

Search For Yesterday

A History of Levy County, Florida



Chapter Twenty-Seven



December - 2005

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Levy County Archives Committee

Sponsored by the Levy County Board of Commissioners

Bronson, Florida

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DEDICATION

The Levy County Archives Committee is very thankful to have Mary Hatcher as one of our loyal and diligent worker members. Often she takes material home and sorts through or summarizes it and returns to the meeting with a quality finished product. She has done this for several recent Search for Yesterday Chapters. She misses our meeting only when it is beyond her control.

The Hatchers have been in and around Levy County for a long time, in fact many generations.



Mary Hatcher

HELP

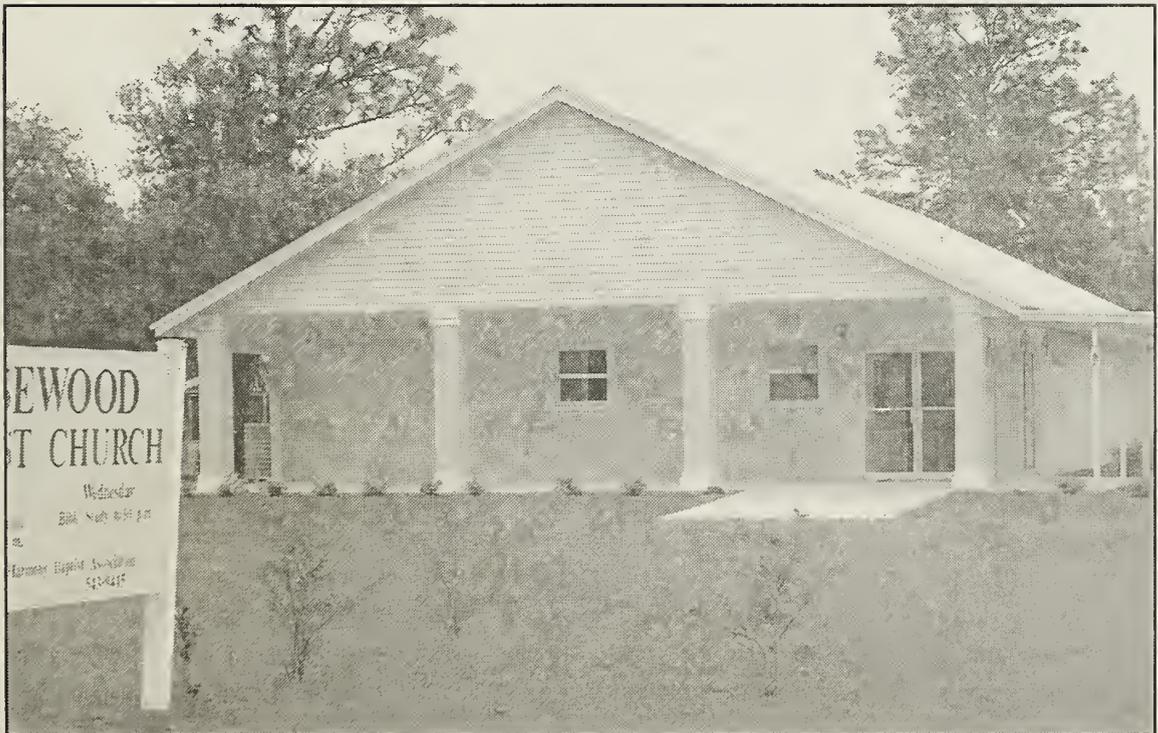
The Levy County Archives Committee requests your help. The history of the churches listed in this Chapter is supposed to be the beginning history of these churches. We welcome your comments or input on any of these or if you would like to see a particular church listed in our Chapters please call Lindon Lindsey in Chiefland at 352-493-4066.

ROSEWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH
HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

Tuesday 3-7-00 **LAUNCHED ROSEWOOD BIBLE STUDY**
At Rainbow Country Campground Preston Wilson teaching Bible Study

Dennis Fowler became pastor July 1, 2000
Tuesday January 9, 2001 Dennis Fowler's last night

- 3-18-01 **FIRST MEETING IN TRAILER AT ROSEWOOD**
- 8-5-01 Jimmy Cowan preached in view of a call
- 8-7-01 Jimmy Cowan called as pastor
- 9-2-01 Jimmy Cowan's first Sunday
- 6-30-02 Adrian Land called as pastor
- 2-2-03 First Sunday in new building
- 2-16-03 **OPEN HOUSE & DEDICATION OF NEW BUILDING**
- 9-05 Billy Philman interm pastor



GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH CHIEFLAND

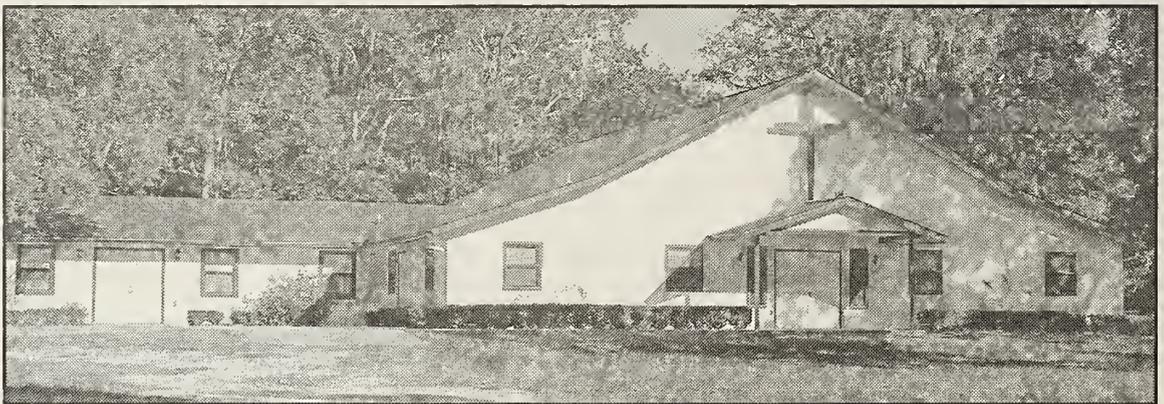
On April 10, 1982, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church was established in Chiefland, Florida. In the years prior to its formation, there was not a Lutheran church within a 45-mile radius of Good Shepherd's current location. At the request of a number of Tri-County residents who were worshipping at First Lutheran in Gainesville, Rev. Robert Besalski began to meet weekly at the Woman's Club in Chiefland with a group interested in forming a new Lutheran congregation in Chiefland. Over 25 individuals showed up to the first meeting, advertised in local papers.

On April 10, 1982, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church became a reality. Its first called pastor was the Rev. John Duerr. Three years later, on April 14, 1985, the church received its charter from the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, of which it remains a member. A year later, with the assistance of Laborers for Christ, Good Shepherd worshipped for the first time in its new sanctuary on April 13th, 1986.

