

**A Continuation
Of the History
Of the
Stone Church of Willow Glen
Presbyterian (USA)
1998—2022**

Forward: Surely, God is in This Place

While writing various church histories over the years, I have carried in my head a deep and abiding wonder at the great continuity of congregations and the life held within them. I recently found a description that seems perfect. The writer is Albert J. Raboteau, a black scholar of African-American Spirituality. In a brief memoir called *A Sorrowful Joy* he wrote: “I began to realize how important the church was with its sacramental life . . . The progression of the liturgical seasons. Advent followed by Christmas, and Lent culminating in Easter, and fifty days later Pentecost, and then ordinary time. Ordinary time, even ordinary time was sacred. In sacred time events that transpired 2000 years ago lived on in the present, not just in memory, but in mystical reality. We lived these mysteries again and again, year in and year out. A regularity that offered stability in an impermanent world.”

It may be that this history recounts much that seems mundane. But underneath, I believe with all my heart, lies this “sacramental life.” It has predictability and stability yes, but always a reliving of mysteries, our congregational life.

As I did with the history of our first 50 years, I have tried in this edition to give credit to the numerous folks who have created congregational life. And as I did then, I now apologize in advance for missing some of you. Stone Church has an amazingly “deep bench” of leadership. I have tried to mention as many individuals as possible.

A note on the photos: Many were taken by the late Sylvia Snyder, who documented life at Stone for a number of years. For others I do not know the photographer. Thank you, whoever you are. And thank you to my husband, Rod, who gave so much help in preparing photos for this book.

I don’t know how many church historians have been given the privilege of writing a history, and twenty five years later writing again. This writing is a joy and I am grateful.

Alice Elizabeth Thorn
Spring 2022

Stone Church History: The Third 25 Years

When Stone Church of Willow Glen was chartered, in 1947, San Jose was just emerging from its identity as a small, agricultural town at the south end of San Francisco Bay, overshadowed by the City in the north. In January 1998, the city of San Jose had a population of 894,000, and was ranked third in California in population size. By October 2021, San Jose's population was 1,021,795, and it was the tenth largest city in the United States. Stone Church was no longer a big church in a small town; it was one among dozens, including non-denominational megachurches. Television, non-existent at Stone's founding, was now a dominant factor on Sunday morning. "Church" was also in competition with a myriad athletic, social and family activities, no longer the given activity of a Sunday morning for most townspeople.

In 1997 the Presbytery of San Jose had 43 churches, including 10 in San Jose. Stone church's official membership was 432. By 2021, the Presbytery, in keeping with the national Presbyterian Church (USA), had undergone a liberal/conservative split, and was down to 29 churches in all. Where Stone Church had been one of several larger churches in the Presbytery and surpassed in membership by such as First Presbyterian Salinas and Sunnyvale Presbyterian, it was now the third largest in the Presbytery, behind Sunnyvale and Los Gatos, and had an official membership of 340.

In 1997 the Rev. Art Mills had been pastor of Stone Church for two years, and the Rev. Rebecca Kuiken had been Associate Pastor for about a year and a half. Both pastors, while not new to the ministry itself, were relatively new to Parish ministry. The Rev. Mills had

been ordained to the position of Program Officer for Religion and Environment, Marin Community Foundation. The Rev. Kuiken came to Stone following a position as Director of Communications for San Francisco Theological Seminary.

Before Mills/Kuiken, the Rev. Bob Bowles had had a long pastorate at Stone. Under his leadership, the church remained strongly connected to the denomination, was deeply involved in the denominational struggle over ordination rules as they pertained to gay/lesbian ordination, worked with expressions of spirituality, including the beginnings of a move toward forming the Taizé service of prayer, and continued to work in areas of social justice.

Art Mills, like Tom Simpson before him, was a builder, and the distinctive of his time as pastor was a major remodeling of portions of the church. Church life retained its continuity, but for a couple of years reality was the complete dislocation caused by this building project.

Rebecca Kuiken worked with women's ministries, and her distinctive contribution was to start the Soul Feast groups (so called because of a book by that name used in the beginning of the program). A couple of those groups have continued. The Taizé services began during her ministry, and she and Art Mills both participated in leadership of the services, which were thought of as alternative worship.

Art Mills' resignation after 9 years of ministry was somewhat abrupt, with the church having just two weeks between the notice of his resignation and his last Sunday in worship. There was confusion about the process for calling a successor pastor and for a bit the church felt rudderless. But with the coming of the Rev. Marge Palmer as interim Pastor, the continuity

of congregational life soon returned.

The next Pastor called to Stone was the Rev. Ken Henry. Under him the church thrived. His personal gifts of preaching (and juggling and guitar playing) and infectious love of people attracted a larger congregation. Ken was pastor during the coming of General Assembly to San Jose in 2008. He was also pastor during the sad splitting of the denomination, when 12 churches left the Presbytery of San Jose. He was active in both happenings. It was Ken who sought out Irene Pak and persuaded her to come as Stone's Associate Pastor. Irene brought enormous gifts to the congregation.

Jim Bender was Interim Pastor after Ken left, and was a pastoral presence for the congregation.

Finally, Stone's most recent pastor is the Rev. Sammie Evans, the first woman head of staff in its history. Her decision to accept this call took a leap of faith on her part, as well as a leap of faith on the part of the congregation. There have been rough spots, the most obvious of which is that Sammie had the enormous burden of pastoring during the long Covid nightmare. She shepherded the creation of new technology to keep worship services and all sorts of meetings going via Zoom, and she and Irene worked very hard to keep the connections of this entire congregation, a Herculean task, with no precedent. There were no seminary courses on worship in a time of Covid. None of us had heard of Zoom until we needed it. Pastoral care when you couldn't physically be with people presented challenges indeed.

A provider of continuity for the congregation has been its newsletter. For many decades it was called the *Stonewall News*; then in August 2003 it received a new name—the *StoNews*—and a new full-page size, with the name later

modified to the *Stone News*. Editor Emily Meacham began an eleven-year run of providing the news.

There was some muted grumbling at the name change, but readers got used to it in time.

The Stone News has been an invaluable source for this writer of our church's history. One of the consequences of our current Covid hiatus is that there will be two or more years without this consistent record of church life. It is a loss we may not comprehend completely.

After Emily's resignation, Joann Vliet took over editorship, and brought visual changes to the news sheet, with continuity in full coverage of congregational life. Her editorship has been interrupted by Covid.

Since the last history was written, some parts of this church's life have ended, and some new have entered. This is a brief summary; more complete descriptions of a few of these may be found in the following pages: Stone Church's long activism on the subject of ordination standards finally came to a resolution through action of the national church; ecumenical involvements dwindled with the shutting down of the Council of Churches of Santa Clara County in 2011; after 39 years of Stone's participation the CROP walk closed after 2017; after decades of bringing important voices and ideas to the congregation, the Henrietta Perdue lecture series ended. The Zephyr Experience, which attracted considerable Stone Church involvement, came to an end.

But the women's retreats continue (with the exception of a Covid hiatus). There are still Taizé services. Worship has been continuous; even in the time of Covid, the congregation has found a way to worship. Presbyterian Women, the Men's Ministry, Stephen's Ministry, Youth Group, many and varied mission projects—all these and more have continued.

