



First Presbyterian Church

Bartow, Florida

1882 - 2007

125 Years Sharing Christ

March 2007

Issue #2

Communion of the Saints

In the words of the Apostles' Creed we affirm that we believe in the "Communion of the Saints". This communion we have by God's Spirit joins us together in spirit not only with Father, Son and Holy Spirit as well as the body of Christ around the world; but also with those who have gone before us in the faith — that "great cloud of witnesses (Hebrews 12:1)" whom we will meet when Jesus brings them with him upon his return (I Thessalonians 4:14-17).

The Communion ware used today was used by the saints of First Presbyterian Church of Bartow over one hundred twenty years ago!

— Rev. Jim Hatch

Take a Look!

On display is an early piece of our church history. The Communion Flagon or Tankard is the only surviving piece of First Presbyterian Church's original communion service and was last on display 25 years ago during the Centennial celebration. It was manufactured between 1866 and 1870.

The flagon is made of Britannia –White metal, plated silver, and is a product of the Middletown Plate Company of Middletown, Connecticut. In 1866 the Middletown Plate Company was incorporated and continued in operation until it became part of International Silver in 1899.

Britannia metal is a pewter type alloy favored for its silvery appearance and smooth surface. The composition is approximately 93% tin, 5% antimony and 2% copper. Britannia Metal is also called Britannium. Some early references refer to Britannia Metal as "Vickers White Metal."

The silver goblets were donated by Mariann Holland.



Remember When . . .

Centennial Sunday March 28, 1982

What were you doing 25 years ago? It was Centennial Sunday and the Lord's Day celebration began with a Centennial Sunday School fete of coffee and doughnuts in the courtyard. Rev. James E. McNaull was the Pastor and the morning service began promptly at 11:00 AM with a Scripture reading from 1 John 1:5-10. An organ prelude, "*Prelude and Fugue in C Minor*" was followed by a taped rendering of the old church bell "Striking the Hour".

The Processional Hymn by the Chancel Choir was "*Lead on, O King Eternal*". This was followed by Rev. Bill Mulcay leading the worshipers in the Lord's Prayer and the Affirmation of the Faith of the Church. The congregation then repeated the Apostles' Creed and joined in singing "*Gloria Patri*". A brief moment was taken to introduce the various worship leaders and ministers. The offertory anthem was "*O How Amiable*" followed by the hymn, "*Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*".

Former pastors Dr. Ernest Thompson, and Dr. John Craven presented short topical sermons on "Prayer Power" and "Our Christian Heritage". Dr. Robert Thompson brought Congratulations from the Southwest Florida Union Presbytery and Mayor Bill Goddard presented a City Proclamation honoring the church from the City of Bartow.

The worship service closed with the recessional hymn, "*The Church's One Foundation*", benediction, choral response and the Organ Postlude, "*Fugue in G Minor (Little)*". The sanctuary was highlighted by the display of the original communion flagon, centennial banners, and an engraved church school bell. Artifacts taken from the cornerstone the previous Sunday were put on display in the church library.

It was a remarkable and wonderful day of celebration followed by an informal luncheon at the Civic Center starting at 12:45 PM. The occasion was a time of reminiscing and visitation with former Pastors, families and friends.

Celebratory items included a centennial cookbook, choir tapes, T-shirts and the official history of the church, "A History of the First Presbyterian Church Bartow 1882-1982" by Freddie Wright.

The Centennial Committee included: Margaret Shanks, Shellie Duncan, Terry Frost, Ed Heidel, Pam McNaull, Tommy Nichols, Helen Pamplin, Brucie Parker, Edith Smith, Ernest Smith, and Freddie Wright.



Interesting Fact!

† The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was first observed on March 28, 1886.

Let's Study!

📖 Presbyterian Lectionary for March 19, 1882

📖 Lesson XII, Mark 5:21-43, Title: "*Power Over Disease and Death*"

📖 Golden Text: *As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler and the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe. — Mark 5:36*

📖 Lessons Doctrinal & Practical — *Sin brings suffering. As all are sinners, all need a Savior; Jesus only can save us from our sins and their consequences. He is not only able, but willing to do this. He condescends to notice and bless even the most unworthy as they come to Him in faith. However weak their faith, He will honor it beyond its measure. While they may come to him with fear and trembling, they shall go away rejoicing.*

Our History...

Rev. William Wallace had organized the congregation at Bartow in 1882 and continued ministering in the town in conjunction with his circuit between Wauchula and Bowling Green. Worship services were held at the Hughes Opera House and Court House on Main Street.

Plans soon followed to erect a new church building on a lot in the middle of town but owing to a lack of funds and the financial depression of the Southern Presbyterian Church a building loan could not be secured.

