who erected the fame of the building. Later, the first contractor went to Mr. Horne demanding payment for the completed structure. To avoid friction and to prevent dishonor falling upon his dearly beloved Church, Mr. Horne paid this unearned bill out of his own pocket, which was unknown to the Church for many years.

The Church called the Rev. J. C. Rogers of Live Oak, Florida in February, 1913, who served as pastor until the following November. His salary was \$250.00 per annum and the Florida State Mission Board was asked to contribute a like amount, which it consented to do. After further deliberation, the Church voted to stand on its

own feet and rejected the help of the Board.

About May, 1913, the Church building was ready for use with homemade benches, a few song books, and an organ, the latter a gift from Mrs. W. D. Horne. The first pulpit used was a gift from E. E. Collins. The building still lacked doors, windows, screens, lights and baptistry.

When it rained the organ was pushed to the center of the building and services proceeded as usual. Now, with a Church home and a pastor, the Church members were encouraged, even enthusiastic, and the Church and its auxiliaries thrived and many improvements were made.

This little Church was born of the true pioneer spirit; these were spiritually rugged souls, walking to Church, defying the elements, fighting the savage hordes of mosquitoes, worshiping God by lantern light.

On May 21, 1913, the first Church conference was held and a finance committee, composed of Messrs. T. A. Campbell, S. L. McClanahan and O. L. Strickland, was appointed. At this conference it was decided to have the regular business meeting on the Thursday before the third Sunday of each month. It was also voted to use envelopes for Church offering. The first new members accepted into the Church after the permanent building was erected were: Mr. and Mrs. G. W. Moon; Ralph, Myrtle and Nellie Moon; Mr. and Mrs. Archie Campbell, S. L. McClanahan, Mr. and Mrs. John E. Jones and Mrs. S. F. Matthews, all by letter.

July 6, 1913 being the first Sunday, the first quarterly Communion was held. Many recall that Mrs. G. W. Moon made unleavened bread for this occasion and continued to do so for many years.

At this time Mr. Horne was Sunday School Superintendent Miss Myrtle Moon was Secretary, a post she held for many years, and Mrs. Stanley Matthews was organist.

Mr. McClanahan was president of the B.Y.P.U. which was well organized and attended by practically the entire congregation, young and old.

The Church choir consisted of Mrs. Horne, Miss Nellie Moon, Mrs. S. F. Matthews, with Mr. McClanahan as Director and Miss Myrtle Moon, Organist.

On July 13, 1913, Mr. Horne resigned as Church Clerk and O. L. Strickland was elected. He served one year. It was on this same day that the long-looked-for windows and doors arrived and the ladies of the Church volunteered to serve a chicken dinner to the men who would install them. As a result of this successful plan the "Baptist Improvement Society" was organized in August, composed of the following Charter members: Miss Nellie Moon, President, Mrs. Matthews, Secretary, Mrs. T. A. Campbell, Mrs. W. D. Horne, Mrs. G. W. Moon, Mrs. S. E. Livingston and Miss Myrtle Moon. Later members were: Mrs. W. A. King, Mrs. S. H. Fitch, Mrs. J. H. Barnes, Mrs. Frank Umphrey, Mrs. G. I. Gault, Mrs. A. J. Campbell, Mrs. R. E. Edwards and Mrs. Tom H. Parker. As time went on most of the women of the Church were active in this organization. Many such dinners were served and great progress was made toward the completion of the Church building. This organization was the forerunner of the now active "Woman's Missionary Union".

The first funeral held in the Church was for Mrs. Harriet Kahl, wife of the resident Methodist pastor and editor of the Homestead paper which later became the Leader-Enterprise. Mrs. Kahl had been active in our Sunday School.

In December, 1913, Mr. Horne was sent by the Church as a delegate to the Florida Baptist State Convention in Arcadia to seek advice about securing a pastor. This led to the calling of Dr. M. M. Bales, who served as pastor for over two years at a salary of \$1,000 per year. During his pastorate many improvements were made. During the year 1914 the Church building was completed, a Baptistry installed, a lean-to was built at the back of the Church to provide additional space; the spire room added, and lights installed. These lights were the old-fashioned carbide type. The Baptistry was filled by a hand pump. The Baptist Improvement Society contributed \$100 toward improvements, which included a runner for the aisle, curtains, etc., and when it became certain that the Associational Meeting would be held here, they bought a new organ. The Matthews boys supplied the money and built the new pulpit.

O. L. Strickland resigned his position as Church Clerk on July 15, 1914, and R. E. Edwards was elected and held the office for 28 years. It was just about this time that the Cradle Roll was organized by Miss Nellie Moon.

In November, 1914, the Annual Associational Meeting was held for the first time in the Church. Rev. Henry Howard Sturgis made an address of welcome. Dr. C. E. W. Dobbs delivered the principal address before 54 delegates from 11 Churches of the young Association. The new Church building was dedicated at this time. The dedicatory sermon was delivered by Dr. S. B. Rodgers of Jacksonville.

The Church membership was now 56. The Sunday School supported 8 boys in a Bible School in Ping-Tu, China. A large box of clothing was sent to the orphanage at Arcadia.

On November 23, 1914, the first large formal conference, with all departments of the Church giving detailed reports, was

held. The following were appointed ushers: Thomas Vann, Ra'ph Moon, R. E. Edwards A. J. Campbell; Publicity Committee: W. H. Vann, W. A. King, Oscar Thomas and Robert Campbell; Calling Committee: Mrs. W. D. Horne, Mrs. T. A. Campbell, Mrs. S. E. Livingston and Mrs. S. F. Matthews.

There being no W.M.U., Mrs. Horne and Mrs. Gault were appointed to take the Home and Foreign Mission periodicals and to canvas the membership for subscriptions to them.

During 1914 the following members were added to the Church: Mr. and Mrs. R. E. Edwards, Mrs. Jennie Dorsey, Mrs. Mrs. Addie Hill Pitts, Mr. and Mrs. A. R. Pratt, Mrs. Sara Morton, Mrs. Fannie Miller, Mr. and Mrs. S. H. Fitch, Emma Fitch Eby, Alice Dunlop, Aldus Matthews, Roy Matthews, Miss Josie Patt, Thomas Vann, and Mrs. W. F. W. Winn.

There is another break in the records of the Church, but we remember vividly the revival meeting in February, 1915, with Dr. John A. Wray of Miami preaching. Our records show over sixty new members that year, most of whom joined during this revival. The gospel singer, W. H. Rowe, also added much to the revival. Members baptized in the old Church building, February of 1915, were: Charlie Caves, Mrs. Willow Caves Reike, Mrs. J. W. Campbell, Robert Campbell, Mrs. Robert Campbell, Alvin E. Campbell, Harry E. Cooper, Ford Cockran and Jennie Cockran. We had so many new additions that about fifty new seats were purchased.

