

Glorifying God

*from Generation
to Generation*

1913-2013



**First Baptist Church
of Avon Park**



*Welcome to
First Baptist Church
of Avon Park*

"Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name." 1 Chronicles 29:11-13

We gather this day to celebrate 100 years of ministry at First Baptist Church in the city of Avon Park, Florida. What a great accomplishment and testimony to the many faithful men and women that have faithfully served the Lord and proclaimed the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I consider it an honor to shepherd His church and continue this great heritage. I think about the number of sermons that have been preached, the number of hymns sung, the number of Bible lessons taught, and more than anything, the number of souls that have come to know Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.

As we fellowship, reflect, and worship today, let us be as the nation of Israel at the time of the building of the temple, and let us also, "Thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name."

Proclaiming His Greatness and Glory,

Pastor Jon Beck

February 10, 2013

Morning Worship

Prelude

"Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah"

Mrs. Darlene Cloud & Mrs. Ramona Severn

Congregational Call to Worship 447

"It is Well"

Introduction and Welcome

Mr. Scott King, former Youth Minister

Congregational Hymn of Faith

"O God Our Help"

Congregational Hymn 96

"Great is Thy Faithfulness"

Directed by Rev. Bob Lewis, former Music Minister

Church Plant Testimony

Jim Wood, Church Member

"Jesus, Friend of Sinners"

Praise Team

Missional Moment

Dr. Vernon Harkey, former Pastor

Congregational Hymn 506

"In Christ Alone"

Music Moment

Rev. Terry Clark, former Music Minister

"Cornerstone"

Mass Choir, directed by Rev. Terry Clark

Offertory Hymn 507

"Who Can Satisfy"

Offertory Prayer

Rev. Charlie Parish, Associate Minister of Youth & Families

"The Hand of Our God"

Worship Choir

Mrs. Joy Loomis, Music Director

Pastor's Message

Rev. Jon Beck

Hymn of Decision 441

"The Potter's Hand"

Benediction

Rev. Jon Beck

Parting Song 668

"Doxology"

Postlude

Mrs. Darlene Cloud



Laying a Foundation for the Gospel

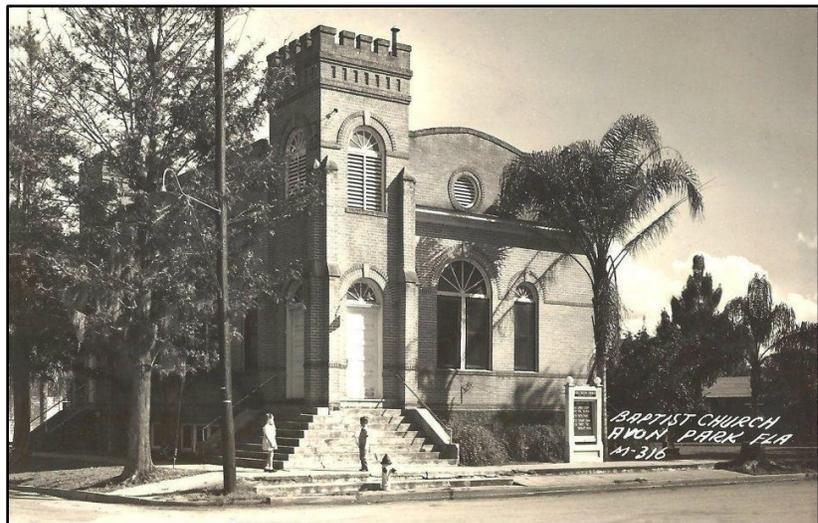
The First Baptist Church of Avon Park was born in the hearts of a small group of citizens who were “hungry for a church home.” They had “lived in other places where they were privileged to worship in a Baptist church... They had faith to believe that if they could organize a church that it would grow as the village grew. They talked of this plan as they gathered in their homes and even on the street corners ‘til they decided it was time to put their faith to the test. Their prayers for help on this plan were answered in almost a miraculous way, but plainly it was the Lord’s hand.”

The story goes on to tell how in 1913 two preachers, Rev. Elmer Albritton and Rev. Sam Durrance, conducted a series of services in the Union Congregational Church in Avon Park, Florida. While visiting, they assisted about 16 pioneer Christians to organize the First Baptist Church of Avon Park. Among the charter members were: Mr. & Mrs. Walter Hart, Miss Florie Hart (Mrs. Donner Bass), Mr. & Mrs. George Godwin, Mr. & Mrs. Barney Blum, Mrs. H.E. Godwin, Mr. & Mrs. W.C. Skipper, Mrs. Lonnie Skipper, Miss Stella Skipper (Mrs. H.T. Piety), Mrs. Irwin Raulerson and Mrs. C.I. Gunter.

The first pastor was Rev. Prentice (1913-1914). Services began in the schoolhouse on South Forest Ave. They soon realized the need for “a place of worship that they could call their own.” There was very little cash to work with, but with a member providing the lot and material to build, as well as all the labor being donated, “they soon erected a rough, board tabernacle.” (This was located behind the present chapel building.) The first services were held in September of 1914. “It was a crude place of worship with its sawdust floors and wide cracks in the walls, but the people were happy and felt they had made a step forward and that God was leading. A goodly number of converts walked down the sawdust trail to become members.”

