

**A HISTORY**

**of**

**STONE CHURCH OF  
WILLOW GLEN**

**Presbyterian Church (USA)**

**1947-1997**



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WILLOW GLEN

WILLOW GLEN CHURCH (USA)

1907-1987

## AUTHOR'S DISCLAIMER

Any writer of history selects what will be written and what will be left unwritten. Therefore, this history is by definition a selection out of the varied, complex, tangled and fascinating life that has gone on within the stone walls for fifty years. In one sense I cannot apologize for the choices I have made. They've been made out of my experience and understanding, augmented by the reading I've done and the conversations I've had. I've made every effort to cover as much of the life of this church as I could, but the reader will undoubtedly ask, "Why didn't she...?" The answer is, that I ran out of time—as every historian with a deadline must. I've mentioned many names, and I have left many names unmentioned. I apologize ahead of time to everyone who feels left out; Stone has had so many leaders, so many fantastic leaders, and I have barely begun the acknowledgements.

In the future, another historian will build on this one, just as I have built on the writings of the past. Someone, for example, will do the definitive description of the building itself, all its stones, and its construction, all the memorial gifts which have gone into its creation.

Finally, I want to pay tribute to anyone who has ever been a Clerk of Session or of the Presbytery. I have read forty-plus years of Stone Church Session minutes, and several years of the Minutes of the Presbytery of San Jose. Those men and women who have taken the time to write accurately and carefully about the life of the church have my admiration and deep thanks.

Alice Elizabeth Thorn  
Spring 1997



Stone Church Chapel and Social Hall, circa 1950

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## THE BEGINNINGS

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It was May 4, 1943, when the Presbytery of San Jose first mentioned the possibility of work by the Presbyterian Church in the Willow Glen area. The Presbytery authorized the use of National Missions funds to "study the field in Willow Glen, and if it should seem advisable, to proceed with the organization of a Sunday School." (Coincidentally, the Rev. Thomas Simpson was seated that day as a corresponding member of the Presbytery, and gave "an inspiring and challenging address on Spiritual Advance.")

At this time, the city of San Jose had a population of approximately 70,000 people, and the Presbyterian church had two congregations within the city--First Presbyterian on North Fourth Street in downtown San Jose, where membership would reach 1,115 by 1945, and Westminster Presbyterian on Shasta Avenue at the Alameda, with a membership of about 850. The city of San Jose had not had a new church in 50 years.

The pastor of First Presbyterian Church, San Jose, The Rev. Dr. A. H. Saunders, suggested the work in Willow Glen. Dr. Saunders had been pastor of First Presbyterian since 1936. Saunders also was the moving force behind the start of Foothill Presbyterian Church on the east side of San Jose, organized on July 30, 1944. Dr. Charles F. Ensign had charge of the Foothills Sunday School for some time and presented the petition to Presbytery requesting organization of a church there.

The Presbytery of San Jose at this time had 19 churches, three of which were Japanese congregations not functioning because of World War II internments. Churches in Santa Clara and in Milpitas had died in the late thirties and early forties. The most recent church organized within the Presbytery had been a Filipino congregation in Salinas in 1943. Previous to that the Presbytery had chartered Trinity Presbyterian in Santa Cruz in 1938. Presbytery minutes show that it was a struggle to raise money from local churches for Presbyterian mission. So when Foothill and Stone were organized, it had been some time since a small Presbytery had seen expansion within its borders. (In 1997 the Presbytery has 45 churches.)

The Willow Glen church was begun while the United States was still enmeshed in World War II. San Jose was an agricultural, small town, with a

population of about 70,000. Street car lines running from downtown had stopped at Minnesota and Lincoln Avenues as their southern boundary as recently as the mid-1930's. The San Jose Municipal Airport would not be dedicated until February of 1949. In 1945, six high schools had served the valley for 50 years, one each for San Jose (the old San Jose High School), Santa Clara, Campbell, Los Gatos, Mountain View and Sunnyvale.

Willow Glen itself was a separately incorporated town until annexed by San Jose on October 1, 1936. Lincoln Avenue, formerly known as El Abra, was a two-lane, tree-lined street. The city boundaries were marked by Malone Avenue, just south of the location of Stone Church.

The study of possibilities in Willow Glen led to a second resolution by the Presbytery of San Jose on April 18, 1944, that "the Presbyterian Church in the San Jose area should be expanded by the opening of a work in the Willow Glen Area." The recommendations adopted included securing a person to undertake the work at the earliest possible date, that a place of meeting be secured after consultation with the sessions of the First and Westminster churches of San Jose, that the presbytery have final approval of a permanent location, and that money from the National Missions Funds again be used. The minutes of the Westminster Presbyterian Church Session meeting in May 1944 record a "Discussion of starting a church and Sunday School at [the] insistence of the Rev. Clyde Smith of the Board of National Missions. No resolution or action taken."

It is interesting that while the first references in Presbytery minutes to the Foothill work are to the starting of a church, the references to the work in Willow Glen are to the starting of a Sunday School, or, simply, a "work." The Willow Glen development was a mission enterprise of the Presbytery; the Presbytery located the land, and began the building before a congregation was formally organized. In the very beginning, the Presbytery evidently did not look ahead to a church in Willow Glen.

According to Jeannette VanderPloeg's earlier history of Stone, "On the evening of May 5, 1944 the Rev. S. C. Potter, Chairman of the National

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Missions Committee [of the Presbyterian Church] and Dr. and Mrs. Charles F. Ensign, a retired Presbyterian minister and his wife living in Willow Glen, met at the home of the Rev. and Mrs. William C. Spaan, also retired and living in Willow Glen, for a prayer service--and the Willow Glen Church was born.

"Dr. Ensign was asked to take charge and he secured the use of the Christian Assembly chapel at 1565 Lincoln Avenue for the first service. On Sunday afternoon June 4, 1944 at 3:00 Dr. Saunders preached the first sermon. Twenty-three persons were present and the offering was \$7.50. Services and prayer meetings were continued until August 27."

By July 26, 1944, the Presbytery again recorded discussion of the "needs and opportunity of starting a Sunday School in the Willow Glen area," with the need for a suitable building paramount. "The Trustees were authorized to purchase three lots located on the southwest corner of Lincoln Avenue and Clark way, price not to exceed \$3,250." In this wartime when all Japanese Presbyterians had been sent to internment camps, and the Presbytery was caring for three church properties within its bounds until the Japanese returned, the Willow Glen project was given use of \$800 of the "Japanese Fund" as a down payment, "the same to be refunded when the Japanese resume their work in Presbytery."

According to Miss VanderPloeg, "This project, however, did not continue without opposition. A petition signed by 66 property owners objecting to the erection of the church was filed in the office of the City Clerk. Along with the usual arguments that property values would depreciate, that parking of cars and singing of hymns would disturb sleep Sunday morning and night, one property owner rebelled at the idea of having to watch funerals being held right across the street."

When the Rev. Tom Simpson came as pastor, he "promised that as long as he should remain no funeral services would be held at the church nor would there be a bell to disturb them."

By October 17, 1944, the need to finance the Willow Glen work became urgent. At that meeting, the Presbytery established a Church Extension Fund to raise money locally, also applying to the Board of National Missions for a grant of \$1600, while authorizing the Trustees of

Presbytery to borrow \$1600 to complete the financing of the lots. In addition, they applied to the Board of National Missions for a grant of \$1600 and a loan of \$1600 for the building. The Presbytery also made a missionary appropriation of \$900 for the year 1944-1945.

One year later, October 16, 1945, the National Missions Committee report included information that the corner lot had been purchased, and that the Rev. Thomas Simpson was now working in the field. "A sign to be placed on the lot announcing plans has been ordered from Foster and Kleiser." Plans now were definitely calling the project a church, as an architect "skilled in church design" was working on the project, and applications for a grant of \$10,000 as the beginning of funds for the erection of a sanctuary, as well as for loans from the Board of National Missions were in the works. Estimated cost of the sanctuary was \$75,000. By January 22, 1946, the Trustees of the Presbytery of San Jose were made the Trustees of the new Willow Glen Church until it could be organized. Trustees were authorized to borrow \$25,000 for the construction of the first unit of the Willow Glen Church. The Trustees included the Rev. W. C. Spaan, Stated Clerk of the Presbytery, and Elder W. F. Miller, first Clerk of Session for Stone.

On October 1, 1946, Presbytery Trustees reported having made application to the OPA (war-time Office of Price Administration) for a permit to construct the first unit. Also, the National Missions Committee reported, "Ground has been broken for construction of the first unit of the Willow Glen Church. The Rev. Tom Simpson reports that he has an office in a temporary structure erected by the contractor, and is therefore officially now on the premises. It is planned to hold a service on the grounds on World Wide Communion Sunday, even though no roof is overhead. God has blessed the efforts to begin this important work in a rapidly expanding area." The temporary structure was dubbed "the Carpenter's shop."

The growth of a new church did not happen without effort. In a letter dated December 29, 1945, Tom Simpson wrote that while confined at home with a very severe cold, "I have prepared almost 3000 packets of literature for the three thousand homes around Clark and Lincoln. . . . Just as soon as this literature arrives and some returns come in I will be on my way from door to door. I am confident that we will secure a working number of friends, from these 3000."

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The first prayer meeting was held at the home of Mrs. Esther Brown on March 22, 1946. On April 14 a worship service was held in the St. Francis Chapel, 1139 Minnesota Avenue. On April 21, an Easter service was held in the old Willow Glen Theater. By June 7 the church site was dedicated and on June 9 ground broken for the chapel, which was to cost \$22,000.

By January 28, 1947, Presbytery minutes record that "A petition signed by some fifty persons requested Presbytery to appoint a committee to organize a church in Willow Glen. The organization of the Willow Glen Church took place on March 2, 1947, at 3:00 pm, with forty-five members. (Eleven by letter from First Church, San Jose; twelve by letter from Westminster Church, San Jose; eight by letter from other churches, and fourteen on confession of faith.)"

The church was named The Stone Church of Willow Glen (Presbyterian).

Elders elected at this meeting were William F. Miller, A. P. Miller, C. J. Finley, Ellis A. Pangborn, Theron Connett, R. Stewart, Edwin Kamuf, W. E. Campbell and T. E. Mickelson. The first four had been elders in other churches; the others were ordained to the Stone Church positions.

The first Clerk of Session was W. F. Miller, who served initially from 1947 until sometime in 1952, when health problems forced him to relinquish his duties. He was followed by Charles J. Petersen, then by Leo A. Dierks, Jr. Miller returned in January of 1954 and remained until September 1958, when he resigned from the session because of a change in General Assembly rules, probably the abolishment of permission to elect Elders for life terms on sessions.

The Presbytery appointed the Rev. T. H. Simpson stated supply for six months or until the congregation decided to extend a call to a permanent pastor. By October 7, the congregational call to the Rev. Simpson was approved by the presbytery. Also on October 7, the congregation thanked the presbytery for its efforts and support on their behalf, and indicated their intention to be an independent church from that time on. (At that same presbytery meeting, the death of Dr. Saunders was marked by a memorial resolution.)

By the time the Willow Glen church was chartered,

San Jose was at the beginning of phenomenal post-World War II growth which would change the landscape of the valley forever. By 1950, the population of the city was 95,000; in 1960 it had doubled to 204,200. From 1950 to 1969, during the tenure of "Dutch" Hamann as city manager, the city had 1,377 annexations of land. South Willow Glen was annexed just before he became city manager in 1950, and the boundaries of the city moved to the south.

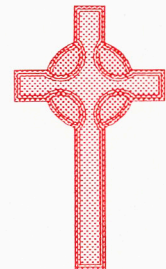
With the growth of the city came growth for the Stone Church of Willow Glen. By the first annual meeting on January 25, 1948, the church had a membership of 112, with a Sunday School numbering 109 pupils and teachers. By 1949, membership was 186. The church had steady growth through the fifties, and by 1960 its membership was 985.

Throughout this period of growth, Stone Church struggled with finding space for Sunday School. At a mid-year 1952 congregational meeting, the Rev. Simpson reported a Sunday School of 308 with an average attendance of 170. In 1956, the Sunday School numbered 359.

The church moved to double services in November 1953. (Session agreed to pay the organist extra for playing at both services.)

Growth continued with the arrival of Bill Perdue in 1959. He remembers, "It was a time of almost phenomenal growth in membership; it seemed that almost every week some person or persons indicated a desire to unite with the church." Growth peaked in 1963 when a membership of 1,206 was recorded.

Perdue made a change in the membership process, however. "Whereas Mr. Simpson issued an invitation to membership each Sunday prior to the sermon, and individuals came forward and were received by the Session right there, at my urging Session agreed to institute classes of instruction with required attendance prior to joining the church."



## THE LAND

Since part of the reality of today's Stone Church is its lack of land, it is instructive to trace the history of the church's land dealings.

Stone was begun with the purchase in 1945 of three lots at the corner of Clark and Lincoln, numbers 1, 2, and 36 in a section called Lincoln Gates. These lots were chosen by members of the Presbytery, with Tom Simpson already involved--see letter below.

The original purchase by Presbytery of just three lots was a severe limitation. An urgent need for more land was apparent to those struggling with how to build the church. In October of 1948 there were two plans for expansion of the property by purchasing land along Lincoln Avenue or on Roycott. In October 1948 Session learned that Mr. Dexter, owner of lot 3 on Lincoln (today's Lincoln House), was not interested in selling. Session authorized a second offer to him, as well as negotiations to buy lot 4 at the corner of Lincoln and Roycott. On October 10, Dexter was reported to be uninterested in selling lot 3, on which his residence was located. The owner of the vacant lot (where the duplex is today) was asking \$7500. Session authorized Elder Brannan to negotiate further with Dexter and to get an option on the corner lot number 4. Both of these actions failed, and Stone was unable to expand its holdings along Lincoln Ave.

In December of that same year, Session voted to secure the lot adjoining the church land on Clark Way to be used for Sunday School expansion over a term of three or more years during the finance campaign for the sanctuary, and endorsed the action of Elder Campbell in trying to purchase the lot (35) owned by Mr. Cimino. This purchase was successful, and the December 19, 1948 congregational meeting moved to borrow \$5,000 at the bank for 90 days to pay for the lot. (The original three lots had cost \$3,150 total just three years before; there was unhappiness at the rise in the price.) The original idea of the purchase was that a Sunday School building would be put on it, to be finished later as a manse.

Evidently the church had tried to buy lot 35 as early as December 1945; there was also apparently some tension in the dealings with Mr. Cimono. A letter dated December 29, from Mr.



**Lot Plan of east end of Lincoln Gates, Block 2.** Lots are numbered around the block, beginning at the corner of Lincoln and Clark and ending with Lot No. 36 on Clark.

Simpson on letterhead of the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church, offices in San Francisco, asks that when the survey is done on the Presbytery purchase of lots 1, 2 and 36, that the surveyor "run your lines over lot 35." Simpson goes on, "While we do not own that lot and the owner asks more than we can pay, we think he will eventually take a reasonable price. Will you therefore WITHOUT DRIVING IN ANY PERMANENT STAKES, make some marks on the sidewalk to indicate to our Architect your points, in case this lot ever does come into our possession.

"I have no desire to create in the mind of this lot the idea that we cannot get along without it. . . But if he will eventually sell to us it will give us a little more room for landscaping and other things. So please disturb him just as little as you can. Perhaps it might offend him to have us make any presumptuous marks on HIS PROPERTY."

