

The History of Moorings Presbyterian Church

Our congregation's genesis was quite small in comparison to where we stand today. Only eight people were present on November 14, 1965 when the first worship service was held at Naples High School. The Reverend David C. Moss was the organizing pastor and the majority of these first worshippers were members of his family! Nevertheless, the chain of events which gave rise to our first building happened quickly. Aided by a grant from the General Assembly, Synod and Presbytery, and guided by realtor and first Clerk of Session Milton Link, the groundbreaking for the first Sanctuary happened with eighty-six friends in attendance. The first service was held here on Harbour Drive on June 12, 1966. Remarkably, with thanksgiving to God, the people of Moorings Presbyterian became self-supporting in three short years on June 1, 1969.

The growth of the church continued unabated. On June 16, 1971 ground was broken for a Fellowship Hall and a wing on the west side of the sanctuary. Pastor David Moss died suddenly on January 24, 1975, devastating the entire congregation and community. Over two thousand people attended his funeral. Nevertheless, our congregation's faith in God remained strong. The Rev. Dr. Charles Webster became pastor on April 13, 1975, and continued to shepherd the growth of this church. During this period the campus continued to grow including a new Christian Education Building, sanctuary expansion, Anderson Music Center, and Webster Chapel.

In 1985, after ten very successful years, Charlie Webster announced his retirement. The Silver Anniversary history quotes his reference from Psalm 127:1, "Except the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain that build it." This scripture was the same text used for worship on June 11, 2006, the day the congregation acted to move forward on the last phase of sanctuary plans.

The Rev. Dr. Robert Palmer followed as pastor and served the church from June of 1987 until his retirement in July of 1991.

In November of 1993 The Reverend Bruce Ingles was called as pastor and served until January of 2003. Again, due to the generosity of members the completion of the church campus moved forward. A new Music Center was built in 1997 and in 2006 renamed

the Crofts Music Center, a Memorial Garden was dedicated, a new gymnasium-Baker Family Life Center was completed. The Baker Family Life Center was built to more strict specifications so that it would be available after a hurricane or other type of disaster to help with community recovery. The completion of the new Moss Hall followed in the fall of 2002. Moss Hall has become a favorite meeting space for community groups and church activities. This left only the sanctuary to complete the master plan envisioned by so many since 1965. The Rev. Dr. Charles M. Cary arrived in 2004, revitalizing and launching the plans for a new Sanctuary in the year 2006. Chuck continues as Pastor leading the congregation toward a bright future.

For over 40 years, Moorings Presbyterian Church has been blessed by a nucleus of Christ-like members whose generosity and hard work reflect God's goodness. The current membership includes over 1,200 regular and affiliate members. There is great anticipation and excitement by what God has in store for the Moorings Presbyterian Church through this campus as members, visitors and friends grow in their faith and together reach out in Christ's name.

Let all the people sing doxology!