It is extraordinary to consider that continuity of our "sacramental life."

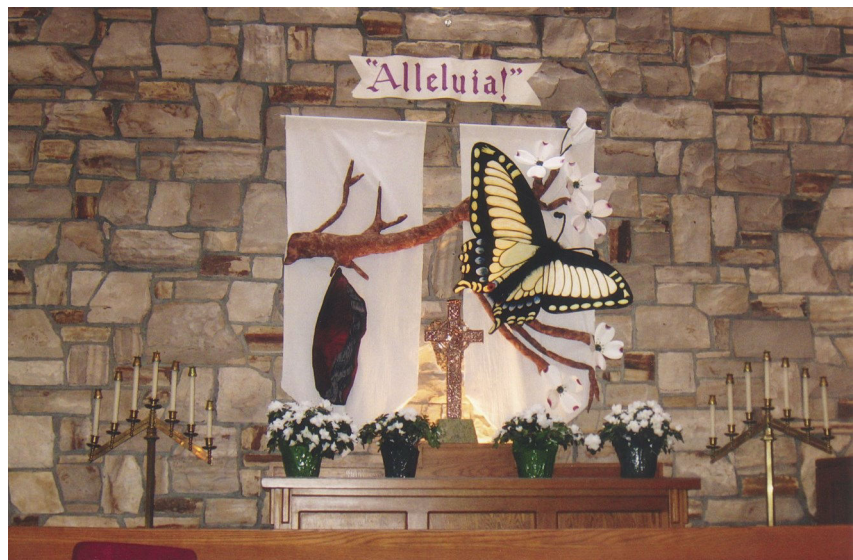


Sammie Evans, for whom worship leadership was complicated by the need to create remote technology in the time of Covid. There had to be upgrades to much of the church's sound system. But in spite of physical separation, congregation members worshipped, and continued many groups.



Ken Henry in 2009 leading Worship in the Park at History Park, San Jose. This outdoor service was a tradition of many years, but had to be ended when the Park began charging higher fees.

The beautiful banner was created by Jeanette Rapp, who made a number of equally beautiful banners for use in worship. Jeanette also provided the palms for the congregation on Palm Sunday. And she gathered a number of people into a banner making group, with the goal of creating hangings to illustrate the Great Ends of the Church. Four of these have been completed.





Art Mills' enduring legacy for Stone Church is the major remodeling project carried out during his pastorate. He left a more usable building, renewed and refurbished, with a lovely social hall for congregational events. Art and Thea also gave the cross hanging in the social hall.



Rebecca Kuiken's robe came from use at the closing worship of the 1997 Church-wide Presbyterian Women's gathering. It was a gift from Diana Lim, who was elected to a three year term as Co-moderator of the Churchwide Coordinating Team at that meeting.



Marge Palmer became Interim Pastor after Art Mills left, and gave wise and caring ministry.

She was honored as Pastor Emerita by the congregation.

Stone Church and the General Assembly of 2008

The Stone News of August 2007 carried an article by Fred Oliver, announcing that the 218th meeting of the General Assembly of the PC (USA) would be held in San Jose, hosted for the first time by the Presbytery of San Jose. Nearly 1,000 commissioners and delegates would be involved, with another 5,000 plus visitors. Already, a number of Stone Church members had accepted leadership roles: Fred Oliver would coordinate a huge Sunday worship as well as daily worship services, including music; Marcia Ludwig would organize local Bay Area tours (participants would take these during breaks in the Assembly schedule); Mel Goertz and Diana Lim would be on the Committee on Local Arrangements (COLA), responsible for volunteer recruitment and management. Former pastor the Rev. Dr. Bob Bowles would serve as leader of all local arrangements. Stone Church would in time live up to its activist reputation, as more than 80 members took part as volunteers in the gathering, far more than any other church in the Presbytery.

Fred urged members to plan to attend open meetings; Pat Magee announced a coming Sunday morning Adult Study series, *An Introduction to the General Assembly*.

In October the newsletter again urged attendance, particularly noting the special morning worship to be held at the San Jose State Event Center. By March 2008, worship had 2 locations: the Event Center and the Civic Auditorium. Session canceled Stone's regular worship to encourage members to attend. Don Foster was a valuable member of the worship committee, which planned daily worship as well as the major Sunday event. Bill Lakatos was Stone's local church contact.

The opening worship was complicated by the need to coordinate two live services in two venues by satellite technology. There were two choirs, one directed by Charlene Archibeque, retired Director of Choral Activities at San Jose State University, and the other directed by LeRoy Kromm, former director of the Stone Church choir and at that time Music Director and Conductor of both the San Jose Symphonic Choir and the Monterey Symphony Chorus. At least 22 churches in the Presbytery, including Stone, sent volunteer singers to participate in the choirs. Henry Mollicone, composer of two pieces of music used in the worship, was a pianist at the SJSU site. (This was, I think, the beginning of our congregation's love of "Hear me, Redeemer.") Coordinators were concealed behind the staging in both venues, connected by head phones, to signal timing within the services.

Moderator of the General Assembly Joan Gray preached live at the SJSU Event Center and was heard by Satellite in the Civic Auditorium. Both services served communion, and a number of Stone Church members worked to prepare elements (9,675 pieces of bread said the *Stone News*) and to serve the elements to 4000 or more people in each venue.

Not only were Stone Church members highly involved as volunteers during the week of GA, they were also invested in the outcome of certain issues. On Friday June 27, the GA voted 380 to 325 to send to Presbyteries a proposed amendment of the Book of Order that would delete the "Fidelity and Chastity" rule and replace it with a new G-6.0106b. At the same time the assembly nullified previous interpretive statements about sexual stand-

ards for ordination. Ultimately this action was ratified by enough Presbyteries that Stone Church saw the PC(USA) finally act in favor of principles the church had been lobbying for all these decades before. [See section on ordination activism for more information]

Election of the Moderator was also of high interest, and the Assembly's choice of Bruce Reyes-Chow was popular with Stone Church members. He was at that time pastor of Mission Bay Community church in San Francisco. Another election garnering attention was that of a Stated Clerk to follow Clifton Kirkpatrick. Gradye Parsons won on the first ballot, receiving 405 votes.

For most volunteers it was eye-opening to see how many details were involved in organizing a convention of this size. There were 15 "extra-curricular" tours available for convention goers—sending tourists to places ranging from San Francisco to Salinas, each needing a planned route, transportation, guides, arrangements for food, rest rooms, water. There were numerous breakfasts, lunches and dinners put on by affinity groups, each needing a venue arranged. And there were needs for housing

for perhaps 6,000 people. When vying for the hosting job, The Presbytery of San Jose had to prove that it and the city had the capacity for all this hospitality.

Related to the GA story, though later in time: Aimee Moiso was a commissioner to GA in summer of 2012, in Pittsburgh. She chaired the committee on Civil Union and Marriage issues.



Communion preparation at Stone Church. L to R Roberto Ramirez, Bill Downes, Jan Keifer, with Alice Thorn in back.



