

CALIFORNIA METHODISM AND PIONEER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
A BRIEF HISTORY

BY REV. JERRY FOX

The purpose of this paper is to share with you a small portion of the beginnings of Methodism in California, as well as a brief look at the history of Pioneer United Methodist Church in Auburn, California. It is a fascinating story of faith in the midst of turbulent and sometimes downright violent times. Our particular congregation's history is intimately tied with the early history of Methodism in California since Methodism in California began only five years before First Methodist Episcopal Church of Auburn came into existence. This paper was originally a series of sermons for the bi-centennial of Methodism in the Fall of 1984. My thanks to Glen Cleveland for assisting in the editing process, any errors are mine not his!

PART I: "BEGINNINGS OF CALIFORNIA METHODISM"

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Isaiah 43: 4-6 and Phillipians 2: 14-18

What is shared here is highly selected from a great deal of very interesting material. Methodism in California can claim many "Firsts" in its history. The first protestant Sunday School in 1847; the first property purchased for protestant worship in 1848; the first protestant worship building in the inner valley, in Sacramento, in 1849; the oldest bookstore in California in 1850; the first charter for an institution of higher education in 1851; and, interestingly enough, the first Jewish synagogue built west of the Rocky Mountains! How did that all happen?

California in the 1840's was a very sparsely settled area. Its inhabitants were for the most part Native Americans, Spaniards and a few white men, most of whom came for trapping or agricultural purposes. One of those trappers by the way, was a Bible toting certified lay speaker of the Methodist Episcopal Church named Jedediah Smith. The coming Gold Rush was to change the face of California forever. Wild and woolly times set in. Between 1848 and 1854 there were 1,200 murders in San Francisco and only one murderer was convicted. Among those who were immigrating to the new territory were Methodists. One Adna Hecox held regular meetings in the San Jose - Santa Clara area as early as 1840.

Gold hadn't yet been discovered in 1847, and the Methodists back East were of the opinion that the center of population growth on the west coast would be a place called Portland in Oregon, so they sent two missionaries to Portland via Cape Horn. On their way to Portland they stopped for six weeks in the town of Yerba Buena - which would soon become San Francisco. William Roberts and J. H. Wilbur managed to visit Monterey and Sonoma during their short stay. Wilbur organized a Methodist class in Yerba Buena and started a Sunday School in Santa Clara. Roberts became the first protestant preacher to hold services in San Francisco. They left and went on their way to Oregon. In 1848 the General Conference would authorize its first missionary conference, to be based in Portland.

Other Methodists were coming into California, and they would begin to come in numbers with the discovery of gold in January of 1848. By June of 1848, Monterey, San Jose and San Francisco were almost empty, with everyone at the gold fields. John Truebody of San Francisco washed \$18,000 from a claim on the American River in one month. With it he bought some property on Powell Street and gave one-third to his church. This became the first land purchased for a protestant church in California. It is presently the home of San Francisco Korean United Methodist Church.

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The new Oregon and California Mission Conference met in 1849 and appointed two men to the California area; William Taylor to San Francisco, and Isaac Owen to Sacramento City, Coloma Mills and Stockton. They arrived from different directions in September of 1849, and preached their first sermons on September 23. Taylor preached in San Francisco; Owen was coming overland from Indiana with his wife, children and newborn child. They stopped in a tent city that was to become Grass Valley, where Owen stuck his cane in the ground, and proceeded to put his top hat on it for use as a pulpit!

The two pioneer preachers had organized a first for each other. Before he left Indiana, Isaac Owen had collected \$2,000 for a religious book concern in San Francisco and had the books sent around Cape Horn to Taylor, who received them in January of 1850. With them Taylor opened the first book store in California. William Taylor was from Baltimore, his congregation had built and paid for a small chapel for Sacramento, taken it apart and shipped it around Cape Horn. When Isaac Owen arrived in Sacramento he found the lumber piled and waiting, on a lot donated by General Sutter. The new church was erected within the week and became the first church ever built in the area. The local Jews used it as a synagogue on Saturday. When the Methodists outgrew it they sold it to the synagogue and it thus became the first synagogue west of the Rocky Mountains.