At this beginning of Stone Church, the need for more space included a concern about adequate parking, as two elders were asked in May 12,



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1952, "to check with the San Jose Building Commission to learn whether or not we had sufficient area to legally park the membership's cars." At a congregational meeting that summer, the congregation was told that the new building would take one-half of the current parking area unless the church acquired adjacent property. Purchase of that property would give an additional 20 feet of parking after the new structure was built.

In September of 1953, there was again discussion in session of a possible purchase of adjacent property on Clark Way. Elders were delegated to talk with Mrs. Duino, owner [of lot 34?]; the meeting recessed while they did so. Mrs. Duino was not interested in selling, and session voted that they drop the suggestion.

But the idea of acquiring more land surrounding the church did not die. On October 10, 1955 the treasurer reported to the Session that Mr. and Mrs. Jay Welsh had purchased the property to the west of the church, and made a down payment of \$2,000. The property was deeded over to the church which then became responsible for payment of the balance. Letters of appreciation were ordered sent to Mr. Jack Copple and to the Presbytery of San Jose, for their part in the transaction. (This was lot 33, 1128 Clark Way.) The Rev. Robert Vogt used this house as a manse.

In June of 1958, purchase for not more than \$13,500 of the Jacka (or Jacqua) house on Roycott Way was authorized by the session. In September of 1958, session learned that Stone Church had received a bequest of \$86,863.46 from Mrs. Sarah Akers, who had earlier given \$15,000 for the Hammond organ. In November, the session authorized purchase of the Jacka House (today called Roycott House), using money from the bequest.

In May of 1959 Session voted to pay all the Board of National Mission loans, by then totaling \$4,650, also using the Akers bequest.

In September of 1959, the session voted to purchase the MacInnes home on Roycott as an investment for the sum of \$16,250. (This is lot 7. As an aside, Angus MacInnes was a relative of Don MacInnes, present-day Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Pacific. Angus lived in San Jose for 50 years, commuting to work in San Francisco and San Anselmo. He was a wood craftsman, and did

much of the woodwork in San Francisco Theological Seminary's Stewart Chapel. He was a lifelong Presbyterian and active in Stone Church at one point, having come from First Presbyterian, San Jose.)

Finally, in December 1962 the session approved the purchase of 1937 Lincoln Avenue (Lot 3, today's Lincoln House) for \$20,900, again using the Akers bequest. In all, Stone Church owned 8 lots on its end of the block, with its church buildings covering four.

In January 1964 session discussed "the availability and price of the duplex on the corner of Lincoln and Roycott, [and] the suggestion was made that the Akers fund could be used to [acquire that property]." And in March 1964 during a discussion of possible enlargement of the sanctuary, Elder Fisher was authorized to "approach the property owners directly behind the Church to determine their interest in either selling their property or a piece of it."

In 1974, thinking about land had changed, and managing the properties was seen as a burden. There was a prevailing philosophy that it was wrong for churches to maintain large cash reserves and property holdings in the face of world needs. That point of view barely prevailed in a special congregational meeting called on June 16. A by no means overwhelming vote recommended the sale of two properties: 1128 Clark Way (Lot 33) and 1121 Roycott Way (Lot 7). The vote of the congregation was 46 to 30, with the vote of the corporation 40 to 13. A task force set up to study use of the proceeds reported back in June of 1975, at which time session voted to give money to the Board of National Missions (\$13,900); send a portion of the funds to the Leadership Development Division of the United Presbyterian Church (\$15,080); allocate \$20,080 to establish a Senior Citizen Center at Stone Church; allocate \$7,740 to improve church school facilities; and allocate \$3,600 for the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee. A fund of \$5,000 was left to establish a Session Emergency Reserve.

Another note about the property. In spring of 1967, Lincoln Avenue was widened to four lanes. The City of San Jose took by condemnation a ten foot wide strip of the church property fronting on Lincoln Avenue. The church was paid \$2,718.00 for the land. A redwood sign which had been installed on the lawn in March of 1958 was

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removed because of the widening.

The lack of land, and the lack of a buffer between Stone and its neighbors, was to be a recurring issue. When Stone consisted of the chapel and the education building, members parked in the area which today is the paved courtyard, as well as at the west end of the building. With the building of the sanctuary, almost all parking disappeared. Session minutes through the years note traffic and parking difficulties. In 1952, the pastor was suggesting "a three year plan, looking forward to the starting of the new and larger sanctuary. . . and regulations pertinent to the parking problem. Elders Whittaker and Timpany were asked to check with the San Jose Building Commission to learn whether or not we had sufficient area to legally park the membership's cars." In 1955, "Elder Nelson called attention to the traffic snarl around the church and reported that he and his committee were working on the problem. . ."

In January 1969, session heard a letter from the city attorney's office about "complaints certain neighbors had about the noise of the junior high dance in late December." In June 1969 the Trustees "reported that they had been unsuccessful in obtaining a Use Permit Variance for the rear patio area. This resulted from complaints to the City by our neighbors on Roycott. The Trustees are working on the problem and contemplate filing again for a Use Variance. In the meantime, activities in the Lincoln and Roycott houses must be limited to Church Sunday School and Vacation Church School." A sign and lock were placed on the entrance to the play yard adjacent to the Lincoln House "to discourage neighborhood youth from unauthorized use of the yard resulting in our neighbors being disturbed."

In February 1970 session heard an extensive report on negotiations for a zoning variance for Lincoln House and Roycott House. Elder [Allen] Bartu was to continue as negotiator for the session with the neighbors. The pursuit of a variance was part of the long report given to session in April of 1971. But one elder was adamant that "the church should mend some bridges with the neighbors before it goes to city hall to petition for the variances." The Executive Committee was to see that one or two ombudsmen are available to the neighbors to improve communication.

That report included comments on parking which

said that "Parking is a continuing, primary annoyance to the neighbors, both because of the volume and noise as well as the illegal incidents." Task Force suggestions sounded pretty familiar: encourage people to park farther away and walk a little; encourage people to ride bicycles; and promote good parking practices within the congregation. In addition, the task force "recommends that all neighbors call the police to issue citations or have offenders towed away for illegal parking."

The church's closeness to its neighbors has led to other issues. When the sanctuary was to be built, a deviation from city rules on setback lines had to be negotiated with neighbors. In 1954, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Sanfilippo wrote the church a letter giving permission for the deviation.

In 1978, session heard a proposal to establish an infant/toddler center in Lincoln house. An application for a zoning variance had been filed with the city of San Jose. In May 1978 session heard that a hearing was to be held before the San Jose City Planning Commission regarding parking, and a neighbor had filed an informal protest. By June 1978 the request to establish a center had been withdrawn, since "it was decided that the City Planners probably would not approve the project due to the lack of parking facilities."

The issue of the limitations of our building was revisited in 1984, and in February the session learned that the social hall couldn't be expanded because of limited parking. The church is "grandfathered in" under old city rules, but any expansion of the church would trigger the need to conform to new city rules about required parking spaces. The report to session included information that "Stone church is not alone in this problem. Substandard parking at churches is city-wide and a growing problem. The city has been overlooking some situations but complaints from surrounding neighborhoods and businesses are growing."

Session minutes of September 1984 carry the suggestion that Stone provide a shuttle service for those who cannot walk long distances from their cars to services.

The session was told in July 1986 that the duplex would soon be for sale. After discussion session concluded that "the potential value of the property to Stone Church was not sufficient to justify its cost."

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## THE BUILDING

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Ground was broken for the first unit of Stone, a chapel, on June 9, 1946. By March 20, 1947, when the first session met to organize itself, that building was completed or near completion. By April 16, there was a vote that each elder should have a key, session planned to hold its meetings in the church, and the group set Sunday May 25th for dedication of the new building.

During those first years, the session struggled both with building plans, and the need to keep up with rapid expansion of the congregation. Acting as a building committee of the whole, the group made decisions large and small, no detail escaping their attention. At regular monthly meetings and numerous special meetings, members were preoccupied not only with the building itself, but with the need to raise money.

On May 18, 1948, an informal meeting of members of session and others was held to discuss the urgent need for more room for the Sunday School. The consensus of opinion of those present was to build the sanctuary first with accommodations, as first planned, in the basement, with the church school building to be the last built.

On October 19, 1948 after discussion, the consensus still was to proceed with the building of the sanctuary as per plans presented by Mr. McDonald, architect, as revised from original plans, to provide for a greater seating capacity.

By May 16, 1949, it was deemed more feasible to build at least a part of the educational unit as a permanent feature instead of a parish house as originally planned.

On May 23, 1949 the session considered alternate plans for the educational plant: 60 by 30 with arches; the same without arches, 60 by 30, to be built at the present time. Session voted to have the architect plan for a building 60 by 32, with six by six redwood posts to support the arcade, placed to permit stone arches in the future. The building was to be one story, with tile roof on the Clark Way side and 20 year asphaltic material on the rear, the roof to rise not higher than the roof of the chapel. There was to be a full basement 54 by 30 with concrete floor. By July 5 there were again two different plans: a 60 foot building and an 84

foot building. On July 13, 1949, ground was broken for this second unit of building. But even after ground-breaking, the session was making changes. On August 3, session approved extending the building the entire 84 feet so as to complete this unit. On August 14, 1949 session moved to request permission from the city to extend the building 7 inches over the line if possible--however, if this would cause an unreasonable delay, they would agree to conform to the building code.

On September 12, 1949, session accepted the suggestion that the downstairs room of the educational building be known as the "recreational room." The opening of the recreation room was set for February 20, 1950 under the chairmanship of Elder Gaines. Elders were to contact the Dads Club of Willow Glen, as well as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Movie Club, Camera Club and Westminster Church, "all of which have used our facilities." As part of the opening, games consisting of table tennis, billiards, shuffle board and archery, with experts on hand to demonstrate the fine points, were offered.

With the opening of the recreation room came the need to manage its use, and by March 12, 1951, the Young People's committee of the Session was to draw up a set of rules and regulations concerning its use. That committee was also asked to consider the placing of a coke machine in the room.

On May 4, 1952, worship was moved from the chapel to the remodeled Sunday School auditorium. Session appointed three members to move the organ. A choir loft was also moved from the small chapel. A communion service was part of worship that day.

No detail was too trivial for session members to consider. At one time the session appointed a committee of three to change doors to the ladies rest room to a more inconspicuous place.

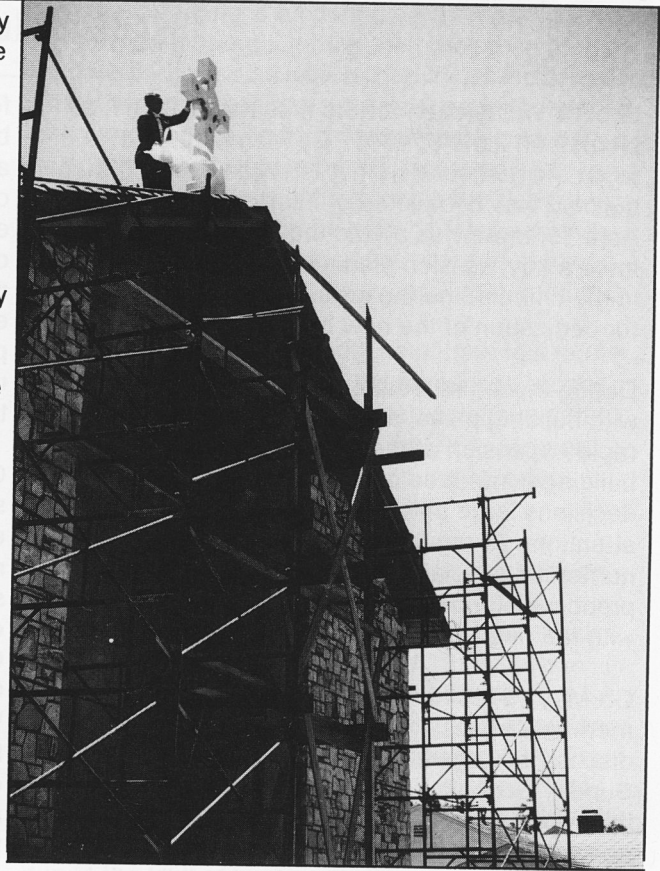
The final phase of Stone's building program was the present-day Sanctuary, which was completed and dedicated on November 20, 1955. The cornerstone was laid on July 10, 1955, with the Rev. William C. Spaan reading the contents of the box of history deposited within. The seven foot

celtic cross at the peak of the roof of the sanctuary was also dedicated, with Mary Simpson pulling the cord to uncover the cross (the mechanism did not work perfectly, and someone had to remove the coverings by hand). The cross was originally covered with gold leaf.

Because of a scarcity of building materials following World War II, the church was built with Carmel stone from Soledad. The stone is said by geologists to be several million years old, belonging to the Miocene period. Imprinted in the many stones of the walls are fossils of prehistoric marine life. The Stonemason was Manuel Sunyer, whose attention to his craft was almost mystic. In building the wall at the front of the sanctuary, Sunyer laid out the stones on the floor, moving stones around until he got them as he wanted them, before ever actually putting them in place. He slept overnight among the stones, to get the feel of them.

The San Jose *Evening News* of November 18, 1955 reported that Sunyer presented the trowel he used to Mr. Simpson, and that it was to be placed in a case and set in a niche in the wall. Manuel Sunyer died December 17, 1975.

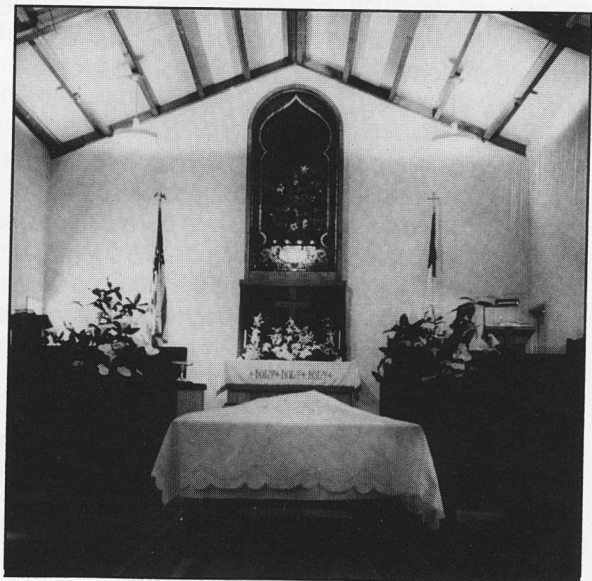
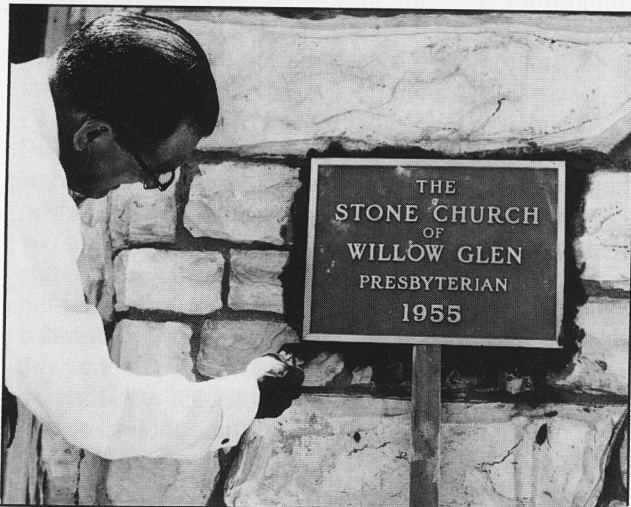
Having a building completed does not end responsibilities. In December 1977, Session placed "a moratorium on expenditure of any unbudgeted funds from any sources pending a report from the Trustees . . . on the nature and extent of the termite damage to the church with an estimate of the costs involved in restoring the church structure." In January 1978, estimated costs of repairs were \$18,500. In addition, "the Buildings and Grounds Board will look into the problem of rat extermination in all three buildings."



