



# Churches of the Sun Cities

by

Emil C. Fischer

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# CHURCHES OF THE SUN CITIES

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**DEDICATED TO**

**The people who after retirement, dared to leave  
old ties, establish new homes, make new friends  
and build new churches, thereby demonstrating a  
deep seated faith that goodness will ultimately  
prevail.**



## INTRODUCTION

The design of a place of worship offers a consuming challenge to the architect. The customary utilitarian structure must give way to an added dimension - the appearance of making a statement embodying acceptable symbolic religious forms.

The interior, conveying a sense of relaxed meditation, must be receptive of the liturgical mood it attempts to create. The congregation must feel this sense of worship as it enters the sanctuary.

As we developed this book, we realized that most of the churches represented here began as small congregations requiring an all-purpose structure serving worship as well as social and cultural needs. As the Sun Cities grew, church membership increased also, requiring an enlargement of the original building or, a new sanctuary. In addition, the space requirements for the various activities related to the particular concerns of these congregations resulted in the development of church complexes that differ, in many instances, from those in a typical urban community. Rooms for Sunday School and other youth activities, for instance, are replaced by relatively large meeting halls, chapels, libraries, rooms for discussion groups and religious education.

It is not the purpose of this book to feature church activities, however, form usually follows function so it seems appropriate to mention some of the activities that influenced the design of these churches.

Many Sun Citians express their social concerns by participating in church initiated activities. The variety and extent of these activities become quite evident as one examines the pages of this volume.

One of the most recently formed community organizations involving the use of church facilities is Interfaith Services. In 1981 the Sun Cities Ministerial Association initiated Interfaith Services, to serve the many needs of the frail elderly and provide social contact for the lonely through Adult Day Health Centers at several churches.

To satisfy spatial requirements for the ever increasing number of community oriented activities and an assurance that membership would grow as the community expanded, these churches embarked on long range planning programs. Planned expansion permitted architects to arrange these added facilities to create intimate, restful gardens or courts. These pleasant spaces surrounded by covered walks and buildings became a rather distinctive pattern for many churches in the Sun Cities.

There is also a considerable seasonal fluctuation in church attendance. During the winter months attendance at the Sunday services increases considerably. The influx of "snow birds" attracted by the delightfully mild winter weather, makes it necessary for the larger congregations to plan for a temporary enlargement of the sanctuary by manipulating flexible partitions to permit a spacious narthex or meeting hall to become part of the sanctuary.



To provide these special facilities and assure adequate room for expansion requires considerable land. Most of these congregations require sites of at least three to four acres. Fortunately the Del E. Webb Corporation realized the problem and the importance of church activities to the people of the Sun Cities. Specific areas in these planned communities were allocated to satisfy the requirements of the various denominations.

Primarily for economic reasons the familiar tower is often omitted in the design of contemporary churches. A tower becomes less significant amid the cluttered and often heavily treed communities. It obviously became apparent to those responsible for the design of the churches in the Sun Cities, that a tower would be a desirable feature of the architectural composition. This area, a relatively flat, open, sparsely treed desert community of one story dwellings allows church towers to stand up and be counted. They are visible from a considerable distance and become significant features in the cityscape.

It seems appropriate to clarify a term frequently used in this book to signify the main body of the church. The area where the congregation is seated in the traditional church form is called the nave and the word sanctuary reserved for the focal point of the church, where the traditional choir and altar were located. Many of our contemporary churches, however, are designed with the pews in an auditorium type arrangement to permit the congregation to be as close to the minister or priest as possible.

The interior of these churches no longer have a distinct nave, side aisles and sanctuary but rather one large open interior, and it has become customary for members to refer to the interior, where the service is conducted, as the sanctuary. Therefor, this term is used to identify that portion of the church wherever appropriate.

This volume contains pen and ink illustrations of the existing 37 churches of Sun City and Sun City West. Although there are significant churches beyond the borders of the Sun Cities, establishing outlying limits for the book's coverage proved to be impractical.

The wide angle interior perspectives graphically illustrated in this volume would be impossible to obtain with a camera without objectionable distortion. We are deeply indebted to Emil C. Fischer, who spent more than three years creating these pen and ink drawings. The sharing of his unique talent is a singular example of the generous spirit which has always been a mark of the Sun Cities.

The spiral binding will permit us to augment the contents of this volume periodically as significant additions to our family of churches occurs. The binding will also permit individual pages to be inserted or removed without damage to the book.

The Sun Cities Area Historical Society recognizes the churches of the Sun Cities for their cooperation in furnishing material for this publication.



## EVANGEL ASSEMBLY OF GOD

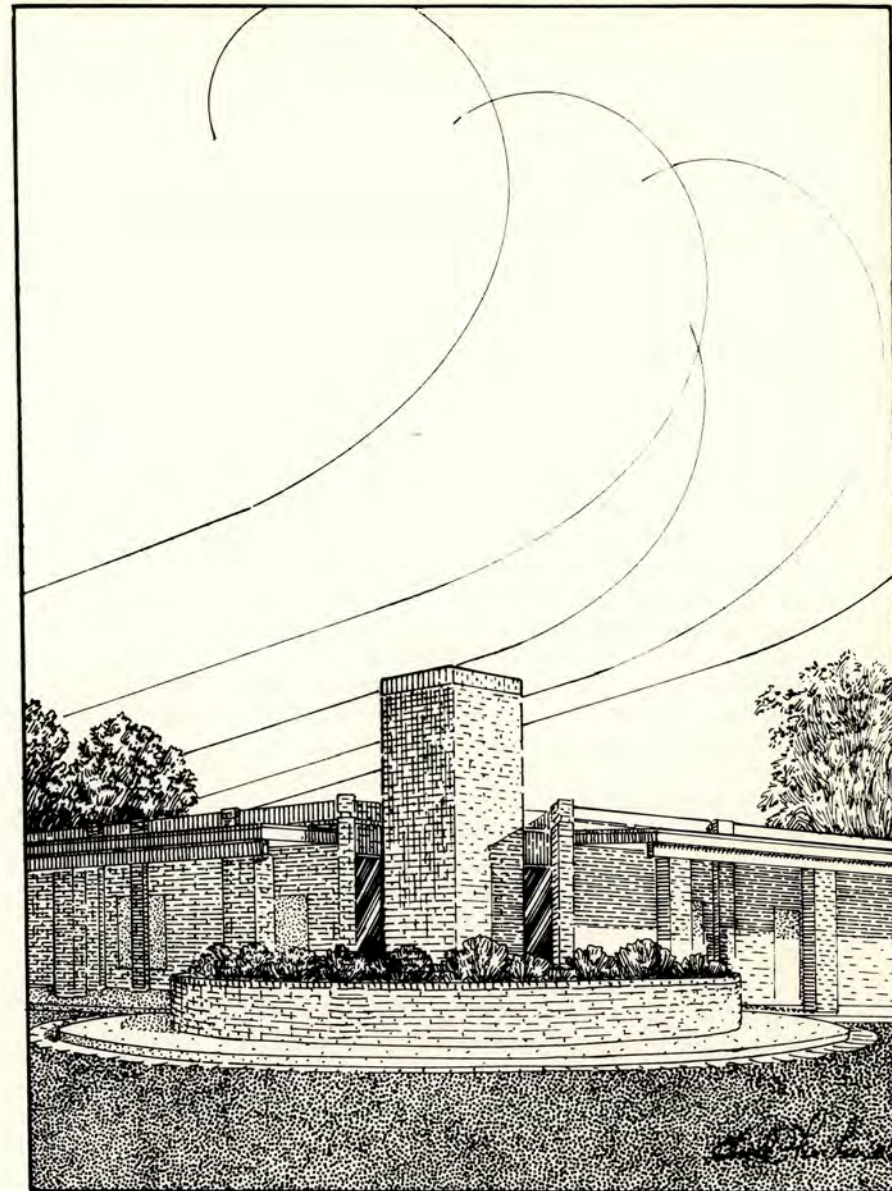
When the Rev. and Mrs. Charles W.H. Scott arrived in Sun City in 1972, it was their dream to establish an Assembly of God Church. The early services were held in the home of A. Pizzi. A nucleus congregation had been formed for a new church but facilities were a problem. Finally, the community rooms were obtained at two of the First Federal Savings and Loans Associations. One was used for Sunday services and the other for Friday night services. The first Sunday of August 1972 marked the opening service with thirty people in attendance.

Robert A. Sikes, pastor of Eastside Assembly in Tucson, sent 35 youths to survey the community for the new church; and in 1973 the Pre-Easter Bible Crusade was conducted.

In July 1975 a 3 1/2 acre site was purchased at 10701 Boswell Blvd., and ground was broken for a house of worship. Easter 1978 services were held in the new edifice designed by Montgomery A. Greene.

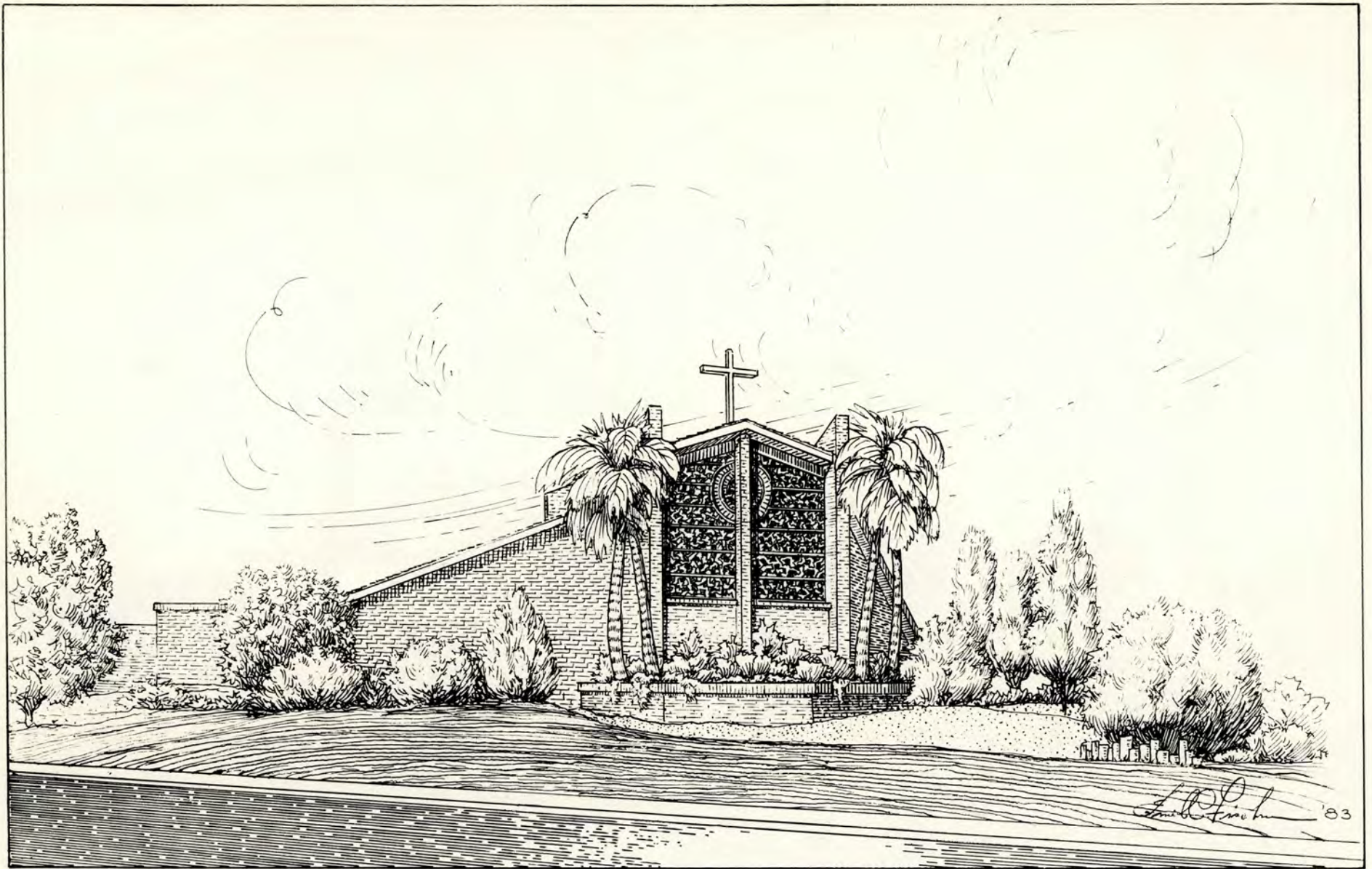
Ten years later, May 19, 1985, marked the ground breaking service for a new building program including a new educational unit. Following completion of this building, the sanctuary was completely remodeled to seat 550 people. The architect for this project was Roe Messner of Wichita.

The church practices the congregational form of government and is sovereign in pastor election, property ownership and business management. Worship is non-liturgical with a strong emphasis on music, prayer, praise and Bible centered preaching.



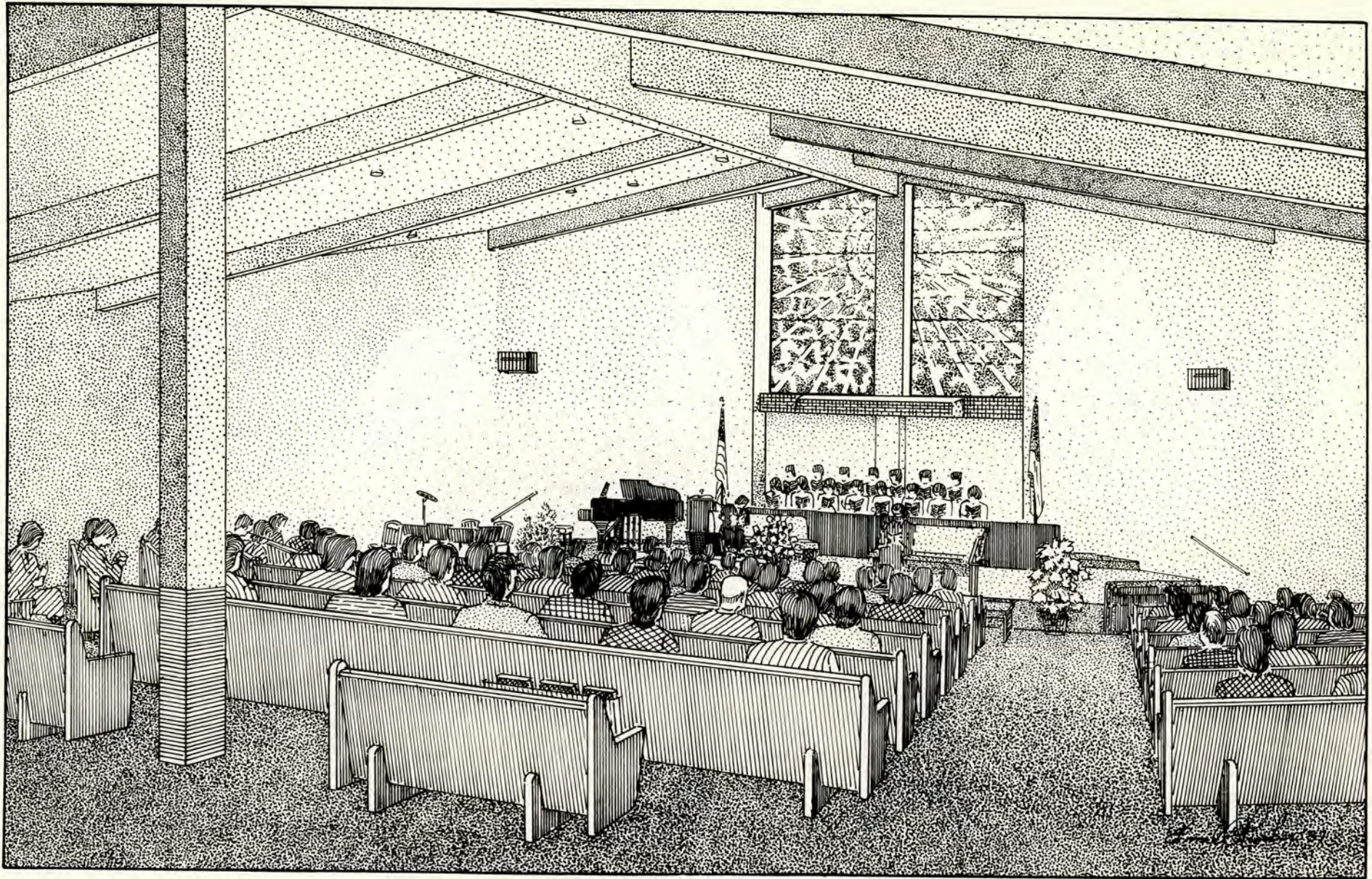
View of entrance motif from parking area





The facade facing 107th Avenue features a large stained glass window





The sanctuary of Evangel Assembly of God was extensively remodeled in 1986



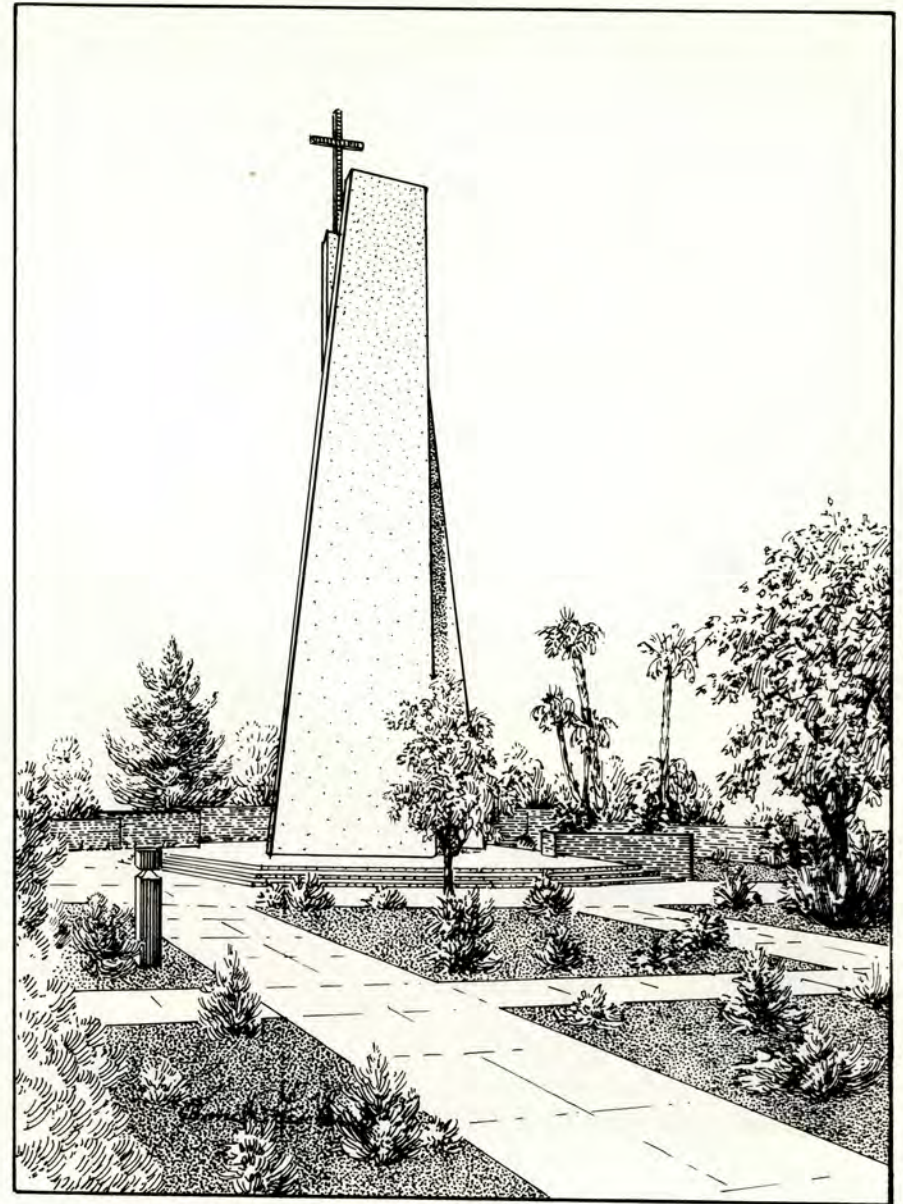
## BELLEVUE HEIGHTS CHURCH AMERICAN BAPTIST

Upon the invitation of Dr. Lee Jeffords, Area Minister for the American Baptist Churches of the Pacific Southwest, 19 Baptists living in Sun City met on November 21, 1971 at the First Federal Savings and Loan conference room. This group continued to meet with Dr. Jeffords and became the American Baptist Fellowship. Fifteen persons responded to the invitation to membership in April 1972 and by the end of the year membership was 37. On April 11, 1972 the congregation had voted to become the American Baptist Church of Sun City, Arizona.

Dr. Charles Bell, Jr., of California became the pastor in October 1972. The congregation voted to call the new church Bellevue Heights Church, American Baptist. Ground breaking ceremonies were held at 9440 Hutton Drive in January 1975. Francis A. Schulz was the architect. Membership had reached 107. By June the building was finished and a dedication service held October 5, 1975. In 1984, as membership increased, a new sanctuary was designed by Dean L. Glasco Architects Inc. A separate bell tower, conspicuously visible as one drives north on Burns Drive, is the central motif of a columbarium - "The Garden of Memories."

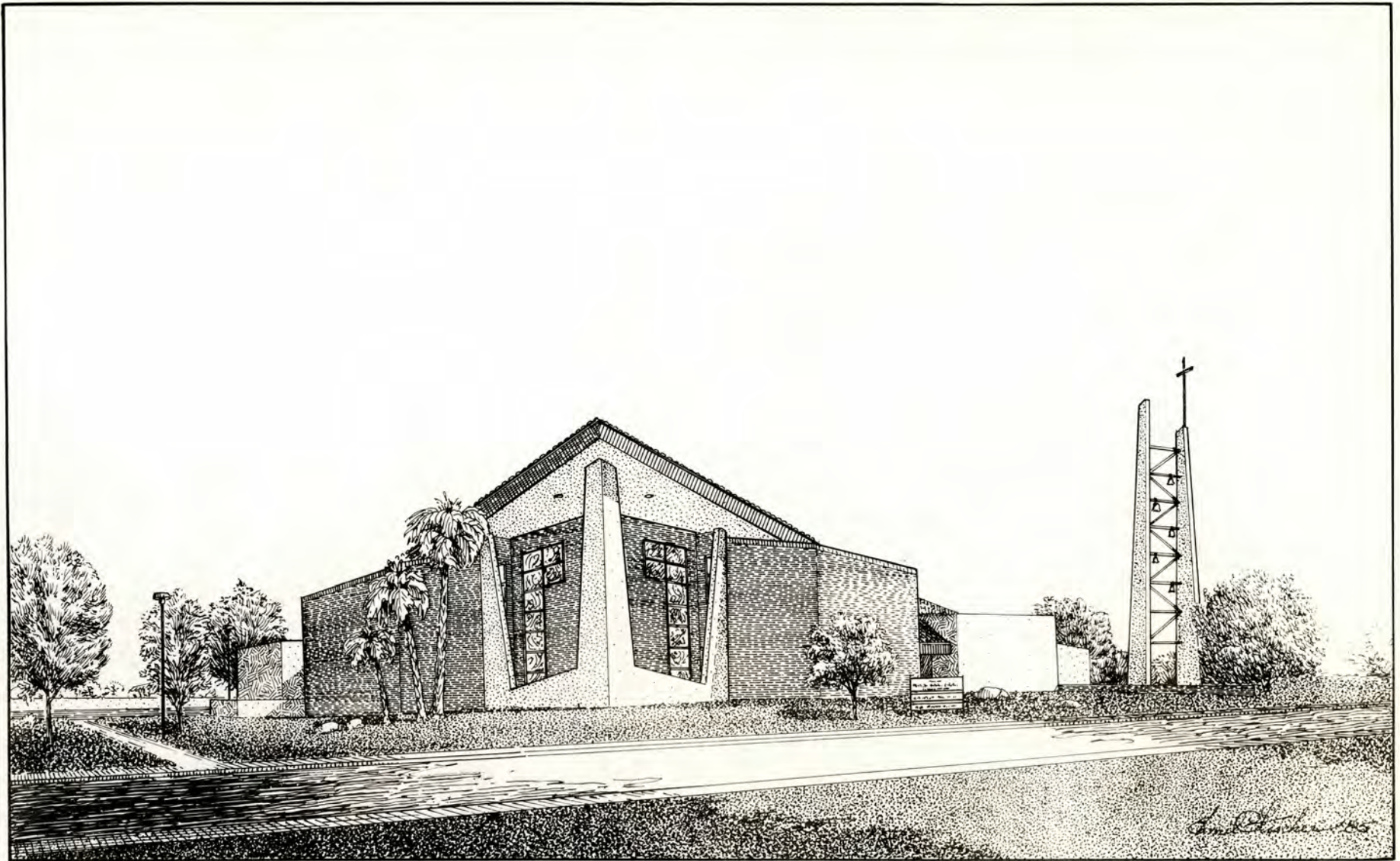
At present the church is giving support to three out-of-state churches and one in Prescott, Cottonwood and West Phoenix. Local mission giving includes Community Services in El Mirage, Centro Adelante Campesino, Urban Indian Ministry of Phoenix, Hopi Mission School, Tonto Rim Baptist Camp, the Valley Christian Brothers of Phoenix and Rainbow Acres.

The morning worship began broadcasting live over KHEP 1280 AM on April 12, 1987 - Palm Sunday.



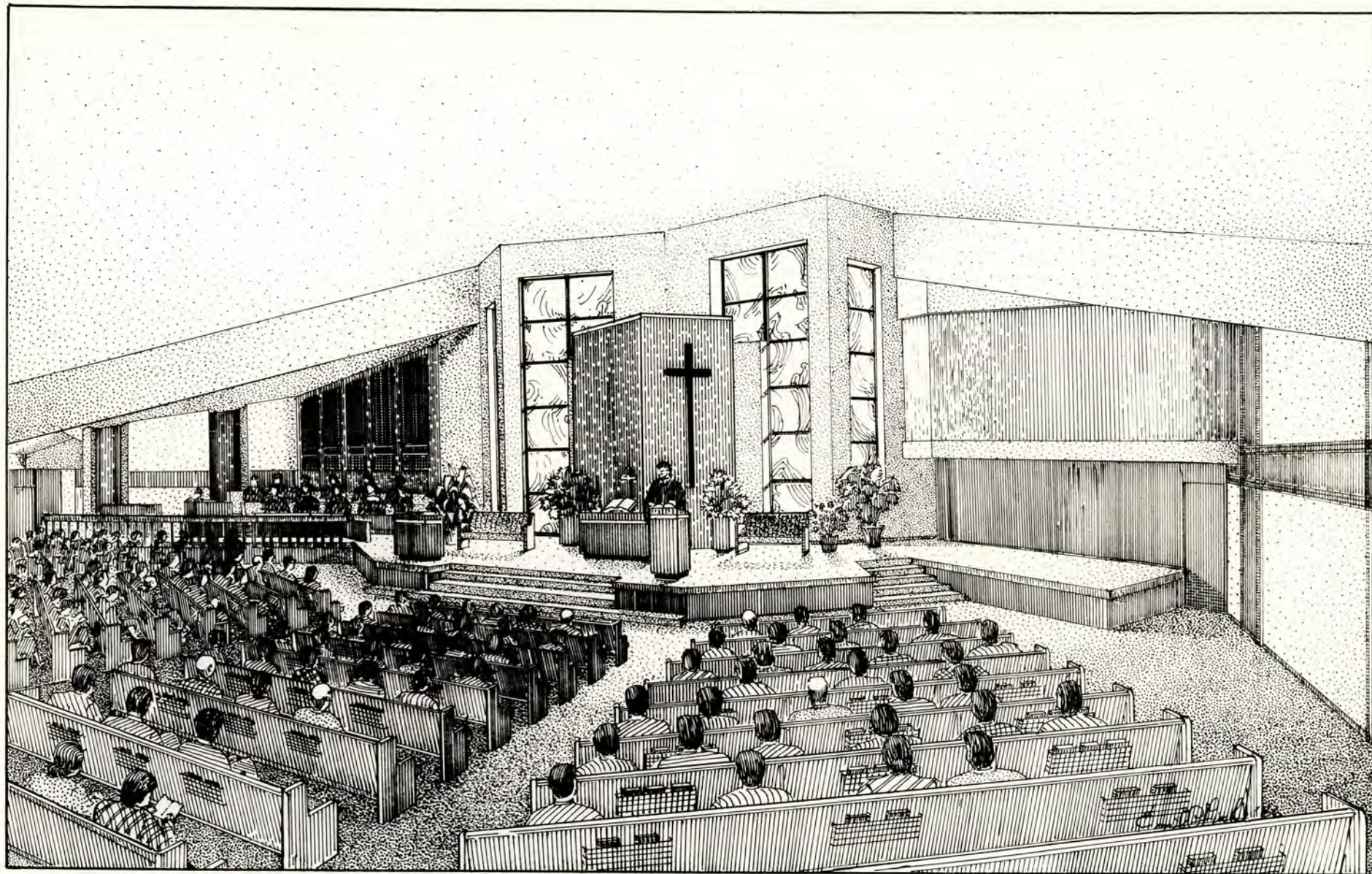
Bell tower and garden for meditation. The garden contains a columbarium





Belleview Heights Baptist Church and bell tower as viewed from Hutton Drive





Sanctuary of Bellevue Heights Baptist Church



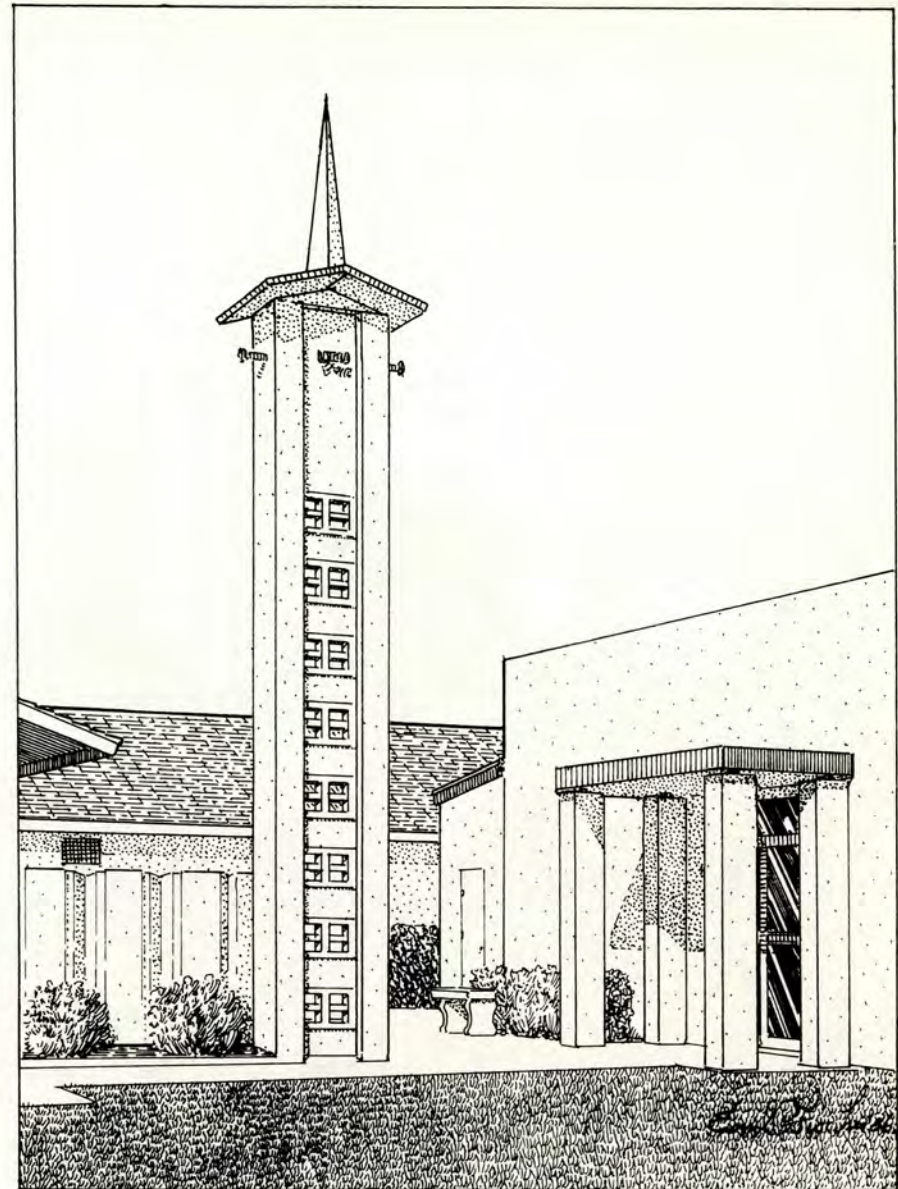
## FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

The organizing pastor Rev. Eugene Virt for this church arrived in November 1971. Under his leadership the church was officially organized April 30, 1972. Authorized by the First Southern Baptist Church of Phoenix, this was the first church in the Southern Baptist Convention to be established by all "over 50" adults. The church was used as a model for a film strip and slides used throughout the United States to establish ministries with retirees and for dealing with the older members throughout the Southern Convention.

Recognizing the need, trustees were elected in 1975 to establish a retirement center. The Arizona Southern Baptist Retirement Centers, Inc., was formed and subsequently constructed "Hines Village, now called "Baptist Village" in Youngtown. In 1982 the operation was signed over to the Baptist Foundation of Arizona Southern Baptist Convention. Private apartments were still available, as well as supervisory care, in the newly built Cook Care Nursing Center.

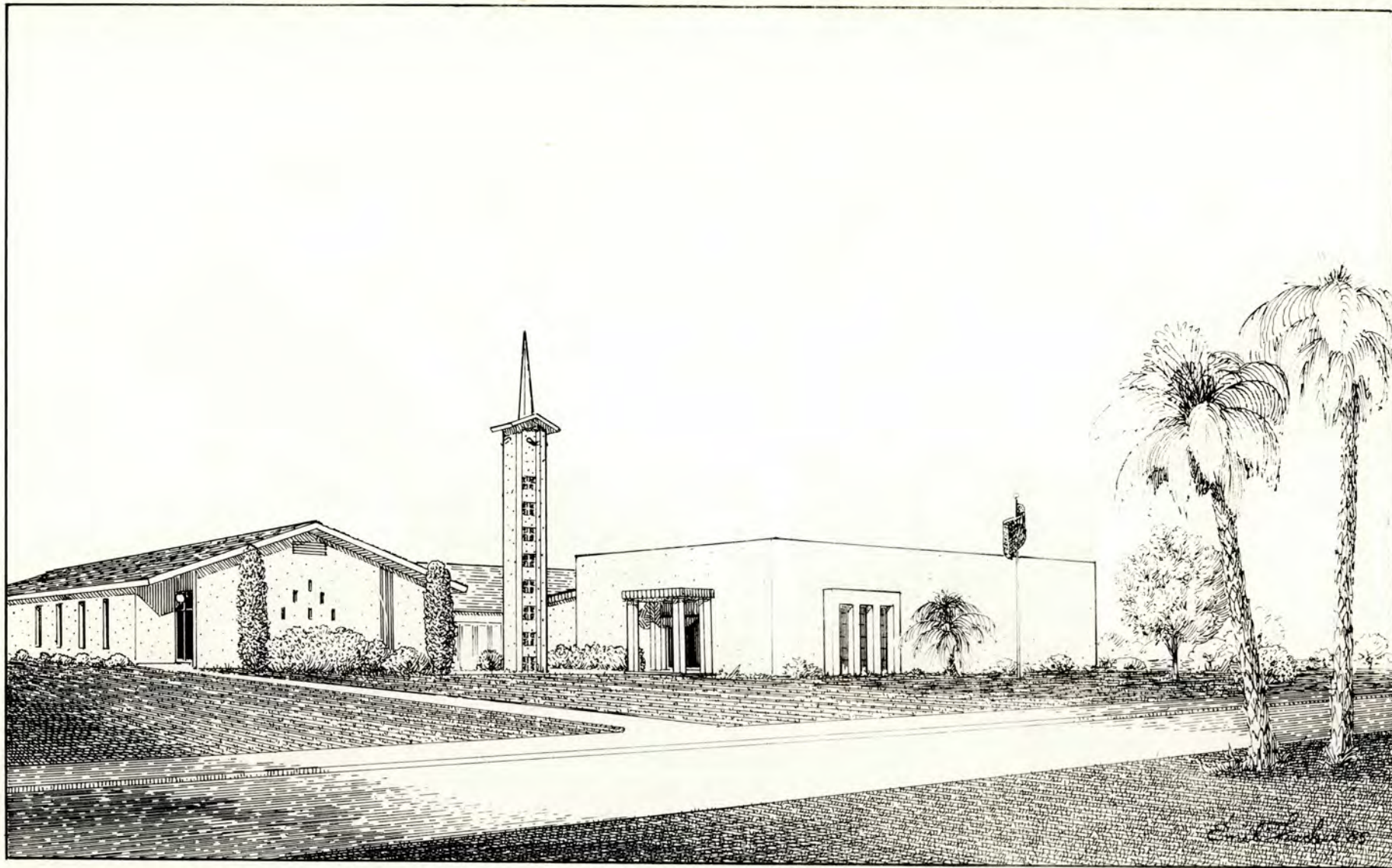
Classrooms, a library and space for offices were added in 1982. The church recently engaged the services of Architect Steve Thompson to design and remodel the existing buildings. The new sanctuary is scheduled for completion by January 1988 at 11019 W. Peoria Avenue.

Over 80 members of this active congregation volunteer throughout the community and a special ministry for widows and widowers has been in operation for several years. The local congregation has sponsored six other congregations in the Phoenix area.



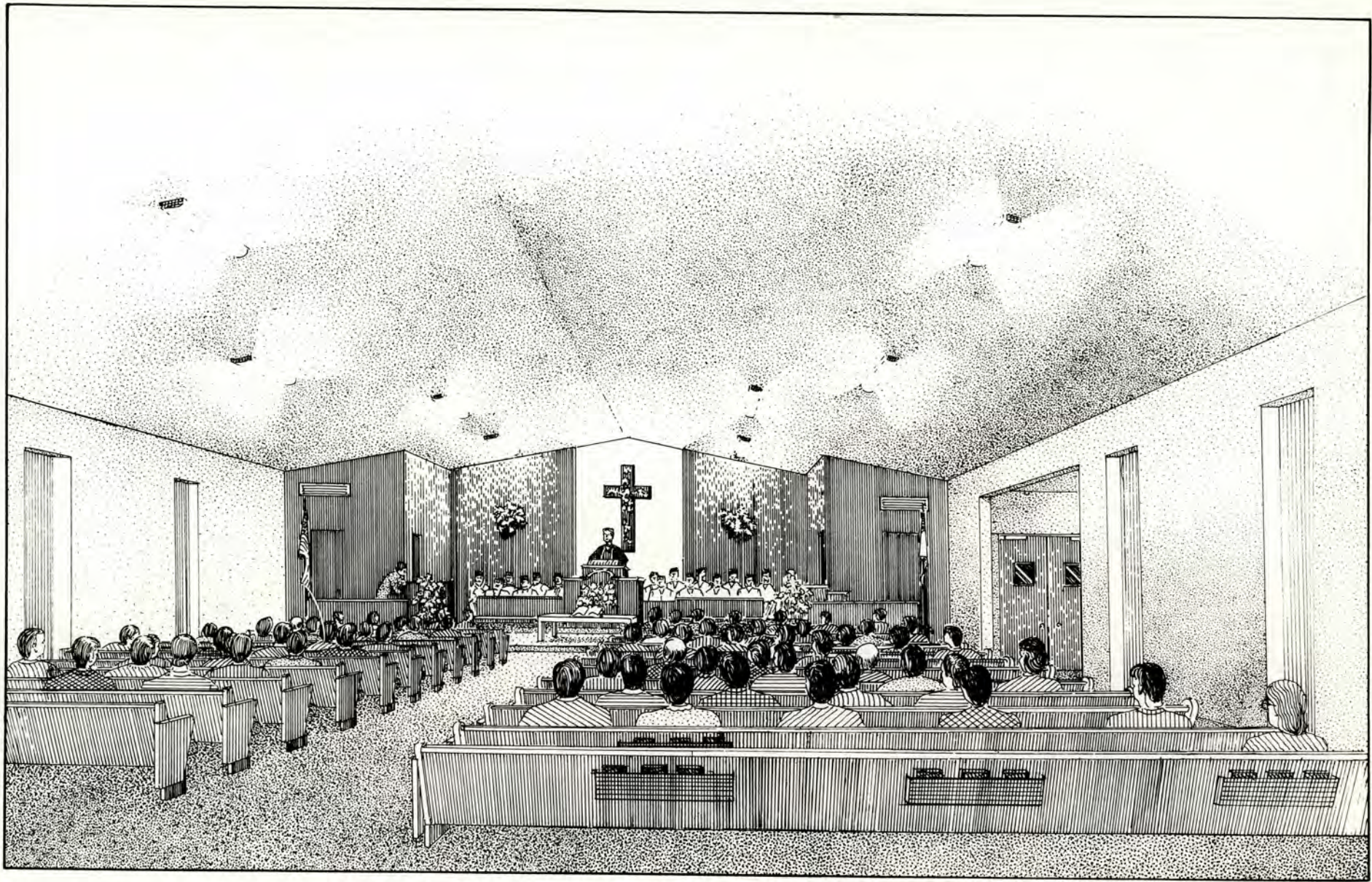
Entrance to court showing the present bell tower





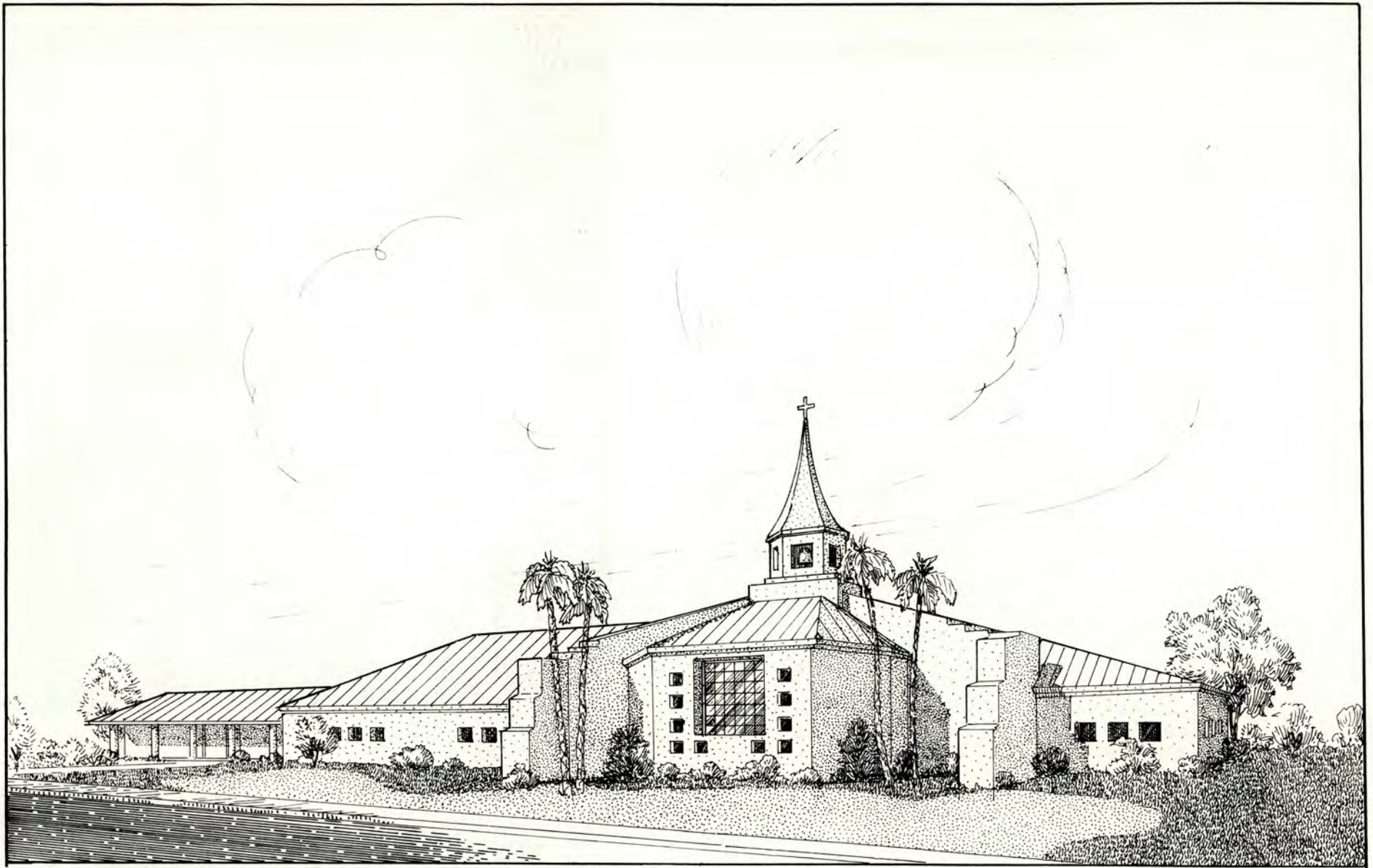
Sanctuary and related buildings before proposed remodeling





Interior of present sanctuary of the First Baptist Church





Proposed new sanctuary of the First Baptist Church viewed from Peoria Avenue



## SUN CITY WEST BAPTIST CHURCH

In July 1978, a letter was published in the Daily News-Sun expressing interest in beginning a Southern Baptist Church in Sun City West. Dr. C. Melvin Ratheal, associate pastor of the First Baptist Church in Sun City, answered the letter stating the Southern Baptists had applied for a site in that area.

Plans were formulated for those interested to meet in the Alco Theater, Sun City. The new congregation would be sponsored by the North Phoenix Baptist Church's Mission Committee. Dr. C. Melvin Ratheal was asked to become the first pastor and he accepted the call.

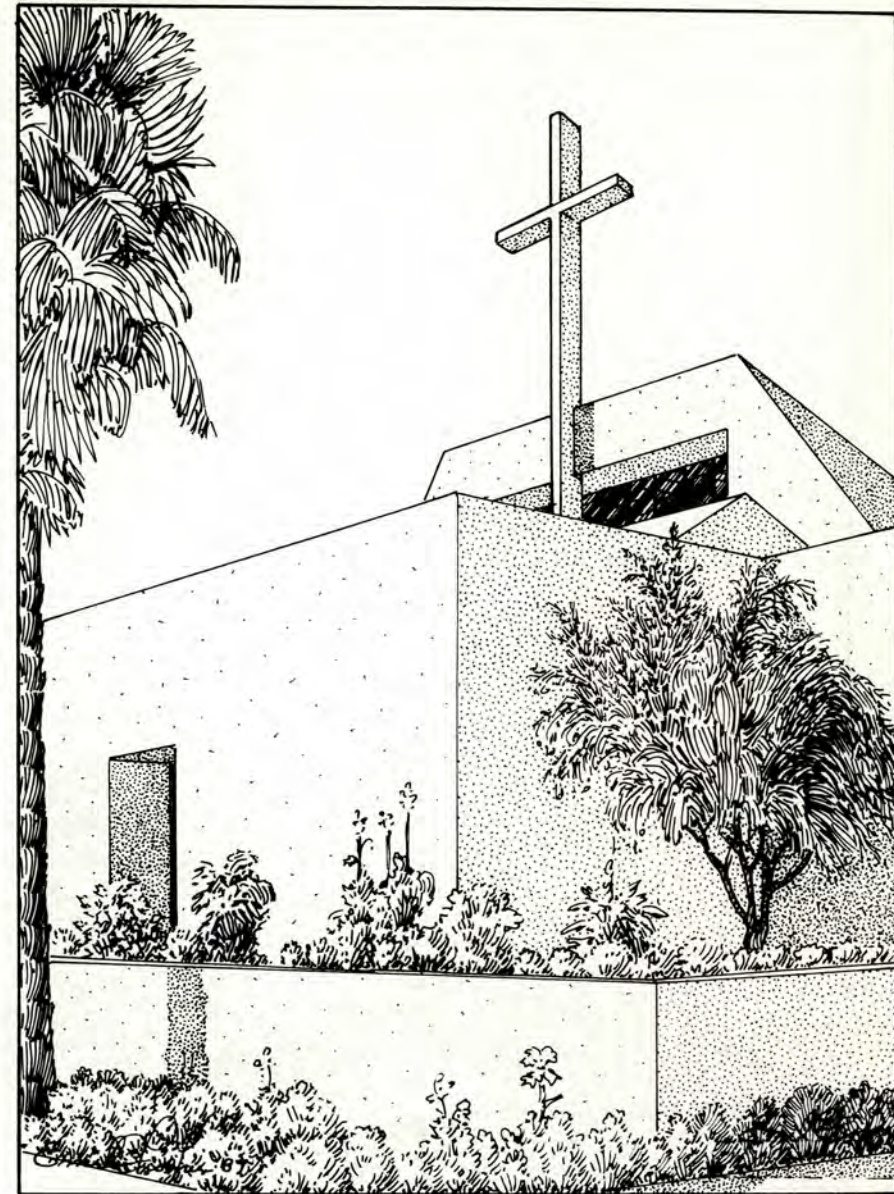
The very first service was held on Easter Sunday morning, 1980, with nine members of the congregation plus 83 guests from the North Phoenix Church in attendance.

The congregation wanted to establish the church so they transferred their services to the community room of the Home Federal Savings and Loan in Sun City West. As membership increased, they again moved to the Western Savings building.

Groundbreaking ceremonies for the present church at 17419 Conquistador Drive, were held in February 1983, and the first worship service was held in the new building on Christmas Day, 1983, with 114 in attendance. It was designed by Design Associates Architects Inc.

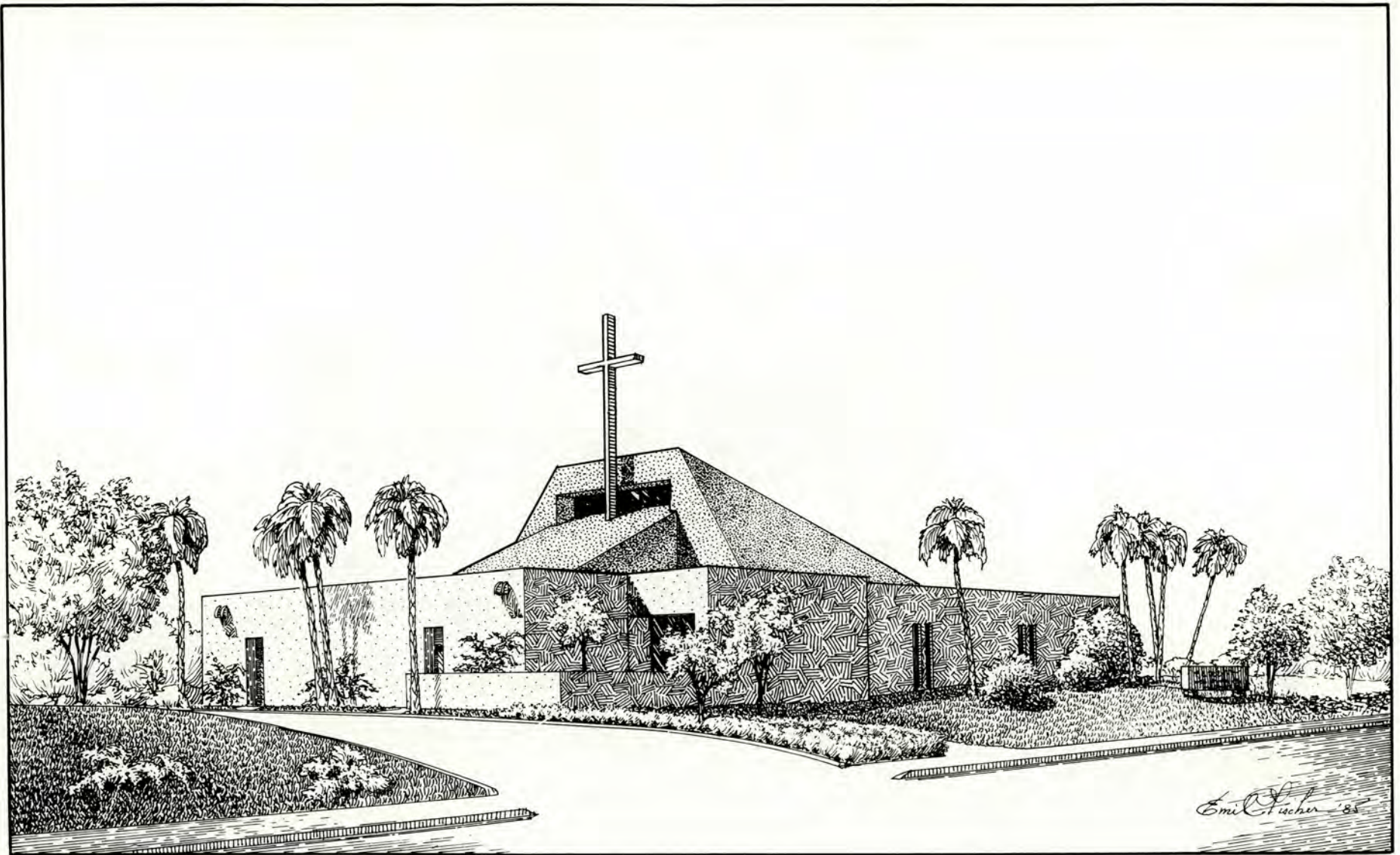
The unusually shaped orange-red roof and white cross attract the attention of motorists as soon as they leave Sun City on Bell Road. The interior walls and ceiling follow the pattern of the exterior and concentrate attention on the pulpit, baptistry and choir.