Rev. Owen had another driving concern, and that was higher education. He set out to start a Methodist College almost immediately. At the very first session of the new California Legislature he applied for a charter for Californian Wesleyan College. The legislature was so busy organizing that they referred it to the new Supreme Court which granted Owen and his petitioners a charter on July 10, 1851. The college would later be moved from San Jose to Stockton with the new name of the University of the Pacific.

William Taylor was a flamboyant champion of the downtrodden. Rather than found a church he spent his time preaching on the streets of San Francisco and founded a church for those who followed him. Conference historian Leon Loofbourow says of him, "He never could be confined within the walls of a building. He knew all sorts and conditions of men, and believed that all, the best and the worst, were children of God. He knew no distinction of color or status." Taylor built Bethel Methodist church in San Francisco for the seamen, and a hotel where they could stay without fear of attack and robbery. Taylor went on to do missionary work in South America and to be Bishop of Africa. For a time he was also a missionary in Australia and is credited - or discredited, depending on your point of view - with introducing the Eucalyptus tree to California.

Another prominent preacher was Martin C. Briggs who came to California in 1850. Briggs was outspoken in state leadership against slavery, tobacco, the desecration of the Sabbath and against persecution of Blacks and Chinese. He was once brought to trial for absenting himself from his work - and acquitted. He had gone to Chicago as the head of the California Republican delegation to cast ten votes at the Republican convention for Abraham Lincoln. He is credited with being the leading force in the state which kept California in the Union. Both of his sons became Methodist preachers.

With leaders like Isaac Owen, William Taylor and Martin Briggs, California Methodism was off to a good start. Very early on, Methodists in California became involved in ethnic and language ministries. The state has always been a state of immigrants. By 1856 a German-speaking district had formed which had its own Annual Conference by 1891. It merged with the larger Methodist Episcopal

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Church North (M.E. Church) conference in 1927. Swedish work began in 1875, a district was organized in 1883, and a conference in 1892 which united with the M.E. Church conference in 1928. There were also Norwegian, Danish and Finish districts and conferences which united with the M. E. Church conference in 1939. St. John's United Methodist Church in San Francisco was founded as an Italian speaking Methodist Church. There was a Latin American Missionary Conference in California from 1924 to 1957.

Methodist have also been very active from the beginning with several oriental groups which have immigrated to California. Today we count Philippine, Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Tongan and Formosan congregations among California's United Methodists. Rev. Otis Gibson began work among the Chinese in Sacramento in 1868, and then moved on to San Francisco where in 1870 he founded a house for Chinese slave girls that the Chinese Methodists rescued from the literal hell holes of the town. He founded a school also. Gibson's congregations and students suffered much severe persecution with the anti-Chinese racism of his day. His schools were torn apart, students were beaten and tortured almost as a matter of course. He fought for their recognition and protection and died from the constant stress. Yet the churches became strong and flourished. Dr. Ting Mai Leung, a dentist, returned from California with others to Canton and established a Chinese Methodist Church there which still flourishes. Chinese Methodist Wilbur W.Y. Choy was elected a Bishop from our Annual Conference and after serving in the Pacific Northwest Conference returned to be the Bishop of our Annual Conference until his retirement in 1984.