In July of 1916 the Rev. Bales resigned and the Rev. W. J. Barton replaced him as pastor in October of that year. In the intervening time the first formal wedding to be held in the Church was on August 17, 1916, when Miss Nellie Moon and J. Tom Vann were united in marriage by the Rev. S. P. Mahoney of Ft. Lauderdale. Miss Nellie Moon was loved by all and held in high regard and

numerous pre-nuptial parties and showers were given in her honor. The beautiful new Church was made into a veritable tropical garden for this important event.

Though Rev. Barton was quite elderly, he and his wife were greatly loved by the young people and, had he so desired, he could have remained longer as pastor, but it was his wish to retire. While he served in this field the first pastorium was built in the winter of 1916-1917 and the Church voted to give \$300 to missions that current year.

In the fall of 1918 Dr. J. A. Sutton was called to serve as pastor and served three years, resigning in September, 1921.

Rev. Charles M. White, son of Dr. J. L. White of Miami, was called as pastor September 1, 1921. He came from Macon, Ga.on August 31, 1921. His ministry here was brief as he left August 31, 1922, to enter Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. During his ministry we again entertained the Miami Baptist Association, with the Rev. E. B. Jenkins the principal speaker, and the second pastorium was built and used temporarily as a social hall and Sunday School class rooms. The report to the Association was as follows: Additions to the Church by Baptism 8, by Letter 17. Total membership was 241. Sunday School enrollment 154, average attendance 99. B.Y.P.U. enrollment 68, W.M.U. enrollment 55. Total contributions were \$2,100, pastor's salary and other disbursements \$979. The Church pledged \$6,900 to the Seventy-five Million Dollar Campaign and paid \$710.42 on the pledge that year. The officers of the Church at that time: R. E. Edwards, Clerk, S. A. King, Sunday School Superintendent, Mrs. Catherine Pichard, President of W.M.S., and A. J. Drew, President of B.Y.P.U.

On September 1, 1922, the Rev. C. N. Walker came from Manchaug, Mass., to supply the pulpit for a month, having gradu-

ated only three months before from Newton Theological Seminary at Newton Center, Mass. He was called on October 4, 1922, as pastor. This was his first charge since graduation. The ministry of this young preacher had, in the years to follow, a great impact on the life and progress of this Church.

The report to the Associational Meeting at Stanton Memorial Church in Miami for the year 1921 shows the organization of a monthly Sunday School Workers Council, 12 members received by baptism and 42 by letter, bringing the total membership to 275. Also reported was the growth of the Sunday School with average attendance of 129, B.Y.P.U. average attendance 52.

By 1923 enrollment of the Cradle Roll was 80; the Sunday School attendance had passed the 200 mark. A B.Y.P.U. and Sunday School Institute conducted by Dr. W. W. William of Jacksonville, Florida, with attendance of 60 people, contributed much to this growth. Three Young People's Auxiliaries had been organized: 18 G.A.'s, 12 R.A.'s and 29 Sunbeams were enrolled. That year 20 were received for baptism and 29 by letter.

The Baptist World Alliance convened that year in Stockholm, Sweden, in April and our Church had a part in sending Dr. S. B. Rodgers, State Executive Secretary, by contributing toward his traveling expenses.

The year 1924 was considered one of the best in the history of the Church and community. It was the year before "The Boom" - everyone was happy and prosperous, Christian zeal was on a high plane - vigorous objection was shown to the opening of a "picture-show" on Sunday.

As a result of the fine leadership and hard work of Brother A. J. Drew and Mrs. G. I. Gault, the Primary Department increased in numbers to such proportions that 8 "huts" were built to accommo-

date them.

A revival held by Rev. J. C. Sims and J. W. Jelks brought into the Church 24 new members.

On October 1st the Church voted to have a Thanksgiving "get-together" to consider the matter of building a new Church and the record reads in a most quaint and charming style, "The picnic planned for Thanksgiving Day was one of the happiest events of the Church; over 80 people were present. There was an abundance of fish and good things to eat."

One of the members of the Church who is living today and who was present at that picnic relates, "This picnic was held at the Jennings estate on the Cape Sable Road which is now part of Everglades National Park. We left early in the morning loaded down with roasted turkey, venison, fried chicken, pork roast, beef roast, cakes and all sort of good food. Then, on top of that, all hands went fishing, the women fried the fish on the banks of the canal and what a feast we did have."

During all of these years we had an active Choir directed by G. I. Gault. Mrs. Nina Strickland, pianist, received the sum of \$2.00 per week for her services. Mrs. Gault assisted on occasions.

1925 was the year of the great boom. The whole atmosphere of the country was changed. Money seemed to be present in a limitless quantities and almost everybody was dreaming dreams of great wealth.

It was during this period that plans took form for erecting a new Church building. (But as the records will show, this was destined not to be until the year 1940.) On Monday night, March 30th, the women of the Missionary Society served a chicken supper. Dr. S. B. Rodgers, Executive State Secretary, was the guest of honor and principal speaker. After a stirring address by Dr. Rodgers, over

\$15,000 was pledged for the building program. On April 1st a building committee composed of W. D. Horne, G. I. Gault and Ben W. Morris was appointed. On Sunday, April 12th a full list of committees was appointed for carrying out the building program. They were: Executive Committee, Finance Committee and Equipment Committee.

In May, through the generosity of A. R. Pratt, who donated the property for the pastorium, and Ben W. Morris, who gave \$1,750, the Social Hall, which was partially completed, was transformed into a beautiful pastorium. Rev. Walker and his family moved into their new home on August 25th and were given a housewarming by the ladies of the Church.

In December of that year the Florida East Coast B.Y.P.U. Federation met with the First Baptist Church of Homestead and supper was served to over 400 people.

On Monday, December 7th, the committee to raise funds for the new Church building met. In a few minutes' time checks in the amount of \$11,000 had been written. The Committee then went out to obtain contributions from other members of the Church.

At a bountiful Victory supper which the men of the Church prepared and served, it was reported the \$20,849 in cash had been raised.

The tide of prosperity had been running in for the Homestead area through all the years up to 1926, but then things began to change, almost imperceptibly at first, but more apparent toward the close of the year, when it became evident to all that the Florida land "boom" had broken.

The year 1926 began with a revival meeting conducted by the Rev. J. C. Sims and Y. W. "Sunshine" Jelks. There were 15 additions to the Church. An interesting notation on the records for January 6th is that the Orphan's Box of the Sunday School was robbed, there being a carnival in town at that time.

On May 19th at the business meeting of the Church, three motions were passed as follows: First, to build the first unit of the Church, which was the Sunday School building, at the rear of the existing Church auditorium; Second, to empower the trustees to sell the old pastor's home in the rear of the Church and add the proceeds to the building fund; Third, to appoint R. E. Edwards assistant treasurer of the building fund.

By this time it had become apparent to all that the Church would be unable to raise the \$60,000 required to finance the building proposed by an architect from Birmingham, Alabama.

The motions of the business meeting on Wednesday night were presented on Sunday, May 23rd at the close of the morning service to the Church in conference and all three motions were approved.

The contract for the new two story Sunday School building was let to Mr. Musgraves, a local contractor, and work was begun on Thursday, June 24th. A ground breaking service was held in which Deacon T. A. Campbell turned the first shovel full of dirt. Dr. J. L. White gave the address.