Although the present membership is relatively small, there is considerable social and missionary activity among members of the congregation.



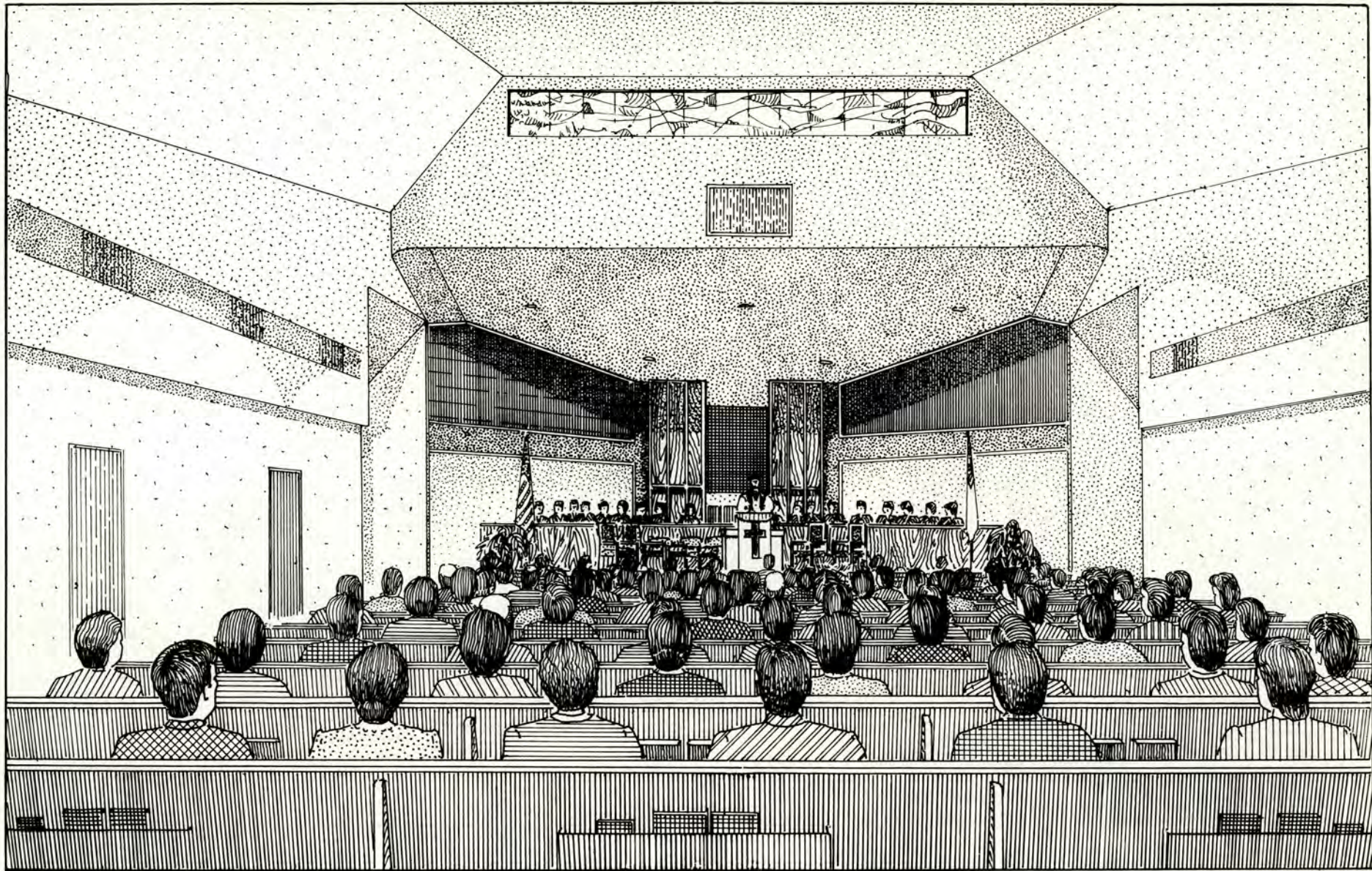
Cross and geometric roof forms at entrance to parking area





View of church from Conquistador Drive





Interior of sanctuary Sun City West Baptist Church



## GRACE BIBLE CHURCH

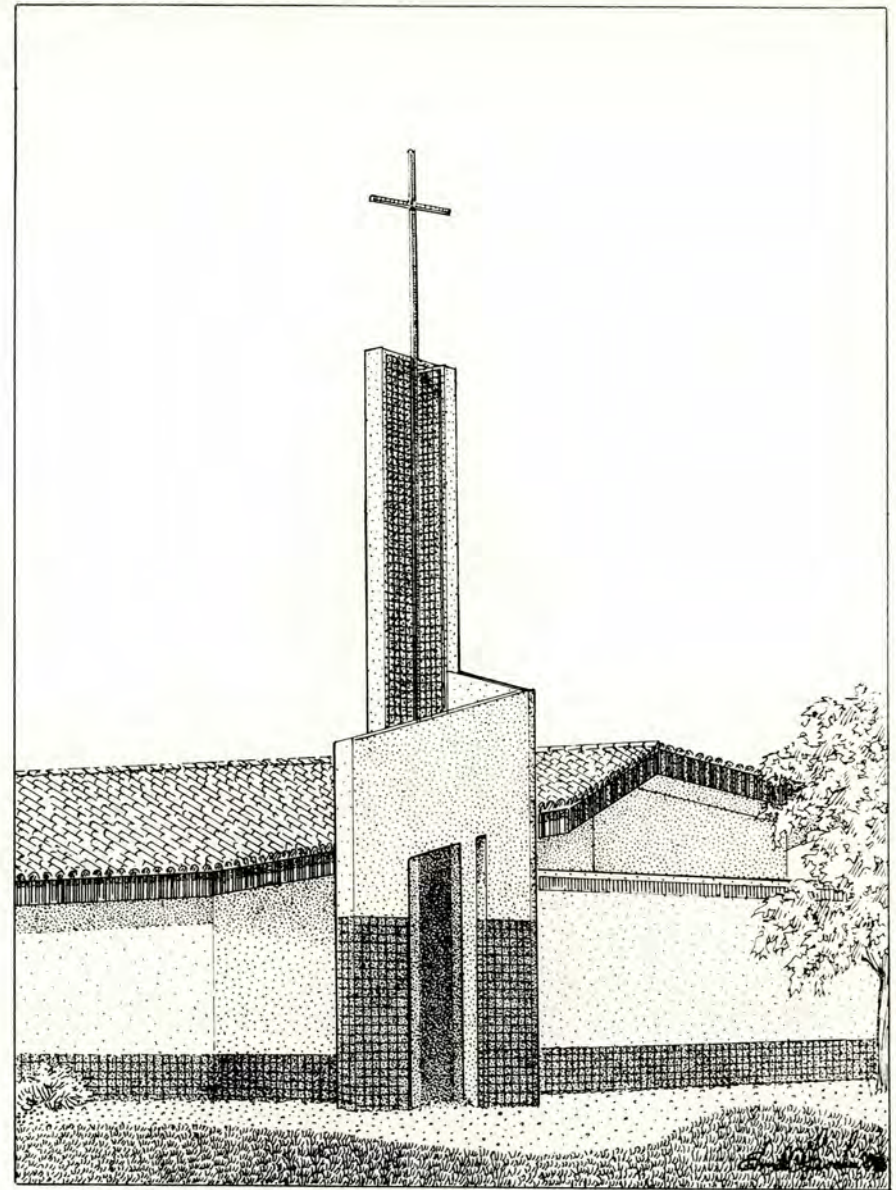
This church started in early 1975 when residents of the area gathered for Bible study, in the homes of those interested in organizing a local church.

Under the direction of Dr. Jared F. Gerig, the church on January 1, 1976 leased the Alco Theater for worship services. Later services were moved to Fairway then Bell Recreation Centers. On October 26, 1980 the Fellowship Hall was dedicated and services were held there. This active congregation soon outgrew the facility and in 1986 engaged the services of Dean L. Glasco Architects Inc., to design the present 600 seat sanctuary. The present group of buildings, located at 19280 99th Avenue, comprise a library, counseling and prayer rooms and rehearsal rooms for the choir.

The church believes in the Bible as the Word of God. While its statement of faith differs little from the mainline denominations, its emphasis on biblical preaching and missionary outreach appeals to a large segment of today's Christian population.

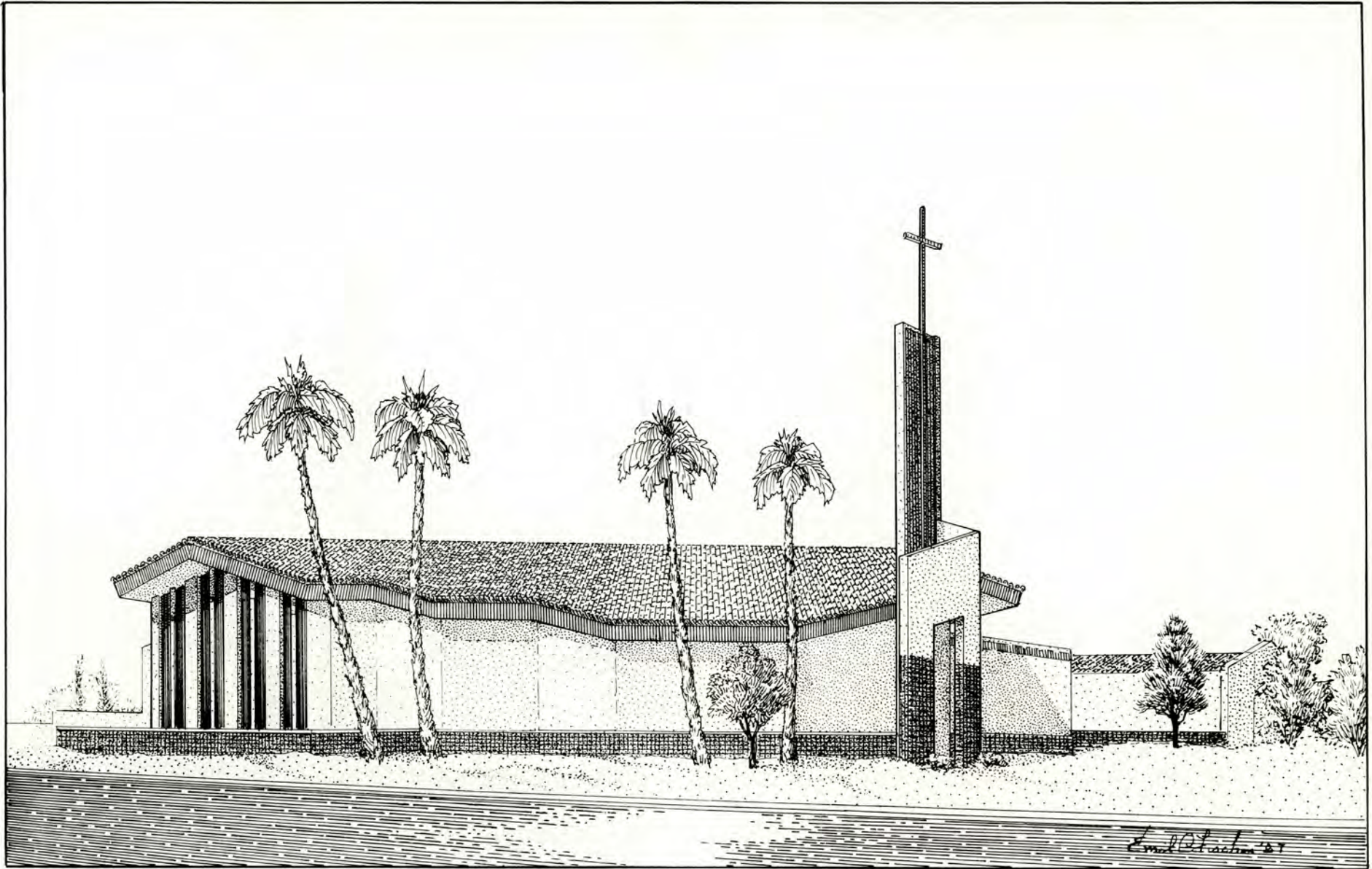
In its outreach, the church supports several projects outside the continental United States. Locally, it supports the Phoenix Gospel Mission, which ministers to the street people of Phoenix, and the Southwest Indian School, which supplies education to children from 19 tribes in Arizona and New Mexico.

The Ladies Missionary Society projects supply items to mission hospitals in Africa and the Navajo people at Christmas time.



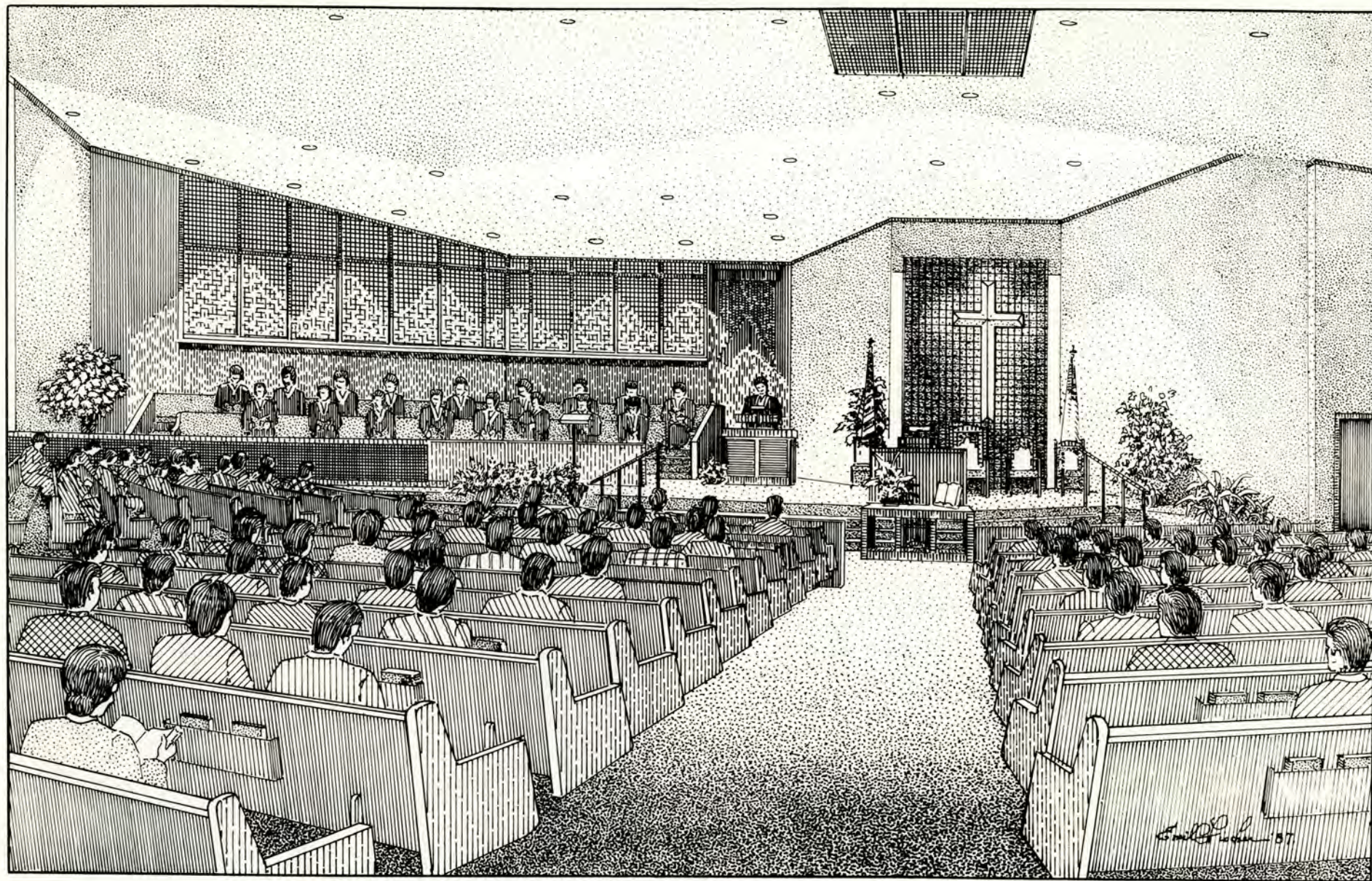
Masonry planes fold back into the tower





The recently completed sanctuary of Grace Bible Church viewed from 99th Avenue





Interior of new sanctuary.



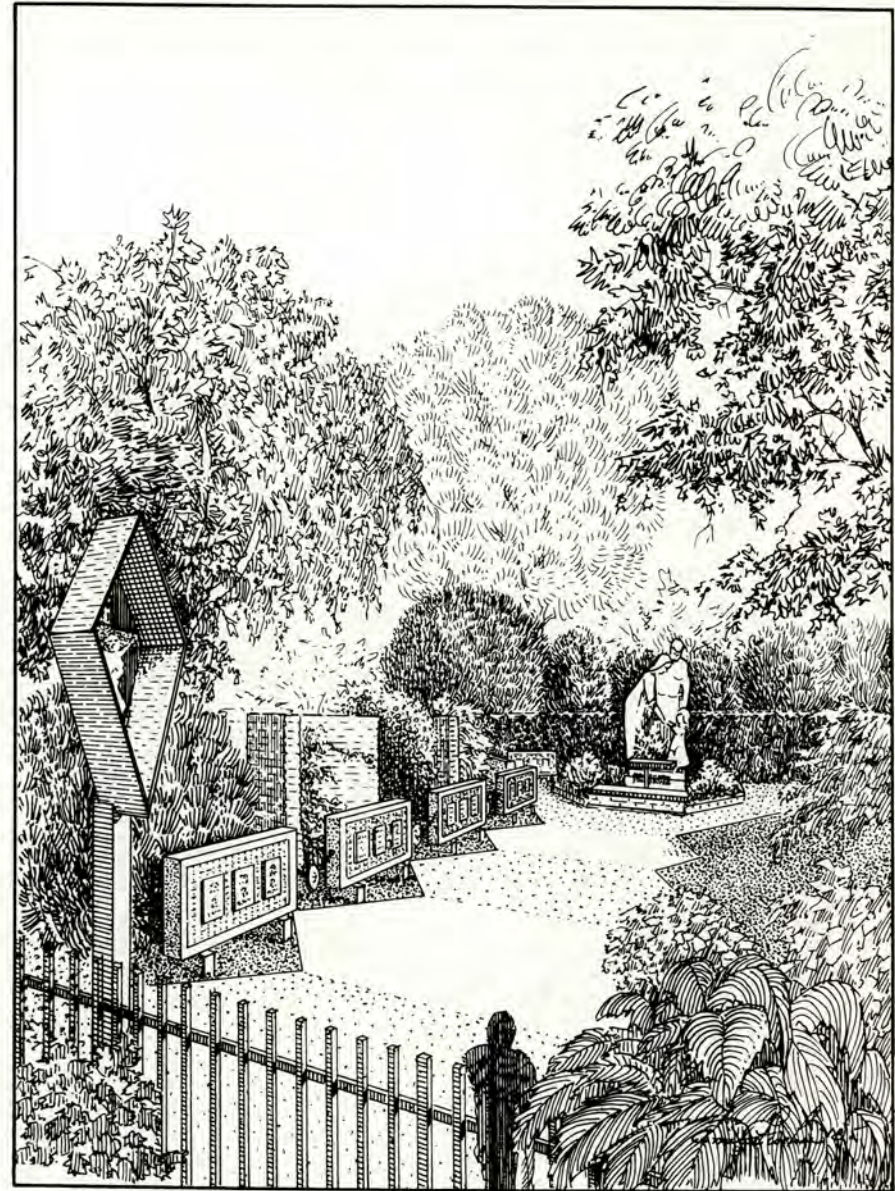
## ST. CLEMENT OF ROME CATHOLIC PARISH

St. Clement of Rome, The 4th Pope, was the second Catholic church organized in Sun City. In 1969 Bishop Edward McCarthy of the Diocese of Phoenix authorized the formation of the 150 member congregation, and the Rev. Harry Morgan was the first pastor. Masses were celebrated in the Sunland Memorial Park Chapel. Francis A. Schulz Architects Ltd., designed the present church at 15800 Del Webb Blvd. The stained glass windows designed by Mrs. Odel Prather of Philadelphia are a significant feature of this imposing church. Particularly impressive are those in the west entrance where the symbolism reminds the parishioners of the reasons why they attend their parish church. A sheltered approach to the main sanctuary from the parking lot through the formal garden prepares the congregation for the service. Some may visit the restful Prayer Garden and meditate before the statuary grouping of Mary and her parents.

For several years the parish has sponsored Bible study classes with instruction provided by a staff member of the Kino Institute of Phoenix. The public is invited to participate.

St. Clement's facilities are made available to community service organizations for meetings and special events. An addition to the parish hall, complete in 1984, is made available to Sun City Interfaith Services to operate as an adult day care center five days a week.

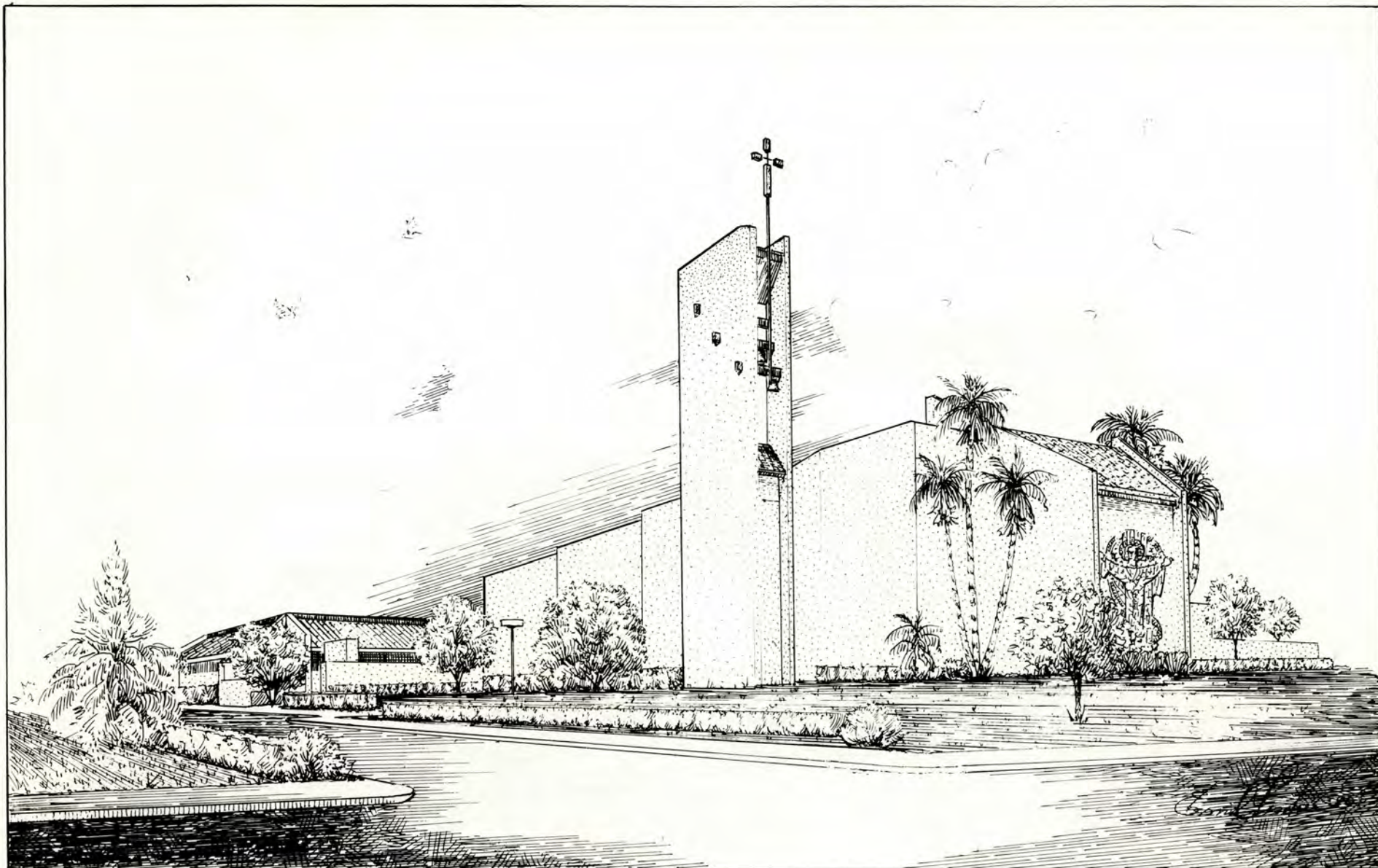
Membership has grown to 3,500 parishioners, many of whom participate in the Men's Club and St. Clement's Guild (women's group). These two groups, as part of the commitment to human services, support local, as well as county-wide, charities with funds generated by members' activities.



View of Prayer Garden.

The sculpture represents Jesus' grandparents and young Mary





Exterior of St. Clement of Rome. The drawing shows the proposed mosaic attached to the masonry wall facing Del Webb Blvd.





This gardened court provides a restful transition for those entering St. Clement from the parking area.



## ST. ELIZABETH SETON CATHOLIC PARISH

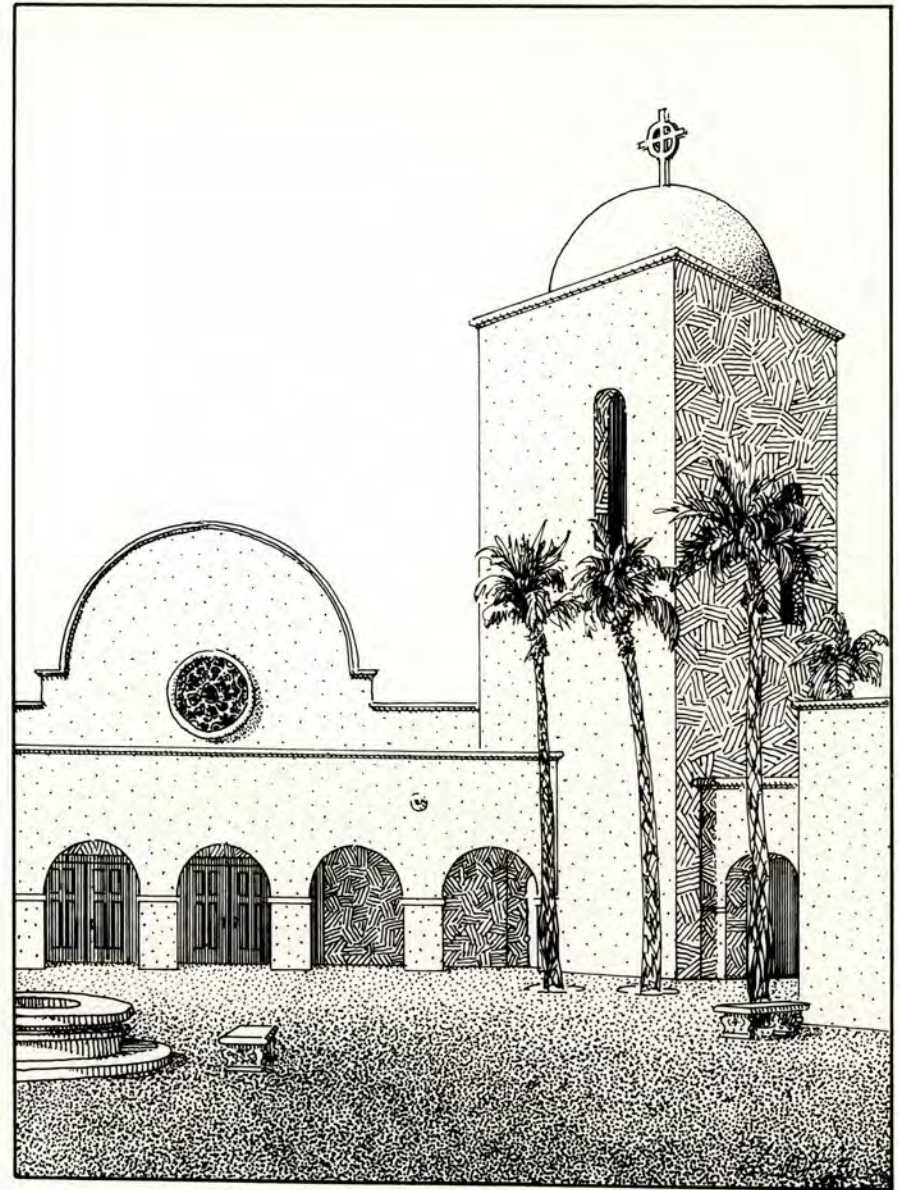
The Most Reverend Edward McCarthy, Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Phoenix, announced on July 14, 1976, that a third parish would be established in Sun City. In September of that year, boundaries were formally announced and the parish was named for the first native born American to be canonized as a saint - St. Elizabeth Seton.

The Rev. Paul Smith was appointed the founding pastor. The cooperation of the adjoining parish, St. Clement of Rome, for daily Mass and the offer of chapel facilities at Sunland Memorial Park, plus the offer from the Recreation Centers of Sun City for the use of the social hall in Bell Center for two Sunday Masses, was invaluable.

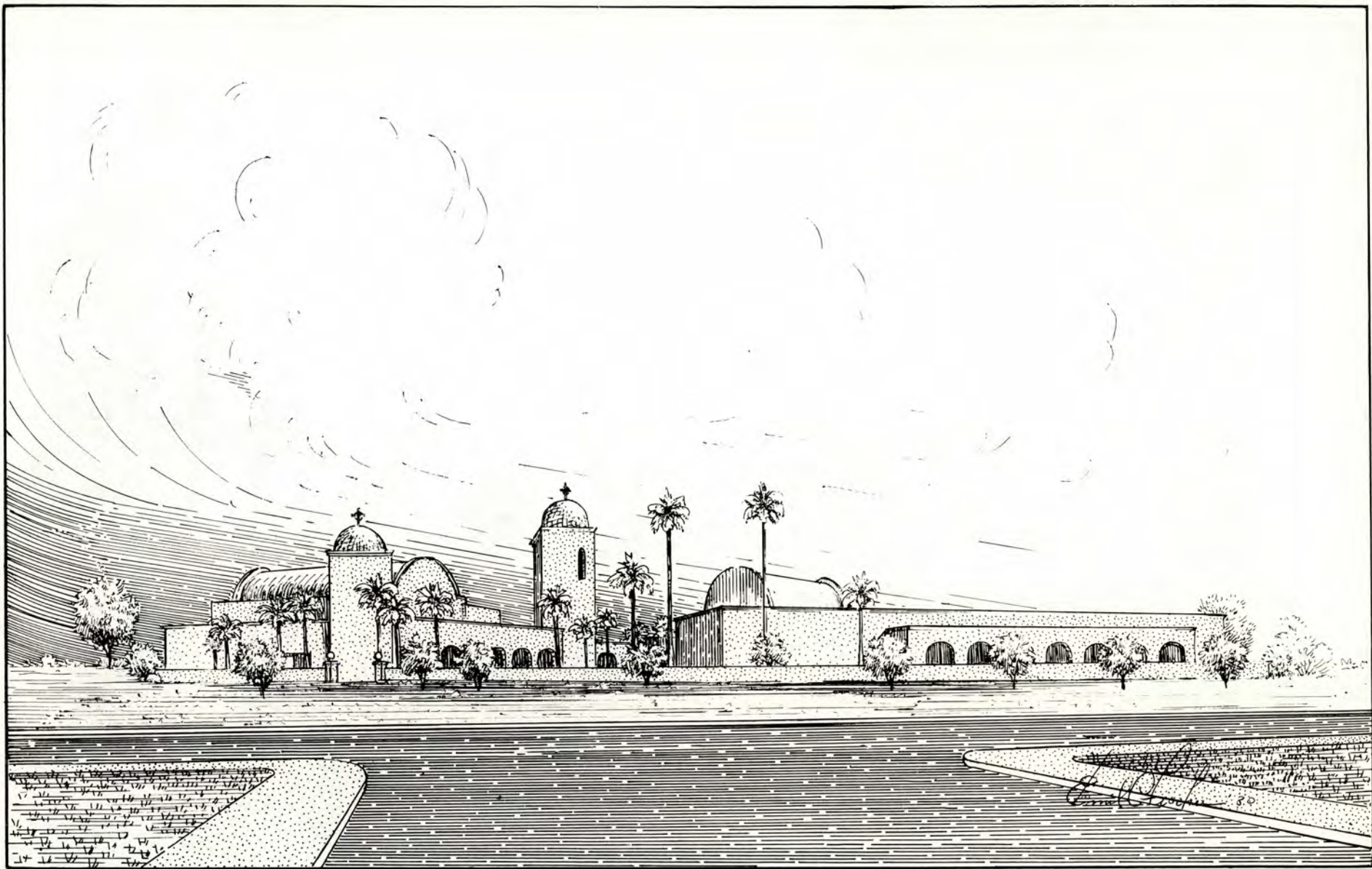
In formulating plans for the church complex it was decided to erect a structure that would appear appropriate to the Southwest. A native Phoenician, Architect Bennie Gonzales, was chosen to design this religious complex. His design, including dome capped towers and semi-circular passageways, recalls Spanish mission churches of the Southwest.

Ground breaking took place October 21, 1977, with the first Mass being celebrated in the new church on July 14, 1979, just three years after the announcement of the new parish. The church, located at 9728 Palmeras Lane, was dedicated in October.

Occasionally, retirement in Sun City presents problems for those who have not only moved from a totally different environment but have also altered their routine, and the parish helps in this transition. Assistance is also provided to the needy, the bereaved, the homebound and a number of church affiliated organizations are involved in social, charitable and liturgical functions.

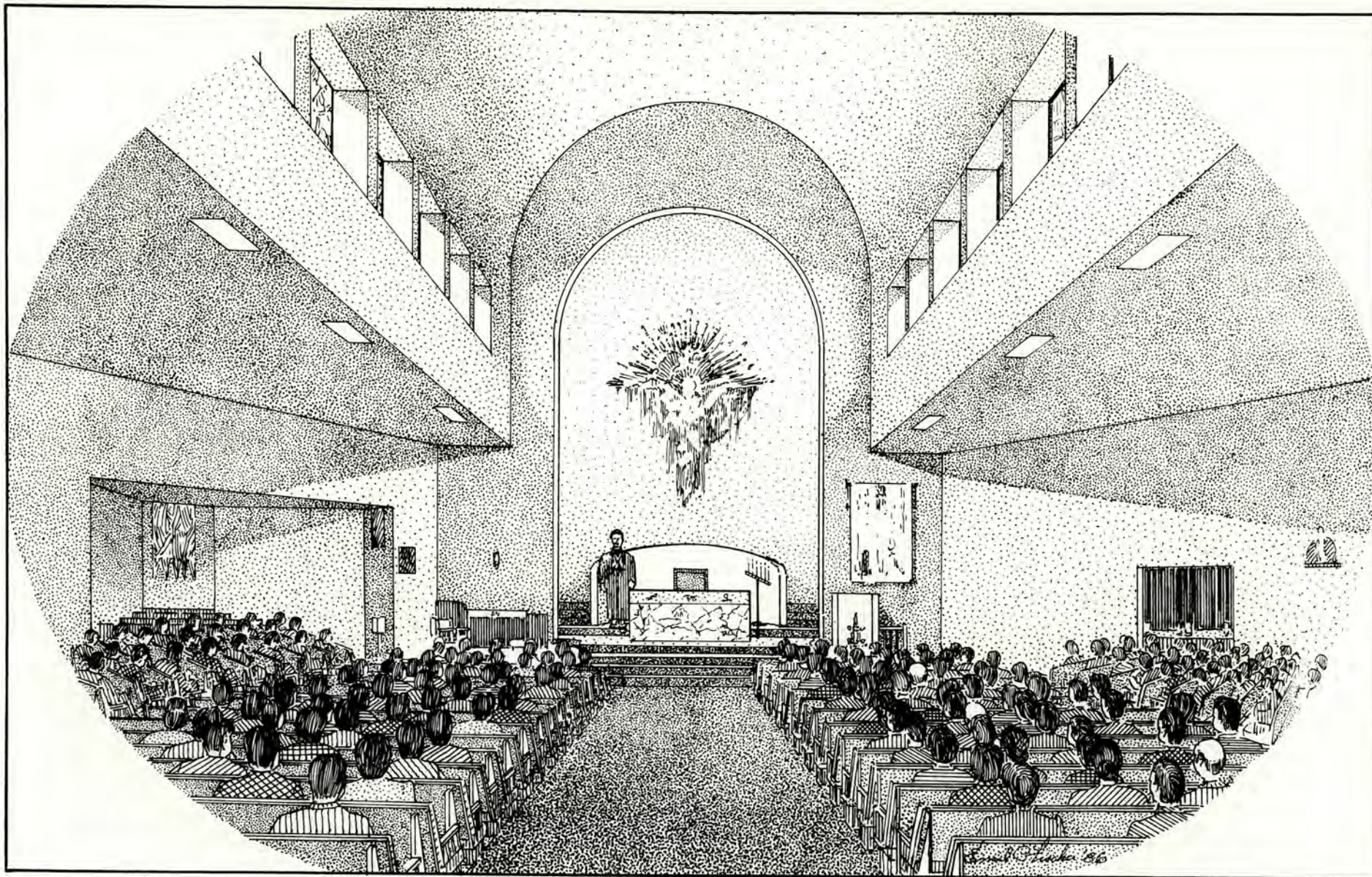






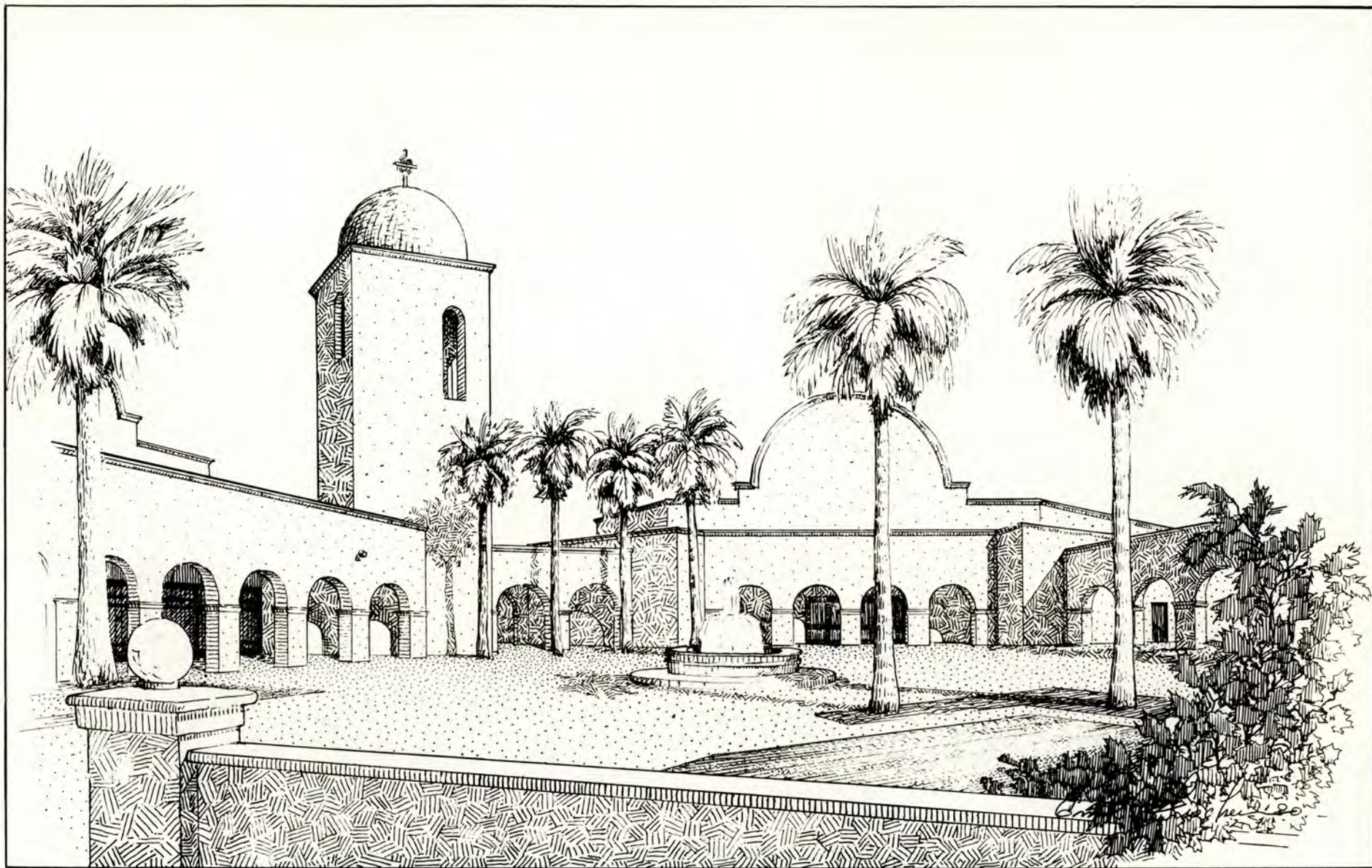
View of the buildings comprising the St. Elizabeth Seton religious complex as seen from 98th Avenue





Interior of the nave showing the barrel vaulted ceiling and clerestory lighting.





The individual buildings of St. Elizabeth Seton, reminiscent of Spanish mission architecture, surround a pleasant court.



## ST. JOACHIM & ST. ANNE CATHOLIC CHURCH

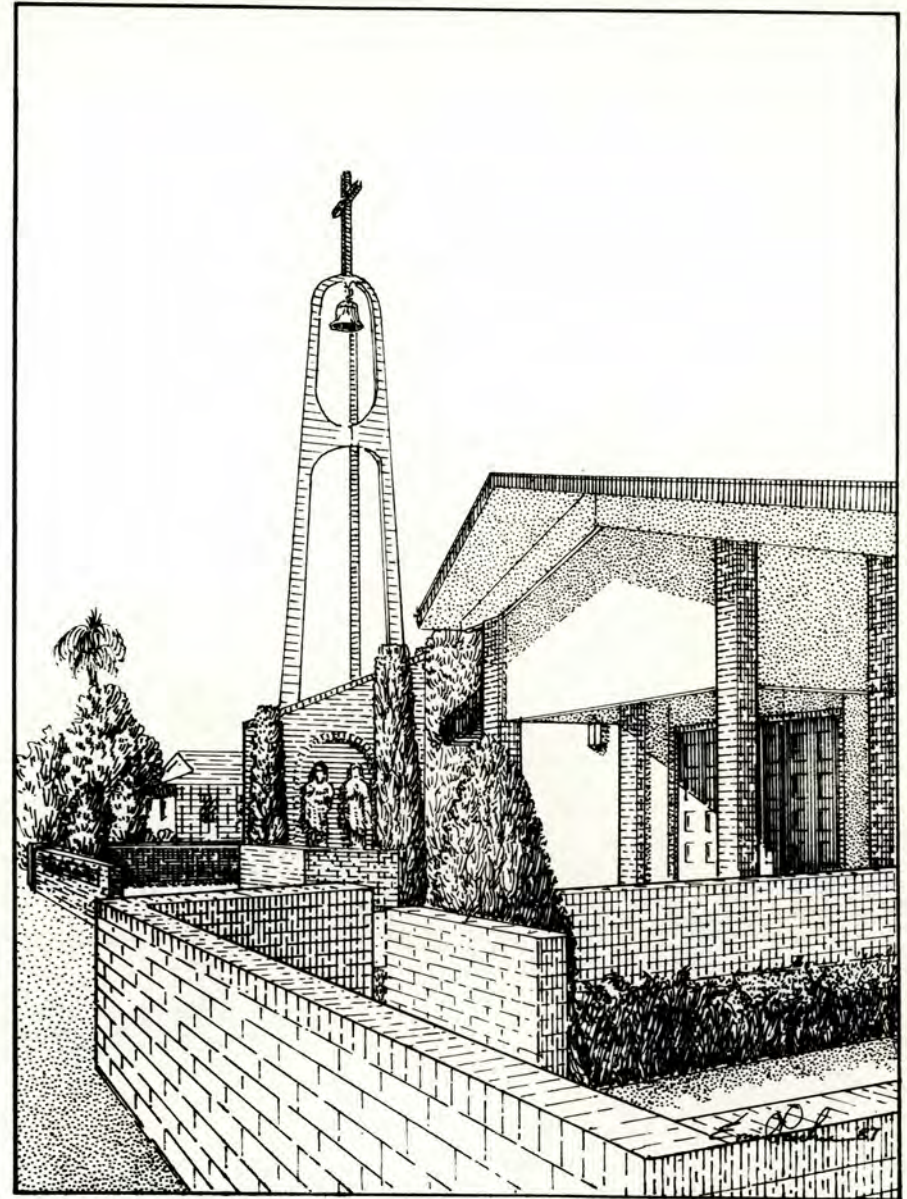
The formation of this parish actually began in 1957 by residents of Youngtown, meeting in the Youngtown Community Center. As numbers grew, Sunday Mass was moved to the Sun City Town Hall (Fairway Center) in October 1960. This was the first parish erected expressly to serve a retirement community. The altar "boys", all being over 55 years of age, were responsible for the creation of a new designation, "Knights of the Altar Society."

On March 18, 1961, Bishop Francis Green of the Tucson Diocese, appointed Rev. Palmer H. Plourde as the founding pastor. St. Joachim, the grandfather of Jesus, was chosen as the Patron Saint. In August of that year ground was broken for the church at 11625 111th Avenue, and midnight Mass was celebrated that Christmas Eve. In 1969 the church became part of the Diocese of Phoenix. In 1975 Father Plourde completed a beautiful shrine to Our Lady of Lourdes, creating a quiet spot for meditation.

The Bishop of Phoenix granted permission in 1980 to include both St. Joachim and St. Anne, parents of Mary, as Patrons of the parish. Statues of this holy couple have been erected both inside and outside the church.

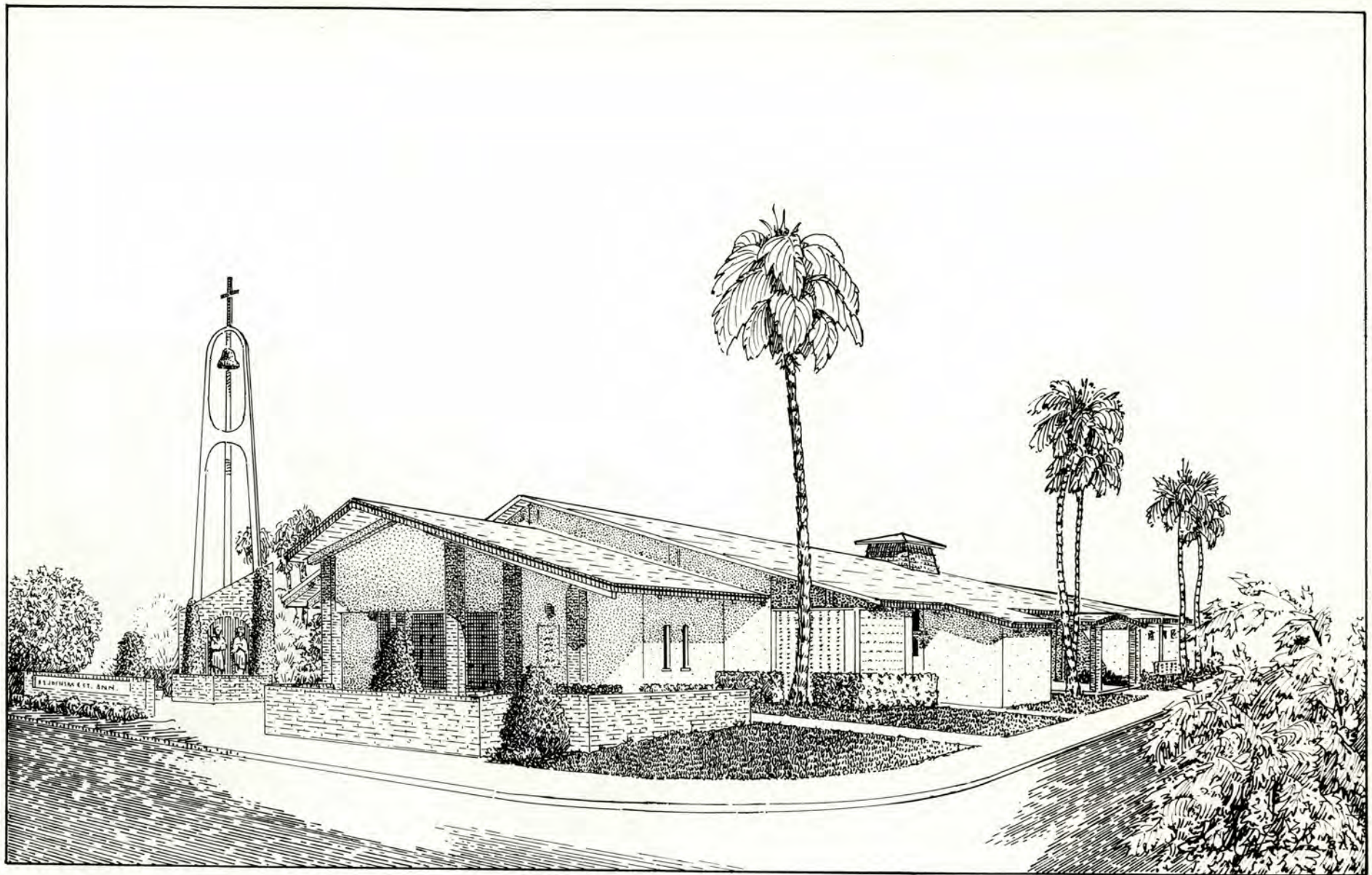
The interior of the church was completely remodeled in 1986.

Since the parish is debt free, surplus funds are used to assist financially troubled schools, parishes and individuals.