Japanese Methodism began in 1877 when Kaniche Miyama and two friends - who were among the first Japanese ever to come to California - went to see Otis Gibson to learn English. He was converted by Gibson and became the first Japanese person to be ordained in our Conference in 1888. Rev. Miyama went on to found the Japanese mission in Hawaii and to be the first indigenious Methodist missionary in Japan. From the first, the Japanese in California experienced violent discrimination and immigration restrictions. There were segregated school proposals, which President Theodore Roosevelt personally had to squash, and land laws which forbade foreign born Japanese from even leasing agricultural land - much less owning it. Japanese Methodists have a long tradition of strong and faithful leadership, and it has taken them through some very hard times. During the relocation of Japanese people at the beginning of World War II, very few caucasian Methodists spoke up for their brothers and sisters in the Japanese Methodist churches. But there were some notable exceptions. One was the experience of the Yamoto Colony in Livingston - a cooperative farming effort which had its own Methodist Church. It gave power of attorney to three caucasian members of the Livingston Methodist church. When colony members returned after the war they found their mortgages had been paid off and new orchards and vineyards in production all ready to be returned to them. Many, many Japanese internees were not so fortunate.

There have also been strong Methodist ministries among the black population of California and the only native residents, American Indians. California Methodists have a long, long history of sharing and learning from the varied ethnic and language immigrants to California that we do well to remember, use and appreciate in our day - when California boasts an even more diverse population than it did when all of these ministries started!

Alongside of this history - which has been the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church - is the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which had split from the church in 1846 over slavery. They also sent missionaries to

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California and had founded a conference by 1852. There were several attempts at union between the two churches in California but none succeeded until the national churches united in 1939.

The southern church was strongest in rural areas and especially the San Joaquin valley where many southerners had settled. In Visalia shortly before the war the editors of two papers, one pro-slavery the other anti-slavery, shot each other to death on the main street. The Methodist Church in town split over the issue with those who favored the north pulling out and the main church transferring its loyalties to the M.E. Church, South. Just up the road from Auburn at Dutch Flat - which was a larger town then - the Methodist church also split over the issue but reunited after the Civil War was over.

Many communities in California thus had two Methodist Churches; one north and one south. My first parish in Potter Valley - an area which has never claimed over 1,200 population at one time, had a Baptist church, an M.E. Church and an M.E. Church South! Often, if you look into why a small California community has two Methodist churches you will find this history to be the reason.

The Southern Methodists founded a college in Vacaville, which was burned by a mob after Lincoln's assassination. It moved to Santa Rosa and later merged with University of the Pacific.

Perhaps one of its most colorful members was Lizzie Glide. Lizzy inherited thousands of acres of rich agricultural land and oil producing land in Kern County. She was an ardent Christian and determined to put her wealth to good use for God. She founded Asbury Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky. When she discovered the deplorable conditions for working women in San Francisco after the turn of the century, she built Mary Elizabeth Inn as a home for 100 working women in a Christian atmosphere. It is still going strong. Her concern for a Christian atmosphere for study led her to build Epworth Hall for women at the University of California in Berkeley. But what she wanted most of all was a city center of outreach for San Francisco, so she personally built a new church on the corner of Taylor and Ellis streets, and set up a permanent foundation to fund it. Later Glide Foundation purchased the Hotel Californian and now uses its profits for the foundation. Under Lizzie's direction it immediately became the first hotel in San Francisco with no bar!

Well, I've left out a lot, but I hope you've gained some feeling for the dedication and love of our foreparents in Methodism in California and the commitment they had to the gospel of Christ. Who we are in this time and place is in some measure due to their efforts and to the Spirit of God which empowered them. May we honor them as we seek to be God's people in this time and place. Amen!

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PART 2: "PIONEER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH'S HERITAGE"
SCRIPTURE READINGS: Matthew 5: 1-12 and Hebrews 11: 39 - 12: 2a

It's really very hard to imagine what the walls of the sanctuary portion of Pioneer United Methodist Church have seen. Some of them have been here for 128 years, which I assume is longer than any of us can say of ourselves. Imagine with me for a moment as we go back in time some 120 years.