The following pastors were Rev. White (1914-1915), Rev. McDowell (1915-1916) and Rev. Springfield (1916-1917). Within a year of the tabernacle being built, “the people’s great faith caused them to decide that they could take another forward step and they began to build again. This time with brick. Much labor was donated again and when the church was finished one could say it was a product of love. This building was looked upon as quite beautiful, large and modern by people of the small town in that day and age.”

In the early years, it was common for Baptist churches to issue an annual call to pastors as well as all church officers. The pastor was called for one year and each year the church decided whether to recall him. First Baptist Church of Avon Park was one of the first churches to issue an indefinite call to their pastor. Rev. J.A. Davis came as pastor from 1917 to 1920. The first service in the cream-colored brick sanctuary was the second Sunday of August, 1918 and it was dedicated in 1920. (This building was on the corner of Lake Ave. and Church St., now the grassy area just north of our present chapel.)



1918 First Baptist Church of Avon Park

Rev. Barnes was the pastor from 1920 to 1922. A pastorium was built in 1921 and Rev. Barnes and his wife were the first occupants. The Women’s Missionary Union was formed at this time. Rev. T.O. Baldwin served as pastor from 1922 to 1930 and the Brotherhood was organized during this time.

Rev. W.K. McClure served as pastor from 1930 to 1936. In the early 1930s there was no church budget, except for the pastor’s pay. Each group within the church had their own treasury. At every church event the

members were solicited for funds from different groups within the church, as well as many other good causes, such as colleges and orphanages. The Sunday School usually took in about 80% of the money and each year would give from its abundance back to the church to help with expenses. In the mid-30s, churches adopted "The Unified Budget", which specified that all money would be kept in one account with an annual budget that allotted a specific amount for all church-approved programs. Members were urged to make their pledges at the first service they attended. Although it was an adjustment for those in leadership, it was a great improvement for the management of church funds.

From 1936 to 1938, Rev. Loys Frink served as pastor. In 1936, Sunday School classrooms were added. "Many years passed and much good and fruitful work was done in the cream, brick veneer church. The membership grew and grew just as the town did and God was good to all."

(Statements in quotes are taken from a document c.1955)



Growing a Family for His Glory

After laying a foundation for the Lord's work in Avon Park, the church continued to expand its witness in the town and developed their education and missions programs. The next two pastors were Rev. J.P. Dalton



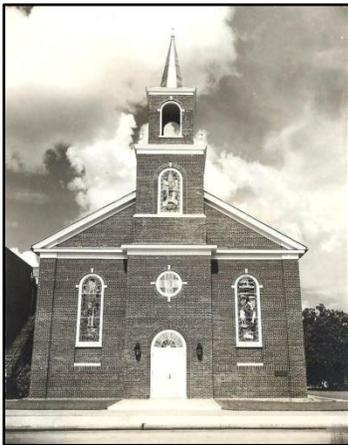
First Service in the new sanctuary, Easter Sunday April 9, 1950 (Our present Chapel)

(1938-1944) and Rev. O.E. Burton (1944-1945). The church budget in 1944 was \$12,000. Although Rev. Burton was a young minister who lacked seminary training, he was on fire for the Lord. He held a revival shortly after coming and



25 people accepted Christ. They were all baptized on the same day. The baptistry at that time was under the choir loft, so the choir would leave and the floor would be lifted up against the wall. After a year, Rev. Burton went on to seminary and pastored in Clearwater for many years.

The next pastor was Rev. E.H.



Puryear. The church was in need of a larger facility and took a big step of faith to build a new sanctuary. The new building would include an auditorium that seated 500-600 people, a library, adult class rooms and young people's department at a cost of \$105,000. (This is the present chapel building.) The lots were donated on which to build (next to the old sanctuary) and the new building was dedicated in December of 1949. The old sanctuary (from 1918) was razed and the rubble was pushed into its basement. It was then filled with dirt and grass planted over it. (A 1980 document described it as now being "a fine football and Frisbee field.") Rev. Robert T. Liner served as pastor from 1949-1953. The first service in the new sanctuary was April 9, 1950.

First Baptist Church established its first mission in the Woodruff Heights Housing Development in 1950. Six pastors served the mission and it was eventually discontinued in 1953 due to the closing of most of the rental units in

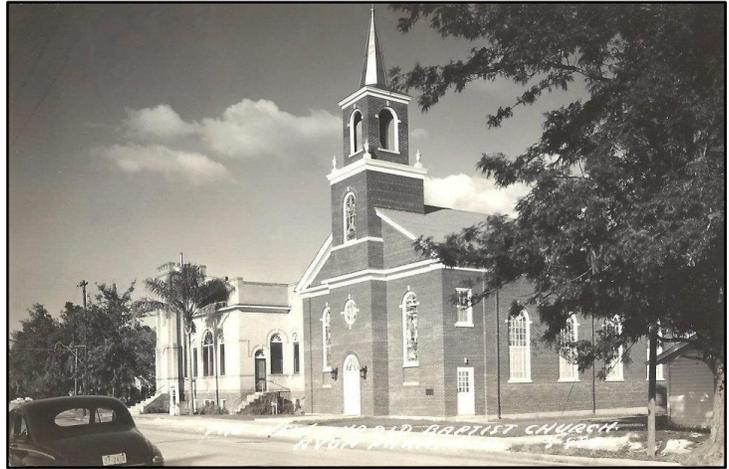
the project. Pastors of the Woodruff Heights Mission were Rev. Alfred Engleman, Rev. Milton D. Durrance, Rev. A.B. Green, Rev. R.C. Dean, Rev. W.B. Hilton and Rev. Clyde Geren.