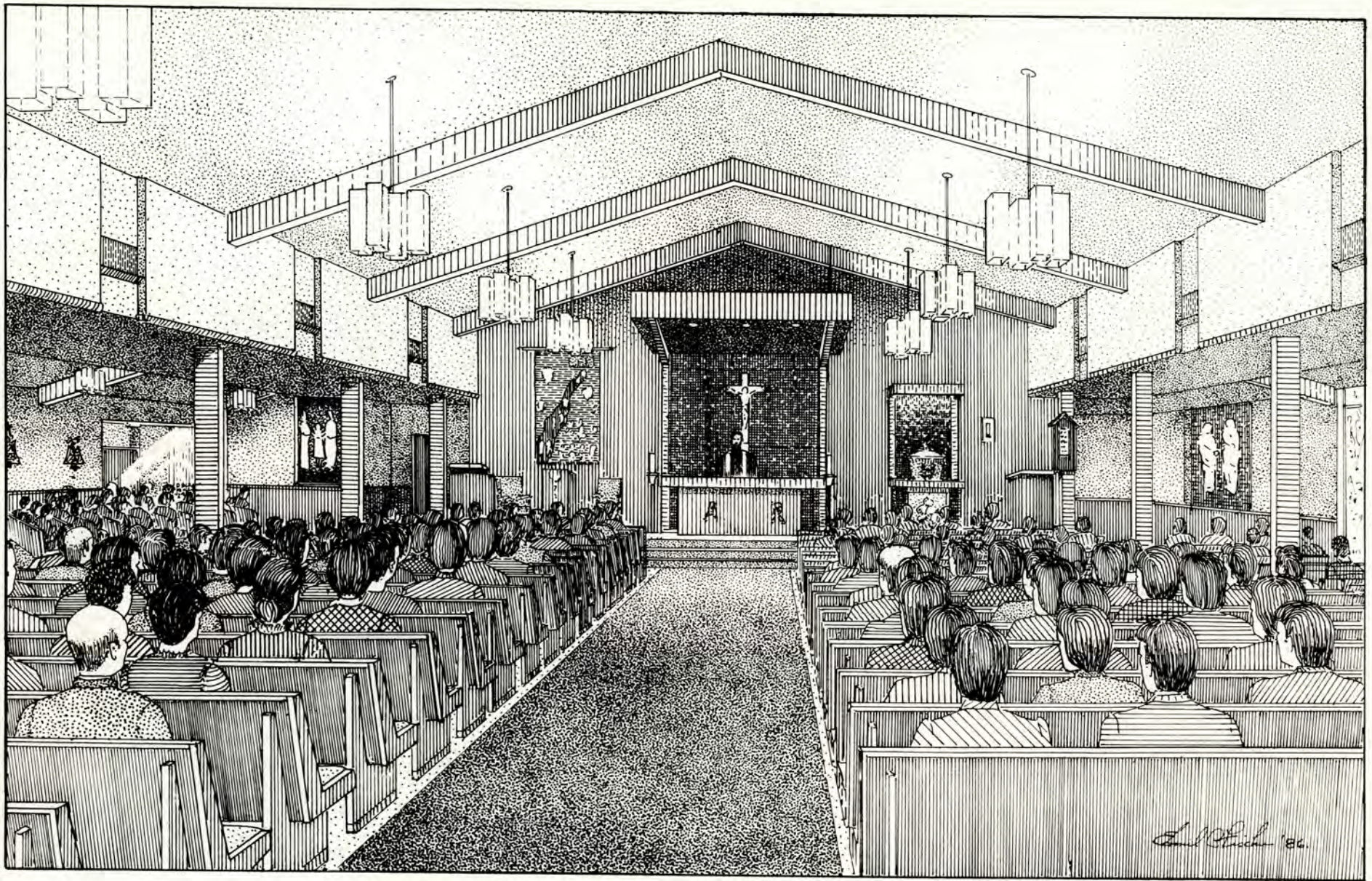
Statues of St. Joachim and St. Anne  
greet the congregation as they enter the church





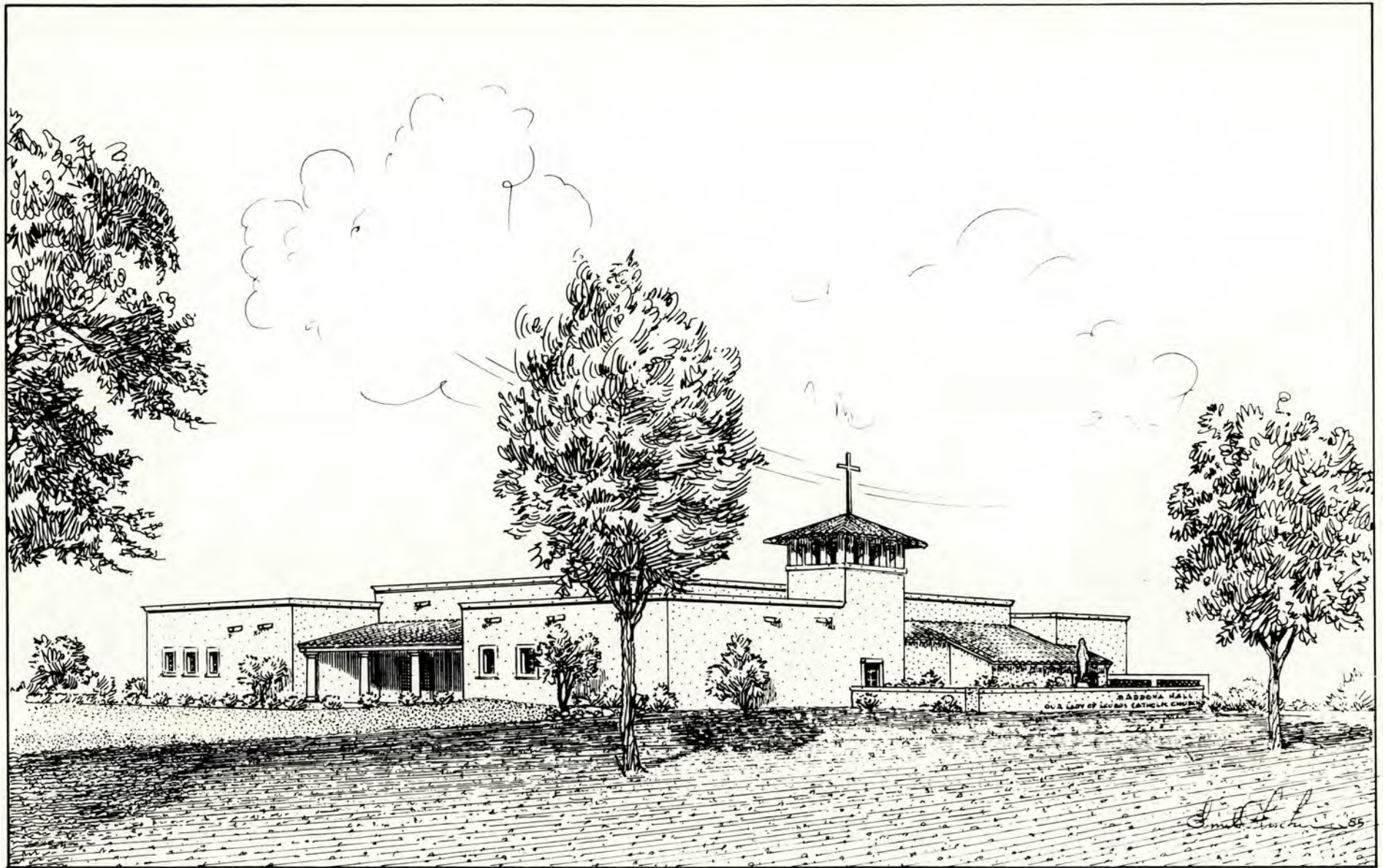
An unusual bell tower dominates the view of St. Joachim and St. Anne Church from 107th Avenue





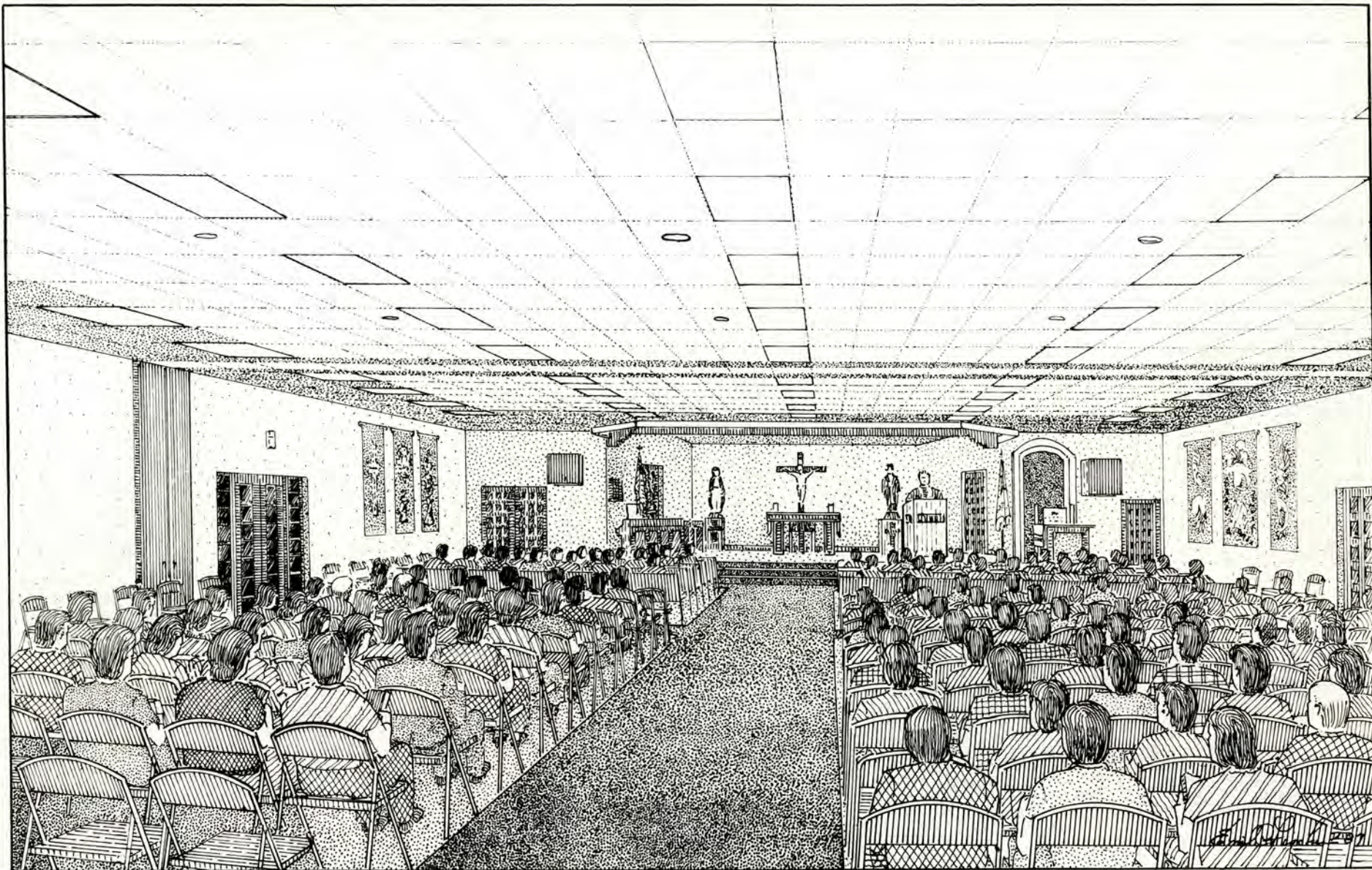
The recently remodeled interior presents a very pleasing and colorful environment for worship





Madonna Hall viewed from Marble Drive





Interior of Madonna Hall, Our Lady of Lourdes. At present this facility is used for worship in addition to social gatherings





Elevation of the proposed new church. Madonna Hall is shown at the right



## FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

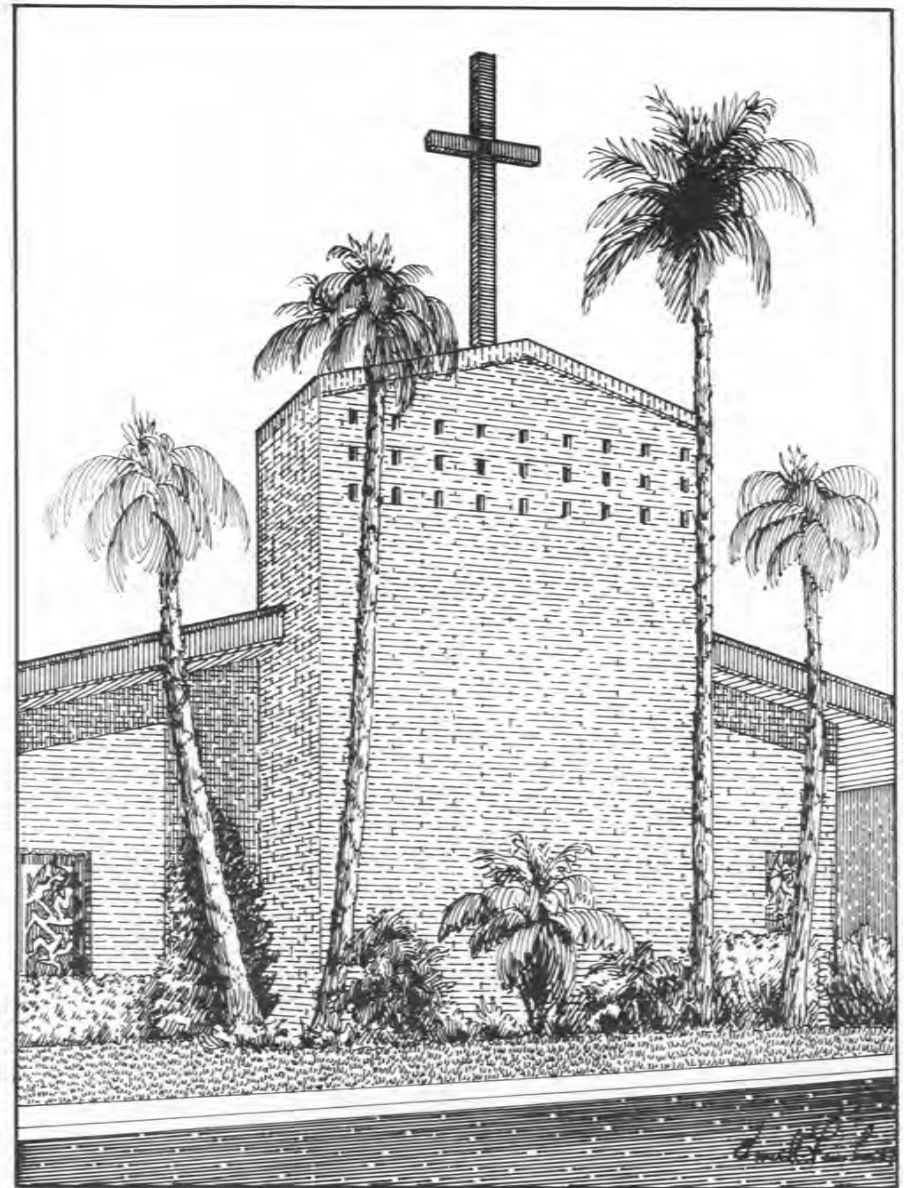
Members of this church met in homes during the 1970's when the congregation first assembled under the guidance of Dr. Ralph Ogan, founding pastor.

The First Christian Church developed from a Presbyterian source in the 1800's when the New Testament was restored as the basis for a church without the use of a creed. Eventually this church merged with a Baptist group but at the present time finds itself in a position between the more liberal Disciples of Christ and the more conservative Church of Christ.

According to the present minister, Rev. John J. Stone, "The First Christian Church is an independent congregation with a strong volunteer relationship with independent Christian churches."

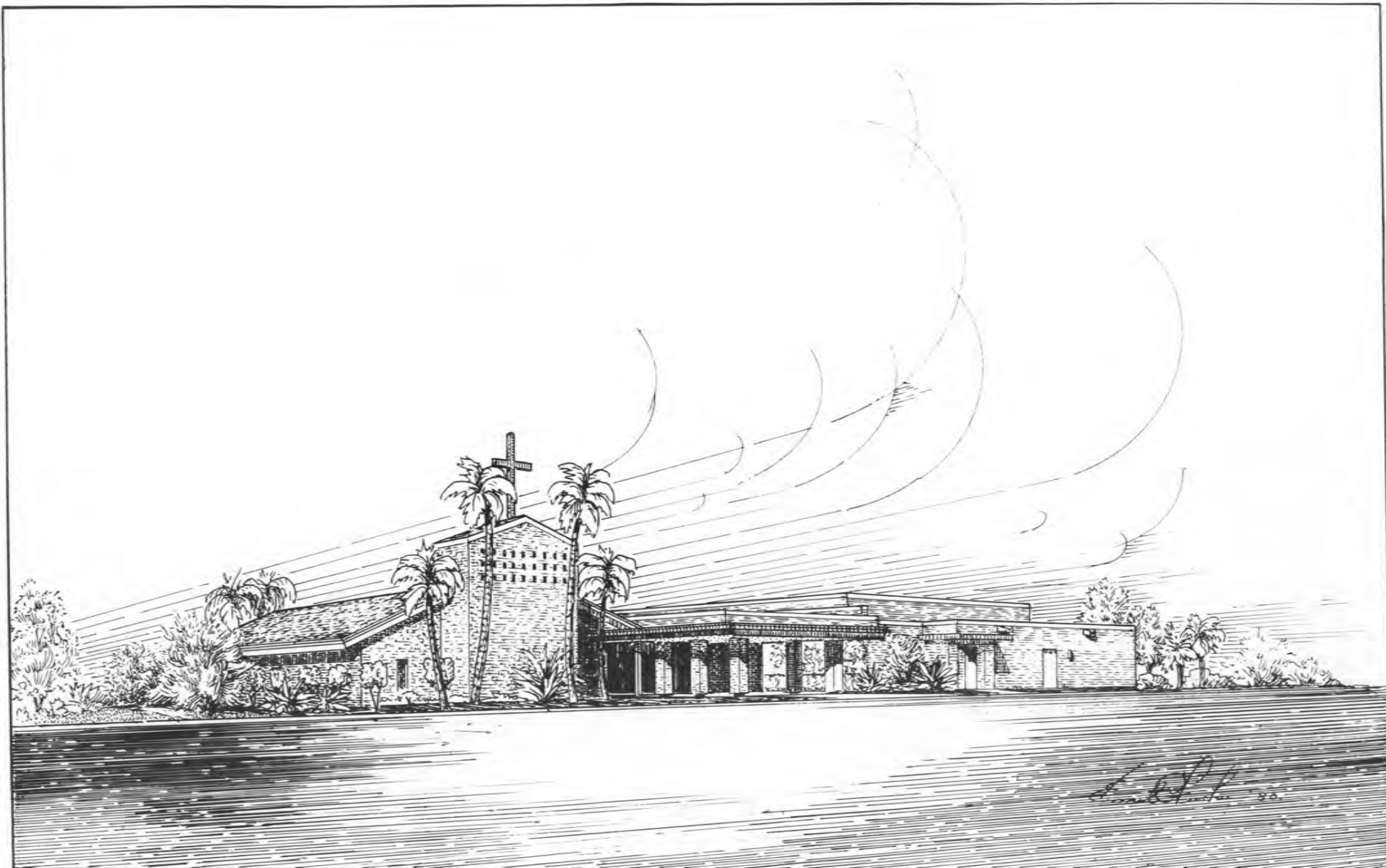
The present sanctuary completed in 1974 at 14001 Thunderbird Blvd., seats 275 people. Dean L. Glasco Architects Inc., designed the structure. A series of tall stained glass windows, depicting images of the Apostles, ring the church providing diffused, multi-colored illumination to the interior.

The church contains a four-foot deep baptistry since baptism is a requirement to becoming a member of this congregation. Membership has increased to about 300 since the first small group assembled in 1970.



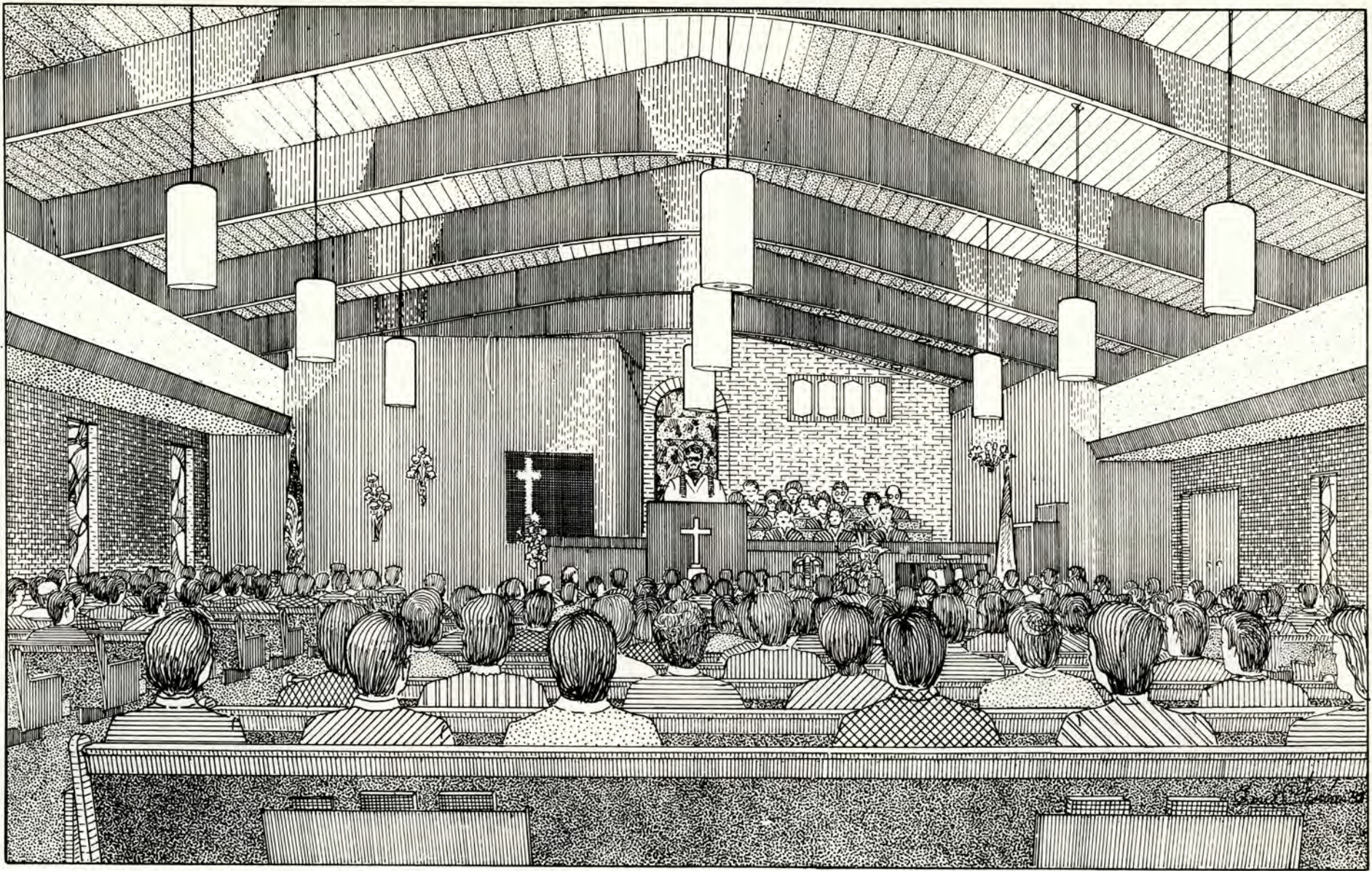
A sturdy tower and cross mark the entry from the parking area





View of the First Christian Church from Thunderbird Blvd.





Interior of the sanctuary - First Christian Church



## SUN CITY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

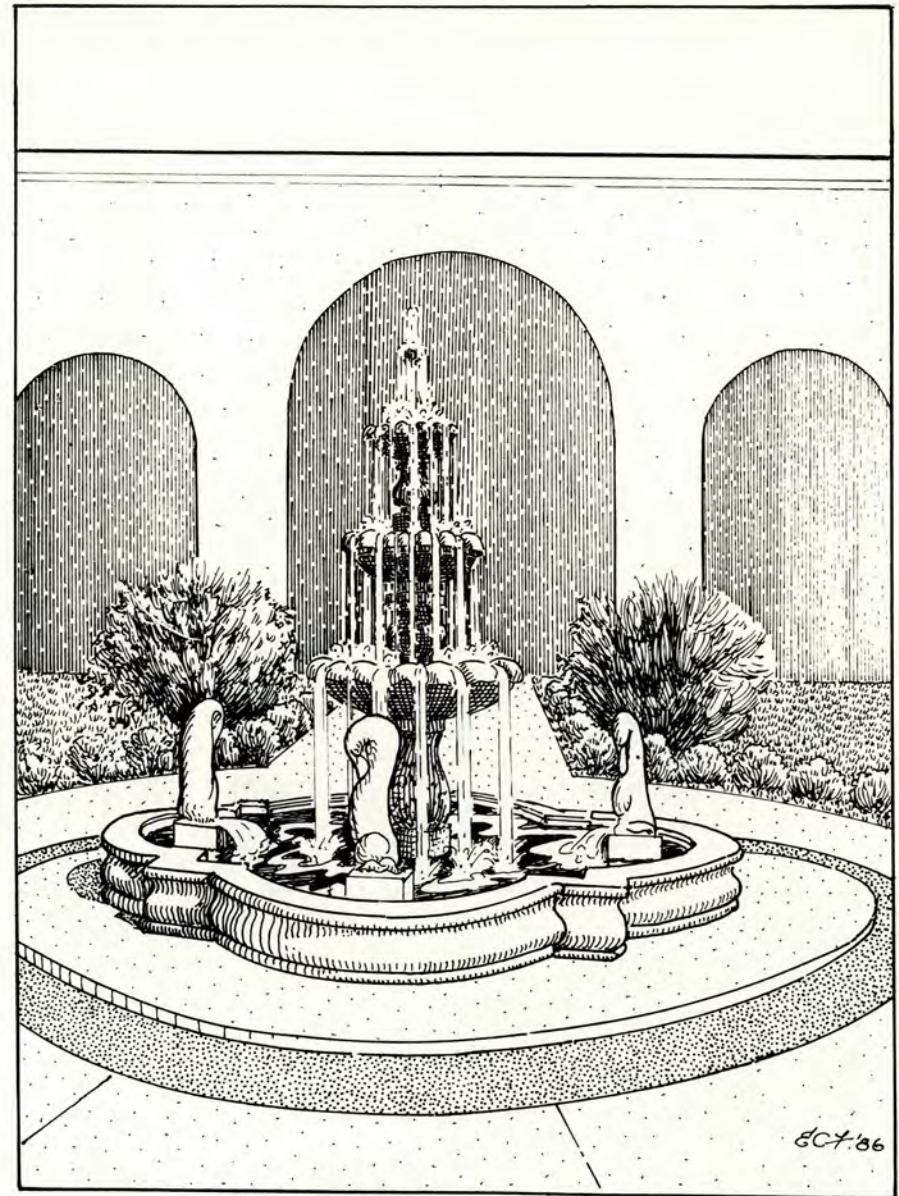
Two imposing towers flank the entrance to the loggia that welcomes the congregation from the entering courtyard.

Upon approaching the church, by way of the court, visitors will see many carved paneled doors depicting religious events, places and ancient myths associated with the development of the Christian Church. Coloradian Oliver J. Knutson was commissioned to prepare these carvings. They illustrate a variety of religious themes. The double doors of Fellowship Hall illustrate the "White Dove of the Desert," the restored mission at San Xavier del Bac near Tucson. Other panels illustrate scenes and events from the Bible and outstanding personalities associated with the history of the Protestant Church. Some persons have said of the carving on the doors, "They are the Gospel in wood!"

On November 3, 1974, Dr. Hartzell Cobbs preached the first sermon to the newly organized congregation in the Lakeview Recreation Center. At the close of the service 32 persons united as a congregation and became the nucleus of the new church.

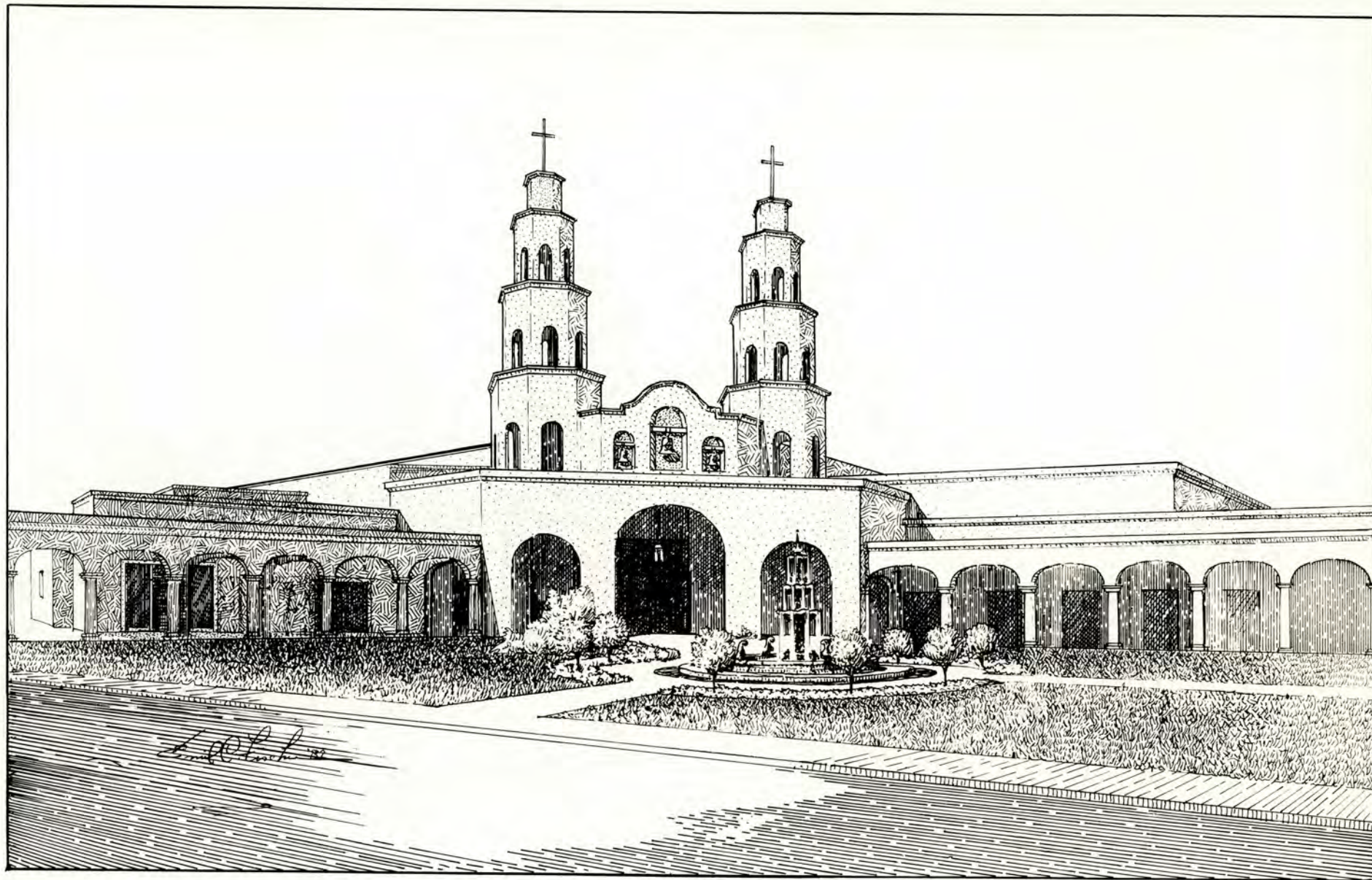
a 4-acre plot was purchased at 98th Avenue and Palmeras Lane and ground breaking ceremonies were held November 11, 1979, to begin construction of the church designed by Architect Duane von Fange and Associates.

Recently a memorial chapel and additional offices were completed.



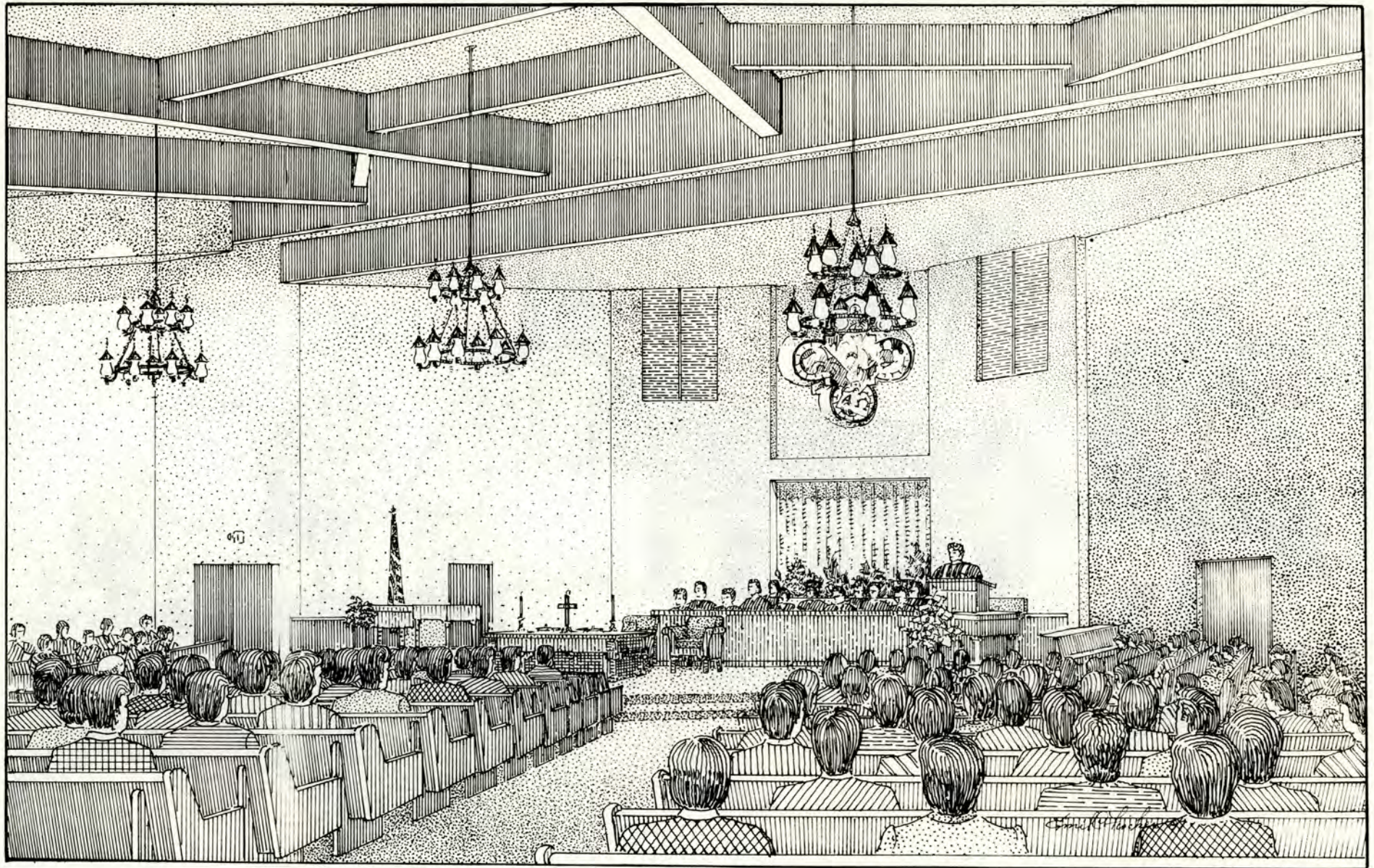
An attractive fountain is the central motif of the garden approach to the church





This view of the church was sketched from the intersection of 98th Avenue and Palmeras Drive





The sanctuary of Sun City Christian Church





## CHRISTIAN SCIENCE SOCIETY

The Christian Science Society, Sun City West, is currently meeting in the Sun City West Savings and Loan community room. Designs for a church building have been prepared by Glasco Architects Inc. Construction is scheduled to start

in the fall of 1987 at Meeker Blvd and Trail Ridge Drive. These facilities will provide space for a Reading Room, a reference library, bookstore and other activities including public lectures sponsored by the Board of Lectureship of the Mother Church on topics of world interest.



## FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST , SCIENTIST

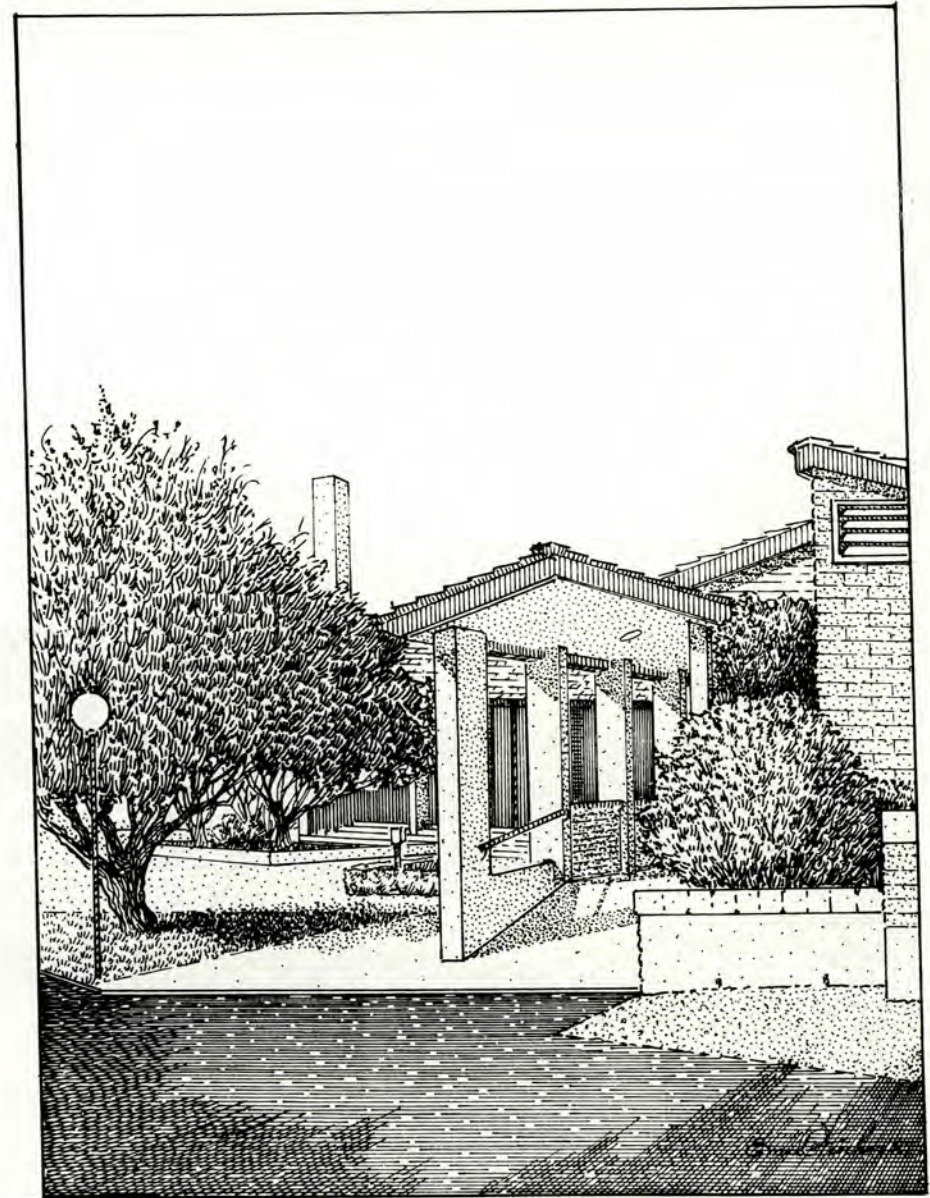
Small in number but large in zeal, a group met informally in the Sun City home of Earle and Violette Atkins on April 28, 1961. Their goal was to provide Christian Science church services for the area.

The first service was held May 14, 1961, in the Sun City Community Center (Oakmont Center). The Sun City group was officially recognized by the Christian Science Board of Directors in Boston, Massachusetts on April 12, 1962, as a Christian Science Society. A Sunday School was started in August 1963 for children in the surrounding communities as no children lived in Sun City. The Sunday School has continued without interruption and now includes the third generation of one family.

A Christian Science Reading Room was opened in May 1964 on the corner of 106th and Peoria Avenues. It has an extensive library of Bible commentaries and dictionaries in addition to the King James version of the Bible and Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures by Mary Baker Eddy. The Christian Science Monitor, Journal and Sentinel are also available.

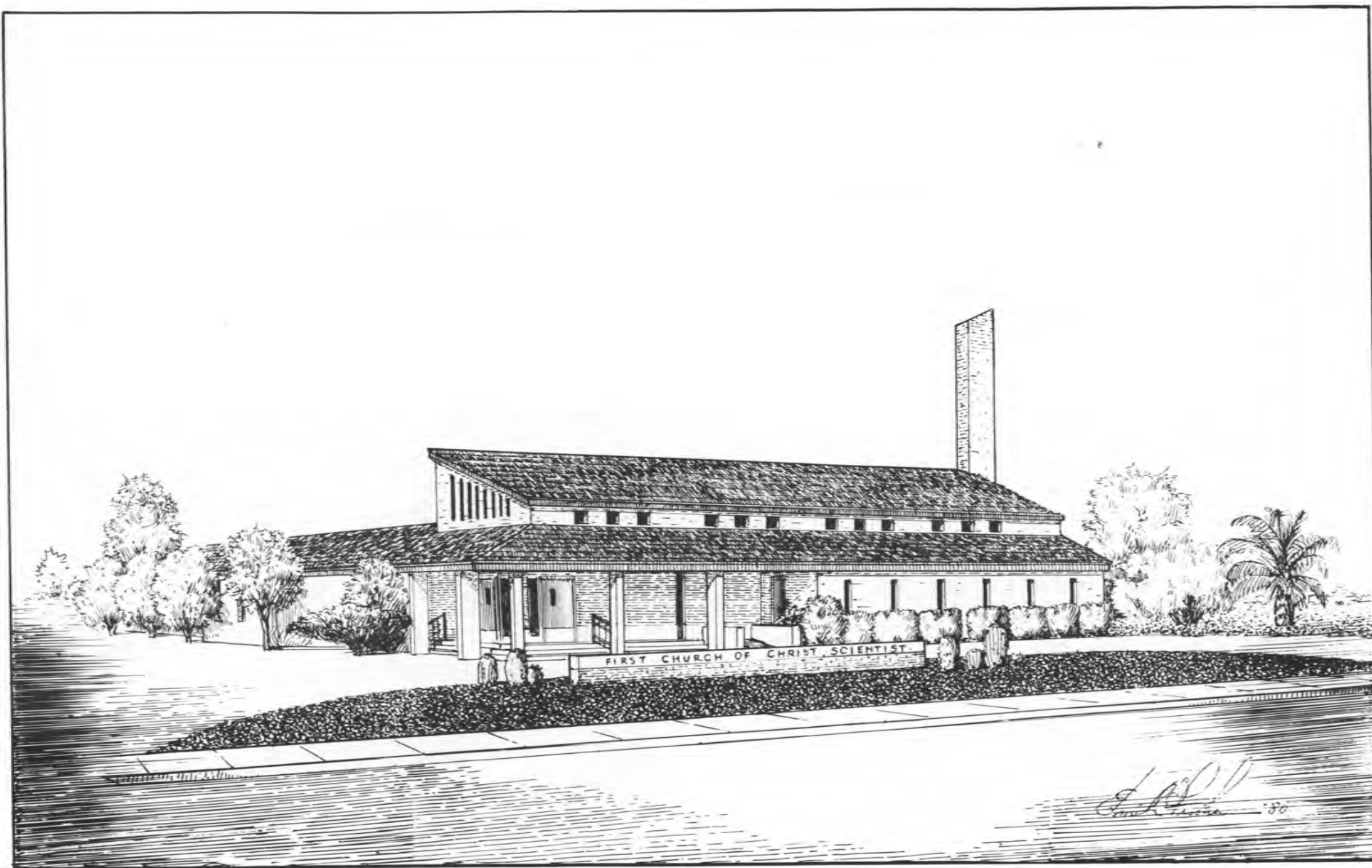
On May 13, 1965 the Society, when its growth was recognized and requirements met, became First Church of Christ, Scientist, Sun City, Youngtown.

Also in May a building site on the corner of Clair Drive and 101st Avenue was purchased and a year later Gabor Lorant Architect Inc., was chosen to design the building. The first service was held in the new building on August 6, 1967. Dedication of the debt free edifice was on March 24, 1974. The name was changed in March 1970 to First Church of Christ, Scientist, Sun City, Arizona.



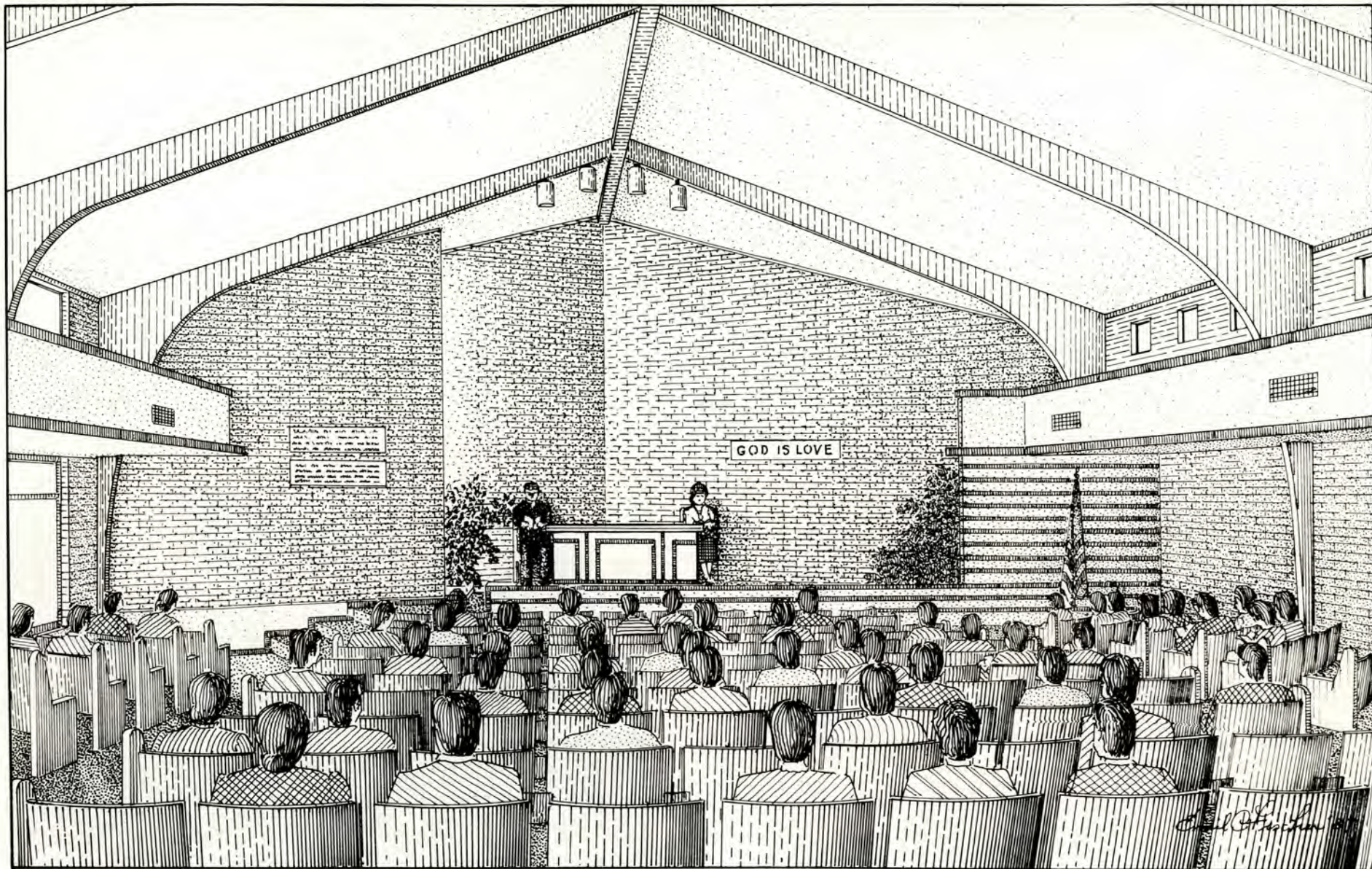
Entrance to garden, meeting rooms and offices from parking lot





View of the First Church of Christ, Scientist from Clair Drive





Interior of the sanctuary



## CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

A nucleus of only ten people meeting in the community room of Western Savings and Loan at Boswell and Bell Road in May 1976, under the aegis of the Congregational Christian Churches, was the start of the church. The Rev. John Alexander was the founding pastor.

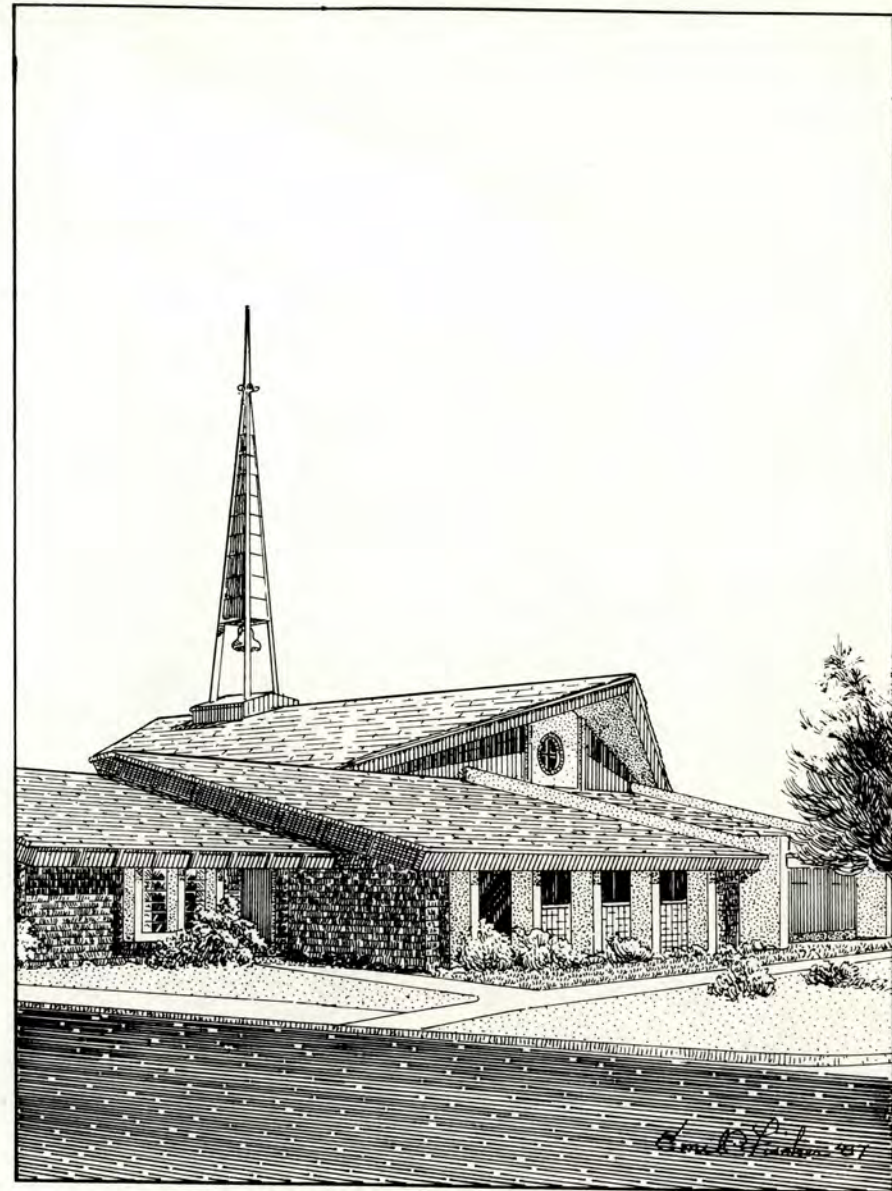
The church is a member of the National Fellowship of Congregational Churches that preserves the historic traditions of freedom and fellowship which were established by the Pilgrims who voyaged here in 1620. Congregationalists emphasize faith, freedom and fellowship.

A Congregational Church acknowledges no particular creed but emphasizes the right of each person to freedom of conscience and the right of private judgment regarding interpretation of the Scripture within the structure of a belief of God and in an acceptance of the teachings of Jesus as found in the New Testament.

It recognizes the validity of all religious expressions for those who hold them sincerely and believes in cooperation in the religious community.