Currently Good Shepherd has over 75 active members, as well as 25 winter visitors, who are part of its church family. Additionally, Good Shepherd regularly welcomes visitors and family who are traveling through the Tri-County area. Its current pastor, the Rev. Graham B. Glover, is a native of Gainesville, and a former parishioner of the Rev. Robert Besalski.

The members of Good Shepherd gather for worship every Sunday at 10:30 a.m., preceded by Bible Study at 9:15 a.m. There is also a mid-week Bible Study on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. Confirmation instruction for both children and adults is regularly offered throughout the year. Members can become involved with the Women's League, the Caring Circle Committee, Habitat for Humanity, LWML, and numerous other organizations.

Committed to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church invites you to visit and become part of our church family!



THE HISTORY OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST CATHOLIC MISSION

The first Catholic mass in Chiefland was celebrated by Fr. Paul B. Hogarty the week prior to Christmas 1973. This mass was held at the Chief Theatre on Park Avenue.

In late February 1974, Fr. Hogarty was replaced by Fr. Roland Julien. On March 24, 1974 mass was celebrated for the first time in our "Little Chapel," the old Chiefland Recreational Center, on U.S. 19-98 across from the Winn-Dixie store. Here a Sunshine Committee was formed in June, Stations of the Cross were donated and installed, first prayer group formed in July as well as our first Vacation Bible School with CCD instruction continuing in September, our first parish picnic was held in August at Manatee Springs State Park, and our first Holiday Festival was held on December 7th in the "Little Chapel" parking lot.

In January 1975, we moved to the Chiefland Woman's Club, and the Chiefland Mission with Cross City made up the St. Madeleine's parish in High Springs. The year 1976 resulted in a Building Fund Drive and the purchasing of the property for our future church. We purchased ten acres of land on US. 24A, at the east side of Chiefland, immediately next to the Forestry Department's tree-seedling nursery. The Building Fund Pledge Drive began in May of 1976 to pay off the \$24,000.00 property mortgage. At this time we had approximately 50 families registered at our mission.

In June 1977, Fr. Julien was replaced by Fr. John Dux who became the new pastor for the St. Madeleine's Tri-County parish. For one week in August mass was held at 7:30 on Saturday night at the Knauff Funeral Home Chapel on West Park Avenue while arrangements were being made to start meeting the following week at the First United Methodist Church in Chiefland which became our regular meeting place for the next five years.

By March of 1978 St. John the Evangelist Catholic Mission officially became part of Holy Family Parish and for the first time all Levy County was joined together in its own parish with Fr. John Gillespie as pastor. Fr. Anthony Sebra replaced Fr. Gillespie in January 1979, and Fr. Patrick Foley replaced Fr. Sebra in January 1980.

One of our first encouraging experiences regarding the building of our church was the formation of a Building Committee, a body of five members of our Mission who promised dedication to a much needed project. On April 11, 1982 the long awaited hopes and dreams of the Catholics of Chiefland and the surrounding area began to take on a visible reality. Members of the Mission celebrated that Easter with groundbreaking for what today we see as St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church.



JOPPA BAPTIST CHURCH

Written by Sandra Colsen

Joppa Baptist Church was established in 1896 in a small country schoolhouse called Red Hollow. The first minister to preach was George Fletcher. The church was moved to its present location in 1915. The name was given Pleasant Grove Baptist Church. On July 21, 1935, Joppa was the name given to the church. Foot-washing was a regular tradition until October 23, 1949 when the church voted to abolish it. Church services were held only once a month while the church was located at Red Hollow. In 1970, the church once again changed its name to Suwannee River Baptist but changed it back to Joppa in 1975. Homecoming was voted to be the first Sunday in June.

The first original church to be used at the present location is still standing. Joe and Maggie Booth of Wilcox purchased it and made it their home. The second building was started by Bro. Jack Mathei which was the present church until October 2004 when a new church was dedicated in the same area. The fellowship hall was added at a later date. Additional Sunday School rooms were added while Bro. Argie Windham was pastor. Central heat and air was added while Bro. Eddie Hatch was pastor. New windows were added to the church while Eddie Keene was pastor.

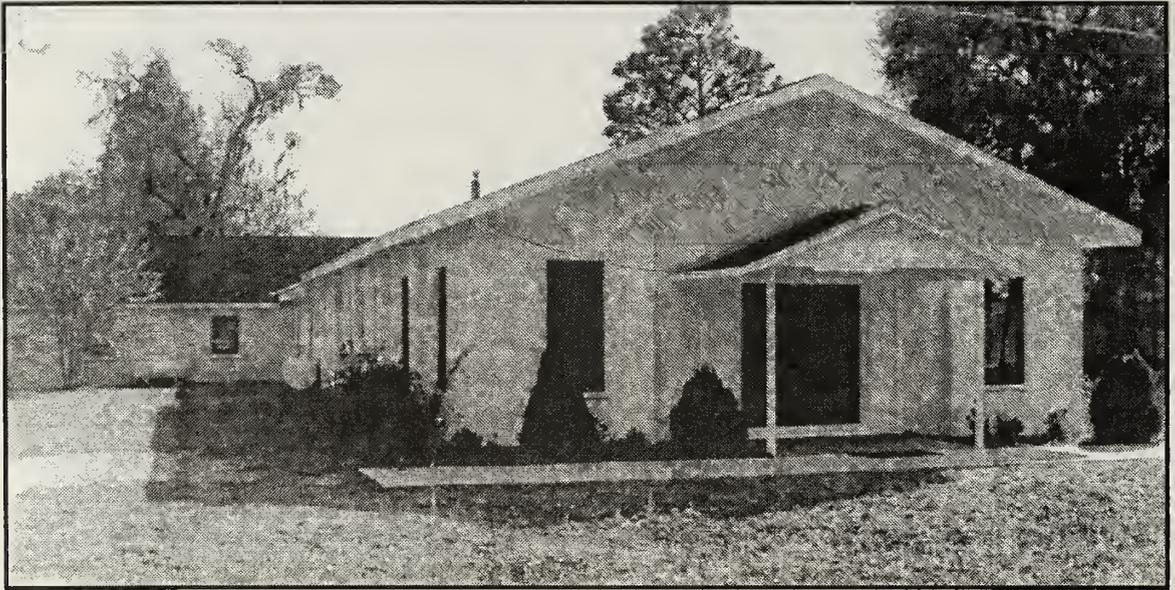
The following is a list of pastors. (All dates are not available)

1896	George Fletcher
	Preacher Smith
	Noaha Peterson
1939-41	Austin McElroy
	Odis Owens
	Lee Mathis
1951-52	W. H. Brown
	Oscar Thomas
1953	Billy Bryant
	Roscoe Hurst
	Sammy Lindsey
1956-62	Odell Craig
	Fred Barton
	Larry Dotson
	Lonnie King
1963-65	Dicky Kingsley
	Ron Scoggins
	Eddie Hatch
1978-86	Eddie Keene
	Jon King
1988-98	Argie Windham
1998-99	Bobby Warren
2000-01	James Hilborn
2002	Alpheous Atkins



1959





2005

THE ELLZEY METHODIST CHURCH

By Marie G. Meeks

Between the year of 1850 and 1860, Robert Narvin Ellzey, a young Methodist preacher felt the call to go to the frontier to help spread the Gospel. With his wife he started out from Barnwell County, South Carolina. They traveled down until they crossed the Georgia-Florida line and from there on everywhere they stopped he preached. He would pray and ask for Divine Guidance at every place he stopped, in order that he might know where to stop and establish a church.