The first (north) wing on the sanctuary was built in 1953 at a cost of \$30,000. It included an office, nursery, kitchen and intermediate department. (This is the wing where our present church office is located.) The congregation gave so well towards the building projects that they were able to purchase a parking lot across the street.

Dr. C.H. Bolton came as pastor in 1953 and served until 1956. He was the former President of the Florida Baptist Convention and helped establish First Baptist Church of Avon Park in the Cooperative Program. Membership at this time was running about 702, with 517 in Sunday School. A yearly highlight for the youth was participating in Youth Week, where the youth filled every position in the church, from teachers to directors, including a student taking the pastoral role of preaching on Sunday. (This Youth Week tradition continued into the 1990s.) In 1956 the south wing was built onto the church at a cost of \$40,000. This included Beginners, Primaries, Juniors and Adult Sunday School rooms. (This is our present Children's wing.)

The longest-serving pastor at First Baptist Avon Park was Rev. Aden Childress, who guided the congregation for almost 23 years (1956-1979). In 1960, the pastor appointed a Survey Committee to view the future needs of the church. They recommended and adopted six priorities for the future: (1) A new nursery, (2) a married young people's department, (3) intermediate departments, (4) adult department, (5) new sanctuary and (6) a small chapel. It seemed like an impossible dream.

In 1961, an Educational Building was built east of the north wing. It included a nursery, married young people's department and two intermediate departments. (This is our present Nursery building.) The same year, a former military barracks was moved to the spot east of the Educational building for \$1,000. A brick veneer was built on the front of the building to match the other buildings at a cost of \$1,400. This building was used as a Social Hall for many years and the church family enjoyed wedding receptions, banquets and a variety of fellowship events within its walls.



1918 & 1950 Sanctuaries side by side



Left: Social Hall (former military barracks) moved on site and brick veneer built on front. Right: Educational Building built. 1961

During this time of tremendous growth in the 1960s, the church began to call assistant pastors to help with music, education and youth. The church family expanded during the baby-boom years and the Lord blessed the church's ministry, calling many to follow Christ and several to submit to vocational ministry. The church continued its strong support of missionaries through the Cooperative Program. Young people developed a heart for missions through Girls in Action, Royal Ambassadors and Acteen education activities.



Acteen Recognition



Multiplying His Blessings for the Kingdom

With such rapid growth in the church family, it was clear that a larger facility was needed, so in 1962 the congregation began plans to build again. A parking lot had been purchased north of the old armory for \$9,500. Several pastoriums had been purchased or built through the years and additional property was purchased for expansion. As the church celebrated its 50th anniversary, the church property was valued at \$438,000.

In 1965 some lots were donated across Lake Avenue and a Recreational building was built for the church. This facility was used by the church family for many fellowship activities and Royal Ambassador functions. The RAs enjoyed a large race track for slot cars in the building.

In May of 1970, the church broke ground for a new sanctuary across Church Street from the old sanctuary. Construction was completed in June of 1971. Total cost for the building with air conditioning, electric, sound and furniture was \$505,000. The new sanctuary would seat 1,000 people. The old sanctuary building was renovated to provide more education space and create a smaller chapel. The cost for the renovation project was \$43,000.



Groundbreaking for New Sanctuary 1970

In little over a decade, the impossible dream of the 1960 committee had become a reality. The church family was blessed with a beautiful sanctuary and buildings to meet the needs of the growing ministry. The value of the property by this time was one million dollars.



During the 1970s, the phone company wanted to

purchase the lots and Recreation Center across Lake Avenue. The church leadership accepted an agreement and the phone company provided funds to build a new Social Hall with a kitchen on the church property at no cost to the church. (This is our present Adult 5 building.) For several years the Social Hall was used for many wedding receptions, dinners, and educational activities. The old Social Hall was now lovingly called the "Rec Center" and became a multi-purpose building especially enjoyed by the youth, along with the adjacent basketball court.



*Second Social Hall (now called Adult 5)
as it looks in 2013*

Wednesday night "Joy Explosions" and Friday night "Fifth Quarters" were often filled to capacity with boisterous activity.

During Rev. Childress' pastorate, mission Sunday Schools were held at a nursing home, the Jacaranda Retirement Hotel and the Lake Bonnet Trailer Park. In 1977-78 a weekly Sunday morning worship service was held at the Sevon Drive-in Theater on Highway 17.

First Baptist Church of Avon Park had been blessed for many years and their blessings continued to overflow as a dream to start a mission was born. In 1978 they found five lots on which to start a mission on US 27 at Valerie and Bass Streets. First Baptist invested \$12,600 and the Florida Baptist New Mission Site Fund provided another \$12,500. They started with Backyard Bible Clubs and surveyed the area.

