



First Presbyterian Church

Bartow, Florida

1882 - 2007

125 Years Sharing Christ

May 2007

Issue #4



First Presbyterian Church of Bartow

1887

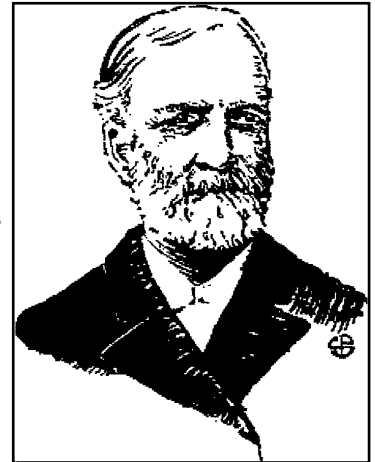
By Martha Post

DEDICATION ...

I was glad when they said unto me: Let us go into the House of the Lord. Psalm 122:1

The first service held in the new sanctuary was on Christmas Day 1887. The church building was completed and the New Year no doubt quickened the pace to perfect the place of worship. Installation of the opera seats, organ, hymnals, light fixtures (light fixtures consisted of chandeliers holding kerosene hurricane lamps), pulpit, and final coats of white paint readied the church for its dedication. During the first week of March the Ladies Aid Society was seeking bids for a picket fence to surround the church grounds. It was not uncommon in Bartow for free roaming bovine and pigs to destroy yards and otherwise become an annoyance. The fence would not only prove to be practical but would also lend itself to the overall enhancement of the church lot.

When a church edifice is complete and ready for use, it is customary to solemnly set it apart to its destined purpose – the worship of God in the teaching and preaching of the gospel. The congregation and session with the guidance of the pastor, Rev. Samuel G. Hair, determined that the Dedication Service would fall on May 20, 1888.



Rev. Alexander W. Sproull

The day to formally dedicate the sanctuary and grounds of the church to the service of Our Lord was not taken lightly. The physical plant was ready for dedication and Rev. Hair was keen to not forget the spiritual necessity for preparation. Like Joshua in the Old Testament commanding the Children of Israel to prepare themselves for three days prior to crossing the Jordan River to enter the Promised Land. Rev. Hair sought to prepare the hearts of the people to the sacredness of the upcoming day. Special services were called for the Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday evenings prior to the Sabbath celebration.

Not being unmindful of the church's beginning Rev. Alexander W. Sproull of Jacksonville was asked to present the Dedicatory Sermon. He was the minister responsible for the reorganization of the church three years earlier which resulted in the affiliation with the Northern Assembly of the Presbyterian Church.

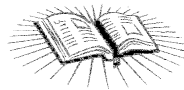
The stillness of the early morning on May 20, 1888 was broken by the tolling of the church bell tall in the tower. Calling the faithful to worship, calling the believers, calling the true church to gather in the beautiful building ready for praise. Congregations from the Methodist and Baptist church as well as all citizens were invited to the occasion.

The May 23rd edition of the Bartow Advance Courier newspaper recounted a large audience from town and country assembled at the Presbyterian Church last Sabbath morning to witness the dedication of the beautiful church edifice. The sermon was delivered by Rev. Dr. Sproull who captured his hearers with beauty of speech, eloquence, and depth of thought simplified.


The Sabbath School followed the sermon with a beautiful song after which Elder McKenzie Dunlope gave a financial statement showing the cost of the building to be just over \$3000 dollars. He further reported that two thirds of the expense had already been realized by contributions from citizens of Bartow. Dr Sproull made an earnest appeal to the people to wipe out the church debt. Responses were given and Rev. Samuel Hair offered the Dedicatory prayer.

The choir rendered two beautiful anthems with a fine effect and excellent execution. Five members of the choir were present and sang at the organization of the church nearly three years ago and have been faithful at nearly all the services since.

The little body at its inception numbered six members on the official roll. By April of 1887 there were fifty six members, and the Session report for the year ending April 1888 indicated that thirty one members had been added. A total membership of 87 souls dedicated and committed to Sharing Christ in the Bartow community.




Let's Study!

 Presbyterian Lectionary for May 28, 1882

Lesson IX: Mark 8:34-38 & 9:1 Title: "Following Christ"

Golden Text: *Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. — Mark 8:34*

 Lessons Doctrinal and Practical: 1. We must let go of self if we lay hold of Christ. 2. If we are making no sacrifice for Christ we know nothing of Him. 3. We should use, value, and enjoy this life with reference to the next. 4. The soul's worth cannot be told in dollars and cents. 5. The lost is forever. 6. We should confess Christ if we want Him to confess us. 7. The Lord will surely come. Lesson Psalm 32

SELAH-MEDITATE ON THIS...

Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord: which by night stand in the house of the Lord. Lift up your hands in the Sanctuary: and bless the Lord. The Lord that made heaven and earth: bless thee out of Zion. Psalm 133

“DEDICATORY PRAYER”

We set apart this house to the worship of the living and true God, and to the service of Jesus Christ our Lord.

We devote it to the preaching of the gospel of the grace of God for the conversion of sinners, and to the education of Christians in a knowledge of spiritual truth, in all activities of Christian life.

Here shall the incense of prayer and praise ascend to God. Here shall the ordinances of the Lord's house be sacredly observed.

Here shall the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever, be sounded out for the salvation of the perishing, and shine as a perpetual light to guide God's pilgrims through the night of time to the land of everlasting light.