After the new educational building was completed in September 1926, but before it was used, it was severely damaged by the 1926 hurricane; however, the courageous members of the Church repaired and completed the building which has been in use to the present day.

Unfortunately another break in our history appears, due to the loss or misplacing of records. However, from various sources some important and valuable information has been gathered.

April 23-30, 1933, the Rev. Edmund H. Rice held a revival and 19 were received on profession of faith for baptism.

One of the highlights of the history of our Church was the 25th Anniversary, September 5, 1934, of the organizing of the First Baptist Church of Homestead. The program given at the annual meeting recounted the chief historical events in the life of the Church since it was founded 25 years before. Mrs. J. T. Vann covered the first years and Mrs. S. F. Matthews, R. E. Edwards and Mrs. C. A. West told of succeeding periods. The Rev. C. N. Walker, pastor, gave what he hoped would be the history of the Church in the next five years.

The Anniversary program consisted of a solo by Mrs. Vera Summerlin, a duet by Alvin Campbell and Mrs. Alex Lanier, clarinet and saxophone numbers by George M. Frick, a trio by Mrs. Summerlin, Mrs. S. L. West and Mrs. Walker, and numbers by the men's chorus. In addition to the Anniversary message, Mrs. S. L. West gave a reading.

The week-end of September 2, 1935, Labor Day, a disastrous hurricane took the lives of all the servicemen stationed on Pigeon Key. Four hundred servicemen and civilians died in the storm; some were killed by flying debris, some were drowned and others died from exposure. The alert went out and many men from the Homestead area went to the Florida Keys to help in any way they could. The first floor of the educational building was set up as a medical center to minister to the victims of the storm. The Church kitchen was used as an emergency room. Doctors and nurses came from as far as Washington, D. C. Sara and Myrtle Hodge, teenage daughters of Mr. and Mrs. G. M. Hodge, present members of the Church, perished, along with all occupants, when the house in which they were

visiting was washed away by a giant tidal wave which swept over the Florida Keys on that tragic night. The local school cafeteria was operated by some of the Church members, at the time, preparing and serving soup and coffee to the patients in the temporary field hospital in the Church. The pastor, Rev. Walker, was badly burned from exposure to the tropical sun as he assisted the many men who composed the searching parties in locating bodies of the hurricane victims.

The year 1937 continued to reveal God's leadership in the progressive program of the Church. The first minister to be ordained by the Church was George Allen West, Jr., present pastor of the Woodmont Baptist Church, Nashville, Tennessee.

From the Church minutes of May 30, 1937, details of the first ordination service reads as follows: "In the matter of the Ordination to the Gospel Ministry of George Allen West, Jr.

"A Presbytery called by the First Baptist Church of Homestead, Florida, to consider the propriety of ordaining to the work of the Gospel Ministry of Brother George Allen West, Jr. met in the Church in Homestead at 3:00 o'clock P.M. on the above date.

"Pastor C. N. Walker, of the First Church, Homestead, called the Presbytery to order and stated the order of the Church by which the Presbytery had been called.

"... The Presbytery organized by choosing Rev. J. C. Sims as Moderator and Rev. C. N. Walker as Clerk.

"'All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name' was sung.

"Prayer was offered by Rev. Noah Peterson.

"Rev. J. C. Sims was chosen to conduct the examination of the candidate. "The candidate then related his Christian experience, his Call to the Ministry and his views of Bible Doctrine.

"The Presbytery voted unanimously to recommend that the Church do ordain to the Ministry Brother George Allen West, Jr.

The Church adopted the recommendation of the Presbytery and directed the Presbytery to proceed, on behalf of the Church, with the ordination.

"The Ordination was carried out as follows:

Mrs. Vera Summerlin sang "Open the Gates to the Temple". "Rev. William King offered prayer.

Dr. J. L. White preached the ordination sermon using as his subject "Paul's Estimate of Christ". The text was Collossians 1:15-19.

"Dr. C. R. Pittard offered the prayer of ordination, which was followed by the laying on of hands by the Presbytery.

Rev. P. T. Taylor welcomed Brother West into the ranks of ordained ministers and gave him the charge.

"Rev. C. N. Walker presented the Bible to the candidate on behalf of the Church.

"The Benediction was pronounced by Brother West, after which the congregation came forward to congratulate the newly ordained minister."

Attest: C. N. Walker, Clerk"

Pastor C. N. Walker resigned October 25, 1938 to become pastor of the Bethel Baptist Church, Lakeland, Florida, thus ending a long and successful pastorate of sixteen years. His length of service shows the love and esteem in which he was and is held. The following figures show partially the fruits of his labors. The Church received for baptism 308 members, 396 by letter. An insertion in the records at that time states, "Since he has been with us the new

pastorium has been built and also the large two story educational building west of the Auditorium. Our growth has not been without pain and struggle and sometimes heartache and misunderstandings but it has been steady. Since the beginning, in 1909, our membership has grown from 6 members to 563 in 1938 and we feel greatly blessed in our privilege to continue our work for the Master.

"We are thankful for our Church home, for our Educational facilities, which are already insufficient for our needs. But, we have something to strive for and we are rejoicing most of all for our spiritual uplift and growth during all of these years. Sometimes obstacles are but stepping-stones to higher attainments. We pray that the Lord will continue to bless His work among us."

The Church in business session on January 11, 1939, extended a call to Dr. J. E. Johnstone to become pastor. He accepted the call January 22, 1939, and the good work of his predecessor continued.

A great campaign to raise funds for a new Church building got under way with an Easter Cantata, "Hail King of Glory", rendered by the Church choir on Sunday morning, March 24, 1940 at 11:00 o'clock. The actual campaign to raise \$35,000 to replace the 27 year old structure was launched on Friday night, April 12, 1940, by Rev. J. J. Patterson of Cleveland, Ohio, who was in charge of the campaign. The only record that could be found, though much searching was done by the historians, concerning fees paid to him for his services is taken from the minutes of a Deacon's meeting in that same year and we quote, "Brother Patterson is to receive \$26.00 out of every thousand dollars from pledges or cash received". These minutes also state that he was paid \$25.00 as a binder when the contract was signed. This was indeed a small amount for the services rendered.

The Fund Raising Campaign was officially opened with a Loyalty Dinner for the entire congregation. Charter members of the Church were guests of honor and Rev. G. Wad Barr, pastor of University Baptist Church, delivered the address. Suppers were served each night except Saturday and Sunday, at which time progress reports of cash and subscriptions were given.

P. J. Franklin purchased the old frame building for \$175 and on May 19, 1940 the pioneers of Homestead and Redland Districts and people of all denominations received written invitations to attend the final service in the old building. A special musical program was given. The seventy-five people who were converted in the old Church, and the twenty people who attended the first service were present. Mr. and Mrs. J. Tom Vann (nee Nellie Moon) who were the first couple married in the Church building were recognized at this final service.