Gladys Grocery Store sat on the adjacent property. They asked the owner if he would be willing to sell the building but he was not interested. The facility included a grocery, "beer joint" and warehouse. To the church's surprise, the owner later changed his mind and sold the building to First Baptist for \$50,000. First Baptist borrowed half of the money from the Florida Baptist Revolving Fund and paid off the loan in one year. The first service was on January 7, 1979 with beer signs still on the walls and a large refrigeration unit in the room. The atmosphere did not dampen the spirits of the standing-room-only crowd as they sang hymns of praise for God's provision. Rev. Aden Childress preached services at both churches until he retired from First Baptist in March of 1979. They named the church Sunridge, after the two housing developments: Sun 'n Lake and Sebring Ridge. In June they ran 50-60 in their first Vacation Bible School. Members from First Baptist helped plant the church and were among the 83 charter members. They realized the need to make the building look more like a church, so they installed a 24-hour electric sign. A First Baptist member donated \$2,000 to buy a steeple and the building was renovated by 1980. In that same year the church was constituted and First Baptist deeded the building and land to Sunridge Baptist Church. To God be the glory for the successful ministry of this church that continues to this day.

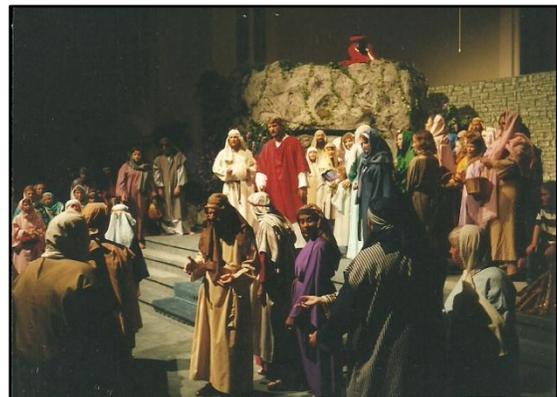
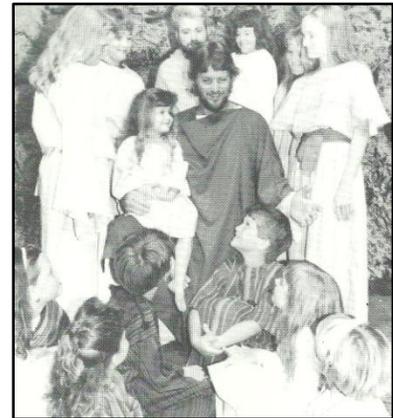
Rev. Aden Childress continued as pastor of Sunridge until 1986. He then extended his ministry in various capacities during his retirement years, serving as Pastor Emeritus of First Baptist for several years. After the long, fruitful ministry of Rev. Childress at First Baptist, Dr. Dwight Smith served as pastor from 1979 to 1981. During this time the Lake Glenada resort ministry began and has continued with early morning worship services led by First Baptist's pastors and lay leadership. Mission trips were also started during this time.

In 1981, Rev. James T. Barber served as an Interim Pastor until Dr. Jack R. Farmer was called as the next pastor of First Baptist. The 1980s built on the solid foundation of the past, expanding and improving the ministries of education, music, missions and outreach. Assistant pastor responsibilities extended to ministering to Senior Adults. In 1982, First Baptist purchased property in Avon Park Lakes for the possibility of planting another mission.

First Baptist Church of Avon Park has always been blessed with gifted music ministers and top-quality music opportunities for all ages. The graded choir program had been established for many years and continues today as a vital ministry and outreach aspect of the church. Lake Yale music camps provided learning and worship opportunities for young people, as well as music leaders. Over the years, children, youth and adults have added to worship with the use of chimes and a five-octave handbell choir. In 1983, a new music ministry started with the production of a

musical passion play, called "The Day He Wore My Crown." The adult choir, along with many members of the congregation, sang and acted out the powerful story of Jesus' ministry and sacrifice. In the second year (1984), with multiple performances during Easter week, 3,500 people attended the musical. Many in the community were impacted with the gospel and the video production expanded the reach of the ministry.

In 1984, a survey was conducted in Avon Park Lakes towards establishing a mission. A Thursday "Mother's Day Out" program was started at First Baptist in 1985. It was so successful that it developed into a Pre-School in 1986, which ministered to many families in the community for several years.



Easter Musical 1983-2002



Pre-School Class 1988-89

Church-sponsored sports teams included softball and basketball. The men organized construction/service projects and also enjoyed deep-sea fishing trips and "Beat the Preacher" golf tournaments.

During the 1980s, The First Haitian Baptist mission was established at First Baptist with Rev. Etienne Delphin as pastor. This mission was successfully nurtured and eventually moved into another building in Avon Park. This church is still serving the Avon Park community today. To God be the glory.

Backyard Bible Clubs were started in Avon Park Lakes and couples from First Baptist committed to help plant a church. They met in homes for a few years and eventually services were conducted in the Avon Park Lakes Clubhouse. The first service was in April of 1986 with 40 members (27 in Sunday School and 48 in Worship). Rev. Lane Fordham served as a church planter/interim in 1986. Rev. Randy Langham was the first pastor, serving from 1987 to 1990, followed by Rev. Aden Childress (1991), Rev. Sean Wright (1991-1993) and Rev. Art Dreyer (1995-1998). First Baptist borrowed money to build the Avon Park Lakes Baptist Church in 1988. The church was constituted in 1996 and First Baptist deeded the property to Avon Park Lakes in 1998. This church continues to successfully minister to the community to this day. To God be the glory for His faithfulness.