Above: Unveiling of the celtic cross

Below Left: Manuel Sunyer

Below: May 5, 1952, First Sunday of worship in the educational wing, showing west end of social hall.



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## THE CONGREGATION

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If the 40's and 50's were a time for Stone to establish itself as a congregation in the community and to get its building completed, by the 60's its character could be seen.

### RELATIONSHIP TO THE DENOMINATION

From the beginning, Stone has taken seriously its relationship to the Presbyterian denomination. The Rev. William C. Spaan, who helped in the organization of the church and served as its treasurer for the first five years was also the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of San Jose. Elder W. F. Miller, Clerk of Session in its first years, was serving on the Board of Trustees of the Presbytery when Stone began. In 1948 he was a Presbytery commissioner to a Synod of California and Nevada meeting held in Long Beach. In 1946 Tom Simpson was elected to the Pastoral Relations Committee for a three year term. In 1949, Elder Finley was elected to represent Stone at the Presbytery centennial celebration at the Monterey Church.

This attention to relationship has been true throughout Stone's history. Stone's session minutes are careful to note the election of delegates to Presbytery and Synod meetings, Presbytery meets at Stone church from time to time, and from time to time the minutes note an issue which has come up at either a Presbytery or Synod meeting. For example, in February 1966, Elder [Ed] Clemenco reported on "a moving discussion and action at Presbytery relating to the Confession of 1967." In April the session "devoted a substantial portion of the meeting to the study and discussion of the proposed Confession of 1967." In January 1967, session held a special meeting with members of the congregation to discuss the Confession. In January 1968 Mr. Cummins reported on the final meeting of the Synod of California at Santa Monica which dissolved the Synod and formed three new ones out of it. Dr. Perdue then "described the efforts . . . to structure the new Synod of the Golden Gate," and said that a consultation would be held at Stone Church, to which the session elected delegates.

Stone has a rich history of providing leadership to the Presbytery and Synod; that tradition continues today. At least two persons from the church--Bob Bowles and Marcia Ludwig--have been Presbytery

moderators. Claudia Hamm was nominated for the office but in an unprecedented action faced a run-off election when the nominating committee of Presbytery couldn't choose between two women candidates. Claudia became vice-moderator. She has also been moderator of the Presbytery Council, as well as giving service as Chair of Presbytery's Education Committee and membership on the Candidates' Committee. Gene Huff, Bob Bowles, Marcia Ludwig and David Hanner have been General Assembly Commissioners.

It is risky to name names, because there have been so many persons, and inevitably this history will leave out as many names of people as it contains. But in recent past there are some to be mentioned. Marcia Ludwig, for example, who was Clerk of Session, Worship Chair, Adult Education Chair and a member of Personnel and Administration at Stone, has served the Presbyterian church on all levels. Beginning a kind of Polity and Government dynasty, she chaired that Presbytery Committee for a number of years from 1977 on, producing a new set of Standing Rules for the Presbytery. She was followed by Alice Thorn who served on the committee 6 years and was its chair in 1985-86, also producing a revision of the Standing Rules. Alice, in turn, was followed by John Kelso, who chaired Polity and Government from 1992-94. Marcia chaired the Presbytery Church and World Committee, was a Synod Commissioner, was a Commissioner to the General Assembly, and for the past several years has served in leadership for the national Presbyterians for Lesbian and Gay Concerns. (She is now a member of First Presbyterian, Palo Alto, but much of her service came during her years of membership at Stone.)

Stone has supported denominational causes financially. In 1982, Stone Church members pledged \$15,000 over three years time to the Presbytery of San Jose New Church Development campaign. In May 1983, Jody Pabst had a one-page article in the *Stonewall News* about the use of the fund and the development of Santa Teresa Hills and Evergreen Presbyterian Churches. "Stone Church is closely related to both these new churches, not only . . . in location but because of our close contacts with their pastors and congregations," she wrote.

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In 1983, when the national church formalized the reunion of the "northern" and "southern" (not totally accurate descriptions, but the ones popularly used) branches of the Presbyterian denomination, Stone had members present at the General Assembly, and the *Stonewall News* featured a front page article on reunion. Issues involved in the reunion were discussed earlier by David Hanner, who expressed his concern about "compromises on women elders and property rights." And in November 1982, Gene Huff led a workshop at Stone Church on the Plan for Reunion. David Hanner was a presbytery commissioner to the GA that voted reunion in June 1983.

General Assembly Moderator Randolph Taylor came to Stone in February 1984, the year of reunion, speaking to 300 persons.

### **STONE AS AN ACTIVIST CONGREGATION**

With Tom Simpson's retirement, and the advent of Bill Perdue, Stone's outlook changed and broadened into a much more activist perspective. Freed from the demands of a building program, the congregation could follow Perdue's vision.

Tom Simpson had the qualities necessary to begin a new enterprise and to get a building built. He was an entrepreneur who walked the neighborhood and by the force of his personality drew people to the church. He was strong willed, could be single-minded about getting what he wanted and did not take kindly to opposition. He was strong on action, and impatient with process. But his determination was what the church needed in the beginning.

Simpson was succeeded by the Rev. William (Bill) Perdue in February 1959. Stone continued to play a significant role in Presbyterian affairs, and members were made aware of issues and controversies in the church at large. It also looked outward to the community, responding to community needs on a practical level, and, again, aware of issues and controversies of relevance to church folk.

One major change came in the government of the church. Early in Perdue's ministry, Stone church elected, ordained and installed its first woman elder. There never had been a woman elder at Stone Church, he says, "indeed there was strong opposition to it." Ruth Starkenburg (elected January 17, 1960) was followed by Ruby Hudspeth

(December 4, 1960), June Tablak (December 3, 1961) and Jeanette Vander Ploeg (August 16, 1962). At the session meeting of December 1962, Perdue commended Ruth Starkenburg to the session for her work as the first woman elder.

A Board of Deaconesses had been authorized in July 1955. But the method of choice was paternalistic by today's standards: Seven women were to be nominated by secret ballot; nominations were to go to Pastor Simpson, who would choose the seven and present the names to session for approval.

Bill Perdue remembers that prior to 1959 congregational support of the General Mission budget was paltry, but that session began incorporating a definite budgetary amount, increasing it each year. "I firmly believe," he says, "that the church prospered so in the sixties as a result of our moving from an ingrown, more or less self-centered congregation, to a people of broader vision of the church."

In the turbulent, political sixties, many members of Stone Church, and its pastor, became involved in the battles for Civil Rights. Stone was perceived to be in the forefront of activist issues in the Presbytery and in the County. Members took part in the farm worker ministry, and in protests against the United States involvement in Vietnam. In January 1967, the session sent a telegram to President Johnson, supporting work toward a cease fire in Viet Nam. There was one dissenting vote. Bill Perdue served on the Human Rights Commission of San Jose and was its Chairperson. Perdue also joined North Coastal Area Executive Dave Illingworth and the Rev. George Peters, pastor of Burlingame Presbyterian Church, in a trip to Washington, D. C., to lobby for civil rights legislation. Peters and Perdue went on to Alabama to be part of the marchers from Selma to Montgomery in March 1965.

While Perdue was supported by the church leadership in his activism, there were also members who bitterly disagreed, including one person who wrote a letter to every member of the congregation, denouncing him and other members, calling them "pinko."

Yet in the congregational meeting of January 26, 1964, the congregation passed a motion "to commend and encourage Dr. Perdue for his courageous witness in the community; further that

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we are as grateful for his ministry of example as we are for his ministry as a pastor and as a teaching Elder. This motion was approved unanimously with a standing ovation."

The church supported open housing, and lived its commitment. When the church employed an African American man as custodian, they offered him residence in one of the church houses. Neighbors objected, using the traditional argument that property values would fall. However, says Perdue, "no family in Willow Glen took better care of their house and landscaping, and the neighbors were glad the family was there." As another example, in January 1964, the session approved a request from the General Council of the General Assembly and authorized a special offering to be taken on Brotherhood Sunday "to be allocated toward an emergency fund of the newly formed committee on Race Relations."

David Beamer came as Associate Pastor just after Bill Perdue had returned from his participation in the Selma March. Beamer remembers, "The church family was doing a lot of reflecting on that action by Bill. Many were openly supportive. Those who were bothered by what he did were silent."

How to provide for dissent in the church was a problem Beamer saw. "Those who did not like 'the church getting involved in politics' could only talk quietly among friends who agreed. The leaders of the church at that time were strong, vocal and articulate in their support of being a church with a strong ministry for social justice. In fact, one of the reasons I was called as Associate Pastor was to organize the church for action." Session created a committee on Urban Affairs in April 1968. Beamer was charged by session to give all the time necessary to provide leadership and assistance to the committee. The Urban Affairs Committee was dissolved in September 1968, since "the responsibility for urban affairs is presently encompassed within the present job description of the Faith and Witness Board." An Urban Affairs Task Force was created within the F & W Board. Session minutes of the sixties refer a number of times to the need for reconciliation with those who disagree with session policies and stands.

## Sandy Sanderson

M. J. "Sandy" Sanderson, a Ph. D. at General Electric began organizing and providing training for GE workers in race relations. Dave assisted him in setting these up and on one occasion participated in leadership. "Sandy was an Elder, a wonderful poet and a true visionary. He, in [1965] was given a leave of absence from GE so he could become a lay employee of the then North Coastal Area of the Presbyterian Church. He was a gifted reconciler, one of the great products of Stone Church." Sanderson's work was featured in the November 1, 1964 issue of *Presbyterian Life*, with an article entitled "The Seven-Month Leave of Scientist Sanderson." He also received the national award of the Elfun Society of General Electric, his employer, "for his outstanding community service in the area of civil rights." He was honored by the Anti-Defamation League of B'Nai B'rith for the same reason.

## Open Housing

Statewide Proposition 13 really hit the church. It was a fair housing issue that Sandy Sanderson championed, with Beamer and others supporting. Stone took a strong position in favor of fair housing, organizing neighborhood coffees to help neighbors who feared the church would "block bust." In time, the church did hire a Block Custodian who really became the "mayor of Roycott Way."

An example of session concerns comes from the minutes of February 11, 1964: "Dr. Perdue announced that the program of the next meeting of Livingstone Men will include a debate on the Rumford Fair Housing Act. This debate would include both defending and opposing views. Dr. Perdue went on to commend the principle which upholds open discussion on both sides of important issues such as this. . . . A discussion involving the needs of the San Jose Unified School District and the forthcoming bond issue followed. A motion was [passed] that the Session of Stone Church endorses the February 25, 1964 bond election for the . . . District and authorized the Session's favorable endorsement to be used in news releases, advertising, and bulletin announcements."

During the activist years, says Dave Beamer, the leadership of the church was supportive of this vision. Many new people came to the church

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because of its direction, and some left for the same reason. Still others, perhaps more than we could know, just kept still, didn't approve, but chose to wait it out.

A group of former elders began to meet informally, and when Bill and Henrietta Perdue left for a study leave and vacation in Europe, the dissent burst out. The session received a letter of complaint signed by sixty persons about the church's involvement in politics. Complaints included Stone's involvement in the St. Mark Parish, and a four-week class the junior high students had on issues in Viet Nam. Session formed a response team and set up a series of three hearings for the group and session, dealing with each question both from a Biblical/theological, and from a historical Stone Church perspective. Says Dave, "No one changed anyone's mind, but it was a very valuable exercise. People got heard. We discovered where the differences were, and some decided on the basis of what they heard to leave the church. The biggest benefit from this time was that we finally learned that you have got to give dissenters a voice and an appropriate way to redress their grievances. When dissent is pushed away, or when there is no appropriate and valued way of registering it, it becomes explosive. We grew up, and became less fearful of diversity."

One organizational result of the dissent was the custom of the session to allow time at the beginning of each session meeting for "open agenda," when anyone could come with ideas, problems, information or whatever.

In October 1967, Session Moderator Perdue appointed a committee "to give prayerful thought to the whole role of the Session as agents of reconciliation."

Activism at Stone could take the form of education and awareness of issues. In October 1964, Mrs. Dale Mitchell of the League of Women Voters would discuss the Propositions appearing on the November Ballot. In the 1980's and 1990's Alice Thorn and Virginia Holtz, both having served as Presidents of the League of Women Voters of San Jose/Santa Clara, would continue the tradition of presenting ballot information to the Stone Church community.

In 1968 the session endorsed a San Jose City Proposition B for housing by a vote of 9 to 5.

In December 1969 Sandy Sanderson was once more speaking to the session, this time about his experiences with the migrant ministry, Caesar Chavez and the Farm Workers organizing movement. He asked elders to consider the non-violent style of change and asked for their support of the movement.

### Angela Davis

On June 8, 1971, Stone's session also dealt with the issue of a contribution of \$10,000 to the Angela Davis Defense Fund by the Council on Church and Race of the General Assembly. (The contribution was later returned to the Council on Church and Race, but the name Angela Davis can still cause hackles to rise among some Presbyterians.) Davis, a Black Panther supporter, had bought the guns used in a fatal 1970 shooting at the Marin County courthouse. She was tried in 1972 for kidnapping, murder and conspiracy. An all-white jury found her innocent.

The session was not unanimous in its opinions: by a vote of 10 to 8 it expressed its concern regarding the consequence to local congregations of the Angela Davis action; it approved by voice vote the theory of legal aid to be dispersed through the Council on Church and Race and by a vote of 9 to 8 opposed the donation of funds to any person or groups whose avowed aims include the violent overthrow of the government of the United States. Finally, the session by a vote of 13 to 3 objected to the Angela Davis donation on the grounds of questioning its propriety and need. A special congregational meeting was called for June 27 to discuss the action taken by session on this matter.

By April 1973, session held a retreat to discuss directions for Stone Church, and developed a report which began: "We are a church community that fosters and nourishes persons working together (interdependence rather than dependence) for wholeness."

### Homosexuality

A divisive issue within the Presbyterian Church is that of ordination of homosexual persons to church ministry and offices of deacon and elder. Stone dealt with that issue leading up to the General Assembly of 1978 which passed the document containing "definitive guidance" forbidding such ordination. In December 1976, session received newspaper articles describing the General



Assembly Task Force on Ordaining Homosexuals. In May 1977, session passed a resolution which it sent to the Task Force stating that "we resolve that the 189th General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church reaffirm that the ordination of Teaching Elders, Ruling Elders and Deacons be based on qualifications as outlined in the Book of Order . . . including the ordination vows, and irrespective of biological and psychological sexual orientation." The session also decided to use this resolution as a teaching tool for the congregation. Session received at least one letter opposing its action.

