



Rev. Leslie Ross is familiar to most Sun Citians as the recently retired minister of First United Methodist Church—a church he served for eight of his 49 years in the ministry.

Churches grow in pace with city

By REV. LESLIE J. ROSS
Special to the News-Sun

The growth and development of the religious community in Sun City began with the birth of the community.

That growth and development has continued right into this 25th year. It has kept pace with the growth of the community itself.

Call the roll of denominations and among those who will answer, "Here," are the Baptists, Catholics, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians, Christians, the United Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ, Seventh Day Adventists, Assembly of God, the Jewish faith, Church of Christ Scientist, the Quakers and others—a total of 32 congregations.

religious community has been the result of numerous factors. It has been in keeping with trends starting with beginnings of our nation.

The church came along with the Spanish into the Southwest and what is now California. The church came with settlers moving from the East to the West. So, those who first came to Sun City brought the church with them.

The Del E. Webb Development Co. anticipated this need and from the beginning designated certain strategic properties for church sites.

This enabled congregations as they began to organize to have a place to build their churches.

AMONG THOSE who pioneered Sun City were those

*Churches grow

—From C29

who had been the leaders in their churches before coming to Arizona. They were experienced leaders and good church men and women.

They knew what to do and how to find each other. They brought skilled leadership in

**“those who first
came to Sun City
brought churches
with them”**

church management and administration.

They effectively put their skills to work and the churches began to take their place.

It has been observed that those involved in starting the churches were also the kind of people who were among the top 10 percent of the contributors to their home churches. They were liberal in their giving here.

THIS BECAME evident, because as in no other community in the country, the congregations financed their new buildings effectively by selling bonds within the church family.

These bonds often were paid off well ahead of the planned schedule. This enabled the con-

gregations to build adequately from the very beginning. Some were able to build their complete church at one time.

The development of beautiful, attractive and functional buildings has made Sun City a showplace of church structures.

It has been suggested that these church pioneers dreamed of the churches they wish they could have had in the past—and built them. The buildings provide well for the spiritual, physical and fellowship needs of the people.

A MOST important element of the development of the religious community has been the quality and stature of pastoral leadership attracted to meeting the challenges of new churches and synagogues in a new community.

An unusual development of pastoral leadership came from the fact that numerous ministers began moving in as they retired in other communities. They became supportive in their respective congregations, adding fine creative leadership.

Still another aspect of ministerial leadership became unique to Sun City. Most pastors have served their churches until their retirement and then

*** Churches, C32**



Early in its existence Sun City held Easter sunrise services, such as this one in 1964, on the lawn of Oakmont Center.

*Churches grow

—From C30

have stayed right in Sun City.

Their support of the continuing ministry has been helpful.

AS FAR as is known, over the 25 years, only two pastors have left their Sun City churches to take appointments elsewhere, and only two or three have left the area on their retirement. The Sun Cities Area Ministerial Association reports more than 100 active and retired ministers and rabbis on their mailing list.

The vitality of the Sun City religious community has been marked by continuing growth of concern for the welfare of Sun City.

There has been a fine sense of working together in caring for their own, and reaching out to help others.

Most noticeable in this area has been the development of Interfaith Services to provide counseling and day care for the community.

MINISTERING to a community of aging persons has become specialized to meet the needs of those people no longer able to care for themselves in their own houses.

Other facilities have been developed. The United Community Church sponsored Sun Valley Lodge. The Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society established the Good Shepherd Retirement Center, Faith United Presbyterian sponsored the Royal Oaks Retirement Center, the Luthern Brethren Church sponsored the new Wooddale Village Retirement Apartments, and the First Southern Baptist Church initiated the building of Hines Village in Youngtown.

Other establishments also have grown up in nearby Peoria, including the Seventh Day Adventists, now building their church in the Pueblo del Rio on Sun City's east perimeter. The

Salvation Army completed a service center with a chapel in late 1983.

CHAPLAIN services are being provided to these centers as well as Boswell Hospital.

An overview of the churches shows a great variety of con-

**"They were
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gregations. There are churches of modest size to large ones. They range from conservative to liberal in theology. That variety is such that almost everyone can find a congregation to meet particular needs.

A chronological study of church development reveals a beginning in Sun City's first year and a continuation right down to the present time. The growth has been steady with very few years going by without at least one new congregation's coming into being.

TWO CHURCHES were started in 1960, with two more in 1962. There was one each in 1963, 1964 and 1966; two in 1969, and a Jewish Temple; one in 1970; three in 1971; five in 1972; one in 1974; two in 1975; three in 1976; one in 1977; two in 1979; one in 1981; three in 1984.

Sun City churches have reached beyond Sun City with new members from the adjacent communities. There has also been a helping hand extended to assist the new churches to serve Sun City West.

For example, the Methodist, Episcopal, Lutheran, United Church and Christ and Presbyterian churches united to hold the first Protestant services in Sun City West on Easter 1979.

THEY THEN alternated in providing ministers each Sunday for what became known as

* Churches, C33



The new American Lutheran Church—one of many Spanish colonial-style churches built by parishioners who pioneered the financing and planning.

*Churches grow

—From C32

the Interim Chapel. Then on the first Sunday of Advent just before Christmas, the new congregations started their own services.

Yes, indeed—the religious community has grown up effectively with Sun City. The churches provide creative worship, a strong adult education program and several have youth education also—constantly expanding to meet the spiritual physical well-being of the people.

Many excellent choirs are to be found.

HANDBELL choirs have come to several of the churches. Men's and women's groups augment the church program and opportunities for fine Christian fellowship are provided.

Sun City churches are noted for their friendliness. They reach out to assist neighboring food banks, Meals on Wheels, the Southwest Indian School, provide tutoring in neighboring schools, supporting the Salvation Army—which has been active in the area since 1974—and otherwise minister well beyond their local congregations.

Togetherness has been marked by participating in an annual Easter Sunrise service that began in 1961 and has been continued in recent years at the Sun Bowl.

United services have been held on Good Friday and Thanksgiving in selected churches throughout the community. An annual Holocaust Memorial Service is also held under the sponsorship of the Ministerial Association.

THE CLIMAX of this effort has come the past two years with courtesy use of the Sundome provided by Devco for the community Thanksgiving Day program drawing more than 5,000 people in attendance.

So—after 25 years, it can be said with genuine confidence:

Religion is alive and well in Sun City.

Chronology of churches in Sun City:

1960—United Community Church, St. Christopher Episcopal Church.

1961—St. Joachim and St. Anne Roman Catholic Church, Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran.

1962—First United Presbyterian.

1963—First United Methodist.