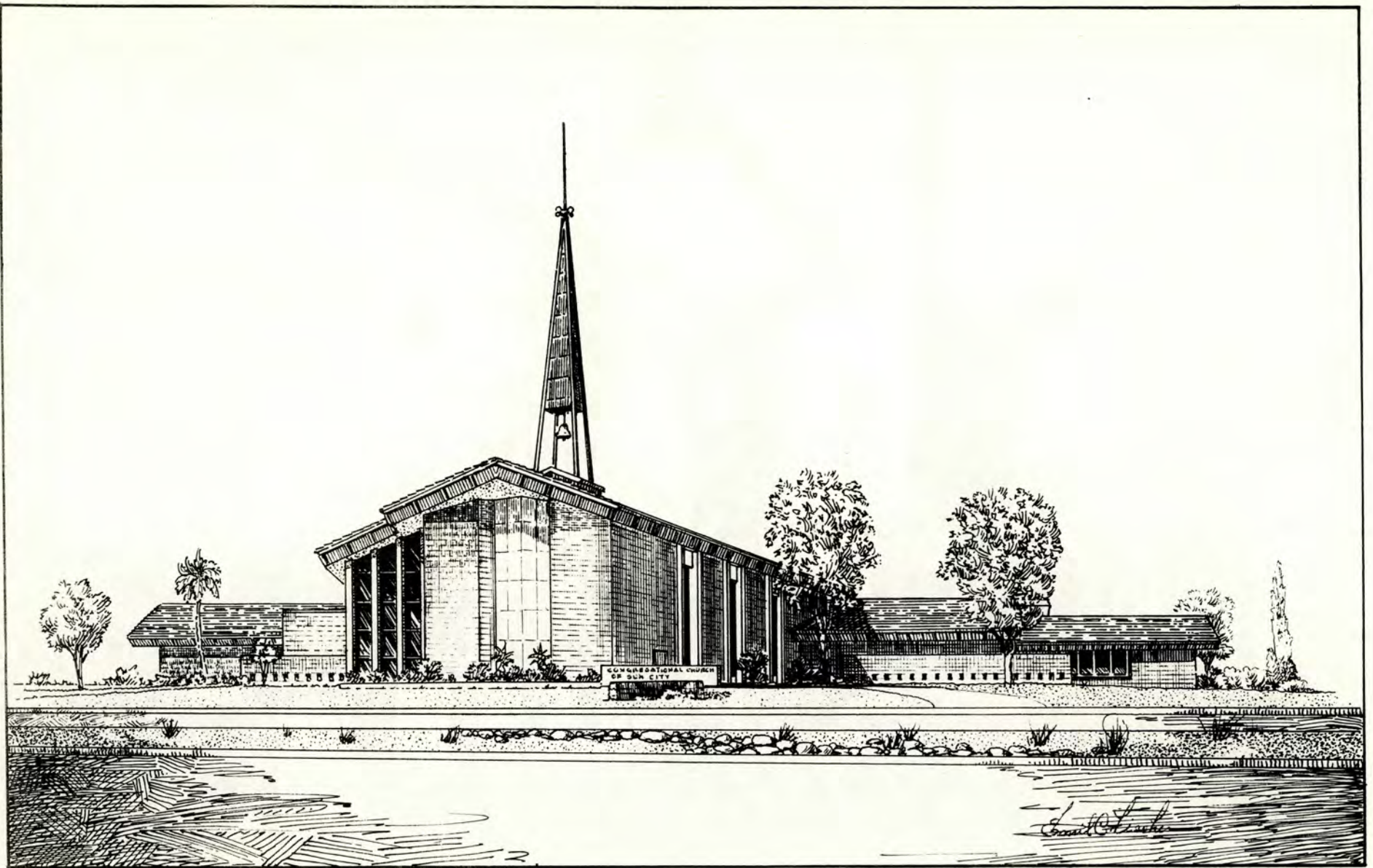
Sunday brunches, Wednesday evening fellowship held in Alexander Hall, and Friday afternoon tea times in the Minister's home, have become customary and extend acquaintance and friendship among church members.

The church, located at 18401 99th Avenue, was designed by Francis A. Schulz Architects Ltd., and dedicated February 1982. Extensive additions, including Alexander Fellowship Hall, were added in 1985.



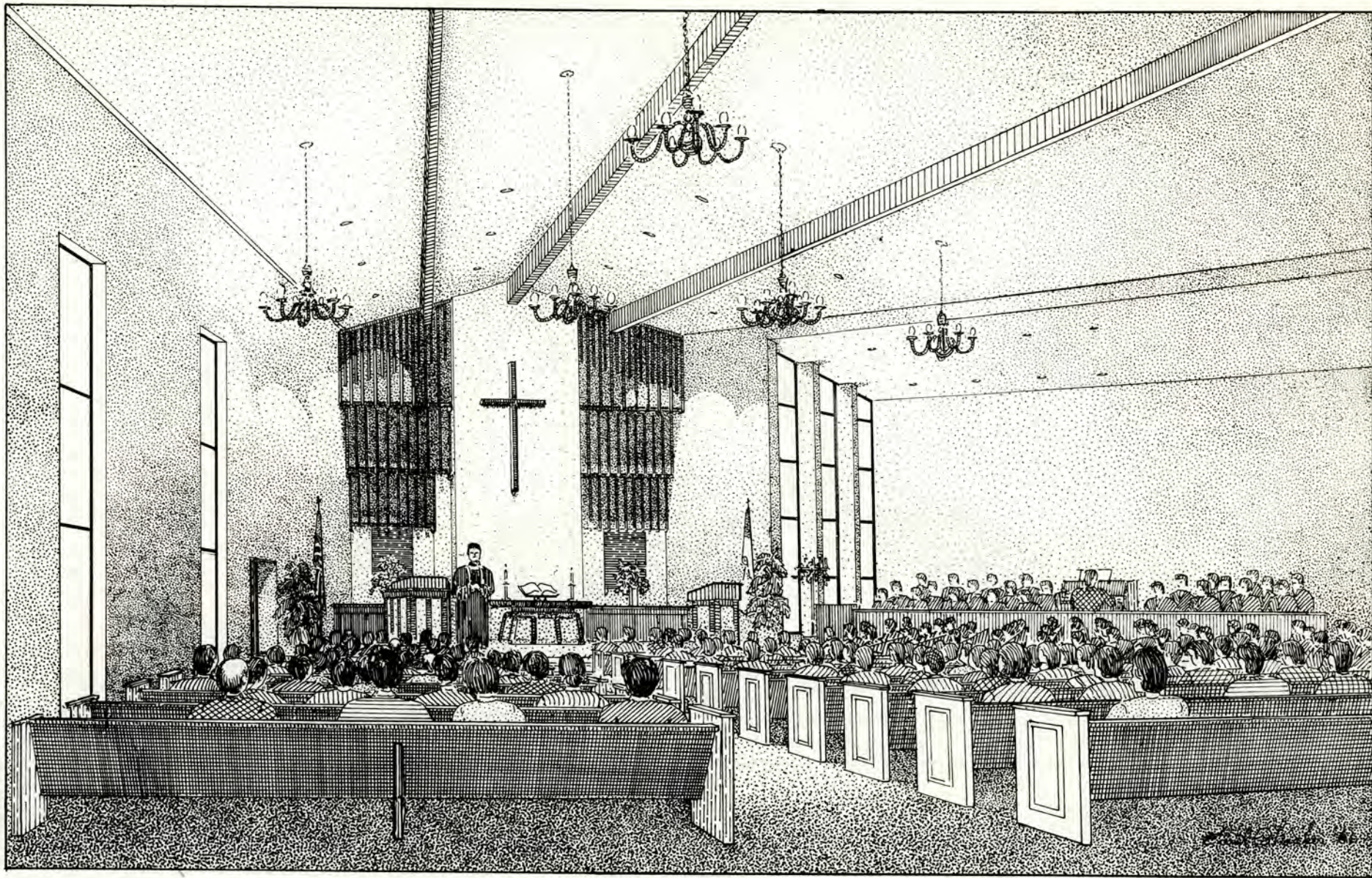
View from parking area





Congregational Church sketched from 99th Avenue





Sanctuary of Congregational Church



## ALL SAINTS OF THE DESERT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Sundial Recreation Center auditorium was home for the 223 founding members in 1973 under the guidance of the Reverend Howard W. Blackburn, Vicar. Three years later the congregation engaged the services of Duane Von Fange & Associates to design the present church complex, located at 9502 Hutton Drive.

All Saints started as a Mission of its Mother Church, St. Christopher's, as the need increased for another Episcopal church in the northern area of Sun City, and it rapidly developed into the largest Episcopal congregation in the area.

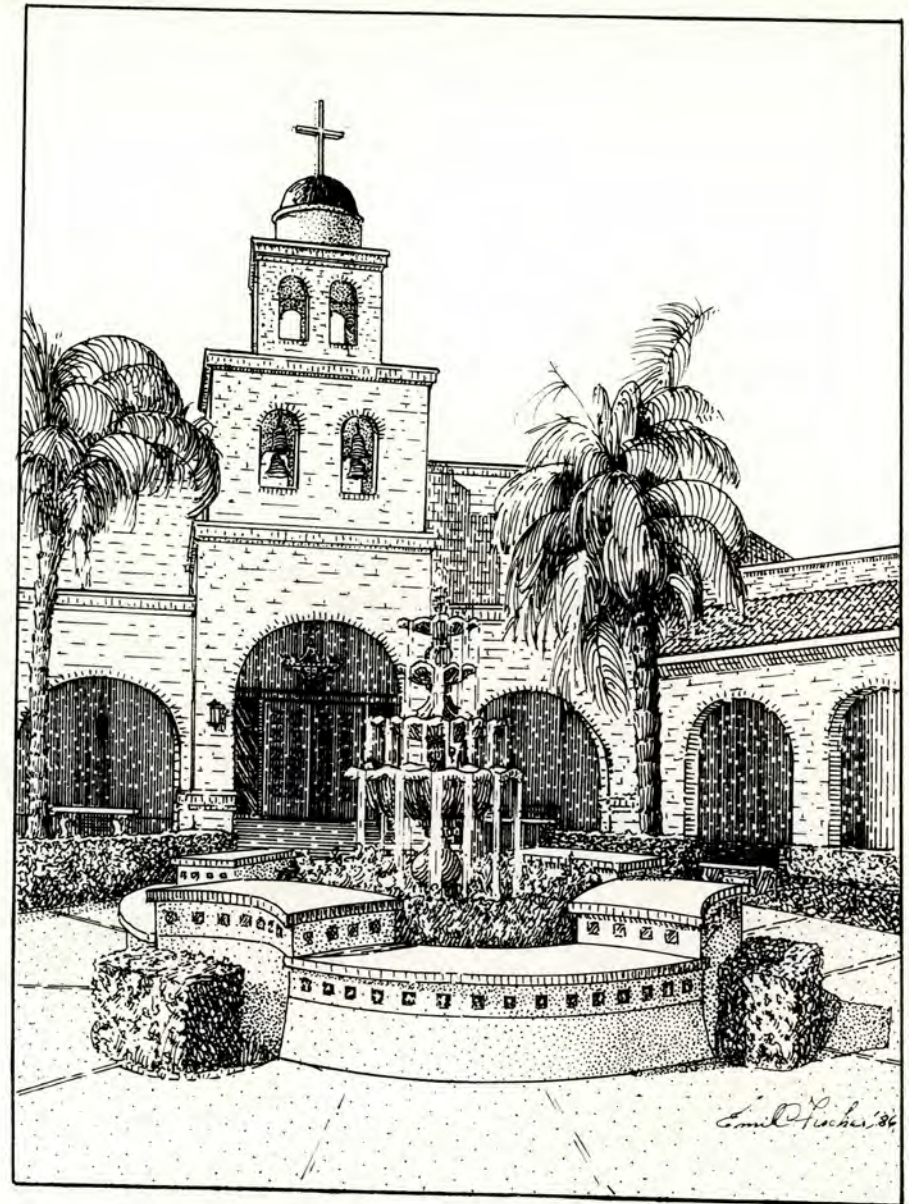
It has always been the policy of the church to cooperate with the Ministerial Association of Sun City and to take an active part in the various community services, such as the Easter Sunrise and joint Thanksgiving services.

The church and its various men's and women's organizations, contribute on a regular basis to charitable groups such as the Westside Food Bank, The Salvation Army and similar charities serving those in need. Financial and volunteer support is also given to the Southwest Indian School. Many of its members serve as volunteers working regularly at the local hospitals and schools in El Mirage and Surprise.

The regular schedule of services include a Healing Service once a week, regular church services on Saturday afternoons and two services each Sunday, at which all baptized persons are welcome to participate in the Holy Eucharist.

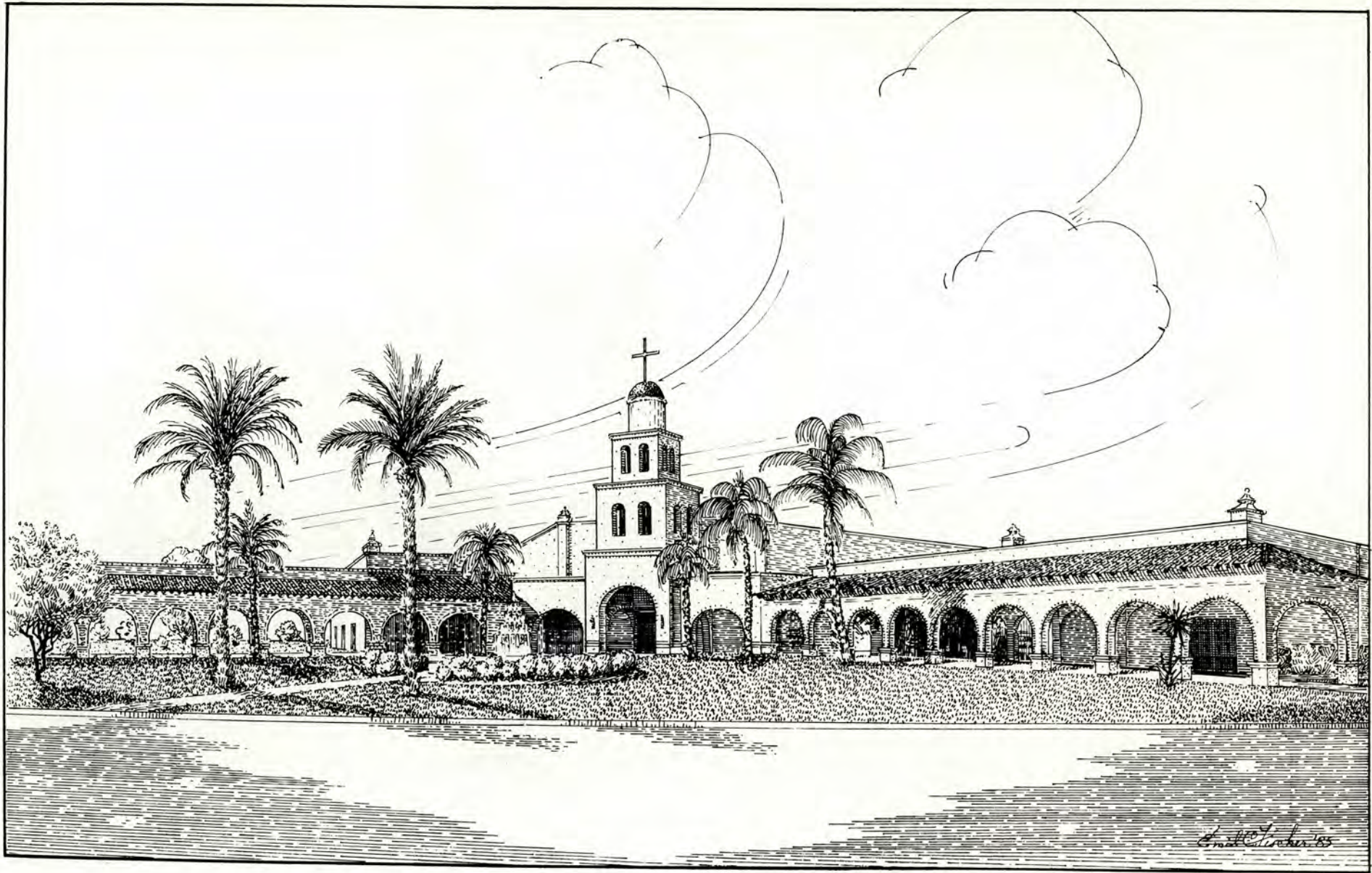
As a summary of the church's mission, the following statement adopted on January 28, 1981 is appropos:

The purpose is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ in the Episcopal tradition to its members, all unchurched residents of Sun City, and all others within the reach of its voice and influence.



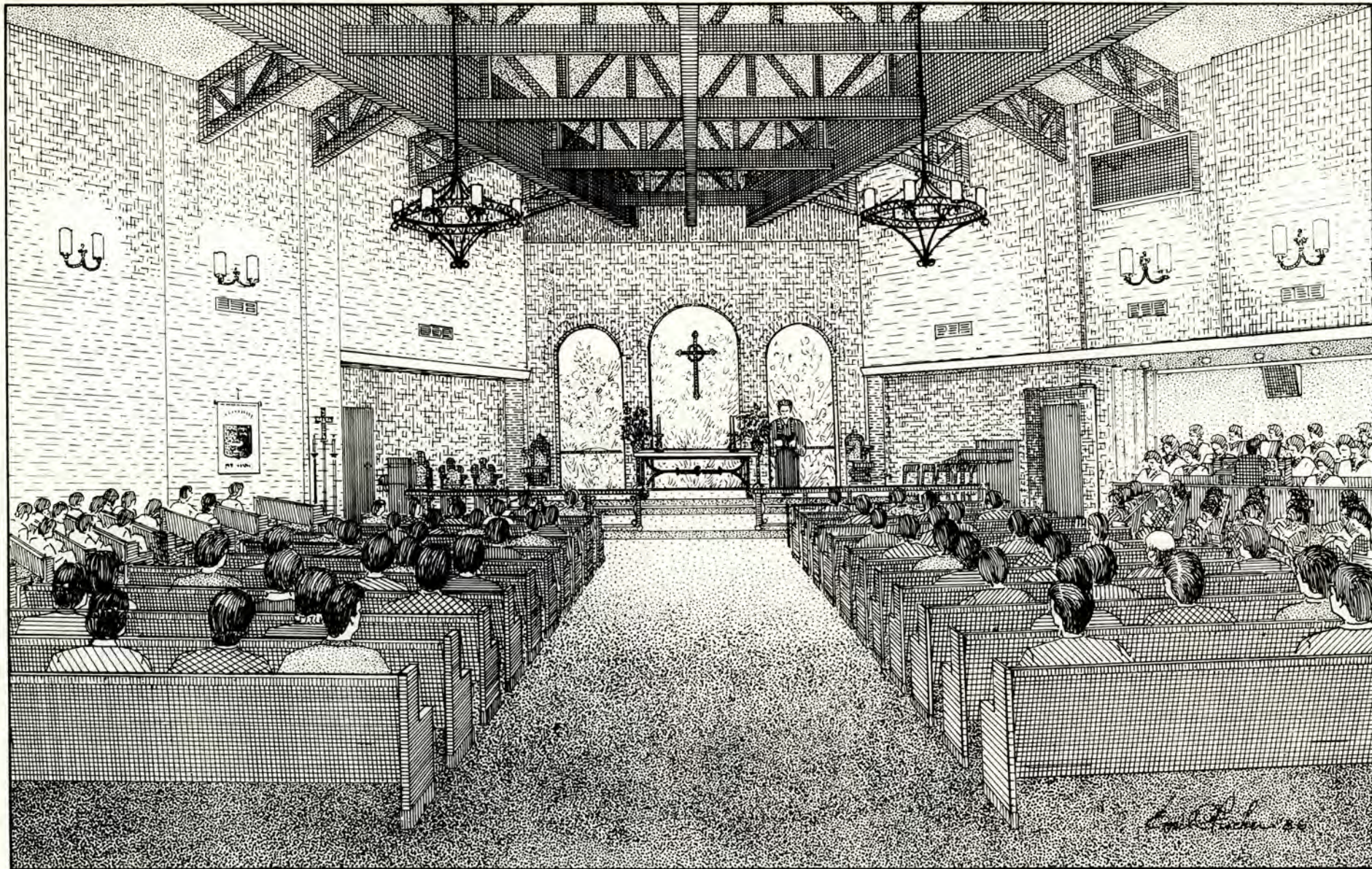
Entrance to All Saints of the Desert





View of All Saints of the Desert from the parking area.





Sanctuary. Clear glass windows behind the altar permit a view of an enclosed garden



## CHURCH OF THE ADVENT EPISCOPAL

The Right Reverend Joseph Heistand, Bishop of Arizona, authorized the formation of this Sun City West congregation in 1979. The initial group of ten people met in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Otto Becker. The Reverend Henry Goetz was the first priest.

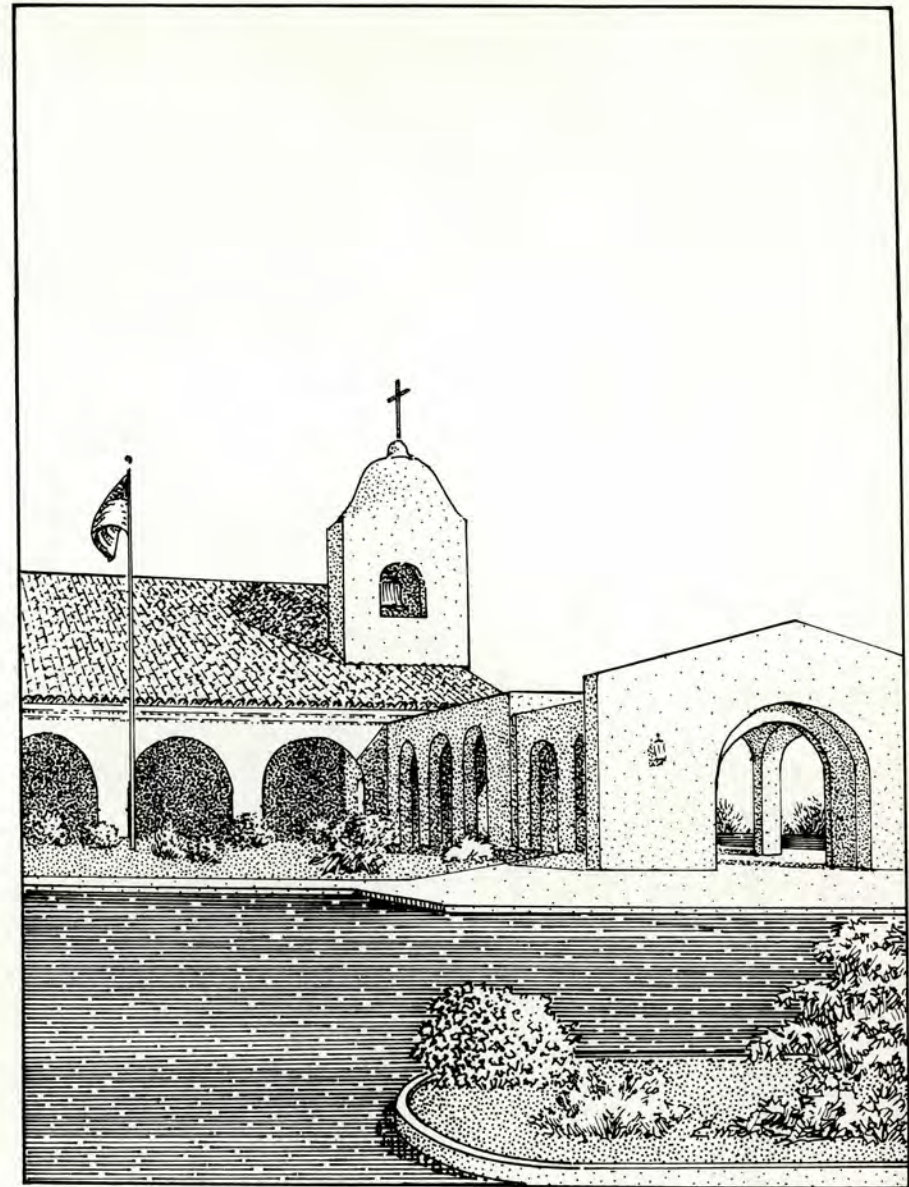
The present church constructed in 1985 at 18150 Spanish Garden Drive, was designed by Christensen-Miller and Associates to satisfy the needs of this growing congregation. It is a pleasing arrangement of characteristic elements of the early mission churches of the Southwest.

In order to utilize plant forms indigenous to this region the landscaping employs grass rather sparingly as a design accent, and relies on a pleasing arrangement of plants that thrive in this semi-arid climate with a minimum of care.

One approaches the sanctuary from the parking area under an arch supported covering. The rugged exposed wooden trusses, textured walls and simple forms of the interior are very consistent with the exterior treatment. The interior receives natural lighting through appropriately detailed stained glass windows.

The congregation has access to an exterior columbarium secluded by a wall. This area, aptly named All Souls Chapel, contains a rugged wood altar and wooden cross. Special services are held in this outdoor chapel on All Saints Day.

In addition to the usual church activities this relatively small but active congregation is rapidly extending its outreach into the surrounding area. Its members actively support Centro Adelante and the Westside Food Bank. Community ecumenical services have been held in this church for the past two years.



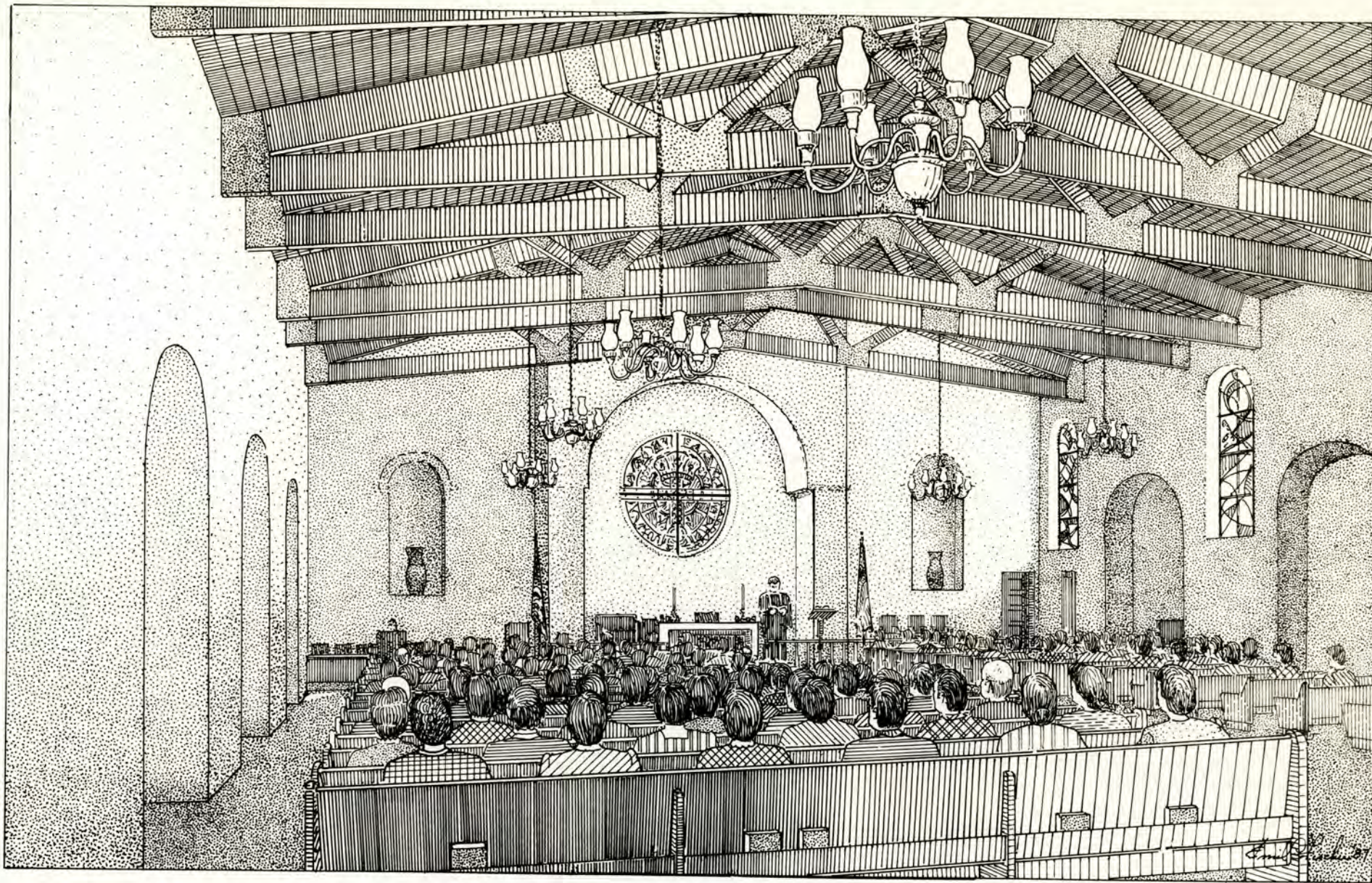
Entrance from the parking area





View from Spanish Garden Drive





Sanctuary of the Church of The Advent



## ST. CHRISTOPHER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The year 1961 marked the inception of a dream of a few people for an Episcopal church in fledgling Sun City. The dream of these few pioneers eventually resulted in St. Christopher's as we know it today. Father Harold Adams suggested the name St. Christopher, patron saint of travelers, because all members of this church came here from another locality. The distinctive feature of the church's exterior is a Carrara marble statue of St. Christopher carrying the Christ child.

The first service was held in the Youngtown Community House in early 1961; then as the congregation grew, it moved to the Community Center (Oakmont) in Sun City and later to Town Hall (Fairway). By November the Rev. Harry G. Secker, Jr., a part-time vicar, began holding regular services.

By August 1963 the Rev. Howard W. Blackburn arrived as the first full time vicar and activities accelerated. Ground was broken at 10283 Peoria Avenue for the church designed by architect M. E. Srnka, February 15, 1964. By February St. Christopher's gained parish status. Additional facilities were needed and four years later an enlarged parish house, Harte Hall, was completed.

In 1977 a building improvement program added a Narthex plus an addition that increased the seating capacity of the sanctuary to 300.

The Sun City Chapter of the International Order of St. Luke the Physician, an interdenominational healing order, was organized in 1975. The Shepherding Program was instituted recently to improve communication and fellowship among parishioners through neighborhood clusters.



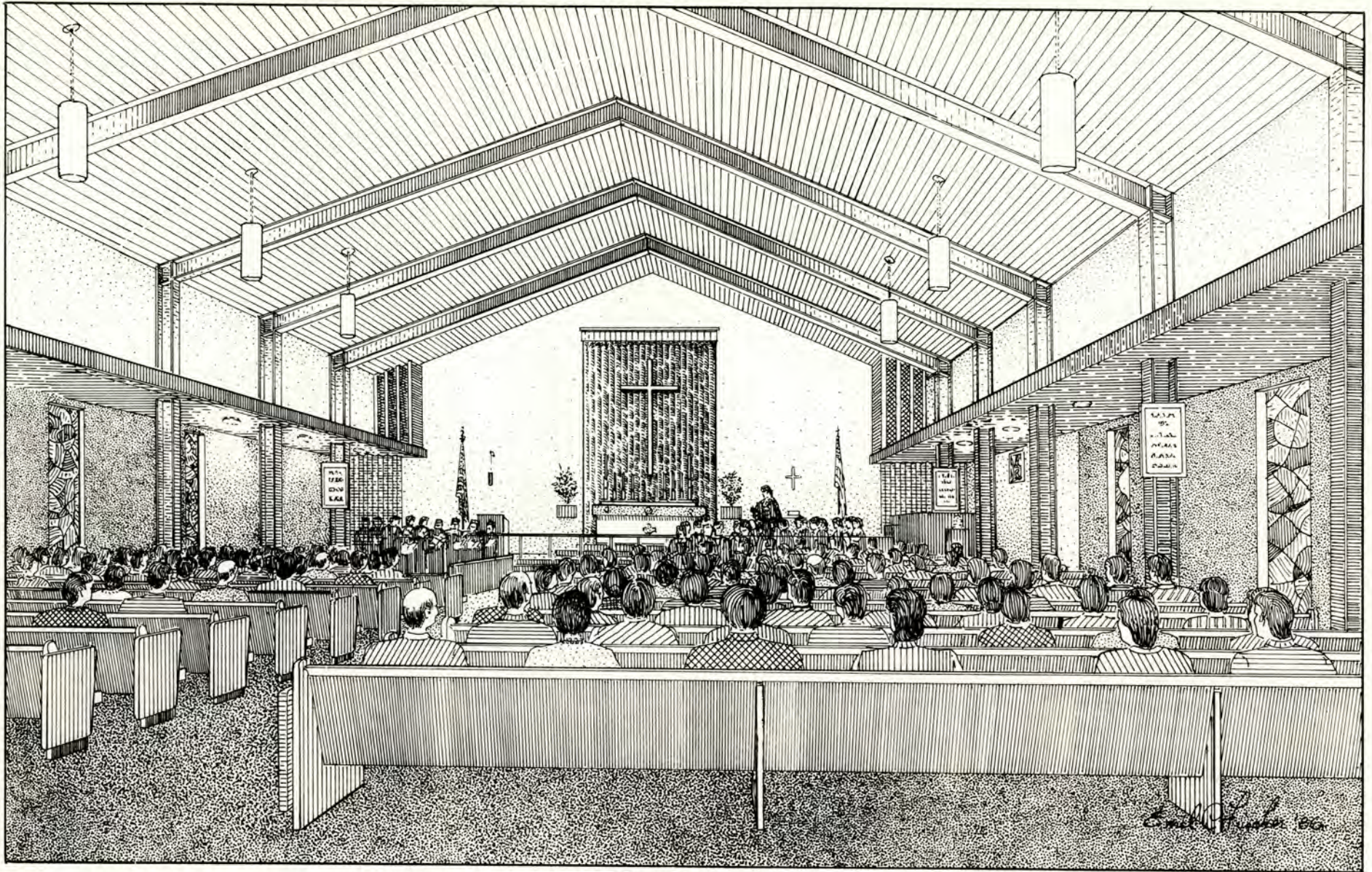
Statue of Saint Christopher with the Christ Child





Sketch of Saint Christopher's Episcopal Church from Peoria Avenue





Sanctuary of St. Christopher's



## BETH EMETH CONGREGATION

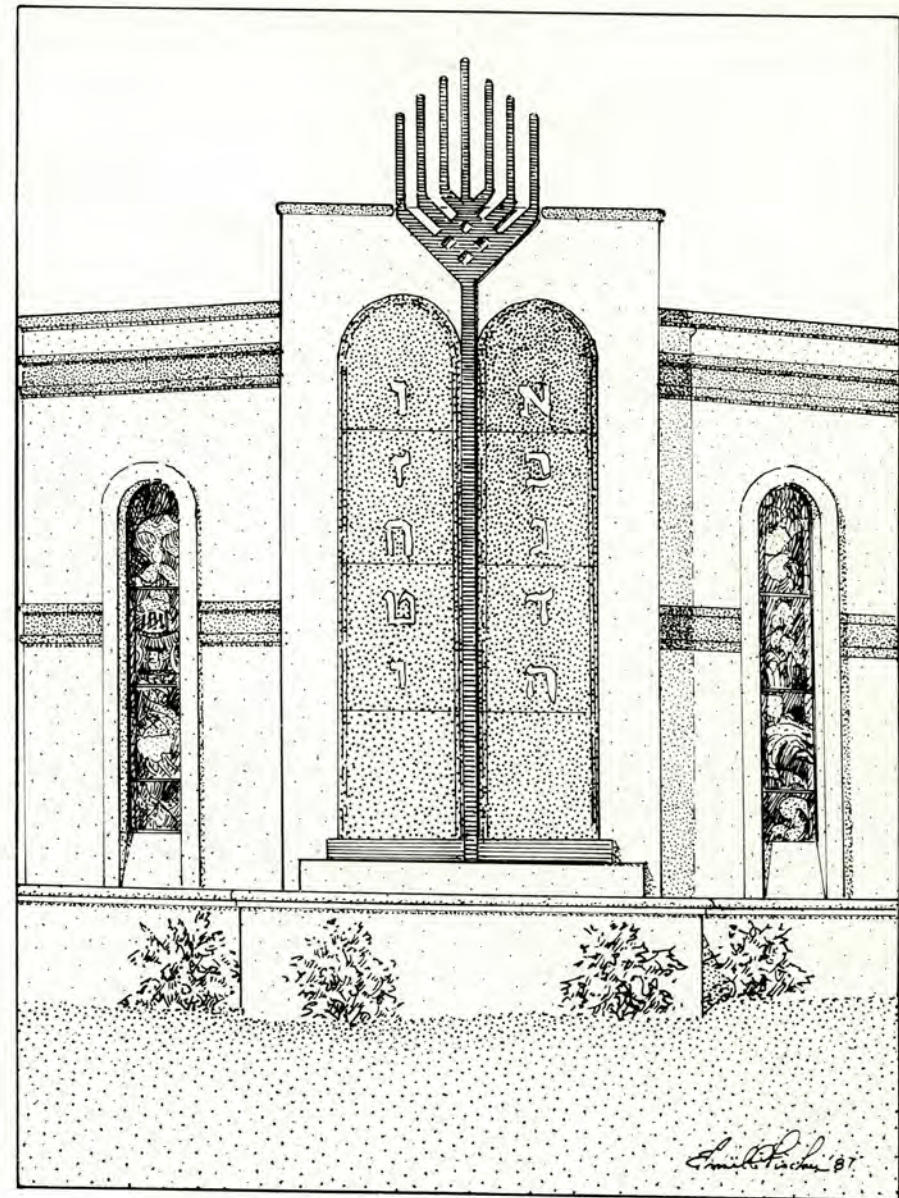
The Jewish Community of Sun City authorized the organization of the Beth Emeth Congregation in 1967. The name Beth Emeth means House of Truth. Regular conservative services were conducted at various recreational centers and private homes until this Synagogue was completed in May 1987. Max Gimpel, an artist resident of Sun City and member of the congregation, designed the temple and its fine symbolism exhibited in the stained glass windows and furnishings.

The building complex, located at 13702 Meeker Blvd., includes a library that opens off a small chapel for daily services in addition to the main sanctuary. The ceiling of the temple, supported by laminated timber beams, sweeps upward towards the main focal point - the two tablets and the Holy Ark. The eternal light is also included in the composition.

The carving on the bronze doors of the Holy Ark depicts a representation of the old city of Jerusalem. Flanking this central feature are two narrow windows of stained glass - colorful symbolic representations of the 12 Tribes of Israel framed by a tallith or prayer shawl.

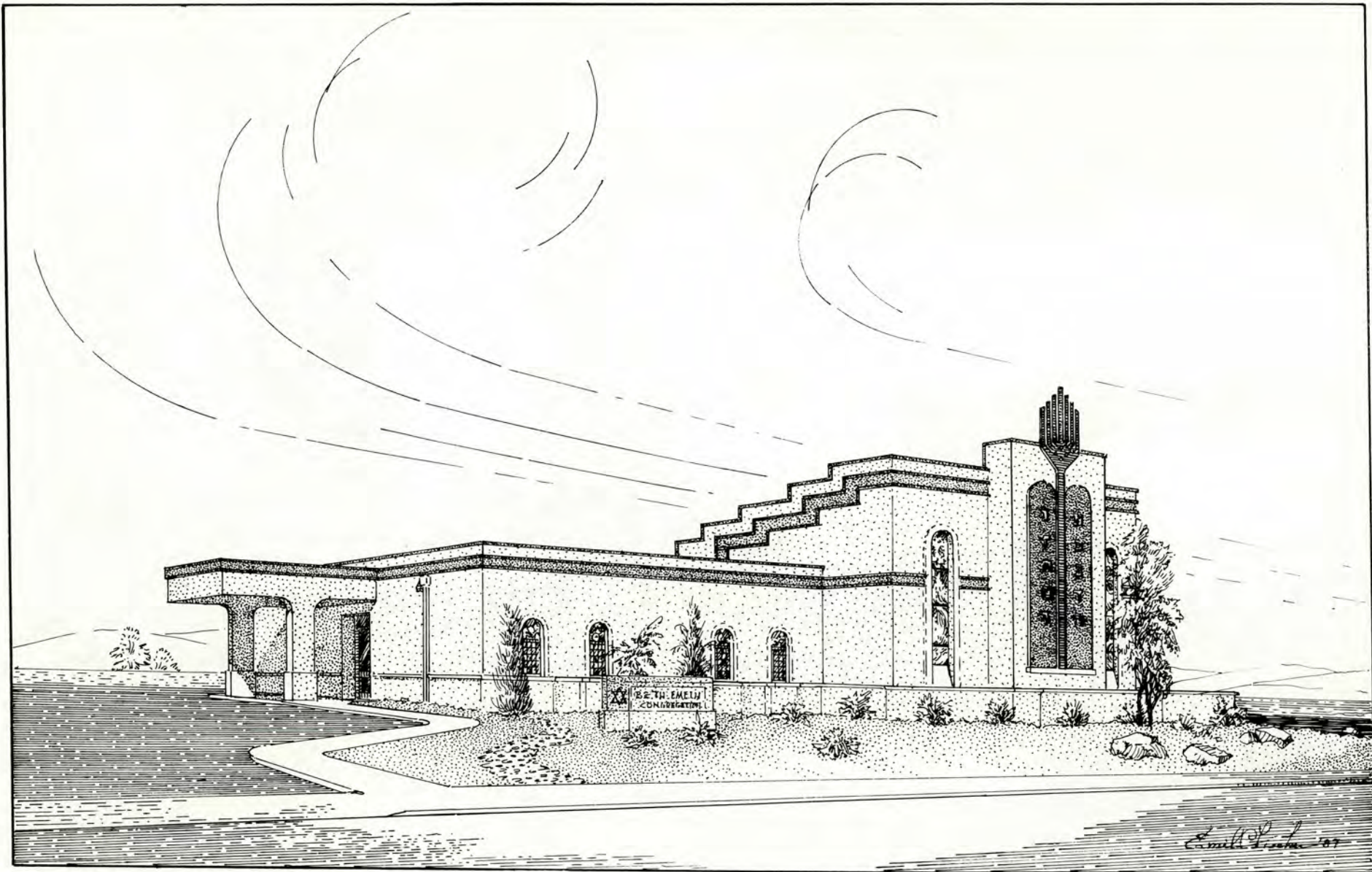
The exterior complements the design of the interior. A composition of the two tablets of the Ten Commandments and the Menorah is the central feature of the East facade. The Menorah - a seven-branched candelabrum, has six branches plus the central shaft. The seven candelabrum represent completeness or a perfect life. The Menorah is the oldest symbol of Judaism. The architectural character of the exterior design recalls similar architectural details of the Temple of Solomon.

The 250 members of Beth Emeth Congregation participate in various community support projects such as Westside Food Bank, El Mirage Senior Center, Jewish Braille Institute and Meals on Wheels.



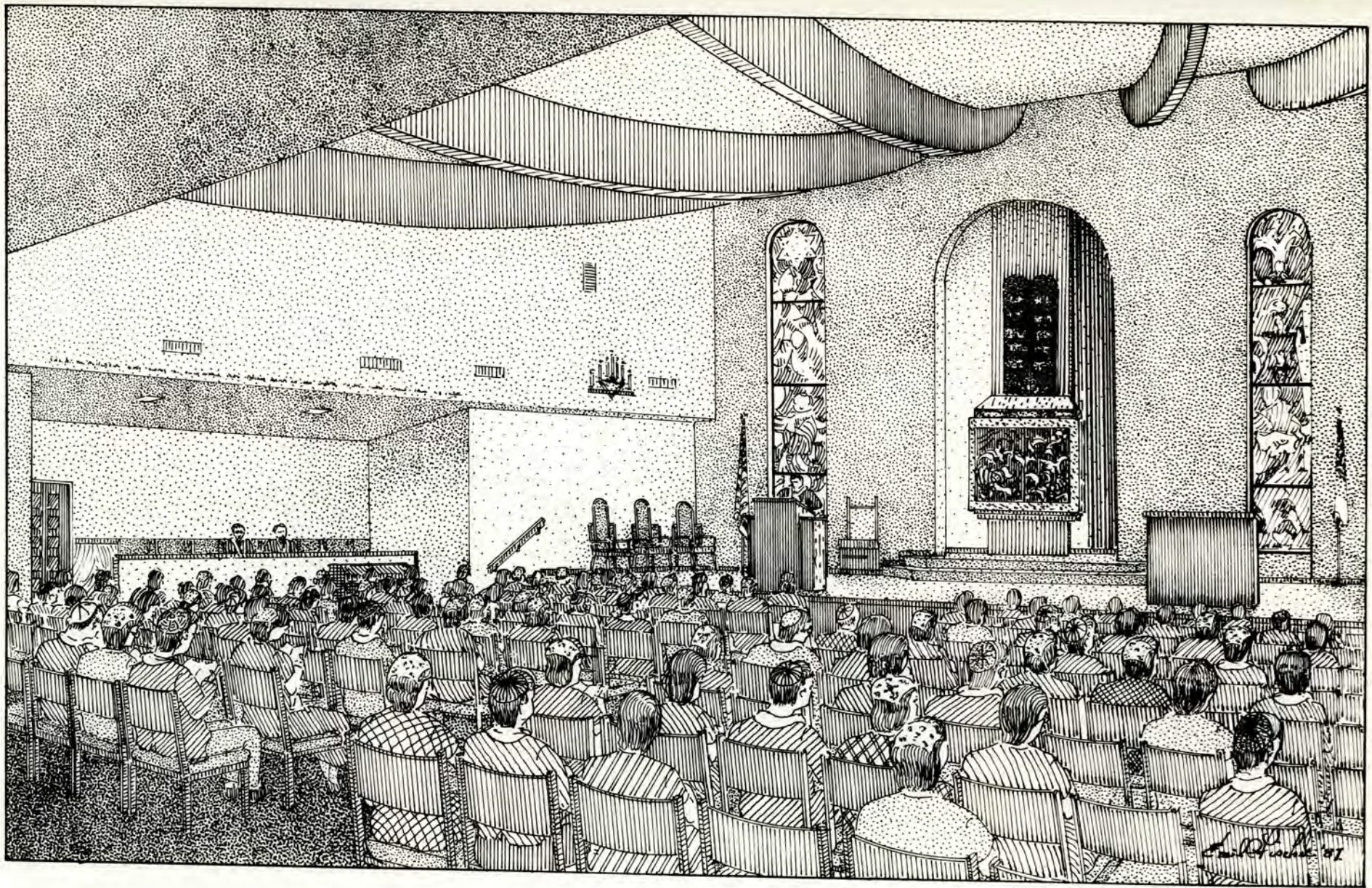
Detail of front facade





View from Meeker Blvd.





Interior of sanctuary of Beth Emeth Synagogue



## TEMPLE BETH SHALOM

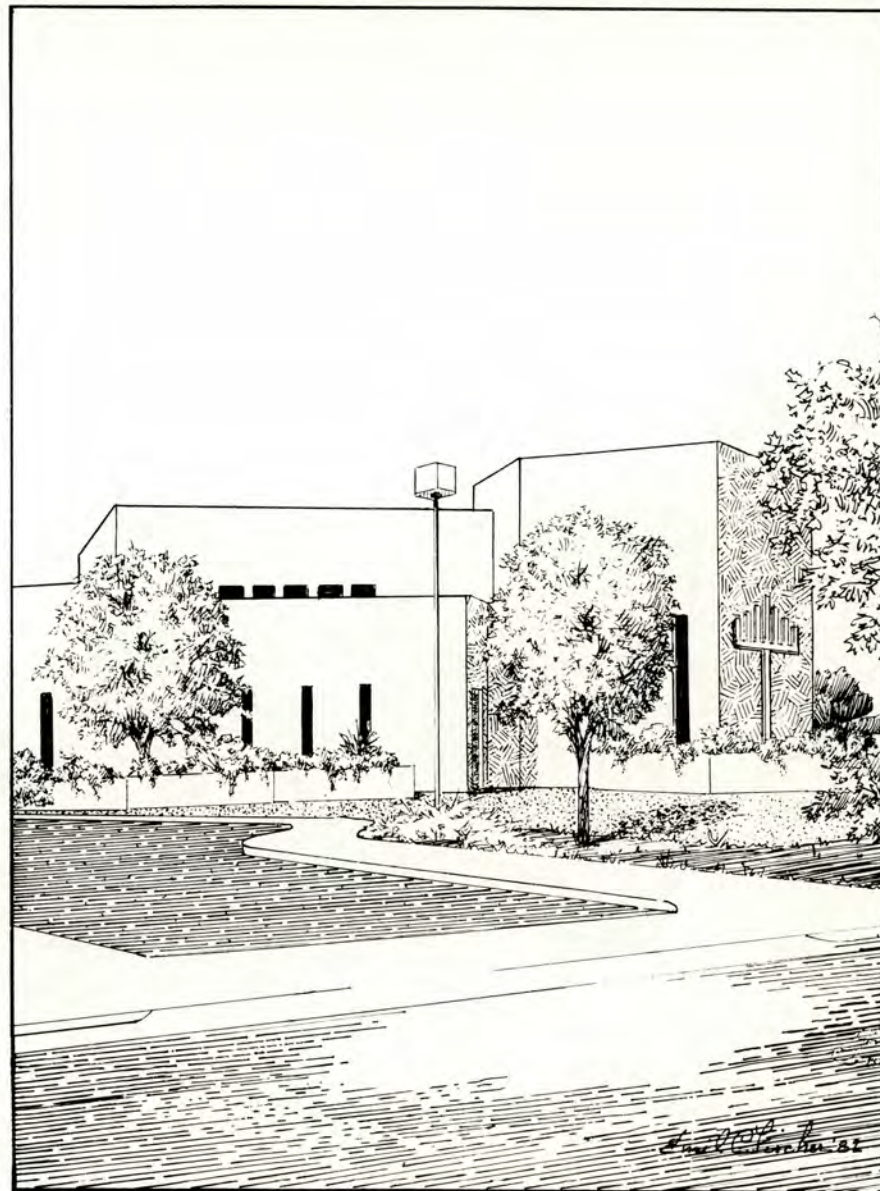
In April 1969, twenty-nine people joined together to form what was then known as Congregation Beth Shalom. Application was made for affiliation with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, parent body of the Reform Jewish Movement. Rabbi Albert Michels became the first spiritual leader in December 1971.

Like many other beginning worship groups in Sun City, services were first held at the Fairway Recreation Center then later at Sundial Recreation Center. On March 17, 1978 the congregation's new home, designed by Architect Stanley Stein, was officially dedicated and the name established as "Temple Beth Shalom and Jewish Community Center." The congregation had in mind a facility which would be much more than just a place for worship and included a library, meeting rooms and Oneg Shabbat (social hall).

These facilities are made available for other community groups and the semi-annual adult education courses are attended by both Temple members and their Christian friends.

To supplement the paid staff, a large group of volunteers assist with office and other Temple functions. The Temple is administered by six officers and a twelve member Board of Trustees.

A recent addition, a multi-purpose room for Saturday Evening Service, was designed by Duane von Fange and Associates. A Biblical Garden has been incorporated into the landscaped area in front of the Synagogue. On Jewish Arbor Day (Tu B'Shevat) different trees mentioned in the Holy Scriptures are planted and benches have been placed in this area for rest and contemplation.