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Take away the side room of the sanctuary and Pioneer Parlour to begin with, and move the church steeple over, to rest directly above the large stained glass window in the back of the sanctuary. Now take away the stained glass window and replace it with a set of double doors for the entrance, and put a balcony over those doors. Next take out the pews, they're only 30 years old, and put a row of small, three or four person pews down each side of the sanctuary with a larger section of pews in the center. There are boards down the middle of the central pews, and the women sit one side of the church and the men on the other. Up in front, in the altar area, take away everything, leaving the back wall blank, with the exception of a large painted cross over a low altar. Looking toward the altar you see a pulpit on its left, with the three high-backed chairs that are now in the side room, sitting behind it against the wall. On the altar's right is the church's prize possession, a new pump reed organ. If you look around the room, everyone will be dressed quite differently - because the year is 1858 - and we're here to dedicate the brand new Methodist Episcopal Church of Auburn.

How did we get to here - to 1858? It all began just a few years ago... around the time our congregation was founded. An early settler named William Green described the great valley of California below Auburn in the 1840's with these words.: "There was an endless sea of white and blue, purple and gold. It really seemed a sea, as the gentle breeze made the myriads of wildflowers to wave and glisten in the sunshine. I seemed to be reveling in the Garden of Eden...The wild oats were over my head, and I was six feet tall...Over this vast plain roamed tens of thousands of antelope, while skirting the timber, were great bands of elk. Close to the hills were many deer and grizzly bear."

All of that was to change very rapidly with the coming of the gold rush in 1849, as news of the discovery at Sutter's Mill leaked out and back to the east coast. Just one decade ago, 1848, was quite a year in California. There were hardly any white folks to speak of, and by then not many Indians either. Most of the population of Indians who lived in the Great Valley of California had died in two large smallpox epidemics a few years earlier. 1848 was the year California became a state. Across the American River Canyon and over a few ridges from here at Coloma, gold was discovered at John Sutter's Mill in January. The next May, seeking gold on his own, a man named Claude Chana camped with 25 horses and 35 indians on Auburn Ravine Creek. Chana discovered gold in the streambed and Auburn was about to be born. Auburn would mushroom up from a tent city to a town almost overnight, founding California's first volunteer fire department to cope with the many fires that roared through the haphazardly built mining town. It was wild west time in Auburn, bear and bull fights were staged downtown, fortunes came and went. But the people of early Auburn wanted their culture too, and an opera house was built. When Placer County was incorporated Auburn became the county seat because of its central location, and a courthouse was built in old town near the site of the present Shakey's Pizza.

Because of their circuit riding structure, Methodists were among the first organized Protestant churches in California. The Methodists had already split over the issue of slavery into the Methodist Episcopal Church (which was anti-slavery) and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (which was pro-slavery). It seems that the Methodist Episcopal Church, South was the first church to send circuit riders through Auburn. Rev. James M. Fulton was appointed to an M. E. Church, South circuit which included Auburn in 1852. Evidently he was unable to begin a congregation. The Methodist Episcopal Church had better results. Most likely because there were already at least two families in Auburn who had been M.E. Church members before they came to Auburn, the Crandalls and the

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Radcliffs. Sometime in 1851 Rev. Grove W. Deal came through Auburn and preached outdoors on the hill behind Auburn near where the bed-and-breakfast "Victorian Inn" now stands. Mrs. Harriet Crandall was there, and she remembered it quite clearly. You can see her picture in the side room of the sanctuary along with her husband, Dr. John R. Crandall. In 1852 Auburn was made part of a circuit with Rev. James Hunter in charge. He bought a home in Auburn and held services in it, and holds the honor of conducting the first Quarterly Conference here that year. His salary was set at \$125.00 for the year and the church contributed \$25.00 toward the Presiding Elders - or District Superintendent's salary.

There wasn't a church building, so services were held in the old courthouse, and in a room over a saloon until one was completed. The first church building stood on Sacramento Street across the street from the present community center and firehouse. The new building was completed and dedicated in December of 1853. Services were held there until 1855. No one is really sure why it happened, but on New Years Day, 1853, unknown person or persons broke into the church, took down the bell, damaging it in the process, took the books from the pulpit and set up a Chinese sign in front of the pulpit. Later that year the building next door was evidently taken over by what we will call Ladies of the Night.....The church decided to relocate.

