

Evangel Church marks a Radiant anniversary

By JEFF OWENS
Staff writer

The pastor, staff and congregation of Sun City's Evangel Church decided to celebrate their 25th anniversary by taking God at his word.

"Be fruitful and multiply," God says in Genesis 1:28, authorized King James Version.

That they have done. Everyone at Evangel Church wanted to sponsor a new church as their 25th anniversary project, and consequently begat Radiant Church, which opened its doors last September in Surprise.

Both churches belong to the Assemblies of God denomination.

Pastor Mel Holmquist said he wanted to extend Evangel's ministry beyond retirees to families, and a new church in a family area appeared to be preferable to trying to attract younger people to Sun City.

"It was very much our intent to start a family church," he said. "You can get seniors to drive to a family church, but families generally don't drive to a senior community."

Enter Radiant Church, in which former Evangel assistant Pastor Lee McFarland tends to a 170-member congregation centered on Kingswood Park, the part of Surprise which is experiencing the greatest growth in young families.

While investigating prospective properties, Radiant's services take place in

Kingswood Elementary School.

Over the past 18 months, the Evangel congregation has raised a quarter of a million dollars for Radiant's start-up costs, equipment and salaries.

Holmquist said proudly that in only five months, Radiant's congregation has experienced solid growth. "It's been fun, because the results are there," he said. "We call it a 'mother-daughter' relationship."

Holmquist has tended to Evangel's considerable flock for nine years now. The church was founded in 1972 by Pastor Charles W.H. Scott.

"The church has had steady growth," said Holmquist, who has seen average Sunday attendance jump from about 170 to almost 250 during his watch.

Holmquist will preside over the church's 25th anniversary services and festivities this weekend, the highlight of which will be a visit by Dr. Thomas Trask, national general superintendent of The Assemblies of God, headquartered in Missouri.

And is Holmquist nervous about the appearance by his Earthly boss? Not at all.

"He's great," Holmquist said. "He's a good man."

Trask will be the guest speaker at Sunday's 10:30 a.m. service. Vocal soloist Jonathan Reine will perform that day at a 9:30 a.m. concert and at the 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. services. Former Evangel Pastor Tayler Davis will be the guest speaker at the 6 p.m. service.

SC churches usher in nurseries

By P. ATWOOD WILLIAMS
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Young faces and parents with babies are found in some of the retirement community churches these days. And to encourage membership, some churches have been building or finding existing room for nurseries.

Others continue to use the narthex (corridor outside the sanctuary) as a crying room and have no plans to do anything else.

"Sun City is being challenged to provide intergenerational ministries as Phoenix moves west to Glendale and Peoria," says Bob Carlson, pastor of the United Church of Sun City. "And the church that is ready will see new life and exciting ministries."

The Sun City Evangel Assembly of God built a "Bawl Room" with a glass window into the sanctuary for children and grandchildren of its members. The service is piped into the room manned by parents or grandparents so they don't have to miss anything.

The two-year-old Our Lady of the Sun (Tridentine) Roman Catholic Church in El Mirage also has a glass-walled crying room for about 20 children at each service, as has St. Charles Borromeo in Peoria.

At the United Church, there are four women who take turns playing grandma or great-grandma in the Nanny Nook, currently a section of the church's library. Plans are being made to move the Nanny Nook to the sun room when a sound system can be installed.

Recently Pat and Cathy Walsh and their son Jeffery joined the church and the choir, precipitating the need for a child-care facility. The church members recently made note when the little boy took some of his first steps during a service.

"The whole congregation enjoyed celebrating new life in the community," said Carlson.

On duty in the Nanny Nook Sunday were Marion and Raymond Harenberg. They played ball with Jeffery, both sitting on the

floor with him. There was also a fourth-grade visitor.

The same Sunday at the Unity Church of Sun City, four members of the Taylor family played with Zachary Norman, son of the Rev. G. Marshall Norman. Ken Carroll and Betty Marchesseault, filling in for Loretta Breckenridge, supervised and showed children's story videos.