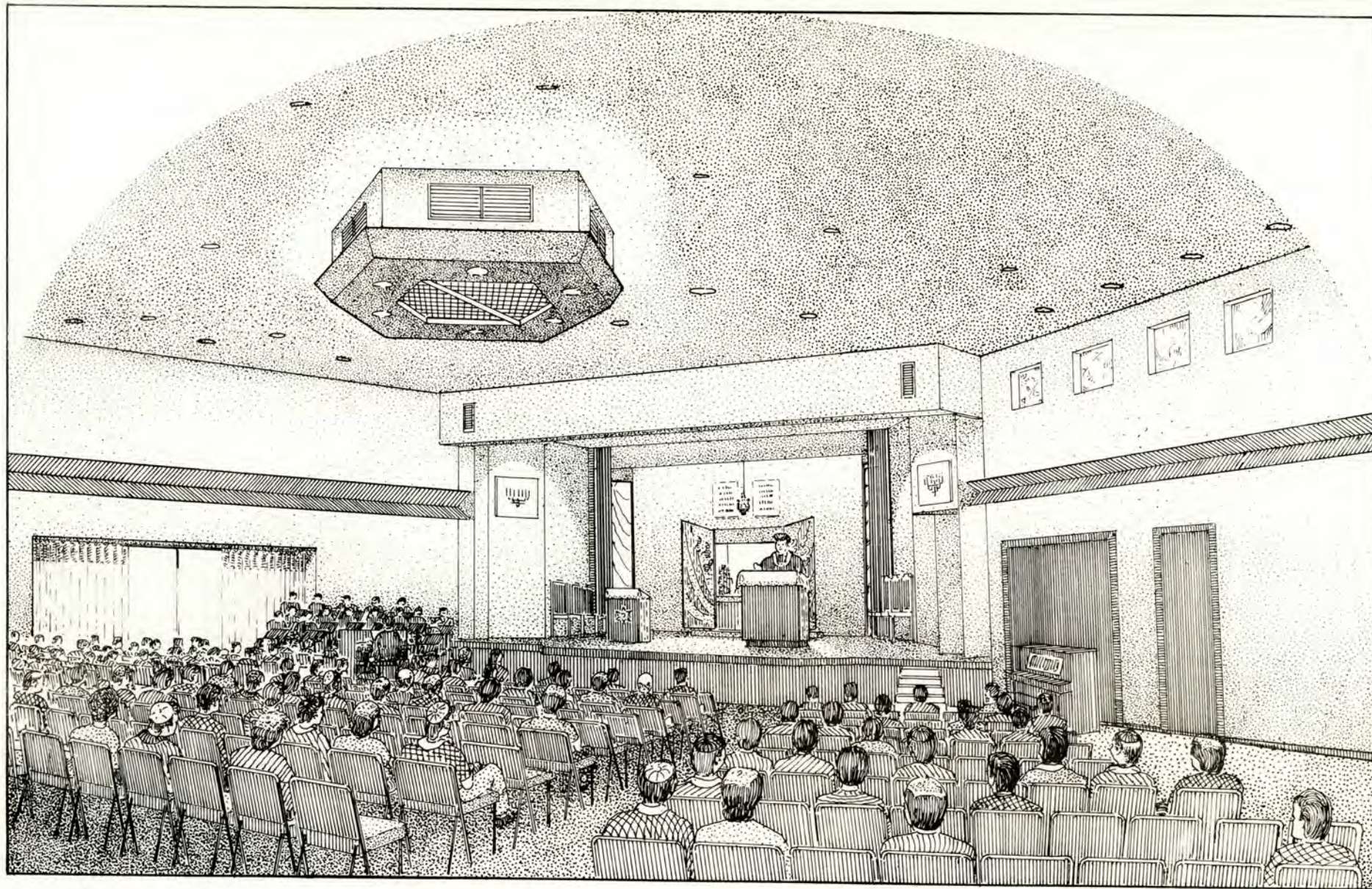
Entrance from 101st Avenue





Entrance to Beth Shalom Synagogue from the parking area





Interior of the Snyagogue



## AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH

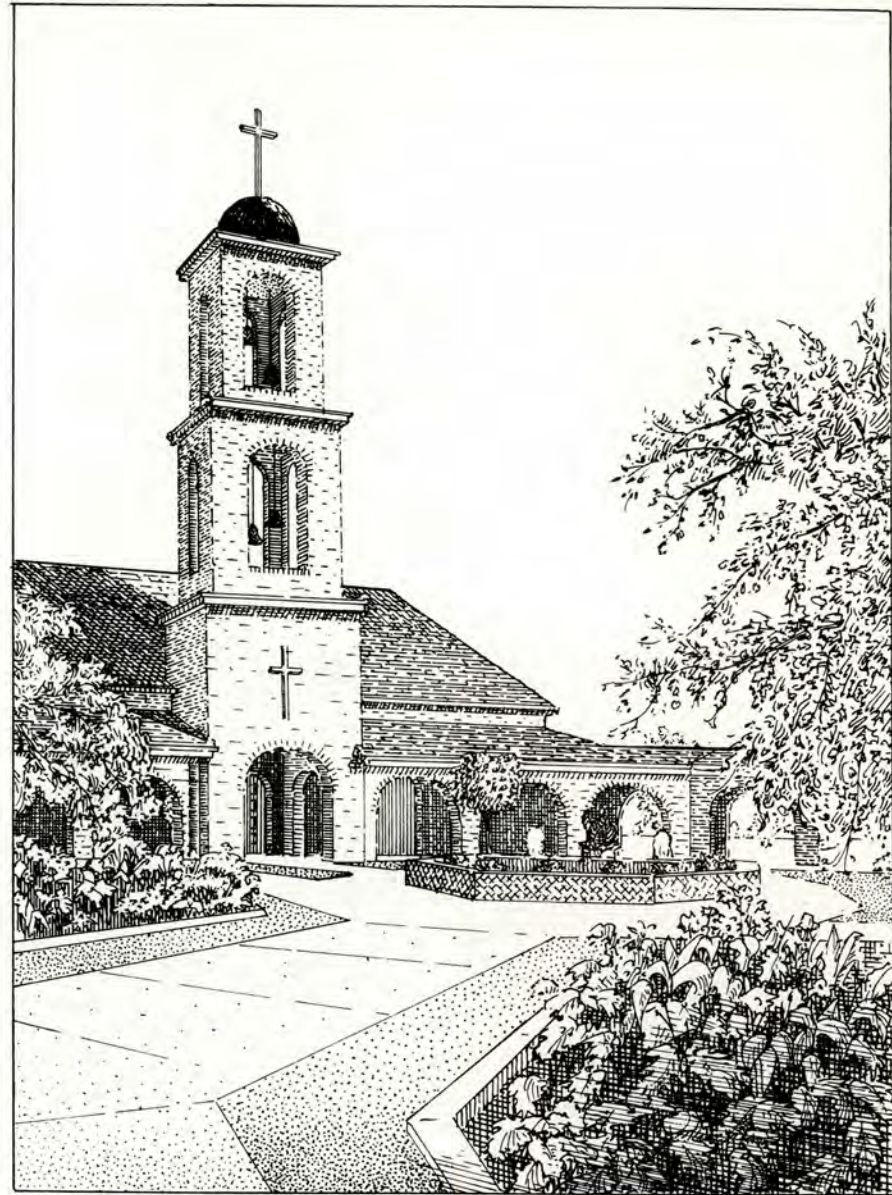
This church has been active in the local community since its organization on February 9, 1975. The budget, includes each year: the Community Fund, Sun City Area Transit, Westside Food Bank, Interfaith Services and the Good Shepherd Home. The congregation is a member of the Community Council, the Sun Cities Ministerial Association and the Ecumenical Education Council. Many members are involved as volunteers in local hospitals and other health care facilities, Interfaith Adult Day Care Centers, Sheriff's Posse, the PRIDES and SCAT as well as other organizations. The congregation also gives help to needy families.

The church supports the Lutheran Ministry Center in Surprise and El Mirage. A building was purchased for residents of Surprise in 1984. This center provides a full time pastor and director of activities and provides tutoring and counseling in addition to worship and educational services.

As the congregation developed, its members enlisted a part-time director of Social Ministry to counsel those with special needs, brought on by re-location and/or family crisis, to serve as a consultant for pastors and to serve as a link between parents and children far away.

Currently the church is giving twelve \$1,000 scholarships each year to young people attending a Lutheran college or university. The congregation supports campus ministry work at Arizona State University and Northern Arizona University.

Groundbreaking ceremonies in October 1976 marked the start of construction for the present 650 seat sanctuary and fellowship hall, at 17200 Del Webb Boulevard, designed by Carl Irving, Architect. The first worship service was held July 24, 1977 with dedication ceremonies on November 6, 1977. Dr. Elmer J. Hjortland was assigned as the first pastor. The firm of Francis A. Schulz Architects Ltd., designed a chapel in 1986, and an educational wing in 1987 enclosing a very restful gardened interior court. A new classroom building will be constructed in the near future to complete the enclosure of the garden.



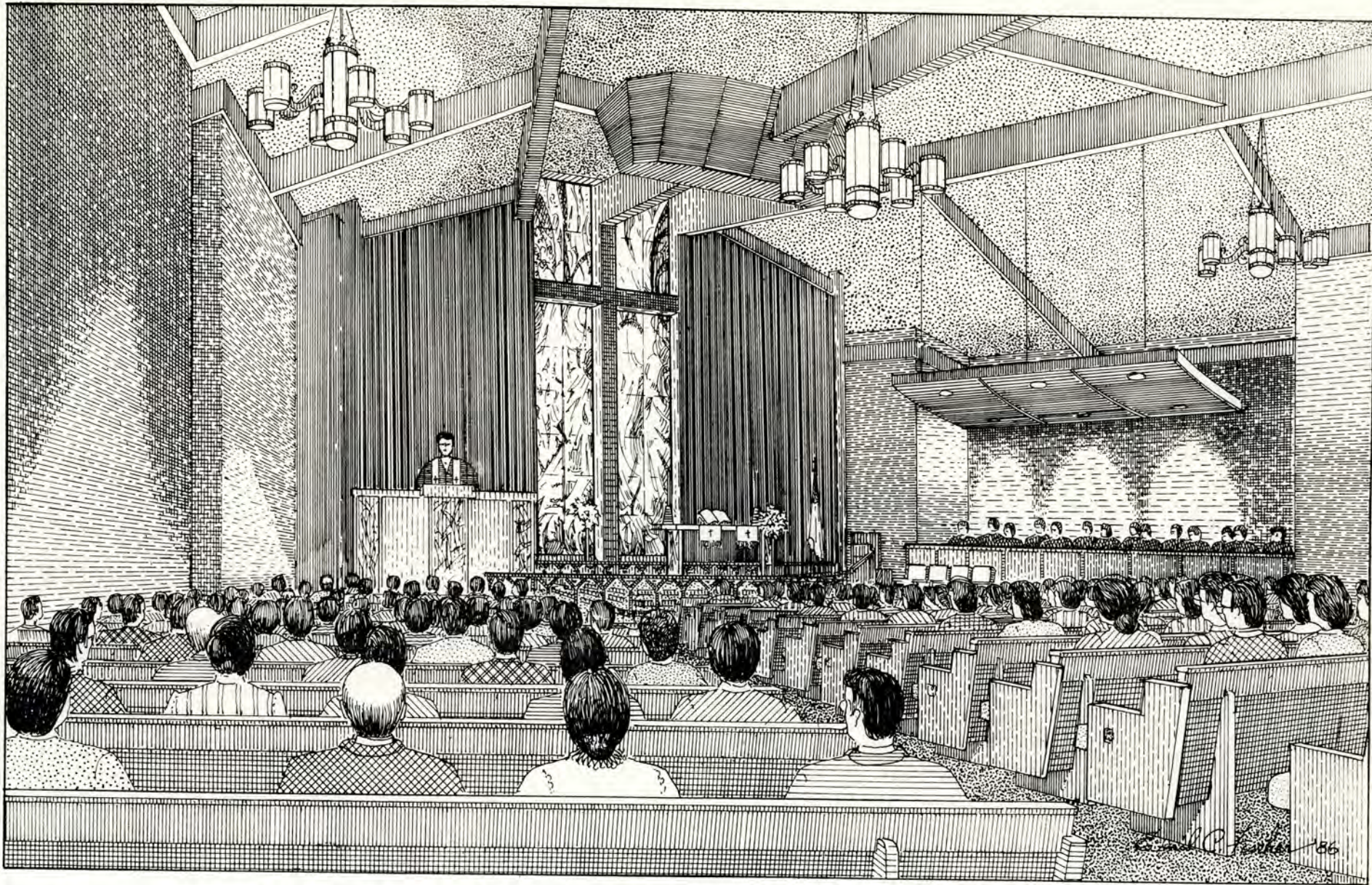
View of bell tower from the garden





The sanctuary - sketched at the intersection of Del Webb Blvd. and 107th Avenue





Interior of the sanctuary, American Lutheran Church



## FOUNTAIN OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Thirty three persons attended the first service on November 16, 1966 at Fairway Recreation Center. The Rev. William C. Pebler, pastor of Christ Lutheran Church in Phoenix, conducted the service.

In 1976 the Southern California District of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, assigned the Rev. Henry Elfman the pastorate. The present congregation was formally organized in May 1968 and Sunday services continued to be held in Fairway Center.

In 1969 a church site was purchased at 15630 Del Webb Boulevard and Francis A. Schulz Architects Ltd., was engaged to prepare a design for the first unit of this religious complex. This sanctuary was completed and dedicated in 1972.

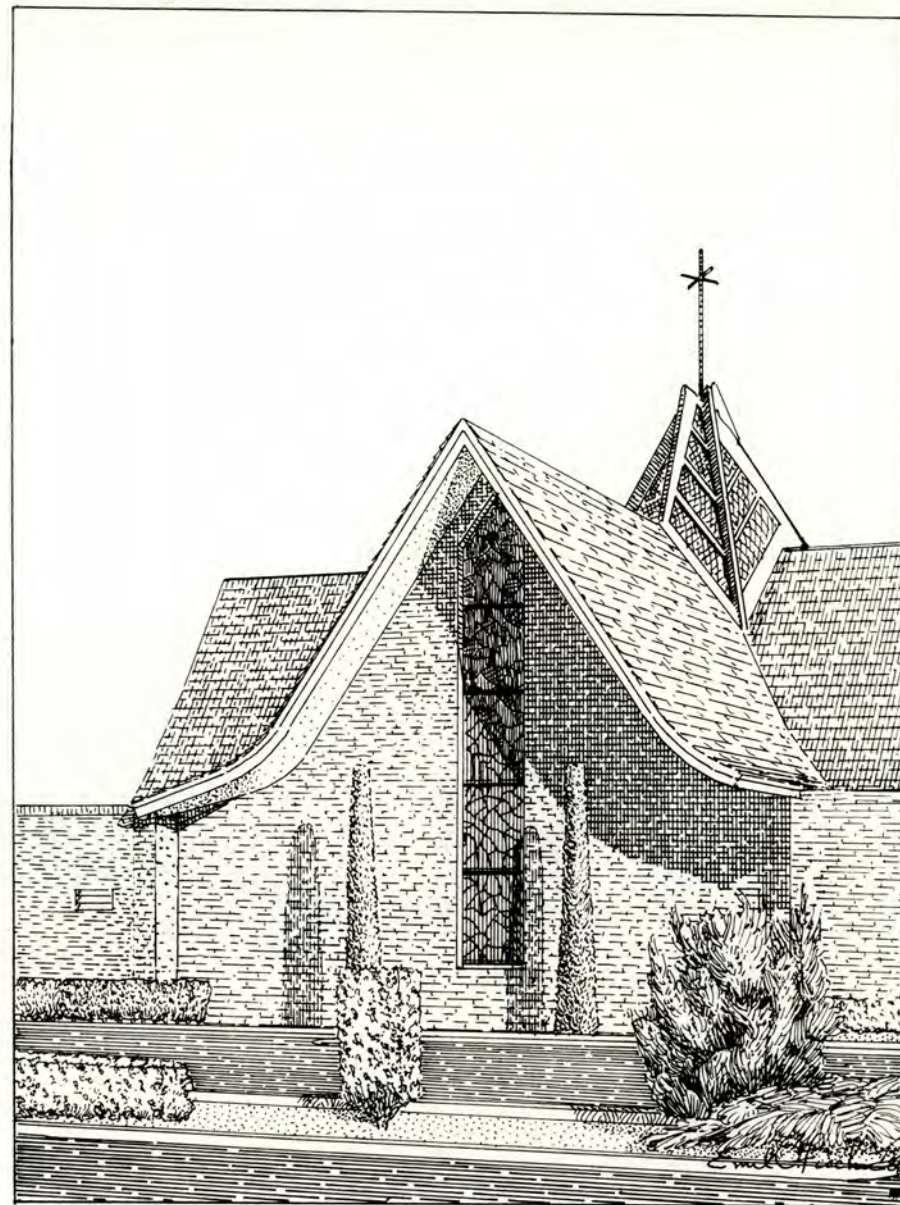
The congregation grew rapidly as Sun City expanded and in 1979 the fellowship hall and the sanctuary were enlarged. The first pipe organ in Sun City was installed in May 1987, to provide appropriate accompaniment for the 50-voice choir.

During January 1986 this congregation transferred 81 members to help form the Crown of Life Lutheran Church in Sun City West.

The Lutheran Women's Missionary League not only supports projects here and abroad but gives many hours of service to the needy and frail elderly of the community. A Christian Care Group assist hospitalized and homebound persons of this congregation. The fellowship hall serves many community groups as well as the needs of the church.

A Braille Work Center will be established soon to print religious material for the Lutheran Braille workers of Yucaipa, California for worldwide distribution.

The name "Fountain of Life" was taken from Psalm 36: "For with Thee is the fountain of life; in Thy light shall we see light."



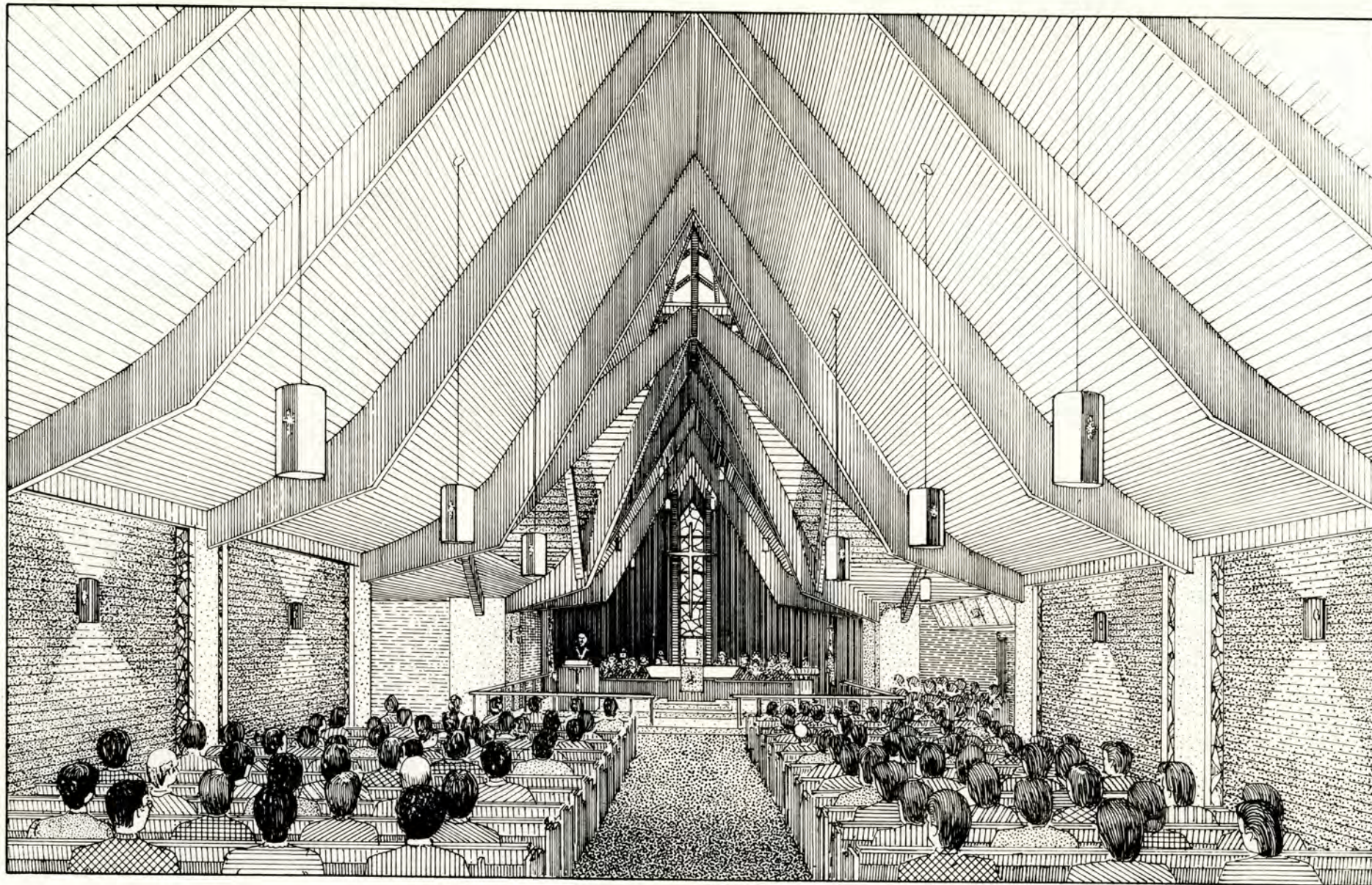
Exterior of chancel from parking area.  
Note the pyramidal structure of stained glass over the crossing





Fellowship Hall & Fountain of Life Church viewed from Del Webb Blvd.





Interior of the Nave



## LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Lutheran Church in America and the American Lutheran Church established a mission in Sun City West in 1979, and this small group of Lutherans held worship services at the R. H. Johnson Center lecture hall.

In November 1981 the church was officially organized with 160 members. The Rev. Charles Ruby was the first pastor.

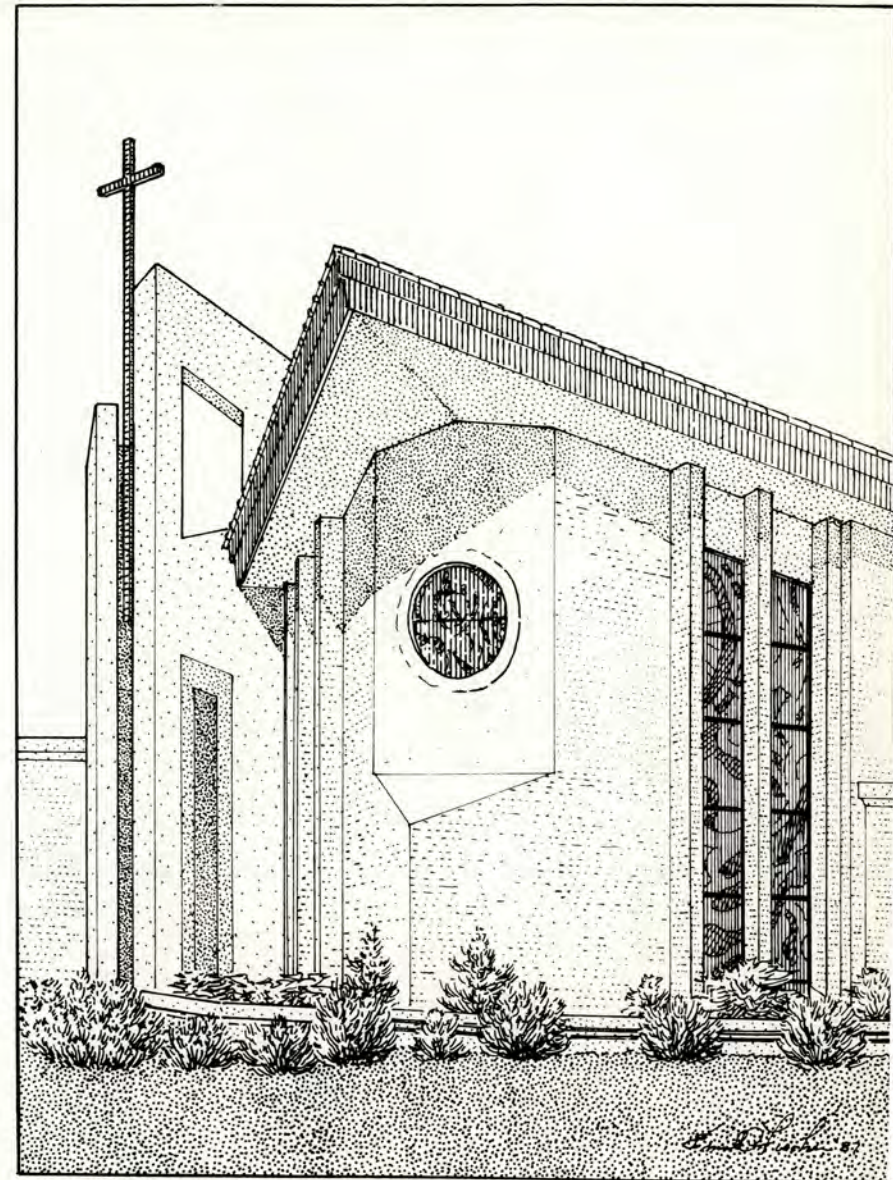
By 1984 the congregation had expanded sufficiently to require the purchase of 4.6 acres at 13724 Meeker Boulevard. The firm of Francis A. Schulz Architects Ltd., was engaged to design the sanctuary and other areas necessary to care for the religious and social needs of the congregation. Although the seating in the sanctuary is limited to 400, a very flexible arrangement permits expansion to an additional 200 seats. This structure was completed and dedicated in 1986.

The imposing building presents an attractive arrangement of triangular forms to those approaching the church on Meeker Boulevard.

The geometric forms of the pulpit, altar and cross seem very consistent with the angular lines of the interior.

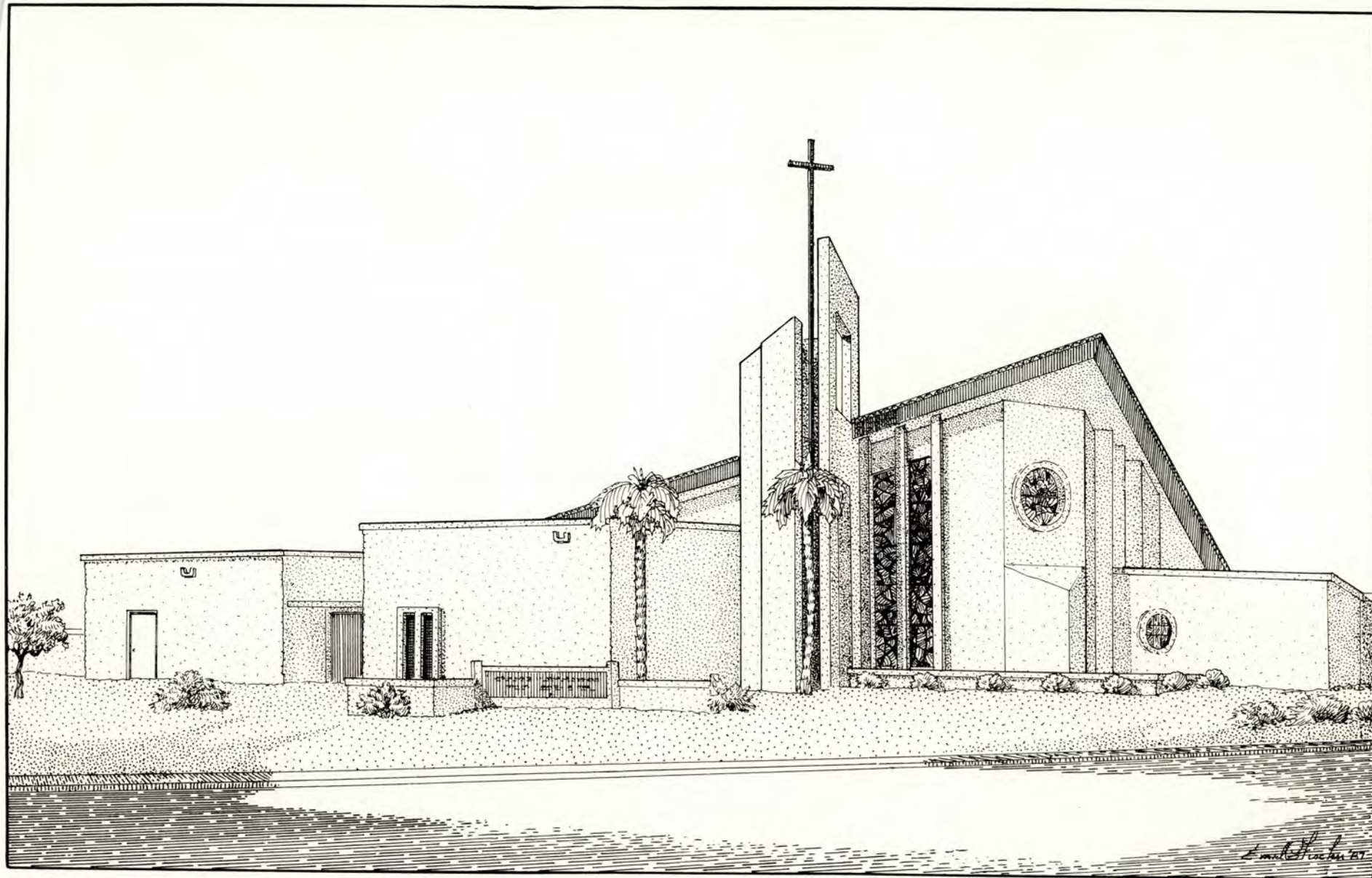
The rose window features a conventionalization of the figure of Christ, "The Lord of Life," radiating blessing and power while the flowing blue values of the glass in the flanking windows suggest rivers of life-giving waters.

This relatively new, energetic, well organized congregation, through its church ministry, has instituted Bible classes, study groups and other services to aid the religious welfare of its members.



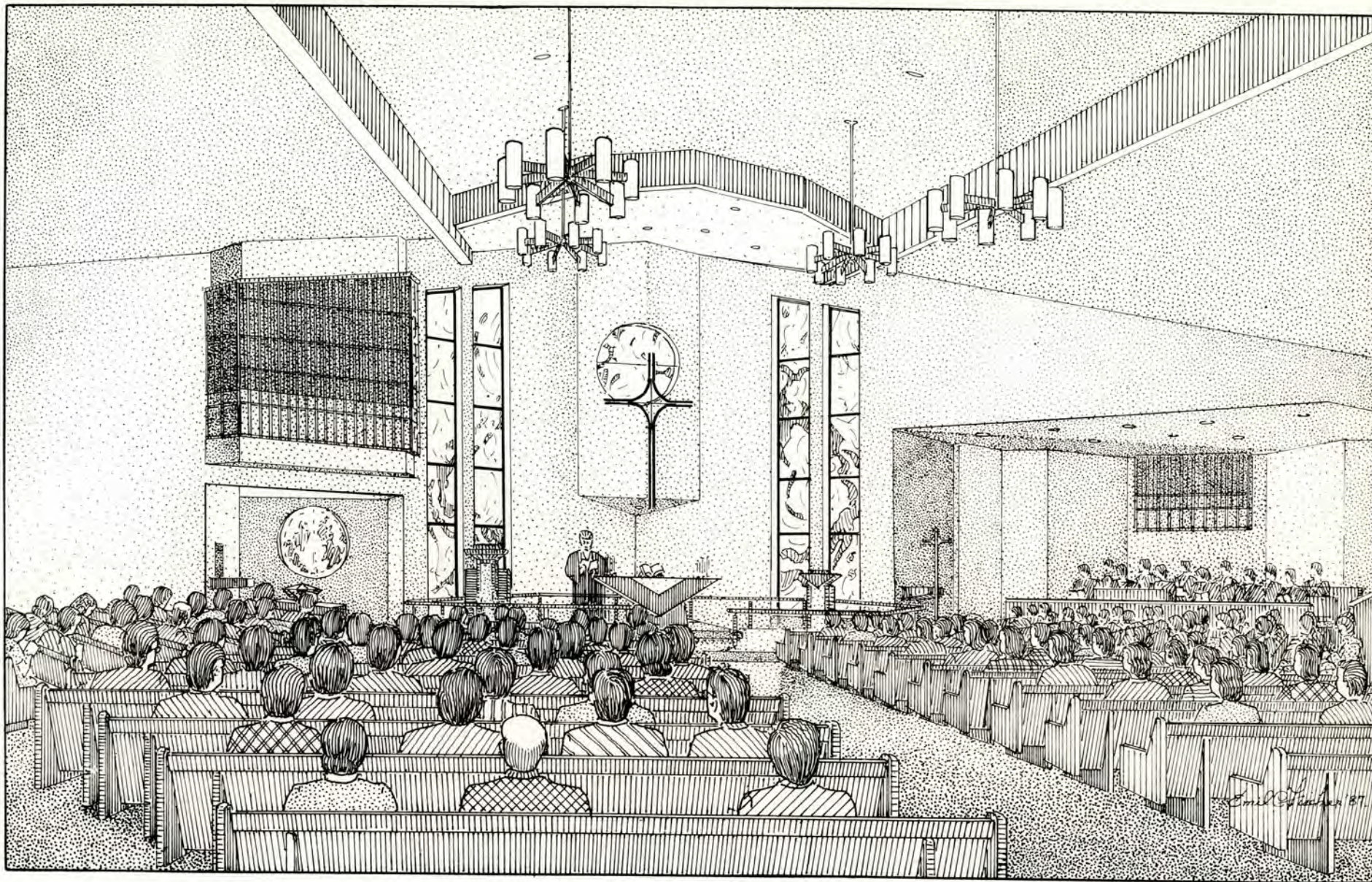
View of the tower and the exterior of the chancel





The Lord of Life Church viewed from Meeker Blvd.





Interior of the Lord of Life, Lutheran Church. The baptismal font is located to the front, left



## OUR SAVIOR EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

A large rugged cross first attracts the attention of persons passing by the Lutheran Church at 9824 103rd Avenue. It all began with a gathering of about 60 people, mainly from Wisconsin, at Oakmont Recreation Center in 1972. One year later the sanctuary, designed by Architect Duane Anderson of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was ready for dedication. In 1984 the chancel was extensively renovated by Architect Karl Krauss.

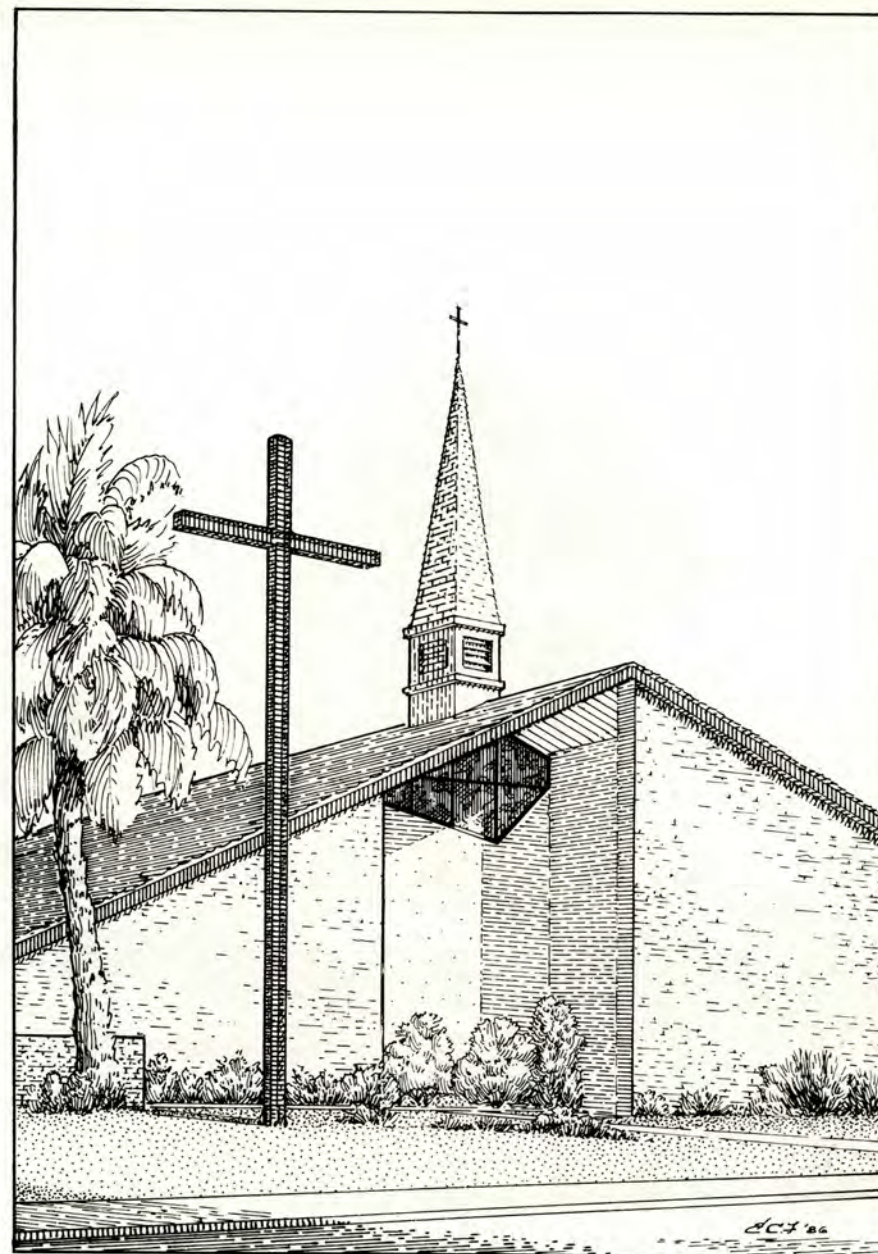
Although Victor Schultz was the first minister, the Rev. Frederic Nitz has been pastor since 1978. The congregation of Our Savior is affiliated with the Milwaukee-based Wisconsin Synod, one of the more conservative denominations of the Lutheran Church. They believe the Bible is inerrant and all doctrine and practice is based on a literal interpretation of the Bible.

Because this branch of Lutheran doctrine had its roots in Wisconsin, it particularly attracts people from that area and, therefore, remains relatively small in numbers. At present this congregation totals approximately 125 members.

Although small in number, their influence is far reaching. The congregation and pastor are particularly concerned with mission responsibilities. In addition to support for the Arizona Lutheran Academy, the Rev. Nitz devotes considerable time to religious affairs of the Apache Indian Nation.

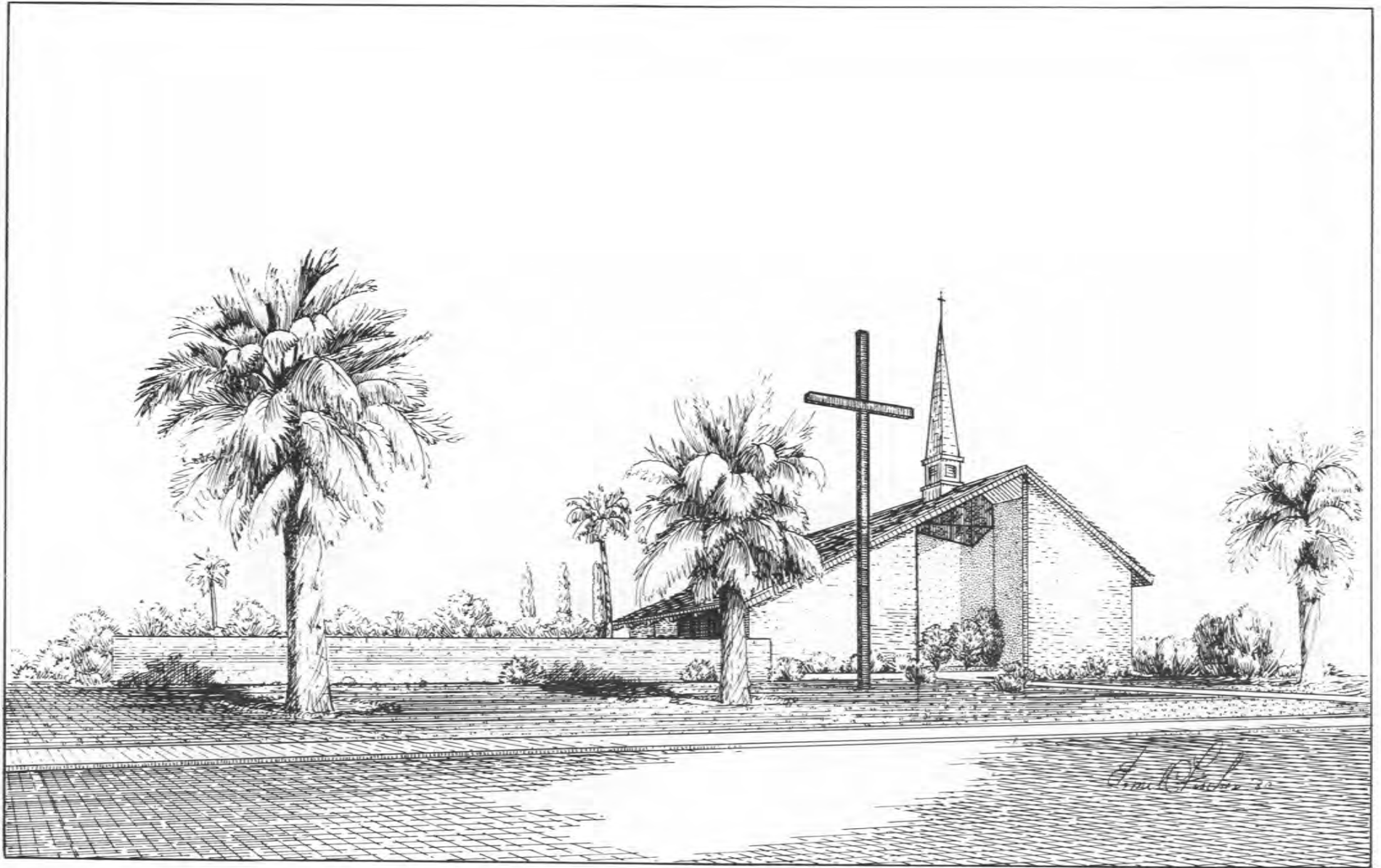
This Synod has been working with the Apaches since 1893. At present, the pastor supervises and advises eight Apache congregations regarding religious matters. The congregation is involved with the construction of a \$900,000 school project at East Fork, Arizona.

Bible classes, the Ladies Guild, as well as these mission activities, assume important roles in the activities of this church.



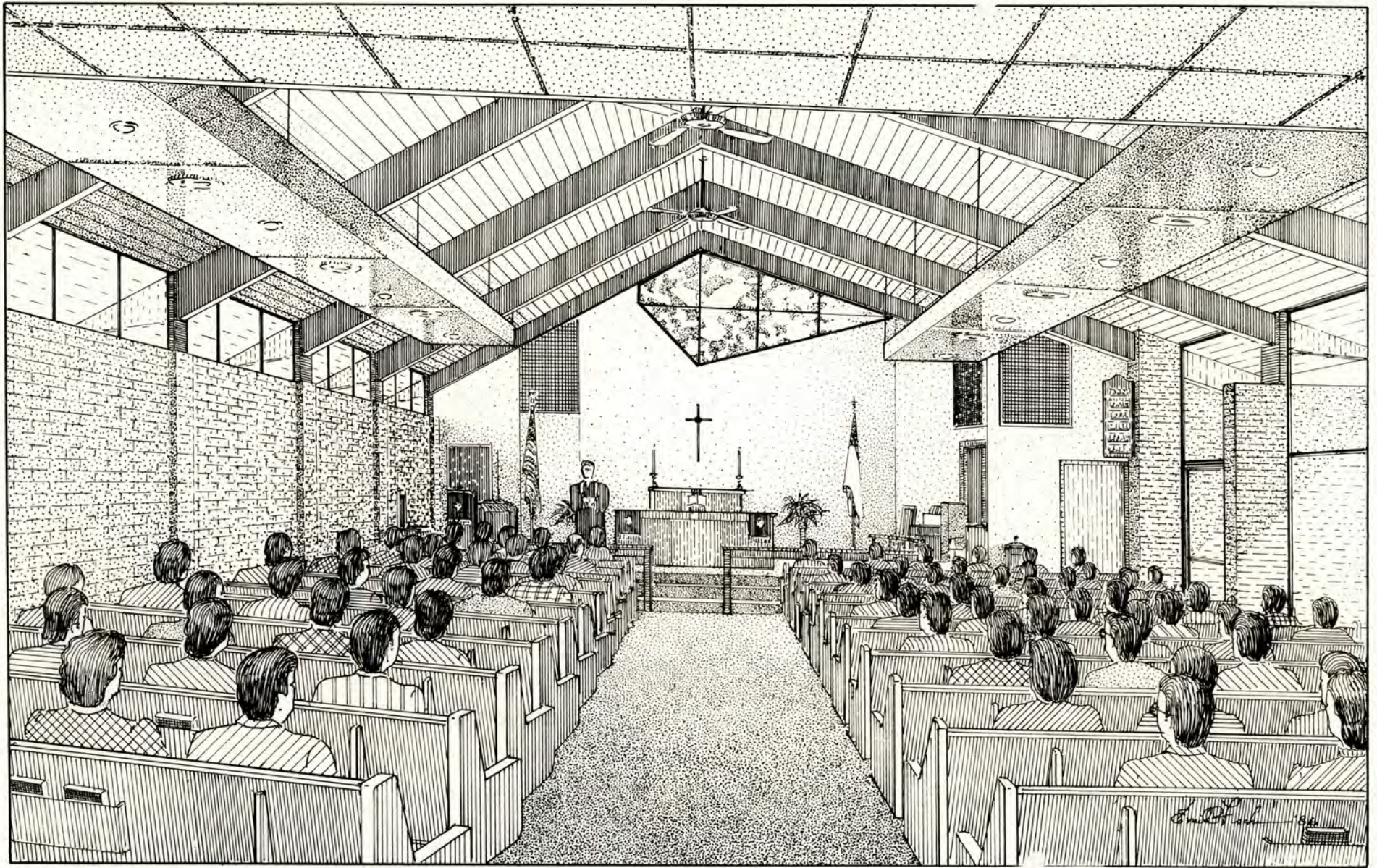
Detail of remodeled front facade and bronze cross





View of Our Savior from 103rd Street





Interior of the sanctuary



## SHEPHERD OF THE DESERT LUTHERAN CHURCH

A small group of residents met in the home of John and Ruth Zilien in the fall of 1960, under the leadership of Dr. Albert Schwertz. The United Lutheran Church in America recognized the congregation in April 1961 and 125 people met for services at the Community Center (Oakmont). The first pastor was Rev. Maxwell Walton.

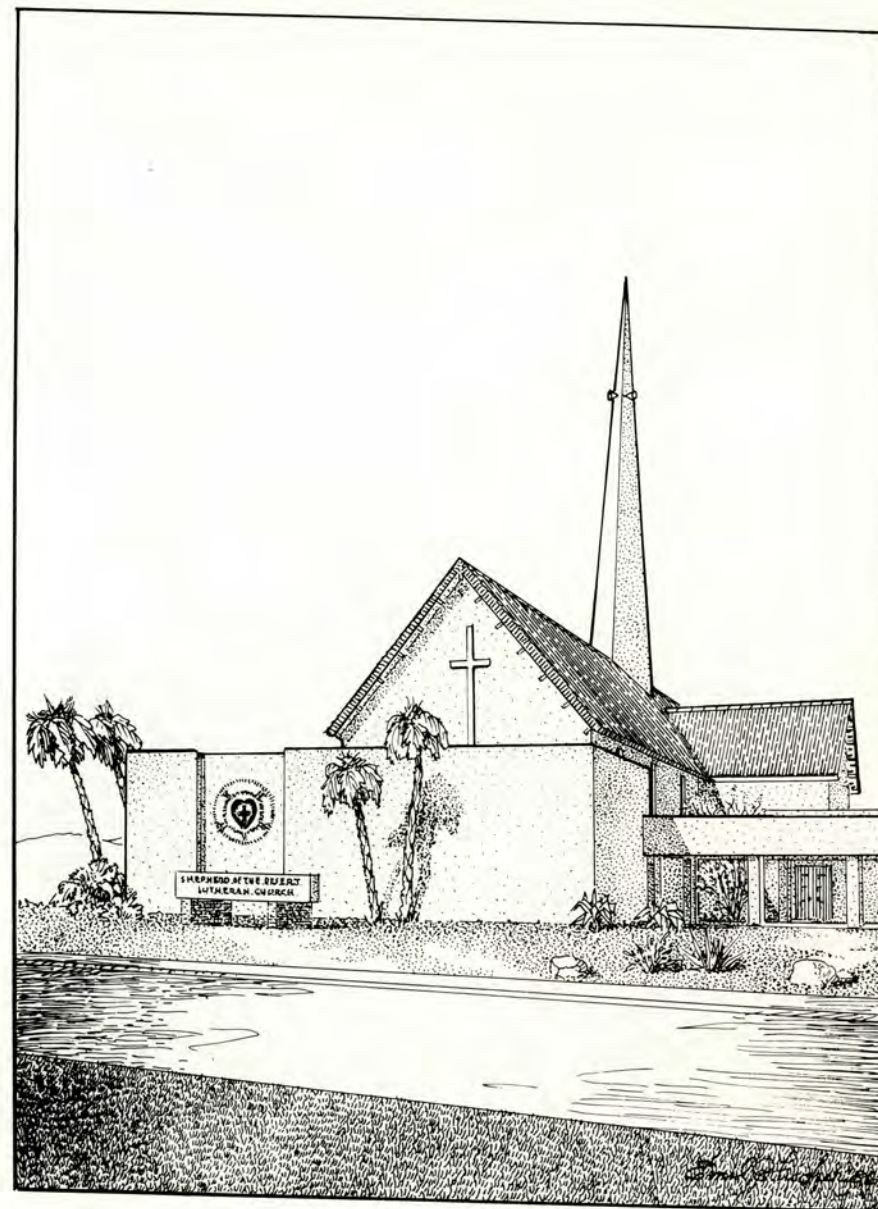
The church is the second Christian congregation organized in Sun City, and is the mother congregation of the American Lutheran Church and Lord of Life Lutheran Church in Sun City West.

The original religious complex, located at 11025 111th Avenue, was completed in 1963. The architecture of the interior is more traditional than most of the recently completed Sun City churches. One is conscious of a nave, chancel and transepts in this cruciform plan. The height of the nave is accentuated by the upward sweep of the pointed, laminated wooden arches supporting the roof. The altar is flanked by delicately outlined symbolic figures depicting the "Shepherd of the Desert."

Many original ministerial programs originated in this church. It is particularly known for its caring and serving ministry which today includes sponsorship of an Interfaith Day Care Center and providing space for Emotions Anonymous. Presently, consideration is being given to establish a Parish Nurse Program as part of this ministry.

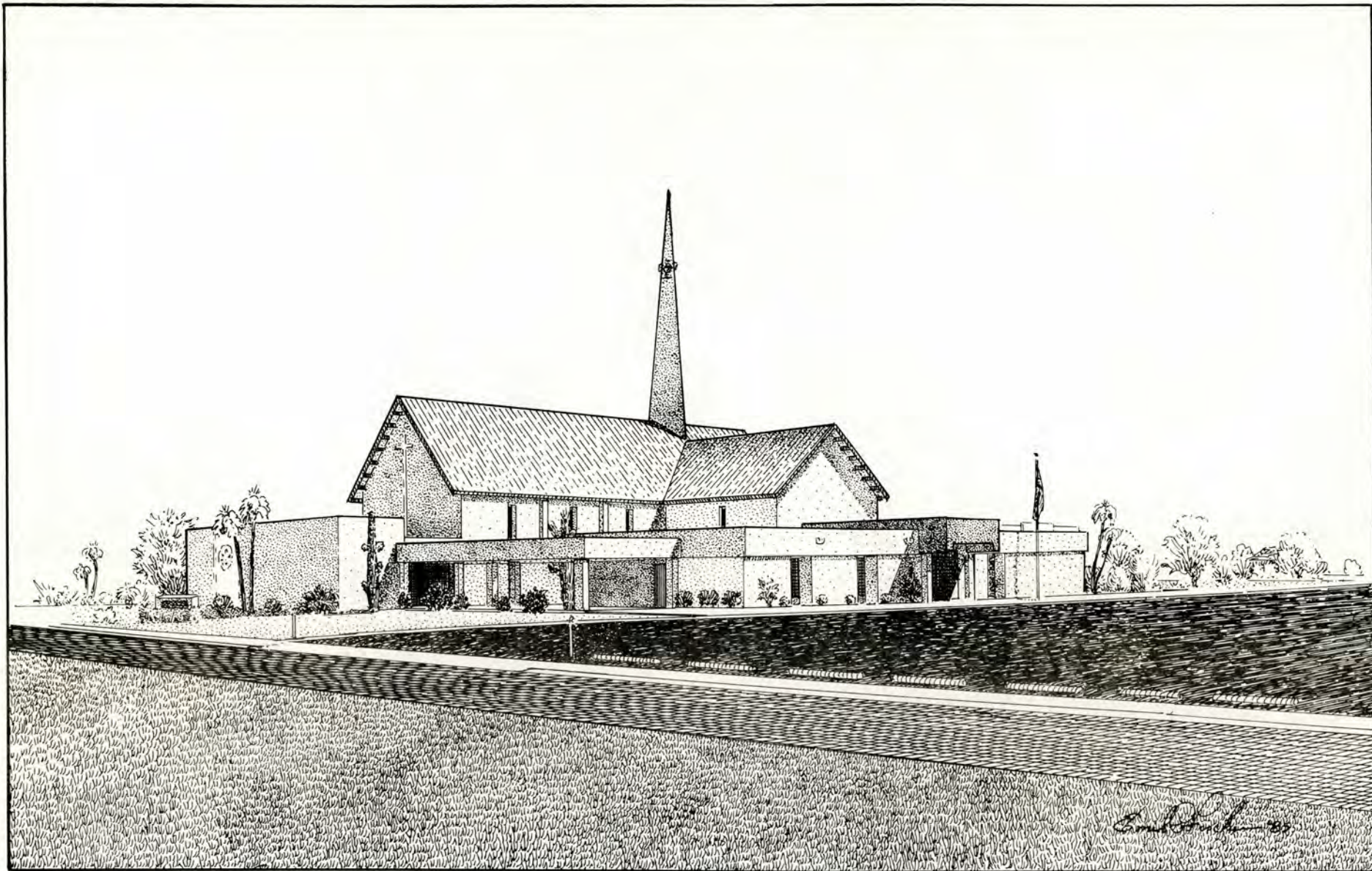
Last year (1986) the congregation completely renovated the original facilities, including Walton Hall, a social hall, choir rooms and an educational unit. Francis Schulz Architects Ltd., did the renovation.

