

# The History of the Pine Castle Church of Christ

Circa 1950's

6123 S. Orange Ave.



The Church of Christ has its origin in the promise of Jesus, "I will build my Church". We stand firmly in the belief that the Bible is the inspired word of God and is the only standard that the Church must be guided by today.

We have no higher authority than Jesus. The teaching of all men whether they are a minister or elder must be confirmed by the inspired words found in the Bible. We believe in an open spirit of inquiry where every question demands an honest answer, and the Bible is accepted as Gods final word on all questions.

The Lord's church at Pine Castle began in December of 1948 when a group of about 14 dedicated Christians held a tent meeting at the corner of Hoffner and Orange Avenue. This meeting was conducted by Brother L. B. Chastain. At the close of the meeting the church began meeting in the Pine Castle Women's Club building on Orange Avenue. Sister Lois Babbitt remembered that T.S. (Tyler) and Della Craig started the congregation. Some of the earliest members included: The Craigs, Jack and Clara Eubanks, Newel and Mary Lou Banta, The Carrs, Robert and Florene Johnston, Bea Eubanks Heath, Lois Elizabeth Eubanks Babbitt and Joyce, her baby daughter.



Tyler and Della Craig



L. B. Chastain

In 1949 property was bought on Orange Avenue in Pine Castle, and a small building was erected. Brother Chastain continued to work with the congregation for about 1 ½ years, preaching on Sundays twice a month. On the Sundays Brother Chastain wasn't there, young men from the Florida Christian College came and preached. Among these men were Brothers Arvid McGuire, John Clark, Melvin Curry, Rex Smith, Lawton Wallace, Ferrel Jenkins, Maurice Netheree, and Tom Turner. Brothers Elmo Hazelwood, Horace Hartsell, and some of the teachers from Mount Dora Christian Home and

Bible School came and helped when needed. The first full time minister was Brother Arlen Kearce, who worked with the congregation during parts of 1957 and 1958. A home for the minister was also bought at this time on Fillmore Street.



Brothers Craig, Wild, & Baird



Group of members on Sunday morning



Classroom building being used for services until the auditorium is finished.



Group of children on Sunday morning:

Left to right, Chris Reel, Patty Banta, Carolyn Johnston,  
DuWayne Babbitt, Carolyn Banta, Shirley Banta, Joyce Babbitt,  
Kenny Reel, Howard Johnston, and David Reel



Several children pictured outside the building on Orange Avenue. You can see Paul Eubanks in front of the window.



In 1959 property was bought on Lancaster Road, where the church building is now located. An air-conditioned building with a seating capacity of 275 was built, and the first service in the new building was on Mother's Day 1960. Brother Bill Hunt had been preaching at the location on Orange Avenue continued working at the new building until sometime in 1961. Brother John Beasley came in 1961 and worked thru part of 1964. Brother Steve Kepley assumed the work at this time as the first full time minister at the Lancaster location and worked through the summer of 1966.