1964—First Church of Christ Scientist.

1966—Fountain of Life Lutheran.

1967—Lakeview United Methodist, Church of the Palms, First Southern Baptist.

1969—Temple Beth Shalom.

1970—St. Clement of Rome Roman Catholic, Unity Church of Sun City.

1971—Bellevue Heights American Baptist.

1972—Faith United Presbyterian, All Saints of the Desert Episcopal Church, First Christian, Evangel Assembly of God, Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran.

1974—American Lutheran.

1975—Unitarian-Universalist, Grace Bible.

1976—Congregational Church of Sun City, Willowbrook United Methodist, Valley Church of Religious Science.

1977—St. Elizabeth Seton Roman Catholic.

1979—Sun City Christian (disciples of Christ), Our Lady of the Sun Mission.

1981—Seventh Day Adventist.

1984—Quaker Worship, St. Albans American Episcopal, God's Temple of Love Spiritualist Church, Salvation Army.

Rev. Leslie J. Ross recently retired after 49 years as a minister. He spent the past eight years as pastor of the First United Methodist Church in Sun City.

A10 Religion Saturday, Oct. 31, 1987 Daily News-Sun, Sun City, Ariz.

Willowbrook, 'People's church,' awaits new pastor

By JOHN NICK
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The Willowbrook United Methodist Church could be described as a people's church.

"Nearly everybody is active in something," said Bill Kerns, a charter member of the church and the chairman of the building finance committee.

The parishioners also are eagerly awaiting arrival of their new pastor.

William Griffith, a pastor from Ohio, will be joining Willowbrook Church on Nov. 1. He succeeds former pastor John Zimmer, who retired this spring.

Griffith will be working with associate pastors Rebecca Long and Clarence Buehler.

They are ministering for a church that has more than 1,200 full members and 166 associate members. Associate members are the churchgoers whose primary membership is with another church. Most of these people are winter residents.

Willowbrook Church began in 1976, with services

being conducted in the Bell Recreation Center. Four years later, Willowbrook United Methodist Church, 19390 N. 99th Ave., was constructed and Sunday services were moved there.

Those services are at 9 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. with church school classes held on Sunday and Wednesday evenings.

"Like I said, we are a very active church," Kerns said. "We must have 15 to 20 groups within the church of various interests."

He said those interests are also diverse, something that is common in the Methodist church.

"Our members come from a worldwide background, with a majority being Midwesterners," Kerns said. "We are learning to live together with this diversity."

"I think that is a strength of this church, and generally it is a strength of the Methodist church," Long said.

The associate pastor says the members of Willow-

brook are continuing to grow in faith and numbers. However, the Methodist church does not offer a list of religious goals to attain before reaching salvation.

"We don't offer a neatly tied package," Long said. "You have to work out your own salvation. Every man is his own minister. I just happen to be ordained."

Long is one of three ministers at Willowbrook. She said the church needs that many because they are constantly busy.

Some of her service includes visiting the sick, which is more common among the retirement community than other parishes.

However, those local residents significantly support Willowbrook church with their administrative and financial backing, Kerns said.

"We are still growing every year, but that growth has slowed down," he said.

However, Willowbrook Church was the site of a baptism two weeks ago and in the past year over half

a dozen infants have been baptized.

"Most of them are grandchildren," Kerns said.

"We also have quite a few marriages here because the people say our church is very beautiful."

Marriage is considered a holy ceremony in the Methodist church. The only sacraments are baptism and communion, but communion is not celebrated every week.

"In the past, we have had communion service about four times a year," Kerns said.

"It is usually done at the discretion of the pastor and the demand of the congregation."

The congregation of Willowbrook United Methodist Church is part of the Desert Southwest Annual Conference. There are 50 members who make up Willowbrook's administrative board. Those board members are elected annually at a church meeting. Their purpose is to give church officials an operating budget.

Halls of service

Charter members anticipate church's 20th anniversary

By CHRISTINE A. GOW
Staff writer

When Jack and Beatrice Hall first attended Willowbrook United Methodist Church they knew they'd found their church for life.

That was 20 years ago. Since then, the Halls have seen the Willowbrook congregation go from meeting in a recreation center to building a church of its own.

As charter members, the Halls are especially excited about next week's celebration of Willowbrook's 20th anniversary. A community fun fest — with an old-fashioned ice cream social and mariachi and steel drum bands — is set for 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday at the church, 19390 N. 99th Ave.



"When we came, I wanted a church that was a friendly church and one where we felt it was a family," Beatrice said. "When I walked into the recreation center, I knew immediately this was the church for us. They reached out and wanted to know about our family and where we were from. It was like our relatives we hadn't seen for a long time."

Beatrice said she believes God led her and her husband to Willowbrook.

The church had organized three months before the Halls moved to Sun City from Akron, Ohio. The first church service took place in the social hall of the Bell Recreation Center on Easter Sunday, April 18, 1976. The Rev. Albert J. Wilson, now retired, preached the first sermon.

The congregation continued to meet in the recreation center, but by September 1976, the church purchased a 4.6-acre plot at 99th Avenue, north of Union Hills, for \$60,000. A building committee was organized and Jack was elected vice president.

Jack's motivation in helping build the church was to serve God, Beatrice said.

The 277 members of the congregation were motivated likewise, and contributed financially to the building project. Not one cent of the \$2 million-project came from a bank or other lending institution, Beatrice said.

The morning of the groundbreaking ceremony — in the fall of 1977 — Jack used lime to border off the locations of the choir loft and sanctuary. Then as people arrived, they took their place inside the lines and prayed over the land, Beatrice said. The next day several volunteers and a few paid workers began the task of laying the foundation and raising the walls of Sun City's third United Methodist church.

"My husband didn't take any vacation that year and was here practically every day of his life," Beatrice said. "The day of the first service, the architect came up to me and said, 'I have never had an unpaid person spend as much time with us as your husband did. I'm sure it was a great pleasure for him to do this.'"

And while Jack was swinging a hammer and pouring cement, Beatrice got involved with the church choir and the

► See Willowbrook celebrates B5

Willowbrook Wanderers — a travel group. She even solicited her neighbors for church membership, while volunteering at Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital.

"I just naturally go up to people and talk to them. It's just part of me. I like people," she said.

Willowbrook also is people-friendly, Beatrice said.

"We are a very friendly church and people are very happy to be where they are wanted," she said. "We just love to have people."

And the people loved their new church and celebrated the completion of the sanctuary, fellowship hall, office and columbarium during the first service on Sept. 9, 1979.

The congregation grew as more residents flocked to the Northwest Valley, namely in Westbrook Village, an adult community in north Peoria.