Dr. Johnstone welcomed and introduced the special guests and delivered a most fitting sermon in honor of this group. The text, "And Their Works Do Follow Them", was considered a true statement indeed, as the Church had grown and was seeking a better place for God's children to gather together for worship. Mr. Franklin moved the old building to his property on North Krome Avenue and the Church met in the Educational building for worship. The City of Homestead loaned a ditch digger for foundation excavation, and A. R. Livingston, Civil Engineer, donated his services for making a survey of the building site.

Ground-breaking ceremonies were held on Monday, June 10, 1940. The program began with the singing of "How Firm a Foundation", led by the choir leader, Jonathan Q. Caldwell. This was followed by Scripture and prayer by the pastor, Dr. Johnstone. "It is significant that construction of this Church started almost the very same hour that Italy declared war against the Allies", said

Rev. J. J. Richards, pastor of the Methodist Church. He continued, "It is beyond a doubt that you who are connected with the erection of this building will do your duty wisely, well, and will erect this structure to outlast everything that is disturbing the world today. Christian civilization is being jeopardized, but it is the Churches such as the ones in Homestead that will keep it intact for the benefit of mankind".

Baker M. Hindman, principal of the Homestead schools, addressing the group declared that the school and the Church must work hand in hand to develop the younger generation. Both institutions must strive to build better character, and mold the lives of the youth after the pattern of spiritual and mental perfection.

Appreciation was expressed to each and everyone who in any way had a part in the planning of a new Church building.

These sentiments were answered by short speeches by E. A. Ehman, Architect; E. L. Lawrence, Chairman of Building Committee; and J. D. Connor, Construction Supervisor.

A. J. Campbell and Ralph Musselwhite, members of the Church for 21 years, were given the honor of breaking the ground for the new building. They climaxed the ceremonies by plunging a new shovel into the plowed earth and then presenting it to the pastor, Dr. J. E. Johnstone, as a memento of the occasion. The Rev. George H. Ricks, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, pronounced the benediction. A large number of Church members and friends attended these ceremonies.

It is interesting to note that real work started on the building the very same day the ground-breaking ceremonies were held. Thus the long-delayed dream of a new Church home was beginning to materialize. The next three years saw the beautiful Church edifice go up and under the wise leadership of the beloved pastor the Church showed steady growth and increased membership.

It is appropriate to print Dr. Johnstone's letter of resignation dated April 4, 1943. He was beloved by his congregation and as his letter shows, he in turn held them in very high esteem. We quote "Dear Brethren: A little over four years have passed since I became your pastor. These years have been filled with joyful service to you. Our fellowship in Our Master's service has been truly a blessing to me, and for your loyal support I am truly grateful. Now the Lord is calling me to other work in His Kingdom. It is not easy for me to sever my happy relations with you. However, when God leads it is for me to say, "Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth." Now I come to ask you to accept my resignation, to become effective in the near future. I am to take the position as Superintendent of Missions under the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in Greater Miami and the Miami Association. I am happy to know that this Church and territory will still be a part of my work. Yours in blessed fellowship, J. E. Johnstone." (Dr. Johnstone actually resigned July 4, 1943.)

During the summer of 1943 Bob Willets, one of our young ministerial students, acted as interim pastor at a salary of \$25.00 per week. In August 1943 Lynne Irwin, another one of our fine young men, was licensed to preach and later was ordained as minister.

The first record of a Daily Vacation Bible School sponsored by the Church alone appears to have been held July 12-23 in 1943. Miss Ellen Vann was principal and a good school was reported with an enrollment of 82 and average attendance of 54.

On August 8, 1943 at a called business meeting, the Church voted to call the Rev. L. B. Crantford of Chattanooga, Tennessee,

to be the 9th pastor of First Baptist Church, Homestead. However, it was not until October 3rd that he accepted the call and preached his first sermon as pastor.

The day of the dedication of the new auditorium was set for February 27, 1944 and Dr. J. E. Johnstone, former pastor, was invited by the congregation to preach the first sermon in the new building as well as the dedicatory sermon on February 27th. The new baptistry was used at the evening service when 5 candidates were received into the Church by baptism. They were: Carl Edward Smith, Herschell Eugene Dalton, Joe Warren Dalton, Jack Sharp Polk and Mrs. Marion Nixon Kerley.

A quotation from the records concerning that day clearly portrays the sentiment of the people and reads, "It is with profound gratitude and thanks to God that we enter our new beautiful auditorium today. We rejoice because of the fine spirit of cooperation upon the part of the entire congregation in making this building possible."

The day of dedication was one of the highlights of the Church. It signified that the Lord had blessed this congregation by giving them spiritual, physical and financial power to work together to erect this place of worship. Three services were held on the day of Dedication and a happy congregation filled the Church.

At the afternoon service, the Rev. L. B. Crantford dedicated the memorials presented to the Church. The pulpit furniture and the Christian and American flags were given by Mr. and Mrs. A. D. Smith and their daughter, Barbara Jean, as a memorial to Mr. Smith's brother, Earl.

The landscape oil painting, which forms the background for the baptistry was presented as a gift by the West family and the H. Collier family. The addition to the original scene was painted by Mrs. W. B. Caves, Sr. The vases were given by Mrs. T. C. Seifert and Mrs. E. L. Lawrence and the pulpit lamp was a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Harry Cooper.

The beautiful ordinance of the Lord's supper was observed for the first time in the new auditorium on April 2, 1944. The congregation was drawn closer together in Christian fellowship and love as the significance of the Ordinance was fully realized in the beautifully decorated Sanctuary.

During the war-torn years of 1941-45 many local sons of the First Baptist Church gave of their services unselfishly. Many made great sacrifices for God and country. A few gave to the utmost, their lives. The honor roll of the gallant, faithful men reads as follows:

Names of Honor Roll

Johnnie Moffett
Billy Moffett
*Tommy Moffett
Edwin Lawrence
Lyman Williams
William McConnell
William McMichael
Jack McMichael
Robert Murrah
Elmer Martin
Roy Martin
Warren Morris
Emil Narick
Lilburn Nixon
Jay Newton
Harvey Newton
Henry Peters, Jr.
Walter Pierce
Allen Pope
Andrew Poole
*Joe Piche
Jud Piche
oud I loud

Harris Delk
Lewis Biondo
H. E. Bouldin
James Brown
Willard Barnes
Hugh Bowen
Clarence Beck
Martin Bishop
Clinton Bishop
Ansel Barrow
Forrest Bell
Joe Byrum
Banks Byrum
Albert Byrum
Homer Byrum
Truitt Bullard
Paul Cox
Bessie M. Chambliss
Bobbie Chambliss
Leon Chambliss
Bobby Caves
Richard Caves

Birdie Horne Albert Ferres Coleman Irwin S. J. Jones John Kuhn Edward Kirby Sam Shepherd Clifford Mayfield Roy Nelson Roy J. Edwards James Wollam Mike Barron Felton Brannen Archer Brannen Emery Brannen Ruther Sullivan Jimmie Schellern *Earl Swilley Clyde Swilley D. C. Sailors *Earl Smith Donald Talbott