In 1987, First Baptist was in-between music ministers and the choir decided to try and continue the Easter musical on their own. It was a success that year and continued as a vital outreach ministry of First Baptist for 20 years. In 1987 Dr. Farmer formed a long-range planning committee to look at the needs of the community and the church family in the future. The Lord had blessed First Baptist for 75 years and expanded its borders, multiplying its blessings in the community.



Reaching Out with Hope for Eternity

The last 25 years in First Baptist's history have been exciting years of reaching beyond the church family's comfort zone and exploring how God wants to use His church in this rapidly changing culture. Standing on the solid truth of God's word, the church has stretched its impact through individual and corporate outreach.

The Senior Adult Ministry became a vital part of church life as active retirees enjoyed VSP choir and made several trips, working and singing as they went. The Youth Sunday School had developed into three departments with weekly activities, service projects, and Christian concert festivals. Annual trips were made to Ridgecrest in North Carolina and the State Youth Evangelism Conference. Youth Choir led in worship on Sunday evenings and presented a musical every year until the early 2000s. Summer Centrifuge and Mission-fuge camps became times of spiritual renewal, as well as Lake Yale and Lake Denton Summer Camps.

In 1994 the congregation took on the challenge of raising money for the renovation of the sanctuary. The entire membership was challenged to give sacrificially and many



*Top- Youth and Children's Choirs
Above- VSP Senior Adult Trip
Right- Renovated Sanctuary*

home visits were made. Two services were held on Sunday mornings in the old chapel during the renovation. The first service in the beautifully renovated sanctuary was March 12, 1995. The cost of the renovation was \$279,000.

Dr. Farmer retired from his faithful ministry at First Baptist in 1996. The church was blessed to have Dr. Richard Whipple come as the Interim Pastor. He had just retired from a long pastorate in Okeechobee. His wisdom and sound preaching were an encouragement during this time.

The church called Dr. Vernon Harkey to be their pastor in 1997. The First Baptist family had consistently supported missions through prayer, giving and education. During this last quarter of its history, the church put feet to its prayers. Along with missions education, prayer support and sacrificial giving, the church constantly sought ways to “go with the gospel” and work to help those in need. Dr. Harkey, along with his wife, Rebecca, worked alongside members in every endeavor, whether it was with children, youth or senior adults.



Sunshine House Ministry

During this time there was an explosion of opportunities for using spiritual gifts for service and the building up of God’s kingdom. In 1999, the Sonshine Ministry was started, reaching out to the growing Hispanic community with services such as English-speaking and citizenship classes. Christian Women’s Job Corps offered training and computer classes. Through these ministries, others blossomed and continue as powerful ministries today. Bible studies and Hispanic worship services were started in 2000 and the first pastor, Rev. Joseph Garcia, led the first Hispanic mission until 2004. Rev. Jose Valentin served from 2005-2006. In 2006, Rev. Johnattan Soltero came to be the pastor of Primera Iglesia Bautista. This mission is a successful ministry that continues today in our chapel building. They are becoming more independent and have recently purchased property in hopes to build a church. To God be the glory for the great things He has done.



WorldChangers 2003

Also birthed through the Sonshine Ministry was an opportunity for a grant to start a free primary medical clinic. Through the work of many First Baptist members and Dr. Harkey’s leadership, along with the faith community, Samaritan’s Touch Care Center was born and serves Highlands County with care and the gospel to this day.

Vacation Bible Schools have always been a highlight in the church year and a vital part of reaching out to families in the Avon Park community. Children’s Bible Drill training was offered during this time, as well as Children’s Church. Worship services were slowly and creatively blended, developing an orchestra and creative arts ministry. At times the youth have led their own worship with praise bands on Wednesday nights.

First Baptist has been blessed with a strong youth ministry where students are educated in God’s word, given opportunities for service and wonderful Christian fellowship. Centrifuge and WorldChangers continue to be the highlight of summers, with DiscipleNow retreats providing spiritual challenge and fun in the winter. During these years, several of the youth from First Baptist have served as staff for Lake Denton and Lake Yale Camps, Centri-Kid, Centrifuge, WorldChangers, and as Associational Summer Missionaries.

A special relationship developed with the Florida Baptist Children’s Home and trips to their Lakeland campus are a regular event to this day. Teams from First Baptist



Florida Baptist Children’s Home

have committed themselves to help in any way possible when the Children's Home has a need.

Not only have mission opportunities developed in the state, but First Baptist built relationships with churches in other states that needed an extra hand. During this time, two mission trips were made to West Virginia, two to New Orleans, three to Montana and one to Utah. Foreign mission trips were also made as members went to Singapore/Indonesia, China, Uganda, twice to Nicaragua, and five trips to Guatemala. Many projects and outreaches were accomplished on these trips, from construction work and Bible clubs to orphanage work. Several families traveled together on these mission trips, with youth working alongside the adults.