Remodeling

The project for which Art Mills will be remembered is the major remodeling and upgrade of the Stone Church buildings. Asked why he initiated this project, he wrote, "The trigger happened very early in my time at Stone Church. Of course, the most stunning physical things were the unusual, beautiful architecture of the original chapel and the main sanctuary buildings. Participating in worship inside the sanctuary was just breathtaking."

Art went on to recount an extended tour of the campus with a couple of long-time members. "The first thing that struck me was that all the Sunday school classes took place in the basement. I just thought that the kids should be above ground, and that it would be important to move the nursery school over into the main building as well." The Session and congregation learned that children in the second grade and younger are not allowed to be housed on any other floor than the first floor of a facility, under the long-standing CA Building Code, section 305.2.3.

Zoning and city codes precluded any expansion of the footprint of the building, so redesigning and reconfiguring seemed the way to go. The building was out of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act in a number of ways.

There was an informal time of conversation with church leaders about the need for a major capital project, then the Session formed a small task force and hired an architect for a pre-feasibility study. Bill Gould Design began a detailed assessment of all facilities including Lincoln and Roycott Houses, in May 2000. A facilities Task Force, co-chaired by Linda Appleton and Fred Oliver, began work.

(Members were Susan Bedolla, Tom Hurst, Barbara Krause, John Lococo, Pat Magee and

Jerry Pearson.)

There were congregational meetings in July 2001 where Task Force members reported on progress to date, what they knew about the building, what could be done and what needed to be done.

At the end of Phase I (information gathering) the Task Force chose to stay with Bill Gould Designs in the move to Phases II and III.

The project moved into essential code compliance and health-and-safety related work: abatement of asbestos and lead paint; removal of termite and dry rot damage, roofing repairs to Lincoln and Roycott Houses, improved door and lock systems, installation of ADA-compliant ramps, seismic improvements as necessary, and upgrade of electrical and heating systems.

In addition, Session began to work on funding and necessary congregational approvals for essential work, as well as a conceptual plan for remodeling. Linda Appleton took on the job of leading the Capital Campaign Committee. A professional fundraising company was hired to run the actual campaign.

The congregation in February 2003 gave overwhelming support to new classrooms in the old Chapel and Office space; church offices moving to Lincoln House from the chapel space; nursery expansion and relocation; reconfiguration of the social hall including a new kitchen; and new ADA compliant bathrooms. And the congregation authorized a capital campaign to raise \$1.25 million. (By May, the StoNews announced hitting the million dollar mark. By June the goal had been surpassed.) Bill Gould Design was joined by Blach Construction Company.

A formal groundbreaking ceremony was held on May 30, Pentecost Sunday. Attendees included Jane Odell, Interim Presbytery Executive, and John Lococo (Sr.), Stated Clerk, of

the Presbytery of San Jose.

Rebecca noted wryly in the August StoNews that for the first time she had used the word “Port-a-potty” in worship. Construction had begun. The first of the magnificent deodar cedars had been removed; it had become dangerous when heavy limbs dropped. The \$6500 cost was an unexpected addition to the project budget, as was finding more asbestos than expected in the building, and the equally unexpected replacement of a water line from the street.

The construction of course caused disruptions, as the social hall and Lincoln House were gutted. Ingenuity became a valued asset. Unfortunately some cherished traditions went on hiatus, as, for example, coffee hour was canceled for a time.

By December 7, the church offices were moved to the newly renovated Lincoln House. With that move the church address changed from Clark Way to Lincoln Avenue. New ramps were installed by then, and work continued on the main building.

Part of the change was a completely new kitchen at the opposite end of the social hall, as well as inclusion of a new coffee bar outside the kitchen area. Walter Roach, who has a degree in hotel management from Cornell University, worked closely with the architect in designing the compact working area that came to be.

An unexpected occurrence was the resignation of Art Mills from the pastorate of Stone, before construction work was complete. Art moved to a position with the Board of Pensions. On March 1, 2004 the Rev. Marge Palmer became Stated Supply Pastor and Head of Staff.

On April 16, the congregation held a celebration of the beautifully reconfigured and restored buildings.



Actions on Ordination Standards

The Session of Stone Church has had several decades of actions regarding the Presbyterian Church's stance on gay rights, particularly those of ordination to ecclesiastical office, and of marriage and other participation in mainstream society. Below is a timeline of some of those actions:

1975 After West Valley Presbyterian Church withdrew from the Santa Clara County Council of Churches over the issue, Session voted in favor of admitting the Metropolitan Community Church (a largely gay and lesbian denomination) into the Council of Churches.

1976 The Council of Churches came under considerable pressure for its stance, and Stone supported it by signing the "Covenant of Mutual Relationship and responsibility" and by a pledge from Stone's budget.

1977 Session adopted a resolution stating that "we resolve that the 189th General Assembly 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."

1978 Again Session resolved that "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."

1978 David Beamer, Karen Scott, Mary Kennedy and Claudia Hamm attended General Assembly in San Diego when the Assembly adopted a conservative "Definitive Guidance" on the question of ordination.

1984 Marcia Ludwig, sponsored by the Presbytery of San Jose and the Church and World Board of Stone Church, attended a conference held at Stony Point, NY, on homophobia.

1989 Session passed a resolution that "all members of Stone Church, regardless of race, ethnic background or sexual orientation, are eligible for ordination and installation to church offices."

1992 Janie Spahr, nationally known activist from Marin County who had been denied the rights of a Minister of Word and Sacrament because of her sexuality, was invited to preach at Stone.

1997 Stone Co-sponsored a newspaper ad in support of the TV Program "Ellen"

1997 Rejected amendment to the Book of Order G-6.0106b

1997 After the General Assembly had changed the church's constitution (the Book of Order), to forbid the ordination of gay and lesbian Presbyterians to church offices, our Session adopt-

ed this Covenant of Dissent to Amendment B (“Fidelity and Chastity”) in reaction. Amendment B read “Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman, or chastity in singleness. Persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders or ministers of the Word and Sacrament.” Book of Order G-6.0106b

The Dissent came about through a Task Force put together under Art Mills’ leadership. Members included Jody Meacham, Bill Ribble and Donald Foster. Jody Meacham wrote the draft of the Dissent, volunteering to do so out of his long experience as a journalist and writer. The document we have is pretty much as he wrote it. It was sent to the Presbytery of San Jose, and to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. Art Mills said that “Our hope was to state clearly our faith and theologically based opposition and to participate in a movement to overturn [the amendment].” Only about 25 PCUSA congregations ended up adopting a covenant of dissent.

1998 The rainbow flag was first raised. It has been torn down a number of times, but always is replaced.

2007 Dr. Jack Rogers presented the Henrietta Perdue Memorial Lectures, “Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality: Explode the Myths Heal the Church.”

2008 Session voted to oppose California Proposition 8 (which would have amended the CA Constitution to read “only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California.”) and to allow the church name to be publicly listed. Stone was one of only two Presbyterian churches in Santa Clara County to have its name in a “No on Proposition 8” ad in the San Jose *Mercury News*.

2011 In 2008 General Assembly adopted, and by 2011 a majority of Presbyteries ratified, an amendment to the Book of Order that restored the right of churches (deacons and elders) and presbyteries (ministers) to ordain those whom they chose without regard to sexual identity.

