

Why did you come to Trinity?

Trinity Evangelical Free Church came into being 20 years ago for many of the same reasons you came to Trinity. In **April 1983**, Pat Ferguson shared with me a vision from the Lord concerning a new work He wanted to begin in Eustis. As we prayed and sought the Lord's will, we also shared with other couples. For 2 weeks, Jim and Pat Ferguson, Bill and Marijane Sprouse, Gary and Pam Stoltz, Dale and I met together in prayer. On **May 20, 1983**, we felt led to begin a new church in Eustis.

The Sprouse House

We called Jim Young as our first Pastor. He and his wife Sharon had two children, Angela and Stephen. Trinity E. Free Church met for worship for the first time on **May 29, 1983**, at the home of Bill and Marijane Sprouse. Those were "great" Sundays: worship services in the living room, children's church in the bedrooms, covered dish dinners and swimming afterwards. We quickly grew too large for the Sprouse House. Jim is a gifted teacher of God's Word. Our hearts and minds were like sponges, soaking up the truth contained in the Bible.

The Women's Club

July 17, 1983, we began services at the Women's Club in Eustis. Although these facilities were sufficient (for a time), there was no room for children's ministry. Jack Prickett offered the use of his professional office building to house children's Sunday School classes and a nursery.

The Citrus Avenue Church

September 25, 1983, we voted to purchase the old Calvary Baptist Church on Citrus Ave., contingent upon receiving \$25,000.00 as a down payment in 30 days. The Lord graciously provided the money. Our first Christmas Eve service was held at the Citrus Avenue Church, although we didn't "officially" take possession of the property until **January 1, 1984**. Finally we had room for a church office, Sunday School rooms, a kitchen, a fellowship hall and a place to meet during the week. **BUT NOT FOR LONG!** **March 4, 1984**, we purchased a house just north of the church for additional Sunday School classes. **The summer of 1984**, we hired John Glad to be our first Youth Pastor. The upstairs of that house became John's home and it was nicknamed **the Glad House**. John served our youth for almost 6 months. **In September 1984**, we offered to pay \$92,000.00 for 7.09 acres of land on Abrams Road. Again, the Lord provided the money necessary for us to purchase this property within months.

May 8, 1985, Phil Davis accepted our call to minister as our Co-Pastor, along with his wife Judy and their 3 children. Phil shared pastoral duties with Jim, he led studies on discipleship and he was able to guide our by-laws committee to complete their work. After a year's ministry with us, Phil and Judy left to form an E. Free Church in Longwood.

August 12, 1985, Doug Edwards accepted our call as Pastor of Youth Development, along with his wife Colleen. Doug and Colleen's ministry at Trinity, in Eustis and beyond, will only be evaluated properly in heaven. Numerous young people have been brought to the Lord and many more exposed to the gospel because of this one ministry. Doug's community focus and outreach has reaped results far beyond Trinity. Doug, Colleen and their staff of volunteers have been ministers of the gospel to much of Lake County.

October 1987, David Whitney accepted our call as Ministries Pastor, along with his wife Cherelyn. His focus was to help equip us as lay people to begin the work of ministry. David was especially effective doing “one on one” discipleship.

The Abrams Road Church

December 1987 our present building on Abrams Road was completed.

Shortly after we moved into this facility, our first Pastor, Jim Young, accepted a call to a church in San Jose, California. David Whitney served as our Interim Pastor for 18 months as we searched for a Senior Pastor. David and Cherelyn eventually left Trinity to begin a church in Maryland. Paula Parker served as Director of Children’s Ministries sometime during this time.

December 1989, David Stone became our Pastor, along with his wife Sharon and their two children. Besides revising our by-laws, two vitally significant ministries began during this time. AWANA is a program that ministers to children from 3 years of age to 5th grade. NDY (Not Done Yet) is a program for retired people who meet for fellowship, Bible Study and service. Pat Sword joined our staff as Church Secretary in 1990. Sometime during this time frame, K.B. Garrison served as our Coordinator of Ministries and Craig Lee served as our Pastor of Ministries. David Stone left Trinity in January 1994 to begin a new church.