"We wanted to not let the walls (of Sun City) stop them from coming," said the Rev. Dr. William D. Griffith, pastor of Willowbrook since 1987.

Two-thirds of today's congregation of 1,300 are Westbrook Village residents, he said.

As a missions-minded church, Willowbrook is active in reaching out to other

communities, Griffith said.

"We've tried to be involved in the community," he said. "We have a responsibility to help in society."

That responsibility extends near and far and is reflected in the churches Willowbrook members helped build in Hermosillo, Mexico, in Chino Valley and in north Glendale.

"That is one of the great joys of being a pastor here; we have great people who care for one another. The love level is very high and that

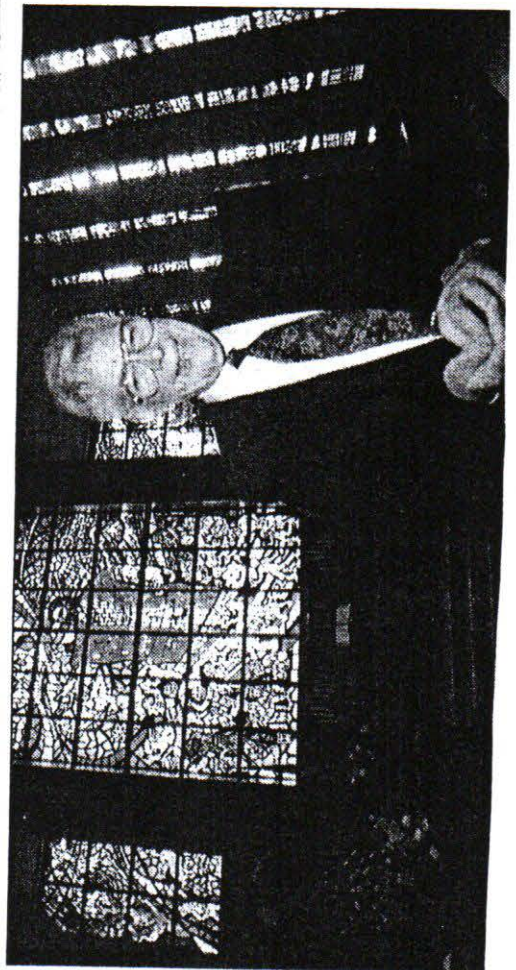
makes it easy to serve," Griffith said.

"We also were blessed with a very creative founding pastor, the Rev. Al Wilson. He put together a whole group of social events for the members to get to know each other."

Willowbrook has neighborhood groups, bowling societies, golf tournaments, pot lucks, prayer groups and a widow survivors class.

Thursday's fun fest is open to the public. For information, call 974-5637.

The Rev. William D. Griffith and his congregation are celebrating the 20th anniversary of Willowbrook United Methodist Church.



Willowbrook church leads National Call for Prayer

By J.J. McCORMACK
Senior staff writer

The invitations have been sent. The flags have been purchased and the prayer guides assembled. All there is left to do is pray.

By all accounts, thousands of people across the country will pray every morning and night starting tonight and ending the morning after the general election, Nov. 5.

Leading the morning and nightly vigils during the National Call to Prayer event will be lay members and clergy of Willowbrook United Methodist

Church in Sun City.

The church's public issues committee conceived the idea to invite people of all faiths to pray for the nation, its leaders and employees as they hoist the the U.S. flag in the morning. At night, when the flag is lowered, individuals are encouraged to pray for state and local government officials and employees.

Last May, Willowbrook launched a national publicity campaign to encourage participation in National Call to Prayer. The campaign met with some success, getting mention in newspapers and

church bulletins from coast to coast. Willowbrook members helped spread the word to religious groups in other states during their summer travels.

A few of the some 500 politicians who received personal invitations to join in the National Call to Prayer responded with praise for the church's concern for government and its leaders.

"I believe prayer can make a difference in our lives," former Vice President Dan Quayle wrote in a letter to the church.

Dr. William Griffith, pastor of Willowbrook, said he and

his congregation believe God called them to pray for the nation and they believe, like Quayle, their prayers can make a difference.

"God's miracles can and do impinge on the lives of every person who has (public) office," he said.

Griffith told a group of Sun Cities area ministers Tuesday there is no way of knowing how many people across the country will answer the National Call to Prayer. He said church members have given the project their all and will rejoice in participating with few others or with scores.

The purpose of the National Call to Prayer is to unite all religious faiths in a common goal — a better nation and government — to encourage people to pray and to be responsible voters.

Ruth Strong, a lay member of Willowbrook's public issues committee, said she normally only displays the U.S. flag on holidays. The flag will go up and come down daily for the next 12 days and with each tug or pull, she will bow her head.

Strong said the presidential election is utmost, but she also will remember state and

local races and issues in her prayers.

"There are so many things that we need to pay attention to," she said, citing the war on drugs and crime.

"When our leaders have these problems, the nation has these problems."

Marilee Reetz, chairwoman of the prayer ministries at Willowbrook, also believes government leaders could use some divine intervention to steer the nation, state and community back on a moral, righteous course. That's what she will be praying for.

► See Thousands respond, A5

Thousands respond to national effort

■ From A1

"We all know there are things wrong with our society that we'd like to see righted.

"I hope that really our prayers will help the candidates for office to desire a more honorable and just and fair society and a government more tuned to the righteousness that we believe God intends for his people."

The more people who answer the National Call to Prayer, the better off our government and our leaders will be, Reetz said.

"We need to make people more aware of the power of prayers. Especially if there's more than one. If a number of people pray about the same thing, there's a great positive benefit from combined prayers."

XII 400.6 VF Churches



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Don Taske takes a pie to the face from the Rev. William Griffiths, left, after poking fun at the pastor in a skit during Senior Summer Camp at Willowbrook United Methodist Church in Sun City Monday.

HAPPY CAMPERS

Pie in face highlights Day 1 of church school

As area kids head back to school in the next two weeks, Daily News-Sun staff writer Bruce Ellison has enrolled in a different kind of school.

Ellison is attending the Senior Summer Camp at Willowbrook United Methodist Church in Sun City this week, and will file daily reports on his weeklong "camping" experience.

By **BRUCE ELLISON**
Staff writer

The church camp of my youth was never like this. Oh, the songs were all right and very singable, and somewhat to my surprise, I knew the words to most of them and had the music down pat pretty quickly for those I'd never heard before.

But at my church camp, back at Winona Lake, Ind., in the 1940s and early '50s, the pastor never threw a pie



in our face — though the Rev. William Griffith did just that to one camper Monday.