2013 While Stone Church rejoiced in the opening of ordination to those formerly excluded, the action of the PCUSA widened a growing rift in the denomination nationally. Ken Henry wrote in the Stone News about a “House Divided.” “So, you might have heard. . . that [several] churches in our Presbytery are preparing to leave the PCUSA. . . some of these churches have been threatening to leave over ordination standards since my own ordination in 1988 or before. . . Opening the door for gays and lesbians to seek ordination in the PCUSA has become a flash point for evangelicals.” Ultimately 12 churches would leave the Presbytery of San Jose in a process called “Gracious Dismissal.”

2013 There was still the issue of who could be married, and the July meeting of Session took up the issue of gay marriage, which was now allowed in California law, but had not yet been clarified by the national denomination. Yet, the pastor has the right to decide who to marry, and a pastor has a duty to give pastoral care to members of the congregation.



The rainbow flag was first hung on the outside church wall in 1998. It was stolen several times, and each time replaced. The church took to buying several flags at one time so there would always be a replacement ready.

The Crab Feed

A long-running event put on by the men's ministries was a crab dinner, held at the beginning of the year whenever crab came into season. After diners finished cracking crab claws and drinking wine, there would be an auction with proceeds benefitting projects chosen by the men. The auctions generated great rivalry and hilarity, with Emily Meacham's Coconut Cake holding the place of high honor.

When crab became scarce, the dinners turned into Italian feasts, with sausage and garlic bread, as David McCreath demonstrates.



Fair Trade Coffee Sales For many years, Presbyterian Women supported the fair trade movement with sales of coffee and chocolate. The project was started by Sally Magee and Diana Lim in September 2002, after Diana saw a display at the Churchwide Gathering of PW. Here Jan Keifer and Sarah Holtzapple take their turns. Others who helped included Gail Chaid, Sheri Cunningham, Sue Evans, Ida Raby, Rhonda Lakatos, Jean Raby and Joyce Summers.

Christian Education

Stone continued an emphasis on Christian Education, with the services of a number of highly creative and dedicated people as leaders.

In September of 1997, a major realignment of the Sunday morning time began. Built around two worship services, the realignment included having church school participants in the beginning of worship, then leaving for church school, a pattern which has continued.

Workshop Rotation Model

The March 2000 Stonewall News announced, in an article signed by Claudia Hamm and Janice Goertz, that this program for Sunday School would begin in September. In it each group of children rotated to a different media-specific workshop to learn a Bible story through a creative medium—art, music, drama, games, computer lab, audio-visuals. Each teacher was assigned to a specific workshop for a four or five-week period to teach the same basic lesson plan each week to a new group. All the workshops focused on the same Bible story for four to five weeks at a time. A computer lab was set up in room 2 downstairs as part of this program.

LOGOS

An invitation to an informational meeting about LOGOS appeared in the March 1995 Stonewall News. The program was described as one meant to “reverse the patterns of the Churches’ loss of youth” by “increasing and deepening youth participation.” It had four parts: Bible study, choir, recreation and crafts, and a family time dinner hour. It required parent participation. Don and Pat Griggs, well-known Presbyterian Christian Educators, came to Stone to help explain the program.

A children’s choir began soon after this meeting, and the full LOGOS program was set to begin in September 1995, to meet weekly through mid-May. The day changed to Wednesday, and LOGOS began an extended run at Stone.

Early contributors to the program were Shelley and Phil Gonzales, Janet Dennison, Margit Laux.

A national organization provided training, attended by Art Mills and Ann Pierce in 1996. Art wrote that “The only rule of the Logos program is: Everyone is to treat everyone else as a child of God. No one has the right to treat anyone else as if they do not matter.”

The “last” LOGOS program was held March 24, 1999. In June 1999 a special Task Force recommended a program consisting of four four-week modules and a change from the LOGOS name.

Christian Education Directors

Rosaleen Zisch

David Beamer hired her as Church School Director, doing Sunday School downstairs in what were then known as “the catacombs.” She also served on the Presbytery of San Jose Christian Education committee, and during that time she gave workshops in the use of the then-new PCUSA curriculum. She also served as a PCUSA CE Advocate, writing one of the youth curricula. She has frequently worked with the youth group.

Rosaleen was a gifted teacher in the San Jose Unified School District, at Hoover Middle School, and has worked in the County Office of Education and with San Jose State.

She was Interim Children’s Ministry Coordinator, half time, January 2008, a job she had shared through the fall with fellow volunteers Janice Goertz, Kate Wheatley and Claudia Hamm. For years, she and Claudia created confirmation classes; she continues to work with Irene Pak Lee.

Kate Wheatley became Christian Education Associate in March 2001. She had been interim associate since that January 1. An ordained elder, she had taught the high school church school class on Sundays and worked with the Youth Group. Kate received a B. A. in Community Studies from the University of California, Santa Cruz. Among her other skills, she was trained as a Master Gardener and has helped with Stone Church’s landscaping.

Miriam Kishi became Christian Education associate in August 2002. She graduated from Whitworth College, Spokane, WA with a major in Christian Education. She was Sunnyvale Presbyterian church Director of CE from 1989 to 1996. She was CE Director at first Congregational Church, San Jose. She served as co-moderator of the Northern CA-Nevada chapter of the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators from 1994-96; and as Presbyterian representative to the Media Resource Center Board.

Miriam stayed for almost 5 years in this position, with her last Sunday in June 2007. She wrote that participants “worked together to include young people as an essential part of today’s church family” and hoped that this goal would remain an intentional part of Christian education. The Rotation Workshop model of education was continued during her tenure. She was CE director during the church remodeling project, dealing with all the moving of programs which went on.

Janice Goertz, was a teacher for 29 years in the Evergreen, and East Side Union High School Districts, and 2 years in Bogota, Colombia. She worked with Miriam in the ongoing development of the workshop rotations, writing lesson plans and occasionally teaching.

Claudia Hamm: see her bio under Office Managers.

Mary Jo Blazek

She began officially summer of 2008, but wrote that she really began “fifteen years ago, when

my then seven-year old daughter began attending Church School at Stone with a neighborhood friend. . . she brought home a note requesting adults to help in making gingerbread houses. . . I was the queen of help.” She then assisted in Vacation Church School that summer, and went on to join the church. Her youngest daughter was baptized at Stone, and her oldest served as the nursery coordinator for seven years. She also said, “My goal while serving in this position is to make sure all who walk through the doors of Stone Church feel loved, wanted and valued as my daughters and I did.” Mary Jo has had the responsibility of continuing Christian Ed during Covid, including creating children’s sermons for Zoom worship.

Mary Alice Collins was honored by former and current members of Stone’s High School Group for her more than ten years as head of the Youth Ministry Community. The *Stone News* article said “Mary Alice had a vision of creating a community of adults to minister to youth. . She helped the group to embody her vision and . . positively affected the lives of many.” Her emphasis was on deepening spirituality.

When the **Rev. Irene Pak-Lee** became Associate Pastor, she welcomed the assignment of youth ministry. She brought love of the ministry, energy, skills, experience of the church at large, a fresh perspective. She took on leadership in the Presbytery, for example by organizing Presbytery-wide sleep-ins, and being point person for registrations for the PCUSA Triennium for youth. She has been in demand as a speaker nationally.