A SHARE Food Ministry was developed, a strong Prayer Ministry, Parish Nurse Ministry and Small Group Discipleship Ministry during this time. A church website was developed. A beautiful Prayer Garden was established with a fountain between the sanctuary and the Adult 5 building. An Afro-American congregation, New Birth Baptist Church, met on our campus during this time, under the leadership of Rev. James Carter.

A plan was developed to expand the present church facilities in stages and the first step was to build a Fellowship Hall. The theme of the fundraising campaign was "We Believe in The Father, Family and the Future." The building was first used in July of 2002. This addition north of the present sanctuary would provide a welcome area, large hall with stage, large kitchen and serving line, additional classrooms and restrooms. The church took on the challenge at a cost of \$1,584,000. Wednesday night suppers, banquets, teaching, movies, concerts and fellowship are just some of the activities enjoyed in this versatile hall.

In 2003, the church was given the opportunity to purchase the Old Armory/City Rec Center with a sealed bid. The congregation was blessed to be able to purchase the building for \$60,106. The two-story building was fixed up to be used for family activities and serve as a youth facility. The upstairs was a basketball court. In 2004 a GOLS Indoor Soccer Ministry was created and leagues were established for 9-12 year olds in the fall and 13-18 year olds in the spring. Devotions are given at every game and sports Bibles are supplied to every player. Games are played on the upstairs basketball court and this year will mark the tenth anniversary of this successful ministry at First Baptist.



GOLS Indoor Soccer Ministry

Three hurricanes passed through central Florida in 2004 and Avon Park was greatly affected. Southern Baptist Disaster Relief teams worked out of the church's parking lots to feed and assist families. Two World-Changers groups came to Avon Park and were housed at First Baptist while they worked in the community. Several other teams were coordinated through the church's outreach to help with recovery in the area. Most of the church buildings received new metal roofs.

The classrooms over the chapel building took on a lot of water damage and some church records were destroyed in a storage area. The rooms were then remodeled. The Old Social Hall/Rec Center was destroyed in the storm and had to be torn down. A grassy playground area was built on the spot.



Dedication of the new Fellowship Hall 2002



Family Life Center and Holy Groundz Coffee House

In seeking to meet the needs of the changing community, a survey was taken to look at the possibility of providing multiple worship services. The church offered an alternative worship service in the Fellowship Hall on Saturday nights in 2007-2008. The Family Life Center was renovated and a coffee house, Holy Groundz, was added.

In 2008 a team of ministry leaders from LifeWay conducted a two-day workshop for the congregation to look at the future needs of the church and discuss priorities. Out of the discussions, the church felt the need for developments in the areas of Communication, Prayer, Spiritual Maturity and Worship. A Vision Team was established to seek ways to

accomplish the goals. In 2008, the entire congregation, along with the Hispanic congregation met at Lake Denton Camp for a time of fellowship and worship celebration. New members were baptized in the lake. Afterwards, a special mortgage-burning ceremony was conducted, celebrating the loan-payoff on the Fellowship Hall.

Also developed during this time was a FAITH Team ministry, visiting in community homes on Monday nights. For several years a DivorceCare ministry was offered to help individuals heal from divorce. A group of individuals from the church were trained and continue to travel with the Baptist Disaster Relief teams. They serve all over the country, providing meals and construction in critical areas. Another successful ministry that has become an annual event is the Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Ministry, providing gifts and the gospel to children all over the world.

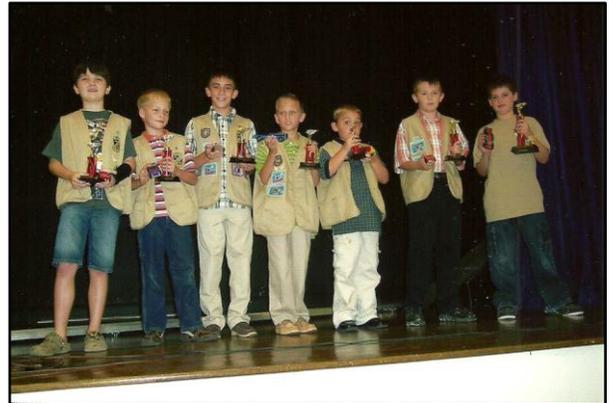
Pastor Harkey retired from his fruitful ministry in 2009 and Dr. Howard Leman, a retired minister from Lake Placid, served the church as a wise Interim Pastor for a year.



Above- Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Ministry
Right- Youth Service Project



Bethany Harkey teaching in China



Royal Ambassadors Recognition



Disaster Relief Team

In 2010, the First Baptist congregation called Rev. Jon Beck to be their pastor. On the edge of the 100 year history, there is much anticipation for the years ahead. The music ministry continues to be a highlight of worship as services are creatively planned to prepare all ages for the response to



God's word. The Lord has continued to inspire musicians today to put the power of the gospel in musical form, blending the old and new. A regular Praise Team helps lead in worship, and the

use of media assists the congregation to worship freely. The congregation is very excited that a youth choir (with praise team) has recently been reestablished and is leading in the Sunday evening services.

First Baptist's Sunday morning worship services were broadcast for many years on the radio. The morning worship service continues to be broadcast on the local cable television station (Cable TV Channel 6 on Sundays at 9:00 am). Recently the worship services have been added to the church's website, along with a pastor's blog with many resources for discipleship and study. The teaching of God's word remains a top priority under Rev. Beck's leadership, along with personal discipleship and sharing of the gospel.