The test of the books of the Bible here was much harder than anything I've ever tried, and I got only four of 15 right. The top scorer had 13 accurate answers.

But the food back in Indiana was never as good as it was at Willowbrook United Methodist Church, perhaps because here it was made by a grandmother named Dorothy Hari. If you ever get a chance to sample her apple-cinnamon crumb coffeecake, do it.

I had joined about 50 other seniors at the Senior Summer Camp at Willowbrook, on North 99th Avenue in Sun City. We'll be there all week, studying the Bible and its meaning for us today while having fun.

Certainly we had fun Monday morning. I can say that at Willowbrook, they don't sing quietly. In our case, Peggy Peterson, a minister's wife who was song leader, wouldn't let us.

"Hey, I didn't hear a lot of you," she shouted as we finished a hallelujah song that is to be our weekly theme. "Look here," she said, pointing to a sign. "A mind is like a parachute. It

► See Bible school, A5

Willowbrook UMC

Bible school challenges book knowledge

◀ From A1

works best when open,' it says. The mouth works the same way, especially when you're using it for singing. Now let's stand up and do it right."

And do it we did, until she was satisfied.

The singing came before and after breakfast — Hari's coffeecake, coffee or tea and orange juice.

Then it was time for the Bible quiz, in which we had to name the books based on short descriptions of them, such as "I contain 150 beautiful poems." That was Psalms, and I got it right. I missed on "I am a gospel written by a fisherman," saying Peter when the correct answer was John.

"Peter was a fisherman, but his book wasn't a gospel," Jody Hill, our teacher/counselor/camp co-director said.

Two ladies at the next ta-

'It would never have happened at my church. We're too serious.'

Summer Bible camper discussing pie throwing

ble, Carol Armstrong and Gurtie Heivilin, polled 13 correct answers. They answered such puzzlers as "I tell of a great queen and her wise uncle" (Esther), and "I am a gospel written by a tax collector" (Matthew).

I missed the trick question, "I was written by the prophet Ezekiel," in part because it was too easy. But Hill tells us, "It's not a trick question. It's like asking, 'What color is the White House?'"

Armstrong, whose Aug. 4 birthday we also noted, said the answers came easily to her. "I read the Bible every day," she said. She uses two

daily devotional books to guide her reading. "I guess I just remember," she said.

Heivilin also said regular Bible study helped her ace the quiz.

Later in the session, after a snack most of us didn't need, two people impersonating TV movie reviewers "Siskel and Ebert" took to the stage for a special review of the churches in Sun City.

While no church other than Willowbrook was mentioned by name, the two (Don Taske and Elmer Powell) did contrast the opulence of a church building with the formality or informality of its service; the old-time religion of its faith with the new-fangled high tech of today ... and needless to say, they differed on what was best.

But when the review came to Willowbrook — crowded parking, friendly folks and a minister (Griffith) whose demeanor "reminded you of a

high school jock who never properly aged" — it was too much for Griffith, a college boxing champ back at Mount Union College in Alliance, Ohio, and a man whose friendly handshake can crush an arthritic wrist (I know this from sad experience).

Griffith pelted the "Ebert" with a cream pie.

Maybe he also said, "Take that, you cad," but it was hard to tell in the excitement of that moment.

"It would never have happened at my church," sniffed a female friend when told of the pie-throwing. "We're too serious."

We also have homework — making a collage from color magazine pictures, something that might say who we are or how we look at life.

In addition, we each have a prayer rock, a small decorated rock with the name of another camper taped on the bottom. We must pray for that person all week, and will

reveal his or her identity on Friday.

This may be hard for me. I am not a praying person, nor much of a churchgoer over 30 years, and certainly haven't prayed for strangers. We shall see.

The homework collage brought a "not for me" grunt from my table-mate, Howard Davenport, who, for some strange reason, I kept thinking was from Iowa.

But when his wife started speaking in flawless and fluent Spanish, I asked where they were from.

El Mirage was the astounding answer. Both Howard and Pat were teachers in the Dysart Unified School District for years, she in first-grade bilingual, he in fourth, fifth and sixth grades.

They moved here in 1956, before there was a Sun City, they said.

We also had a short message — a sermonette actually — from the Rev. Dick Pete-

rson, who reminded us, in the words of Auguste Renoir, "The pain passes, but the beauty lasts."

Peterson suggested that a lot of beauty in our lives is taken for granted, so we don't notice it. He said we need to create a still life of our own to contemplate God's beauty, and he added that "if there is graffiti in your life, let God come in and paint over it for you."

Our morning also ended in song, a rather curious song, in honor of the 20th anniversary of the death this week of Elvis Presley.

The song was a country blues number that I had never heard, called "Jesus Is the Rock 'n' He Rolls My Blues Away."

They were swaying in the aisles on that one, and Tanya Griffith, the Rev. Bill's wife, was a swingin' leader.

Like I said, the church camp of my youth was never like this.

On to Day 2.

Felicity and fellowship



'Camp' games generate joy and laughter

Staff writer Bruce Ellison is attending the Senior Summer Camp at Willowbrook United Methodist Church in Sun City this week, and will file daily reports on his week-long "camping" experience.

By BRUCE ELLISON
Staff writer

You can't keep the Lord's joy from a good woman. Not even one who can barely see and who uses a walker.

She's Happy Dworshak. Her 91st birthday is next week. And on Tuesday, despite her infirmities and some sadness in her life, she won a cake in the cakewalk at summer camp.

It may have been hard to do, for she was grieving over the death Sunday of Ralph Goodell, her "friendly visitor" from Interfaith Services, who she knew was ailing.

"Both Happy and Ralph had a gusto for life," said Interfaith's Judy Hooker. "I know he would have wanted her to carry on."

Carry on she did. She moved around the numbered cakewalk squares on the floor as Bernie Holmquist's fingers raced over the piano keys. Her walker rolled carefully and she looked down past very heavy, band-mounted glasses to the number where she stopped.

And when she won a cake — an oblong cake with white frosting and many chopped nuts on top — she smiled broadly and carefully took it back to her seat, then headed off to gabble with friends about her success.

As she did, about half the 40



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Norma Beatty, right, gets the giggles as she passes Ellen Johnson a grapefruit during game time at Willowbrook United Methodist Church Tuesday morning.

campers in the room stopped by my chair to tell me about her and her zest for living.

Not only does she participate in things like Willowbrook's camp, she still works in a way, writing inspirational articles for the church bulletin.

Happy isn't her name. That's Harriet, but "nobody here at Willowbrook has ever called her anything else," a camper tells me. "She's so up."