Left: Rosaleen Zisch
Bottom: Mary Jo Blazek
Right: Kate Wheatley



Christian Education



*Left: Janice Goertz (with Nancy Kromm).
Below right: Miriam Kishi (with Sue Evans)*



*Above: Mary Alice Collins (with Dean Helms)
Right: The most perfect Santa Claus, Walter
Roach, with Mrs. Claus, Mary Jo Blazek.*



Henrietta Perdue Lecture Series

From 1974 on, when the series was begun with money in the Henrietta Perdue memorial fund, this series provided challenging lectures by well-known authors and speakers. (The 1947-1997 history book has information about the series' first years.) In April 2009, Pat Magee, whose "energy, intelligence, imagination and love" were the driving force of the series for many years, spoke to Hazel James about Henrietta. Hazel and Henrietta were close friends for many years.



Quoting from a *Stone News* article by Judi Kaiser: "It was through Henrietta that Stone Church women began to take an active interest in National Presbyterian Women. While not wanting to be known simply as "the minister's wife," Henrietta truly ministered to Stone Church. . . .An Old Testament expert, she encouraged learning for every group in the church. . . .She made it relevant and exciting."

Pat's emphasis in his years was cutting-edge theology—the historical Jesus (Marcus Borg, Dominic Crossan among many others), theology and science, justice (Jack Rogers on the Bible and homosexuality), Bible (Bishop John Shelby Spong; Barbara R. Rossing on Revelation), spirituality (Barbara Brown Taylor). He frequently attracted 200 to 250 people on the Friday nights of the main lectures. However, as time went on the audience began to dwindle, and the 2015 lecture proved to be the last. A lecture planned for November 2016 had to be cancelled for lack of interest.

Pat was honored in February 2017 for his nearly forty years of service in Adult Education and presented with an inscribed school teacher's bell.

First Night Service

In the Session meeting of September 21, 2010, the Session appointed the Rev. Aimee Moiso as the leader of a new Sunday evening service designed to appeal to members in their 30's and 40's, to help them connect with the church and with each other. The service was to be informal, with abbreviated sermon and an interactive environment. Bob and Karen Johnson provided music.



Called First Night (because it was on the first Sunday of the month), it met in the Fireside Room and was designed to be a changing, interactive and casual experience.

Unfortunately, attendance did not match the hopes for the service.

Music at Stone Church: Choir Directors



LeRoy Kromm (1996)

LeRoy was a well known soloist, choral clinician and interpreter of opera and sacred music. He was on the voice faculty of Santa Clara University and active in the departments of theater, pastoral ministries and music where he also directed the University Pops Ensemble. He was (and is still) the Director of Music for the San Jose Symphonic Choir. He had been Director of Music at First United Methodist Church, Palo Alto, and had been Director of Music of the El Camino Youth Symphony. He brought an emphasis on larger choral pieces, including Bach's St. John and St. Matthew Passions, and work by Henry Mollicone. The choir traveled in 1997 to Ft. Wayne, Indiana, to take part in the singing of the St. John Passion.



Lucik Aprahamian (2003)

Lucik was a graduate of UC Santa Cruz with a B. A. in Music and an M.A. in Performance Practice/conducting. She was assistant conductor for UCSC opera Theatre productions for five years, as well as for the Chamber Singers. She was also artistic director of the UCSC University Women's Chorus. She did research on 20th century composer Alan Hovhaness. Lucik was born in Venezuela to Armenian parents, and was fluent in three languages, with knowledge of little-known repertoire from the Classical period in Venezuela.



Nancy Wait Kromm (2006)

Nancy is a performing soprano and associate professor at Santa Clara University in the voice and opera theater faculty. Nancy began studying the violin at 8 years old. She joined the California Youth Symphony as a 10 year old and toured internationally with the group until she was 12. She holds bachelor's and master's degrees in music from the University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign, and held a teaching fellowship at Stanford. At Santa Clara she teaches and directs opera productions. She is known as a soloist nationally and internationally. She has continued a focus on big musical numbers, and on travel for the choir. For a while after Nancy arrived, there was fear that the choir loft could not hold all the singers. Unfortunately the Covid hiatus has halted choir singing completely, and the future is yet to be known.

Peggy Spool has since 2011 directed the children's choir at Stone, and has brought her deep experience and understanding to the music. She recently retired from twenty plus years as founder and director of the Vivace youth music program. Peggy grew up in a Presbyterian church in Ohio, and herself sang in kids' choirs there.



Miriam Rowan could play any hymn or popular song you could name, by ear, in the right key. She was in incredible demand at choir parties and women's retreats, anywhere that a group would want to burst into song. She was a comedian, too, and could play her French horn while playing the piano, interspersing the music with a monologue built on funny quotes taken from the Bible. But she was also a serious musician, and left several choral compositions treasured by the choir.



Karen Johnson helped to create the Taizé service of contemplative chants and prayer. Beginning in 1998, she was its pianist and musical leader for twenty years, through all the seasons of the liturgical year. She also prepared the bulletins for all different seasons. Sadly, Karen died of breast cancer at the age of 62.

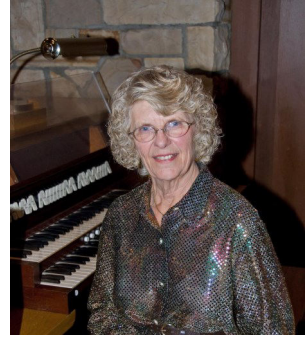


Jean Raby organized the bell choir in the beginning of 2007. The bells were at first on loan from First Presbyterian, San Jose; they were later purchased. Jean introduced challenging music for the bell ringers, and the group provided special music periodically in worship.



Organists

Joyce Rhodes served as organist at Stone for forty years plus, having begun in December 1970. She was organist during the building of the Shoenstein organ, and was honored at a gala celebration concert in November 2010, when the pipe organ, was also celebrated on its 25th anniversary. The organ was especially designed for its worship space.



Stephen Boniface became organist in August 2012. He had been organist and choir accompanist for 12 years at St. Joseph's Cathedral Basilica, where he was among several gay musicians whose contributions to worship were cherished, but whose identity as individuals was not. He said to Irene Pak: "Everybody knew, but it was sort of a 'don't ask, don't tell' situation. We were an odd community of people who fly in the face of what the church finds acceptable. They preached about it when we were right under their noses."



Stephen had degrees in piano performance and software engineering from San Jose State, and was beginning degree work at UC San Francisco to serve the sick and aged as nurse practitioner. He had played the organ for a succession of local churches, including the first Christian Church downtown, where he first came out to himself, and then the congregation, as gay. (from a *Stone News* article by Jody Meacham)

Mark Bruce became organist in September 2016. He had previously been organist for almost 11 years at St. Luke's Episcopal in Los Gatos.

Mark began playing organ as a 10 year old in Reed City, Michigan. He studied piano, composition and organ at Olivet College, Michigan. In his early 20's he played keyboards in a rock 'n roll band called "Down to Earth," and supplemented his income with teaching at an all-girls Episcopal school. In 1975 he moved to California to join another band, and also got a job as an organist at a Presbyterian church in San Mateo. He and the church found out he was gay at about the same time and he moved to an Episcopal Church in San Carlos.