Here may children of sin and sorrow find a refuge from despair and ruin, and Christians a harbor to which they can resort when the tempest is high, and be safe.

May no discordant note of strife ever be heard within these walls, no unholy spirit of pride or worldliness find entrance here.

And may God graciously accept this offering of a house in His name- an offering made by grateful hearts and willing hands- and bless every heart that shares in this gift.

May multitudes here be born to God, so that when all these here today shall have gone to their eternal home, others will take up the service until Jesus comes and all His are gathered home.

To the glory of God, our Father, by whose favor we have builded; to the honor of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God and our Savior; to the praise of the Holy Spirit, source of life and light.

We dedicate this house.

For worship in prayer and song; for the ministry of the Word; for the observance of the holy ordinances.

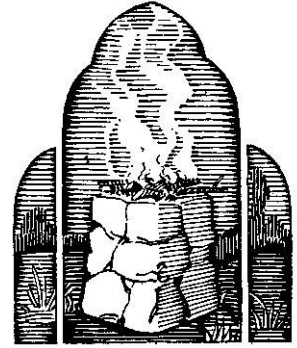
We dedicate this house.

To the sanctification of the family; to the training and nurture of childhood; to the inspiration of youth and the salvation of all.

We dedicate this house.

To the help of the needy; to the promotion of brotherhood; to the extension of the kingdom through the whole wide world.

We dedicate this house.



(Dedicatory prayer from an early minister's manual)

Read All About It!

☰ *Bartow Advance Courier newspaper...May 23 1887*

...The following many respectable businesses, houses, and dwellings were built. The two churches Methodist and Baptist disposed of their donations and built their respective church buildings on Church Street. Since that time there has been a Presbyterian Church organized, which has erected another church building. In 1884 the Court House was removed and a new Court House, costing some ten thousand dollars was erected in its place. The South Florida Railroad ran their first train to Bartow in January 1885. Bartow was incorporated in 1882. The first newspaper *The Bartow Informant* was established in 1881 and early in 1887 the *Advance Courier* was established. The first Fire Company was organized in 1885. The YMCA was organized in 1886. Bartow now contains three church buildings, two town halls, a bank, twenty four stores, five leading hotels, and a population of two thousand souls.

More news from 1888...

Bartow Cornet Band gave a concert every Sunday afternoon during the summer.

Eleven deer were killed five miles from downtown by W. J. Pearce, the venison sold for \$70.50. A black bear was killed north of Bartow at Banana Creek.

Fire engulfed the entire block south of the Court House. It was reported as a non permanent disaster since the wooden buildings burned were being replaced by more substantial buildings. (Buildings still stand as the block south of Polk County's Historical Museum on Main Street)

Were You There . . . ?

- ? The new sanctuary was dedicated on August 26, 2001 under Rev. Jim Hatch. The service began with a reading of Psalm 100 followed by the Organ Prelude "*Grace of God*" by Jim Jordan. The congregation then joined in singing "*All Hail the Power of Jesus Name*" after which Tom Bos of the United Intercessors for Bartow pronounced the Invocation.
- ? Rev. Hatch welcomed a full audience in attendance followed by Offerings of Testimony, Blessing and Prayer by leaders and well wishers of Bartow's Christian community. The following made presentations: John Hutto, Lay Leader of First United Methodist Church; Rev Robert Lewis of Bartow Church of the Nazarene; Rev Adam Williams, Associate Pastor of the Bartow Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church; Clifton Lewis, Chairman of Trustees of First Providence Missionary Baptist Church; Rev Don Fontaine, Church of the Kingdom of God; Rev Mike Tedder of Bartow First Assembly of God; Rev Andre Camp of Acts Praise and Worship Center; and Stan Cain, Elder of McLeod Presbyterian Church.
- ? A Litany of Thanks was presented by Rev Jim Mawhinney of McLeod Presbyterian followed by three Offertory Songs of Praise, "*Give Thanks*", "*He is Exalted*", and "*I Exalt Thee*". The Organ Solo "*Hymnus*" was expertly played by Jim Jordan. Next the Church Choir presented a choral and instrumental anthem entitled, "*Built on a Rock*" and adapted for the occasion by Choir Director Curtis Rush Bell.
- ? Rev. Hatch then gave a Charge to the congregation and offered the Prayer of Dedication. The congregation then joined in praise by singing, "*Lord, You Give the Great Commission*". A Benediction and Organ Postlude "*The God of Abraham*" closed the service.
- ? Building the new sanctuary was the result of the contributions through gifts and prayer of the entire body of believers, and through the Grace of Our Lord. The following church members were noted for their hard work and dedication to the project: Building Committee; Ken Ford, (Chairman), Fred Bohde, Richard Clark, Bob Fry, Brian Hinton, Len Jordan, Tom Kruse, Bill Pamplin, Ernest Smith, and the Decoration Committee; Mariann Holland (Chairman), Katherine Arnold, Doris Bellar, Doris Bigby, Sylvia Bohde, Ruby Fry, Lloyd Harris, Cathy Hatch, and Sharon Kruse. Rev. Jim Hatch served at the forefront in all endeavors.

Soli Deo Gloria... "To God Alone be the Glory"

◆ *HISTORICAL COMMITTEE* ◆

Rev. Jim Hatch, Eric Ehrhart, Lloyd Harris, Chairman, Mariann Holland, Louise Lang