They traveled down through central Florida, finally arriving in Lake Butler. Here he stopped and preached, supposedly for several months. While there his wife passed away. (1)

After the death of his wife, he moved on down thirty-six miles west of Gainesville, to what was then called Eurika, but later changed to Ellzey. Upon arriving there he said that this was the place he felt that he had been looking for. He immediately established a homestead grant and took up residence. (2)

Soon after getting a cabin fixed for himself with the help of a few settlers, they erected a one room log cabin to be used for a church. They split the logs to make the floor and used wooden pegs for nails.

By this time Parson Ellzey or Uncle Ellzey, as he was more commonly known among his close friends in the surrounding communities, had married Avarilla Williams, who was quite a help mate for him. Along with raising four children, she conducted Sunday School and made arrangements to feed and lodge the many people who came from the surrounding communities to attend services at the church.

Sometime during the years between 1860-1865 the one room log cabin church burned. A Mr. Worthington agreed to cut the lumber, and by this time a number of families lived in Ellzey and all agreed to go to work and build a new church on the same site. This is the church that is standing today. The only difference to be found in it is, the storm which passed through in 1889 blew the steeple off, new windows and several new roofs have been added and also three Sunday School rooms have been added to the back.

In 1872 Parson Ellzey's circuit included Bronson, Cedar Key, Ellzey, Archer, Shell Pond, Blich Schoolhouse, Hardee Schoolhouse, Clyatt School, Levyville, Rocky Hammock and Oak Grove. This included practically all of what is known as Levy County today except the Willistor area.

A ledger containing a few remaining sheets of the old church record dating 1871, at the time when Parson Ellzey was admitted to conference, lists the names of 87 persons on the church roll in 1894. The sheets containing the roll before that time were torn out.

Reference:

1. A cemetery near Lake Butler named Ellzey, believed named for Preacher Ellzey.
2. Information supplied by W. V. Ellzey, son of R. M. Ellzey.

ELLZEY

Mr. W. W. Ellzey states that his father walked to churches within eight miles and rode horseback to the others. He says his father was paid mostly in produce from the farms and with the little money they received they bought clothes. The majority of the money went to buy the long tailed parsons coat which his father wore. He says his mother was a good manager and even though his father was away from home most of the time his mother managed to keep things going.

At the 27th Conference held in Tallahassee in 1871, Robert Marvin Ellzey was admitted to Conference. (1)

Out of the eleven churches that Parson Ellzey served in 1872, there are four still active today.

They are Ellzey, Bronson, Cedar Key and Archer.

In 1853 a railroad was built to Cedar Key from Fernandina. The train burned cord wood so several of the families found that they could make good by cutting cord wood for the train. Others found that they could do well cutting the cross ties to build and then to repair the railroad tracks.

Around 1900 Ellzey went through a period of growth. A cedar mill was constructed and a little later a turpentine still was put into operation. Many of the older families, some of which are still represented here today are as follows: Phelps, Ellzey, Meeks, Ferryman, Hogans, Pinner, Ishie, Williams, Tindales, Becks, Berryhill and Oglesbees. All were farmers.

During the period of growth the church prospered and many preachers came and went. A Baptist church was added to the community during this period and was maintained until around 1918 when the cedar was cut out and the cedar mill moved. The turpentine still operated by West Brothers was closed down in 1952.

Sunday School and church services have continued continuously from before the building of the first log church when services were conducted in the homes up until the present time in Ellzey. They have been conducted on the same site except for the times that calamities have befallen the building.

In 1936 several people in Ellzey decided to start raising goats. They overran the place and due to neglect of the people they took the church so the people just moved out to the school building where services were conducted for about two years.

A new preacher, Reverend Skelley came to us who had zeal and determination, so he started a campaign to reclaim the church. Under his direction we were, in a few months, back in the old church with a new roof on it, windows repaired and a new door with a lock on it so the goats could not enter.

We had been back in the church approximately a year when one afternoon three boys of the community sought refuge in the church from an electrical storm. While in there they had nothing else to do so they shot the windows out. Due to the fortitude of Brother M. B. Cox, Mr. Robbie Pinner, who was then Superintendent of the Sunday School, Mr. W. W. Ellzey, son of the late Parson Ellzey, and Mr. N. J. Meeks, with the combined help of the other members of the church, the windows were replaced and services were soon resumed in the church.

On the first Sunday in June 1939, after church services were resumed in the church, the first "Homecoming" was held. This was the beginning of the annual "Ellzey Homecoming" which is attended by hundreds from near and far each year, giving proof that the church has had a far reaching effect and has a history behind it.

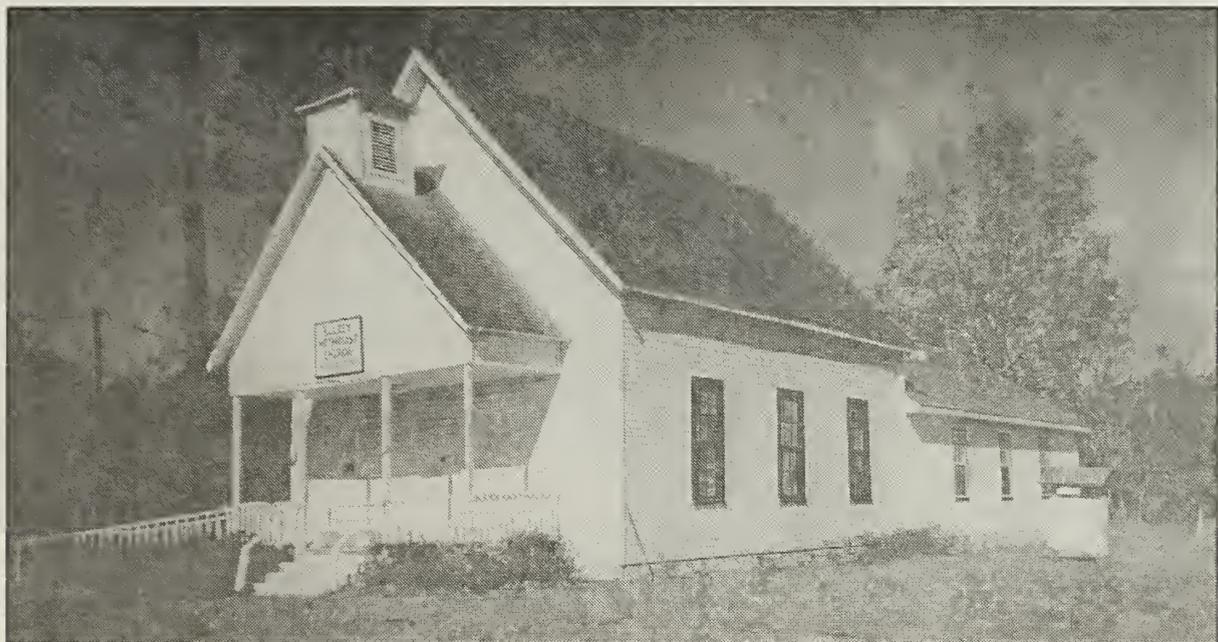
The Ellzey Church has approximately 25 active members today. The old church is very much in need of repair. Due to the encouragement brought to the church by the young student pastors serving it, out of the University at Gainesville and due to the consecration, love and devotion of the few remaining members the church carries on today conducting Sunday School and church each Sunday.

When one attends the Ellzey Methodist Church today he cannot help but agree with the following quotation: "There is no single influence that I know of that has been more potent in American civilization than the Itinerant Methodist Preacher. You can find his track on every highway of American history clear back to the days of the Revolution, when Whitfield and the Wesleys preached in Georgia. No people ever suffered more for the country and for God than these brave men. I am not writing this from the standpoint of a Methodist, for I am not a member of that church. God bless the Methodist Preacher. (1)

Reference: 1. Pensacola Journal, December 10, 1911

“Reminiscences of the Alabama Conference” by Judge Charles Ley.

Written by and researched by Marie G. Meeks for credit on Master’s Degree.



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF BRONSON

The First Baptist Church of Bronson was organized in 1885. The original wood frame church building was a one-room building with a Sunday School class in each corner. Old-timers recall classes held under the oak trees. The building served as the sanctuary until 1955, and as Sunday School rooms for ten years after that. The building initially sat on the present-day high school softball field.

From 1897 until 1906, the church was only partially active, maintaining a Sunday School and preaching services once a month for some periods.

In 1921, church enrollment was 33, with preaching services occurring every fourth Sunday. In the 1920s, the Baptists held services on Sunday mornings while the Methodists held services in the afternoon. There was a warm fellowship between the two churches, meeting together for several years on fifth Sundays. Baptisms took place in a pond behind the Wellman home on Pennsylvania Avenue.

The Depression of 1927 depleted the Baptist population in Bronson to such an extent that the church closed its doors. There were only 3-4 members at that time, and they worshipped with the Methodists. In 1934, the church was revived under the leadership of Rev. Eugene Vining with preaching services occurring twice a month.

In 1934, public school was held in the church while the present high school building was under construction. Lou Eva Keen attended her first year of school in 1934 in that building. In 1938, Orton and Irene Yearty were married by Rev. Ray Walden in the old church building.

In the 1940s, Helen Wilson, Harriet Wilson's sister, would arrive at the church early, unlock the door, sweep the floor and build the fire in the wood-burning stove. Emma Dixon, Lou Eva Keen's aunt, would ring the church bell, then run home again to dress for church. Many times, she would provide the altar flowers from her yard.

While G. B. VanAllen was pastor (1950-1952), an architect was hired to draw plans for a new church building. The plans were approved and construction began. In August 1969, the sanctuary was air-conditioned.

Rev. George Dunn became pastor in 1952 and divided his time between the churches in Otter Creek and Bronson. In November 1953, Rev. Dunn was on the field full time in Bronson. The mortgage was burned at the 1955 Homecoming service.

In 1964, the original church building was moved to the Charlie McKoy farm where it still stands, without its belfry. The bell is still used today to announce the end of the Sunday School hour.

In 1971, the church purchased the property next to the church from the Griffin estate, and the property between the pastorium and the Lott property. Rev. Harold Johnson was known as the builder and served two terms as pastor. He enlarged the sanctuary, and added the two side restrooms, the fellowship hall, and Sunday School annex. He also built the pastorium.

Sandra McKoy started playing the piano in church as a youth and was officially named pianist in 1971. She continues sharing her talents to this day.

Rev. Jimmy Rogers was the next pastor in 1972. He was a man who rang every doorbell, called on people we might never have known existed, bringing in people to the church who never had been to church. The church's bus ministry began in 1974 with the purchase of its first bus.

In 1976, the picnic pavilion was completed in time for Homecoming. The Brotherhood built the tables and benches. The Sunday School building adjacent to the pavilion was completed that year and dedicated.

Rev. Joe Hudson was the pastor from 1977 to 1980. He was a preaching man who stressed

the need for continuous visitation.

The tape ministry began in 1979 with Charles Young in charge. The church sign in the front church yard was built by George Shankle. While Rev. Finley was pastor (1980-1982), the Tuesday morning Bible study began. Also in 1981, Annie Sims assumed the duties of church treasurer, when Dogan Cobb retired. In March 1982 a new prefabricated fiberglass baptismal pool was installed by the men of the church.

Rev. Goss (1982-1984) taught brotherly love, he was known as "The Preacher of Love." The Homecoming date was changed by a vote of the church from the third Sunday in August to the third Sunday in October.

Rev. Conrad came as pastor in 1989. He led the church to consider whether to expand the current building or build new facilities. He is remembered as the pastor who saw to the building of the new sanctuary we now enjoy for growing the church. Rev. Conrad was called to another church in 1998.

The street running behind the courthouse and the church was closed, and the portion of the street between the church and pastorium was deeded to the church. One classroom wing was demolished and the old frame house on the lot next to the pastorium was deeded to the church. One classroom wing was demolished and the old frame house on the lot next to the pastorium was razed by Frank and Lessie McKoy to make room for the new sanctuary. The site of the new sanctuary was dedicated on May 22, 1996. Many hours of labor by faithful church family volunteers saved a lot of money. The baptistry from the former auditorium was removed through a side window with the assistance of Levy County inmates and placed in the new sanctuary. The first service in the new sanctuary was held on August 31, 1997.

At the 2001 Homecoming service, Brother Mark Conrad was the invited speaker, and our pastor Brother Steve Garnett burned the mortgage.

In 2002, the mortgage on the second pastorium and the loan on the van were paid off. The church was now debt-free.

Under Melinda Chemin's leadership as choir director for over nine years, the choir has grown to a record 50 members.

The physical presence of the church became more noticeable to motorists in March 2003 with the installation of a large, permanent, well-lit marquee on Alternate 27.

In the summer of 2003, Emily Lovely, Stephanie Norris, Ruth Sprague and Selina Surles answered the call of God upon their hearts and went to Romania to serve in the children's camps.

In June 2003, Brother Troy Turner joined the church as associate pastor, and minister of music and youth. Within a month of his arrival, he and his wife, Nina were off to youth camp and soon became an integral part of the lives of the youth.

In July 2003 a permanent LCD projection system was installed in the sanctuary. In addition to showing videos and DVDs for special events, announcements, songs and sermon notes are projected each service.

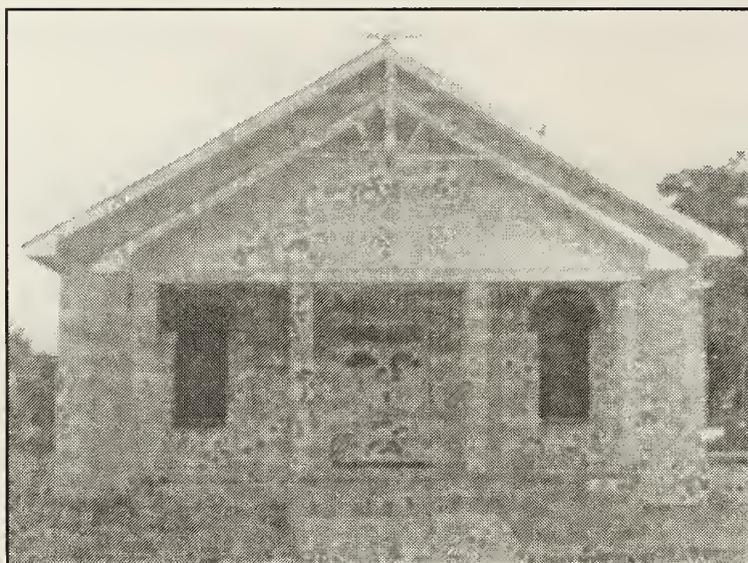
In September 2003 on Wednesday night, under the direction of John Dulaney, the AWANA Club was started. Adult involvement in the AWANA and youth programs was so significant that the church voted to move business meetings from Wednesday night to Sunday night, so more adults could be involved in the business of the church.

Dogan Cobb is the oldest member of the church and to the best of his memory has been a deacon since 1942. He credits the good women of the church for keeping the church alive through the early years. Reba Griffin has been a member of the church the longest of any others, having come with her parents as a one-year-old in 1925 and being baptized in 1934. Her father, Percy Fender, was a deacon who served with Dogan Cobb.

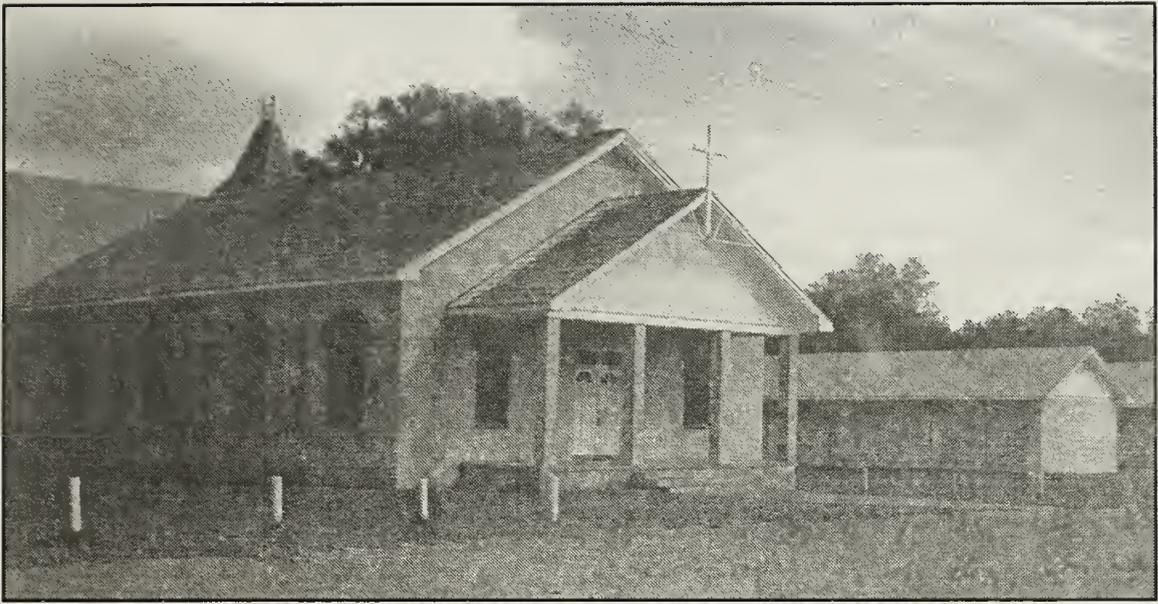
The church theme for 2004 is "Each One Reach One." The year has already seen improved Sunday School and church attendance, and people joining the church. The average Sunday School attendance goal for 2005 is 261. The year to come holds much promise.



Old Bronson Baptist Church



Bronson Baptist Church November 10, 1955



Bronson First Baptist Church 2005

CONCORD BAPTIST CHURCH HISTORY

The church was established in 1867, as Rocky Hammock Baptist Church. Walter Graham's parents donated the land. The original church was made of wood with doors on either end. Services were held by lamplight the first and third Sunday of each month. Reflecting the times, men sat on one side of the church and the ladies on the other.

Records show the following pastors over the next several years:

1935	Josie B. Knight
1941	Brother McElroy
1942	U. W. Rollins
1944	R. R. Sledge
1946	Learch
1947	G.C. Eubanks
1948	G. T. Evans
1949	Perry Edwards
1950	Bennie Yelovinton

The church closed some time in 1951 and reopened again in 1953. It struggled with six active members and the doors were closed later that year.

In 1955, a layman named Jack Matthews, of Joppa Missionary Baptist Church, visited families, filled out census cards and services were once again held. Jack Matthews became lay pastor and with the support of Brother Joe Ishie, Brother A. B. Al King, and Mrs. Lizzie King the church started to thrive. The first service brought out ten people one month later, 29 people attended the church. The first baptisms were held at channel number 4 in Cedar Key and later in Otter Creek.

In March 1955, Brother Matthews listed the following aims for the church. Requesting the members adopt them as their goals.

- A Consecrated membership;
- Every member of the church saved;
- Every member praying privately and publicly;
- Every member reading the Holy Bible every day;
- Every member taking part in family worship every day;
- Every member attending all services except when sick or compelled to work;
- Every member visiting the sick in body and the sick of soul, doing their part in winning lost souls; and
- Every member tithing - their time, talents and income.