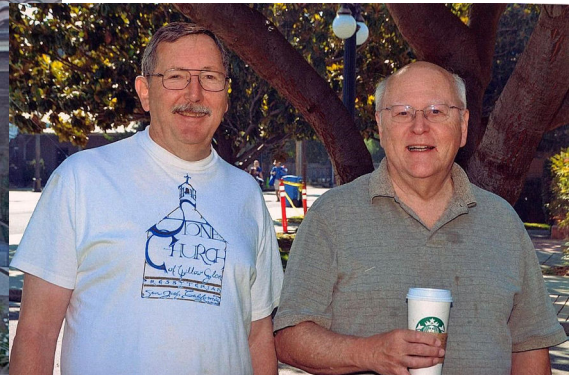


Pam Hood first became known to the Taizé committee after the death of Karen Johnson, pianist for the service for 20 years. Out of the blue, Pam contacted the committee to ask for a special service for her partner, who was dying.

After her partner's death, she offered her services. In the early 1990's she had trained with

Sister Suzanne Toolan of Mercy center, Burlingame, who introduced Taizé to churches throughout the Bay Area and beyond. Sister Toolan helped in the development of Stone Church's service. Pam was experienced in organizing Taizé services in parishes and in homes.

Pam had recently retired as an Associate Professor of Ancient Greek Philosophy at San Francisco State, where she also taught Philosophy of Religion. She has a BA in Music Composition from San Jose State, an MA in Philosophy from San Francisco State, and a PhD in Philosophy from the Claremont Graduate School. She described herself as "raised in the Congregational church, baptized in the Russian Orthodox church, and as an Episcopalian confirmed at Grace Cathedral." From her teen years she served as accompanist, pianist and organist for soloists, choirs and churches. And, she brought to Stone music grounded in gospel music and jazz.



Fred Oliver and Don Foster

Over the years, Stone's music has included any number of instrumental ensembles. In this picture above left, Don Foster directs (l to r) Fred Oliver, Don D'Angelo, Miriam Rowan, Andrew Edwards, and Rod Thorn.

Don Foster is a pillar of Stone's music, as substitute organist or as pianist, as choir member and soloist, and as a member of search committees when a new organist is hired. Don is one of two people left in the congregation from the committee which chose the Shoenstein organ (Alice Thorn is the other).

Men's Ministries: Work Trips

Art Mills persuaded Leland Wong to organize work trips for men, finding sites needing repairs done where free labor would be highly appreciated. Among the places chosen were Zephyr Point Presbyterian Conference Center, Lake Tahoe, and Westminster Woods Conference Center, Marin County. The group usually took a weekend, and picked projects where the work could be done in relatively short times. The trips went on for a number of years.

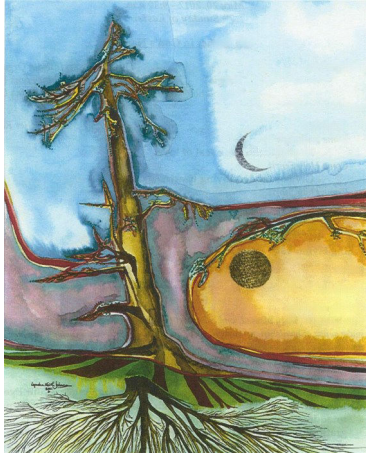
Right: The men rebuilt a stairway at Zephyr Point, Lake Tahoe. Front: Leland Wong, David McCreath; in back: Art Holtz, John Lococo, Bruce Raby.



Men who work hard, must eat: From the left—John Lococo, Leland Wong, Art Holtz, Rod Thorn, Michael Donald, Bill Palmer, David McCreath, Bruce Raby.

Proving that their elders don't have a monopoly on work, the Youth Group went in 2006 to the very hot Central Valley near Visalia to help in building a home.





Lynden Keith Johnson: Stone Church has for close to thirty years received the gift of original art for bulletins and music programs. The range of subjects and styles for church seasons is incomparable.

Lyn has bachelor's and master's degrees from San Jose State University. After years in the Army and as a working artist in Europe, he returned to San Jose in 1977. Coming to Stone Church, he stayed for the music and the warmth of the congregation; he has sung tenor in the choir ever since.

The church has periodically held displays of Lyn's art. The picture is of a display at an arts fair held in the summer of 2005.



At the same arts fair Tom Scott showed his wooden ware.



Mary Johnson (no relation to Lyn):

Stone Church has yet another service not available in every congregation. Since about 1993, Mary has been parish nurse. This is a position, encouraged by the national church, where a registered nurse combines the skills of that profession with spiritual care.

Mary has given blood pressure checks, made flu' shots available and given consultations to individuals. She helped develop the Health Ministries Committee of Session; unfortunately that committee had to end its work when there were no longer available workers for it. She has helped with home and hospital visits, and has helped to collect and dispose of unused medicines.

Office Managers at Stone Church

Office Managers in the early days of Stone Church included Norma Swindler, Phyllis Sander-son, Nancy Moore and Dotty Carey; all were members of Stone.

Claudia Hamm: Claudia and Jim Hamm were married in Stone Church in 1960, with the Rev. Don Emmel as officiant. He was campus pastor at San Jose State at the time. She graduated from SJS with a degree in Education and a Kindergarten-Primary teaching credential. She taught three years in the Cupertino Union School District.

She started volunteering in the office on Mondays while the secretary was counting the offer- ing. Son David was in Kindergarten, and son Steve came along with his Big Wheel which he rode around the patio. She was office manager twenty years, from 1980 to the end of 2000. She also helped with CE when Rosaleen Zisch was CE Director and then with Paula Kelso— mornings in the office and afternoons doing CE. That's when office volunteers began. She worked with Bob Bowles, Betha Hoy, Gene & Joan Huff, John & Paula Kelso, Art Mills and Re-becca Kuiken.

In addition to CE, Claudia has given untold time to Presbyterian Women, serving in leadership and behind the scenes both at Stone Church and for the Presbytery PW organization. One example of her creative leadership is the January PWP tea held at Stone Church and built around a Taizé style meditative service followed by dessert in the social hall.

Claudia was honored at the San Benito County Banquet in Hollister on Nov 14, 2011 (National Philanthropy Day) for her work with Emmaus House, the only shelter for abused women and children in San Benito County. Claudia has worked on their behalf for many years, making holiday pillowcases for the children and bi-monthly trips to deliver donations.



Claudia with Irene Pak Lee; the church courtyard hung with quilts on Gifts of Women Sunday.

Elizabeth Sorensen began work in January 2001. She was a graduate of Washington State University with a B. S. in Psychology and a minor in leadership studies. She was enrolled in the three-year Counseling Psychology program at Santa Clara University, pursuing a CA Marriage and Family Therapy license.

Elizabeth was from Idaho Falls, Idaho, and had worked as a sales analyst for Nestle, as a child care/camp counselor, and as a sales intern.



She left in June 2006 after 5 ½ years of service to continue in marriage and family counseling

M. J. Nesbit became Office Manager in August 2006. She came to Stone Church from a career in commercial real estate. She received her undergraduate degree in English Literature from the SUNY at Cortland, NY, and held an MS in Business Management from Marylhurst University in Portland, OR. She was a certificated Legal Assistant. M. J. moved to Florida July 2007 to be near her elderly mother and her sister.