In February 1978, session again adopted a resolution on the issue, combining parts of the first resolution with one presented by David Beamer. Two elders requested that their votes be recorded as against this motion. The resolution said, in part, "we believe that it ought to remain a possibility that a self-affirming practicing homosexual Christian could be ordained if he or she manifests such gifts as are required for ordination, and the judicatory involved was not conscientiously opposed." Dave Beamer taught classes and preached on the topic, and Stone Church members Karen Scott, Mary Kennedy, Claudia Hamm and Dave Beamer attended the General Assembly meeting in San Diego. Pastors since Beamer have preached and taught on the issue.

In September 1979 David Beamer expressed concern to session over the religious community's petition to revoke the Gay Rights Ordinance in Santa Clara County, and asked what the stance of Stone Church should be on this issue. Elders were asked to "encourage our congregation to be open and caring over differences on this issue."

In October 1984, Marcia Ludwig reported to session on her attendance at a conference in Stony Point, New York, on homophobia; her attendance was sponsored by the Presbytery of San Jose and the Church and World Board of Stone Church.

In March 1985, Gene Huff returned to the topic with a Bible study on the texts traditionally associated with homosexuality.

### Alcohol

Whether to serve alcohol on the premises has been an issue from time to time. A Wine Policy

Committee in 1976 and 1977 took considerable time and energy, holding listening sessions, spending an evening with David Hanner to hear about the history of alcohol and the church. In March 1977, session voted that "wine or other alcoholic beverages for purposes other than Holy Communion not be served on the premises of Stone Church of Willow Glen. This recommendation is made out of respect for the feelings of those church members who would be upset by the serving of wine at the church."

### Nicaragua

Rod Thorn on behalf of CROP and the San Jose Presbytery became part of an interfaith fact-finding delegation to Nicaragua from December 3-11, 1983. This was the era when President Reagan had placed an embargo on trade with that country because of its left-leaning government. In February 1985, session voted unanimously to send correspondence to the President and California Senators/Representatives stating clear opposition to any further United States aid to Nicaraguan counter-revolutionaries (contras).

Bob Bowles went to Nicaragua from March 26 to April 2, 1985. In June 1985, Stone created a Central American Refugee Response Task Force. The Task force was to study issues regarding Central America and report to session quarterly. Members noted that central American refugees came primarily from El Salvador, undergoing a civil war, and Guatemala, where the indigenous population was oppressed by the government.

On February 21, 1986, Stone held an auction of the work of Nicaraguan artisans—posters, art prints and other items—in support of the Nicaragua Interfaith Committee for Action (NICA). These had been brought from Nicaragua by Wayne Kagel, a graduate of Stanford University in Latin America studies and a member of Stone. Wayne was in Nicaragua September 1985, taking medical supplies and batteries. Benefiting from the \$3,000 raised was an orphanage in Somoto, Nicaragua. Leigh Weimers' column in the *Mercury News* noted the auction, "The Presbyterian Stone Church of Willow Glen's weekend auction raised more than [\$3,000] to aid a Nicaraguan orphanage in anti-Contra territory, the sort of thing the Reagan administration frowns upon." NICA director Janine Chagoya reported to Stone in 1989 that one wing of the planned orphanage had been built.

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In December 1985, session voted support of the Rev. John Fife and other sanctuary workers on trial in Tucson, Arizona, sending letters to Fife, Presbyterian George Chauncey, Congressmen Edwards, Mineta and Zschau, and Senators Cranston & Wilson, and President Reagan. Rod Thorn was to help Bob Bowles write the letters. On March 11, 1986, session voted to declare Stone Church a Sanctuary Support Church.

### The Council of Churches of San Jose/Santa Clara

From its beginnings Stone Church participated in programs of the Council of Churches of Santa Clara County (founded as the Council of Churches of San Jose in 1943). A recorded action of the session in 1947 authorized use of the Carpenter's Shop for a released time Christian Education program, one of the first major efforts of the Council. This program was a state authorized permission for school children to be released for a period of religious education provided by local churches as an after school effort.

Work with migrant ministries was done in cooperation with the Council. Although, by March 1976, session directed the Church and World Action Board "not to designate given funds, or give any funds, to the United Farm Workers' Union."

In December 1975, a special Session meeting considered a resolution to be sent to the Council of Churches. This was in response to the United Presbyterian Church of West Valley, which withdrew from the Council of Churches because the Council had admitted the Metropolitan Community Church to membership. The statement read in part: "It seems important at this time to 'stand and be counted' and to declare that our representatives, after consultation with our church's Community and World Action Board, and consideration of the issues, voted in favor of admitting the MCC to the Council of Churches. . . . We affirm that there exist within the church a variety of positions on any issue, including homosexuality, and that these positions are informed by culture, upbringing, the institutional church, and by individual personality and faith. . . . We deplore as imprudent and ungrateful to God the practice of grading sins as 'little sins, big sins and Super Sins' as it tends to lead to the dangerous and Orwellian notion that 'All of us are in need of grace but some . . . are more needy than others.' . . . We resolve to continue our

support of and participation in the Santa Clara County Council of Churches, and we welcome, as brothers and sisters in Christ, the congregation of the Metropolitan Community Church to the ecumenical fellowship of the Santa Clara County Council of Churches." The statement was adopted by the session with one dissenting vote.

In April 1976, Stone was still supporting the Council of Churches, by signing the "Covenant of Mutual Relationship and Responsibility," and supporting them with a pledge of 3.5% of the budget. In December 1981 Hal Janzen reported that Stone was the leading financial supporter of the Council.

### Peacemaking

The Stone Church Peacemaking Committee Charter became a part of the Church and World Action Charter in 1982, creating the Peacemaking Committee as a part of the C & WA Board. Rod Thorn was its first chair. In May 1982, Congressman Mineta spoke to the congregation. On Oct. 10, 1982, Dr. Francis Tomasawa, Hiroshima survivor, spoke to the Adult Education class as one part of a four week series. A peace event on September 15, 1985 featured Carol Amen, nationally known author.

### Karen Hagan holds offering of letters, 1983



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## **STONE CHURCH: "HANDS ON MINISTRIES"**

Social justice activism has been one part of the Stone tradition. Another has been "hands on" ministry in the community, either directly or by raising money. Throughout its history, the Stone Church Congregation has been involved in a number of mission projects.

### **St. Mark Parish**

Stone members worked on the St. Mark Parish in East San Jose, an ecumenical effort of American Baptist, Presbyterian, Disciples of Christ, Methodist and Episcopalian churches. In September 1966 Mrs. Robert (Hazel) James "representing the National Missions Committee of the Presbytery of San Jose, reported. . . concerning the Presbytery's urban work committee [and about] assistance needed for the St. Mark Parish; she asked that the session release Mr. David Beamer for assistance at St. Mark Parish for a period of five hours every other week and one hour every other Sunday for a term not to exceed six months." Session approved. That relationship with St. Mark was dissolved by action in February 1967.

### **Rockathons**

Frequently, Stone has become involved in a particular community ministry because of the energy of a single individual from the congregation. One relatively recent example of energy and creativity was the "rockathons" held by the Junior High group for at least 8 years, from 1979 to 1986. In this event, spearheaded by June Tablak, the young people spent 24 hours at the church, each in a rocking chair which had to be moved continuously over the time, except for brief "timeouts" each hour. The youngsters got sponsorships for their hours of rocking, and the money was given to the One Great Hour of Sharing. The 24 hours usually became a long party, with parents supplying endless videos and popcorn, or with youngsters whiling away the time playing chess and other games. Surprise visits at 3 am from members of the congregation were not uncommon.

### **Ming Quong**

Earlier, Stone was a long-time supporter of the Ming Quong home in Los Gatos, support which has in recent times been weakened because Ming Quong is no longer a Presbyterian institution. In June of 1964, for example, Session authorized a

mailing to every family in Stone church, urging individual support of Ming Quong.

### **Contact**

Stone Church members were among those supporting the Contact telephone counseling ministry from its beginning in 1970. In 1984, Connie Gum was honored by Contact for 1000 hours of service as a counselor, having given 8 hours a month since 1972. In April 1985, Bill Gum was noted as having served Contact for 10 years; his contribution has been as a consultant on the computer system. June Tablak, Derk Johnson, Carol Campbell, Barbara Gleichman and former member Joan Kaster have also been part of the ministry.

### **FISH**

Support of FISH was strong for a time, because of the work of "Mac" MacCormack. In April 1973, Session agreed that a "Fish Sunday" would be held at Stone Church, details to be worked out with the Pastors and FISH.

### **The CROP Walk**

One of the long-running involvements of Stone Church began in September 1979 when Session was given pamphlets regarding a Hunger Walk to benefit the Church World Service hunger and relief agency CROP. Session voted to promote the Hunger Walk within Stone Church, approving Rod Thorn as coordinator for the church. This began a tradition that continues today, with Rod as the individual who prodded the church into its concerns for hunger in the community and the world. Stone provided the central core of leadership for a number of years, with Rod as Coordinator, Linda Hagan as Treasurer, Ted Becker as arrangements person, Bob Cole putting up and taking down signs, Rosaleen Zisch organizing the Hoover Middle School kids--including the Hoover Hawk and "Honk for the Hungry" signs, and Gene Huff for a time the recruiting chair.

A friendly rivalry with the Visalia, California, Christ Lutheran Church was initiated when Stone published a letter of challenge in the Spring 1986 *Coastlines*, a CWS publication, asking if any northern California church could beat the 1986 Stone Church record of \$4,114. Visalia answered in the summer 1986 *Coastlines*, pointing to totals of \$6,238 in 1985 and \$7,249 in 1986. They ended

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their answer with a blessing which galvanized Stone: "May the Lord be with you in second place." The letter was signed by Dr. Paul W. Thomson, Pastor.

The CROP Walk in fall of 1986 saw a total of \$7,315 raised by 101 Stone Church walkers. Rod and Don Foster, then Clerk of Session, sent a letter to Dr. Thomson in January 1987, noting that Stone's total was \$66 in its favor, and requesting that "the regional bragging rights be returned to our San Jose home." The letter ended, "But for now, we return to Christ Lutheran a few of its own well-chosen words: 'May the Lord be with YOU in second place.' "

As a footnote, Visalia went on to raise over \$10,000 in its 1987 spring walk. From 1980 through 1996, Stone raised a total of \$54,549.97.

A second memorable "auxiliary" CROP Walk came about through the enterprise of Gene Wei. In October 1991, Gene was in Beijing, China, and held a CROP Walk with four other church members of the Haidian Christian Church, walking from the church to the Imperial Summer Palace and back again.

### Kairos Center

Evidence of the growth and changes in Stone Church life came from new programs and projects. For example, in 1978, in response to a wish expressed by then-Associate Pastor Bob Bowles, Kairos Counseling Center was created by Mary Alice Collins, Connie Pearson and Carolyn Foster. This was to be a counseling ministry staffed by licensed professionals who would honor the spiritual as well as the emotional/psychological dimensions of people's lives. Stone agreed to support the Center by providing office space as part of its service to the community, allowing the therapists to offer reduced fees for a significant number of clients, broadening the community base of clients. Session gave the Center a one time \$5000 seed money grant from the Senior Citizens' sub-account of the Property Fund.

Carolyn Foster left the Center in October 1986 to teach and write. Connie Pearson and Mary Alice Collins have continued, and by 1997 the work was expanded to include pre-marital counseling, initiated by Art Mills, and approved by the Session. Every couple married in our church is provided three pre-marital sessions with a licensed

counselor as part of the cost of a wedding.

### The Senior Center

The Senior Center was begun after the sale of the two houses in 1974. Kay and O. B. Watson were co-chairpersons of the steering committee to set up the center. Ruth Nelson was hired to serve as director, her salary to be paid by Metropolitan Adult Education. The Center was to open in 1976.

The Center apparently did not need all the money that had been allocated from the house sale for its beginning. In April 1977, Session voted to disband the Senior Citizens Advisory Committee, leaving \$5,000 in savings, \$700 in checking, and putting the remaining \$9,830 in a separate savings account to be used later for a special project at session's discretion.

In the January 1978 in open agenda, Kay Watson reported on the Tuesday Senior Center, which served approximately 25-40 seniors. Karen Scott was then Director. In June 1978, funds available through Metropolitan Adult Education Program were cut as a result of the passing of Proposition 13. The Session voted to approve up to \$440 from the Senior Center checking account to pay Karen Scott's salary for 11 weeks. In September 1978, Session continued its support of the Center and put it under care of the Community and World Action Board.

Joyce Linn became interim Senior Center Director on November 1, 1983. She became permanent director by session action in November 1984. The Center has operated one day a week, providing four hours a day of socialization time for seniors from Stone Church and from the community. Activities include games of bridge, conversation, and reading. Staff and volunteers have provided lunch.

In May 1977 session voted to approve \$1,000 from the unallocated Senior Citizens funds to a feasibility study on a new residential care facility to be co-sponsored by the existing board of Town Park Towers and the Presbytery of San Jose. The session voted to designate a minimum of three representatives from Stone Church to participate in the Steering committee. On April 25, 1981, Presbytery approved formation of South Bay Presbyterian Homes. That Presbytery project, sadly, ended with a law suit which the Presbytery lost, forcing a special assessment onto local

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churches to pay legal costs. An anonymous member of Stone paid the assessment.

### Southeast Asian Refugee Family

In June 1979, at the urging of Shawn Casucci, Pat Merchant and a group of interested persons, a proposal was made to session to sponsor a Southeast Asian Refugee family. Session voted unanimously to empower the Community and World Action Board to proceed, with a Refugee Family Sponsorship Committee to be headed by Shawn Casucci. The church would work through the Family Reunion and Refugee Resettlement Services of the United Presbyterian Church and Church World Service, would use \$1200 seed money from the C & W A budget, would use government funding and services, and Medicaid. The committee would be responsible for finding suitable rental housing.

In September 1979, session heard that a Cambodian family had been assigned by Church World Service to Stone Church for sponsorship. The Yin family included Fath, the father; his wife, Lann Ing; his sisters Chann Leng and Yin Fong; two daughters of Chann—Chav King and Chav Vou; and his mother Chav Tay. The young wife gave birth to a daughter Sara on October 8, 1979. Committee members made many trips to Valley Medical Center to care for health problems, but the family soon was doing well. Baby Sara had to be treated for a hereditary, non-contagious skin rash. Eight year old Vou had successful ear surgery soon after the family arrived.

Stone members were kept informed of the family's accomplishments, and heard that in the first six months the three little girls were doing well in school and had learned to write in English using cursive, that Fath rode his bicycle a lot, and that the three adults used the bus to attend classes in English as a Second Language. They had learned to handle their own grocery shopping and banking, and had enough English to use the phone..

Session learned that Chaun Leng's husband, supposedly killed in 1978, had been located in a refugee camp in Thailand. Members voted to sponsor Chao Loeung as a refugee to come to America, as he was in danger of being forced back into Cambodia without sponsorship. In July 1980 Session heard that the basic needs of the family had been met, but that they needed to learn more English to become employable. Chaun's

husband was still waiting to immigrate to the U. S. In time, he did arrive safely.

By October 1985, Fath and Lann Ing had additionally sponsored her brothers and sisters; their uncle, wife, and seven children, a total of 13, all with the help of C. W. S. Each grant from C. W. S. had been repaid. At that 1985 report, Yin Fath and Lann Ing had signed papers to purchase their first home, they were both employed and owned two cars. The Casucci's maintained close ties to the family.