The Unity Church nursery was installed during the past two months in a corner of the activity room in the west building. There is a playpen-bed and video screen. A tape of the sermon is made for the volunteers. As many as five children have used the facility at one time.

"We really love to have young families and are working toward getting more of them in our church," says Demoi Kirk, wife of the visiting minister at Church of Christ in Peoria.

A nursery was included two years ago in the new addition made to the church, which See SC churches, C6

C6 Religion Friday, July 28, 1989 Daily News-Sun, Sun City, Ariz.

SC churches make room for new generation

— From C1 includes 14 education classrooms. The church will hold its third vacation Bible school next month.

When the Valley Church of Religious Science moved from Youngtown to Peoria two years ago, they debated whether to provide a place for tiny tots.

"Someone donated a baby crib, another brought in a rocking chair and the first Sunday four little ones showed up," says the Rev. June Scott Darby. "Our membership is becoming more diverse in age and we have four

new members in their 20s and 30s."

Debbie Dille, who has a young son, is in charge of both the nursery and Sunday School at the Valley Church of Religious Science. Dille is given a tape of the service.

Another church with a nursery is the Living Springs Assembly of God in Glendale. They hire an attendant and average about a dozen children in the nursery at each service.

Both the Sun City and Sun City West Christian Science churches have child-care facilities

for children and visiting grandchildren. They are run by volunteers and a speaker system enables them to hear the sermon.

Many churches such as Our Savior Lutheran Church and All Saints of the Desert Episcopal Church, use the narthex (hallway outside of the sanctuary) for a crying room. There are windows in the sanctuary, and the Lutheran church has a speaker into the hallway for parents comforting a child during the service.

Sun City Congregational

Church is discussing the possibility of building a nursery as is Sun City West's Covenant Presbyterian Church in America.

"I think there is a gradual trend in the Sun Cities to evolve back to more traditional churches with families," says the Rev. Milton (Ed) White of Sun City Congregational Church.

He explained that the church has plans to use a portion of the activities room for a nursery providing a crib and a baby-sitter.



Submitted photo

HAPPY CAMPER — "Nanny" Marion Harenberg, right, greets Cathy Walsh as she brings Jeffery into the Nanny Nook at Sun City United Church Sunday.

Daily News-Sun Friday, June 9, 1989 C1

SC pastor arrives with a mission

By P. ATWOOD WILLIAMS
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Following a nine-month study sabbatical in Florida, Rev. Mel S. Holmquist and his wife, Pat, have arrived to serve the Evangel Church of Sun City.

Holmquist most recently was pastor for the Oak Park Assembly of God in a suburb of Minneapolis. From 1983 to 1988 he served as liaison between the Home Missions Committee working with pastors to establish an average of five new churches a year.

The Assemblies of God is 75 years old this year and one of the fastest growing Pentecostal denominations. The annual August celebration in Indianapolis will be a special event this year.

Holmquist's committee worked with new churches arranging mortgages and going through training and outreach work.

"My previous congregations have striven to have 20 percent financial support for missions," the pastor said.

"In our denomination, the congregations that emphasize missions build stronger congregations and buildings at the same time," he said.

In Sun City the Evangel Church supports Interfaith Services and Teen Challenge, based in Tucson. The group operates a

teen rehabilitation center, the New River Christian Life Church, and reports an 80 percent cure rate.

The Sun City church foyer houses photos of families supported by this congregation in missions around the world.

Holmquist, 48, was raised in Park Rapids, Minn. and played high school football. He holds a bachelor's degree in theology from North Central Bible College in Minneapolis.

He has served as pastor in Glasgow, Mont., Blue Earth, Minn., and Prosser, Wash. He was assistant pastor at Park Assembly of God in St. Louis Park, Minn.

