

RIVERSIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 1976 - 1985



OUR COMMUNITY

Cocoa Beach celebrated the country's 200th anniversary with a huge parade and fireworks. As the Shuttle program began, neighborhoods started filling up with the return of companies such as Martin-Marietta, McDonnell Douglas and Harris. In 1981, hundreds of tourists watched as the Space Shuttle Columbia made its maiden voyage on April 12. For the first time, the entire orbiter returned to earth to be used again. The next year, Dr. Sally Ride became the first woman in Space during the second Shuttle mission, and Cocoa Beach residents marveled to see the Shuttle return on the back of a Boeing 747 as it flew up the beach from Patrick AFB to Kennedy Space Center. The BIC (Business Improvement Council) was formed to promote businesses in the city, and in 1977, the Shops of Cottage Row, housed in 1940s cottages, began Friday evening shopping featuring music and food to spur interest in the downtown. Tragedy struck in 1981 when the five-story Harbor Cay Condominium collapsed, killing eleven people and injuring 23 others. The rescue effort, clean-up, and investigation of the accident kept A-1-A closed to through traffic for several days.



OUR CHURCH

Rev. L. Rex Pedlow began serving as Pastor in October 1976, bringing his Irish brogue and his love of music. "Hymn Sings" were instituted along with "GEAR Nights" (Great Evenings at Riverside) featuring food, fellowship, talent shows, and dramas. In 1980, the Watson Bell Choir was organized. The physical church expanded with the \$75,000 purchase of land along the north property line in 1977. Construction of Fellowship Hall, with an estimated cost of \$275,00, began six years later, and the building was dedicated in March 1984. The "Super Chefs," under the leadership of George Hanlon, was formed in 1983 to provide great meals for the church's 536 members. In 1985, Riverside moved from the Northeast Presbytery to the newly-formed Central Florida Presbytery.



OUR PEOPLE

Pastor Rex Pedlow was born in Belfast, Ireland and served for 19 years at St. John's Presbyterian church in Bangor, Ireland, before moving to Phoenixville, Pennsylvania in 1969. Six years later, he brought his slight, delightful Irish accent to Cocoa Beach. As he began serving Riverside, Pastor Pedlow became a familiar sight along A1A, where he could be seen riding his bicycle to and from work every day. He served as our pastor until 1986, when he and his wife Rita returned to their native Ireland.