The Methodist and Baptist churches had been blessed by the noteworthy gift of twenty acres of land each from Bartow's early benefactor and "Cattle King" Jacob Summerlin. The sale of lots enabled the Methodist and Baptist congregations to complete construction of their respective sanctuaries. Presbyterian services continued at the Opera House.

In one year the population of the city increased to over 400 persons. The town boasted two church buildings, two hotels, two steam operated sawmills, four general stores, a drug store, a millinery store, livery stable, blacksmith shop, wheelwright shop, bakery, school, Masonic Lodge, and a saloon. By 1884 the city's population jumped to nearly a thousand and in 1885 the arrival of the railroad evidenced a further boost in growth.

The same year Bartow's Presbyterians turned to a visiting minister Rev. Alexander W. Sproull of Jacksonville. He was a Missionary representing the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. The two Presbyterian denominations North and South were racing to plant churches in communities throughout post Civil War Florida. Even though Bartow was a circuit station for the Southern denomination the Northern branch sought to provide a more permanent ministry.

Rev. Sproull started by holding a series of services to gauge interest among the local Presbyterians in funding for a church building by the Northern Presbyterian Church and guaranteed scheduled weekly services. The meetings were not held at the Opera House but at the Methodist Church borrowed for the occasion. The newspaper printed a call for all who favored the movement to attend the meetings. The offer for stability and a church home from the Northern Assembly took hold on Bartow's Presbyterians. What followed was a formal reorganization on July 26, 1885 under the auspices of the Northern Presbyterian Church's East Florida Presbytery. This organization took place in the sanctuary of the First Methodist Church with seven members.

Rev. Dr. M. Waldo was assigned as the temporary pulpit supply to the newborn church through January 1886. The congregation still worshipped in the Opera House and in February 1886 the ladies of the church held a supper to raise funds. The event netted a total of \$100 and the monies were used to purchase an organ and hymnals.

Rev. Waldo departed the community and one of Bartow's six physicians Dr. Frank M. Wilson filled the pulpit for a month until the church welcomed its first full time pastor.

The Rev. Samuel G. Hair took the reins of spiritual leadership on March 1, 1886 and began in full time ministry to the Bartow congregation. Rev. Hair's fourth Sunday, March 28, 1886 was noted as a landmark when the small body of believers held its first observance of the Lord's Supper. Five new members were added the same day.



Did You Know!

↗ The church communion service is engraved and reflects memorials on the cup servers to: *Charles & Julia McCoy 1944, Madeline & Douglas McDowell 1979, and The Bill Ruster Family 1981.* One of the bread plates bears and additional memorial to the parents of the late Bill Ruster and is engraved, *In Memory of Jennie & Morris Ruster 1978.*

Biographical Note:

Rev. Alexander W. Sproull, who reorganized the church in 1885, was born in Ireland and had pastored church in Jacksonville, Florida and Chester, Pennsylvania. He later ministered to Presbyterian Churches in New York City until his death in 1912.

The Record:

*Charter members of the reorganization of the church in July 26, 1885 were
E. K. Gibbons, Laura Gibbons, Dr. M. Kennedy, W. S. Brown,
E. F. Conrad, Olivia A. Smith, and Josephine Wirt.*

From the Archives of First Presbyterian Church of Bartow

- ✠ February 25, 1882 — Church organized by Presbyterian Evangelist Rev. William Gordon Flagler Wallace (Presbyterian Church in the United States (South) with 6 members.
 - ✠ March 1882 — John R. Richardson elected 1st Elder.
 - ✠ Worship services conducted in Hughes Opera House and County Court House.
 - ✠ 1882-1885 — Site selected for church but the congregation is unable to secure loan to build a church due to financial depression of the Southern Home Missions, Presbyterian Church in US.
 - ✠ 1885 — congregation turns to Rev. Alexander W. Sproull from the Presbyterian Church in the USA in order to secure loans and guaranteed monthly services.
 - ✠ July 26, 1885 — church borrows Methodist sanctuary and reorganized by Rev. Sproull. Rev. M. Waldo is the temporary pulpit supply.
 - ✠ February 1886 — Ladies of the church sponsor a dinner at the Opera House and raise \$100 to purchase organ and hymnals.
 - ✠ March 1, 1886 — Rev Samuel G. Hair called as first full time Pastor.
 - ✠ March 28, 1886 — Sacrament of the Lord's Supper observed for the first time.
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◆ HISTORICAL COMMITTEE ◆

Rev. Jim Hatch

Eric Ehrhart

Lloyd Harris, Chairman

Mariann Holland

Louise Lang