### The Rotating Shelter Program

The most recent major mission project of the congregation is the Rotating Shelter Program, a program of the Council of Churches of Santa Clara County, with staffing and oversight from InnVision, San Jose's homeless program. The shelter uses Stone's facilities once a year for one month's time to house homeless men. The shelter did not get easy approval, and it was John Kelso who led the church's actions in getting it through city process. He was helped by a number of people, including attorney Lynn Stutz, and Stephen Buckley.

Neighborhood opposition to the shelter was heard in a town meeting at St. Francis Episcopal Church on April 30, 1992. Opponents worried about real estate values, about the undesirables who would be brought into the neighborhood, about possible expansion of numbers of participants, about the concentration of three churches in a one mile square area, about parking. Hearings were held before the Planning Commission, and at City Hall before the full Council. On June 9th, the City Council unanimously approved a six-month trial period for the Transitional Housing Program. Approval came after extended conversations among leaders of the Willow Glen Neighborhood Association, church representatives and staff from the office of Mayor Susan Hammer. Compromises worked out in these conversations tightened the enabling ordinance and assuaged at least most of the fears of neighbors.

The City Council approval came only after angry confrontations between opponents and Stone Church. At one point the neighborhood trees and fences held posters which said in effect, "Stone Church, Your Neighbors are as Mad as Hell!" At one hearing, an anonymous letter purporting to be from members of Stone lambasted the "social justice activist members." An editor of *Metro*

newspaper was told by one opponent, "We know where you live."

Then Executive of the Council of Churches, Hugh Wire, was quoted in the Council's newsletter of July/August 1992, "The debate has been messy, and painful. Similar programs have begun in other communities in the county with far less controversy. But the issues are complex. Religious congregations need to be free of interference inside their walls. But citizens need a voice when change affects their sense of well-being. And a city needs to insure a safe place for all citizens, including homeless persons."

In a mild irony, the shelter has operated virtually without incident since it opened at Stone.



1983: Joan Huff, Alice Thorn, Jan Barley, Gene Huff on CROP Walk , Campbell Percolation ponds.

Below, circa 1981: Front left, Heather Harris. In back of her are Fred and Lizanne Oliver. Identity of man in back is unknown. Right of Lizanne is Judy Harris, Kevin Contreras, Julie Deal, Unknown, Paul Martinez, Rob Bowles, Jennifer Classen, Linda Deal. To right of Kevin is Julie Deal, Kelly Furbeck, Michelle Classen, Michael Thorn.



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## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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### Education as a Priority

In April of 1984, Associate Pastor Gene Huff wrote: "In spite of feeling strongly that there is something special about Stone, it isn't as easy as it may appear to put that specialness into words. . . . But if I had to choose one of the most important elements I think it would be growth. Stone is a place where people can grow. In many ways, some obvious, others more subtle, personal and spiritual growth are cherished in this faith community. A premium is placed on permitting, encouraging and fostering growth as persons and as a people of faith."

Not only has Stone emphasized social justice and helping ministries as part of the Christian faith, but it has also been strongly oriented to education. Since the first Presbytery mention of a "Sunday School" in Willow Glen, the church has offered an amazing variety of classes for members of all ages.

Decisions about curriculum were taken seriously. In May of 1948, Session ordered "the new curriculum" for the entire junior department. On March 29, 1949, the session, after "considerable discussion" authorized the Sunday School faculty to use the International Uniform series in all grades above the beginners. By June 13, 1949, Session rescinded this action "as a majority of the teachers did not care for it." By September 1951 a group from the San Francisco office of the North Coastal Area of the Presbyterian Church came to Stone to present information on the new curriculum. In June 1968 the choice was the United Church of Christ curriculum.

During the building years it was a struggle to find room for all the children. The Sunday School grew rapidly, and the publicity piece published in February 1954 to explain the church building campaign showed photos of the Sunday School where more than 300 children were enrolled. About 40 babies were housed in the old carpenter's shop; 60 children crowded into the basement, but with no classrooms. As many as 175 children assembled in classes in the Sunday School Hall on the main floor, with circles of chairs so close together that it was difficult to teach. "Our teachers are faithful men and women," said the brochure, "working under the greatest handicaps."

There were comments about a high enrollment but poor attendance, probably because of overcrowding in the church school.

A report from 1964 is a good example of Stone's attention to the education of its children. Marian Kolte, chair of the Teachers Standards Committee, led a discussion of its work, presenting for approval "a letter of call for church school teachers." Mrs. Kolte indicated "that the CE Committee was thinking . . . of a teacher training committee composed of three specialist members: . . . one responsible for theological basis, one for theological content and one for curriculum and methods."

An issue during the sixties seemed to be whether or not teachers in the church school had to be members of the church.

Members took their education obligations seriously, as evidenced by this elaborate policy passed in May 1966: "The membership of this committee represents the church at large and is not made up of representatives of special groups; therefore the committee may depend on Task Force studies to assist in the determination of policy in any given area of Christian Education. The Christian Education Committee is a policy making body responsible also for . . . the fulfillment of these policies under Session. The administration of Christian Education at Stone Church will be handled by lay superintendents and chairmen responsible to the Christian Education Committee. The Minister of Christian Education will act as coordinator of and resource for those lay persons in accord with the report of the Personnel Task Force Committee Report of June 1964. . . . Communication of the decisions and policies of the Christian Education Committee shall be in the hands of the chairman, the secretary, and the Minister of Christian Education." Included in the minutes is an elaborate chart of the CE program.

In February 1977, a Recruitment Committee was proposed, to do the recruiting of personnel for the CE program.

In more recent times, a highly creative approach to the training of youth for membership in the church was begun by Paula Kelso. "The Journey"

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partners a young person with an adult for several weeks of guided learning in church history, Bible content and membership responsibilities. The program fosters not only content learning, but relationships which continue beyond "The Journey" itself.

Not only has Stone been concerned for the education of its youth, but great "energy, intelligence, imagination and love" have gone into a continuous stream of offerings for adults. A May 1983 article in the *Stonewall News* says, "Adult Christians must continue growing; education is an essential ingredient for that growth. Maturity is not a commodity that we 'get' at age eighteen and then 'have' for the rest of our lives. Growth is a process; adult Christians are in the process of maturing. Stone Church enables persons to 'grow up into Christ,' by providing intentional, disciplined study." Stone has been blessed with numerous lay teachers of adult classes. Ed Tablak as a Bible teacher and Pat Magee, whose offerings have encompassed a wide range of subject matter, come to mind, but there are countless others as well.

On December 17, 1965, Robert McAfee Brown, described as "the author of *The Bible Speaks to You*, [spoke] here under the auspices of the Hearthstone group."

Session minutes mentioned the Spring Session of "Learning for Laymen" to be held from January 18 to March 8, 1967. In October 1967, classes included "The Gospel According to Peanuts," and "Making Christian Decisions on Vietnam." Again, in February 1969, an ecumenical Lenten "Learning for Laymen" series was held with the St. Francis Episcopal Church, with session approving the participation of Stone Church members in joint communion services at St. Francis. In May 1973, there was concern that choir members be able to participate in "Learning for Laymen" classes "to the greatest extent possible."

The "Learning Faire," successor to "Learning for Laymen," was for many years a program of classes on a wide variety of topics, ranging from "how to" crafts (stained glass, for example), to studies of all sorts. Tehillim dance choir grew out of a "Learning Faire" class in November 1973 when SFTS graduate the Rev. Mikel Taxer was brought from San Diego to offer a dance workshop, described as "body conditioning, learning simple dance routines, sharing traditions of dance

in worship, and experiencing dance as a blend of the traditional and contemporary." There were still "Learning Faire" offerings as late as 1988, though finding persons with the time to organize such an ambitious number of offerings became increasingly difficult, and attendance dwindled as the realities of people's frenetic schedules made attendance difficult.

### Henrietta Perdue Lectureship

A long educational tradition was begun in March 1974 when Session voted that the Henrietta Perdue Memorial Fund was to be used to provide seed money for an annual lecture series.

Henrietta was the wife of William Perdue, and she died on March 25, 1968. This death touched the congregation deeply. Session minutes noted "the tragic illness of Henrietta Perdue; [and] recommended that the Executive Committee act as an agent of the Session in a supportive role to Dr. Perdue in whatever needs he may have."

Henrietta was a remarkable woman. She spoke Spanish and French fluently and taught both, as well as Latin. She was one of the founders and officers of the International Student Center at San Jose State University. She was an Old Testament scholar, and, says Bill, her hero was Moses. Says David Beamer, "I remember her as one of the finest lay theologians I have known." He adds, "She was passionate about the life of faith. Incredibly honest, she pulled few punches when she was dealing with something she cared about-- and she cared about kids, the church, the healthy use of the Bible, and a broad range of social justice issues."

Again, only selected programs can be highlighted, and each Stone church person has particular favorites. In February 1979, the speaker was Barry McCurry on Healing Energy; another speaker was Edward Lindaman, President of Whitworth College, and futurist. In May 1986, the lecture brought Sister Martha Ann Kirk, who told stories in movement, narration and song. Author Madeline L'Engle packed the church on the evening of April 27, 1990 for a single lecture. (She had also been at Stone on a previous occasion.) And most recently, the Perdue lectureship made it possible to bring Bishop John Shelby Spong for the weekend of October 18-20, 1996. Bishop Spong's topic was based on his newest book, *Liberating the Gospels: Reading the Bible with*



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*Jewish Eyes.* He not only gave seminars, but preached at both services on Sunday morning.

During Dave Beamer's time the youth group grew. June Tablak had a way of getting Junior Highers to come, he said. The youth played a lot of volley ball in the back "court." Unfortunately the noise caused continuing problems with neighbors. Other leaders remembered as strong with the junior highers of the late sixties are Rod Rodler and Allen Bartu.

A use of a formal adult curriculum came in 1984, when Joan Huff instituted the use of the Kerygma Bible study in evening classes. Several Stone church members helped her in teaching.

### Personal Growth, "Self-Actualization"

In August 1980, David Beamer wrote in the *Stonewall News*, "While Stone Church has always been a center for spiritual growth and ministry in the world, it has been very moving to me to see the fresh expressions of those venerable qualities of growing and serving that have emerged recently. . . For some time now, Stone Church has had a major focus on personal growth and development. . . Our theological reflection has taken us into the sometimes fruitful, and sometimes disquieting realization that a great variety of religious experience shapes our life together. . . This exploration of personal growth has been an important movement within the life of our congregation. Hopefully, it will remain a strong, and vital component of our mission. What the new cutting edge of our life together will be is not yet clear to me."

Examples of personal growth, the inward journey, included healing prayer groups, psychology based studies, encounter groups, meditation, even astrology.

One of the yearly experiences with high participation from Stone Church was called the Asilomar Experience, which as its name implies was a conference held at the Asilomar Conference Center in Pacific Grove. Sponsored by the three Presbyteries of what was the Golden Gate Mission Area, this conference brought people together for the kinds of personal growth experiences Stone members wanted. As many as 60 Stone people might go in any year, and in the seventies and early eighties a number of families participated with their kids. Karen Scott was co-Dean one

year.

Asilomar as an experience also dwindled, perhaps because participants "aged out" or because the "self-actualization phase" ran its course.

### The Jeannette Vanderploeg Library

The *Stonewall News* of January 1971 reported that "a library at Stone Church was started about 1955 when Larry Hillhouse, Director of Christian Education and Choir, brought his personal collection of books to the church to be used for reference during his time of service there. A few miscellaneous books were added and the church school storage room in the basement became the Church Library. Jeannette [VanderPloeg] began her work there by cataloguing this small collection."

When Mary Brown became director of Christian Education, Ed Tablak was chair of the C. E. Board. She presented the idea of a "real" library to the board, and talked to Jeannette to see about ordering more books with C. E. Funds. Books added included the twelve volume *Interpreter's Bible*. The books were moved to the Chapel.

In 1962 the Session budgeted \$250 for books, and at the close of that year there were 647 volumes. By 1964 there were 994 and Jeanette was begging for a library room. A library truck was used on Sundays on the patio or covered area. On December 19, 1965 the library opened for service in its new quarters with approximately 1200 books, 400 of these for young readers.

In December 1970, Session named the library "the Jeanette VanderPloeg Library in recognition of Jeannette's enthusiasm, devotion and professional ability."

Jeannette received her M. A. in Librarianship from the University of Illinois Library School and was Associate Professor in the Department of Librarianship at San Jose State College from 1929-1959.

Sue Williams has been librarian for the last five years, and reports a collection of about 2700 volumes. Books are added at the rate of 20 to 30 a month, many from donations and some bought with a small budget. The collection includes books on special needs children, family/parenting, social issues, ecology, and women's concerns.

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## PARISH LIFE

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At the congregational meeting of July 17, 1952, reports indicated that Stone was getting its parish life organized. The Lodestone group was organized for social purposes, reported Mrs. Leonard Nelson, "our chief objective being to acquaint friends with our Church and to make them welcome." It numbered about 80 members.

Other groups were forming: Mrs. Grace Glendenning reported the need for such organizations, as many new people joined and attended the church. "There needed to be some means of reaching them---finding the groups in which they belonged. . . We needed to create a feeling of friendliness and welcome." The consequence was a number of groups: Capstone (older members of the church; Livingstone (men's fellowship); Lodestone (couples between ages 30 and 60); Hearthstone (younger couples); Cornerstones were Senior Highs and Pebbles were boys of the 4th, 5th and 6th grades. The social group organization stayed in existence for many years, then as members were no longer willing to accept the work of organizing and maintaining the groups, they dwindled. Minutes of 1969 mention a revival of the Stone concept with the "Stonewarmers" under the Worship committee. Again, in 1984 came the formation of the present-day Singlestones group for singles over 30 and at about the same time Couplestones as a group came into being.

### Women's Organizations

The relationship of the women's groups to Stone Church under Pastor Simpson was a traditional one. An early action of the Session is amusing today: It was voted "that the Pastor proceed to announce to the ladies of the Church that the session would like to see them organize themselves."

The women did indeed organize themselves, and for a time represented the largest organization in the church. At the suggestion of Mary Simpson circles were named after precious stones: Garnet, Emerald, Amethyst, Topaz, Turquoise, Jade, Ruby, Sapphire and Diamond.

Women did the "women's work" around the church; men served on Session. The women served food. For example, in 1951 "The Pastor

announced that the ladies would provide the dinner for the meeting of Presbytery in our church and [it was voted] that they be allowed the profits of the undertaking." In 1955 Elder [Leonard] Nelson was given authority to authorize the Women's Association to supervise janitorial work. In 1956 the Women's Association accepted responsibility for baby sitting during church services in 1956. But they told the session that by 1957 this should be a church responsibility and in the budget.

But as well as doing the traditional work and maintaining a continuous program for the circles, the women's organization provided a training ground in leadership. The national church had for decades frozen women out of "mainstream" leadership, and the "separate but equal" principle prevailed. Still, Marcia Ludwig remembers that "those of us who were in Jade circle as young mothers learned leadership." She remembers Dottie Cary as her mentor, telling the women, "I'm going to teach you how to run a circle." Dottie was one of Stone's "feisty women."

Time brought a change in emphasis within the church, however. In March 1980, Nelda Emery wrote in the *Stonewall News*, "The United Presbyterian Women's Association of the Stone Church (UPW) is probably the smallest group functioning within the stone walls. In the early history of the church, the UPW was the largest, most active group.