He served the Minnesota District of the Assemblies of God as presbyter, sectional secretary-treasurer and worked on the home missions committee.

During his recent sabbatical in Florida he studied what was happening in full gospel churches.

Among the negative things he found during his survey of churches was "not enough emphasis on personal work of the Holy Spirit in an individual's life." He also saw a lack of opportunity for personal commitment to be drawn from individuals at the conclusion of most church services.

"I did, however, note a powerful sense of worship and adoration of God and a strong emphasis on local and worldwide missions," says Holmquist.

"A church stagnates if it doesn't have a mission program," he says. Holmquist hopes to make a personal preaching mission to the Philippines some day.

Duties in Sun City will include conducting the 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. Sunday services, 7 p.m. Wednesday Bible study and 8 a.m. Saturday prayers.

"And I will emphasize the Holy Spirit during an informal interchange with group participation in singing during the 10 a.m. Wednesday charismatic hour," he says. Holmquist is pleased to have this service, not usually available in a community of working members. He says normally this type of service is held on Sunday evenings.

"I will prepare for it as I do for a Bible class," he says.

Holmquist thinks his preaching ability is "fairly decent" and knows that he will probably spend more time on home visitations here instead of operating youth programs. He is aware that many congregation members will ask him how to prepare for dying.

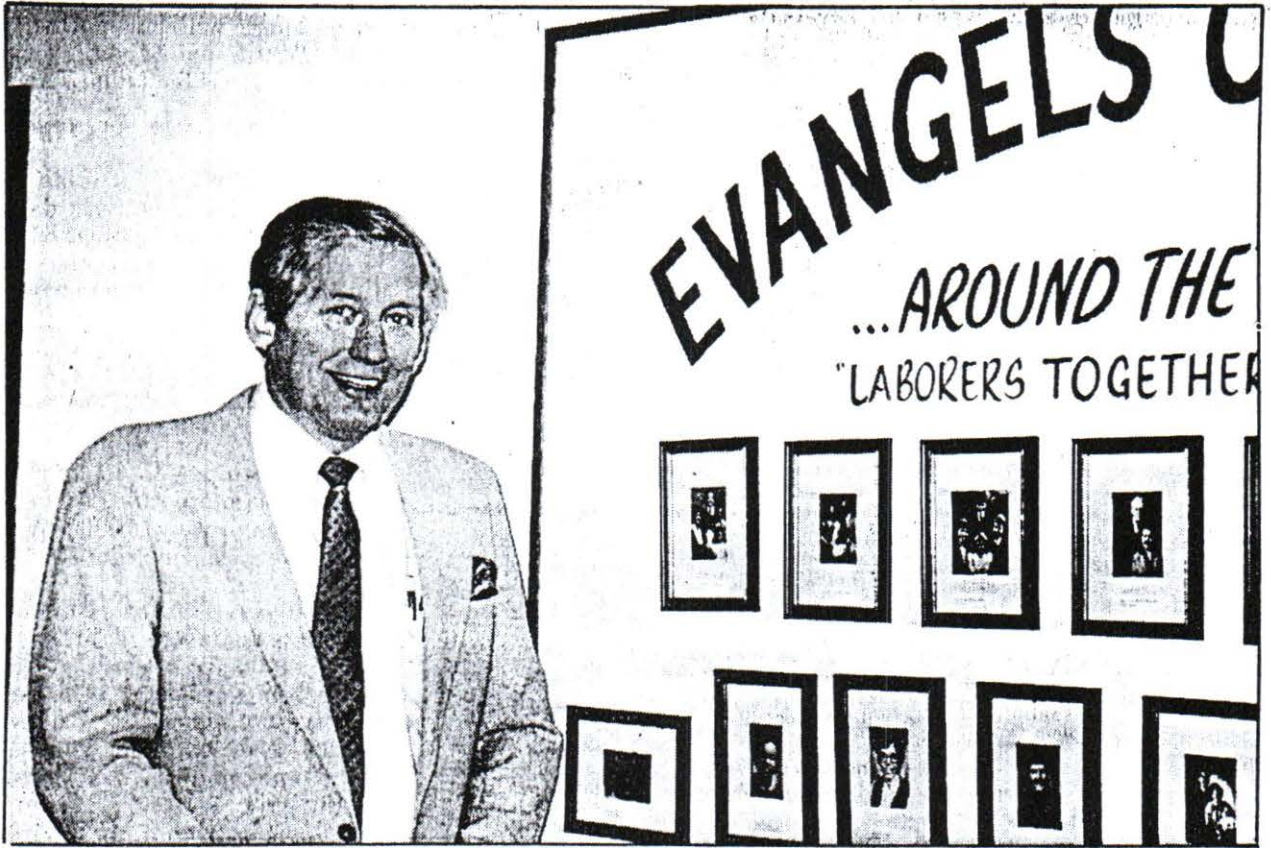
He says his wife Pat's strengths are in personal counseling and that they will work together in some instances. "She has an ear and heart for people," he says. Both have previously lost spouses; they were married