The congregation, which now numbers over 1,000 members, is active in educational work among adults and families. It operates a Sunday School for children and is well known for its annual Vacation School.



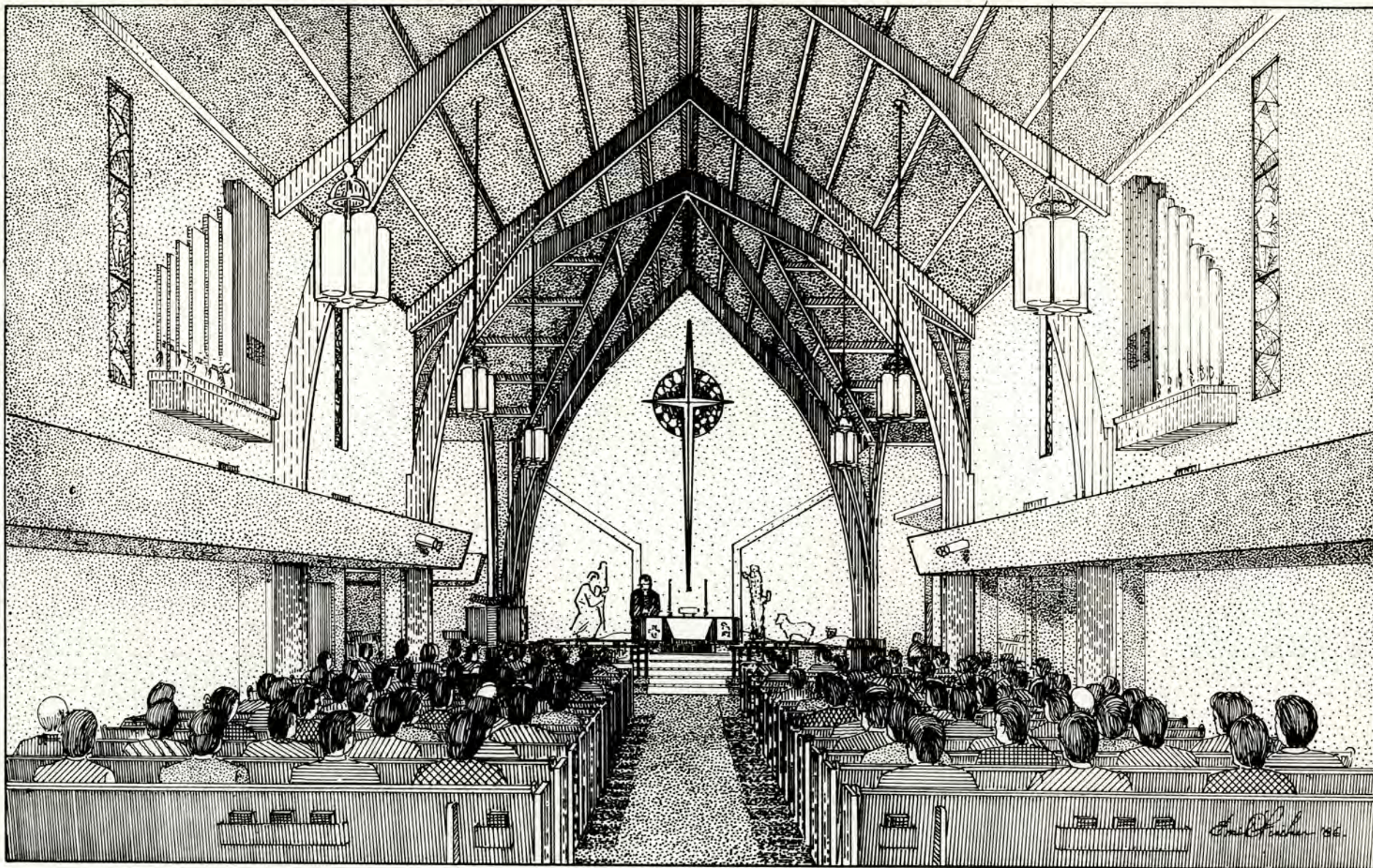
Remodeled front facade





Drawing of remodeled church with new additions as seen from 111th Avenue





The nave of the Shepherd of the Desert



## FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Ninety people assembled in the Community Center (Oakmont) in 1964 to form the first Methodist congregation in Sun City. The Rev. Duane Thistlethwaite and Mr. Raymond Corson directed the formation of this congregation, and Rev. Thistlethwaite became the first minister. A small formal garden, for rest and meditation, was created by his family and named in his honor.

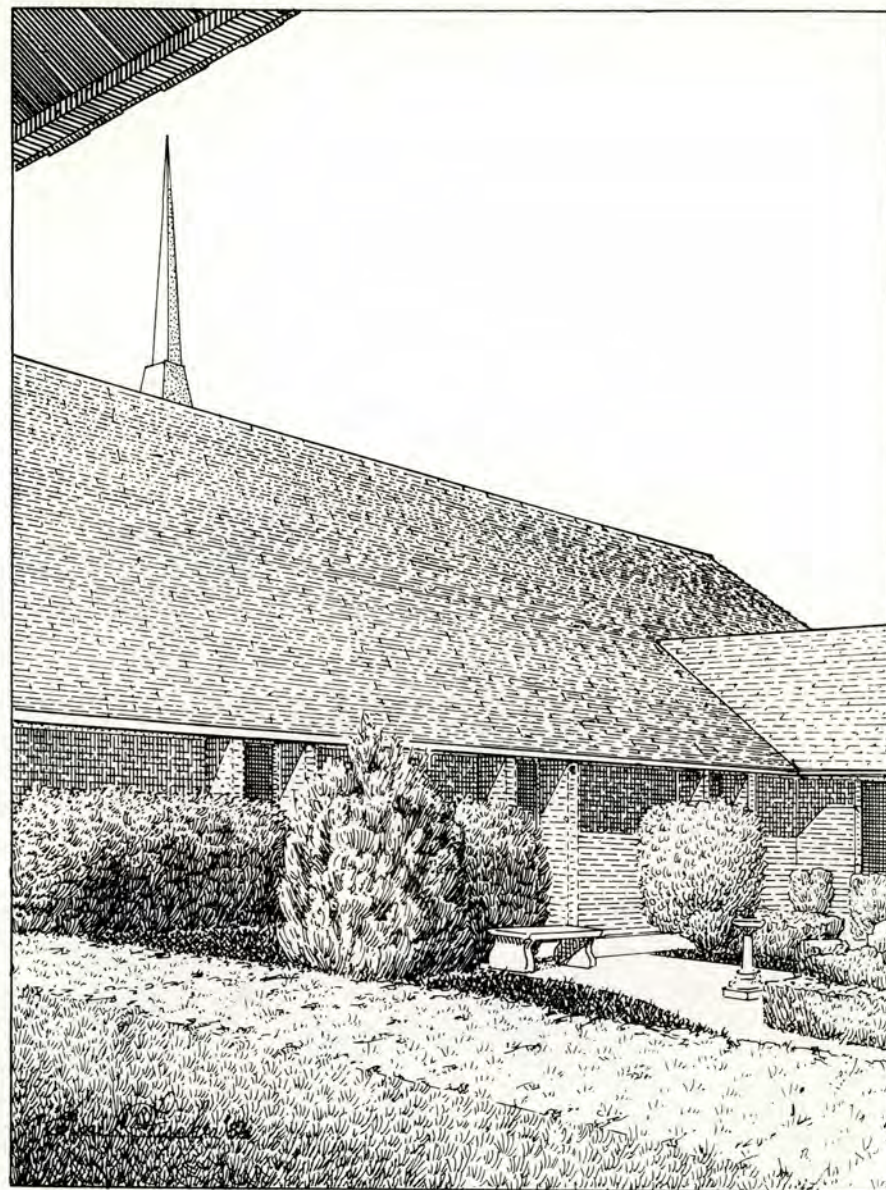
Two years later this thriving congregation engaged architect Richard Butz to design the sanctuary at 9849 N. 105th Avenue.

In 1973, McIlnay Fellowship Hall, dedicated in honor of the Rev. W. McIlnay, was added to the sanctuary. This space absorbs any necessary overflow from this 1,000 member congregation.

At this same time the present office space and choir rehearsal room were also enlarged and the chancel remodeled. Another addition, Nicholson Hall, is used for workshops and meetings.

The congregation participates in the Sun City Community Council and Interfaith Services to assist in providing adult care and crisis counseling to members of the congregation and community.

In addition to the usual church activities and appropriate Bible studies, this active congregation sponsors retreats, tours, musicals and other special events during the year.



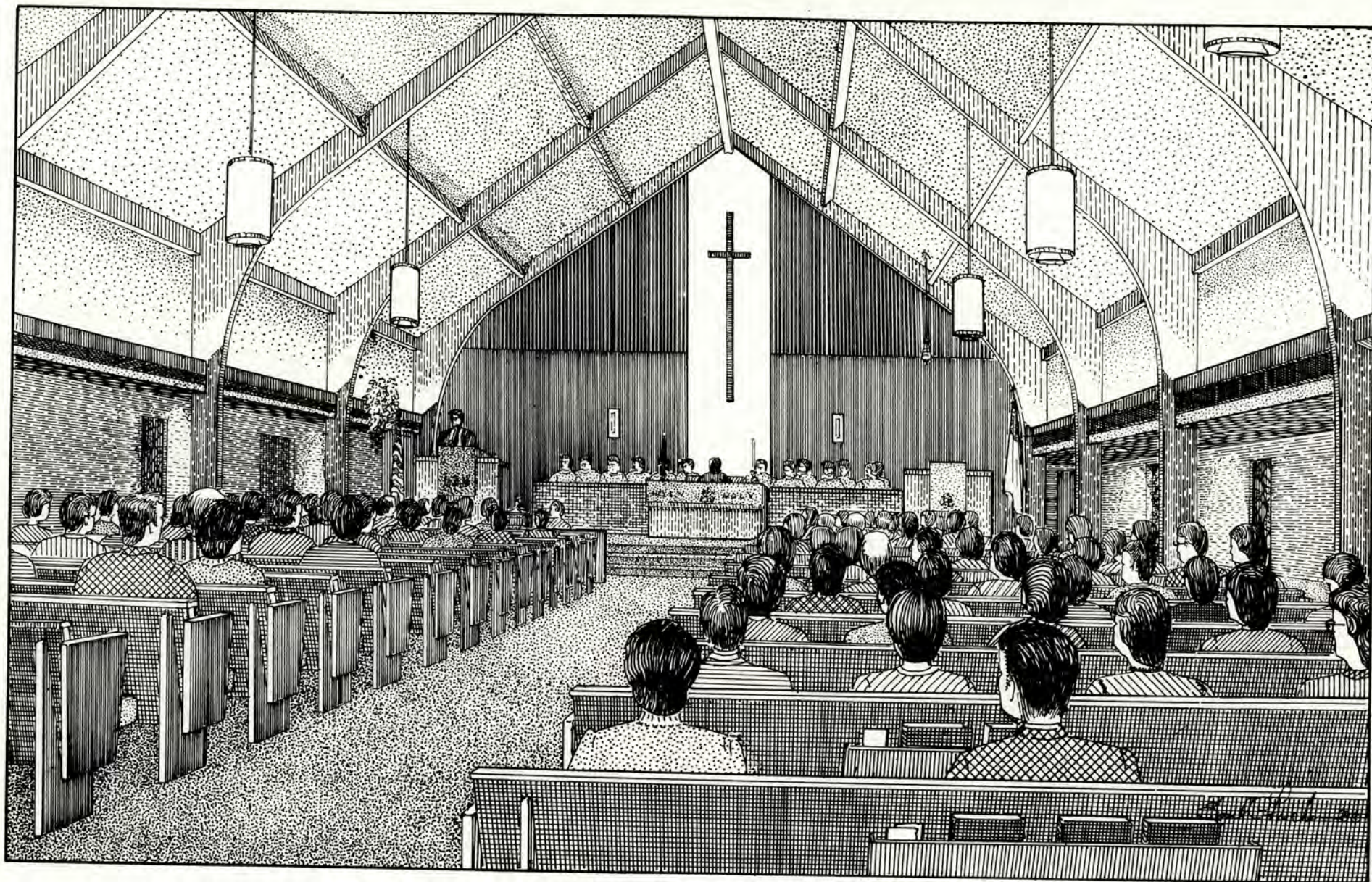
Thistlethwaite Garden





First United Methodist Church viewed from 105th Avenue





Interior of Sanctuary



## LAKEVIEW UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

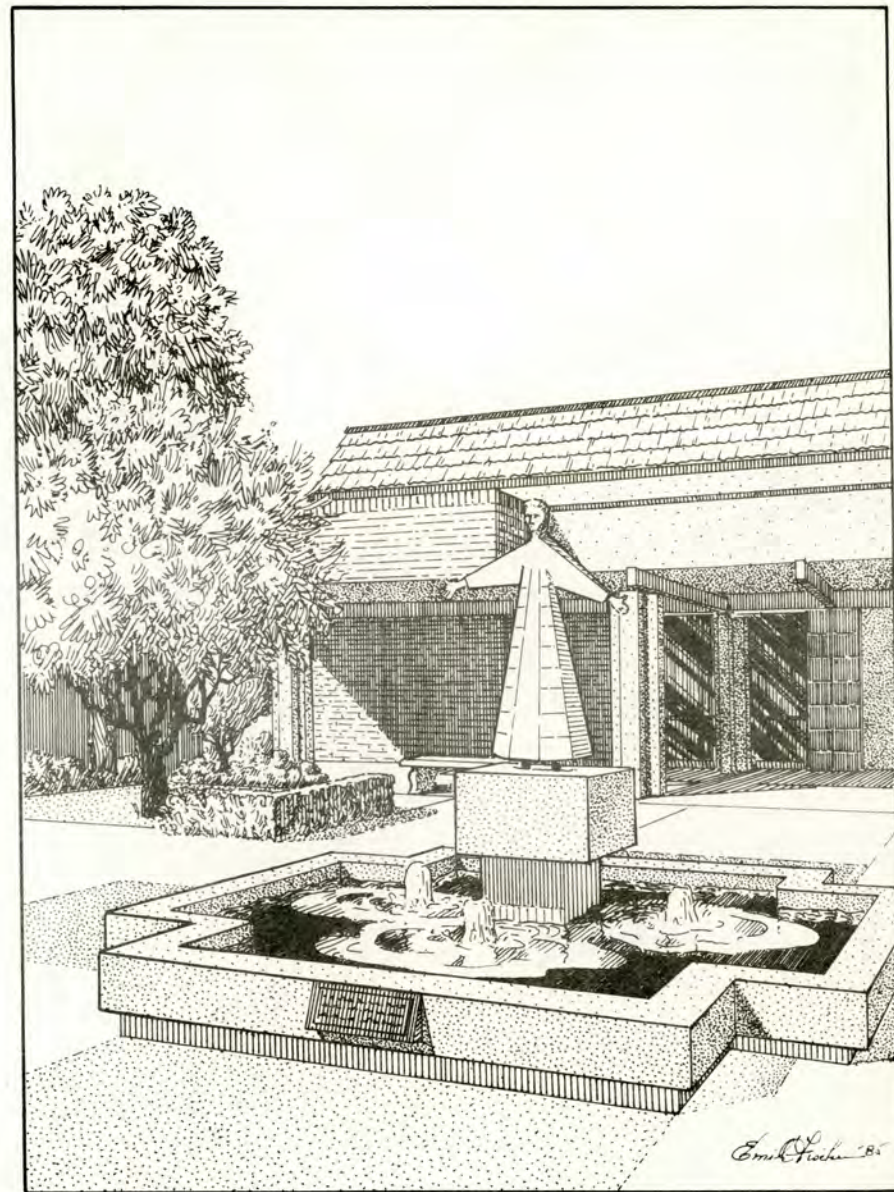
Organized March 22, 1970, 240 people attended the first service. Formation of the congregation was authorized by the United Methodist Conference. The founding Pastor was the Reverend Leonard Smoot and services were held in the social hall, Lakeview Recreation Center.

The present church, built in 1973 at 10298 Thunderbird Blvd., and designed by the firm of Francis A. Schulz Architects Ltd., has a rather unique structure that creates an inspirational environment for worship.

Upon entering the sanctuary worshippers are attracted to the upward sweep of the wood trussed roof. The Greek Cross floor plan rises upward to an impressive height of 40 feet over the altar. Tall stained glass windows terminate the arms of the cross formed by the roof construction. The west window is seen first upon entering the sanctuary and delivers a message of invitation, "Come to Me all that labor." The north window is a graphic representation of the Ten Commandments. The south window represents the eight Beatitudes taken from Christ's "Sermon on the Mount." As the congregation leaves the sanctuary, the tall figure of Christ is visible in the glass of the east window, while the symbol of the Holy Spirit descends from above.

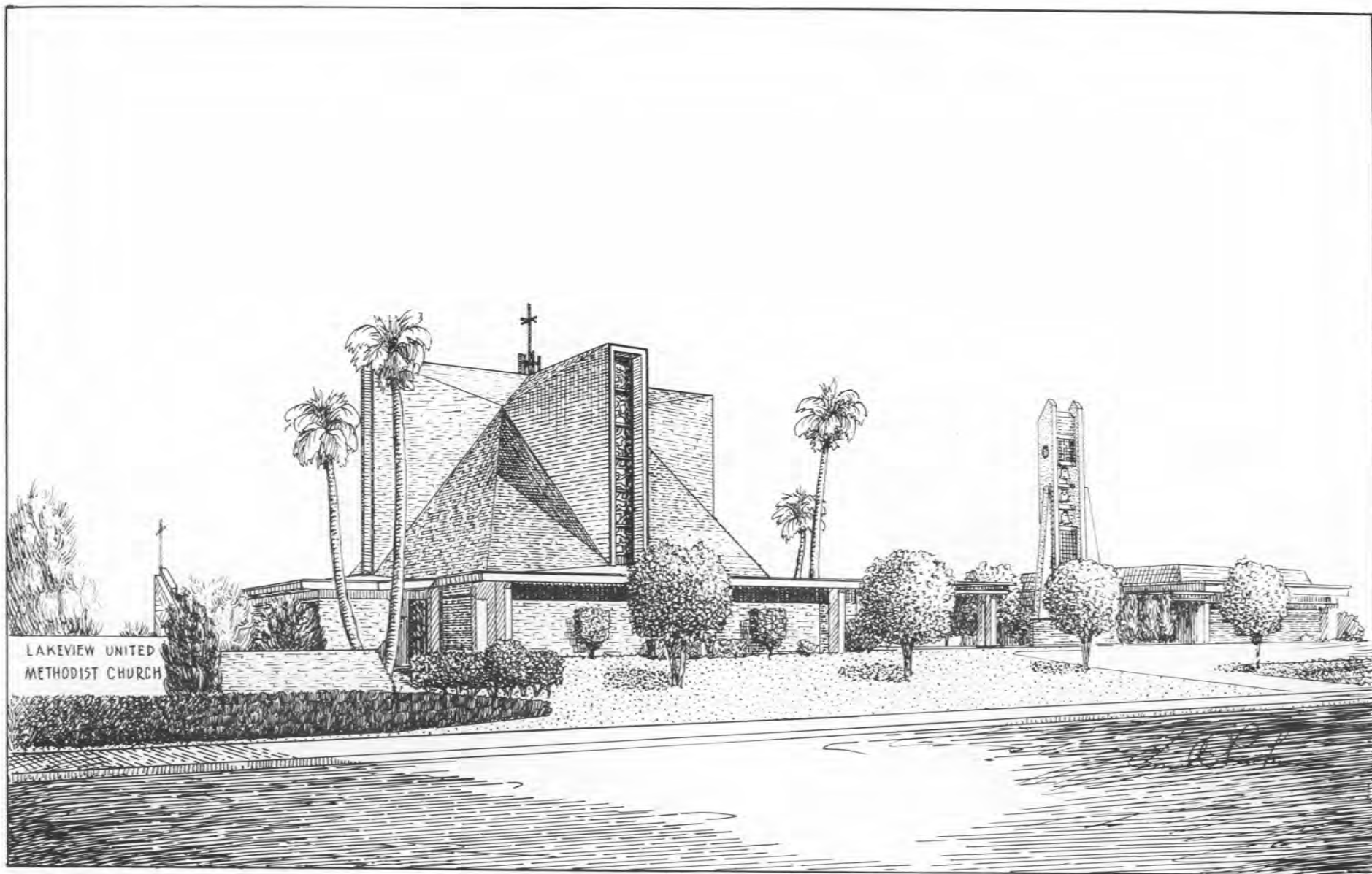
The church buildings are grouped about a courtyard with a centrally located fountain, designed by Kent Addison of St. Louis. Just off the courtyard to the west is the Nelle Wright Chapel seating 60 people. The administration building and Smoot Hall complete the enclosure of the landscaped court. Future plans include a bell tower to be added to this building group.

This active congregation supports many instructional and social programs for its members and the Sun City community.



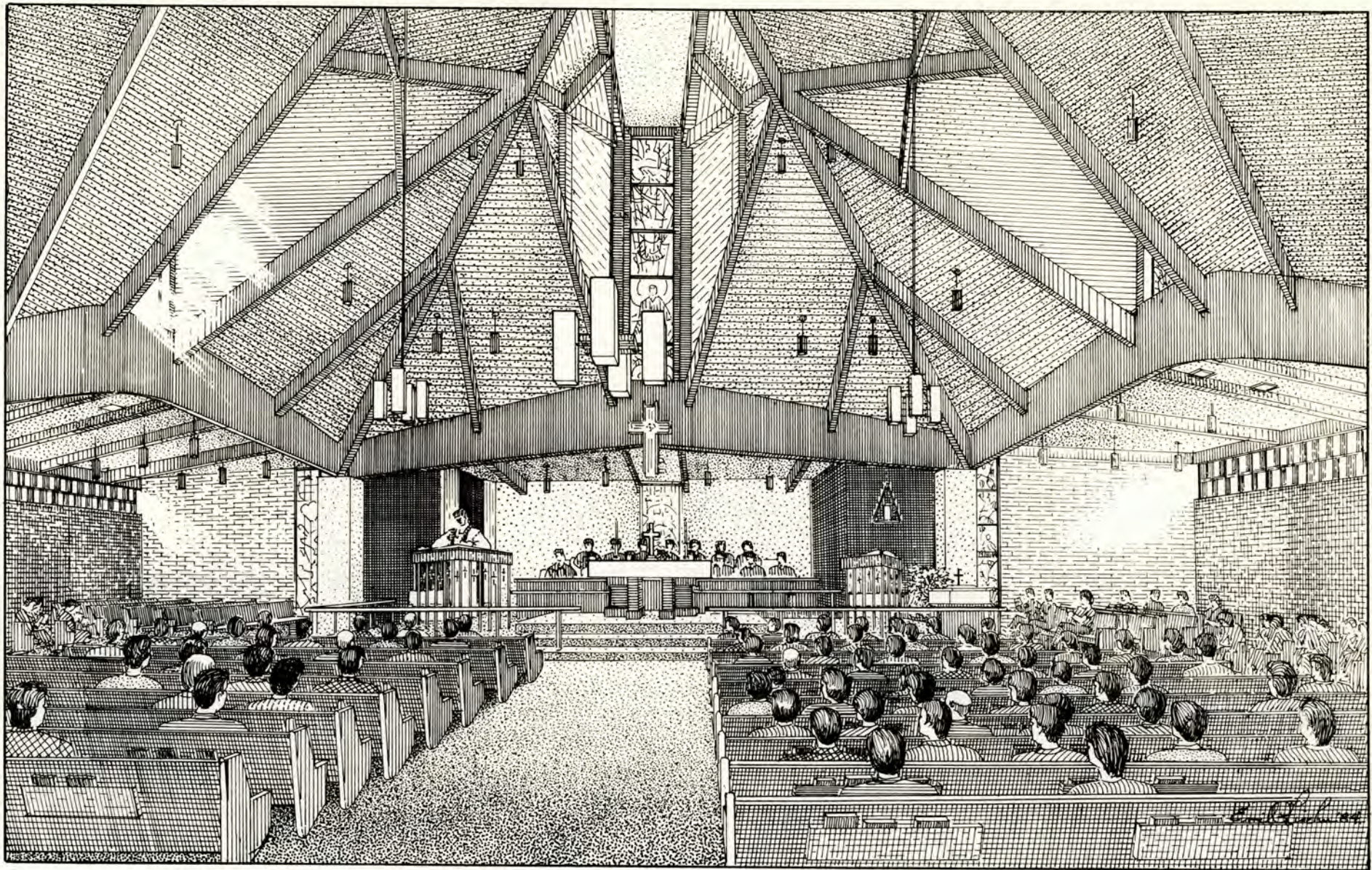
Garden fountain and statue of Christ





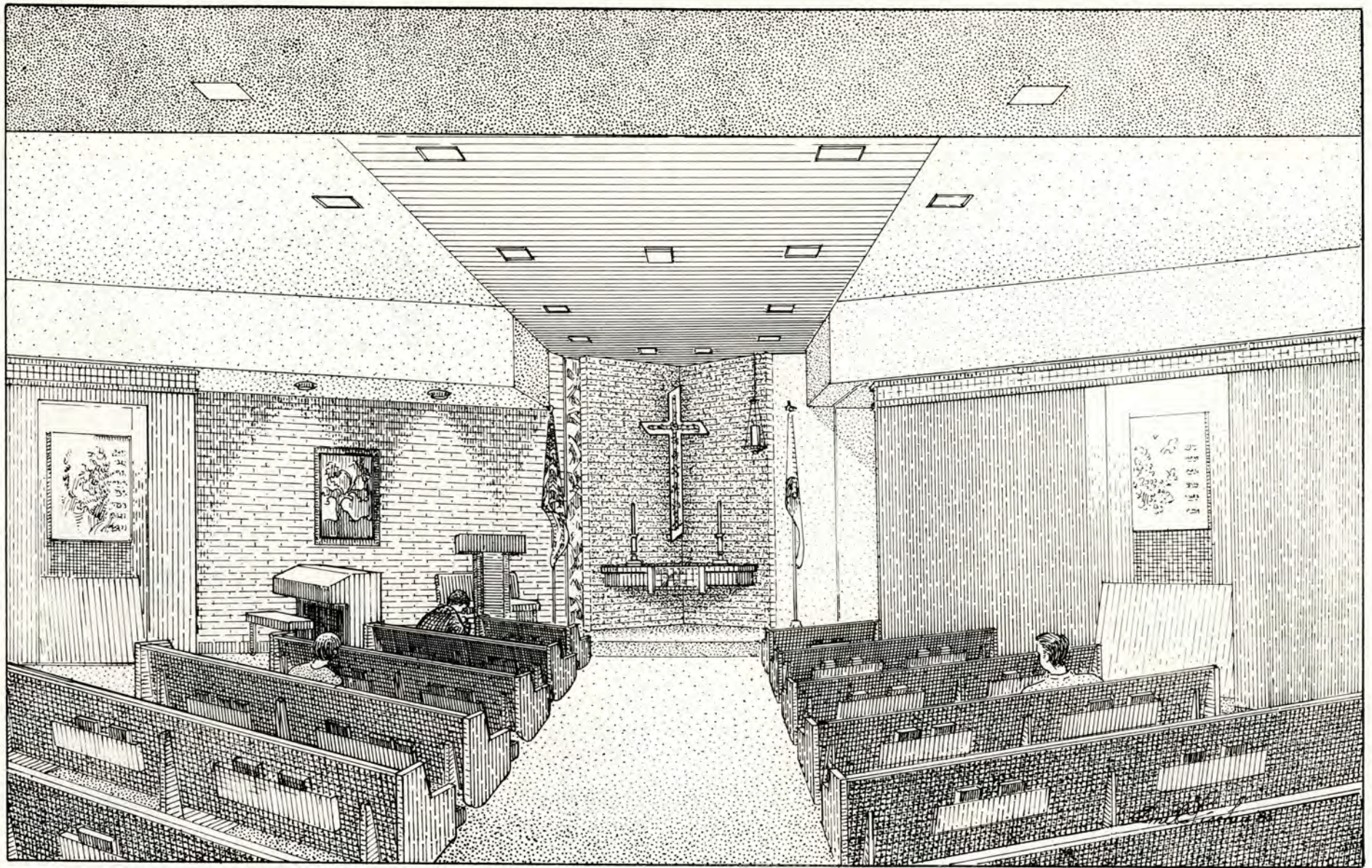
View of church and fellowship hall from Thunderbird Blvd.  
Campanile added in 1987.





Interior of Lakeview United Methodist Church





Interior of Nelle Wright Memorial Chapel - Lakeview United Methodist Church



## SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

This Sun City West church at 13658 Meeker Blvd., is one of three recently completed on adjacent sites. All three contrast considerably in architectural character.

The stepped central motif and large vertical wall surfaces, pierced by a pattern of small square windows, form a distinct contrast to the design of the other Methodist churches in Sun City. Christensen-Miller & Associates were the architects of this sanctuary that appears to seat more than its 650 capacity. A spacious narthex, that is designed to accommodate an overflow of this 800 member congregation, conducts you into the sanctuary. The rather austere interior concentrates your attention to the communion table and rose window depicting the Holy Spirit as its central motif. The colored glass surrounding this central feature suggests flocks of sheep in a stylized pastoral setting. Six "soft" relief panels attached to one side wall balance the opposite wall pierced by windows. Seating for a choir of 50 voices banks the left wall.

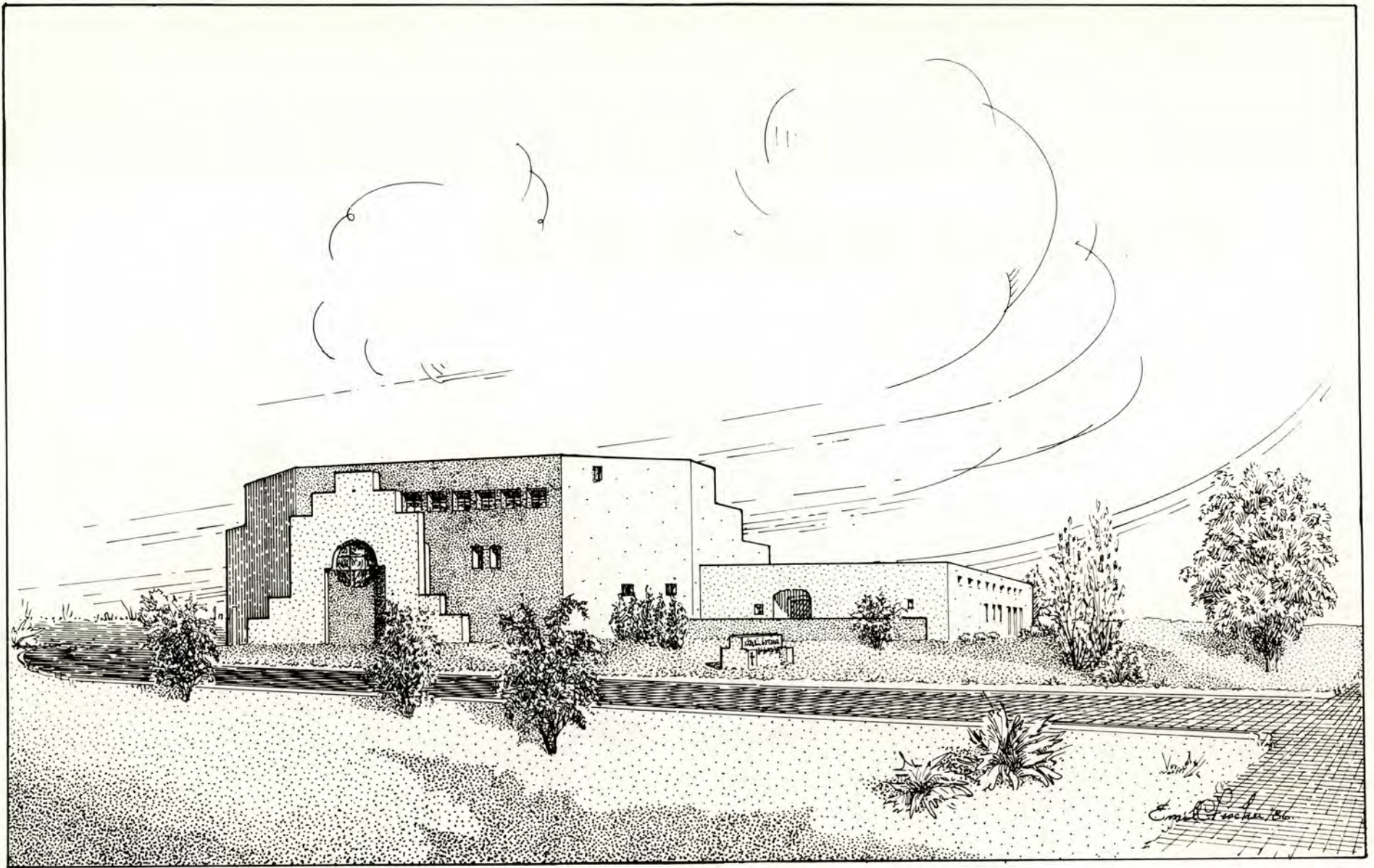
A social hall seating 135 completes this religious grouping, but plans are afoot to increase the size of the social hall and add a chapel.

A campanile or bell tower separated from the church was designed to blend with the architectural character of the church and adds interest for the visitor and members as they walk under the covered passage, from the parking lot to the sanctuary.



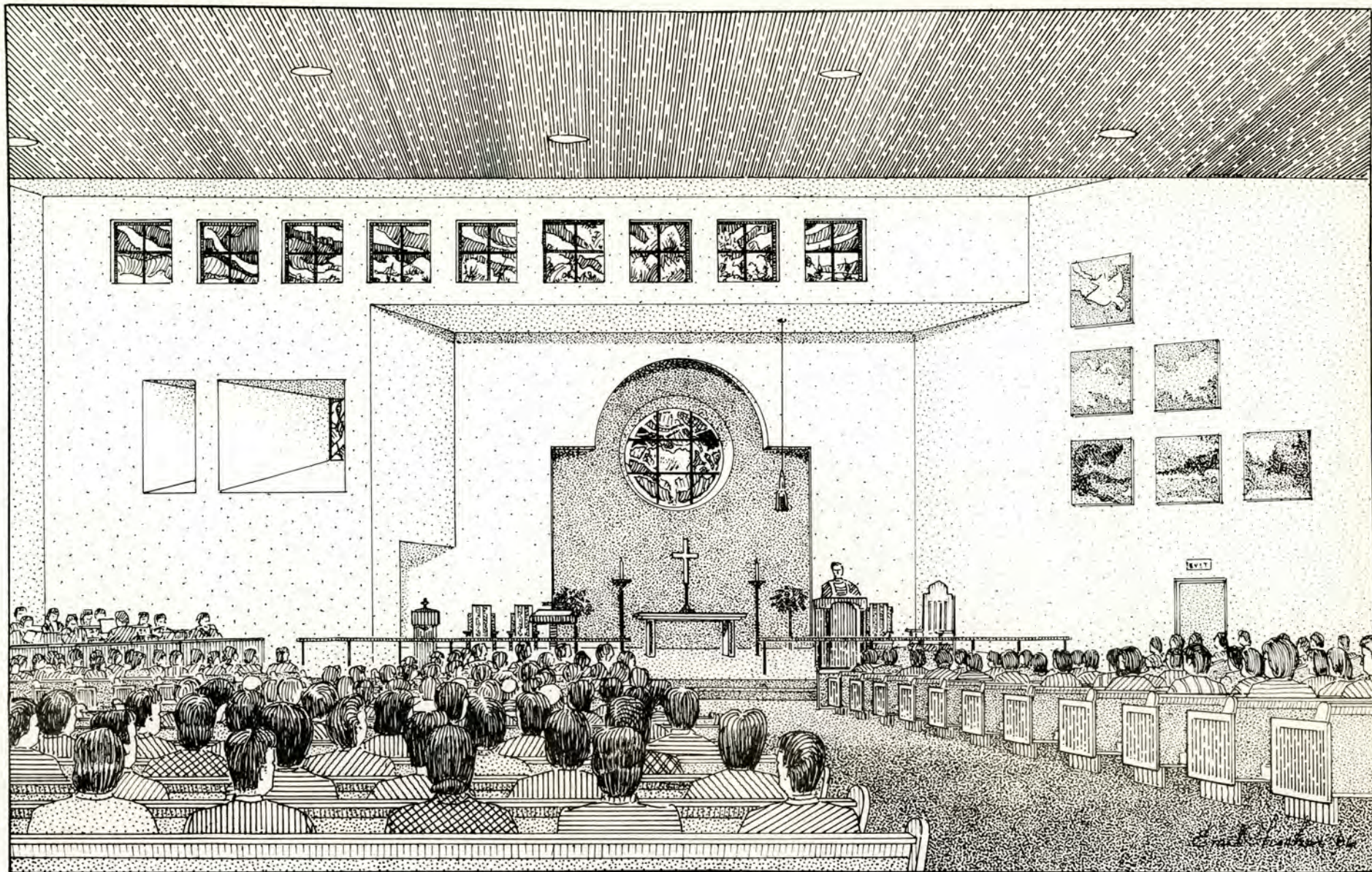
Bell tower and garden





Approach to the church from Meeker Blvd.





Interior of Shepherd of the Hills



## WILLOWBROOK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

With the expansion of homes north of Bell Road it became evident that another Methodist church would be needed. Under the jurisdiction of the District Church Extension Society, Rev. Albert J. Wilson, an experienced new church developer, was invited to become the organizing pastor in January 1976.

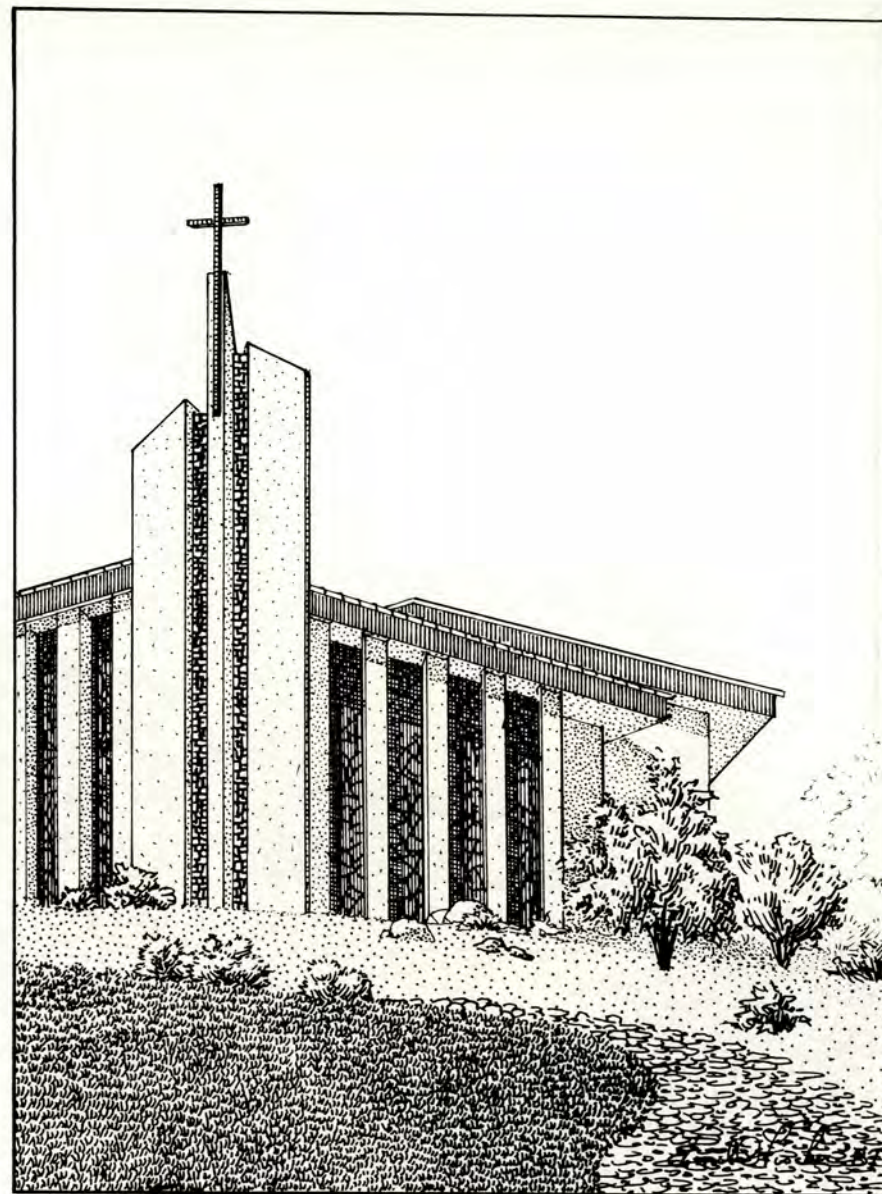
The first service was held Easter Sunday, April 18 in the Bell Recreation Center social hall; the choir consisted of four people. At the conclusion of the service 37 people joined the church. A tract of land, 4.6 acres, was purchased in September of that year to be used for a permanent home at 19390 N. 99th Avenue.

The membership had grown to 277 by 1977 and in August members voted to proceed with the building of a church edifice. Ground breaking took place on May 7, 1978 and construction began. The first service in the new sanctuary was held on Sunday, October 7, 1979 and it was consecrated by church officials October 14. Rev. Wilson retired in 1983.

The parish of 1,370 members is nurtured by "Neighborhood Groups" whose caring and spiritual enrichment helps fulfill the needs of the congregation. Besides two services every Sunday, there are Bible classes, intercessory prayer groups, a 100-voice choir and active groups serving all members.

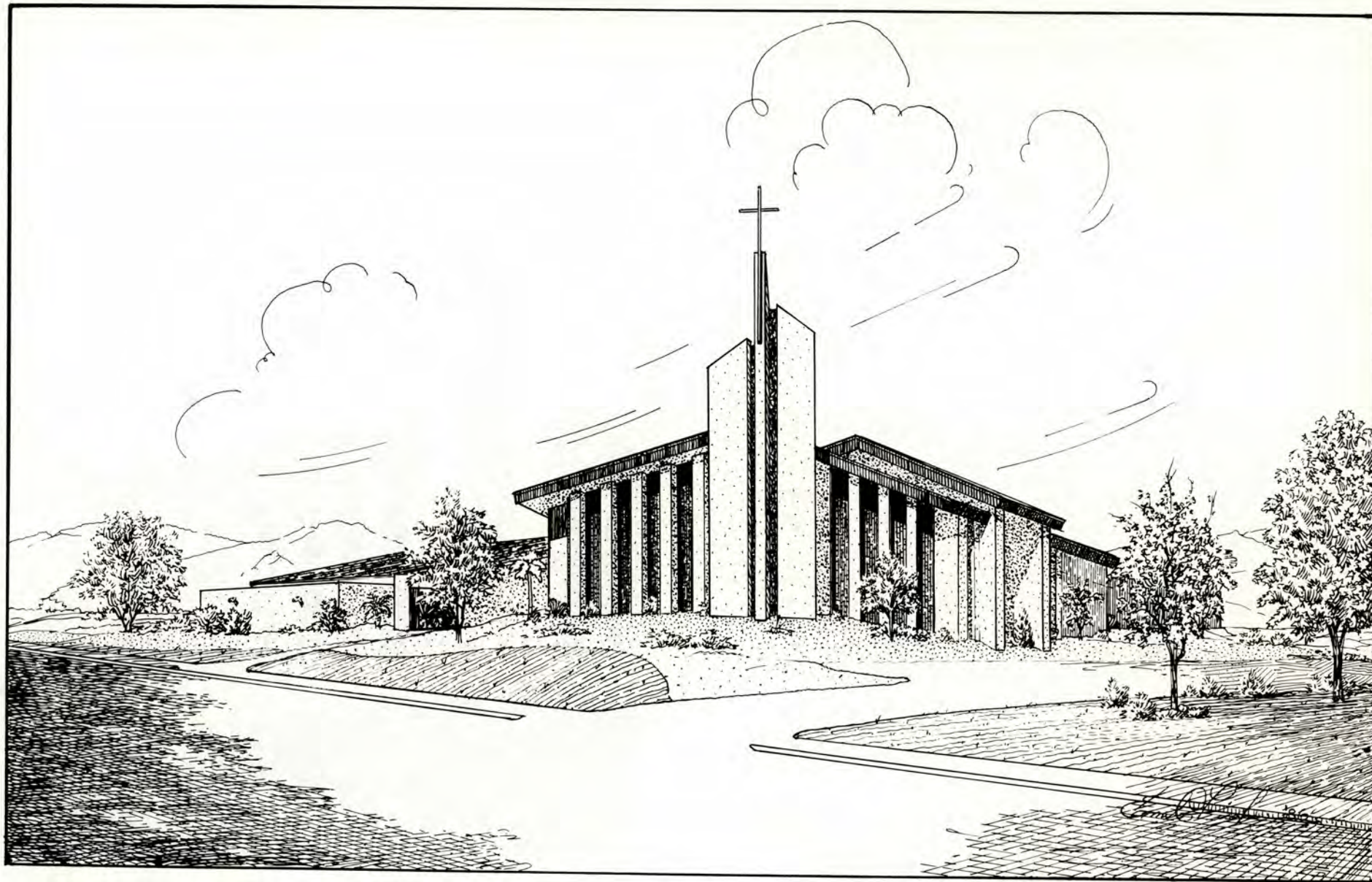
The church has a strong mission program serving local, national and international programs. It also sponsors a whirl of social activities.

Willowbrook is a friendly church, strong on spiritual uplift, social responsibility, organization and study. It is widely known for its forward-looking ministerial leadership.



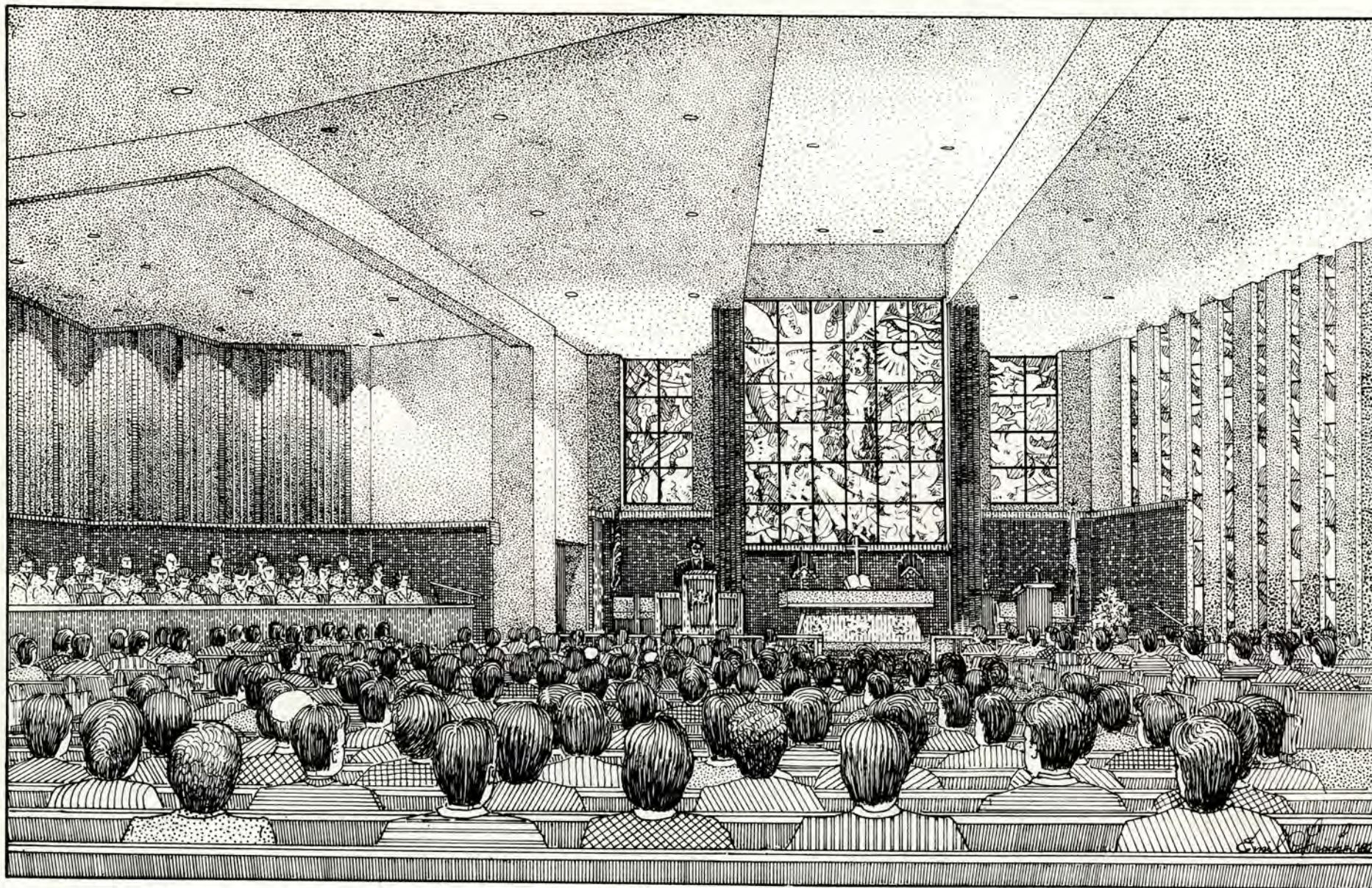
The vertical slabs of masonry comprising this tower mark the location of this church as far away as Bell Road...





Willowbrook United Methodist Church faces the intersection of 99th Avenue and Saddle Ridge Drive  
Dean L. Glasco Architects Inc.





The beautiful stain glass windows and soft lighting contribute to the religious environment of the sanctuary



## COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

The tiny mission church named "Covenant" made its humble beginning on January 10, 1978, when two Sun Citians interested in establishing a Bible teaching church in the area met with Rev. Garrit DeYoung, Pastor of the Trinity P.C.A. Church of Scottsdale. Calls were made to interested prospective members, an organist was obtained, and a room for worship was acquired. On February 14, 1979 at 9:00 a.m., 14 people attended the first service in the lecture room at the Sun City Western Savings.

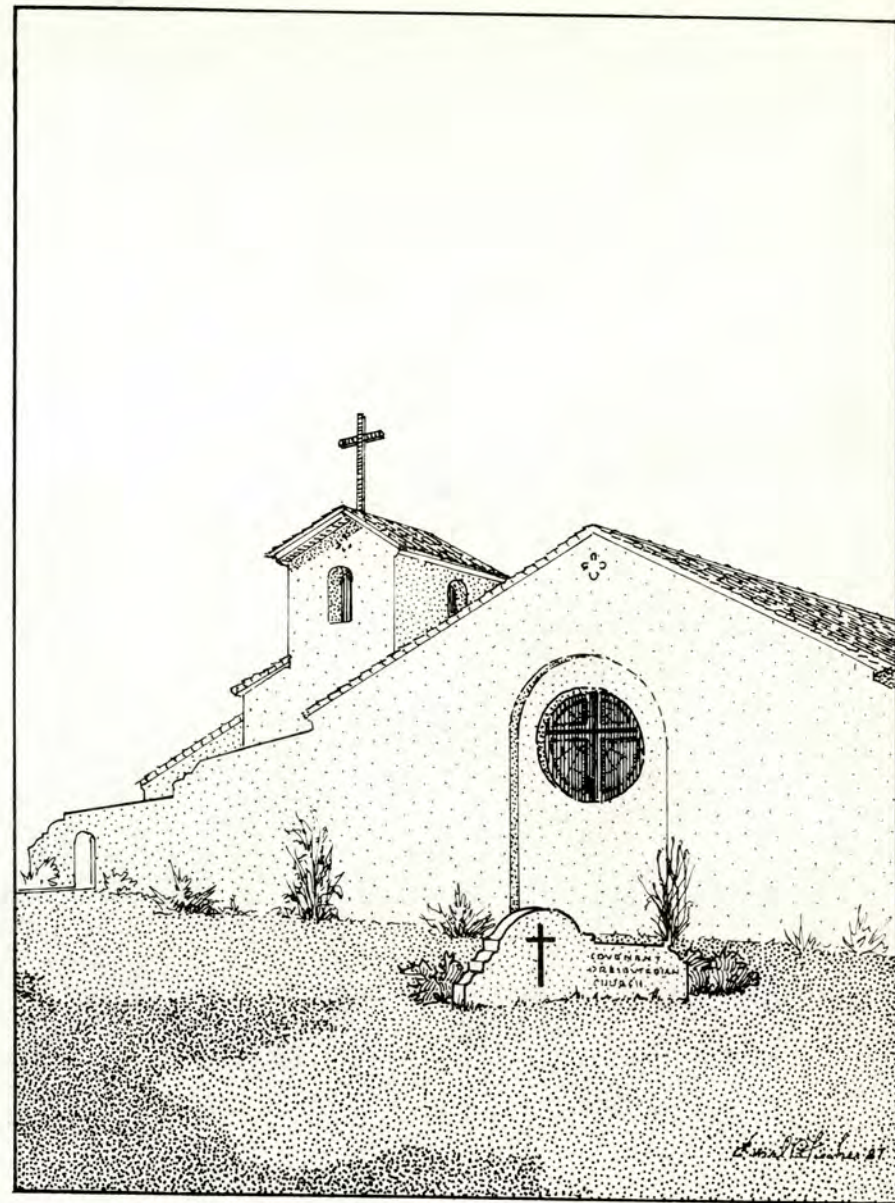
In May 1979, Rev. Donald R. Esty, of Bellwood, Washington, received the call to serve as organizing pastor and he has continued to serve ever since.

