



First Presbyterian Church

Bartow, Florida

1882 - 2007

125 Years Sharing Christ

July 2007

Issue #6

OUR HISTORY...

The summer of 1889 was overwhelmed with dark clouds. The death of Rev. Hair was the first trial that rocked the congregation that year, and by October a split in the congregation ensued.

The immediate need to fill the pulpit each Sunday was met by Rev. Charles Montgomery Livingston. A native of New York he had been in the ministry for twenty five years serving in his home state and Ohio. In 1887 he accepted the call to Florida as a Home Missionary for the Presbyterian Church. One of his duties was to assist as a Temporary Pulpit Supply minister where needed. As a result of the sudden death of Rev. Samuel Hair he was sent to Bartow.

Two years earlier the Session had increased from two to four members. C.E Hooks and P. W. Daniel were elected to serve with E. K. Gibbons and M. M. Dunlope. The Session would soon be faced with leadership challenges. The search for a full time pastor continued and after two months another dark cloud loomed on the horizon. A congregational meeting was called in August for the purpose of addressing the desire of several members to change the church's affiliation from the Northern Assembly of the Presbyterian Church back to the Southern Assembly. The church was originally established as part of the Presbyterian Church (South) and had maintained that association for three years.

The Presbytery sent another Temporary Supply the Rev. Henry Keigwin to Bartow in time to steer the young church through the storm. Rev. Keigwin hailed from Indiana and his thirty years of pastoral experience was a blessing to the leadership. The action to transfer affiliation was stalled but forced to a decision by the Session on October 6, 1889. A formal petition from sixteen members requested the "Establishment of a Southern Presbyterian Church in Bartow", and further requested Letters of "Dismission" to organize another Presbyterian Church. The Session denied the request.

The Session with Rev. Keigwin serving as Moderator came to a decision to refuse to grant Letters of Dismissal based on three considerations. The first was that it violated a plan of unity existing in Florida between the Northern and Southern Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church in Florida. Secondly that to do so would bring "censure" to the local church as truce breakers, and lastly it was recognized that no minister or committee from the Southern Assembly was authorized or actively pursuing the organization of another Presbyterian church in Bartow. Nothing more was recorded on the subject during the remainder of that year.

By the end of 1889 Rev. George Case accepted the call as Pastor. One of the first tasks he undertook was to address the troubled waters. The minutes dated January 16, 1890 noted the concern. Of the sixteen members having earlier requested letters of dismissal ten had organized themselves into a church under the jurisdiction of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South. The remaining six had not recall their requests for Dismission. It was therefore resolved that the sixteen names be dropped from the church roll. The breach between Presbyterians in America which arose from the Civil War had not adequately healed, and in this twist of history the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church of Bartow was born.

While the first church was weakened by this move in the formation of another church from its body, Presbyterianism in Bartow was strengthened, with the advent of this new church with the Presbyterian heritage. First Church gradually recovered from the loss of membership and the Associate Reformed Church began to grow.

With its first major crisis successfully met and behind it, the church continued to set itself to work of the Lord.

SHEPHERD OF NOTE . . .

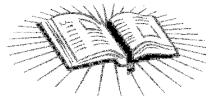
The Rev. Henry Keigwin was born in Jeffersonville, Indiana on January 5, 1836. He graduated at Hanover College (Indiana), Class of 1856. He entered the Theological Seminary at Danville, Kentucky and completed his Seminary course at Columbia Theological Seminary in Columbia, South Carolina in the spring of 1860. He was married to Martha Elizabeth Miller of Hanover, Indiana the same year.




His first church was at Cahaba, Alabama (the old state capitol). He was in Montgomery when Jefferson Davis was inaugurated President of the Confederate States of America. Just as the Civil War was opening he was called home to Indiana to the deathbed of his father. Not being able to return to Cahaba he led churches in Indiana and Illinois. After the war he served in Kentucky and in 1881 moved to Orlando, Florida. He accepted a call to pastor at Leesburg where he was appointed Superintendent of Home Missions in the Presbyteries of East and South Florida.


He continued his Presbytery work for seventeen years, traveling throughout the state planting churches, filling pulpits, finding supplies and materials for needy churches, and ministering to discouraged congregations. During this period of time he was the constant helper of Bartow's young flock. On four occasions in 1889, 1894-95, 1898-99, and 1902-03 he filled our pulpit when vacant. He ably assisted the Session in searching for new Pastors. He literally was the minister of the Church at Bartow during those early years in that his guiding hand is found in every major decision of the church.

Rev. Keigwin spent his summers preaching and assisting mission work in the mountains of Tennessee and Kentucky until his death. After his retirement from the mission field he had charge of churches at Punta Gorda, Arcadia, and Glenwood. He died November 17, 1912 and is interred in Orlando with his family.