2 ½ years ago.

Between them, they have five children, four of whom are married, and eight grandchildren. Their youngest graduates this weekend from the University of

Minnesota.

A date for Holmquist's installation by the Arizona District of the Assemblies of God will be announced this summer.



FOLLOW ME — Rev. Mel S. Holmquist in the lobby of his new church, the Evangel Church of Sun City. Holmquist observes

News-Sun photo by P. Atwood Williams

photos of the many mission families which the church supports. He considers mission work to be very important.

C2 Emphasis Friday, Aug. 19, 1988 Daily News-Sun, Sun City, Ariz.



News-Sun photo by Mollie J. Hoppes

PASTOR TAYLOR DAVIS — Has ministered to members of the Evangel Assembly of God Church in Sun City for more than seven years. Visitation is one of his most important duties.

Helping others takes large serving of love

By **JOHN NICK**
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — After 46 years in the ministry, Pastor Taylor Davis is not ready for retirement.

"I thoroughly enjoy the work of the ministry — every phase of it," he said. "Besides, a minister never retires. He just continues in another area of the ministry."

Davis, 67, has been the minister of the Evangel Assembly of God Church in Sun City since March 1981. He also has ministered to congregations in Kansas, Oklahoma, Wyoming and Illinois.

"Luckily, I have had very few weeks of unemployment," he said.

"I started out young and I'm still young."

As a minister in Sun City, Davis said most of his time is spent visiting local hospitals and comforting members of his church before they undergo surgery. He spends time with the

church member before they go into the operating room. Then, he will wait with family members until the operation is completed.

"Visitation is an endless and multifaceted part of the ministry," he said.

"It doesn't make a difference when they call," Davis said. "Time is not important because there is a need and you want to be there."

He said it is not possible to help people unless love is involved.

"I feel you can't help someone unless you give of yourself to them," Davis said.

That desire to help others is the main reason he entered the ministry.

Davis graduated from Central Bible College in Springfield, Mo., in 1942 and started his career soon after that in Kansas.

"I have a very deep impression in my heart that the work of a minister is the work that I

should be in," he said.

Davis says he has especially enjoyed working and living in Sun City.

"The people of Sun City are the most wonderful people in all the world," he said.

But working in a retirement community has changed his duties.

While spending most of his time in visitation, other duties, like performing baptisms and marriages, do not occur too often, and he admits that he misses those particular ministerial duties.

However one family in the church has had Davis perform both ceremonies.

That family is Bob and Jennifer Chelпка of Peoria.

They grew up attending the church with their families and were married by Davis. He also baptized their 3-year-old daughter, Laura.

Jennifer Chelпка said Davis is

the main reason they continue to attend the Sun City church.

"He is a very loving man," she said.

"The people (at Evangel Assembly of God) care a lot about us. They are like parents and he is like a parent, too."