As early as 1979 a Home Study Program was inaugurated and Dr. Esty's ability to make doctrine and the Books of the Bible come alive, soon made it necessary to expand the number of meetings. These Bible studies have become an integral part of the life of the church.

In 1980 the Mission Board designated that the church move to Sun City West, and on January 27, 1980 the first service was held at the R. H. Johnson Center lecture hall.

October 1981 saw the formation of the Women in Church group which raised considerable money for the building fund. A contract was signed on November 4, 1985 with Christensen -Miller & Associates Architects, to design a mission style building of approximately 7,500 square feet. The building, completed in April 1987, is located at Spanish Gardens and Aleppo Drive.

The simple geometric shapes of the exterior masonry walls recall the forms of some of the early mission churches in the Southwest. The non-supporting "curtain" walls flanking the sanctuary are designed to be removed at a later date if expansion is necessary. Future plans visualize additions that will develop around a court.



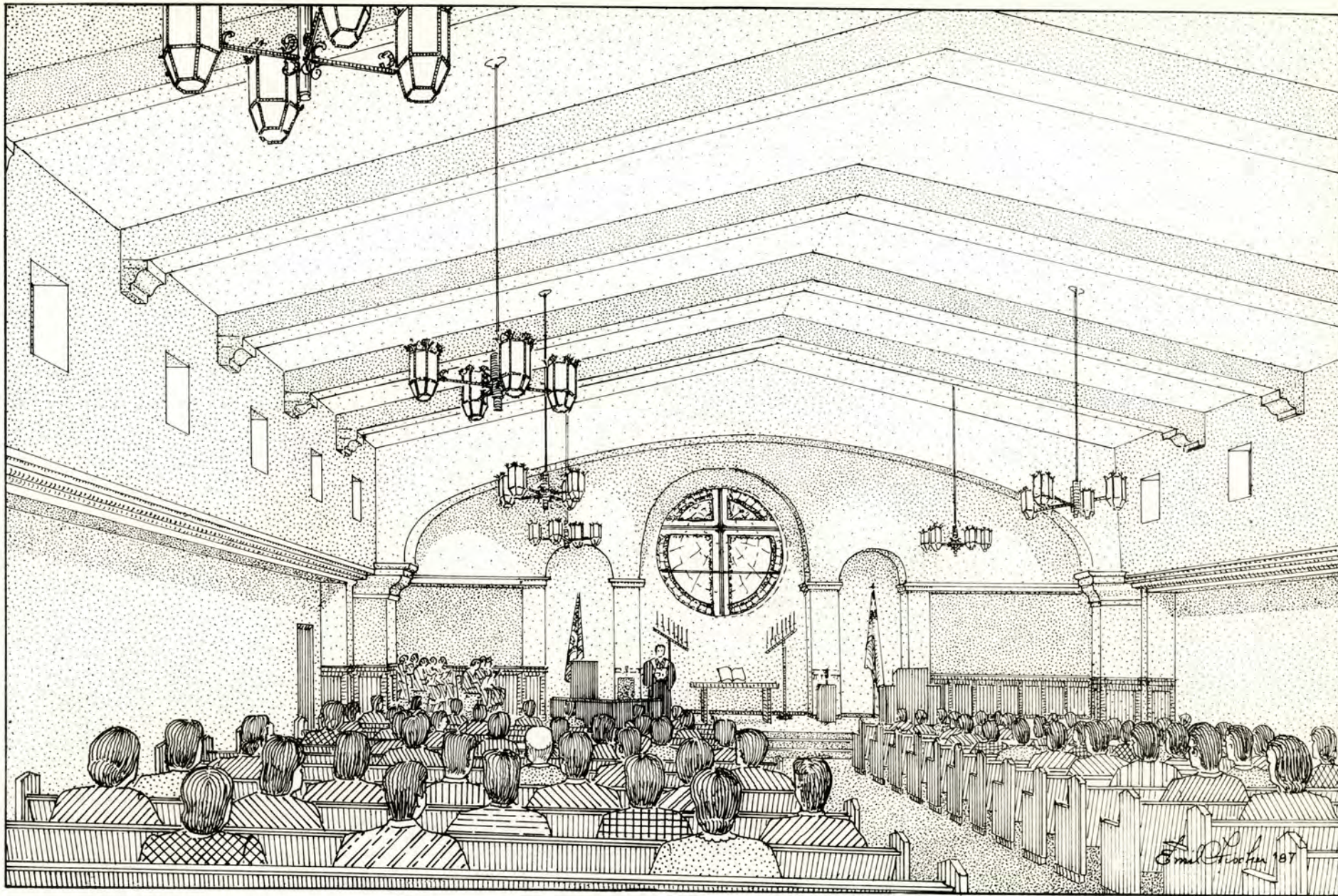
These forms, materials and textures recall the character of the mission churches of the Southwest





View of the church from Spanish Garden Drive







## DESERT PALMS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The Presbytery of the Grand Canyon authorized the formation of this congregation in 1980. Dr. Arthur Dahlberg was the first minister. The initial group of 131 members assembled in the R. H. Johnson Center social hall on Sunday mornings.

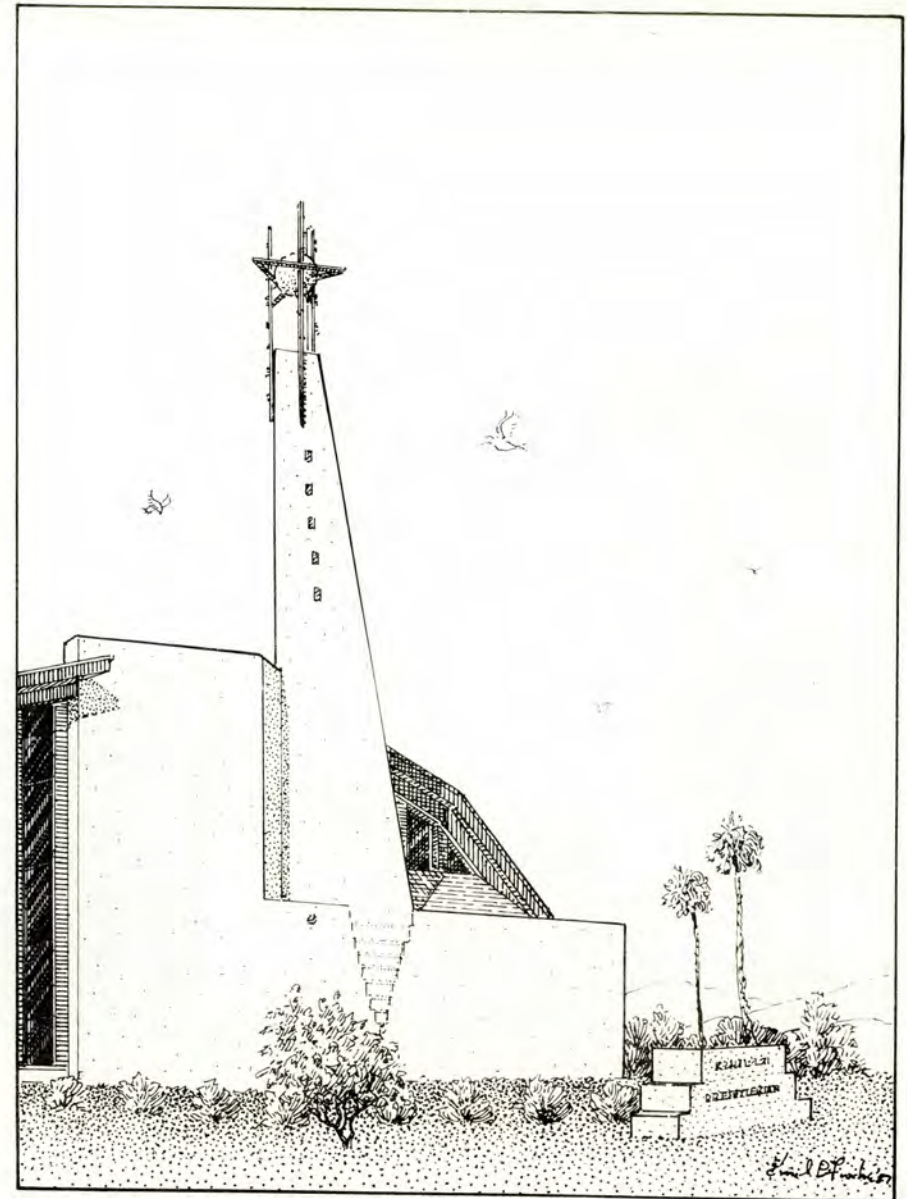
The expanding congregation erected the present building at 135th Avenue and Stardust Boulevard in Sun City West in 1986.

In addition to the usual social activities, 22 neighborhood groups have been organized to encourage fellowship, caring and better communications involving the needs of both members and non-members. Services are taped and made available for the homebound members to create a feeling of belonging and participation in the service.

Mission activities also include assisting the Interfaith program and Centro Adelante Campesino, a neighboring Mexican Aid Center in El Mirage. A scholarship program was started in 1985 to help curtail the drop-out rate in neighboring schools.

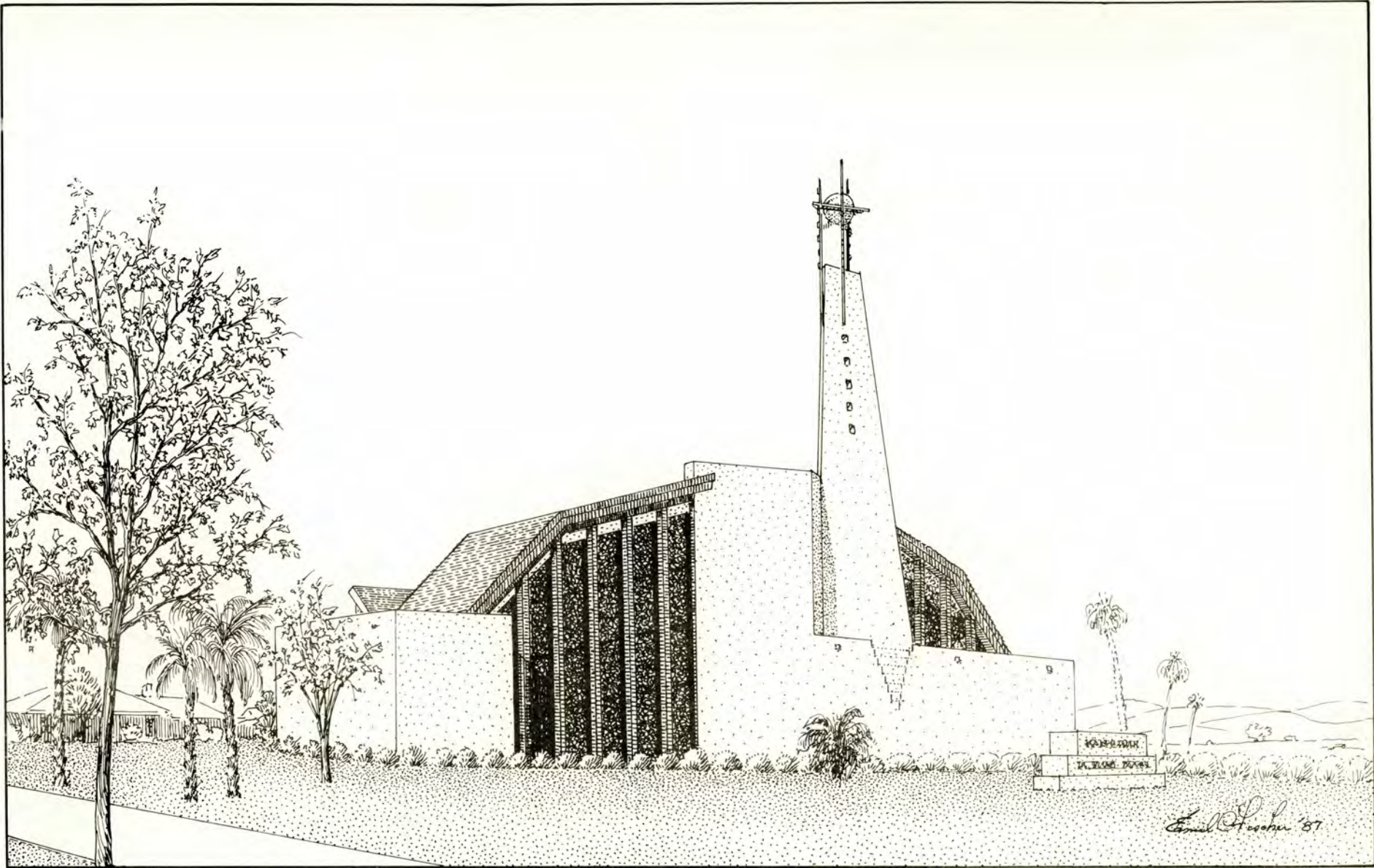
The church was designed by Taliesin Associates. Its tall triangular tower is illuminated at night and the trinity of crosses and globe at the pinnacle is visible for miles.

A domed roof, pierced by triangular gables on three sides, caps the sanctuary enclosed by walls of reinforced textured masonry. The interior details repeat the angular theme of the exterior. The pews, seating 500, are arranged so that no one is more than 50 feet from the pulpit.



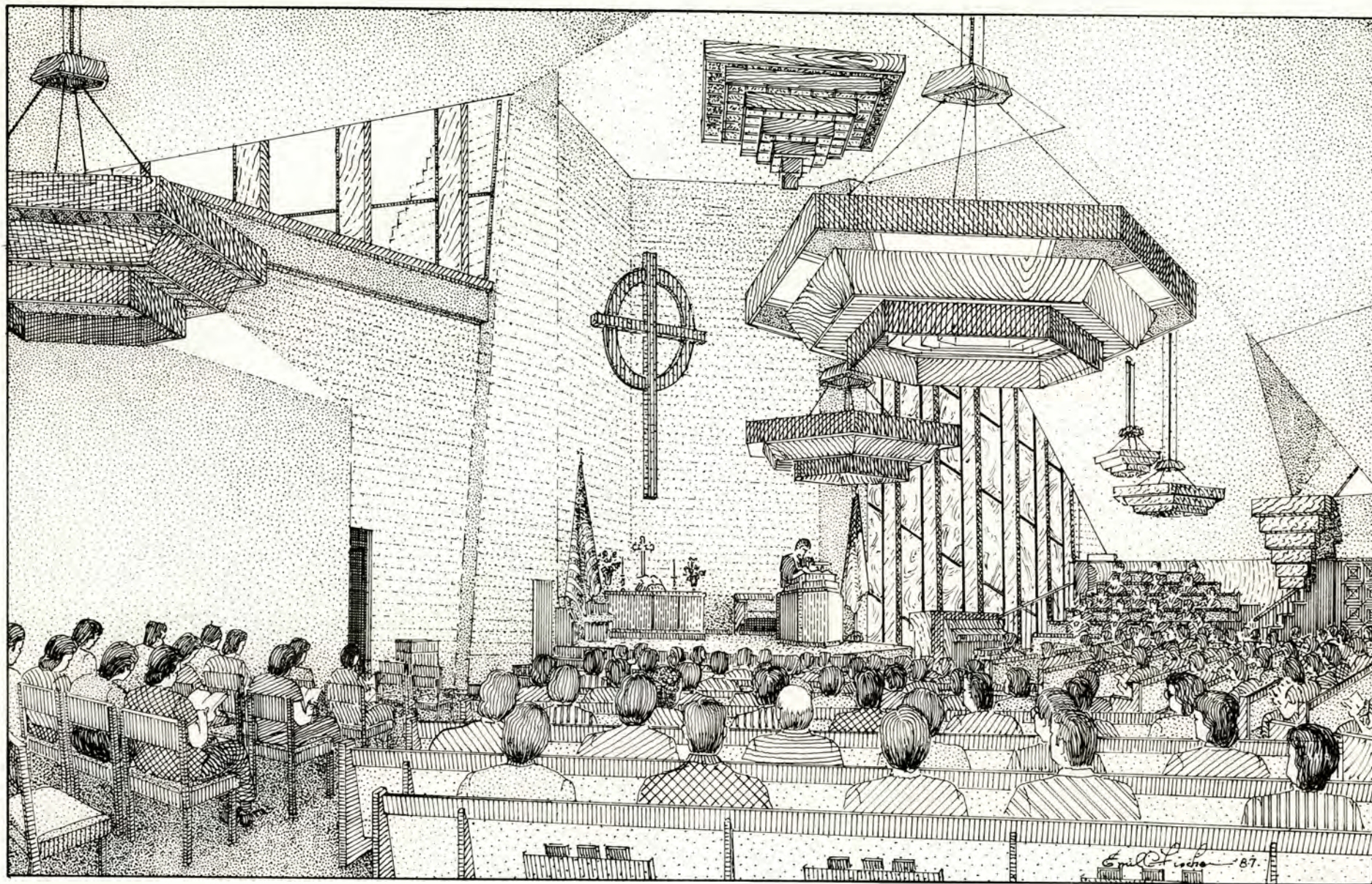
The featured motif of the facade is a triangular tower crowned by triple crosses sustaining a globe





The Desert Palms Presbyterian Church viewed from Stardust Blvd.





View of interior showing relationship of the geometric forms of the lighting fixtures, furnishings and architecture



## FAITH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

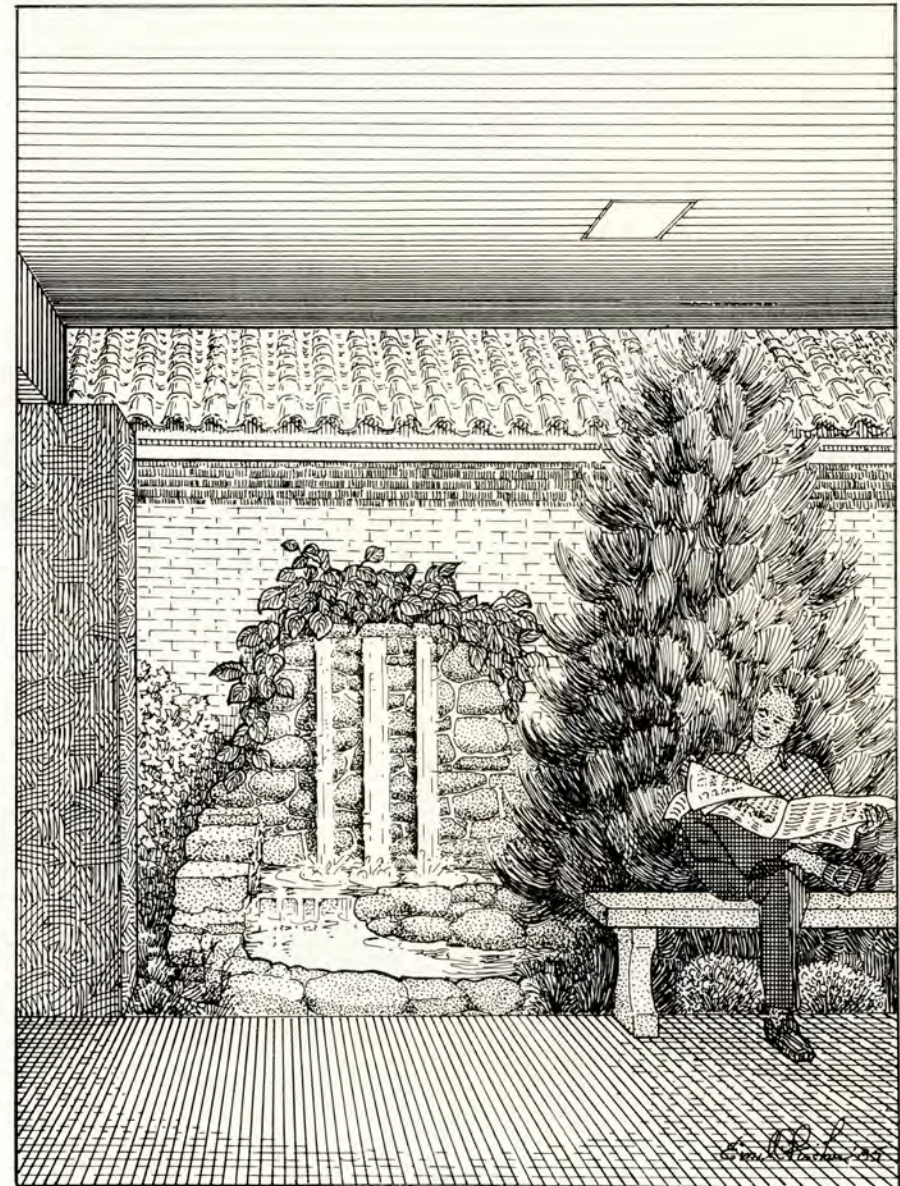
A beginning group of 89 people gathered together in February 1973, at the Fountain of Life Lutheran Church, and met there for that month. It eventually moved to Wilcrest Restaurant, Lakeview Center and the Alco Theater. Finally, in November 1975, the congregation moved into their own building, what is now known as Illingworth Hall, named for the founding pastor, Dr. Davis J. Illingworth. The sanctuary designed by Dean L. Glasco Architects Inc., was completed in 1978.

In 1986 the Memorial Chapel, classrooms and expanded office space were completed. The firm of Francis A. Schulz Architects Ltd., were the designers of this addition.

A ministry which seeks to provide regular opportunity for worship, a variety of study programs, opportunities for spiritual growth, times for fellowship and training for social witness is possible only because of the hours of leadership time provided by members.

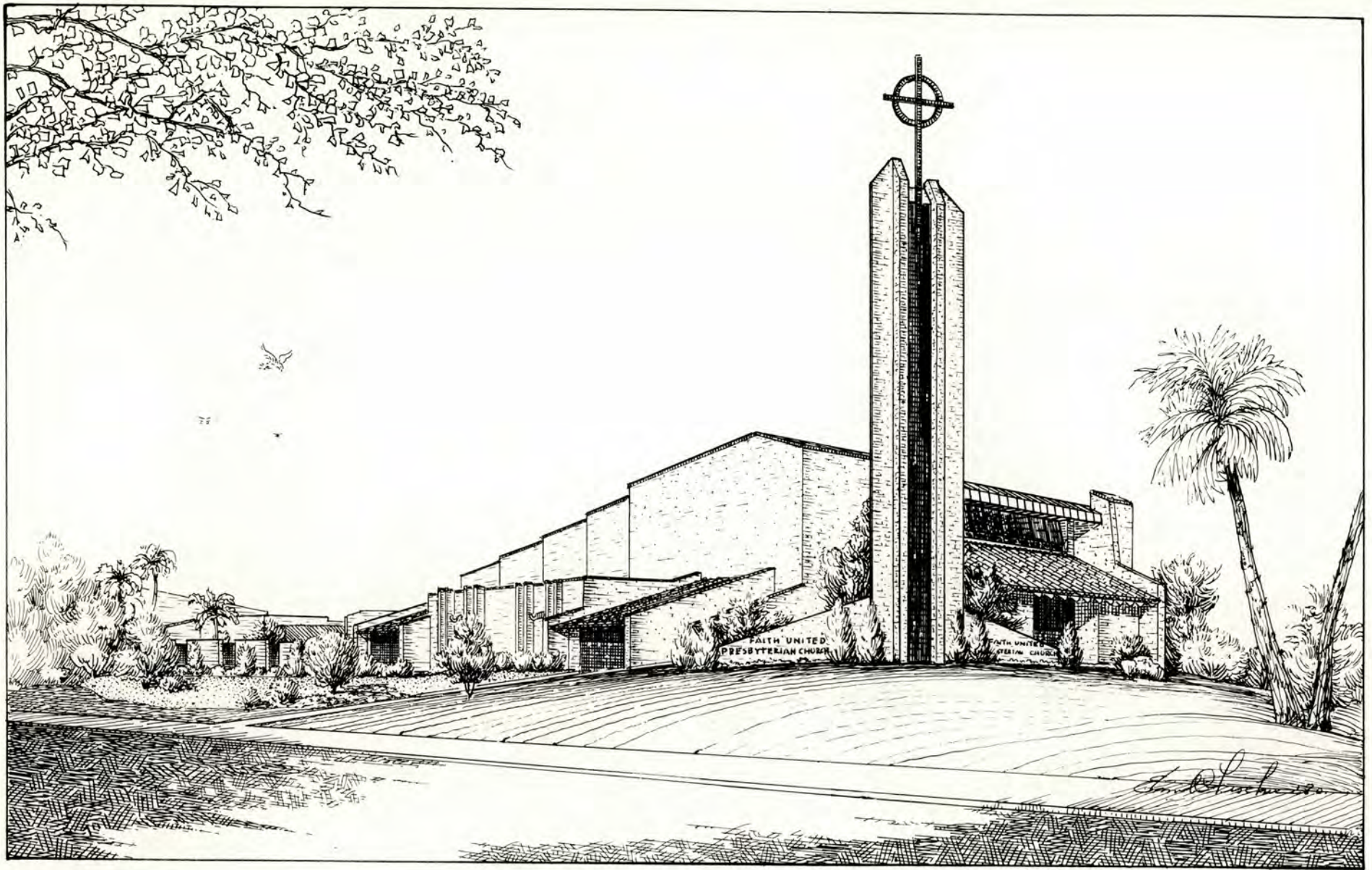
Thirty-six ordained Deacons head up a system of neighborhood groupings, which allows face to face contacts for a large congregation. In addition to financial support for world ministry, the church has organized a program entitled "Aging Creatively Today" to help in training future ordained ministers and to present discoveries and insights concerning ministry with older adults.

Central to the working philosophy of the church is the conviction that the church exists to help people live meaningful lives. Because churches in Sun City have more experienced, creative members with available time, the church seeks to help such members find ways in which they may use their skills in serving others. The response to this challenge is what makes this church the vital, exciting place it is.



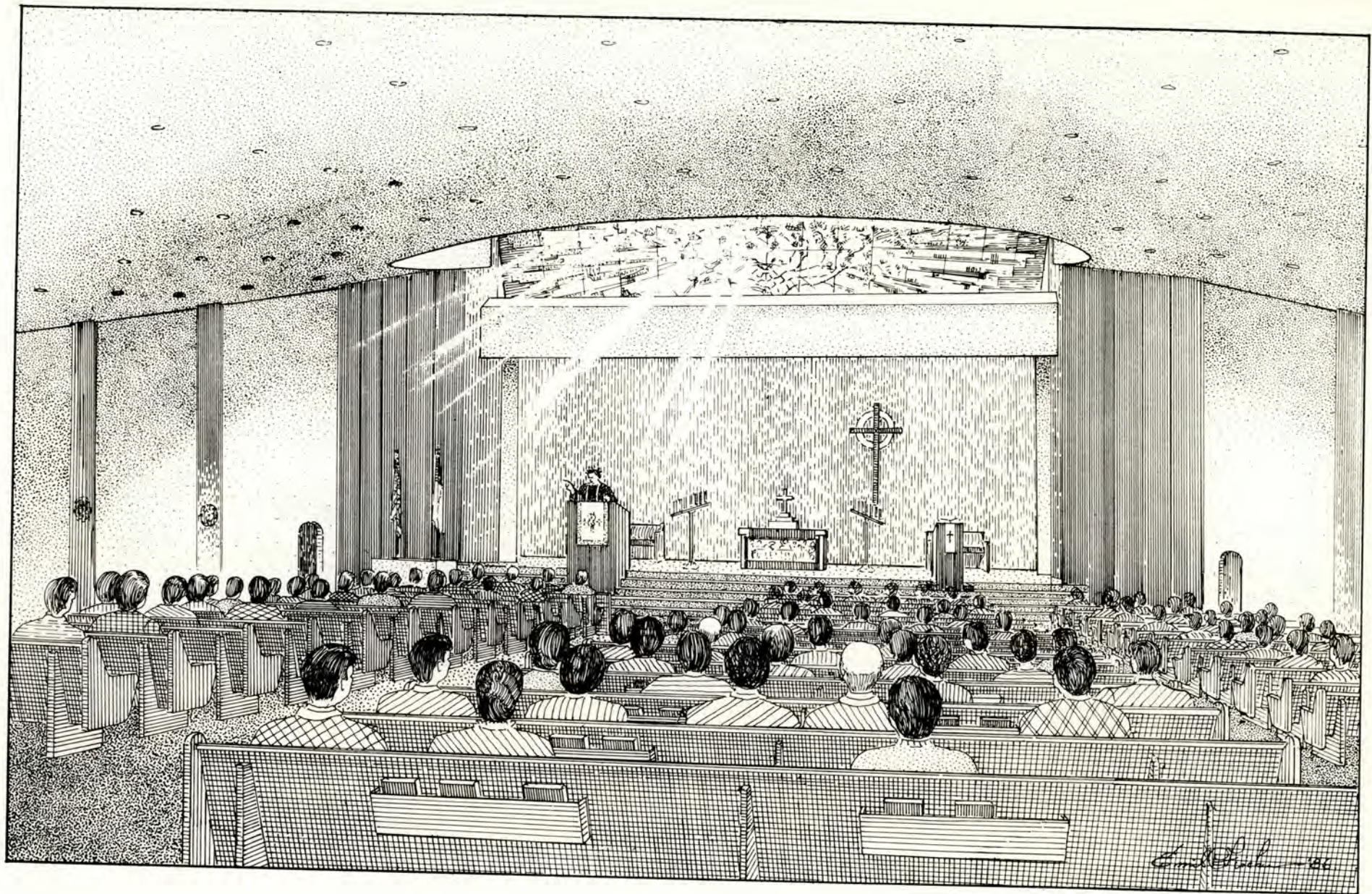
A wall fountain provides interest in the garden flanking the covered passageway to the sanctuary





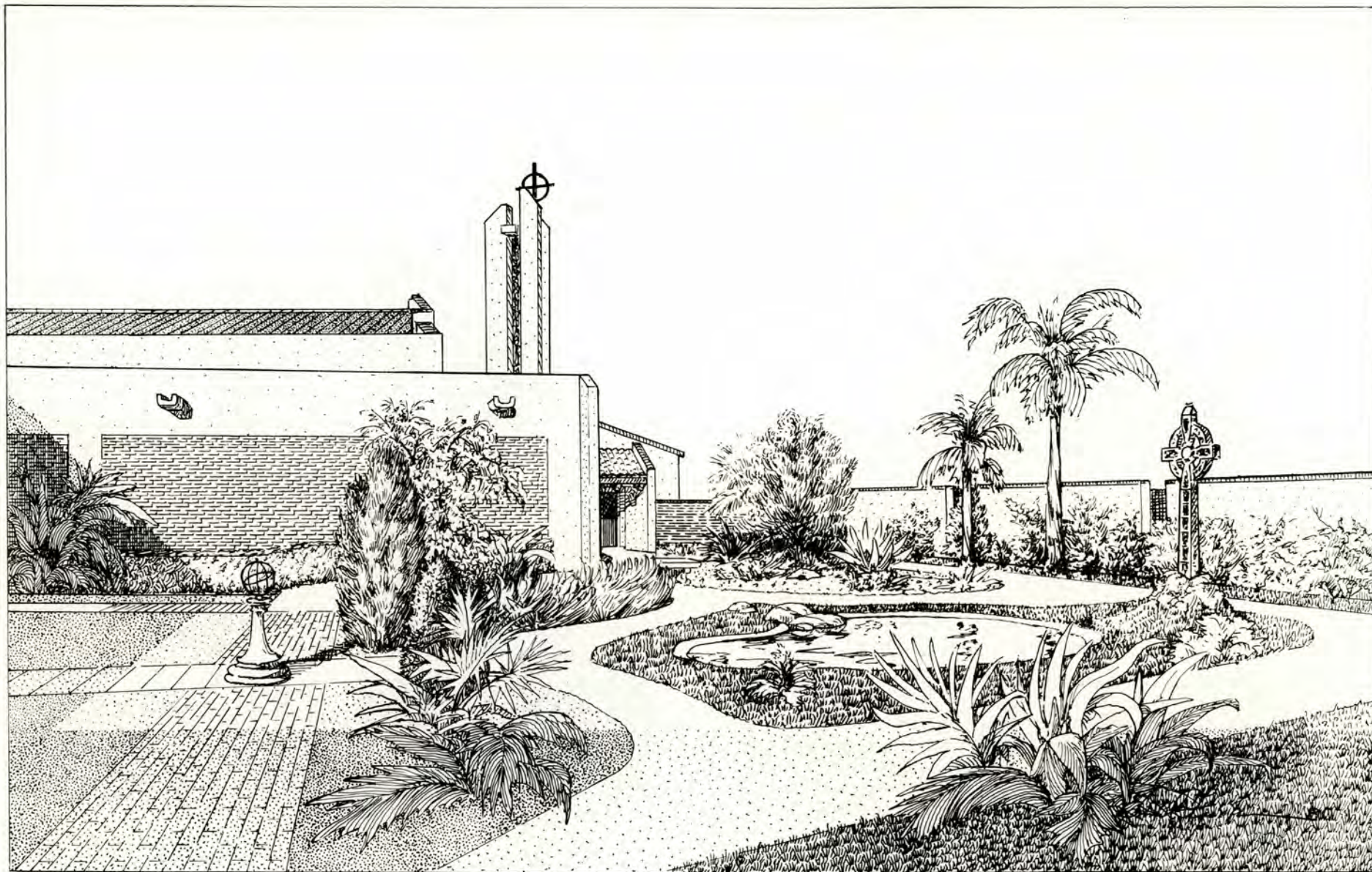
View of church from Del Webb Blvd.





The choir of Faith Presbyterian Church is seated behind a translucent movable mesh curtain





The Garden of Meditation



## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

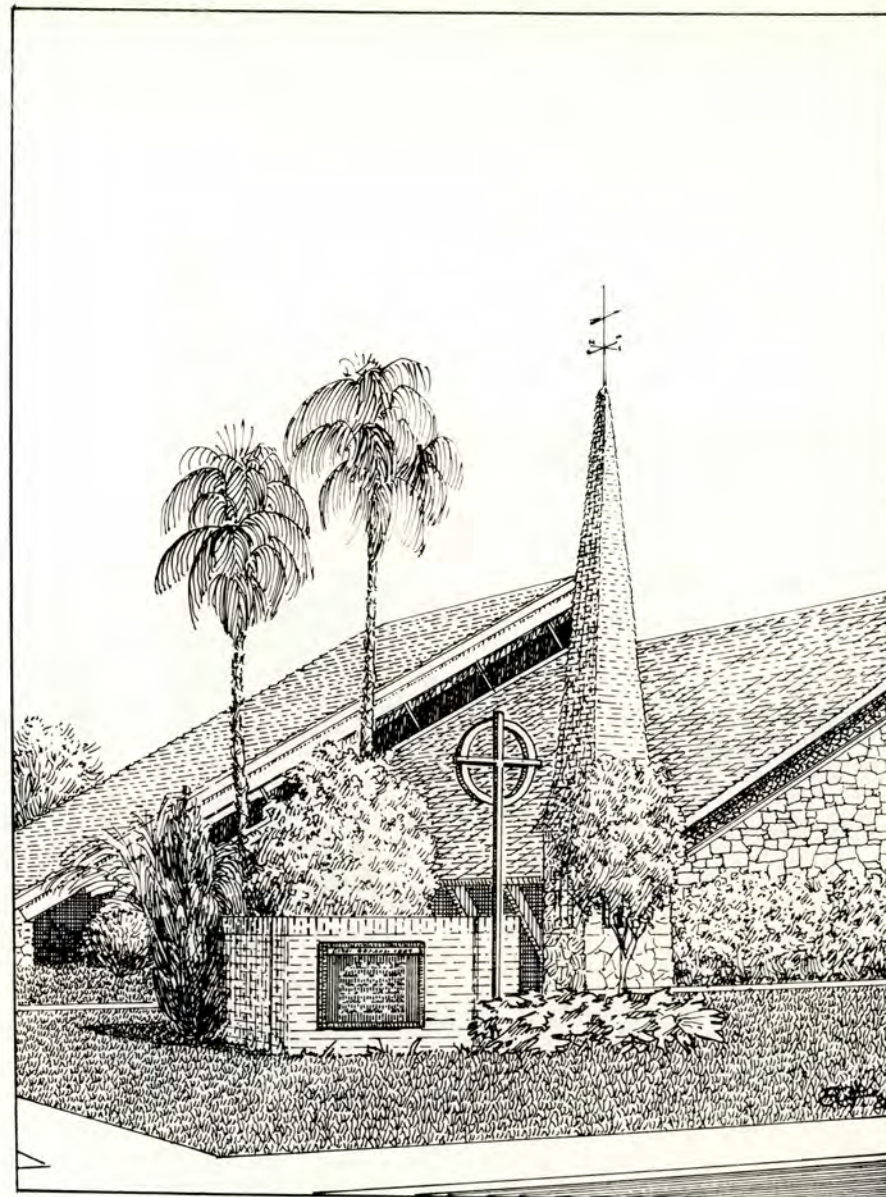
From its beginning the church was involved in serving Sun City and the surrounding area, through its members volunteering time and talents to many different organizations. Church members have been involved for many years assisting the educational programs in the Dysart School System, serving as volunteers at Boswell Hospital, nursing homes, American Red Cross, Hospice, Recorded Reading for the Blind, Interfaith Services and the Community Fund. The church also opens its facilities to be used by outside organizations.

A rather unique feature of the ministry is its annual University of Life Program which is open to the entire public. This was highlighted in early 1987 by the presence of the world renowned author and lecturer, Dr. Elton Trueblood, who presented a series of lectures over a period of four weeks. Other educational programs are the weekly Bible Study Series and discussion groups to which all are invited.

Probably the most important aspect of the outreach ministry of the church is the weekly radio program "Reflections on Life" which is broadcast each Sunday morning. This program reaches throughout the Valley. It is a program of fine Christian music and a meditation by the pastor of the church, and provides an opportunity for the listener to relate to a local congregation.

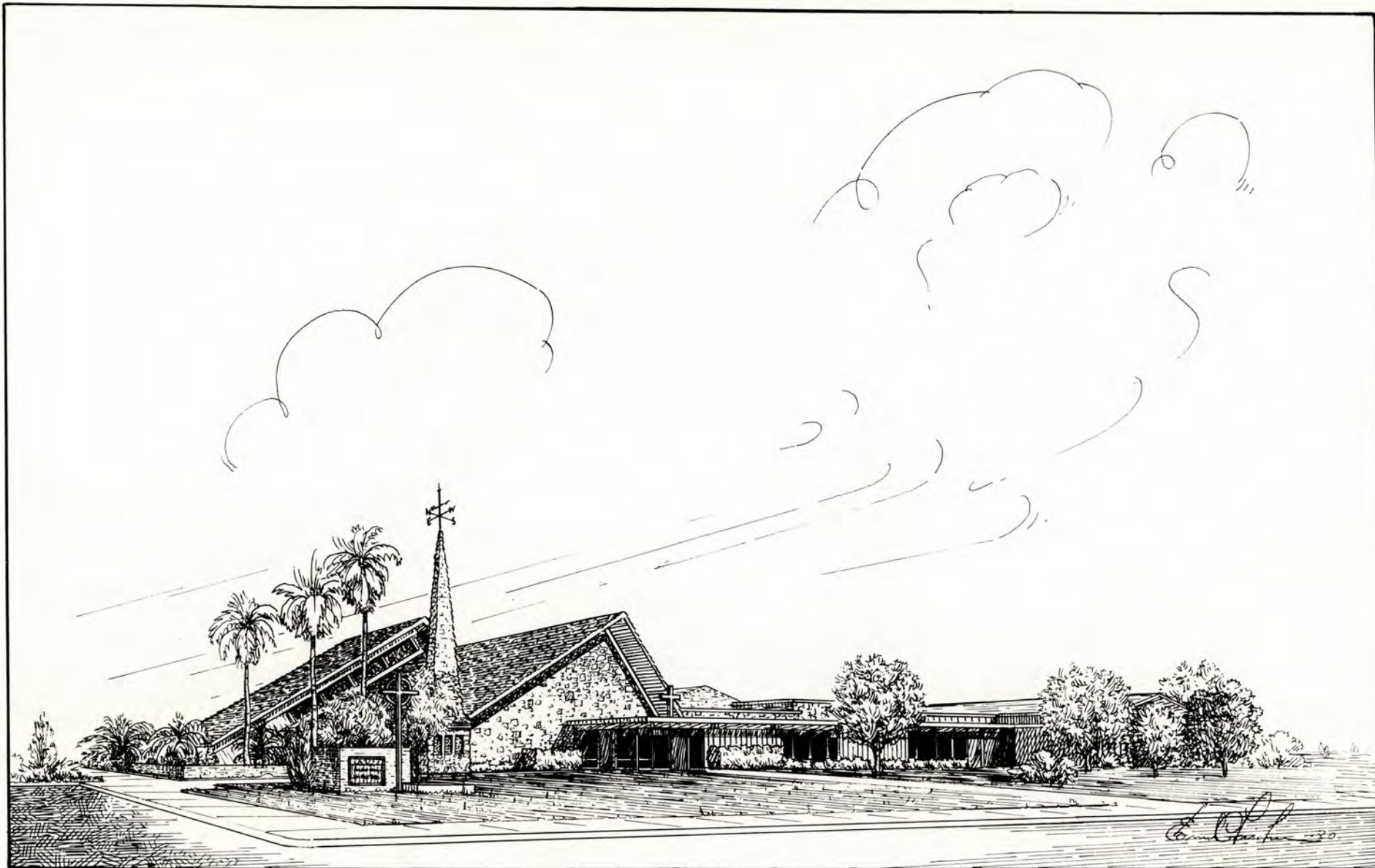
The congregation of this church began in 1963 when a group of 52 persons met for religious services in Town Hall (Fairway Center). Under the leadership of the Rev. Charles A. Surber, the congregation increased rapidly and the first unit of this church complex, located at 12225 N. 103rd Avenue, was erected in 1966. This portion of the present sanctuary was designed by Architect Wallace H. Brown, a member of the congregation. Several years later the sanctuary was extended to seat 550.

Continuing growth to a congregation of 1,300 required additional construction, including enlargement of the sanctuary, a beautiful chapel seating 145, and additional office space designed by Dean L. Glasco Architects Inc.



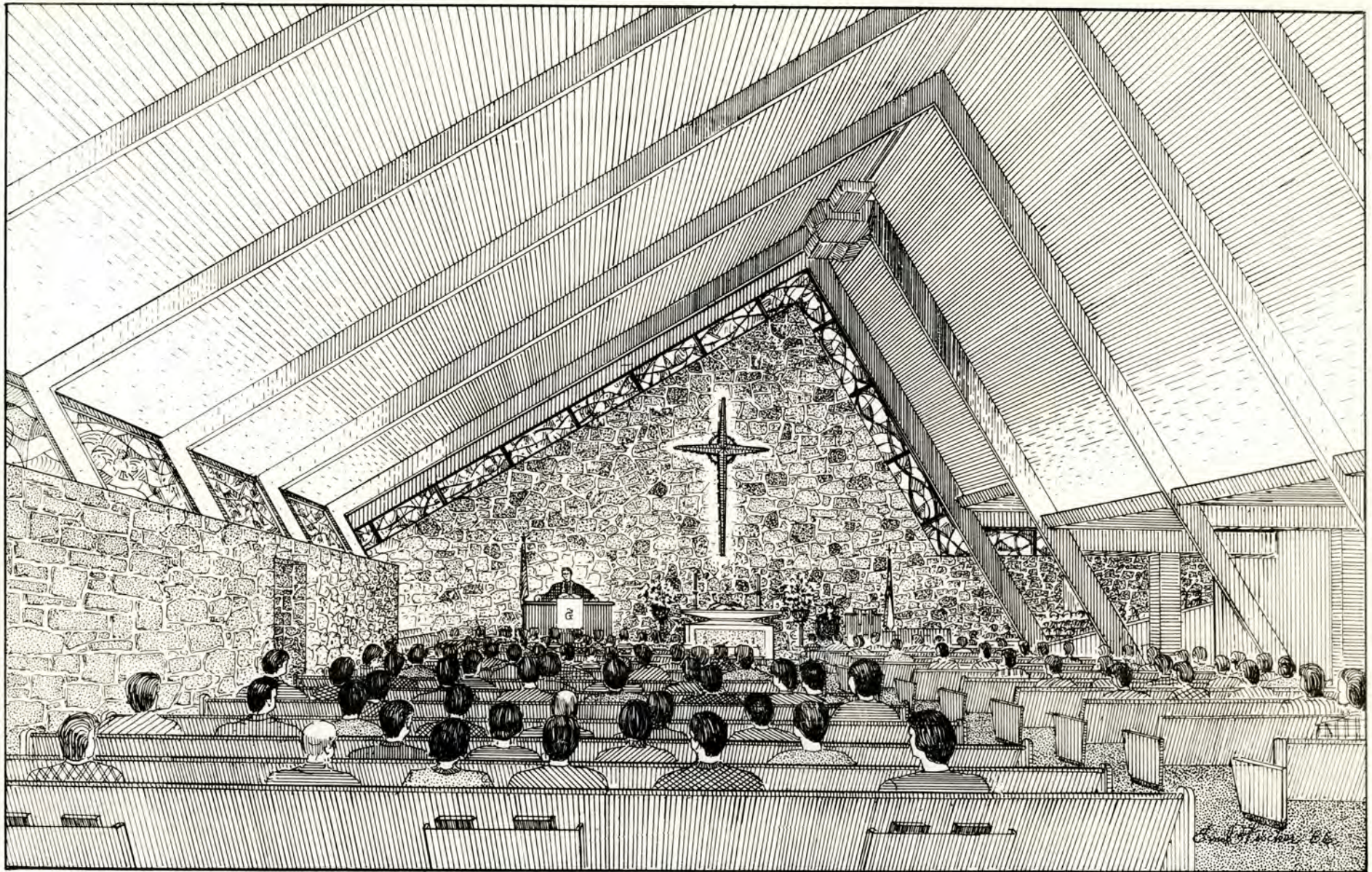
The memorial tower adds interest to the large shingled roof of the sanctuary





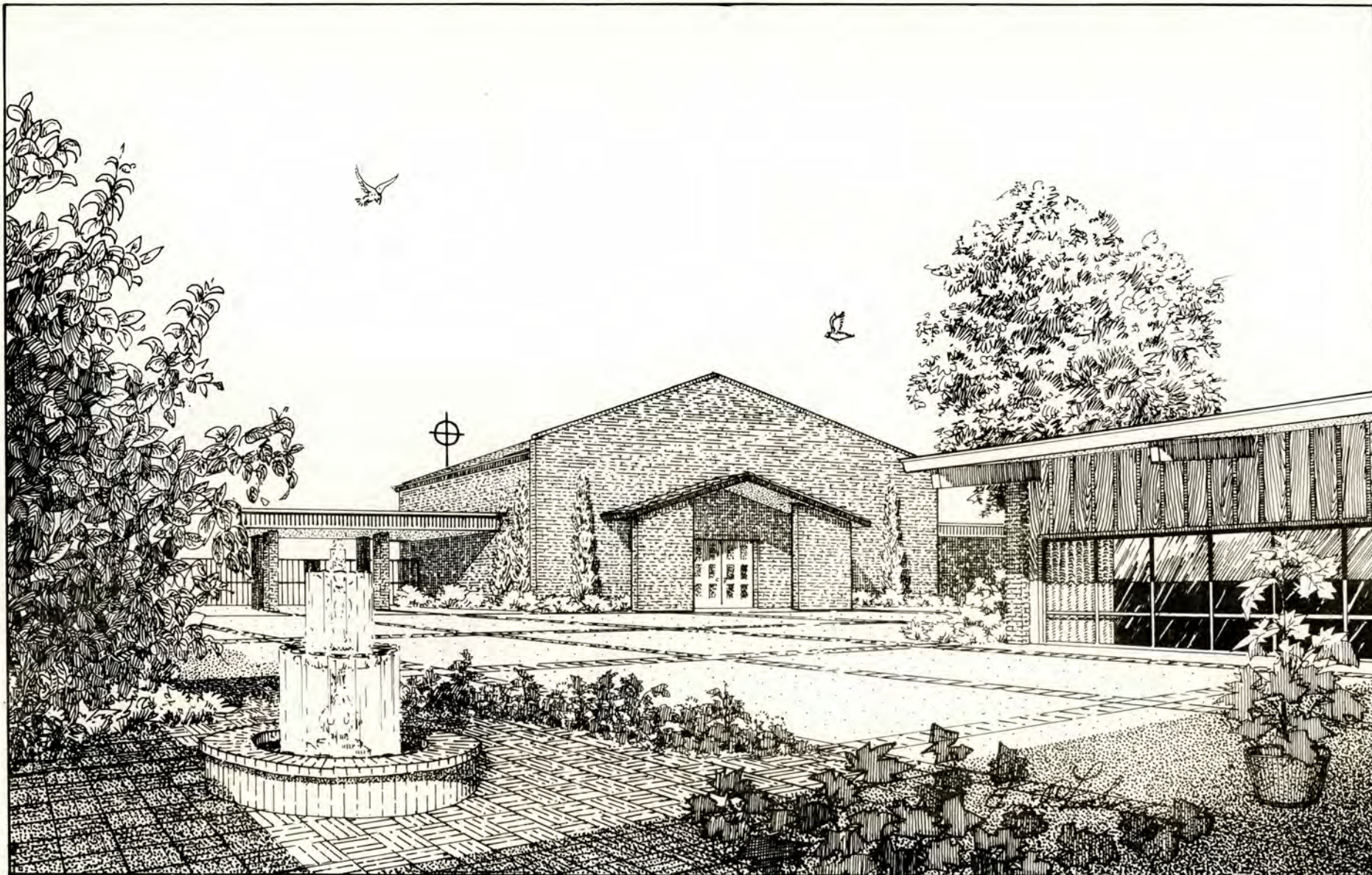
The church and narthex viewed from 103rd Avenue





Interior of the First Presbyterian Church





The Interior court and entrance to the chapel. Swain Hall is illustrated to the right



## THE SALVATION ARMY

The Salvation Army, founded in 1865, is an international religious and charitable movement organized and operated on a quasi-military pattern and is a branch of the Christian Church. The motivation of the organization is love of God and a practical concern for the needs of humanity.

The Sun City area center, now located at 10730 Union Hills Drive, serves the area offering Sunday worship service, casework counseling, youth and family programs, music programs, men's and women's groups, visitation and information and referral.

It was in 1972, Lt. Col. Goerge B. Russell came to Sun City and operated out of a small office located in the Sun City Professional Building at 103rd and Coggins Avenue. Twenty-five volunteers assisted him.

Two outstanding projects carried out each year are the back to school clothing for children in the area, and at Christmas time over 350 families receive food boxes and gift certificates to buy perishables and gifts and toys for children.