"For many reasons the membership has dwindled. There are more women employed outside the home today. Also, many women are taking an active role in projects that are of vital concern to the community at large and this is their way of projecting the Christian message."

### The Women's Retreat

The women of Stone Church instituted a new form for developing relationships with the first Women's Retreat in 1987. Donna Cassin explained in that November's *Stonewall News*: "During July of this past summer, Carolyn Foster, Alice Thorn and I rode back and forth to Berkeley for five nights in order to take a writing class given by Madeleine L'Engle at New College, Berkeley. Every afternoon, we left at 4:00, had dinner in Berkeley, went

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to class and drove home. We never stopped talking except in class. . . we agreed that the opportunity to get to know one another was the bonus we all appreciated the most. . . . We. . . discussed sharing a similar opportunity on a grander scale with the women of Stone Church. . . The Counseling Center has agreed to sponsor a Women's Retreat with Mary Alice Collins as discussion leader."

That first retreat was held at the Presentation Center above Los Gatos from March 4-6, 1988. The retreat has been held yearly, since, at various retreat centers, and with women leaders including not only Mary Alice, and The Rev. Paula Kelso, but the Rev. Marjorie Hoyer Smith, The Rev. Kristin Sundquist, The Rev. Penny Mann, Signe (Seena) Frost, and the Rev. Marjorie Pearson.

Other attempts have been made to recreate the fellowship groups. In February 1972, "Elder Cary was given permission to try to organize small groups in the church for study and/or fellowship." In January 1973, a proposal for a Fellowship Board was accepted by session, and such a board created. "People with the gift of friendliness who are deeply committed to developing fellowship should be asked to serve on the Board." In a November 1974 congregational meeting, Manuel Sunyer spoke about wanting to have a Camera Club at Stone Church and asked the Congregation to support him in seeking financial assistance.

In May 1980, there was a discussion of what is now the Worship and Fellowship Committee. A proposal was made to divide the two functions; chair Alice Thorn reported that the committee "had held discussions about fellowship and its meaning. The old forms for fellowship groups don't seem to fit anymore." The session was challenged to give further thought to the direction "fellowship" was to take at Stone Church. In July 1980 a report to session concluded that "Fellowship is a by-product of any meaningful activities conducted by various groups and organizations in the church, and that a committee to pursue fellowship as a goal is unnecessary. Session voted to dissolve the Fellowship Subcommittee of the Worship Committee.

### Family Clusters

Family Clusters, intergenerational groupings, became a part of Stone Church in about 1980, through the work of June Tablak. By December 1981 it was reported that five clusters involved

100 persons in regular gatherings. In February 1982 Session voted to put Family Clusters under the Membership Board. In November 1982, Family Clusters were transferred to the jurisdiction of Christian Education. The Clusters continued as a program for several years. In 1985, it was reported that over 75 families had participated during the last five years.

### Men's Groups

The men of Stone have never been as fully organized as the women, but from time to time they too held meaningful events. The *Stonewall News* of December 1985 reported that fifteen men of Stone Church along with Pastor Bob Bowles spent the weekend of June 6 and 7 on a retreat at Mt. Cross Lutheran camp. Moderator Bowles led the men in a discussion of what it means "To Be A Man in the Church" and "The Importance of Meaningful Relationships Among Christian Men."

### Experiments

Through its history, the Stone congregation has shown a willingness to try new things, and to admit when the new did not always work out. In its life the use of a co-pastorate (two pastors serving with equal ecclesiastical authority) seemed to be one of those times.

The concept of a co-pastorate was not accepted unanimously. The session passed a resolution trying to reassure the congregation. Yet in January 1970, the congregational meeting dealt "in some depth" with the need for information on how the co-pastorate was working out, particularly in comparison with the goals of the congregation. A resolution was voted asking for a congregational meeting in March where part of the discussion would be on the status of the co-pastorate. That meeting was held as requested, and reports were given by all boards and the pastors. "There was time allowed after each presentation and lively discussion." A resolution was voted to have such meetings regularly, "to communicate to the membership what is going on at Stone Church."

In October 1974, a motion to seek a co-pastor, after the resignation of Sherwood Cummins, failed on a vote of 8 yes, 9 no and 2 abstentions. A vote to seek an Associate Pastor passed on a vote of 10 yes, 7 no and 2 abstentions. The congregation later voted 49 yes and 23 no to accept that recommendation.

Sometime parish life is just funny: In the February 1971 meeting of Session, Dottie Cary suggested that elders take turns preparing coffee for the coffee break. This was amended by Elder [Allen] Bartu to eliminate the coffee and smoking break completely. The amended motion was passed. In March, the Session changed its mind, and "by common consent the Session decided to restore the coffee break at the next meeting." [No word on who will make the coffee.]

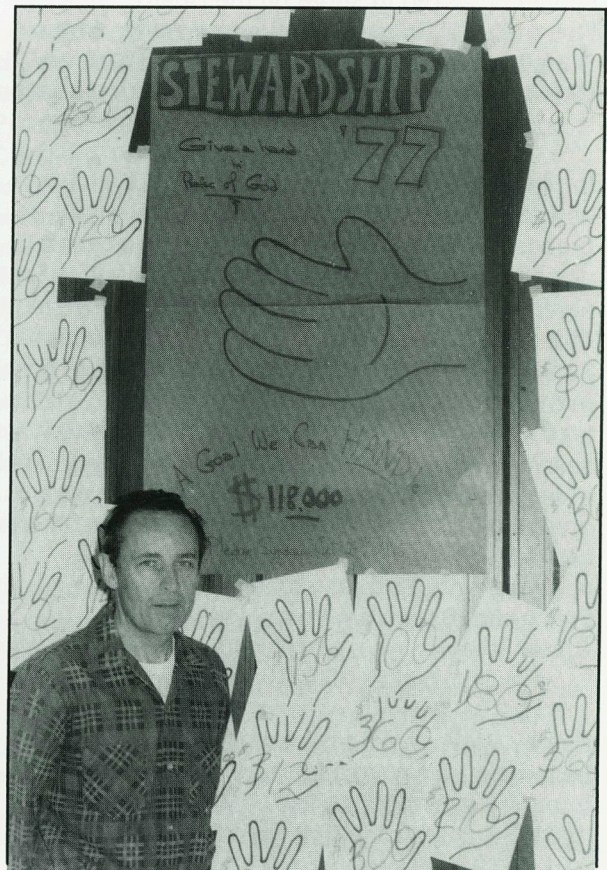


March 1969: Ruth Starkenburg Stone's First Woman Elder

Below, 1984: Craig Congden clowns for Stone Church School open house.



1976: Burt Corsen, Stewardship Chair



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## WORSHIP

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On the second Sunday of his pastorate, Bill Perdue included a written corporate prayer of confession in the order of service. "This," he remembers, "was considered a radical innovation by some, but we survived. Perhaps members came to believe that John Calvin was correct, and they indeed were sinners in need of confession and the assurance of pardon."

In June 1964, June Tablak proposed "the institution of a ritual of friendship as a means of becoming better acquainted with those attending services and to provide a better record of those visiting, and to assist the Session and the pastors in their concern for the parish." The motion passed with six opposing votes. By October 1964, Perdue noted that "the Ritual of Friendship was proving . . . to be most helpful in opening lines of communication with members as well as non-members . . . expressing a need for pastoral assistance or counsel."

May 10, 1966 "The choir was requested to sing hymns softly during the distribution of the elements at Holy Communion with the pastor to select the hymns."

An hour and a half discussion was held in June 1969 concerning the recent Innovative Worship Services. The consensus of session seemed to be that a substantial number of members were upset while other members, perhaps in a minority, were excited and encouraged by these services. The services were temporarily stopped, awaiting evaluation.

October 12, 1971: "Baptized Children may receive the elements of the Lord's Supper with the approval of their parents" was voted by session 15-5.

February 1972: Session voted to buy electric candelabra for the sanctuary with money from the organ fund, "the money to be repaid from savings in candle costs in the next few years." Somewhere along the line, the church must have gone back to candles, because in February 1978 it was reported that a "line item . . . for Chancel and Sacrament had been depleted due to ordering candles for weddings and special occasions. Any money that is reimbursed for candles goes into the General Fund."

May 1973: "A motion was made to thank Paul and Agnes Frommherz for their gifts. Explain to them that while we gratefully accept the bread at this time, the wine will have to be held in abeyance. Tell them of our current policy regarding grape juice. . . and that we plan to review our policy in the fall." September 1973: "It was m/s/c that beginning September 11, 1973, the Session of Stone Church of Willow Glen adopt the policy of serving wine along with grape juice during the Sacrament of Holy Communion. There was a request to record the 11-yes, 6-no vote."

In October, "After a lengthy discussion dealing with [certain members'] concern regarding the serving of wine at Holy Communion. . . it was recommended that a group from the Session . . . talk with them. . . . The Session felt that now was the time to communicate with the congregation on the matter of serving wine. It was therefore m/s/c/ that Claudia Hamm and Barbara Culbertson assume responsibility for communicating and educating the congregation on behalf of the Session." November: Proposed motion that "any exception to the wine/grapejuice and bread as communion elements be cleared through the Worship Committee." This motion was voted on and approved in December.

It was m/s/c/ that the Learning Faire dance workshop be allowed to include Holy Communion in their Friday, November 2, 1973 Worship Service."

### The Purple Box

Long remembered by youngsters who were in Stone Church in the summer of 1980 was the **Purple Box**. As described by Bob Bowles in the *Stonewall News*, here is the story: "Most of us who have been together for worship throughout the summer have grown to love the 'purple box' . . . the Sharing with the Children . . . involved having a child take home a bread-box-sized, purple, wooden box. During the week they would decide on an item to bring to worship in the purple box. During worship children and adults together would attempt to discover what we could learn about God from whatever was in the box. Our thesis has been that we could learn something about God from anything if we approached it holding that expectation. Our thesis has been tested throughout the summer and

has borne up under close scrutiny. We have learned from cartoons, critters [including this historian's favorite, a huge tomato worm], stuffed animals, rocks, a juggling act, [a mirror, an empty box left purposely so] and the minor crisis of having the box not show up one Sunday. In the beginning, the children, free of creed and form, were the most creative in helping us discover the 'lesson' about God that was contained in the particular item. Soon the adults, too, were risking to discover new levels of understanding of who God is, and the creativity as we learned together was truly a blessing of the Holy Spirit."

### MUSIC

Music has been an important part of the pattern of Stone Church life from the very first. Robert Vogt remembers the music program as "fantastic" during his time (1957-58), and references to major music presentations are numerous in its history.

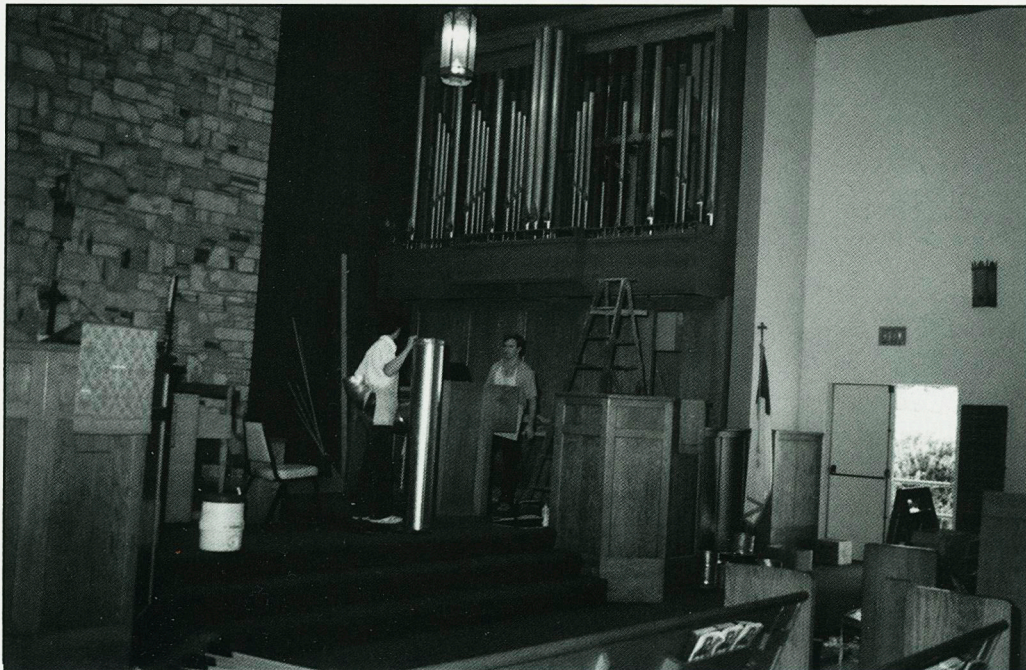
The first Stone Church Session held its organizing meeting on March 20, 1947, and one of its actions, at the request of the pastor, was to order 50 hymnals. At its second meeting, on April 16, the Session set up its budget, and included \$50 for music. At that same meeting, it appointed Elder Edwin Kamuf to head the music department, and it moved to accept a gift of music from Mr. Sheffield of the Westminster Presbyterian Church, with thanks. Growth could be seen when, in 1951, the Session ordered 200 more hymnbooks.

### Organs

In November 1947, the Session accepted an offer from Sherman Clay & Co. to put an Esty electronic organ on trial to be used at the evening service before Thanksgiving. The pastor was to ask the congregation whether they would want to purchase the organ. However, even though the congregation agreed to the purchase, that decision was never carried out, as the organist was placed on the committee and evidently preferred a Hammond Organ, which was ordered in January of 1948. That organ was paid for partly with a loan of \$1800 from Mrs. Arthur Akers, who later canceled the loan provision, turning the amount into a gift.

The first organist was Mrs. Lyle Ferrell, whose daughter Jeanne attended Stone and was the first bride married there (Jeanne and Don Stephens now live in Saratoga). Mrs. Ferrell had begun playing the piano when she was a little girl, and in grade school played for an assembly where the students marched in. Mrs. Ferrell was organist until her resignation in January of 1952. She was followed by Mrs. Margaret Peterson, then by Mrs. Merl (Margaret) Seavers. Next was Charles Hauser in mid-1960. He resigned in January 1963, and was replaced by Emily Elliott (now Kusak). Emily resigned in June 1968 and was followed by Mary Sherman whose term began in September 1968 and ended in September 1970.

### **Circa 1985: Schoenstein installation**



Joyce Rhodes was hired in December 1970 and has been organist since that date. Don Foster has been substitute, and was organist during year-long leaves of absence by Joyce.

Difficulties with who should use the organ are a recurring theme over the years; in April of 1948 the Session felt it necessary to take an action putting Elder Kamuf in charge of the organ, "and no one not having instruction on same will be allowed to play on it."

Stone Church has owned four organs in its history. The first was the Hammond mentioned above. When the congregation moved to two services, at 9:30 in the chapel and at 11:00 in the present-day social hall, a second instrument was needed. In October 1953, an organ was placed in the chapel for one month's time, and in November the session moved to negotiate its purchase. In January of 1954 the cost was underwritten by an anonymous member of the congregation who took a note from the church; the note was subsequently paid off. The July 1955 session minutes return to the theme of who should use the organ: "the use of the organs [plural] shall be restricted to the Church Organist unless approved by the Minister of Music." After the sanctuary was completed, in December of 1957, a Wurlitzer organ was sold for \$900, presumably the instrument from the chapel.