Wilbur Caves Delma Rhodes Charles Robertson Richard Fuchs James Redd Harold Radford William Radford Ray Andrews Ralph Andrews Lewis Aldrich *Anderson Arrant Theodore Arrant Eugene Allen Richard Biggers Steve Biondo Charles Biondo Charles Sullivan

Randolph Caves Harold Campbell J. Q. Caldwell Douglas DuBose Robert Frazeur Millard Gaddis Andy Gibbs Myron Grennell Virgil Grennell Von DeWeese Eldred DeWeese Bert Henry Harry Hall Arthur Hall Roberta Harrison James Sullivan *Clayton Lehman

Ted Thomas Billy Vann Jimmie Vann Paul Vann Howard West Lovett Newell Bowling G. Dye Neill Jeffrey C. W. Kartuff Elbert West George Kocontes Dukes West Willie Webb Erwin Myrick Glenn Simmons Eugene Saunders

Tommy Harvey Moffett, March 9, 1941 died while in training as a result of a fire in Camp McPherson, Georgia.

Earl Smith and Anderson Arrant, December 7, 1941 killed at Pearl Harbor on the Navy Ship USS Arizona.

(Lt.) Joe Piche, July 17, 1944, (Air Force Pilot) killed in action in the Liberation of France.

The week of June 6th is one to be remembered a long time. The long expected invasion of Europe began and the radios and papers were filled with articles about prayer. Our Church was open and many came to express their gratitude to God and pray for the deliverance of our boys. This was truly a time for prayer and many realized that each day should be a day of prayer for God to guide our every move.

"Our deacons have been asked to give special attention to our service men stationed at the Homstead Air Base. Many have joined our Church and are a great blessing to us. Our Senior Train-

^{*} Killed in the Service of our Country

ing Union gave a program at the Air Base Chapel. Chaplain Miller and his workers gave them a fine reception and everyone expressed himself as having a wonderful time." Thus reads the records of those anxious days.

In June of 1944 Rev. and Mrs. Crantford celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary. Their work together for Christ has been wonderful during their thirty years of married life and the entire congregation wished them many more happy years in the service of the Master.

At a business meeting July 2, 1944 the Church voted to give \$25.00 to help erect a memorial in Homestead for the boys of this community who went into the service of their country.

It was also voted at this meeting to accept the quota of \$1,200 for our Church to help with the new building program for Stetson University, our Baptist College in Deland, Florida.

Our Church joined with the Southern Baptist Convention in the Centennial Evangelistic Crusade to win One Million Souls for Christ and voted to give \$100 to help promote the campaign.

On the occasion of his first Anniversary as pastor of our Church, Brother Crantford had this to say: "The pastor desires to give thanks and appreciation, and wishes to express his gratitude to God as we come to this our first anniversary with the First Baptist Church, Homestead. We have enjoyed trying to serve as your pastor. The Church has been kind, considerate and cooperative. We have enjoyed the blessed fellowship and the fine spirit of encouragement so evident in all the work of the past year. We are thankful for the progress made and rejoice in the willingness of the people to go forward. Pray as we look to the future that we will do more and serve better than ever."

At the business meeting of September, 1944, Mrs. J. L. Kulp was elected Sunday School Superintendent to take office in October, 1944. She held this office until she left to help with the new Modello mission, sponsored by the Church in June, 1952. Mrs. Kulp was efficient, energetic and a good organizer and the Sunday School grew under her fine leadership. October 7, 1952 was "Kulp Night" at the Sunday School Teachers and Officers meeting honoring Mrs. Kulp's eight years as Sunday School Superintendent. During that time the Sunday School had increased its enrollment from 286 to 799.

A memorial service for Lt. Joseph Piche, who was killed in action July 17, 1944 in the liberation of France, was held on Sunday, October 15, 1944. Later the Piche family presented the Young People's Department with a beautiful mahogany table in memory of "Joe".

In January, 1945, our Budget was raised to \$6000, and the pastor's salary was raised to \$4,800. During this year \$9,752 was given to all causes and there were 115 added to the Church. Sunday, May 20, 1945 the Sunday School attendance reached an all time high of 253.

May 13, 1945, was a day long to be remembered when large congregations attended both services to give thanks for "Victory Day" - the end of World War II.

The Church met on Wednesday evening, June 20, 1945, for the purpose of ordaining Lynne Irwin as a minister of the Gospel. Lynne is the son of Mrs. Frank N. and the late Frank N. Irwin and was born and raised in Homestead.

The program opened with the congregation singing, "My Faith Looks Up to Thee" and "Come Thou Fount", Invocation prayer by Rev. Frank Morgan of South Miami. A motion was made by A. D. Smith and seconded by Frank McIlwain that Lynne Irwin be accepted for ordination. "Lynne" gave a beautiful talk on his experiences and conversion. J. L. Kulp gave the charge to the Church and after laying on of hands, gave the ordination prayer.

Rev. Frank Morgan made a very inspirational speech on preaching the Gospel. Rev. Crantford, the pastor, gave the charge to the young minister.

The Bible was presented by Mr. Kulp. Meeting was dismissed by the new minister, Rev. Irwin. Rev. Irwin, a very successful pastor through the years, is now pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in Pensacola, Florida.

In July, 1945, for the first time in the history of the Church a Youth Revival was held and the Rev. Maurice Fain, now pastor of the First Baptist Church, Miami Beach, was the evangelist. All young people of the community were invited to attend. The young people worked hard and many various activities took place during the revival. A youth choir was formed and the male quartet from the Air Base rendered selections during two of the services.

On December 12, 1945, a new constitution and by-laws for the Church were adopted.

At the business meeting October 9, 1946, Mrs. Alta Gaddis reported on plans for a Library and it was decided that night to have it located in the Educational building. Mrs. William McMichael was elected Church Librarian with Miss Myrtle Moon, assistant. For the next few years several volunteers had charge of the library but in 1949 a Southwide Library worker was sent to help reorganize the Library and teach a study course on the "Church Library Manual". Miss Vera Mae Anderson served as Librarian until 1950 when she left for Blue Mountain College. Mrs. Art Gude, who had assisted on the Library Committee, was appointed Librarian by the Church.

She diligently studied the Library methods and for nearly nine years gave unreservedly of her time and efforts toward making our Library one of the best in the State of Florida. In fact, our Church received recognition at Ridgecrest when Mrs. Gude was invited to go and tell about the Library of First Baptist, Homestead. Our fine Library was made possible by yearly appropriations by the Church and generous gifts of the members. It has grown from 250 volumes to over 1,100. Special features are the Bible School Reading Club which is enthusiastically entered into by the children each year, and the observance of National Library Week.

The first Teachers and Officers Banquet promoted and financed by the Church was held October 1, 1946.

The continued growth of the Sunday School made it necessary to plan for more room and on December 1, 1946 the Church in a special called business session following the worship service, voted unamimously to buy the building known as the Leader-Enterprise property for \$12,000. This building sat on a lot 145' x 67½' adjacent to the existing educational building.