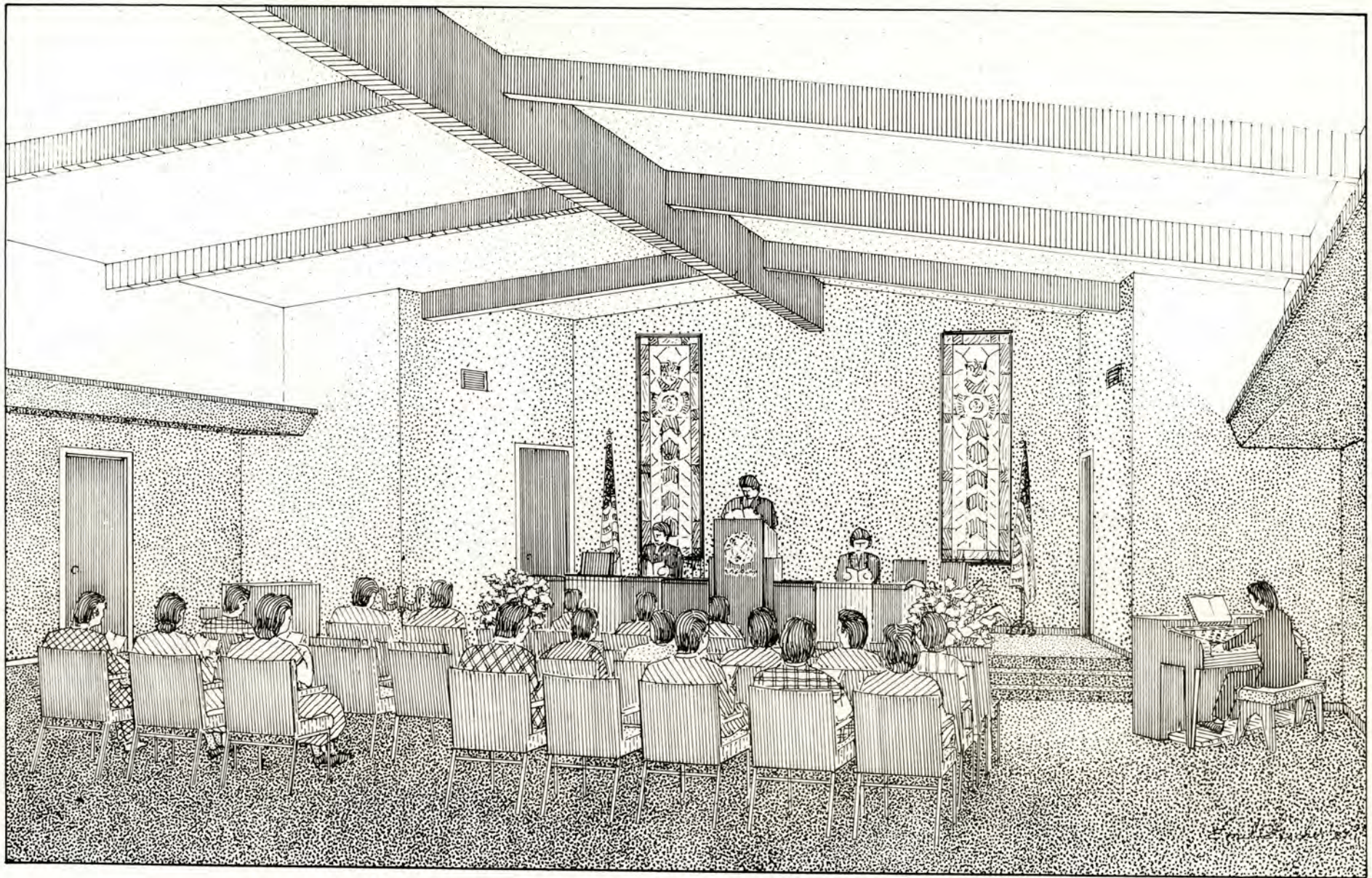
Entrance to office and chapel





View of Salvation Army offices and chapel





Interior of Salvation Army chapel



## CHURCH OF THE PALMS

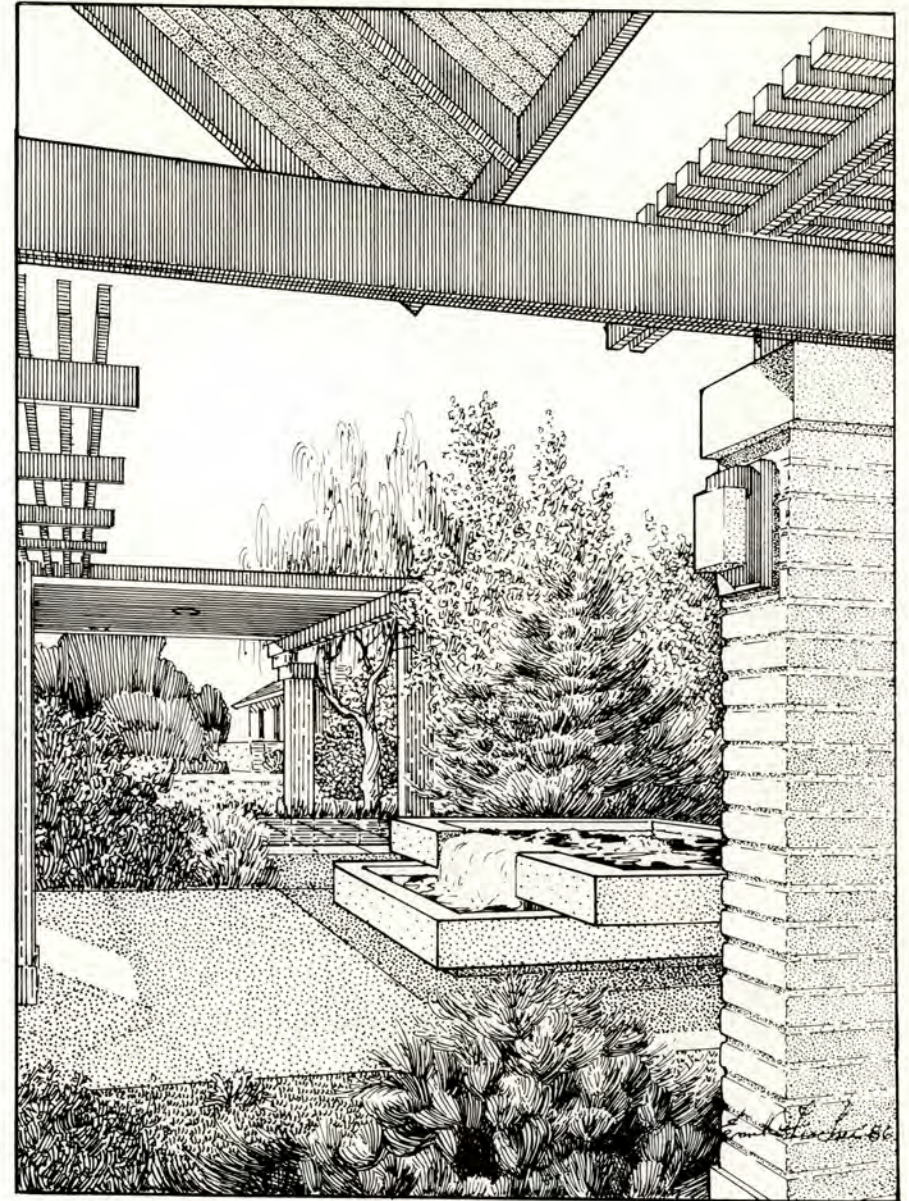
In 1969 under the auspices of the United Church of Christ, ten people assembled at Oakmont Center for the purpose of founding a church. Under the direction of Dr. Albert King membership increased and in 1972 the congregation dedicated their own place of worship at 14808 Boswell Blvd., designed by Architect Dr. Robert G. Hershberger. This congregation of over 900 members have no creed and retains the autonomy of its congregational heritage although it is associated with the United Church of Christ.

The architecture of the sanctuary seems to reflect their unpretentious service. The enclosure of wall and ceiling planes finished in wood and adobe blocks lends a feeling of simplicity and honesty in keeping with the simple faith of their pilgrim origin.

The functional organization of architectural elements permits a flood of natural light to dramatically brush the textured wall behind the pulpit.

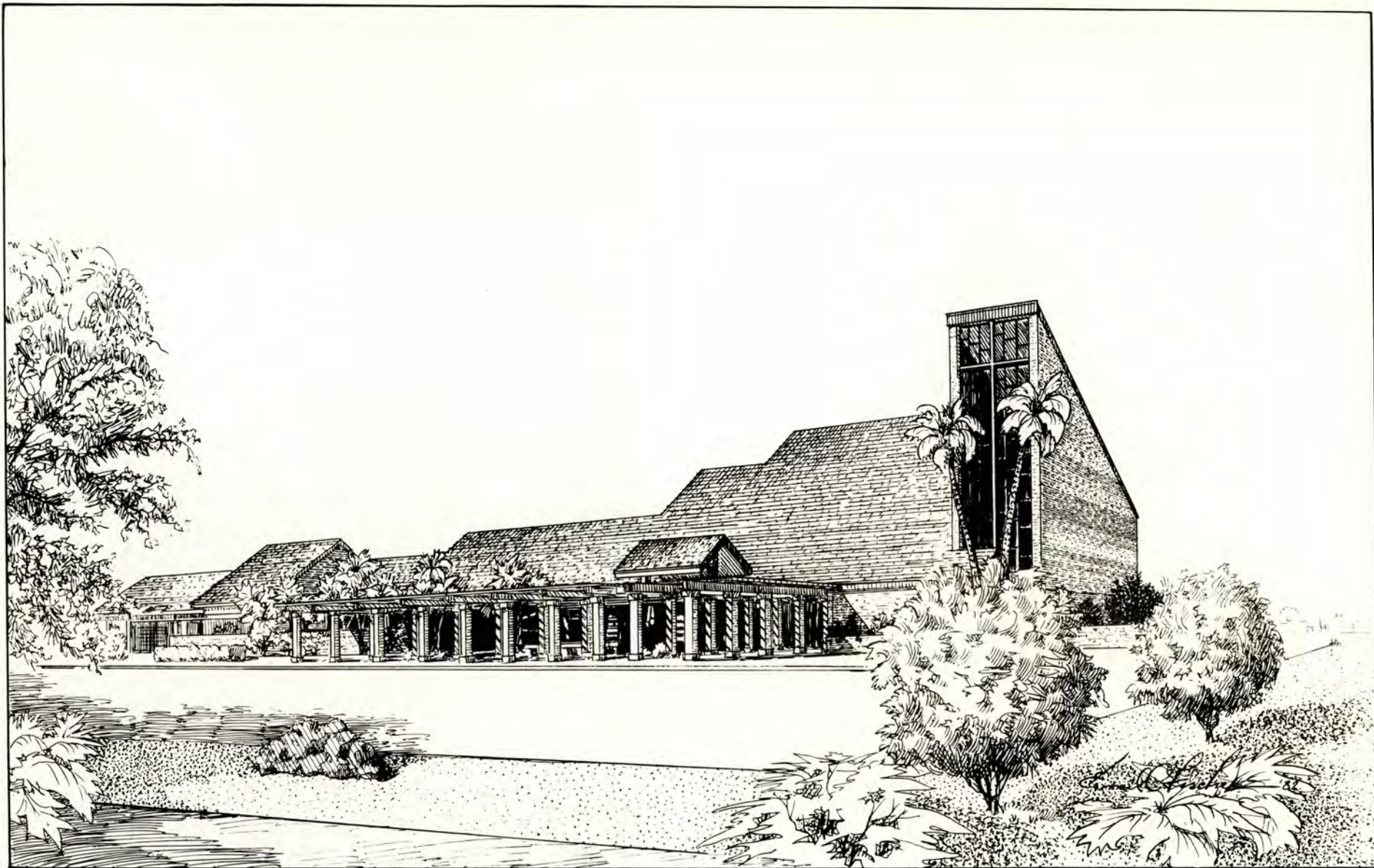
The church thrives on strong mission and outreach programs for Sun City's Hispanic neighbors in the El Mirage/Surprise communities. Volunteers serve by offering financial support for the Laubach Reading Program, 4-H Workshops for Senior Citizen Center, Habitat for Humanity in addition to sponsoring summer scholarships for youth.

Sun City's needs are not neglected. The congregation supports the Community Council, SCAT, Interfaith Services, Hospice, Sun Valley Lodge, Meals on Wheels and Good Shepherd Home. Support is also extended to the American Indian Nursing Home, Crisis Nursery and Kee N' Bah preschool.



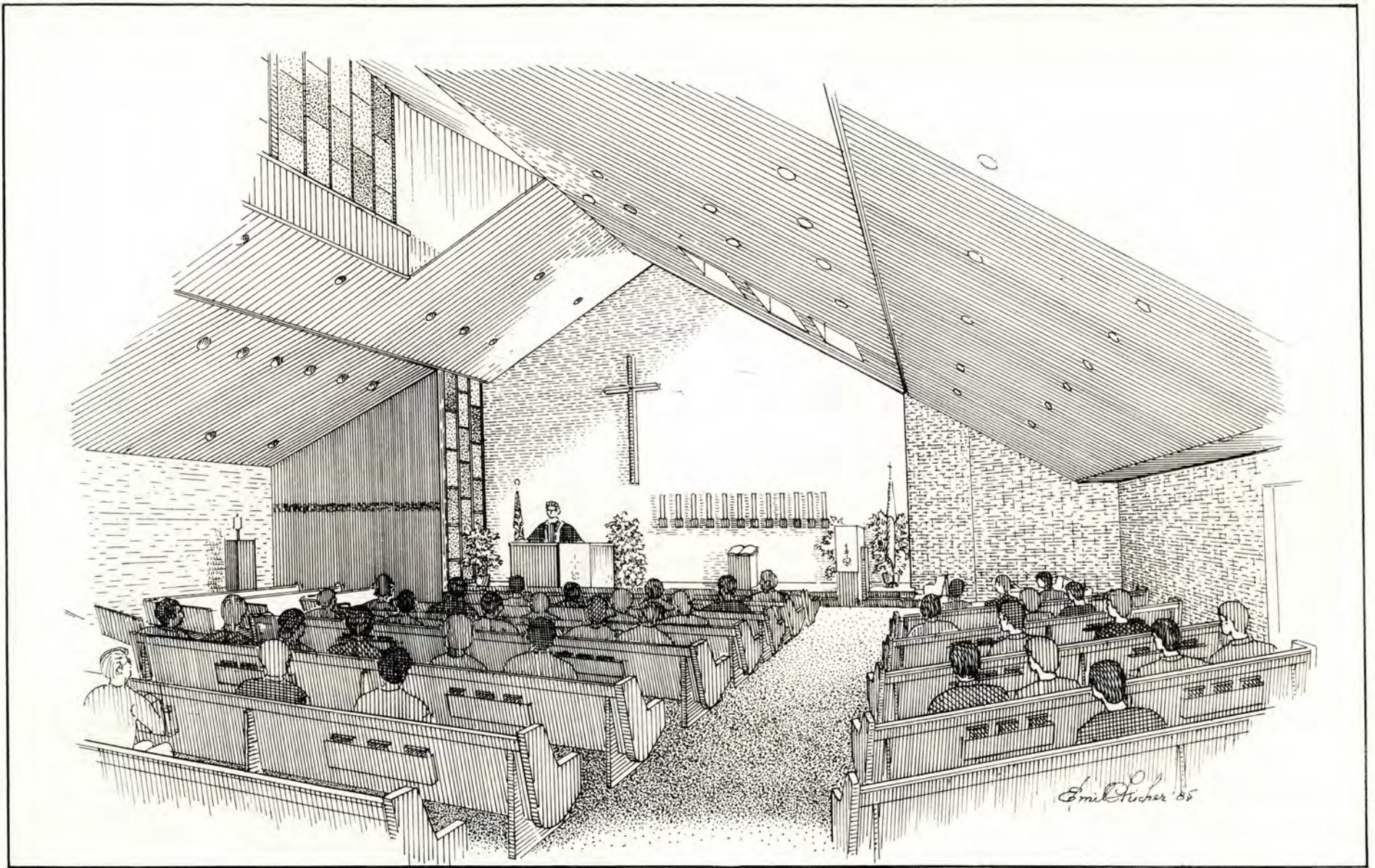
A pleasant garden and portico form a transition between the parking area and church





Church of the Palms. The tall glass area floods the chancel wall with light





Interior of Sanctuary



## DESERT GARDEN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

This church group was organized in 1979 with 32 members. Under the leadership of the Rev. Frederick James, they held services for four years in Johnson Recreation Center. Continuing growth encouraged the building of the present sanctuary at 18818 128th Avenue, in 1983. The firm of Dean Glasco Architects Inc., designed the church.

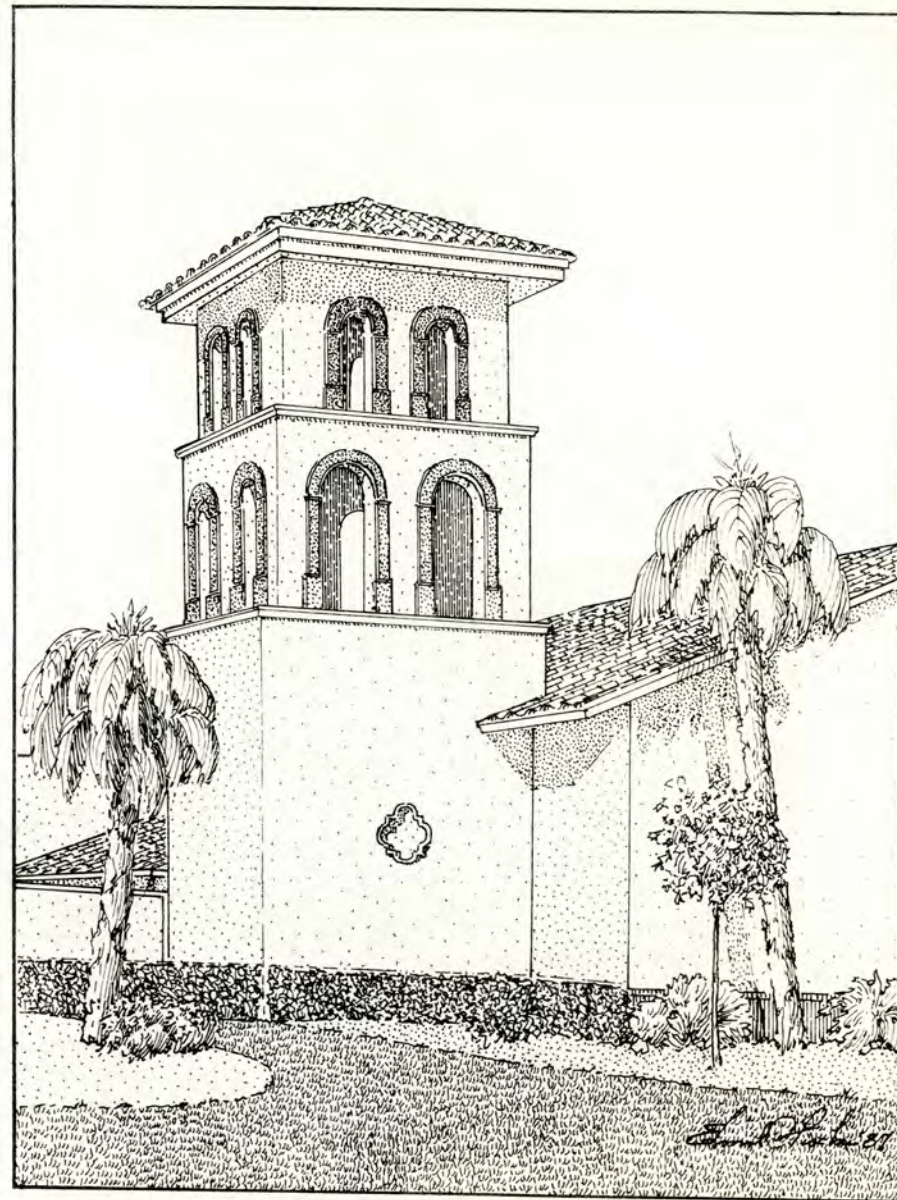
The United Church of Christ was formed in 1957 through the uniting of four church groups - The German Reformed Church established in the U. S. in 1725; the Evangelical Synod in North America, established in the 1800's; Congregational churches, established by Pilgrims in the 1620's and the Christian Church, established in Vermont in 1801.

Because of its liberal admission policy, Desert Garden is developing into a Community Church in Sun City West. People of many religious persuasions participate in its two Sunday services and many social activities.

Interfaith Services meets here weekly. This congregation of 450 members supports study groups and reaches out into the community to encourage missions and other local projects such as the Food Bank which makes food available for agencies that care for the needy.

The name "Desert Garden" is emphasized by the depiction of desert plants in the stained glass windows of the sanctuary and the planting that surrounds the church.

The present facility is already becoming inadequate for this active congregation. Planning is underway to enlarge the complex by the addition of a Fellowship Hall, additional administrative space, meeting rooms and a small chapel. A columbarium to contain receptacles of cremations is also in their plans.



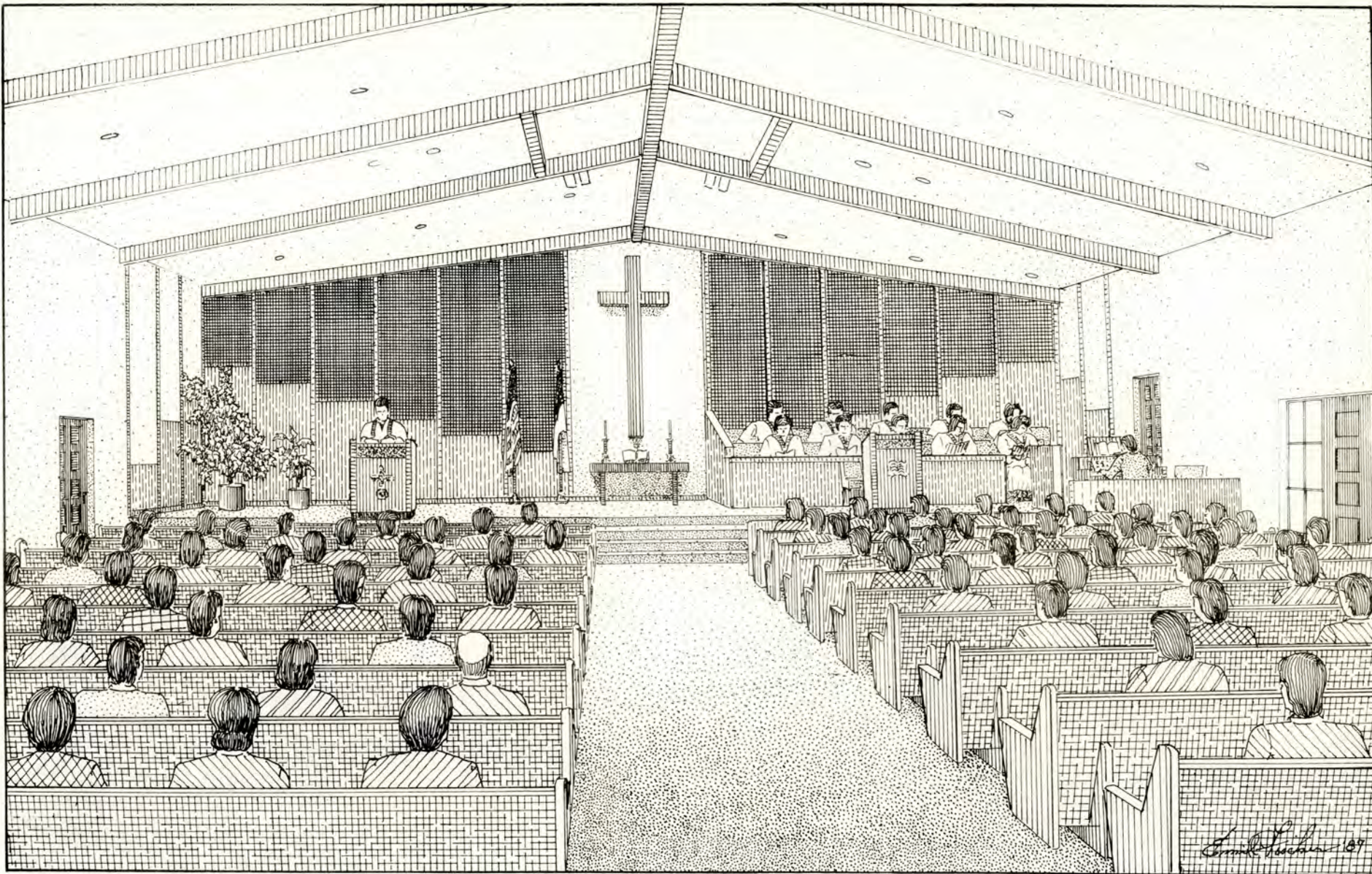
Detail of the Bell Tower





Desert Garden United Church of Christ viewed from 128th Avenue, Sun City West





Interior of Sanctuary - Desert Garden Church



## UNITED CHURCH

This church has the distinction of being the first church to be organized in this active retirement community. The congregation is a member of the Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ.

One hundred fifty residents attended the first worship service in the Community Center (Oakmont) in October 1960. The following month 101 persons were received into the church as charter members. Witt Hall was completed by the following June and services held there. The social hall was named for the first pastor, Dr. Walter W. Witt.

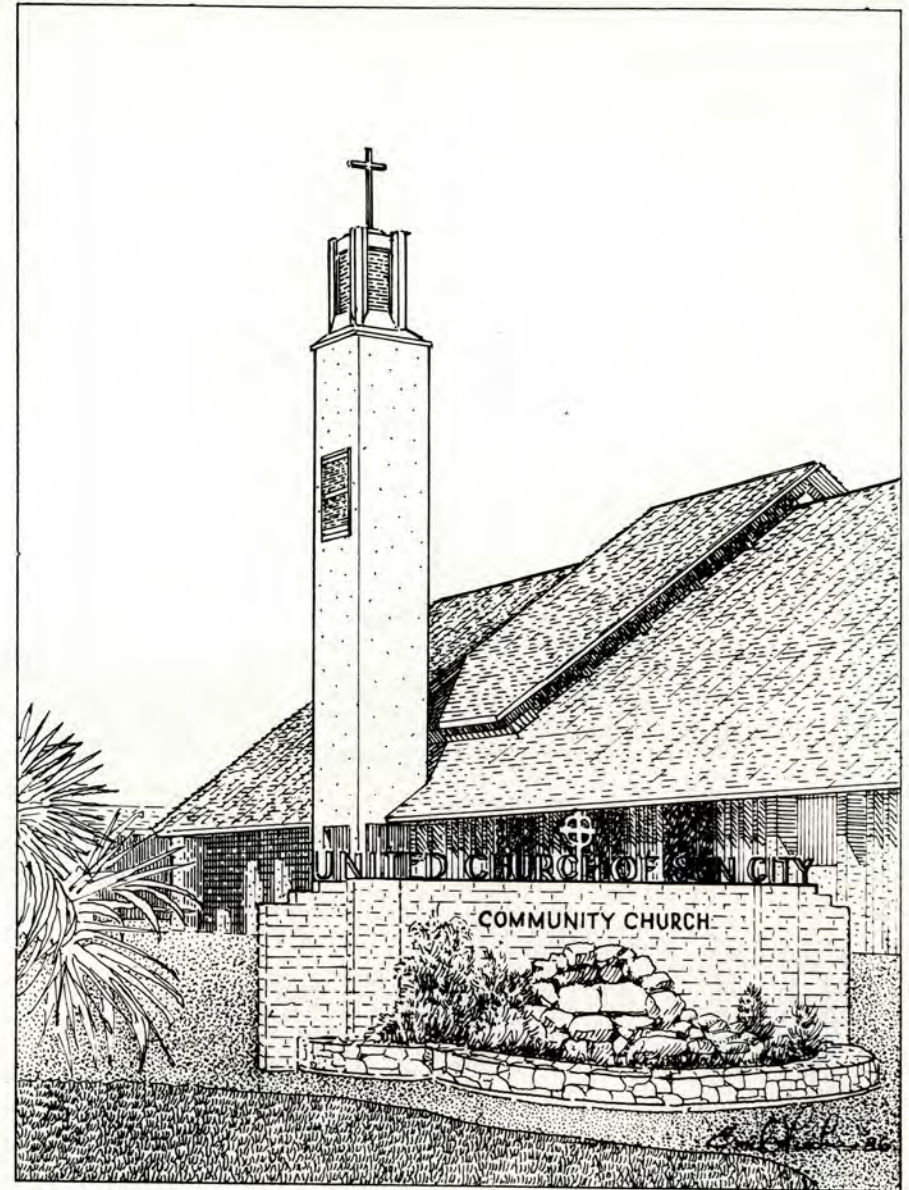
The present sanctuary located at 11250 N. 107th Avenue, designed by Richard D. Britt, seats 1,000 and was dedicated November 1965. A conference room, library, chapel and offices complete this religious complex. Typical of so many local churches, these buildings are arranged to enclose a garden for rest and meditation.

In 1975 a 700 pound bell was donated to the congregation. It formerly hung in a church in Brooklyn, Maryland. A ten-foot addition was constructed on the bell tower to accommodate it.

In 1964 members of this congregation started Sun Valley Lodge. The church also endeavors to provide financial aid to needy retirees.

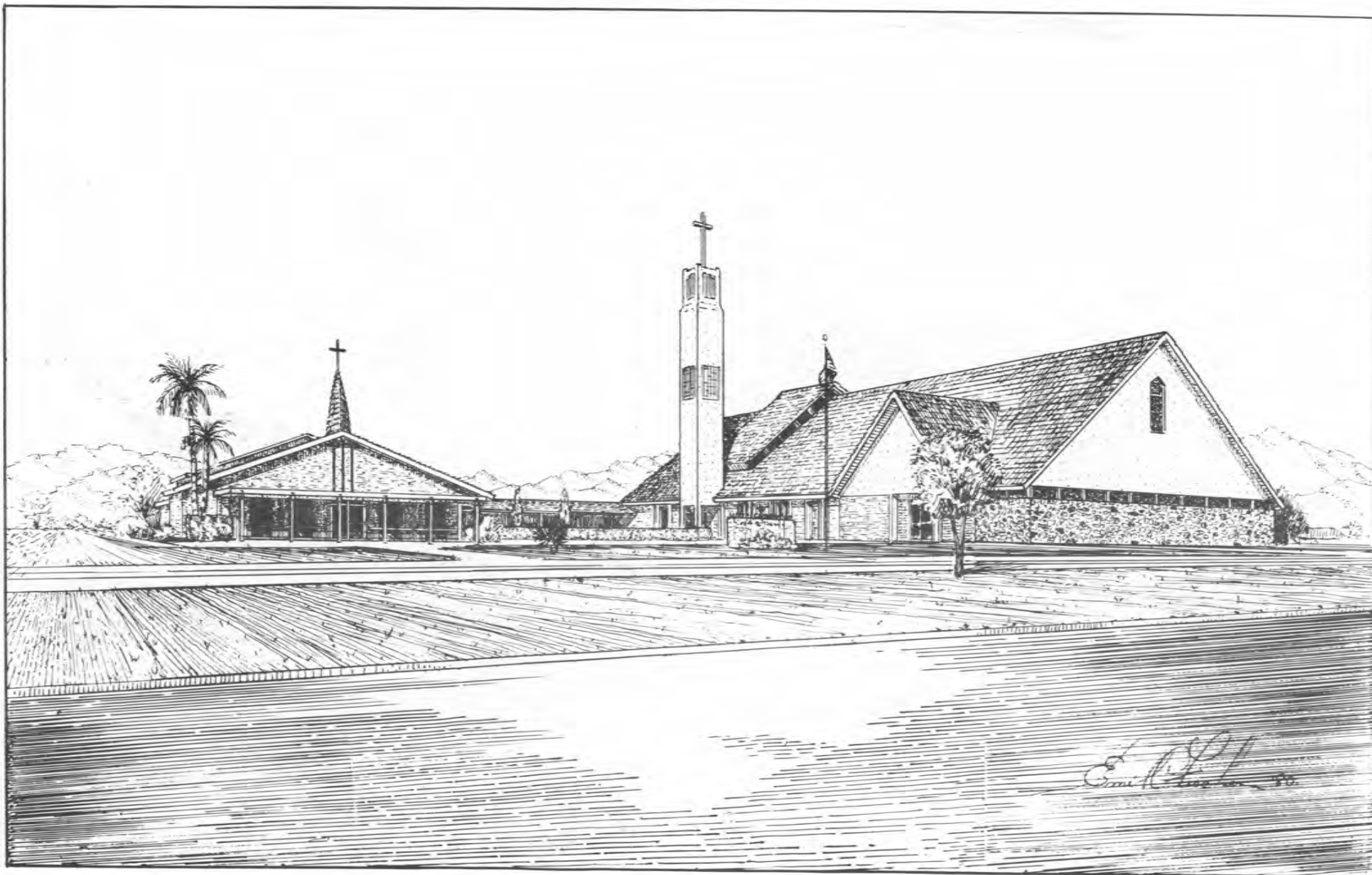
A meeting sponsored by this church in 1981 discussed the establishment of Interfaith Services in Sun City. 18 religious organizations responded to establish this organization to aid the elderly to better cope with their physical, psychological and spiritual problems.

In addition to providing aid to the Dysart Community Center and other community agencies, the congregation also sponsors the program called "Habitat for Humanity" where low income families are assisted with home construction.



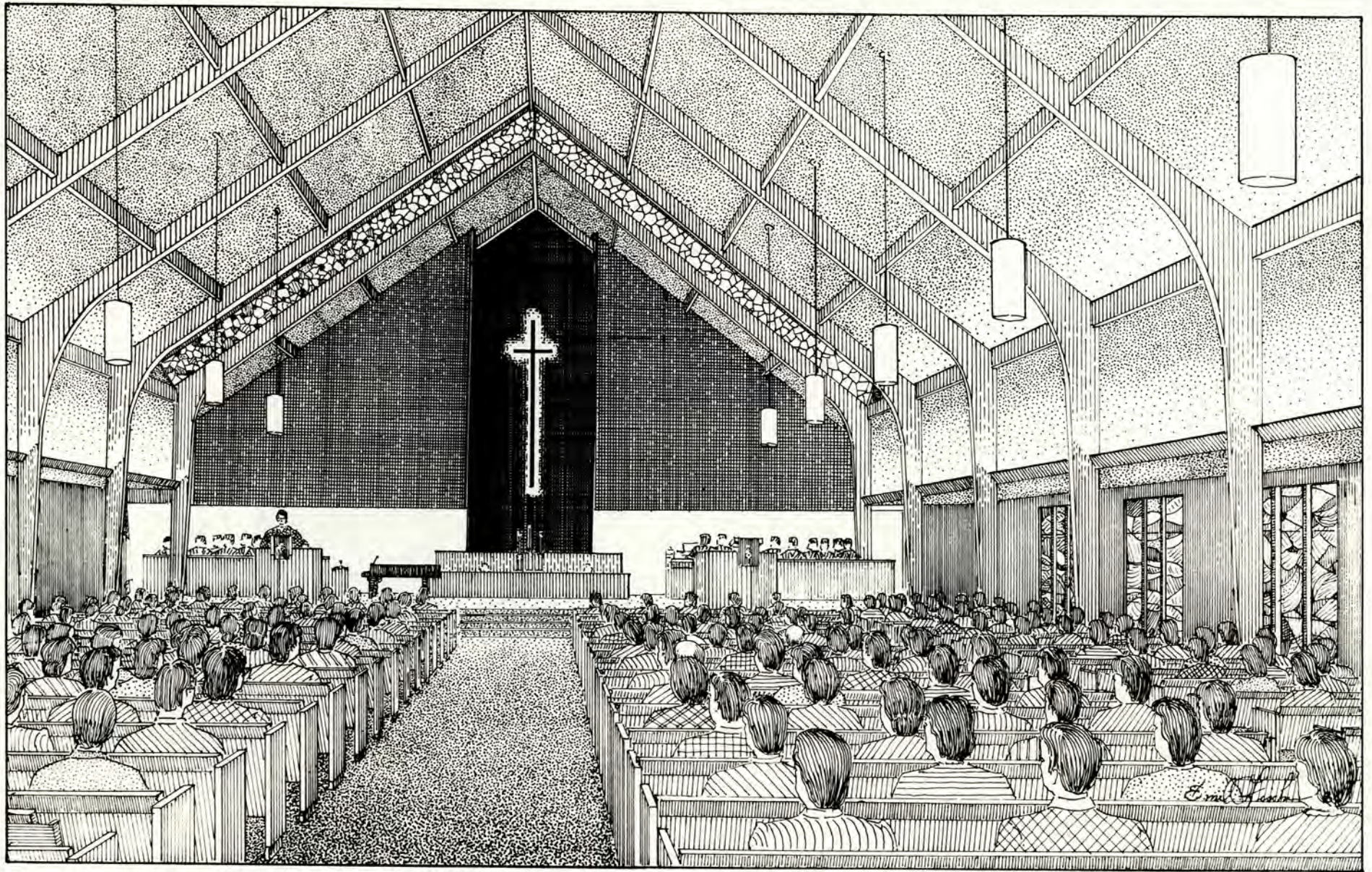
Tower and entrance court





Witt Hall and the main sanctuary of United Church





View of the Interior



## UNITY CHURCH

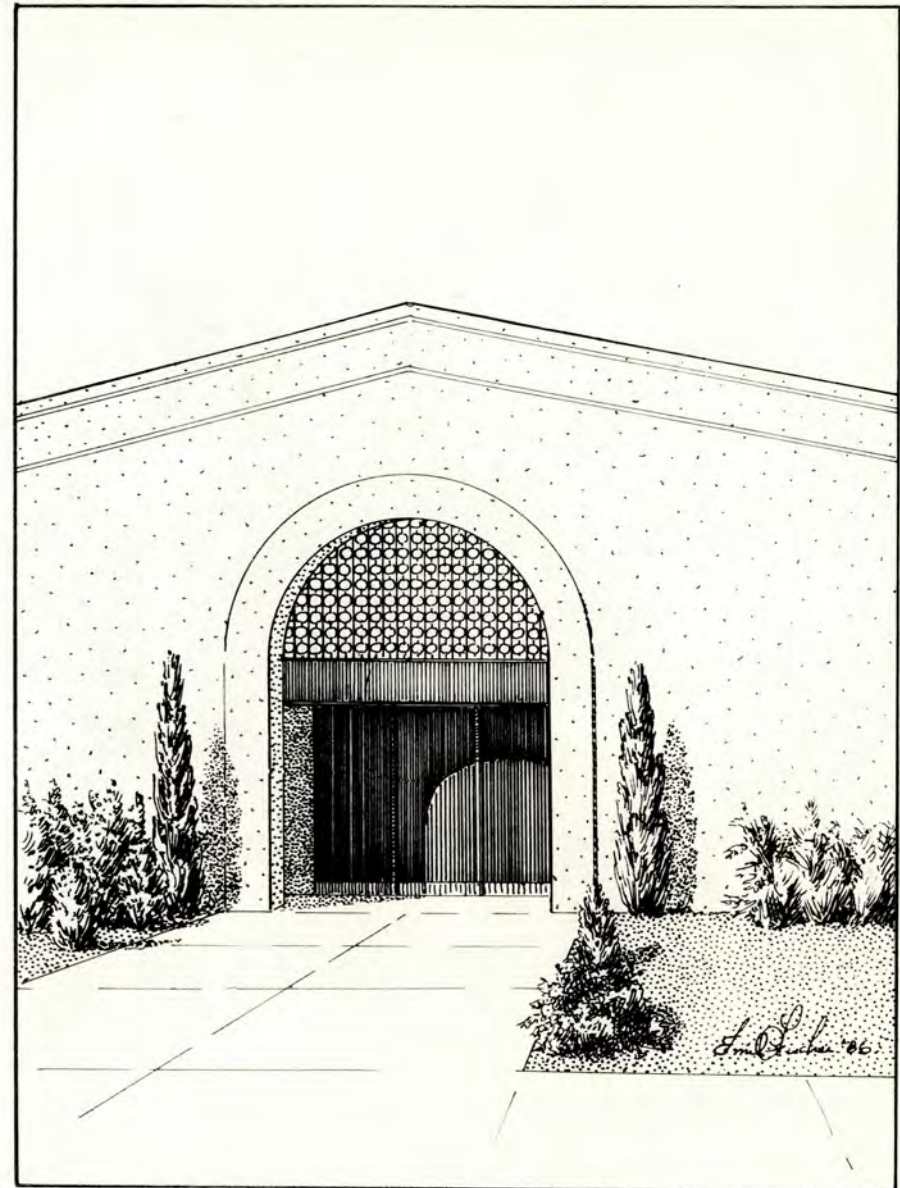
Unity was formed just before the turn of the century in Kansas City, Missouri and the Unity Church of Sun City began with the Unity Class Center in 1962 under the guidance of Mary Gladys Adams.

In November 1971, Sunday services were begun with Dr. Bernice Biggers. Property was acquired at 10101 W. Coggins Drive and the west building was constructed in 1978. A sanctuary was completed in 1985 enclosing a prayer garden. The architect was Richard D. Britt.

Teaching is the central purpose of Unity. Local Classes include studies of the Bible from a Metaphysical understanding, and prayer through positive affirmation and meditation. Unity is the practical application in everyday life of the principles of truth taught and exemplified by Jesus Christ. Unity assists individuals in their own spiritual growth by sharing their understanding of practical Christianity. People of many religions, denominations and creeds attend and participate in Unity. They are invited to do so even though they have no intention of changing affiliation. Activities are generally supported by the freewill offerings and donations made by those attending.

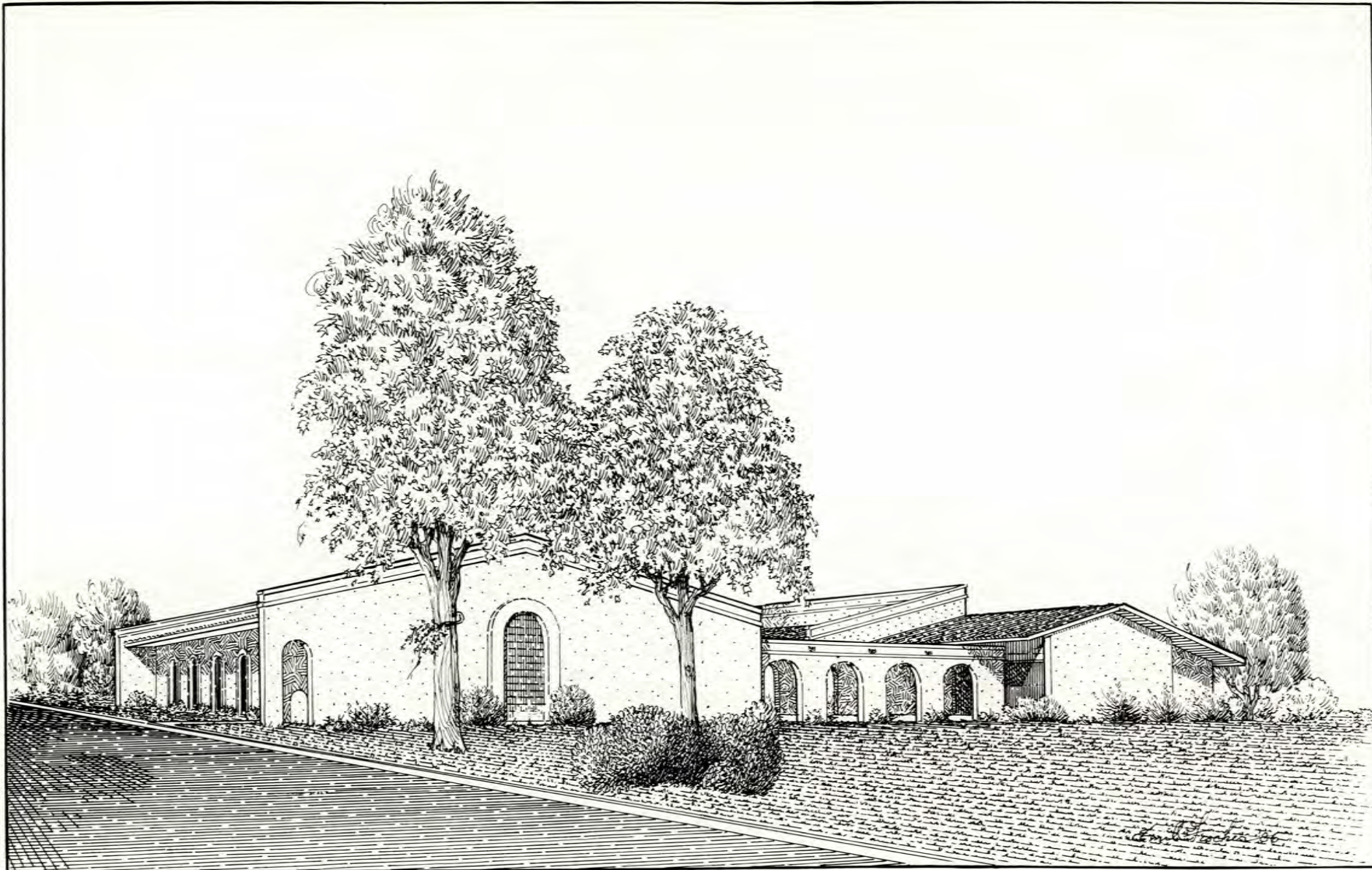
Unity also reaches beyond the teaching center with a 24-hour Dial-A-Thought answering service. Unity maintains a 24-hour prayer tower with personal responses. This is known as Silent Unity. There are special programs that assist and serve the blind. Publications are also distributed in several languages. The church maintains a library and bookstore.

Unity supports the community by assisting in the activities of those groups that serve the physical and social needs of the general population.



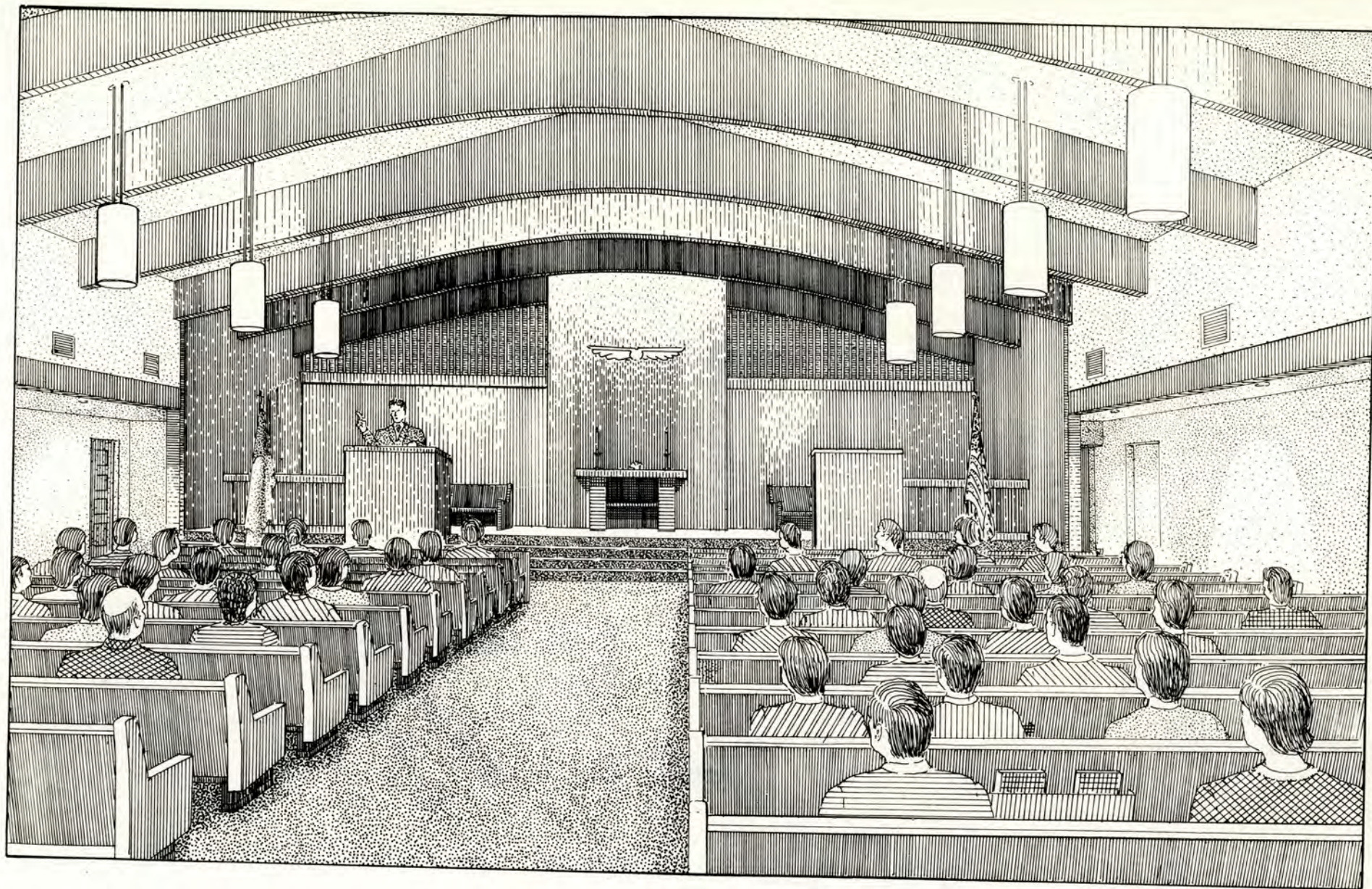
Entrance to the recently completed sanctuary





The new sanctuary is shown at the left. An arcade connects the sanctuary with the original building





The interior of the sanctuary of Unity Church



## CHURCHES WITH NO PERMANENT PLACE OF WORSHIP

### CROWN OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH

In the fall of 1985, Fountain of Life Lutheran Church began the challenge of starting a "daughter congregation" by seeking participation of those church members who resided in the Sun City West area and encouraging them to become involved in such a missionary endeavor. Eighty-one members responded to the call and began the effort of organizing and chartering such a congregation. The Rev. Elmer Kroening, a retired pastor and a resident of Sun City West, was requested to serve the fledgling group until a missionary/pastor could be called.

April 20, 1986 was Charter Sunday for the young group and became a reality with 107 members. Worship services were held in the lecture hall of the R. H. Johnson Recreation Center.

In October 1986 the congregation extended a call to the Rev. Dr. Rupert A. St. Pierre of Irvine, California; he was installed as missionary/pastor on January 18 1987.

By March 9, 1987, negotiations were completed for the purchase of a building site at 13131 Spanish Gardens Drive and a Building Committee commissioned to begin the search for an architect.

### ST. ALBAN'S AMERICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH

In 1984, a small group of local residents who had been commuting to Phoenix for church services, rallied together and started St. Alban's in Sun City. The congregation, which meets every Sunday for morning prayer in the Menke Chapel, 12420 103rd Avenue, strictly follows the old traditional Anglican form of service using the 1928 Book of Common Prayer.

Rev. Hanafi Jeffers serves as a part-time priest and is leading the group in the planning of a permanent building and site location. The newly formed congregation is becoming more actively involved in community programs and services as it grows in numbers.

### RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)

Like many of the congregations, members first met in private homes beginning the summer of 1981. Eventually, meetings were moved to the Menke Reception Room Annex. Keeping with the Quaker tradition, there is no minister.

The Quakers meet together in silence, each to pray and meditate as one wishes. If someone has the desire to share a thought or prayer, he is encouraged to do so; otherwise there is silence. The purpose of the meeting is to deepen one's spiritual life and to seek guidance.

Quakers support peace among nations, social justice, prison reform, and to give aid to those in need, both here and in the Third World countries.

The local group supports the Sun City Area Interfaith Services, Inc., by being a member of the House of Delegates, otherwise each member serves one's neighbor and community as he sees the need.

### UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

This group of 40 people first met as a Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in 1975. As a Fellowship they had lay leadership, under the direction of Emma Peterson, the first president. In 1981 they became the Unitarian Universalist Church and Dr. Glen G. Bomstad served as a part-time minister.

After a few informal meetings, the Fellowship met at Heritage Chapel in Youngtown. Since 1980 meetings have been held at the Masonic Fellowship Center.

Unitarians, believing in freedom of religious belief, as well as in the dignity and worth of the human being, are notably active in community services. Half of the members are involved in community services, as well as national and international programs, for human welfare.

The members are currently seeking land on which to build a place of worship.



SUN CITIES AREA



HISTORICAL SOCIETY

16828 99th Avenue • Sun City, Arizona 85351 • (602) 974-2569

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MEMBERSHIPS AND CONTRIBUTIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE.