

Help Tell the Story of the 1916 Bunnell Seventh Day Adventist Church

1916 Seventh Day Adventist Church - Bunnell / Espanola

Did You or Your Family Attend?

The Flagler County Historical Society and American Association of University Women (AAUW) Flagler need your help to tell the story of “The Church Beautiful”

Built in 1916 and once located on S. Anderson Street in Bunnell, the church was later moved to Espanola and served as “The Glorious Church in Jesus Christ”

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The Flagler County Historical Society and American Association University of Women (AAUW) Flagler County Branch Want YOU to Help Tell the Story of this Historic Church

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Bunnell, FL – Did you or your family attend the 1916 Bunnell Seventh Day Adventist Church? Do you have stories, memories, or photos you’d like to share? If so, the Flagler County Historical Society (FCHS) and American Association of University Women (AAUW) Flagler County Branch want to hear from you.

This historic church has quite the tale; but we want to know the rest of the story. The church was built in 1916, in Bunnell, on South Anderson Street. As reported by *The Palm Coast News-Tribune*, the pioneering families of Lucas Johnson, W.A. Mach and O.C. Mosby worked to build the church. Hand crafted benches were hewn “with love and with care”, from rough cypress. A.H. Evers was the church’s first pastor. The church boasted an initial membership of 35. Because Seventh Day Adventists held services on Saturday, other denominations, who did not yet have a permanent church building, were able to conduct their services in “The Church Beautiful” on Sunday. First Baptist Church members held services there until 1927.

The FCHS and AAUW Flagler discovered a connection between the church and local suffragist, Alice Scott Abbott. She was the church’s music director. Mrs. Abbott would often pen letters to Mr. T.A. Verdenius and have them published in *The Bunnell Home Builder*. In November of 1917, she writes about the 1916 Bunnell Seventh Day Adventist Church. She

writes, “It took my breath away” as the tithing report for the church was read aloud. When she “spoke out in Meeting”, she asked, “how many hundreds of years have you been tithing to get such a sum?” The total tithing was reported as \$2,250.00 and it had taken “just three months” to raise. Her reporting notes “four or five families” had sold potatoes, corn, and “\$200.00 worth of watermelons” to raise money for the church.

As hard times fell on Bunnell, members of the historic church moved away and by 1930 the church had disbanded. Twenty-five years later, St. Thomas Episcopal Church bought the little church and held services until 1966. As *The Palm Coast News-Tribune* recounts, the church was then purchased by Mrs. Ruth Miller of Flagler Beach. At some point, she sold the church and it was moved to Espanola. Once again, the church was transformed and became “The Glorious Church in Jesus Christ”, with Pastor James C. Hill at the pulpit.

We know there is more to the story of “The Church Beautiful”. If you, your family members, and/or friends attended the church in Bunnell and/or Espanola, we want to hear from you. Help us fill in the pages of the church’s history. Members of the FCHS and AAUW Flagler presented plans to bring the church home to Bunnell on September 9, 2020, before the Flagler Board of County Commission. The vote was a unanimous “Yes” to proceed. The FCHS and AAUW Flagler are diligently working to relocate, restore, rededicate, and reimagine the church to Bunnell, next to the Holden House Museum. Help us tell the story!

If you have any information, please contact the Flagler County Historical Society at 386 437 0600 (phone) or email: FlaglerCountyHistoricalSociety@gmail.com.

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