She does seem to follow the injunction we heard from another Willowbrook pastor, the Rev. Cliff Asay, who talked to us about our need to be happy.

"I sometimes get the feeling that we work on trying to be somber, that we

don't try to have fun," Asay said.

"We all could be a little happier in our lives."

Indeed, most of the Tuesday session was designed to get us that way, from the initial song, "I'm in Love With a Big Blue Frog," to the cakewalk — and in between a chance for us to line up and pass a grapefruit from chin to chin, no fair using your hands.

I can remember doing something like this as a kid somewhere, but kids and adults, especially kids and senior citizens, aren't the same.

The body is changed, if nothing else. Inhibitions arise. Bifocals and double chins arrive.

Some of us, for instance, now have more than one chin, making it kind of

► See Exercise yields, A5

Willowbrook UMC

over

Exercise yields frivolity, laughter

◀ From A1

hard to keep a grapefruit under it. And some of us no longer are as limber and supple as we were at 8, or 12, or even 35. It is hard to bend down and pass a grapefruit from under the chin on our 6-foot 2-inch frame to some lady nearby who's only 5-3.

A good laugh was had by all, particularly as we tried to watch others do the impossible, or what we thought was impossible. Curiously, none of us dropped the grapefruit, though I know we cheated and got hands and arms into the process.

The aim of the exercise was to show us that it's still possible to have fun, to let go, to simply enjoy a few moments of frivolity and laughter—and we did. The smiles were there in abundance, and no one looked put upon.

It was a little more like work, however, when it came to singing. Once again, we couldn't live up to the high expectations of song leader

Peggy Peterson, who had us start the day jumping up and clapping.

There is something to be said for such exercise, though.

The song was that British favorite, "If You're Happy and You Know It, Clap Your Hands." So we did. And stand, and sit and tap our feet. As Peggy told us, "I can't seem to keep you in control."

She also had an extra verse in her song, one that wasn't printed in our books. It was the one that said if you're happy, touch a friend. So we sang that verse, and did a lot of touching. By permission.

Our second day at the camp also proved that humans are territorial animals. We did not have assigned seats, but most of us were back where we had sat on Monday.

We also got to try a 10-question test, not on religious knowledge, but to see if we could make sense out of what seemed like nonsense words.

Things like "Butter laid done ever," which, if you say

it fast out loud sounds like "better late then never."

I did well with "Ah waits beep a light," or "always be polite," but failed miserably on the longest line, "A fit furs chewed own suck seed dry dry egg hen."

Before you curse, pronounce it fast, and don't try to read the meaning of the words. All you want is the sound: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

The guitar-plucking Asay, or Uncle Cliff as most church members call him, said science now appears to have documented the old adage that laughter is the best medicine.

"We need more of those 'yes!' moments in our lives," Asay said, "moments when we are totally exhilarated, totally exhausted and totally happy."

Too many people today, he suggested, worry too much. "Live for the moment, and take what joy the Lord provides," he told us.

Certainly that was what Happy Dworshak was doing.

There is a ratio of men to women here of about 1 to 6, perhaps typical of the older congregations in Sun City. By some strange coincidence, when we passed the bean bags along a line by hand, before moving to the more difficult grapefruit chin-pass, our line won.

"Unfair," charged the other two lines. "They have all the men."

Almost all, it was true.

But we didn't win with the grapefruit.

Today I have to turn in my collage poster. We also have western day, including something called being branded for Jesus.

Church camp back in Indiana was never like this. Except that, as I did then, I do have new friends, the Davenports, Jan Ockunzziu and Lucille Cockrey, my table mates now for the second day.

These are interesting folks, and I look forward to chatting with them anew.

XII 400.2 ✓ F Churches

DAY in the WEST

Campers explore religion's role in settlement

By BRUCE ELLISON
Staff writer

It may have been her most stunning role yet: Tanya Griffith as Joe Arpaio.

Yes, at the Willowbrook United Methodist Church Senior Summer Camp on Wednesday, there was Tanya, wife of the Rev. William Griffith, dressed up in fancy western duds and toting a rifle.

Sheriff Tanya was there on official business, we were told.

It was western day at camp, so those of us who had failed to follow instructions to wear appropriate attire were rounded up and jailed. By Tanya, who is probably more familiar to Sun Citians as Eleanor Roosevelt or Amelia Earhart, roles she plays professionally.

After she had locked away the miscreants, we sang, "How much is that prisoner in the jail?" adding, to the widely known doggie tune, "I hope he can quickly make bail," which was 25 cents.

But Griffith was perhaps at her best while stalking an er-



rant parishioner, Leon Jenks, who wore a western shirt, jeans and boots, and some homemade chaps carefully crafted out of old newspapers and large fluffy cotton balls.

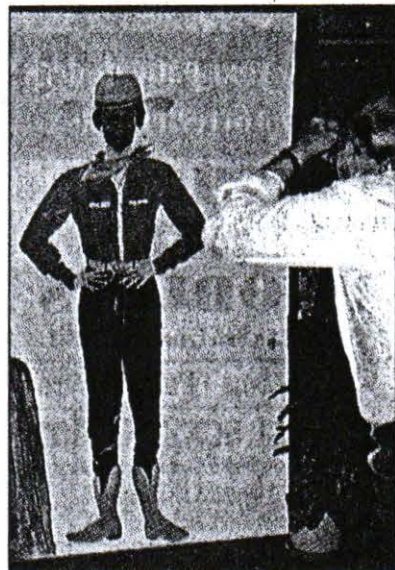
He was portraying a desperado, and while his wife, Virginia, sang about him, he stalked into Fellowship Hall in a foul mood, six-gun at the ready.

He actually shot several of us — with his water pistol.

Griffith, rifle at the ready, chased him into the kitchen and dragged him back out, "before he had time to reload."

Afterward, Jenks confided that "I didn't want to come to this thing, but my wife made me do it."

It was Jenks who on Monday had told me, after the books of the Bible quiz, "Matthew, Mark, Luke, John;



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Frank Hill captures The Rev. Dick Peterson behind the cowboy cutout. Wednesday was Western Day at the Willowbrook United Methodist Church's summer camp.

what's the horse I ride upon?"

He also conceded that he had arisen at 4 a.m. Wednesday to make the chaps, which did look fetching.

I am beginning to think that this John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, may have had

► See Camp draws, A5

Willowbrook UMC

Camp draws on diversity

◀ From A1

one of those sound bites in the days before TV. If so, it was, "Methodists have more fun."

But there is a serious side to our 2 1/2 hour sessions, the Rev. Griffith explained after Wednesday's meeting.