In 1970, the sanctuary Hammond was replaced by a rebuilt and modified Baldwin electronic organ. Emily Elliott, Dr. Harold Hill, Robert Manning and Joyce Rhodes were members of the Organ Subcommittee of the Worship Committee. Perhaps having a new instrument triggers anxiety about its use, because in May of 1970, the session again issued guidelines: only church members could use it for practice, at the discretion of the organist and the worship committee; the church organist had first priority for practice; the practicing organist was not to change the registration of pistons; and was to take into consideration the church's neighbors, the fact that sound travels, and the need to limit the times he [sic] used full organ.

In October 1982, with the Baldwin showing signs of its age, the Session established a committee to study obtaining a new organ for the church.

That committee was chaired by Emily Elliott (now Kuszak). Members included Bill Melver, Joyce Rhodes, Don Foster, Miriam Rowen, and Alice Thorn. Bob Rhodes was a de facto member of

the group, by virtue of being its frequent chauffeur. The committee considered both electronic and pipe organs, meeting with representatives of organ companies, and traveling around the Bay Area to hear instruments already installed in churches as well as at the University of California at Berkeley, and at Stanford Memorial Church. After almost a year of research and listening, the committee chose a pipe organ to be built by Schoenstein & Co. of San Francisco, builders of organs for five generations.

Schoenstein craftsmen designed the organ for the acoustical space of the Stone Church sanctuary. The design was complicated by the small space available, but in spite of the problems it presented, the company could say "we like your building in proportion and acoustics." The final design included 14 registers and 16 ranks, and its cost was about \$100,000. Construction was begun in mid-year 1985, with Stone's Dan Jones responsible for changes in the building. Dedication concerts were held on January 19, 1986, at 3:00 pm and 6:00 pm, featuring organist Wilbur F. Russell, Professor of Church Music, San Francisco Theological Seminary.

In choosing a pipe organ, the committee continued the Stone Church tradition of "classical" church music. As Emily Elliott wrote to the Session, "Wherever faith in God is lit or re-lit, wherever the gospel becomes a real power in people's lives, there will be music. . . . At the center of all this for the past centuries has been the organ . . . distinctively the instrument of the church. . . . While it has found its way into other places and settings, its true home is in the church and at the heart of Christian worship. . . ."

Again, with the new organ, Session was concerned with who should be able to use it. At its December 1985 meeting, the "opinion of session was solicited concerning outside use of the church organ." Ideas were to be directed to Personnel and Administration or to the Worship Committee.

### Choirs

A choir was also part of church life from the beginning. In January of 1949, Elder Edwin Kamuf, director of the choir, reported to the Session on "the activities of this fine group, who are doing an excellent job." Later, however, music life was evidently not so smooth, as in April of

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1952 a committee of four members of Session met with the music committee, "to investigate possibilities for better coordination of music with the Sunday morning church service, and to learn areas of disagreement which might be smoothed out."

By 1950, the Church was growing, and the church budget included \$200 for music. During that year the Session authorized \$5.00 for laundering of white collars of choir robes.

Elder Kamuf resigned as choir director in September of 1952. The session then hired Larry Hillhouse, who with his wife had graduated from Westminster Choir School in Princeton, NJ. Minutes of December mention that Mr. and Mrs. Hillhouse will be installed as ministers of music on December 21, 1952.

By 1954, Larry Hillhouse and Jay Welsh proposed to Session that a choir school take the place of Daily Vacation Bible School after the public schools closed. Session agreed to underwrite part of the cost. The report to the congregational meeting on January 12, 1956, described a choral program of 141 participants, composed of six choirs and a male octette known as the "Mello-stones." Larry Hillhouse was still choir director (as well as CE director).

In September 1956, Mr. Patrick R. Daugherty became choir director. In December 1959, Ralph G. Pfaff was choir director. He resigned October 31, 1964, but continued to sing in the choir. In December 1964, the hiring of Ross Bergantz was announced. He resigned July 1, 1965. Patricia Christa was temporarily employed. In September 1965, John Pleasant was hired as Director of Music. He resigned June 1966.

Jack Matthews was the next director hired in September 1966; he resigned as of June 30, 1968 at the same time Emily Elliott's resignation became effective.

Bob Manning became Director of Music in August 1968 and resigned November 12, 1985, having served 17 years. In addition to his duties as Stone's choir director, Bob was and is principal string bass player for the San Jose Symphony.

Don Whitney was hired as interim director of Music January 1986 and became permanent director of music in August 1986. He was a

graduate of San Jose State University, and sang with Opera San Jose. He resigned on September 10, 1991 when failing health from complications of HIV infection made it impossible for him to continue. Don died early Sunday morning, September 22, 1991, at the age of 30. A memorial service on Saturday October 12 included music from the choir into which he had poured such energy and love. As John Kelso wrote in the *Stonewall News*, "Whenever we sing and play and listen, we remember the gift he gave us and celebrate his life among us."

Mary Linduska became Interim choir director after Don. Chuck King, also a product of San Jose State University, became choir director in February 1992.

Leroy Kromm became interim choir director in February 1996, and permanent choir director in January 1997. He serves on the voice faculty of Santa Clara University, and is active in the departments of theater, pastoral ministries and music. He is also the Director of Music for the San Jose Symphonic Choir. He is much sought after as baritone soloist, choral clinician, and interpreter of operatic arias and sacred music.

Valerie Prunetti became director of the Logos children's choir in spring of 1996. She is a graduate of San Jose State University.

In 1989, Joe Cascio was honored for 37 continuous years in choir service. Also in that year two hundred fifty new Presbyterian *Hymnals* were purchased in December.

### Music in Worship

In the beginning, as now, there was disagreement about use of music in worship. At its meeting of November 1953, the session voted that the congregation "refrain from singing during the Baptism of children in order to permit the congregation to more fully participate in this important Sacrament."

In October 1964, minutes note the authorizing of a "monthly 'Hymnenany' which will be a hymn-teaching program conducted between Worship Services in the social hall."

In February 1967, the Worship committee recommended that "the ushers be instructed not to seat anyone while the Choir is in the Narthex during the Processional Hymn, or Invocation, but

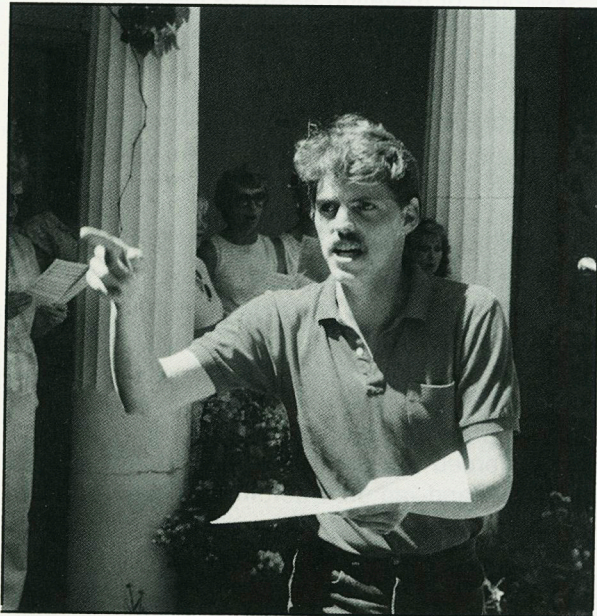


with leaving the doors open.”

## Dance

In February 1968, Session approved the proposal by the Director of Music “that 12 persons from the Sanctuary Choir sing at the 9:30 am service, and that each group serve for one month then rotate. Also that the 9:30 am choir be allowed to recess at the most convenient time after the anthem, at a time least disruptive to the Worship Service.”

A Task Force on the arts and religion was formed in June 1966. Before then, Barbara Lingafelter had been responsible for the presentation of several plays at Stone.



Tehillim dance choir grew out of a “Learning Faire” class in November 1973 when SFTS graduate the Rev. Mikel Taxer was brought from San Diego to offer a dance workshop, described as “body conditioning, learning simple dance routines, sharing traditions of dance in worship, and experiencing dance as a blend of the traditional and contemporary.”

The name is the plural masculine of the Hebrew word tehilla which indicates a song of praise, a hymn. “Tehillim” has come to be applied to the collection of the Psalms. Original dancers were Margie Bowles, Diane Dolwig, Claudia Hamm, Janet Rolph, Rosaleen Zisch, Ann Coons, Cherie Coons, Gay Schy, Karen Bohlander and Ginny Melver.

Tehillim Dance Choir became the responsibility of the Worship Committee, including having a line item in the worship budget on March 8, 1977. In April 1980, Ann Webster’s resignation as director of Tehillim was announced, but the group planned to continue for the time being without a director.

**Left, 1989: Don Whitney conducts choir at party in the mansion where he lived on Summit Road in the Santa Cruz mountains. The house was later made uninhabitable by the Loma Prieta earthquake.**

**Below: Tehillim, circa 1975. Back, left to right, Donna Rowe, Shirley Stough, Claudia Hamm, Bonnie Manthey, Karen Scott. Other two unidentified.**



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## PASTORS OF STONE CHURCH

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### The Rev. Thomas H. Simpson (1945-1958)

Thomas H. Simpson was born on June 20, 1884 in Ireland, then came to the U. S. and Princeton Theological Seminary for ministerial training in 1908. In June, 1910, he answered a notice of a pastoral position in the state of Washington for a "young man not afraid to put on overalls" to build a church. He wired, "Save the overalls for me" and traveled to Concrete, Washington, the home of several cement companies in a small community. He met his future wife Mary, a recent graduate of Western Washington Teachers College in Bellingham, who had come to Concrete to teach.

They were married in September 1911 and set up housekeeping in a log manse next to the little log church. After the arrival of the first baby, they moved to the larger town of Aberdeen on the Washington coast. In addition to work in his church, Tom became a "Sky Pilot" or traveling pastor to the nearby lumber camps, leaving Mary and (by 1916) two little daughters. During World War I he was needed full time in one of the large camps.

Tom Simpson was always a man on the move--churches from Olympia to Seattle to San Francisco--always accepting a challenge to build a new or restore a foundering parish. A son had been added to the family and they were living in San Francisco, where Tom was an industrial chaplain, when the call came in 1945 to serve a Mission Church in Willow Glen. He was sixty-one years old.

The Simpson family moved to 1163 Clark Way in 1947, the first house they had ever owned. During the busy years of building Stone Church, Mary kept the home, protecting the privacy of her husband, and listening to the callers who came to their house for help.

Cancer attacked Tom in 1954, was controlled by surgery, and served as an added incentive to the Session to drive for the completion of the Sanctuary so that the man whose dream it was could preach there. Dedication was in 1955, and Tom Simpson served until forced to retire in 1958. As a farewell gift from a grateful congregation, he and Mary were given a trip to Ireland--an unforgettable, happy period for her.

After Tom's death on October 12, 1960, people still came to her home for comfort, advice, and just for fun. She kept up her yard, harvesting and preserving its fruits. She was a great cook, a weaver, a lover of books, and a tireless writer. An independent soul, she would seldom accept a ride if she could get to her destination by bus.

(Based on an article written by Edith Smith for the *Stonewall News*, January 1979.)

### The Rev. Robert Stuart Vogt, Assistant Pastor (January 1957 - November 1958)

Bob Vogt graduated from the University of California in Berkeley in 1943 with majors in psychology, history and sociology. He received his Bachelor of Divinity Degree from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1946 (In those days everyone received a B. D., he says. M. Divs. were later awarded retroactively, but he never got around to getting the paperwork done.) He was ordained in May of 1946 at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Sacramento. He then had pastorates in Calvary Presbyterian, San Francisco; First Presbyterian, Seattle under Paul McConkey; and a New Church Development in Milwaukee, Oregon. After Stone, he went to Pleasanton, where his pastorate lasted 30 years. He retired in 1987.

He is married to Sallee (formal name Esther), and they had one son, Robert-John Stuart, who was five when they moved to San Jose. Their son later died in a drowning accident.

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## The Rev. Dr. William Perdue

William Morton Perdue was born in Columbus, Ohio on September 17, 1915. He graduated from Washington & Jefferson College in Washington, PA in 1937 with a BA degree. He was graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1940 with an M. Div. degree. Immediately after arriving at Stone, he was honored by a Doctor of Divinity Degree from the College of Idaho. His alma mater, Washington and Jefferson College, later gave him the honorary degree Doctor of Humane Letters.

His first pastorate, from 1940 to 1944, was a three parish National Missions field in the upper Peninsula of Michigan comprising St. Ignace, Rudyard and Hessel. He was ordained on July 15, 1940 by the then Lake Superior Presbytery. He went on to serve churches in Detroit, Michigan and Jerome, Idaho before coming to Stone.

He was married to Henrietta, and they had four sons.

Dr. Perdue's resignation came before the session in November 1968, to be effective December 7, 1968. He wrote "Sometimes in the course of a man's pilgrimage an event, a circumstance, or a series of events compel him to make a decision which he truly believes is for his own best interests. As well as the best interests of his family, his friends, all those that he cares about most--and he may even believe that God is leading him in that decision. So it is with me now.

"It is not that I want to give up fighting battles; but there are some battles in the warfare of life that I do not have the margin, the desire, or really the opportunity to fight any longer in San Jose--due, in a large measure, to very personal reasons largely associated in one way or another with Henrietta's death last March."

His letter also said, "Let me conclude with three concerns:

1. That . . . it be impressed upon the congregation that my decision to resign is a very personal one and not related in any way to any pressures--real or imagined that have been 'put on me' by members of Stone Church.
2. that . . . it be impressed upon the congregation that my leaving in no way affects the very solid and firmed-up relationship of Mr. Cummins and Mr. Beamer to the congregation and
3. that we all acknowledge that in life there seems to be an eternal pattern written in the very heavens--a pattern of death and resurrection."

In the minutes of the congregational meeting held to accept Dr. Perdue's resignation, a resolution was passed which said, members "note in these minutes their deep love and appreciation for Dr. Perdue who is both a leader whom the Congregation has followed to dream dreams, and realize new horizons; and a man whose personal life so exemplifies love that as a congregation we find ourselves called to act with conscience enlightened by the Word of God."

After Stone he went to Westminster in Tiburon from 1969 to 1980; from there he retired and was named Pastor Emeritus.

## The Rev. Edward Frost (January 1962 to November 1965)

Edward Frost received his undergraduate training at the University of Texas, and also received a law degree from there; he received his theological training at Yale University Divinity School. He was ordained November 1958 by the Presbytery of Kendall, and his first pastorate was in the First Presbyterian Church, Malad City, Idaho. He was called as Associate Pastor to Stone. He was married to Signe and they had four children. While at Stone he was active with the Council of Churches, the United Campus Christian Ministry at San Jose State [College] and in Presbytery matters. "This church,

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through individuals and corporately, is quite active in the community--in issues of civil rights; migrants; and local politics," he wrote in his resume.

Effective December 1, 1965, he became pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Watsonville. (While at Watsonville, he saw the rejoining of Chapel Hill Presbyterian and his church into the United Presbyterian Church. Chapel Hill had split off in 1952 in a dispute over a conservative pastor.)

He later became a Pastoral Counselor, and at the Presbytery meeting of February 2, 1980, he was released from the exercise of ordained office and transferred as a lay member to the United Presbyterian Church, Watsonville.