That family atmosphere is present in a number of ways at Evangel Assembly of God Church.

For example, it is impossible not to notice the nursery in the back of the church, a design feature that Davis insisted on when the church was expanded two years ago.

"I think we are the only church in Sun City with one," he said. "It gets used more often than you think. We have a lot of grandparents."

Davis is the grandfather of seven. He and his wife, Eleanor, have been married for 46 years. They have two daughters and one son.

A10 NEWS-SUN SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1986

Pastor Davis leads growing church in Sun City

By SCOTT BONTZ
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Change gives birth to churches and splits them.

Witness the myriad Protestant Christian denominations.

One budded in 1914 as a reaction to loss of evangelical fervor among Methodists and other established religions. About 300 fundamentalists, splintered from various denominations, gathered at Hot Springs, Ark., to



DAVIS form a Pentecostal church that became the Assemblies of God.

Today, the Springfield, Mo.-based, denomination has about 2 million adherents in the United States.

About 220 of those attend the

Evangel Assembly of God at 107th Avenue and Boswell Boulevard in northwest Sun City.

Pastor Taylor H. Davis said the 14-year-old congregation is smaller than most but growing.

The church, which built its sanctuary in 1978 after meeting in a savings-and-loan building for almost six years, doubled its size this spring with a \$550,000 building project. The additions included offices, classrooms, and bathrooms designed for the handicapped and medical emergencies. The sanctuary, once strained by the number of worshippers, can now seat more than 550.

Davis would like to fill the empty pews. He said one of his main goals as an evangelist minister is the "conversion of the unsaved," or non-Christians.

At 15, Davis was converted from Methodism and decided to

become a minister. He has been preaching for 44 years. The last five have been at Evangel Assembly of God, where he succeeded founding Pastor Charles W. H. Scott, who moved to Springfield.

For his congregation, Davis said, his object is spiritual improvement.

Davis said he and Associate Pastor Gordon Nelson spend much of their ministerial time attending congregation members at home, in hospitals and at mortuaries. Davis, who lives in Sun City, said an older population requires more visitation than others.

"Preaching a sermon is the least of the work," he said.

The focus is Bible-based fundamentalism.

"Many of the churches are

really struggling at accepting the Bible as the inspired word of God," Davis said.

Not so the Assemblies of God, for which the Bible is the "all-sufficient rule of faith and practice," according to church literature.

Pentecostal worship is short on ritual and long on congregation participation in music, prayer, praise. In the Evangel Assembly of God sanctuary, there is a piano and drum set, as well as a large screen behind the pulpit for showing Christian motion pictures.

But the most distinguishing Pentecostal practice is that of glossolalia, or "speaking in tongues."

"We believe in an experience that we call the baptism of the spirit," Davis said.

Pentecostals believe the Holy Spirit can speak through people. Davis said that "after something inspiring has been said or done," it is common for someone in the congregation to begin glossolalia, producing speechlike but unintelligible sounds.

The Pentecostals believe there is a spiritual message in the utterances and an interpreter in the congregation — whomever feels moved to do so, Davis said — rises to explain in English what has been said in tongues. Davis said the translation is typically spiritual instruction from the Bible.

Davis said the Assemblies of God vary little from other Pentecostal churches except in administration. He said Assemblies of God pastors are elected by congregation members while other

Pentecostal ministers are appointed by the church leadership.

Church members are asked but not required to pay a tithe. Davis said the Sun City congregation is generous.

Members are not supposed to drink alcohol, smoke, gamble or dance. They are baptized by immersion.

Some Pentecostal churches impose a dress code, but Davis said, "If your heart is right, your dress will take care of itself."

The Evangel Assembly of God has Sunday Bible study at 9:15 a.m. and worship programs at 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. On Wednesdays, there is a "Charismatic Hour of Power" at 10 a.m. and prayer and Bible study at 7 p.m.