Mrs. Crandall and Mrs. Brouse were appointed to solicit funds for a new church to be built on this site after Mr. Crandall had bought the lot. They set out house-to-house in Auburn knocking on doors and in one week raised pledges of \$3,500 - enough to build the new church building!

Both the old church, the new church, and later the parsonage were built for the most part by a man named Captain Alden Radcliffe. Another family that seemed to hold the new congregation together was of course the Crandalls. John was a Doctor from Illinois, where both he and Harriet were very active Methodists. He organized the Peoria Pioneers for the journey to California and they settled in Auburn in 1849. He helped begin the Auburn and Bear River Ditch, which later became the first unit of P.G. & E., which may explain why so many P.G. & E. employees belong to this church.. He also tried growing many varieties of fruit trees for the first time in Auburn. Harriet became the first person to ever win a prize for fruit preserves in the first Placer County Fair. John also ran, unsuccessfully, for state and local offices several times. He died in 1877 and Harriet lived until 1903. She left her property to the church in her will, and most of the building you see today - in 1986 - was built with funds from her bequest. The stained glass window at the rear of the sanctuary was installed and dedicated in memory of the Crandalls in 1904. That was even before John Robinson's time!

But back to the building in 1858; think of it as it stood then, a small white frame church, being dedicated on Thanksgiving Day. Perhaps, with the exception of a few small children, no one in the room had been born in California. They had all come from various places on the globe to live in Auburn. With their different reasons, hopes and expectations they had set out for a new life and had arrived for the moment in Auburn. They were aware of the hardships of their new life. Just two years before their pastor, Rev. James A Brooks, had set off from Auburn to his new appointment in Sawyer's Bar in Siskiyou County. He'd come back to Auburn for some boots for that community because there weren't any to be had in Sawyer's Bar. He was caught in a snow storm on his return trip and froze to death. His body wasn't found until the next spring. Rev. Brooks was all of 26 years old.

The Crandalls, the Brooks, the Radcliffs and the other names that dot the

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historical pages of the church were people committed to being God's people here in this place in their time. They opened Auburn's first school, it's first church and were lively participants in the community. Those are among the gifts they bequeath to us. Not so much the building...but the energy and commitment that built the congregation which built the building. "For All The Saints," we sing, and the gift of a commitment to being God's people here in this place and time is a gift of those saints who have gone before us.

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On the previous pages we took a tour of Auburn in the 1840's and 50's and its new Methodist church. Actually its title was First Methodist Episcopal Church of Auburn. We visited it at the Thanksgiving dedication service in 1858, and shared a bit about how it had gotten to that point. Now we take up where we left off and travel down to our time and place. We'll cover a bit more territory, and leave out quite a lot. What I hope you'll have is a glimpse of the people who have made up the congregation. I'll talk some about buildings, but that's only because they give us some insight into the character of the people who used them - and that's where my true interest lies.

First Methodist Episcopal Church was a very active group of people from its beginning. One of the congregations greatest concerns was education of children and adults. In 1852 it boasted 5 'scholars' (pupils) and 2 teachers in its Sunday School. They met twice a month, sometimes in a room over a local bar or in the old courthouse. Just a few years after they began there were 50 scholars and 6 teachers. This was a real school, mind you. In those days there just were not that many schools available. The Sunday Schools taught reading, writing and arithmetic in a church-related setting. The early Methodists had inherited a commitment to education from the Wesleys and Asbury. They taught children and adults who otherwise could not afford the time or the funds how to read, write and do mathematics. I've not been able to trace it down accurately yet, but it seems that very early in its life our congregation founded a school in Auburn and built a school building of some kind next to its first church sanctuary. This week day school and the Sunday School show a tremendous commitment to education on the part of the founders of our congregation.