Changing pastors is always a difficult time in the life of a church, but the Lord graciously sent a wonderful man to be our Interim Pastor. Al Bishop provided the pastoral care and leadership we needed until our new pastor could be found (I think he was hiding in California).

September 1, 1994 Dave Strem accepted our call as Senior Pastor, along with his wife Katie and their 3 children. As Jesus used parables, word pictures, and stories to help His audience understand and remember His message, Dave has used many, many things to illustrate the point of his sermons. Who could ever forget the huge boat motor or the beautiful horse used to grab our attention? Dave’s preaching style and his use of technology, undergirded by the unchanging truths of the Word, always enlightens my mind and causes me to desire a deeper walk with the Lord.

1996 Al Bishop returned to Trinity as Director of Pastoral Care. This time he brought his helpmate, Ollie, with him. Al cares for and tends the flock at Trinity. Hospital visitation and counseling are only 2 of his many duties.

August 5, 2001 our current staff was completed when Ed Holt accepted our call as Director of Young Family Development, along with his wife Sheryl and their 2 boys. Ed oversees and facilitates our Children’s Ministries. He also tries to build relationships with and disciple our young families, to help them better do the work of ministry, whither that ministry is at home, at work or at church.

January 2002 we moved into the Impact Center. Again the Lord has provided for our needs and given us room for our AWANA program, for our youth, for adult classes and more flexibility to do Kidzone.

From Overheads to Power Point

No history of Trinity would be complete without mentioning our Worship Team. From the beginning, our worship service has been “different”. We have tried to provide an atmosphere where we could express our praise for **who God is** and for **what He has done** for us, as well as express our great love for our God and for our Savior the Lord

Jesus Christ. I am grateful to the people of my generation (and older), who have allowed us to design a worship experience that is often more appealing to a younger generation.

Many of the musicians who shared their musical gifts with us are still faithfully playing or singing, Sunday after Sunday. Pam Stoltz, Beth Granger, and Mary Carter were part of the Worship Team at the Women's Club. Terry Porter and Steve and Michele Troesch joined us at the Citrus Avenue Church. Occasionally Hank Schneider played his bass guitar and George Madden played the saw. Cora Burnham did her part by changing the overheads for the overhead projector. After 7 years of leading the worship, I turned this ministry over to Terri Cleaver, who was later joined by Rodney Mashburn and Melinda Lee. The Lord continues to add talented musicians to Trinity.

The Book of Acts Continues

The names and dates of the last 20 years at Trinity don't begin to capture the pure, unexplained excitement that has been ours as we have lived and experienced those 20 years. It has almost been like living in the book of Acts. We have seen God do amazing things. We have seen God provide money for pastors, buildings and ministries. We have seen God bring talented, gifted lay people to Trinity and He has motivated and inspired them to minister (**unpaid**) in every imaginable way at Trinity and around the world, from Kidzone to Guatemala, fulfilling our goal at Trinity, equipped lay people doing the work of ministry. **Hundreds of volunteers have made Trinity what it is today.**

Just like the book of Acts, these 20 years have brought not only joy, but also sorrow, disappointment and sometimes disagreement. But **"thru it all"** God has been faithful. He has used the difficult times to mature us, to force us to depend upon Him and Him alone, and to help us refocus on His vision and His purpose for Trinity.

The foundation (I Corinthians 3) has been laid at Trinity:

- The authority of God's Word - Do you **believe** it?
- The sovereignty of God - Do you **trust** Him even when things are **BAD**?
- The sufficiency of Christ's work on the cross – Are you **relying** upon Christ alone for your salvation?
- The resurrection of Jesus Christ – Are you being **changed** into His likeness by the power of His resurrection?

We have begun to build on that foundation. Let us pray that what we are building will survive the scrutiny of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as He walks among us at Trinity (Revelation 2,3).

What do the next 20 years hold for Trinity? The next 20 years are in God's hands, just like the first 20 years have been guided by and provided for by the Lord. Let us keep our eyes on the Lord, seek His agenda and join Him in bringing a lost world to salvation. I believe the next 20 years at Trinity will be even more exciting than the last 20.

Let us praise Him today for what He is going to do!

Eileen Johnson
August 31, 2003