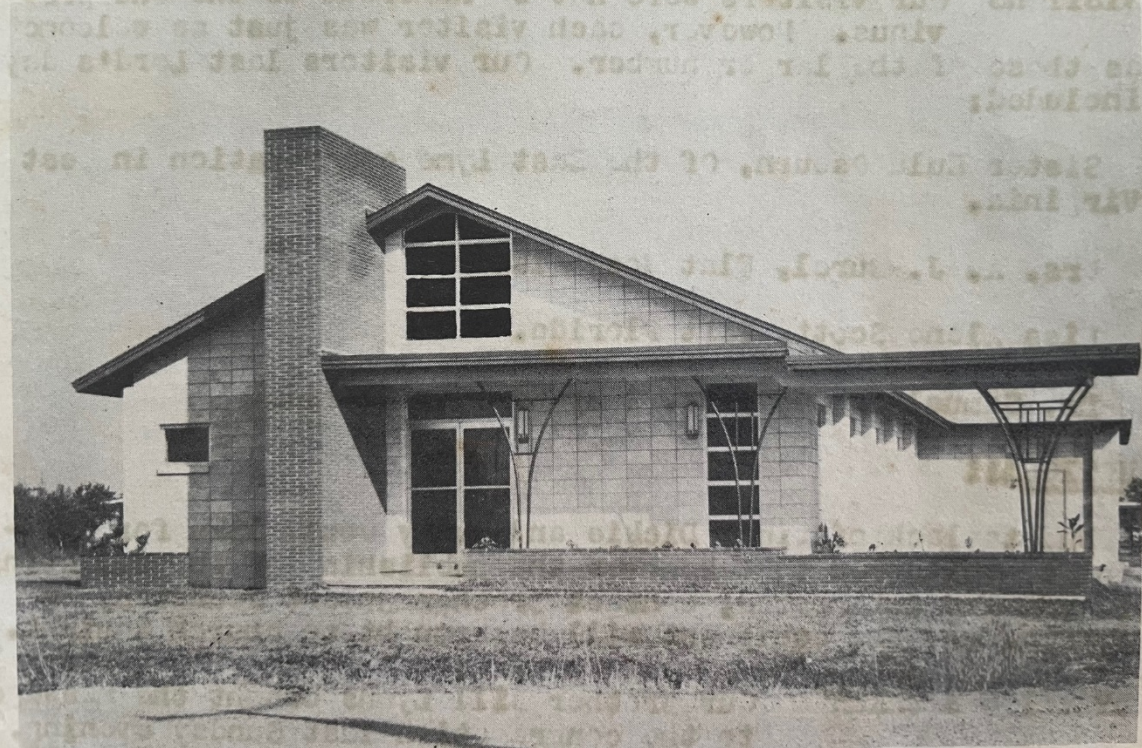


Bill Hunt



In September of 1966 Brother Charles Wright began work with the church and remained until 1978. It was during Brother Wright's ministry that a solid foundation was laid for future growth. The church did grow and a record attendance of 291 was reached on April 11, 1971. With these crowded conditions, the brethren decided it would be beneficial to conduct two Sunday morning worship services. Having two services began on March 5, 1972. The first service was 8:45-9:45, Bible Study at 10:00, and the second service at 10:55.

21 LANCASTER ROAD  
PINE CASTLE, FLORIDA



# Pine Castle Porter

*Jn. 10:3 "To him the porter openeth . . ."*



CHURCH OF CHRIST

The church continued to grow, and the classroom wing was expanded, and the property on Calypso Drive was purchased.



The building in 1973 (before the new auditorium was built)

During the summer of 1978 a new auditorium seating 475 was built adjoining the old building. The original building was converted to a fellowship hall and classrooms. Open house for the new building was held on December 3, 1978, with an attendance of 289.

About this time Brother Wright went to the Kissimmee congregation to work, and in the intervening years several Godly men filled the pulpit. In June 1989, one of our own, Brother Paul Eubanks, began part-time work with the church. Brother Eubanks had grown up in the Pine Castle congregation and had graduated from Alabama Christian College. He served at two congregations in Florida and several in Texas. The members rejoiced when he accepted the full-time work in December 1989.

When the Air Force base in Orlando closed it had a big impact on the church. Several very faithful families were lost. Through the eighties the church remained very faithful to God's Word and teachings. In the early nineties problems began in the church. A power struggle began, and division was the result. About half of the members left and went somewhere else to worship. For the members that remained it was a very difficult time, and many tears were shed. Through hard work and prayer, the church survived, and slowly grew. New elders were appointed, and a good foundation was laid to continue God's work.



Glenn Newton became the minister in July 1998. In December that year the congregation celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The celebration included a gospel meeting held by Paul Eubanks, one of the former ministers.

In 1998 a group of brethren from Haiti approached the congregation looking for a place to hold worship services in French Creole. The group's first minister was Miguel Jadis (several of his children are still worshipping at Pine Castle and his son, Rhone, serves as our current youth minister). Miguel was followed by Serge Vilarson as minister. Serge is currently in Haiti working to establish a new congregation. Today the Haitian brethren have several capable men to lead in their worship services. Among them is Alex Antenor. He is the first of our Haitian immigrants to serve as an elder at Pine Castle.