Women's Retreat 2012



The ladies recently enjoyed a women's retreat and the pastor has developed a "Man-Up" men's discipleship class.

A strong Bible study program, children's choirs and mission groups remain as vital ministries. Youth discipleship is a strong emphasis, along with providing opportunities for service and missions. Recently a welcome

center has been added to the mall area of the Fellowship Hall, where members and guests can pick up important church information. A discipleship book cart and resource library are available with "Pastor's Picks" in good Christian literature.

A mission trip to Wisconsin is being planned in the near future and a strong relationship with the Children's Home is being maintained. The support of foreign missions remains a priority through giving, prayer and going. Mission Banquets have been a yearly emphasis, providing opportunities to learn of different missionaries and opportunities for support. Challenges for state, national and foreign missions offerings are creatively promoted and children give each year during VBS to a specific need. Missions education is promoted with children through RAs, GAs and Mission Friends each week.

We praise the Lord for His guidance and watchful care over this First Baptist congregation during the past 100 years. We thank Him for all the souls that have been claimed for the kingdom and the many who have gone out from this church to serve the Lord in vocational and lay ministry. God has been faithful through the years. We pray that if He tarries, we will be faithful along with future generations to carry the torch of His truth to a world that needs the hope of Christ.

During First Baptist's 50th anniversary in 1963, Rev. Childress penned these words which are a challenge for us today: "On this occasion we humbly give thanks for God's saints whose faithfulness and achievements bless us today. But anniversaries are meant to be more than a review of days that are no more. This should be a time of rededication for the days and tasks that are yet to be."

We are grateful for those who have joined us today for this celebration and pray that your hearts have been blessed and renewed to serve Christ wherever He leads you. Please join us on our centennial Facebook page ([First Baptist Church Avon Park Centennial Celebration](#)) for connection with others from the First Baptist Avon Park family. A collection of photos has been arranged on the page by decades. For church information and to view worship services, visit the church's website at www.fbcap.net.



Dr. Jack Farmer would often quote the following poems, which challenge us in our role as "builders" for His Kingdom.

I watched them tearing a building down
 A gang of men in a busy town
 With a ho-heave-ho and a lusty yell,
 They swung a beam and the side wall fell.
 I asked the foreman, "Are these men skilled,
 And the men you'd hire if you had to build?"
 He gave a laugh and said, "No, indeed!
 Just common labor is all I need.
 I can easily wreck in a day or two
 What builders have taken a year to do."

I thought to myself as I went my way,
 Which of these roles have I tried to play?
 Am I a builder who works with care,
 Measuring life by the rule and square?
 Am I shaping my deeds to a well-made plan,
 Patiently doing the best I can?
 Or am I a wrecker who walks the town,
 Content with the labor of tearing down?

-Author Unknown

Isn't it strange, that princes and kings,
 And clowns that caper in sawdust rings,
 And common-folk like you and me,
 Are builders for eternity?
 To each is given a bag of tools,
 A shapeless mass and a Book of Rules;
 And each must make 'ere time has flown,
 A stumbling block or a stepping stone.

-R.L. Sharpe, "A Bag of Tools", circa 1809

"You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ:" (1 Peter 2:5)

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

"For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything... Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast." (Hebrews 3:4, 6)



FBCAP Family in Ministry Vocations

The Lord has called many from the FBCAP family into ministry vocations. Following are some of the individuals that have served in ministry/missions over these past 100 years. Several have served in multiple positions. Many more are in church-related fields or have served in short-term missions, as well as lay ministries. Please forgive any that may have been overlooked. We would like to compile a more complete list of those in full-time, short-term, part-time or church-related ministries. Please e-mail us at info@fbcap.net. To God be the glory.

Reaves C. Dean	Minister
George Liner	Minister
Milton D. Durrance	Minister
Gene & Dorothy Clark	Missionaries
William D. Wingfield	Minister of Religious Education
Robert J. Cook	Minister, Director of Missions
D.O. Alderman	District Missionary
Gordon Eisenman, Jr.	Minister
James Howell	Minister
Alfred Engleman, Jr.	Minister
Charles Lawhon, Sr.	Missionary
Samuel Longbottom, Jr.	Missionary
Buddy Burton	Minister
Wayne Strickler	Minister of Music
Clifton Crews	Chaplain
Mary E. Wright	Minister of Youth/Christian Education
Eddie Garner	Minister, Director of Missions
Mark Garner	Minister of Music
Vesta Hall-Clary	Missionary
Juan Sanchez	Minister
Phyllis Johnson	Minister of Music
George Hall	Minister
Heather Hall	Missionary
Nancy Turnbull-Cothran	Children's Minister
Robert Turnbull	Minister of Youth
Dustin Lemler	Director of Creative Arts & Production
Steve Antley	Minister of Students
Mike Miller	Missionary
John Coulliette	Minister
Jason Coulliette	Minister
Richie Birdsall	Minister of Youth
Joy Loomis	Music Director
Chris Clark	Worship Minister
Richard Peavy, Jr.	Samaritan's Purse
Amanda Peavy	Children's Minister
Jared Longshore	Minister
Jared & Ashley Hewitt	Missionaries