“May the Holy Spirit lead us everyone, every minute, in advancing Christ's Kingdom to the honor and glory of God.”

The church looked after others by giving to hospitals and helping the community. A Young People's class and Vacation Bible School was started.

With the church in trouble in July of 1956, Brother James Quincey from Pine Grove Baptist Church delivered an inspirational message. He asked that “any that would make a vow to God to come forward and knew that they would keep the doors of this church open as long as they live in this community. Even if everyone quits except the one that makes the vow. Even if he has to come here alone and pray and read scripture.” Nearly every member present came forward and

made that vow. "May God help us and keep us now." This vow would be the glue that held the church together time and again.

Brother Matthews resigned in September 1956. Brother Willis Cason was licensed and ordained to preach and became pastor.

During his term, Brother Willis created a true church family. During the early years, the church was renamed Concord Baptist Church and expanded with a sanctuary of block and outside restrooms. Air conditioning, new pews, outside lighting, carpet, a sign and a steeple were installed. As the church continued to grow, an annual Homecoming, Church Covenant, PA system and "inside bathrooms" were added. Willis Cason, Lizzie King and Joe Ishie, were commended for taking the vow to keep the church doors open. In February of 79, after more than 22 years as pastor, Brother Willis resigned as pastor and the next day was called home to be with the Lord.

In May 1979, Brother James Corbin was called. The church continued to enlarge by building porches, Sunday School rooms, a kitchen and purchasing a bus. Later that year, Brother Corbin resigned and Brother Ronald Cason was licensed.

In 1980, Brother Jimmy Couliette began to pastor. During this time, by-laws were made and a nursery was put into place. Brother Perry Geiger was called to pastor later that year and additional land was purchased from Mr. Graham to accommodate the growth. A fellowship meal was held every quarter, church bulletins were purchased along with items of furniture.

Brother Michael Brooks began to pastor in April of 1983. A mobile home was purchased and used as a pastorium. The church was incorporated and softball teams were sponsored. Two trips were made to Jamaica to teach Bible School and the first church directory was made.

During the March 1985 Homecoming, the history of the church was read and members told the history of the church.

In 1986, Brother Brooks resigned and Brother Tony Barber was called as pastor. The congregation continued to expand. To accommodate it, a wheelchair ramp was installed, a pole shed and bathrooms built, the and picnic tables and benches bought. In December of 87, two acres were purchased and a new block pastorium was built. The sanctuary was enlarged and two Sunday School rooms were built. A church bus was purchased along with a copy machine. A basketball court was installed and an awning was added. The church had a float in the Watermelon Festival parade and the youth took several mission trips.

In November of 91, Brother Tony resigned. The WMU ladies visited Seafarer's Ministries. We also started holding Children's Church.

In May of 92, Brother Danny Wilson began as pastor. The members of the church continue to reach out as they made trips to Homestead to minister to the victims of Hurricane Andrew and to the Panhandle to help clean up and assist flood victims. The church helped prison ministries and purchased water purifiers for missions in Indonesia. Support was given to a mission church in Fanning Springs and a high school scholarship given. Our youth went on missions to the Smokey Mountains and passed out tracts in town. The sanctuary was enlarged and a new Sunday School building was added along with more picnic tables and benches. A newsletter was born and a "Joy Group" was started. The church supported "New Beginnings" as well as a petition to exclude "consumption on the premises" at the Fishing Hole on Manatee Highway. In June of 98, Brother Wilson resigns.

Brother Ray Scott began as interim pastor in January of 99. In March the same year Brother Wade Bridges is called to pastor. The church continues to grow and purchases computers, support members who go into the ministry and add a carport to the pastorium. We license Brother Preston Wilson to preach and we sponsor the Rosewood Mission.

In November of 2001, Robert Carter became pastor. Space again became limited and the de-

cision was made to build a new fellowship hall and create more Sunday School rooms. The first "Hanging of the Green" ceremony and candlelight service was held, and a church cookbook was created. Financial Reports were distributed and the church purchased "In God We Trust" plaques to be placed in the high school. In October of 2002, Robert Carter resigns.

Jamie Brock became pastor in February 2003. The church continued to reach out by hosting missions from Haiti and Kenya. An account was set up at a local thrift store for members in need, the children supported troops in Iraq by sending shoebox gifts and the first Sunrise Service was held Easter 2003.

IN SUMMARY

To see so clearly the way God works in our daily lives. He has shown compassion, given us hope and through trial, He has tested his follower's metal. He has risen His church from ashes time and time again, because He has a plan for us.

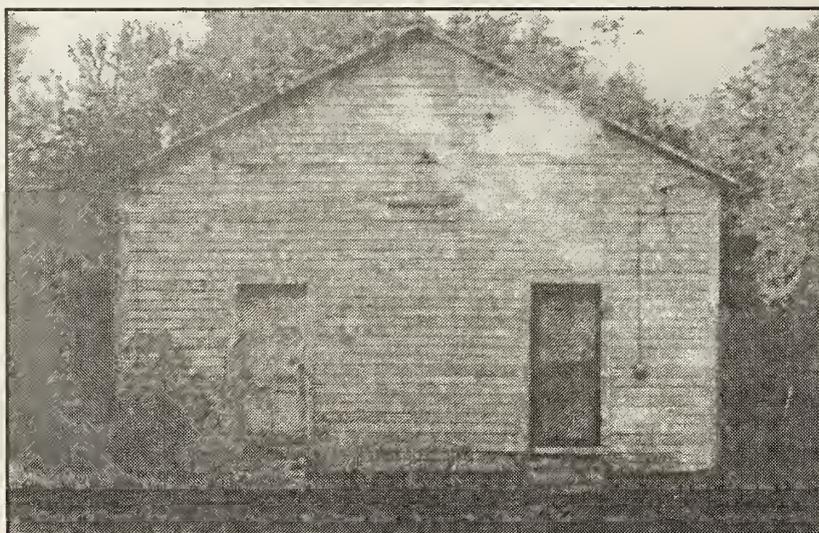
Every pastor and every member had a roll to play. From Jack Matthews who opened the doors of the church and took it through fire by almost causing the church to split. To James Quincey, who God worked through to keep His church united. He has taken simple laymen like Willis Cason and used him to create a family in Christ and taken others to show us humility and cause us to look deep into ourselves to see the sinners we all are.

I think I'm most impressed with people like Joe Ishie and Lizzie King and others who had the courage and undying belief in our Lord. They took a stand and made a vow to God that they would be the last person standing in the church, and He rewarded them well. The vow has made itself evident on numerous occasions and it appears to me that anytime the church found itself being tested, we always came back to it. Whether we knew it or not, He did...