In 1946 Mrs. Frank N. Irwin was elected the first Recording Clerk to relieve the Church Clerk, Mrs. J. Tom Vann, of the duties of taking and reading the minutes of the business meetings, which position she held for many years.

The year 1947 saw a steady growth in Sunday School and Training Union; the Church membership had increased to 456. An Audio-Visual Department was started and the sound-film projector was given by Mr. and Mrs. L. H. Dawson. The Church purchased a console organ for the sum of \$2,602; \$2,782 was given, the balance being used for carpeting. The first \$100 was given by Mrs. Stella Harper in memory of her daughter, Katherine, who with her father met a tragic death in an automobile accident.

After four fruitful years of labor for the Lord, Rev. L. B. Crantford resigned on September 10, 1947. Dr. J. L. White acted as interim pastor until a regular pastor could be secured.

The Sunday School received the Standard of Excellence for the years 1947-1948, attesting to the efficient leadership of the organization.

The Miami Baptist Association was again guest of the Church on November 6th and 7th, 1947, and was well attended. The annual sermon was preached by the Rev. C. W. Smith of Pompano Beach, Florida.

Sunday, February 15, 1948, was designated as "All-States Day" and our tourist friends were our honored guests. Thirty-one States and Canada were represented.

The sixty new members who were added to the Church during Dr. White's ministry as interim pastor were honored at a reception on Wednesday, February 25th.

The Training Union Banquet was held April 14, 1948, and the guest speaker was the Rev. John Howard Whitt who had also preached at both services on the previous Sunday.

Rev. Whitt accepted the call to become pastor of our Church and was scheduled to arrive on the field in June. Dr. White left on May 2, 1948 and his work for Christ will live on in the memory of the members and records of the Church. A large number attended the reception given in honor of this fine minister of the Gospel.

Rev. and Mrs. John H. Whitt and daughter, Louise, moved into the pastorium and he preached his first sermon as our pastor on Sunday, June 13th, 1948.

A large group greeted the new pastor and family at a reception which was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Howard Johnson.

For the first time in our Church, Singspirations were held and large numbers of young people met to sing and enjoy Christian fellowship.

In July work began on the Youth Center which was located on the property purchased from the Leader-Enterprise newspaper.

The young people of the Training Union under the leadership of Miss Barbara Jean Smith, gave an inspiring program at the Baptist Church in the Negro section of town and in return the Negro young people presented a "song fest" which was enjoyed by all.

The Adult Department of Sunday School bought an outside lighted bulletin board for the front of the Church. The T.E.L. Class sponsored the project and gave \$25.00 toward its purchase.

In the records of November, 1948, is the following entry: "MEMORIAL: The Church is grateful to Mrs. Homer Davis and her daughter, Mrs. Comer Lee, for the gift of the public address sound system including personal receivers, which we are receiving this morning in honor of the late Homer J. Davis. This fine system is to aid the people in hearing the Gospel of Our Lord. We are indeed grateful to these fine members in presenting to the Church this gift of love and service."

A letter was received from Dr. J. L. White suggesting that a picture of Dr. Johnstone and a page be placed in the 1948 Miami Baptist Associational Minutes by the First Baptist Church as a memorial to their former pastor. This was unanimously agreed upon.

A revival was held November 9th through 16th. Dr. C. Roy Angell preached in the evening services and Dr. J. L. White had charge of the morning services. There were 24 additions by baptism and 5 by letter.

Miss Betty McLaughlin of Effingham, S. C. was called by

the Church as Youth Director. She assumed her position in January of 1949. Her tenure of service was brief due to the illness of her father.

The Church and pastor's offices were relocated in the rear of the auditorium and a full time secretary was engaged. On October 10, 1949 Mrs. T. D. Smith, Sr. assumed her duties as Church Secretary, which position she held for nearly eight years. During many of these years she also served as assistant Treasurer.

A new educational building had been in the minds of the people for a long time and early in the year 1948 a building fund had been started. The love and generous spirit of the people of our Church was exemplefied when Earl Harvey, a seasonal farmer, gave a field of tomatoes to be harvested by the men of the Church, the proceeds to be added to the Building Fund. Each Sunday we were heartened by the increase which brought the new building nearer to a reality.

During 1949 we ranked fourth in the Miami Association in Study Course Awards and the Church closed the year on a high note of spiritual fervor and with great hopes for the future.

With the great influx of people into the city of Homestead, Pastor Whitt saw the need of a religious census. This was taken in January, 1950, in preparation for a revival which was held in February. One of our own "preacher boys", George Allen West, Jr., was to lead the revival campaign. He spent two weeks in the city and community visiting the friends of his childhood and brought a great spiritual blessing to the Church. Twenty decisions were made for Christ and 62 re-dedications.

A portable organ was purchased by the Church and was carried to the Convalescent Homes for Sunday Services. After much planning, consultation and earnest prayer and with \$12,446.48 ac-

cumulated in the Building Fund, the time had come to hire an architect to draw up the plans for the new educational building. Accordingly, on May 17, 1950, Mr. Lloyd Vann, A.I.A., of Miami was engaged to draw the plans for the two-story building, which could be enlarged to three floors at a later date.

A Memorial stand and lamp for the Visitor's Register Box was presented to the Church by the family and close friends of the late Mrs. Julia Polk. This was a fitting memorial to the friendly, Christian character of Mrs. Polk, who was always anxious to greet visitors and make them feel at home.

A bus, bought in 1949 to transport Sunday School pupils, was used to carry 20 young people to Ridgecrest for Training Union Week. Mrs. Roy Schowalter and Miss Ruth Smith, Training Union Director, were the counselors. This was a fine group and much spiritual benefit was derived from their first experience at Ridgecrest.

In 1950 Pastor Whitt and his family enjoyed the wonderful experience of attending the Baptist World Alliance which convened at Cleveland, Ohio.

After a survey had been conducted and many hours spent trying to locate an appropriate site for a long desired mission, the Church opened its first mission Sunday School on Sunday, June 22, 1952 in a shell factory on Highway No. 1 with 16 present. Deacon J. L. Kulp, acting Superintendent of Sunday School, preached at the morning worship service. Those going from First Church were: J. L. Kulp, Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Bowden, Miss Louise Whitt, Miss Vera Mae Anderson and Mr. and Hrs. Jim Drawdy. The mission progressed and in the fall of 1953 was ready to be organized into a Church.

Services for constituting the mission, Modello Chapel, in-

to a full-time, independent, cooperative Baptist Church were held November 8, 1953. Moderator John H. Whitt asked all members of the mission to stand - there were 56. The Church Covenant was read and all present consented to formally constitute the Modello Baptist Church. Seventy-five charter members thus became the Modello Baptist Church, their letters being transferred from the mother Church. J. L. Kulp was elected by the new Church as their moderator due to a pastor not being on the field. This was a memorable occasion. The first mission had become a Church. Property was secured and groundbreaking ceremonies for the new Modello Baptist Chuch were held March 21, 1954 and the first service in the new Church building, located on Biscayne Drive at Colorado, was held April 11, 1954. The building, the first of four units, was designed to accommodate 200 in the auditorium and approximately the same in Sunday School and Training Union.