"We really are trying to accomplish four things here," he said.

"One, of course, is to have fun.

"But we've found that a lot of our parishioners don't get out too much in summer. It's hot, there's not a lot to do, and many people go away, which makes it hard on those who stay.

"So this provides an organized activity that can get them out of the house regularly for a week.

"Then, some of the people here are in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease," Griffith added. "This is a safe place for them with supervised activities."

People who attend Willowbrook come from a variety of backgrounds, and not all are or were Methodists, he said.

"So we create a senior camp that will appeal to that diversity and that will allow our folks to unite in a more or less non-denominational way."

As the stranger in this house of worship, I do feel accepted, and I have not been preached to. No one is luring me to join up, or attend other activities. For me, the summer camp seems to exist on its own, apart from the rest of Willowbrook.

One thing I learn from all the church-goers around me is what a major role churches and synagogues and their activities play in daily life as we age in places such as the Sun Cities.

Willowbrook has things going on all the time:

People are planning a post-retirement resource and information fair for several weeks in October and November.

Laura and Jim Sulzby, who joined our table Tuesday, are among the prime organizers of the upcoming church rummage sale, which, they proudly inform me, is huge.

The next day they bring pictures to prove it, adding that people are lined up at 4 a.m. waiting to get in. The event raised more than \$20,000 last year, they said.

Other folks talk about the choir, in which my new friend Pat Davenport sings.

There are trips to everywhere it seems. Suppers. A men's breakfast that took our meeting room today.

With 1,300 members, Willowbrook is a large church, as are many others in the Sun Cities. It tries to keep its members busy and it employs three pastors. (Tanya comes for free in the bargain, as does our camp music director, Peggy Peterson, wife of another pastor.)

But apparently it is not big enough.

This week, construction began on a major addition to the church building.

The Griffiths take a few minutes for serious talk after breakfast, outlining for us how Christianity and religion came to the West. And they credit the Catholics with blazing the trail, from the

Mission at San Xavier del Bac near Tucson.

But when Easterners moved out here to serve the cowboys and cattle barons, they said, Methodist preachers on horseback followed. "They wanted a church on every corner, like there was back East," Tanya said.

"They found out that a lot of different people who went West left their religion back East." The Southwest was wild territory in many ways.

Methodists eventually built churches in the Arizona Territory, first in Yuma, and later in Phoenix.

A woman, Mary Elizabeth Post, gets much of the credit, Tanya said. Moving to California as a teacher before the turn of the century, she later heard a call from the Lord and came to Arizona.

"With the help of a Jewish merchant named Goldwater, she held the first organized Christmas party for children in Arizona.

"She taught past the age of 90, and became the first pensioned teacher in the state," Griffith said.

Willow brook UMC

Daily News-Sun

Campers in full a chord

Musical traditions transcend cultures



Staff writer Bruce Ellison is attending the Senior Summer Camp at Willowbrook United Methodist Church in Sun City this week, and will file daily reports on his weeklong "camping" experience.

By **BRUCE ELLISON**
Staff writer

Almost as long as man has walked the Earth, he has made music part of his life and part of his relationship with God — or whatever other being he might worship.

The musical tradition runs across many cultures, appearing in the western tradition, in the Middle East, the Orient and among the native peoples of the Americas, be they Mayan, Inca, Navajo or Inuit.

That is one reason why music is so popular in today's religious rites, the Rev. Dick Peter-

son told campers at the Willowbrook United Methodist Church Senior Summer Camp Thursday.

"Try to imagine a wedding without song," Peterson said. "You just have to have music. That or sign the papers in the lawyer's office."

That importance may be why we campers have spent as much as half our daily lesson time in song, generally singing what our pianist, Bernice Holmquist, would call old-time gospel hymns.

Bernie is one of those special people that every church needs, but few are fortunate to find. She reminds you of your grandmother, and of your second grade teacher. She did teach music to elementary

► See They're dancing, A5



Steve Chernek/Daily News-Sun

Peggy Peterson, left, and Betty Pennington sing and clap along to "You Are My Sunshine" at church camp Thursday.

XII 400.6 VF Churches

They're dancing in church

◀ From A1

school kids once, and she has an uncanny ability to play anything you ask her, whether she knows it or not.

No printed music here, piled in stacks waiting to be pawed through and unfolded before the tunes flow. You just tell Bernie what we're gonna sing and she plays it.

Hum a few bars of some tune you heard at the old church back in Missouri when you were in high school, and she says, "Oh, like this," and plays the melody with a couple of fingers.

If you nod a yes and start to sing, then miraculously there appears a fully chorded accompaniment, and that's all it takes.

But what makes this marvelous music-making mama all the more interesting is that she doesn't belong to Willowbrook. She hails from Grace Bible Church across the street.

It came to pass one day that they needed somebody at Willowbrook to play for Saturday night services, and somebody mentioned Bernie, who came by, and one thing led to another and somehow the musical miracle became a Methodist fixture, doing the Saturday night gig as a regular.

That's why she's been playing for us campers all week.

She says she was given a gift from God, the ability to play, and she willingly shares it in His service. Not to mention that she really enjoys it.

But she's not the only non-Methodist helping out here. Laura Sulzby, whom we met a couple of days ago preparing for the upcoming Willowbrook rummage sale, just casually mentioned that she goes to Mass at St. Elizabeth Seton.

So I looked at her and asked why she was at the Willowbrook Senior Summer Camp and running a Methodist rummage sale. "For the fun of it," she said.

Talking about music in the church, Peterson tells us that it dates back a long way. The Old Testament speaks of David singing his poems, and many of his psalms talk of using music in praise of God.

"Oh come, let us sing unto the Lord," one starts.

Many of the stories of the Old Testament were told in song, a method that moves audiences to remember, especially at a time when people neither wrote nor read.

That's still true today, as



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Bernice Holmquist plays for the enjoyment of campers at Willowbrook United Methodist Church.

witnessed by the protest songs of the '60s, the union songs of the '30s, and the quasi-religious songs of the integration battles, when the words of such songs as "We Shall Overcome," could bring even Congressmen or Lyndon Baines Johnson momentarily to tears — and to change.

Christianity gave us the chant, the Mass, the passion, the requiem and similar renaissance and later music. Compositions for the church influenced European composers for generations. Bach, Schubert, Buxtehude, Franck and dozens of others gained fame — and the cash to do their composing — from the purses of the priests or parsons wanting music.

If you don't believe music can move the mind and mend the heart, listen to a CD recording of Schubert's Mass in A. Listen in the dark for better effect and listen with all your being.