Claudia Hoaglund became the New Office Manager in 2007. Born and raised in Millbrae, a third generation Californian, previously worked as A-lines Merchandiser for Montgomery Ward, as a secretary in a law office and with a construction company. She resigned in November 2010, having served three years.



Jennifer Scott-Brand began as Office Manager in January 2011. She was found through a search that yielded 190 applications. She is the daughter of long-time member Karen Scott and the late Tom Scott, and was baptized and married at Stone. She has become the functional heart of Stone Church life.



Web Masters

Dependence on communication through “the web” has grown more than most people could have foreseen. Stone’s first webmaster, the one who created Stone’s first web site, was Walter Roach, in the mid to late ‘90’s. Walter was followed by Pat Magee in about 1998, and Pat, in turn, was followed by Chris Luebcke who took over in December 2001 and kept it until 2003. It was then David Minehart who undertook to maintain the site. After David, came Rod Thorn, (right) who began in September 2005 and was webmaster for 12 years, providing redesign and expansion of the site.



Rod was able to track visitors to the site and learned that it had visits from all six inhabited continents including cities like St. Petersburg, Madrid, Osaka, Seoul, Nairobi, Cairo, Perth, Rio de Janeiro, Johannesburg and most states in the U. S.

Rod retired in June 2017, and the job then went to Jody Meacham. Jody, too, has redesigned the site and made it user friendly for a new generation. It has been during Jody’s time that the website has become the congregation’s information center for worship and meeting, as everyone learned to “Zoom.”

The Deaf Ministry

A new direction for Stone Church began in March of 2013, when Ken Henry reported to Session that he had met with Bill Raby, who had brought a group of friends to Stone, all of whom were deaf. The group wanted a progressive church, and needed sign language provided. (In the beginning, Bill’s mom Ida Raby provided signing.) The Session at that point allocated seed money for such a ministry and agreed to investigate longer term funding. By May of 2013, Stone received a Presbytery of San Jose Vision Grant of \$5,000 to provide regular American Sign Language interpreters on Sunday morning.

That grant was intended to get the ministry started, and since then the church has provided funding. Participants have taught signing to children in Vacation Church School and in adult education classes. The choir has learned from them how to sign the Doxology. And members have served on Session and as members of committees.

Bill Raby-Brown staffed a table at the Deaf-Nation Expo in October 2015 in Pleasanton to try to expand understanding of Stone’s program to the wider community.

Several people who are skilled in ASL have become regulars in providing signing at Stone Church.

Activism in the Issue of Race



Irene Pak Lee led a group of Stone Church members in 2017 to the Montreat Conference Center in North Carolina to attend a Presbyterian Conference on race called the DisGrace conference. It was to be a “faithful response to the embedded and structural racism in church and culture. . . Grounded in worship, truth-telling, confession, and collaboration.” Sermons and adult education presented information brought back from the conference.

In January 2017, Rhonda Lakatos, Nick Hurley, Judi Kaiser, Donald Foster and Jennifer

Scott-Brand spoke of the profound effect this conference had on them in a three-part presentation for members of the congregation, after church in the sanctuary. The first class ended with an exercise called “Line of Privilege” where participants in a line stepped forward or backward in response to prompts. If your parents spoke English, one step forward. If you’ve had more than a year without health insurance, one step back. The hanging of the flag and a Letter of Confession and Repentance were adopted by Session in June 2020.

Taizé Prayer and Meditation Service



Since 1998, the meditative prayer services patterned after a modern monastic community in Taizé, France, have been a part of Stone Church’s worship life. Back then, a group of Stone church women visited Taizé, and experienced the services. Coming home, they worked to get such an experience for our church community. The services have been primarily organized and led by a lay committee, working within the Session’s Worship Committee and with the support of the pastors.

Pastors

The Rev. Art Mills was called as pastor on January 21, 1996. Art 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 received his Master of Divinity from San Francisco Theological Seminary in 1990. Prior to his call to Stone Church, Art was the ordained Program Officer for Religion and Environment Marin Community Foundation.

Art shared in establishing a contemplative Taizé service, (along with strong lay leadership and with Rebecca Kuiken). Early in Art's tenure, and with his full participation, the congregation considered and supported, and the Session approved, a Covenant of Dissent, protesting our denomination's discriminatory policies against gays and lesbians. Art also started a new form of men's involvement, the Mission Work Trips, where building skills were put to use helping improve facilities for non-profits.

Art is most remembered for the major renovation of Stone's buildings, including a complete redoing of the social hall, kitchen and bathrooms, as well as the education wing and Lincoln House.

Art's last Sunday was January 16, 2005. He accepted a call to work with the Presbyterian Church (USA) Board of Pensions as Regional Representative to the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii, and the Synod of the Southwest. He and his wife Thea moved to San Diego.

The Rev. Rebecca Kuiken was installed as Associate Pastor in October 1997. She served until September 2007, though her last day at Stone was August 6. The dissolution came about because Stone was having financial problems, and the Associate Pastor position was closed in August.

Rebecca graduated from the University of Oregon in 1978, studied in France as a Fulbright Scholar and did graduate work in religion at the Harvard Divinity School. She received a Master of Divinity Degree from San Francisco Theological Seminary.

Rebecca is remembered as a gifted preacher and worship leader. She shared in the establishment of the contemplative Taizé service, and was instrumental in initiating nine Soul Feast groups (named after the book first used in the program) in which 80 women participated. She was Vice Moderator of the Presbytery of San Jose in 2005, and its Moderator in 2006.

The Rev. Marge Palmer served as Parish Associate under Art Mills, then became Interim Pastor in March of 2005. She ended her term June 2007, and returned to Parish Associate November 2007 after the arrival of Ken Henry as Pastor. (Parish Associates serve at the request of Pastors.)

Marge had been worshipping with the congregation as an Honorably Retired Pastor and it was because of her character that the congregation could ask her to take the role of Interim even though she was an integral part of the congregation rather than an “objective outsider” as was usually considered best. She is remembered in that role as having wisdom, good humor and caring leadership, and is held in high esteem. She was honored as Pastor Emerita on Sunday January 30, 2011 when the congregation voted unanimously to give her that title.

Her education included a B. A. in Sociology from Keuka College, New York, an M. A. in Religion and Psychology from the University of Chicago Divinity School, and an M. Div. from Union Theological Seminary, New York. She was ordained in June 1989. She had extensive experience as a pastor, in the Presbytery of Hudson River, NY, and in the Presbytery of San Jose.

The Rev. Dr. Ken Henry was called on Easter Sunday, April 8, 2007 and served as Pastor from June 2007 to July 2016. His background was first as an English major in Western Oregon State College. He attended Princeton Seminary, and graduated from San Francisco Theological Seminary with an M. Div. He received a Doctor of Ministry in Christian Nurture, Austin Theological Seminary, Texas. He came to Stone Church from a position as Assistant Professor of Rhetoric and Homiletics at Northwest Christian College in Eugene, Oregon.