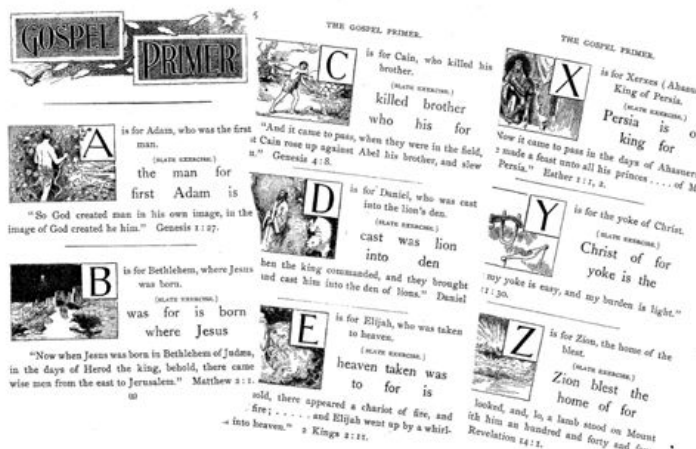
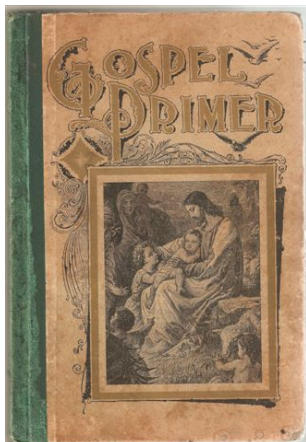
Let's Study!

 Presbyterian Lectionary for July 30, 1882.... Lesson V - Mark 11:1-11; Commit to memory vs. 8-11
Title: The Triumphal Entry

 Golden Text: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass."
Ecclesiastes 9:9

 Lesson Psalms: Psalm 24

 Lesson s Doctrinal and Practical: Christ has messengers for all his errands. Every person's field of labor is marked out for him. All things are put under Christ. He and his followers will get what they need of this world. *Psalms 34:10 "The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.* Excitement is well bestowed on Christ's march- Jerusalem, the Temple, and the twelve. In all places where I record my name, I will come unto you and bless you.



REMEMBER WHEN...

A little noticed item unique to church services, previous to air conditioning, was the hand held church fan. The church fan was everywhere, especially in the South, and not only at church but also at outdoor gatherings, court, etc. its presence was synonymous with any public gathering. Standard items for church attendance included the Bible, Sunday school material, and the fan. If you didn't have your own you could usually find them neatly stored with the hymnals.

The church fan was constructed of cardstock or heavy paper in various shapes stapled to a six or eight inch wooden handle. The face of the fan generally featured a biblical or religious image. Some examples used contemporary scenes, children at prayer, stained glass windows, symbols, rural churches, or a still life with a Bible. The reverse side had the advertisement of the local company that supplied the fans.

Funeral homes and insurance companies were common sponsors. The fan proved not only to be utilitarian but afforded a stroke of marketing genius. The rhythmic pulsing of the "little breeze maker" was as good as a flashing neon sign advertising the sponsors' name, address, products, and slogans. It was needless to say, it was "a cool way to do business"!

Period hand fans were made of silk and exhibited an oriental flavor. Others were crafted from plant fibers, palm, bamboo, straw, and cane, these were usually purchased at a department store or novelty stand. Regardless, these fans as well as the ubiquitous church fan were much appreciated by the congregation as they sat through a worship service several hours long.



Guess Who! These two lovely ladies are celebrating our church's centennial. Hint: The year is 1982 and they are sisters. Answer on back



Church fan from Whidden Funeral Home founded in 1925
By Henry P. Whidden in Bartow.
The three digit phone numbers date the fan to the mid 1930s

WE REMEMBER . . .

On June 24, 2007 following the morning worship service Rev. Jim Hatch dedicated a bronze memorial plaque to our founding pastor Rev. William G. F. Wallace. The memorial was unveiled by the church's senior member Louise Lang amidst much applause.

The event was published in the local newspaper which brought a challenge from an interested reader as to the validity of Rev. Wallace's internment being in an unmarked grave near Weewahitchka, Florida. Here are the facts: the report of his final resting place as being "unknown" was provided by a collateral descendant and further substantiated by an obituary appearing in a period publication the *Christian Observer* dated May 7, 1902. In addition a complete search of every cemetery in Gulf County, Florida returned no evidence or record of his final resting place giving confirmation to the initial report.

The memorial marker will serve to remind us of Rev. Wallace's place in our history. It is his only epitaph. We are the descendants of his faithful witness of Jesus 125 years ago. Our church coupled with the recently dedicated plaque serve to honor him as he honored Christ. We remember!



◆ *HISTORICAL COMMITTEE* ◆
Rev. Jim Hatch
Eric Ehrhart
Lloyd Harris, Chairman
Mariann Holland
Louise Lang