God has placed His hand on the church and used the sweat, dedication and commitment of His people to make it grow. And through His faithful followers, seen many lead to his Kingdom. From the youngest people of His church, to the oldest, He has used them to reap His harvest. From mission trips, giving aid, to financially supporting others, you can see He has had His hand on it all.

He has taken care of His loyal people and rewarded them beyond measure. He made sure His church had everything it needed, at the time it needed it. He has made it into what it is today.

I wish I could be around to see the plans He has in store for the next 150 years. We are all truly blessed!





Concord Baptist Church October 1971



SAINT BARNABAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH WILLISTON

Arch-dean Fred Yerkes and rural missionary, Ruth Thompson, organized the St. Barnabas Mission in June 1947.

Fr. Yerkes led the first services once a month in a small brick house owned by Mr. and Mrs. Semprich. It was directly behind the present church property.

The services were next held in a house near the present day Baptist church. After meeting there for a year, the property was sold. This was when services were moved to the Thompson office building located near the limestone mine about four miles north of Williston. Furniture and altar supplies were provided by Fr. Yerkes who gathered them from other Episcopal churches.

Mr. Thompson's death in 1949 brought many substantial memorials for the building of a new church.

In 1950, the Thompson office building was moved to the church property. This frame structure was covered with felt and asbestos shingles and this became the first church on this property. In 1961, the building was remodeled as a parish hall and was called "Thompson Hall."

In 1962, the Travis Harris house adjoining the church property was purchased as a rectory.

In 1956, the church membership increased and an enthusiastic drive was begun to accumulate funds for a new church building. The women of the church added to the fund with bazaars, bake sales and other fund-raisers.

Construction began with Fred Le Sueur, Ben Doerr and Eva Thompson as general overseers, and Dewitt Beamer, contractor-constructor.

The structure was completed in 1958, debt-free and was dedicated and consecrated on November 2nd by Bishop Hamilton West.

Through the years many clergy have served St. Barnabas well and gratitude is expressed to Father Yerkes for a fine start.

The congregation remains comparatively small, there is a loving outreach extended toward other's needs.

The church building was used as a beginning home for three churches – Church of Christ, Cornerstone Assembly of God and Holy Faith Catholic.

Thompson Hall has been used by alcoholic's anonymous, Tri-County Senior Center, scouts, and various civic groups.

As Fr. Yerkes said at the 40th birthday, "We've had a lot of happy times together!"



HISTORY OF PINE GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH

Organized July 10, 1871

In the fall of 1866, at the meeting of the Santa Fe River Association, Rev. Simeon Sheffield was chosen Associational Missionary of the body and directed to move to Levy County and establish a mission work.

February 12, 1867, he left Bradford County and moved, not knowing where he would stop. In the evening just before night he made camp near what was known as the "Boney Place." The next morning the preacher bought out Boney and settled down to the business of winning lost souls to the Lord.

History records that Rev. Simeon Sheffield began a mission Sunday School in the Pine Grove community. Upon moving into the community, he found a log-rolling going on at the Widow George Hagans; a frolic was planned for the night. Invited as a guest to the event, Missionary Sheffield, with a master hand, turned the would-be frolic into a regular revival meeting. Out of that service came the Pine Grove Baptist Church. The Widow Hagans and her daughter became charter members.

At the first baptismal services, two men announced that they would not permit Reverend Sheffield to baptize their wives; they let it be known that they would be on hand with horse whips ready for the preacher. Undaunted, Missionary Sheffield went forward with the service. When it came time to baptize one of the wives, a man rode out of the forest on a big horse and holding in his hands two large pistols; he announced that if any man molested the preacher, he would be shot immediately. No trouble was experienced from that day on.

This was taking place at a time when missionaries were needed as the Civil War had just come to a close and the country was torn with strife and discord, filled with outlaws and ruffians. Some people had never heard the Gospel preached.

The first sermon preached by the missionary was preached in an old discarded bar-room in Levyville, the old county seat of Levy County.

Brother Sheffield, the missionary, established several mission stations, preaching most of the time under the trees, or "arbors" when the weather was good. In bad weather, services were held in private homes.

In this community the missionary organized a Sunday School in a little house about one-half mile east of the present church. This was the first Baptist Sunday School in the county. They got their literature from the American Tract Society.

The following March, Mrs. Hagans gave a rail splitting and quilting party, as was the custom in those days. They were to have a dance that night, but instead they decided to have preaching as there was a preacher living among them, so they sent a delegation after the preacher. In due time he arrived and the text that he used was the words of Peter where he said to Cornelius "with what intent did you send for me." With this meeting there was established a regular appointment for the following third Sunday in each month and the Saturday before. These meetings were held in the open under the "trees and arbors" during fair weather and in private homes during bad weather.

In the Spring of 1871 the people gathered and built the first church in this community, of pine logs and split boards to cover the building. On July 10, 1871, Ebenezer Baptist Church met and organized Pine Grove Baptist Church, transferring the following names from Ebenezer Church rolls to Pine Grove Church roll:

1. Ela S. Sheffield
2. James K. Sheffield (a former pastor of Ebenezer)
3. Elizebeth Sheffield

4. Julia C. Sheffield
5. Jane E. Davis
6. Mary F. McDonnell
7. Mary E. Moore
8. Harriett Ann Sanchez
9. Mary A. Love
10. Elisebeth Colson
11. Martha Rogers
12. Mary D. Loper
13. Francis J. Colson
14. Sarah F. Love
15. Julia A.. Smith
16. Georgia Ann Brock

The Rev. Kinsey Chambers came from Live Oak, Florida to assist in constituting this church and on the 11th day of July, 1871, the transferred members from Ebenezer came with their letters and Pine Grove Baptist Church was duly organized and constituted.

The Widow Hagans and her daughter became charter members of the church.

After Pine Grove was organized, it joined the Santa Fe River Baptist Association and remained a member of the Association until the fall of 1879. In the fall of that year the organizational meeting of the Harmony Baptist Association was held at Pine Grove from October 31-November 2, 1879. Pine Grove has remained in this association since that date – Pine Grove gave \$4.35 to this association for mission work in 1879.

In 1881, Pine Grove sponsored the Hope Baptist Church, which later became defunct in 1900. A frame building was erected on the present site in 1885. Pine Grove sponsored Liberty Baptist Church in 1892, and Judson Baptist Church in 1895 – both of which are defunct. By 1896, the twenty-fifth (25th) anniversary, Pine Grove had forty-two (42) members and its property was valued at \$500.00.

The old “T” shaped, white frame building was erected between 1920-1922. It was dedicated on August 15, 1925. On the 50th anniversary in 1921, Pine Grove had one hundred eighty-five (185) members and the value of the church property had risen to \$2400.00. The total amount of gifts given was \$327.16, of which \$12.93 (four percent) was given to associational missions and \$287.47 was paid to Rev. J. L. Norris.

