

Yesterday & Today: United Church of Sun City



United Church of Sun City as it appeared in 1961, left, and as it appears today, right, where it is also home to the Olive Branch Senior Center.

Sun City's first church opened in 1960

United Church of Sun City, 11250 N. 107th Ave., was the first church established in Sun City.

The church was formed by Dr. Walter Witt and his wife, Gladys, who moved to the new retirement community in May 1960.

Members of various denominations held initial services at Oakmont Recreation Center, but as attendance grew Dr. Witt eventually applied for a charter from the United Church of Christ and acquired the property on 107th Avenue.

When the church originally opened it included parishioners from over 60 denominations.

The actual structure has remained primarily unchanged over the years, although the lush lawn has been replaced by desert landscaping.

The campus itself, however, has greatly expanded over the years. The Olive Branch Senior Center now exists on the property just south of the sanctuary and fellowship hall. Operated by Banner Health, the facility provides a low-cost lunch and other activities to resi-



United Church of Sun City celebrating its 25th anniversary in 1985.

dents.

(Photo from 1961 from the archives of the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum. Photo from 1985 and today taken by Bret McKeand.)