The early 2000's were productive years at the congregation. Bill Weaver served as the minister for ten years and helped the congregation get deeply involved in the work at Central Florida Bible Camp. The youths that attended as campers during the Weaver years are still with the congregation today and help make up our very involved young

adults. In addition to the work with the camp, the congregation completed 7 years of door knocking in the neighborhood to invite our friends and neighbors to worship at Pine Castle. Brother Weaver left to be the minister at the 6<sup>th</sup> Street Church of Christ in Pompano Beach, FL and Nathan Wheeler was selected to be the next minister. Nathan and his family worked with the congregation for 7 years before his father, Dan Wheeler took over. Dan serves as the current minister of the congregation. During the last few years, the congregation has started a program to provide Bibles to the local community.



The program is headed up by Glenn Halladay (one of our current elders) and offers Bibles “free-of-charge” to all who desire to read and study God’s word. Bible studies are also offered to the recipients. The Bibles are available in English, Spanish and French. Children’s Bibles are also available in English and Spanish.





Through the years many good works have been supported in full or cooperatively by the congregation. Many missionaries have been supported over the years. In 1975 the congregation began supporting Bill Sweeton in Belo Horizonte, Brazil and continued their support for ten years. Jimmie Hill was given support to evangelize in Ghana, Africa in 1983 and then again, he was supported for his work in American Samoa in 1987. Among the most recent mission efforts were Joey Treat and his family working in Micronesia. Joey and his family will officially end their work there by the end of 2023. Locally, from 1976-1980 the Christian Counseling Clinic was partially supported by

the congregation. The Mt Dora Christian Home and Bible School, the Accept Pregnancy Center and many other good works have also been supported. Today the congregation supports the Central Florida Bible Camp, World Bible School, Mt. Dora Christian Home and Bible School, Eastern European Missions, Florida School of Preaching and various evangelism efforts in Haiti. The neighborhood at 21 W. Lancaster Road has changed significantly since the congregation began meeting there. Today a significant number of Spanish speakers live near the building. Future plans for the congregation include starting a Spanish ministry at Pine Castle to meet the needs of our neighbors in the community.

**Ministers and Years that they Served (dates are approximate):**

L. B. Chastain	Tent Meeting, December 1948-1950
10 Men Shared the Pulpit from Florida Christian College and Mt. Dora Children's Home and Bible School	1950-1957
Arlen Kearce	First Full Time Minister 1957-1958
Don Stidham	1959-1960
Bill Hunt	Mother's Day 1960-July 1960
John Beasley	August 1960-July 1964
Steve Kepley	August 1964-July 1966
Charles Wright	August 1966-July 1978
Steve Bastin	August 1978-July 1979
Michael Stone	October 1979-April 1980
Joe Cross	July 13, 1980-October 1985
Ray Peters	February 26, 1986-April 12, 1987
Bob Spurlin	August 1987-July 5, 1989
Paul Eubanks	December 1989-August 1992
Jimmy Hill	April 1993-January 15, 1995
Robin Dickerson	July 1995-February 1998
Glenn Newton	July 12, 1998-May 2001
Bill Weaver	October 7, 2001-2011
Nathan Wheeler	2011-2018
Dan Wheeler	2018-Present

## Elders

Joe Norwood

Newell Banta

Dick Rodgers

Fred Bogle

Bob Tritt

David Sloan

Ray Radford

Charles Wright



Lloyd Bush

*Brother Bush served as an elder from March 1973 until his death in December 2022 (over 49 years).*

Tony Sloan

Glenn Halladay

John Bryant

Carl Watson

Alex Antenor

Appointed to serve in 2022

## **Youth Ministers (Part-time)**

**Nathan Wheeler**

**Elvis Galbreath**

**Jay Watson**

**Midly Jadis**

**Rhone Jadis**