A Sunday School building was added in 1936-37 and the church building remodeled in 1939.

In 1946, after 75 years of service, Pine Grove had grown in membership to 355, the value of the church had grown to \$9000.00; and \$5000.00 for the parsonage. Gifts given during the year were \$3706.66. Brother R. M. Hall was paid \$1800.00 and \$775.16 was given to missions.

The first W.M.U. of Pine Grove was organized about 1906, with Mrs. Minerva Orange Swilley, wife of Francis “Frank” Swilley, as its president – Pine Grove has had a W.M.U. since that time.

In 1919, B.Y.P.U. was organized in Pine Grove by W. C. Armstrong, with 51 members, all meeting in one department. The youngest member was Milton McLeroy, and the oldest was I. S. C. Sheffield. Since then the name has been changed to B.T.U. and now called Church Training.

The former brick building was dedicated September 10, 1961. Rev. Ruben Davis gave the Sermon of Dedication – the Hymn No. 380 “The Church’s One Foundation.” The pastor was Rev. Josh Long, Brother R. M. Hall brought the morning message.

On July 10-11, 1971 Pine Grove observed its “Centennial.” Brother C. A. Lundy was pas-

tor. Brother Austin McElroy brought the morning message. Dinner was Bar-B-Que Pork, Beef, Chicken prepared by the men of the church. The ladies brought salads, desserts and other delicious dishes from home. Iced tea and coffee were served.

Mrs. Angus J. (Johanna Swilley) made a large two layer cake decorated with 100th Anniversary on it.

Brother John Dicks, former pastor from Lake City, brought the evening message. The text he used was taken from John 3:16. The closing song chosen by Brother Milton McLeroy was "God Be With You." The deacons were: Stacey Quincey, Carver Hutchinson, H. Tom Willis, Milton McLeroy, L. V. Corbin, Ronald Watson, Lynn Ward, Vernon Watson, R. C. "Cole" Horne, and Ronald Layfield. The Church Training Director was Angus Swilley and Sunday School Director was Carver Hutchinson.

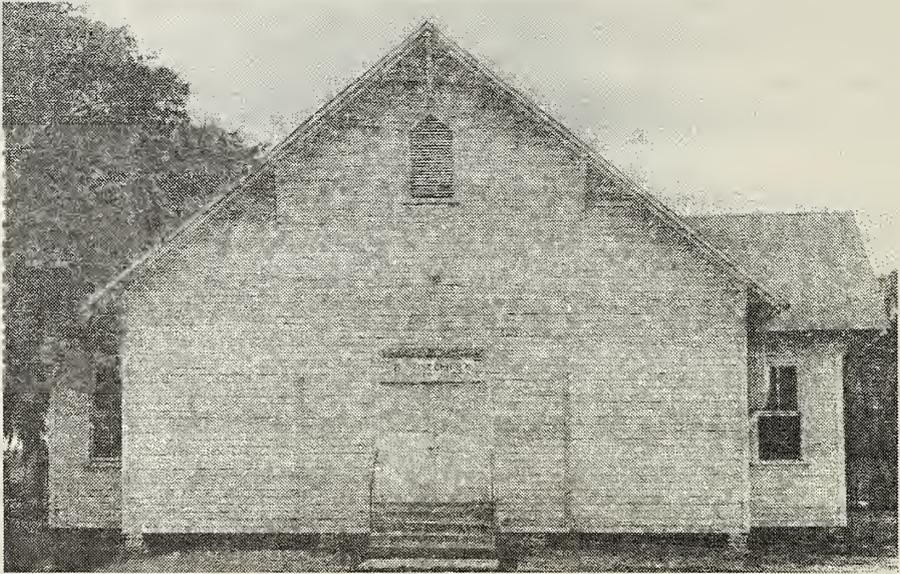
A new \$75,000.00 pastorium has been built since 1971. The approximate value of land (40 acres) and all church buildings is over \$500,000.00.

Pine Grove moved into the new building on April 27, 2005 which was Easter Sunday with Rev. Greg Douglas as pastor.

Pine Grove Baptist Church continues the evangelistic missionary spirit that gave it birth in July, 1871.

Pine Grove Baptist Church Pastors

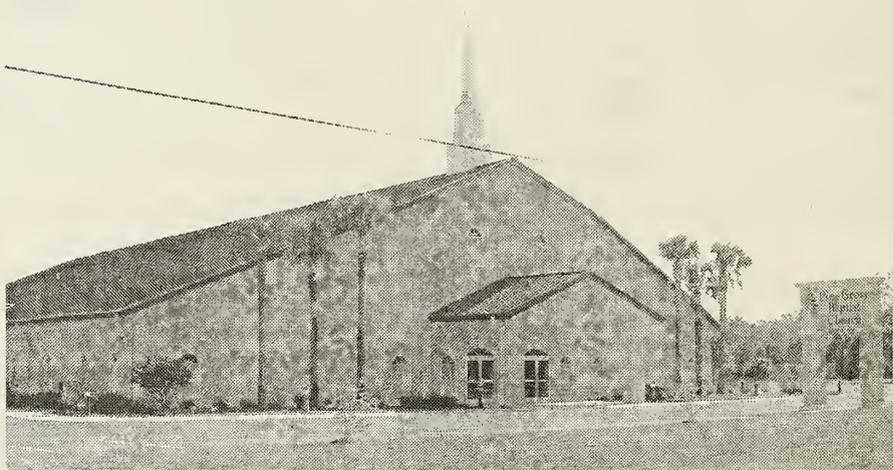
S. Sheffield	1871-83	W. T. Rycroft	1949
W. S. Perry	1883-85	R. B. Davis	1950-53
S. Sheffield	1885-93	Joe Hough	1954
Ben Mosely	1893-95	John Martin	1955-56
J. K. Sheffield	1895-03	H. Mitchell	1959
W. J. Martin	1903-07	Josh Long	1961-62
J. K. Sheffield	1907-10	Hayes Davis	1964
W. J. Martin	1911	J. Maddox	1965-66
S. S. Proctor	1912	C. A. Lundy	1967-75
G. W. S. Ware	1913	H. H. Powell	1976 (Interim)
J. L. Norris	1914-16	W. C. Estes	1977-81
Joseph Bell	1917	J. W. Keen	1982-84
J. L. Norris	1917-27	Shep Bryan	1984 (Interim)
A. B. West	1927-30	R. S. Walker	1984-87
W.B. Hicks	1930	Miles Patterson	1988-90 (Interim)
O. G. Herndon	1931-32	David C. Jones	1988-90
John Dicks	1932-41	Tom Harper	1990-91
H. Collins	1942	Ellis Turner	1991 (Interim)
E. E. Earnest	1944-45	Tony Clubb	1991-97
R. M. Hall	1946-48	Greg Douglas	1998-Present



1955



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