Ken was not new to the Presbytery of San Jose, as his first pastorate was with Trinity Presbyterian Church in Santa Cruz. As a new pastor he went through the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, an arson fire in his study at the church, and a flood in the church caused by burst pipes. As pastor he had an emerging ministry to those living and dying with AIDS.

He wrote about himself, “When I was younger, my attendance in church was divided between my Mom’s idea of church and my Dad’s. Thus, on some Sundays I went to the church with pews, communion, hymns, sermons and choral anthems, while on other Sundays my father took us hiking in the Columbia River Gorge. . . . Years later, I found myself writing my M. Div. thesis on *Loving the Earth: Introducing Reformed Christian Eco-Spirituality to Adults*. The natural world and the Christian life go hand in hand for me.”

Ken was pastor in 2008 when the Presbyterian General Assembly held its meeting in San Jose. Stone Church provided a good portion of the local leadership and labor for this. He was also pastor in 2011 when the PC (USA) finalized approval of the change from “fidelity and chastity” as standards for ordination, and the denomination underwent a major split. Ken and a number of Elders were active in this Presbytery process of “gracious dismissal.”

Ken went from Stone Church to Charlottesville, VA, where he accepted a call to the Westminster Presbyterian Church.

John Aney a student at Pacific School of Religion was Pastoral Intern from September 2011 through May 2012, . A native Oregonian, John was raised Presbyterian; he was a member of Foothills United Church of Christ in Los Altos. He was a semi-professional actor and director. He and his wife Mary had lived in the Bay Area for 12 years.

The Rev. Jim Bender became Interim Pastor in October of 2017. Jim received a B. A. from Lebanon Valley College, Annville, PA, an M. Div. from Princeton Theological Seminary, and Master of Public Administration from State University of New York, Albany. He was ordained in Derry Presbyterian Church, Hershey, PA, then served pastorates in New York and Wisconsin. He and his wife Sheryl had moved to the West Coast in retirement to be near family.

The Rev. Irene Pak Lee began at Stone Church on August 1, 2012, half time. She later moved to full time.

Irene Pak was born and raised in Ogden, Utah, to Korean immigrant parents, and is a lifelong Presbyterian. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Communications with an emphasis in Public Relations from Weber State University, Ogden, where she minored in music, playing cello. She received her Master of Divinity degree from McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago. She first worked for the PC (USA) in Louisville, Kentucky, in the Office of Racial Justice and Advocacy. She then accepted her first pastoral call to the Daesung Korean Presbyterian Church, Sunnyvale, as Associate Pastor for Christian Education and English Ministries.

She brought to Stone church a new emphasis on the wider denomination, as well as an emphasis on racial and cultural understandings. Youth work took on new energy, including mission trips to Chicago, Los Angeles, New Mexico, and a home building project in the HOT central valley.

Her marriage to Marion Lee brought to Stone “the wedding of the century,” long remembered not only for the ceremony, but for the “thousand paper cranes” created and sent from all over the United States and overseas. Their son Ezra and daughter Eden have added joy to the congregation.

The Rev. Samantha Lynn Evans began her pastorate on February 1, 2018. She was Stone’s first female Head of Staff. The pastoral relationship was dissolved on February 17, 2022.

She was born and raised in northwestern Pennsylvania. She graduated from Allegheny College, Meadville, PA, in 2011 with a BS in Physics and a minor in German. She then went to Princeton Theological Seminary and received a Master of Divinity in 2014. Her first ministry was in Philadelphia, PA at the Broad Street Ministry, where she found her preaching voice, created the Garden Initiative, and supervised several young would-be pastors.

At Stone Church she encountered the Covid Pandemic, and found, beyond her wildest understandings of ministry, that she was responsible for a congregation that could not meet in person, and for setting up “from scratch” a communications system to meet the needs of the diaspora. With Covid needs as a continuous overlay, she nevertheless maintained focus on the life of Stone Church as a worshipping community.

The Rev. Sharon J. LeClaire was ordained at Stone Church on February 17, 2019, and became Temporary Part-time Stated Supply. Sharon grew up in Saratoga, and was raised at the West Valley Presbyterian Church, Cupertino. She attended a Catholic women’s college in Arlington, VA, then, a number of years later, graduated from Whitworth University in Spokane, WA with a degree in American Studies. She had wanted for many years to be a pastor, and

with the encouragement of the late Rev. Bob Butziger she entered San Francisco Theological Seminary and graduated with masters degrees in Divinity and Theology. Her position ended at the end of 2021 because of budget constraints.

The Rev. Aimee Moiso was named Parish Associate by the Session on Sept. 20, 2011, with an emphasis on worship design and leadership.

Aimee grew up in the suburbs of Portland, Oregon.. She is a graduate of Whitworth College, Spokane, WA, and of San Francisco Theological Seminary. After college she worked for Bread for the World, and during seminary spent a summer in Geneva, Switzerland as an intern with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. She traveled to Cuba, Colombia and China. She participated in the 2004 General Assembly of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and its Global Institute of Theology in Accra, Ghana. She returned to Geneva to pursue a masters in ecumenical studies through the Bossey Ecumenical Institute and the University of Geneva. While Parish Associate at Stone Church, she was campus minister and director of ecumenical and interfaith ministries at Santa Clara University.

Aimee left the Bay Area to pursue a doctorate in preaching at Vanderbilt in Tennessee.

The Rev. Chris Hansen became Parish Associate January 2014. He grew up in Milpitas, attending Valley Christian High School, and Azusa Pacific University, where he studied biology and theology. He later studied in England, and worked for a summer at a church in South Africa. While at Stone he worked on a PhD at Berkeley in Systematic Theology and the intersections of the Natural Sciences. Also while at Stone he was a chaplain in the Navy Reserves. He left Stone for full-time active duty.

Butch Washington, Seminary Intern (Fall 2004 through March 2005)

Butch Washington grew up in Los Angeles. He was active in the Catholic Church. He considered enrolling in Catholic seminary to become a priest. Instead, he chose a career in forestry, earning a degree in Forest Management from Humboldt State in 1979, and a degree in Logging Management from Oregon State. He had a 20-plus year career in forestry. In 1996 he suffered a difficult divorce which led to regular meetings with a spiritual counselor. He had a conversion experience and clearly sensed that God had more for him to do. He attended Hollister Presbyterian, the first time he had been in a Protestant church. He enrolled in Fuller Seminary's extension program. He was ordained as Minister of Word and Sacrament at First Presbyterian Church, Hollister on October 9, 2005.

The Rev. David McCreath Parish Associate

David and his wife Ruth moved to California from Louisville, KY, where they had both worked in the PCUSA offices—David with the Office of Stewardship Education and Ruth for the Presbyterian Foundation. Before KY they had lived 16 years in Chicago, and 16 years in Ft Worth. They moved into the PCUSA housing for retired Presbyterian workers called El Sombroso Oaks, in Los Gatos. (Marge and Bill Palmer also came to California because of that housing.) David began working with Habitat for Humanity. In May of 2007 he traveled to Gulfport, Mississippi to help build housing for that organization. He joined 500 AmeriCorps and VISTA workers from 35 states on a five day "Blitz Build." He commented "It was a stirring experience to be a part of that many people concentrating on providing homes for folks in great need."