#### **The Rev. Sherwood Cummins (1965 to 1974)**

Sherwood Cummins was Associate Pastor from October 1965 as Minister of Christian Education; called as Associate Pastor in June 1966; became Co-Pastor with David Beamer in 1969; resigned in July 1974, effective 9/15/74 to go to the Redwood Presbyterian Church, Larkspur.

Sherwood received his undergraduate training at the University of California at Berkeley and his theological training at San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo. He was married to Patti, and had two sons.

#### **The Rev. David Beamer (1966 to 1980)**

David Beamer became Associate Pastor August 1966 and assumed the responsibilities of Senior Pastor effective December 7, 1968 when William Perdue's resignation took effect. He was called as Co-Pastor with Sherwood Cummins June 1969; he resigned effective November 30, 1980, to become pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Ashland, Oregon.

David received his undergraduate training at Whitworth College in Spokane, Washington and his theological training at Princeton Theological Seminary. His previous pastorate was at the Bethel Presbyterian Church in San Leandro. He was married to Betty and they had four children. He and Betty were divorced during his pastorate at Stone. He and Terry Rymer were married at Stone on July 21, 1979.

#### **The Rev. Robert Samuel Bowles (1975 to 1994)**

Robert S. Bowles was called as Associate Pastor on 10/19/75 and installed in December; 10/25/81. The congregation then voted to call him as pastor; he was installed December 6, 1981; he resigned effective July 30, 1994 to become Pastor of St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, Aptos.

Bob Bowles received a B. A. from Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, attended McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, received his M. Div. from Louisville Theological Seminary, Kentucky, and his D. Min. from San Francisco Theological Seminary, San Anselmo, CA. He was ordained July 4, 1971.

Bob was national leader of the Young Pastor's Conference in 1975-1977. From 1976 to 1981, he and Margie served as a Presenting Team for Presbyterian Marriage Encounter. In September 1978, Session endorsed and supported Bob and Margie as the National Clergy Couple for Presbyterian Marriage Encounter for a two year term beginning January 1, 1979. In 1980 to 1982 He served the United Presbyterian Church Young Pastors' Seminar, and was its Co-Dean. Bob served on the Presbytery of San Jose Ministerial Relations Committee from 1978-1984; he was moderator of the committee in 1984. He served on the Presbytery Committee on Preparation for Ministry from 1987-1992 and was committee moderator in 1991-1992.

He and Margie have a son Rob and a daughter Amber.

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**The Rev. E. Eugene Huff and the Rev. Joan Galvin Huff**  
**(1982- 1986)**

Gene and Joan Huff joined the Stone Church staff as Assistant Pastors, August 15, 1982 and were installed October 17, 1982; they were called as associates on January 22, 1984; they resigned December 1, 1985, effective February 14, 1986. They were the first clergy couple to serve Stone, and the committee which screened candidates for the position made a conscious decision to call a couple. Part of the reasoning was the desire to include women pastors as part of Stone's staffing, with the belief/hope that acceptance would come through this action. In the *Stonewall News* of October 1982, Gene wrote of how unusual it was to have a church actually seek out a clergy couple and design the set of positions as part of the pastoral team.

Joan Huff was raised in a Roman Catholic family; one of her uncles a priest serving as chaplain at St. Mary of the Woods College in Terre Haute, Ind. and another who had been teaching in a Jesuit school in Seattle until his death. She did her undergraduate work in Manhattanville College, Purchase, New York where she received a BA in English Literature. She then graduated from Fairleigh Dickinson University, with a Masters in Psychology. She worked on the administrative staff of the Presbyterian Board of National Mission and New York Theological Seminary. She received her theological training in the School of Theology, Claremont, CA and was ordained in 1980. She was an intern at two Presbyterian churches, in Lavern and in Ontario, California. She and Gene were married in 1972.

Gene is an only child who grew up in Oklahoma where his father was a farm manager. Both his parents were active in the First Presbyterian Church in Chickasha, Oklahoma. Gene graduated from Park College in Missouri and from McCormick Seminary in Chicago.

His earlier pastorates were in Morton Grove, IL, a suburb of Chicago, and in New Rochelle, N. Y. He worked 3 years with the Presbytery of Chicago and 11 years on the staff of General Assembly agencies in New York. There he served as a consultant in local church mission and new church development and coordinated a large staff in mission strategy and evangelism. He travelled to all but two states and to Japan, Germany, Switzerland and the Carribean.

Together the Huffs were co-pastors in the Presbyterian Church in Cottage Grove, Oregon, and Interim Co-pastors at La Crescenta Presbyterian Church, California.

The Huffs have two sons, Mark and Joel.

Joan worked with PACT, People Acting in Community Together, a community organizing group; with the Council of Churches and with Presbytery. Gene was liaison to Santa Teresa Hills Presbyterian Church, San Jose, in their development, and worked in New Church Development for the Presbytery.

**The Rev. Betha Hoy, Interim Pastor (1986-1987)**

Betha Hoy was Interim Pastor March 1, 1986, through January 11, 1987. She came out of Cameron House, San Francisco and was junior high youth group leader for Stone member Leland Wong some years before she went to seminary. She was director as a lay person of the Presbyterian Distribution Service office in San Francisco which was responsible for providing denominational materials for 1300 churches in the western region of the US. She is one of the few pastors of her generation of Chinese American women.

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### **The Rev. Paula Kelso and the Rev. John Kelso (1986 - 1995)**

John and Paula Kelso were called as Associate Pastors December 21, 1986. They were ordained and installed on February 22, 1987. They became interim co-pastors after Robert Bowles' resignation, and served until December 1995.

Paula graduated from William Woods College, Fulton, MO, in Spanish, with minors in English, German and Education. She received her Theological training at Princeton Theological Seminary, New Jersey. She was a junior high school Language Arts and high school Spanish and English teacher, then a Director of Christian Education before going to seminary.

While at Stone Church, she served on the Presbytery of San Jose Racial Ethnic Ministries Committee and was liaison to the Hispanic New Church Development; on the Christian Education Committee; and on the Committee on Ministry, becoming its Chair in 1994.

John Kelso received his undergraduate degree from Cleveland State University, Cleveland, Ohio in Political Science and Economics. He received his M. Div. from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, though part of his work was done at Princeton Theological Seminary and transferred to Pittsburgh.

Earlier, John served in U.S. Army intelligence and the National Security Agency as a Russian linguist. He also held several business positions.

He served on the Presbytery of San Jose Committee on Polity and Government and was its chair from 1992 - 1994.

### **The Rev. Arthur Wesley Mills (1996- )**

Arthur Wesley Mills was called as pastor on January 21, 1996 and installed on March 17, 1996.

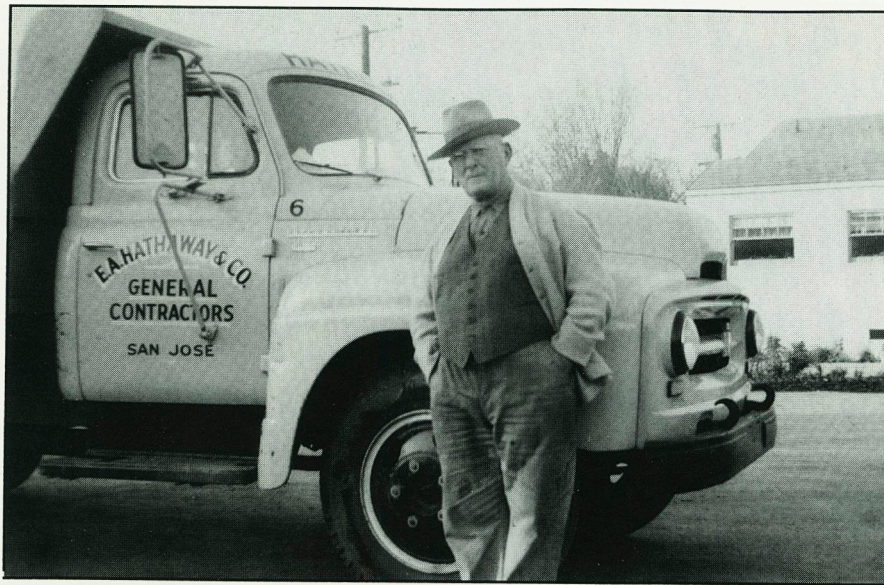
Art Mills graduated from California State University at Sacramento with a BA in Government and received a Graduate Diploma in International Relations from the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, the Netherlands. He did additional course work at Cal State Sacramento in Government. He graduated from San Francisco Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity. He was ordained on October 13, 1991 to the position of Program Officer for Religion and Environment, Marin Community Foundation. Before coming to Stone, he was Moderator of Redwoods Presbytery and served as Parish Associate, Pt. Reyes Presbyterian Church.

### **Parish Associates**

**The Rev. David Hanner** has been Parish Associate since 1977. The January 11, 1977 Session minutes record that members "[voted] to approve David Hanner as our new Parish Associate for the staff of Stone Church effective January 1, 1977-78, subject to annual review and renewal. Whatever tasks Mr. Hanner is asked to perform will be negotiated between the Session, Mr. Hanner and the two pastors. Mr. Hanner's main focus of interest . . . will be to head a task force . . . to study the church educational program, including church school, Jr. Hi, Sr. Hi, and adult education, looking into curriculum as well as the total program." Dave has been an integral part of church life from that time, with his tasks changing as the needs of the church have changed.

**The Rev. Susan Isaacs Brohmer** was Parish Associate in the early 1990's. She and her family now live in Crescent City.

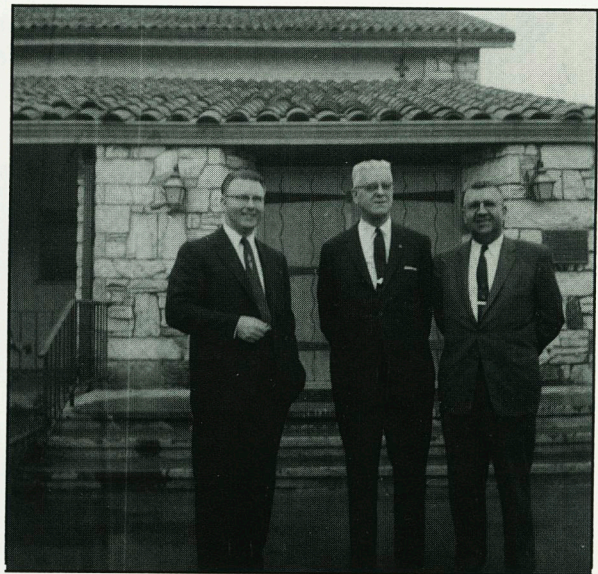
**The Rev. Lemuel Ignacio** became Parish Associate on June 19, 1993; he and his family had been a part of Stone Church life in earlier years, when their sons took part in musical programs.



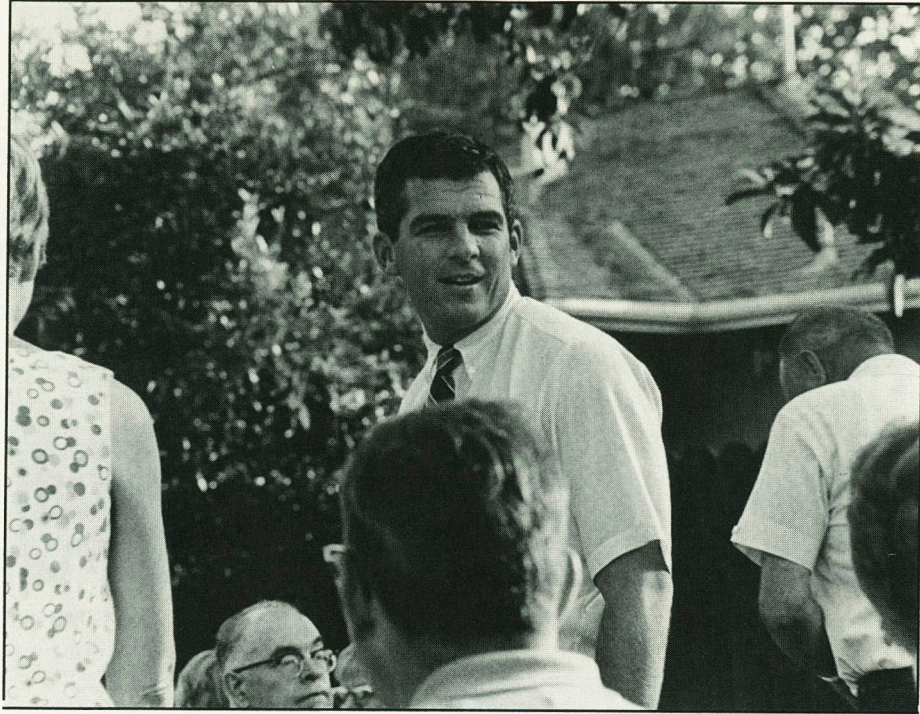
**The Rev. Tom Simpson**



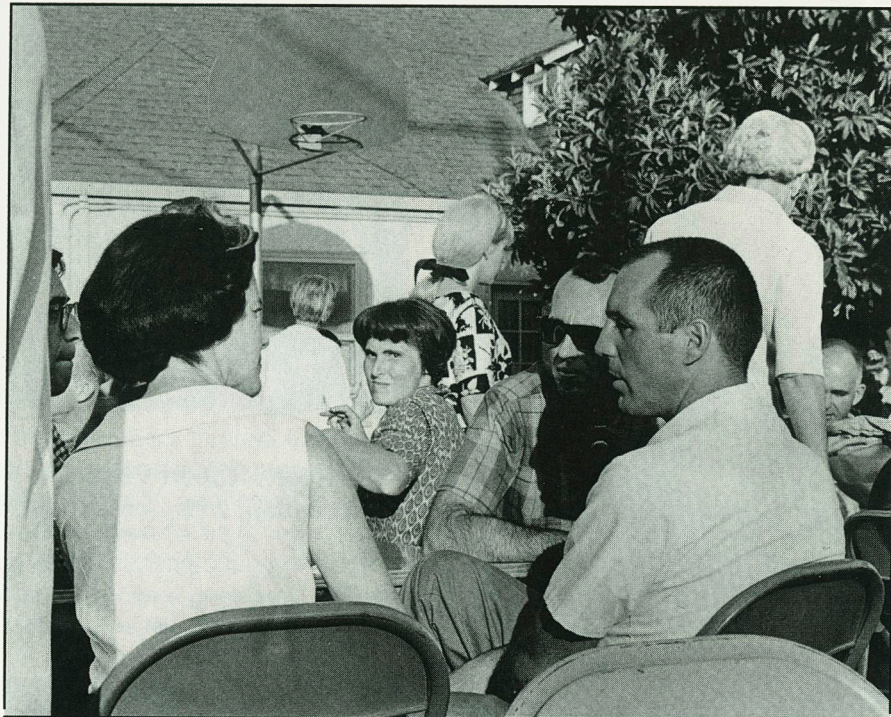
**The Rev. William Perdue greets  
Marilyn Gardner**



**The Rev. Robert Vogt, The Rev. Gilbert  
Christian, with unidentified third man.**



**The Rev. Sherwood Cummins  
(Peter Holt facing bottom left)**



**Left to right: Bill Gum (profile), Connie Gum, Leecy Cross,  
John Lingafelter, The Rev. David Beamer**