Things seem to have gotten tough for the Sunday School in the 1860's though. This may be of interest to all of you who have ever been Church School teachers or superintendents. In 1862 Rev. T. H. McGrath said to the Quarterly Conference, "But one member of the church labors in the Sabbath School, and but one member of the church attends Sabbath School. The teachers in the Sunday School are neither church members nor are they professors of religion. It is a burning shame that the religious education of so many children is so utterly disregarded and neglected by the Quarterly Conference and the Church. In the name of God I call upon the Quarterly Conference to see to the religious wants of the precious children under its care." - In other words the school the Methodists had founded was going well, but few Methodists were participating in it! For a while our church shared its pastor with Ophir which at the time was a thriving town near the size of Auburn with its own church. In 1870 the Sunday School program was going well and reported 85 students in Auburn and 35 in Ophir, with 12 in the Bible class in Auburn and 10 in the one in Ophir. Perhaps Rev. McGrath's appeal was taken to heart. Not long after the turn of the century most Sunday Schools began to change into what we know them as now - centers for religious education rather than academic basics in a religious setting. The old concept of Sunday School faded out as public education became more and more available. My

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information is too scanty to be sure just when our church made the switch.

Education has continued to be a concern of our congregation down to our present day. Some of our members have carried on these concerns for a long time. In 1929 a very young lady named Martha Spooner came to our church because she wanted to take a class and learn more about the Bible. She was asked to become the Sunday School Secretary which involved taking role in each class and receiving and counting the collection as well as ordering materials for the classes. She never got to take her class! During the church growth boom of the 1950's Pioneer Methodist Church boasted 210 in Sunday School with 16 teachers at one point. The old parsonage which stood between the church and the present custodians house was turned into a Sunday School building and the present parsonage purchased to house the minister and family.

In 1958 the congregation began to take a look at its future with a planning committee Chaired by Robert Keskeys. It resulted in a building committee headed by Bill Riley. An idea for a large youth building with its own fireplace center soon blossomed into a new fellowship hall and an education building with plans for a new sanctuary to house the growing congregation. Max Strawser headed up the fund raising campaign, which then built the present fellowship hall and education buildings. The congregation's long standing commitment to education bore fruit in new facilities which surely would have made the founding congregation proud. In the late 60's and 70's the congregation experienced the decline in membership of all the "main line" churches at the time. But it looks like things are changing and those rooms may yet find that they have moved from being adequate to very full, and that's the kind of problem we like to have! The decline in membership and other factors led to the shelving of the plans for a new sanctuary for the moment until a later time.

That's just a very quick overview of our congregation's commitment to education for its children and members. I left out a lot of interesting stories, including Clarence Ormsby's Sunday School brass band, and it is a history I think the congregation can be proud of.

The church has always had a strong women's organization of some kind. In fact I'm sure it wouldn't be here without the commitment women have shown down the years. "The Ladies Sewing Society" was organized in 1853 by Mrs Crandall with 17 members and "45 gentlemen as honorary members, who paid one dollar a year as dues."(Centennial history) It later became the Ladies Aid Society and continued its major purpose which was to raise funds for the upkeep of the church buildings. Until St. Luke's Episcopal church organized in the 1880's the group contained the local Episcopal women also, and was quite large. It was they who raise the money for the second sanctuary. There's a side story here; evidently the parsonage was also built at the same time as the sanctuary in the late 1850's, but the materials were not paid for to the satisfaction of the church creditors. The creditors obtained a court order to have the sheriff sell the church and give them the proceeds. The church was advertised for sale in December of 1861 to be auctioned on Jan 3rd of 1862. The trustees scraped together the money needed and paid off just in time. By June of 1863 the church was declared free of debts.