First Baptist Church Pastors and Assistants

1913-1914
1914-1915
1915-1916
1916-1917
1917-1920
1920-1922
1922-1930
1930-1936
1936-1938
1938-1944
1944-1945
1945-1949
1949-1953
1953-1956
1956-1979

Rev. Prentice
Rev. White
Rev. McDowell
Rev. Springfield
Rev. J.A. Davis
Rev. Barnes
Rev. T.O. Baldwin
Rev. W.K. McClure
Rev. Loys Frink
Rev. J.P. Dalton
Rev. O.E. Burton
Rev. E.H. Puryear
Rev. Robert T. Liner
Dr. C.H. Bolton
Rev. Aden D. Childress

1959-1960 Rev. Jerald Dunn, Minister of Music
1961-1963 Mr. LaVern Plett, Minister of Education, Music & Youth
1963-1969 Rev. Otis Strickler, Minister of Music & Education
1969-1971 Mrs. Charlotte McDaniel, Minister of Music
1971-1972 Rev. Willie Beaty, Minister of Education
1972-1978 Miss Syble Watson, Minister of Music
1974 Rev. Thomas E. Leland, Minister of Education
1975-1976 Rev. Donald Yeager, Associate Pastor
1977-1979 Dr. Calvin J. Vice, Sr., Minister of Education

1979-1981

Dr. Dwight Smith
1980 Rev. Frank Thompson, Minister of Music & Youth
1980-1981 Rev. Joe E. Bailey, Minister of Education
1981-1987 Rev. Terry Clark, Minister of Music & Youth

1981-1982

Rev. James T. Barber, Interim Pastor
1981 Rev. J.W. Smith, Minister of Senior Adults
1981-1982 Mr. Rex Jones, Minister of Youth

1982-1996

Dr. Jack R. Farmer
1982-1987 Rev. Bill Wester, Minister of Youth & Outreach
1983 Rev. J.W. Smith, Minister of Education & Senior Adults
1985-1992 Dr. James Coates, Minister of Education & Administration
1987-1991 Rev. John Holloway, Minister of Youth
1988-2002 Rev. Robert Lewis, Minister of Music
1991-1993 *Mrs. Ramona Severn, Interim Minister of Youth*
1993-1994 Mr. Jimmy Kersh, Minister of Youth
1995-1997 *Miss Jennifer Ball, Interim Minister of Youth*

1996-1997

Dr. Richard Whipple, Interim Pastor

1997-2009

Dr. Vernon Harkey
2000-2006 Mr. Scott King, Minister of Youth & Education
2002-2003 *Rev. Jim Touchton, Interim Minister of Music*
2003-2005 Rev. Hugh Patterson, Associate Pastor of Music & Senior Adults
2003-2005 Dr. Ron Holley, Pastoral Counselor
2004-2005 *Mrs. Jenny Wells, Coordinator of Community Ministries*
2005-2006 *Rev. Robert Lewis, Interim Minister of Music*
2006-2007 Rev. George Hall, Associate Pastor of Music & Senior Adults
2007-2008 Rev. Chuck Lauver, Minister of Youth
2007-Present Mrs. Joy Loomis, Music Director
2008-2010 Rev. Jared Hewitt, Minister of Youth

2009-2010

Dr. Howard Leman, Interim Pastor

2010-Present

Rev. Jon Beck
2010-2012 *Mr. Scott King, Interim Minister of Youth*
2012-Present Rev. Charlie Parish, Associate Pastor of Youth and Families

“And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge- that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.”

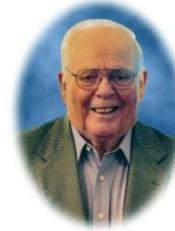
Ephesians 3:17-21



Rev. T.O. Baldwin
1922-1930



Rev. Robert T. Liner
1949-1953



Interim Pastor
Dr. Richard Whipple
1996-1997



Rev. W.K. McClure
1930-1936



Dr. C.H. Bolton
1953-1956



Dr. Vernon Harkey
1997-2009



Rev. Loys Frink
1936-1938



Rev. Aden Childress
1956-1979



Interim Pastor
Dr. Howard Leman
2009-2010



Rev. J.P. Dalton
1938-1944



Dr. Dwight Smith
1979-1981



Rev. Jon Beck
2010-Present



Rev. O.E. Burton
1944-1945



Interim Pastor
Rev. James T. Barber
1981-1982



Rev. E.H. Puryear
1945-1949



Dr. Jack Farmer
1982-1996

The Hand of Our God

-Jeremy Johnson & Paul Marino

Take a look around,
See what God has done;
So many lives have changed,
So many lost have come.
We have seen His spirit move,
We have seen what love can do!

Broken hearts renewed,
Fragile faith restored;
Shattered lives made new
By the power of the Lord.
We have seen His Spirit move,
We have seen what love can do!

The hand of our God is on this place.
He has shown us His favor,
His goodness and grace.
Year after year, day after day,
He has been faithful in every way.
The hand of our God is on this place.

From generation to generation
He has been our strength.
From everlasting to everlasting
He will reign, He will reign!



“We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Matthew 28:19-20

 **First Baptist Church
of Avon Park**

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(863)453-6681

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