

**Presbytery of St. Augustine
Memorial Resolution
The Rev. Dr. Jack Wilson Hurse
1928-2020**

Whereas the Rev. Dr. Jack Wilson Hurse was born on October 15, 1928, and entered into eternal rest on March 20, 2020, we the Presbytery of St. Augustine do resolve to give thanks for Jack's life and ministry with the following memorial:

Jack grew up in Gainesville, Florida. A talented athlete, he lettered in four different sports at Gainesville High School and served as captain of the football team before earning his diploma in 1947. He then began undergraduate studies at the University of Florida.

Although Jack grew up attending Gainesville's First United Methodist Church, it was not until his third year in college that his faith really came alive. At age 21, Jack (as he later put it) "fully placed his faith in Christ" as personal Savior and Lord. Shortly afterward, he became aware of a strong sense of call to the ministry. Jack transferred to Bob Jones University and graduated with a BA in Religion in 1954.

Further study led Jack to the West Coast and eventually to the American Baptist denomination. He earned an M.Div. at the American Baptist Seminary of the West in 1959, and was ordained an American Baptist pastor. For the next fifteen years Jack pastored congregations in Los Angeles, in West Hollywood, and elsewhere throughout California.

A committed evangelical, Jack believed strongly in the Great Commission of Matthew 28. Congregations grew steadily under his leadership. His zeal for sharing the gospel eventually led him to take a post as Crusade Director for the Billy Graham Association, where he served from 1970-1976. During the 1970s he also worked with Apollo 15 astronaut James Irwin to establish a ministry called the High Flight Foundation.

Jack resumed his studies at Fuller Theological Seminary, earning a D.Min. in 1978. He ended his time on the West Coast with pastorates in Santa Clara, California, and Oak Harbor, Washington.

After retiring from full-time ministry in 1987, Jack returned to his boyhood home of Gainesville, FL. He reconnected with and eventually married his high school sweetheart, Nita Nell Bohannon.

Jack still felt a call to ministry, but there were no American Baptist congregations in his part of Florida. Past experiences on the West Coast showed him the way forward. During his time with Billy Graham, Jack had attended a Presbyterian church in California. He now decided to try the First Presbyterian Church of Gainesville. Jack became active at the church and was soon received into membership as a minister member of the Presbytery of St. Augustine.

In 1989, Jack began his first call within the Presbytery, at Bethlehem Presbyterian Church in Archer, Florida. It must have been an interesting experience. Jack had once pastored a 600-member congregation, and he had helped lead evangelistic crusades that moved millions. He had literally been a Hollywood pastor. Now he was preaching from a vintage Victorian pulpit, in an old historic church with about 60 members!

Bethlehem may have been a change for Jack, but he carried out an important ministry there. He excelled at pastoral care, and members continued to reflect decades later on the way he helped them through times of struggle and loss. His preaching, delivered in a resonant voice honed during his years with Billy Graham, held the congregation spellbound. And then there was his irrepressible sense of humor. He once reminisced that a certain lady had told him: “My name is Graves. I’m the last place you’ll ever go.” Without missing a beat, Jack responded: “My name is Hurse. I’m what takes you there.”

After a year and a half, Jack made the difficult decision to move on from Bethlehem, citing the need for the church to have a resident pastor who lived in Archer. He then served as interim associate pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Gainesville. During his final years he was also active in ministry at St. Andrews Anglican Church in Gainesville.

Wherefore the Presbytery of St. Augustine does adopt this memorial resolution, giving thanks for the life and ministry of Jack Wilson Hurse, and resolves that this resolution be spread upon the minutes of the 2020 Fall Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of St. Augustine.