Listen to Arlo Guthrie sing "Solidarity Forever," or Pete Seeger's version of "We Shall Overcome," or Anne Murray singing "Amazing Grace."

Listen, too, to the words of

some of today's rappers and see what your grandkids are being taught. The medium still works, even if the message may be different and dangerous.

"Back in Exodus," Peterson tells us, "they were doing early rap. It was a way to tell a story by adding song to the oral tradition. It made it easy to remember, to pass along informally."

As we conclude Thursday's session, we heard from — and sang along with — a local group known as The Gores, led by Cliff Gore and Monty McCoy. Their sound is country with a hint of gospel twang, and we all knew the tunes and most of the words.

The music is so good, the singing so familiar, that Virginia and Leon Jenks are soon waltzing across the carpet — yes the carpet — urged on by the gentle applause of their fellow-campers.

And I say again to myself, as I have before, that no, this is not the church camp of my youth. And it's not because we're not playing volleyball. It's because they're dancing. In church.



Prayer partners Harold Gates, left, and Eppie Pendleton share a hug as summer campers gather in a circle on the last day of camp at Willowbrook United Methodist Church Friday.

Steve Chernek/Daily News-Sun

Summer camp concludes with final message of hope

Staff writer Bruce Ellison attended the Senior Summer Camp at Willowbrook United Methodist Church in Sun City this week, and filed daily reports on his weeklong "camping" experience.

By BRUCE ELLISON
Staff writer

You don't think of an evangelist as good with one-liners, but Darlene Danninger of Scottsdale delivered a few along with a message of salvation Friday.

Danninger, who like many evangelists speaks with the conviction of her personal experience with Christ, came to the Senior Summer Camp at Willowbrook with a humorous brand of Christian testimony woven into a serious message.

She explained how she had dealt with a number of mis-



fortunes suffered over the years, finally going to a Bible study class, meeting Jesus anew, and finding new meaning to her life.

That new meaning eventually put her on the road, talking with groups like ours to be sure we understood the miracles that Jesus can work for ordin-

ary mortals who accept Him.

Danninger also told us that she was completing study to be certified as a police chaplain, and would join the chaplaincy corps at the Phoenix Police Department soon.

He eldest son, she added, recently became a Peoria police officer, working a shift that lasts until after midnight.

"I never thought of him with a bulletproof vest and a gun on his hip," she conceded, adding that she worries about him. "He calls about 1:30 in the morning when he's off" to diminish the worries, she said.

But the line that brought down the house was what Danninger said was her answer to a woman who years ago tried to talk with her about salvation.

Asked then if she were going to heaven, Danninger said, "I

See Camp organizers, A5

Willowbrook UMC

Camp organizers made week enjoyable

◀ From A1

hesitated and said 'maybe not,' but then I told her I wasn't going to hell because hell is for men."

It wasn't the only good-natured male-bashing on the program. Another speaker, pointing out differences in how men and women see life, remarked that "of course God made man first.

"Don't we always do a rough draft before we make the finished product?" she asked. Wives by the dozen pointed at husbands with a knowing look as smiles floated across the room.

This also was the day on which almost all of us turned

in our collages, pasted-up mixtures of photos, headlines and magazine clippings that told something about us. As a contest, we each had to see if we could identify the makers of the otherwise-unlabeled collages.

The winner named 17 makers, of a total of about 50 collages: I got just three, two from my tablemates the Davenports, and the one done by Tanya Griffith.

Howard Davenport's was easy to spot: he had told me he had a motorcycle and a boat, and his was the only collage with two motorcycles and a boat pasted on it. Pat Davenport had said she

taught bilingual education, and hers had the word "bilingual" on it.

Having failed to win a cake in the cakewalk, or any prize from doing the daily written contests, I nonetheless became an award recipient, as camp organizers called me up to receive the "Good Sport Award," a hand-made calligraphed certificate that soon will hang on my wall.

I was hardly the only good sport there: the campers, most of them regular churchgoers, were kind to allow a stranger into their midst, and a note-taking stranger at that.

But the real awards for a weeklong effort of this sort

must go to the generally unsung workers who put it all together.

In the case of Willowbrook's camp, they were prime organizers Jody Hill and Carolyn Bailey, who often acted as moderators, Dorothy Hari, kitchen organizer, Joanne Baran and Betty Moody.

Pianist (and Grace Bible Church member) Bernie Holmquist, and our camp music director, Peggy Peterson, also deserve special mention, for they devoted many hours to making an enjoyable experience for the rest of us.

They had the work; we had the fun.

Camp ended before noon with about 50 campers, not including me, heading off to a cafeteria in the Arrowhead Towne Center mall area for a good-fellowship lunch.

One last thing: like the other campers, I received a prayer rock on Monday, a small decorated rock with the name of another camper pasted on it. This was the person for whom I was to pray, and I was puzzled about whether I would, or could, do that, especially for a perfect stranger.