Back to the women's groups; with this one embarrassing exception - perhaps the trustees hadn't consulted them about the parsonage... they continued to be the main group which raised the necessary funds to maintain and improve the church's property with the exception of some major building campaigns. In 1940 the Ladies Aid Society became the Women's Society of Christian Service and began

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to provide regularly what they had been doing all along; worship and an emphasis on growth and study related to the Christian Faith. The emphasis on care for the whole person and society is even stronger in the new structure of United Methodist Women. Looking back and forward into the future over all the changes women in our society and our congregation have been through and are going through - we can only marvel at what God's Spirit and theirs has accomplished in their lives.

Many churches in the western United States conferences of Methodism do not have very active men's groups. Pioneer's men have been an exception all along. In the early days men were expected to be the trustees of the church and as trustees not only to manage the property but to work on it too. The Centennial History Brochure notes that in the 1920's and 30's there were no strong service clubs in Auburn and that the "Mens Club" at Pioneer was in its glory with members from several different organizations and churches, especially PG & E employees! Methodist Men got their first charter in our congregation in 1950. Charles W. Bartlett initiated Methodist Men's organizing meetings. Charles W. Bartlett, who was the church lay leader at the time, and Frances Bartlett's husband, developed a sudden and fatal illness. The lighted cross which faces the freeway is a memorial to Charles. Unhappily he didn't live to see the new organization in action. The lighted cross which faces the freeway is a memorial to Charles. You'll never guess what their very first activity was.... you won't be surprised, perhaps. It was to paint the parsonage! Look around the buildings and the grounds and you will see the result of their regular monthly work-days as they continue to care for the buildings, and to have breakfast and fellowship together.

Our church also has a long history of being very involved in a ministry of music. The church has had several organs. The present organ was purchased in 1947 and dedicated to the mothers of those who gave funds for it. The chimes are dedicated to the fathers of donors. The organ was considered a very fine small pipe organ when it was purchased - and it still is. For several years regular "Melody Hour" concerts were given on it during the week by visiting and local organists. A newsletter in 1955 notes that one of those melody hours consisted of a string quartet with Collan Walker at the piano, Suzanne Farris, Helen Best and Marian Schenk - violists, and Clifford Brau, cellist. Later on that year appeared a note that "Because of the resignation of Mrs. Violet Heayer as choir director, the Official Board appointed Miss Suzanne Farris as Director." Who was this Suzanne Farris who played the viola and the directed the choir? Well, later she married a young man by the name of Bob Dings...

The sanctuary in its present "colonial" style as we see it today went through a process of remodeling which began in 1949. The new sanctuary was dedicated in September of 1952 in a service led by the District Superintendent Dillian Throckmorton - who, incidentally was a founder of Heifer Project International. Dr. Throckmorton concluded the service with this dedication in which he asked all to join him: "We now, the people of this church and congregation, compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses, grateful for our heritage, sensible of the sacrifice of our fathers (and mothers!) in the faith, confessing that apart from us their work cannot be made perfect, do dedicate ourselves anew to the worship and service of Almighty God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

"To the worship and service of Almighty God" said the words of the service. "To make perfect the work of those who have gone before us," it says. Not to preserve - but to make perfect. Not to stay the same - but to continue their work and their commitment - to education for instance - or to a ministry of music - or

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to meeting the needs of others; to continue their work and their commitment. The challenge of the 1980's is to worship and serve God, and thus serve one another in ways appropriate to our time and place, keeping in mind the spirit of those who have gone before us - seeking God's lively Spirit in the midst of our present lives - calling us forward into perhaps new and different ways of worship and service. And always, wherever we go, the God whose Spirit was with those who founded our congregation is present. The God who came in his Son, Jesus, proclaiming a new order in which human beings are loved by God and therefore have the opportunity for forgiveness and whole lives - and the gift of truly loving one another. The God who heals the wounds of the world and reveals the presence of the Spirit in our lives - our lives - is present and available. God give us the grace to see, hear and follow as we journey together as a portion of God's family. In Jesus' Name--Amen!