Again the Church launched out and in October 1953 started another mission, this time on the Florida Keys at Islamorada, Florida, 45 miles from Homestead. For several months Pastor Whitt and his wife drove to Islamorada each Sunday afternoon to conduct Sunday School and worship services. Laymen from First Baptist supplied for the pastor from time to time. All services were conducted in the U. S. Coast Guard Building. This was a very unsatisfactory arrangement since secular activities were carried on during the week in the same rooms as the worship services, but the small faithful congregation made progress.

Because of adverse circumstances the work moved slowly at first but God sent a man in the person of Rev. A. L. Derry who, with his consecrated wife, labored faithfully and accomplished much for the Lord.

On one occasion, in 1958, Rev. Derry said to his wife,, "We will have to pray for a miracle, it seems, to accomplish the task of

getting our own building." This was when they needed a Church building. But God has a way with and for His people, the old Methodist Church building was available, the Methodist congregation having moved into a new auditorium. The "Miracle" had happened and their dreams had come true. The old Methodist Church was secured and moved to the property previously secured by First Church. Complete remodeling and repair provided the mission with a lovely, suitable building.

Rev. Derry came as pastor in August 1956 and he and his family moved back to Ohio in June 1959. During his ministry many people were added to the membership and the attendance increased from 15 to 75 in the worship services with Sunday School enrollment increasing from 35 to 90. Training Union grew from 20 to 60. This is a fine record considering the difficulty of evangelistic work on the Florida Keys.

Rev. John H. Whitt's ministry as pastor of First Baptist Church came to a close on February 14, 1954 with a record behind him of fruitful years of growth in every phase of the Church work; years not without struggle and tears perhaps, but also joy in outstanding accomplishments. The record speaks for itself in the following firsts for our Church: The organization of the Married Young Peoples Department, one of the first to be set up in the State, thereby, gaining recognition in the Miami Association and the Florida Convention; First Commencement Exercises of the Sunday School Training Department when about 40 honorees, under the leadership of Mrs. J. Tom Vann, Superintendent of Training, wearing caps and gowns received their diplomas and seals for Training courses completed. Another "first" was the setting up and putting into operation the rotating system of Deacons.

In his parting message to the people that he loved so well and for whom he had labored so faithfully and unselfishly we see the very nature and character of the man: "Praise God from whom all Blessings flow". Words of praise come to our hearts and minds as we recall the marvelous blessings and accomplishments of the past five years and eight months. God has a unique way to help us forget the disagreeable things and remember only the great spiritual blessings of our ministry.

When we think of what God has done during our ministry a song of thanksgiving wells up in our thankful hearts. 554 people walked the aisles for Christ in professions of faith and by letter and rededication to God."... "Modello and Keys Chapel and joys of our hearts. Through your stewardship and tithing the Youth Center and new Educational plant has been built"... "You are a great people, you have a marvelous future and our prayer for you is 'That you go forward for Christ'."

By 1954 the Sunday School enrollment had grown to 1,022 and all departments except Juniors and Intermediates were meeting in the partially completed Educational Building.

Dr. B. A. Bowers served as supply pastor from February 21 to April 18, 1954, The Rev. Leon Northrup supplying until May 2nd, when Rev. Edmund H. Rice became interim pastor.

Rev. Rice was no stranger to the congregation as he had preached several times in our Church and had also conducted a revival some years before. From the very first day of his ministry with us, he was respected and beloved by all. His coming was the beginning of a happy and prosperous era in our Church; a time of momentous decisions and important events. The Church called him, as pastor, in August and he preached his first sermon as our regular pastor the first Sunday in September, 1954.

The first move was to incorporate the Church so that money could be borrowed to complete the Educational Building. This was accomplished after much discussion and study. There was approximately \$10,000 in the Building Fund, the Church proceeded to borrow \$21,000 or enough to get started on the building and the Church agreed to raise \$5,000. The original plans of architect Lloyd Vann were used and the complete specifications were drawn, without charge, by Frank Robinson, a member of the Church. The new contract called for the addition of a third story and completion of the entire building. About \$35,000 had been spent already, making the total cost in excess of \$70,000.

The next financial transaction of the Church was to purchase two lots in back of the old pastorium for \$15,000. The old pastorium across Third Street from the Church was sold and Mr. and Mrs. Rice lived in a house rented by the Church until the new pastorium could be built.

The Church purchased two lots from Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Caves, Sr. on Northeast 17th Street for \$5,000. Fred Acker, a builder in the city, erected the lovely spacious pastorium at a cost of \$13,000. His generous gift of \$3,000 reduced the total cost to only \$15,000.

In December of 1956, Mr. and Mrs. Rice moved into the new pastorium and on the 18th they were honored by a "housewarming" at its formal opening.

With the Greater Homestead area growing rapidly, more people were moving into Homestead. The Homestead Air Force Base had become one of the leading Strategic Air Command bases; thus bringing more people and prosperity. The economy was stabilized. Due to the increased population and more stable economy, the Church was growing and expanding its ministry.

Even though the educational facilities had been greatly enlarged by the completion of the new, three-story educational building, there was an overcrowded situation in many areas. The auditorium was usually overcrowded at every service. Extra chairs had to be used in the aisles. To meet this need, two morning worship services were started. The two services were continued throughout the Fall and Winter seasons, with the early morning service discontinued the first Sunday after Easter. However, continual growth soon made it necessary for this service to be conducted throughout the entire year.

During Rev. Rice's ministry, he was assisted by two fine young servants of God. The first, Josh Wilson, served as Minister of Music and Youth Director on a part-time basis. Upon his resignation, Rev. Lawrence Stewart, a recent graduate of Florida State University, was called as Minister of Music. He also worked with two choirs on a part-time basis.

A happy occasion and one long to be remembered was "Homecoming Day", Sunday, March 31, 1957. This day had been planned for months before and all the former pastors and their wives had been invited, as well as all old-time members. Three of the former pastors were able to attend. The Rev. C. N. Walker preached at the 8:30 o'clock morning service. The Rev. L. B. Crantford preached at the 11:00 o'clock service and the Rev. John H. Whitt, at the evening service. After the morning service, everybody was invited to the patio to share in the fellowship dinner. Needless to say, there was an abundance of good food, wonderful fellowship and the renewing of old acquaintances.

Mr. Rice had been talking about retiring for some time, but when it became known to the Church, everyone's heart was saddened at the thought of losing its beloved pastor, spiritual advisor and friend.

During Mr. Rice's three years as pastor, the Church grew steadily in membership and spiritual strength and also in financial stability. This was made possible because of the coming of so many fine people into the area, many of whom were associated with the Homestead Air Force Base, plus the wise leadership of an experienced pastor. Mr. Rice announced his retirement on April 1, 1957, and the Church now had the task of appointing a Pulpit Committee to seek a new pastor.

This recalls the unusual incident the Pulpit Committee experienced in contacting and ultimately extending an invitation to Rev. Key, the present pastor. The Committee had gone, in a body (of five), to hear a visiting minister preach in a near-by city, and were immediately attracted to the assistant pastor of that Church, when he presided over the service of worship. Upon their return home, and subsequent discussion of the matter before them, each member of the Committee had been so impressed by the young minister that they felt certain he was the one they were looking for.

Therefore, the Holy Spirit inspired the Pulpit Committee to contact the Rev. Luther A. Key, Associate Pastor of Central Baptist Church, Miami, in regards to becoming pastor of this Church. After much deliberation, Rev. Key consented to preach to the Church on Sunday, March 24. In conference on that date with the Pulpit Committee, the leadership of God was felt very strongly by minister and Committee alike. It seemed that God's leadership was being followed at all times. On Sunday, March 31, the Church issued a unanimous call and Rev. Key accepted. He was to assume his position on April 1, thus relieving the retiring minister somewhat earlier than expected, due to Rev. Rice's impaired physical condition at the time.

Having accepted the pastorate, Rev. Key began his duties officially on April 3, 1957, at which time a most significant and inspiring service was conducted, which well might be called a Service of Installation for the incoming minister, as he assumed

the pastoral leadership of the Church. The service was unique in many ways. Perhaps one of the most outstanding things about it was that at this service the retiring minister, Rev. Rice, in a very fitting ceremony, presented the keys of the Church to the incoming pastor. Notable among the many things in his statement of presentation was that the keys which he presented were not only to open the doors of the Church and educational buildings to the multitudes seeking Christ and Christian growth, but they were also symbolical of the key of pastoral leadership that he was transferring to the new minister.

The service was most meaningful and highlighted the spirit of love and cooperative endeavor of two of God's ministers and a congregation of devoted Christians.

In his acceptance speech, Rev. Key, the incoming minister, extended earnest and sincere thanks to Rev. Rice for his labor of love, untiring efforts and outstanding leadership of the Church which was now ready to launch an advance program to extend its ministry in a broader scope. As he accepted the keys, he stated to the congregation, "I accept these keys which shall always be used for opening, not only the place of worship, but the place of teaching and training to those who are now affiliated with the First Baptist Church, and to the many who will be the responsibility of pastor and Church in the future. I also accept these keys, which symbolize the pastoral leadership of one of God's outstanding progressive and Christ-centered Churches, with humility and awareness of the great responsibility which comes to me upon my acceptance of the pastorate of this Church."

Following the acceptance speech by the incoming minister, the congregation as a body in Christ, seemed to be lifted to a higher peak of spiritual relationship with Almighty God. They realized that seldom, if ever, had such a meaningful service been conducted in the Church. Rarely does the retiring minister participate in the installation service of the incoming minister.

Sunday, April 7, 1957, was the inaugural service for the new minister. Shortly thereafter, on April 19, a reception for the retiring minister and the new minister and families was held.

The following quotation is taken from the first bulletin printed after Rev. Key became pastor, "As we begin our ministry, together, my earnest prayer is for a long, successful and fruitful pastorate. The main objectives of our work must be, first, to lead the unsaved to Christ; secondly, to train each person who becomes, and is now, a member of our Church to be an effective, efficient servant of God.

"As the pastor of this Christ-centered Church, I shall endeavor to be a preacher of God's word without prejudice or biased opinion; to be a considerate and wise counselor to those who seek spiritual guidance; to be a pastor of the whole Church and not to just a part of it; to be a friend as well as a minister. Will you help me become the pastor that God needs here by constantly praying for me, and by serving in some capacity within the organization of our Church? If we do these things, then and only then, will Christ be glorified." These were the thoughts and ideals of the new minister.

Upon becoming pastor, Rev. Key immediately initiated an administrative program for the Church, engaging a corps of workers, which included a full-time financial secretary and a full-time Minister of Education and Music.

Realizing the need for a well qualified person to direct the program of Education and Music, the Church, after several months called Gratten E. Tomlinson from the Lakeview Baptist Church, New Orleans, to become Minister of Education and Music. At the same time, the Church purchased a new home for the Minister of Education and Music, at 1340 N. E. 12th Street. Mr. Tomlinson, with his wise guidance, sincere spirituality and patience soon developed a well functioning organization throughout. Under his guidance, the total Music department soon increased greatly and four fully-robed choirs were ready to serve in the worship services of the Church.

A Correlated Church Program was initiated, which facilitated the entire program of the Church by having as many of the organizational and auxiliary meetings and choirs on Wednesday afternoon and evening as possible.

The Forward Program of Church Finance was adopted and put into effect. This resulted in raising the Church's annual budget from \$49,965 in 1956-57 to \$84,063 in 1958. The current budget is \$89,441.

During the 27 months of Mr. Key's ministry 578 people have united with the Church. Of this number, 224 were received on profession of faith. Ten fine young men and women have publically dedicated their lives to full-time Christian service. Some of them are already preparing themselves in our universities and colleges to enter their respective fields of Christian service. Two men have been licensed to preach the gospel of Christ and are planning to continue their education to enter the full-time gospel ministry.

As "Fifty Golden Years" come to a close, one "beholds" the glory of God in many areas and events of First Baptist Church.

One observes from statistics available that many hundreds of thousands of dollars have been contributed to support a world-wide ministry. The people who have held and who now hold membership in the Church, number almost 3,000. To be exact, 1,261 precious

souls have been baptized into the Church and an additional 1,634 have been received by transfer of membership from other Churches.

At the close of the first half-century, the following facts reveal that God's leadership has been closely followed. Total Church membership, 1,391; Sunday School enrollment, 1,345; Training Union enrollment, 342; W.M.U. enrollment including Auxiliaries, 151; Brotherhood enrollment including Royal Ambassadors, 80; Music Department enrollment, 120 voices in four choirs. The value of Church owned property is approximately \$300,000. Two mission Churches, Naranja Park Chapel and Keys Chapel, are sponsored and supported by First Baptist. These missions have a combined membership exceeding 100 people.

As we face the future, God forbid that we should glory in the accomplishments of the past 50 years without looking to the challenge of that which lies ahead of us. The First Baptist Church of Homestead has been blessed with a good location wisely chosen by those who preceded us and founded a Church at this place. It is located in one of the fastest growing sections of Florida. Our Lord has greatly blessed us in giving us such a wonderful opportunity for service. We must accept this challenge to service, if we are to be true to those who labored before us, to ourselves and to our Christ. We must enlist the great multitude of people all about us in service in the Kingdom of God. We must continue to build, so that we will have adequate facilities to take care of them. We must spend time in prayer, put forth every effort, and give unselfishly of ourselves that these things may be accomplished.

We are grateful to God for the faithful people who have served Christ in this, His Church, in such a commendable way, and our prayer is that He will keep His people ever true to the teachings of the Bible, His Holy Word; ever near to the altar of prayer; and ever responsive to the leading of the Holy Spirit for guidance in the years ahead.

Nellie H. Vann Ida M. Smith Church Historians

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