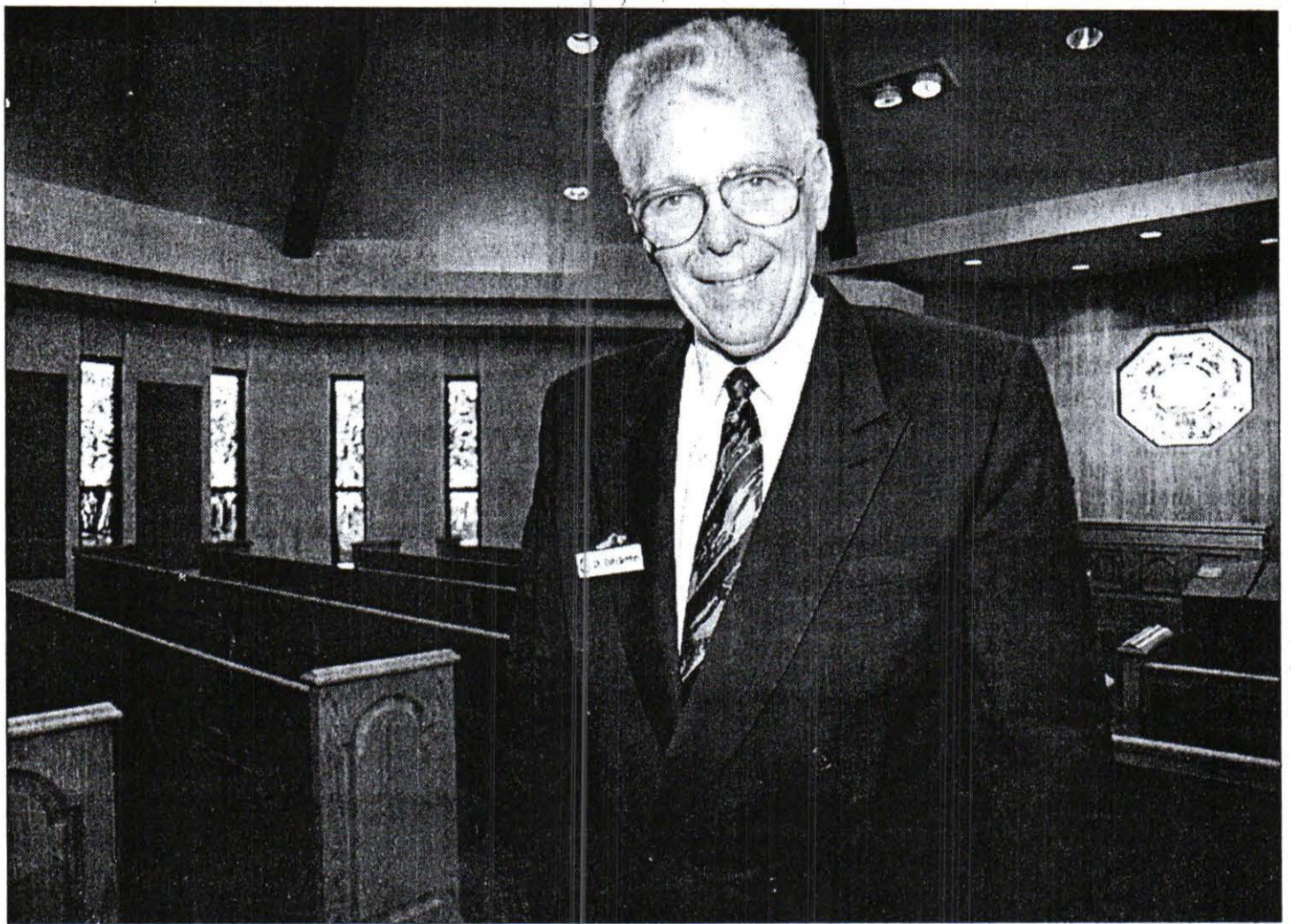
But if you join church campers for a week, you probably need to partake of

all their activities, and so God and I had two brief conversations and came to an accord on how we would handle this matter.

I told Him that I didn't know Opal Helm at all, but that He did. He knew her needs, her desires, her own prayers.

"Just give her what You believe she needs according to Your own view of the situation" I told Him. And He agreed to do just that.

But if God is as wise and all-knowing as they say, He probably would have done that anyway.



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

William Griffith, senior pastor of Willowbrook United Methodist Church, stands in the new chapel which will be dedicated Saturday. Pastor Griffith is planning to retire next summer.

Stained glass memorial windows highlight octagonal chapel

By JEFF OWENS
Staff writer

The gang over at Willowbrook United Methodist Church in Sun City appears to have made a pretty good trade.

For the relatively small sacrifice of a section of covered outdoor walkway and a couple of parking spaces, they gain in return a new 3,000 square-foot, half a million dollar chapel.

Bought and paid for.

Divine intervention, or merely astute financial planning? Take your pick, but at the dedication ceremony at 4 p.m. Saturday, the doors are going to swing wide on a lavish new chapel completely free of any outstanding debt.

"That's the unique thing about it,"

said the Rev. Clifford Asay. "It's bought and paid for by the congregation. They worked hard at making it happen."

The congregation officially agreed to the project last January, and work crews will have just completed finishing touches when the chapel opens tomorrow.

Church members and friends of Willowbrook said they wanted a new chapel and meant it — they anted up to the tune of \$383,000 in construction costs, and \$125,000 in furnishing costs, including a new state-of-the-art \$60,000 electronic organ. In all, 346 families contributed to the funding for the chapel.

All those contributions bought a large hexagonal room which seats 130

worshippers. Eighteen of the chapel's 24 memorial stained glass windows are now in place.

Asay said the first official use of the chapel will be an advent service at 4 p.m. Sunday.

Saturday's dedication will be in two parts, including Willowbrook's regular Saturday evening worship service at 5 p.m. Refreshments will be served at 4 p.m., and ushers will take groups of 25 people on a tour of the chapel as Dr. William VanOrnam plays organ music.

The dedication service will begin at 4:45 p.m., and will be conducted by William E. Dew, Resident Bishop of the Desert Southwest Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Willowbrook United Methodist

Willowbrook's pastor announces retirement

By JEFF OWENS
Staff writer

Declaring his mission accomplished, Willowbrook United Methodist Church's Senior Pastor William Griffith announced he will step down from his post next summer.

Griffith made the announcement during last Sunday's two worship services at Willowbrook.

His retirement will become effective on July 1st, 1998, bringing 11 years of leadership at the large Sun City church to a close.

"It's time for new leadership here," Griffith said. "This has been a marvelous year for self and church growth. I can't top this."

Griffith said he has accomplished what he came out to Arizona from Ohio 11 years ago to do — lead the congregation and get the church's finances into good shape.

And the church's finances do appear to be in pretty good shape — Willowbrook's new chapel, opening this weekend, cost a lofty half a million dollars, but it's already paid for in full.

Griffith said he is satisfied that he is departing office without leaving any loose ends to be tied up.

What will retirement hold for him? Griffith said he is looking forward to travelling with his wife, actress Tanya Griffith, as she performs her one-woman shows across the country.

He said he is particularly eager to see his young granddaughter in Ohio. Tanya went to Ohio last year for her birthday party, but business kept Pastor Griffith in Arizona. He doesn't want to miss any more of his granddaughter's birthdays.

"I'm not going to be left behind," he said.

In the meantime, a Willowbrook committee will review potential successors and make formal recommendations to the Bishop for the new appointment, who will take over immediately on Griffith's departure.

Willowbrook United Methodist

Willowbrook welcomes Wood



Steve Cherek/Daily News-Sun

The Rev. Jim Wood is the new senior pastor at Willowbrook United Methodist Church in Sun City.

When Senior Pastor James Wood of Willowbrook United Methodist Church first heard the call, it was coming from ships at sea.

Wood was working as a civil engineer with the Port of San Diego in the late 1960s when he answered an even more insistent call than the ones blasting from the horns of incoming vessels — a call from God.

The Nebraska native left the job in 1968 for the life of a clergyman. In 1971, he graduated from Denver's Iliff School of Theology, embarking on the journey which led him to Sun City in July 1998.

After six years at Crossroads United Methodist Church in north central Phoenix, Wood was invited to Willowbrook. Fortunately, Wood was once an associate pastor at an east Mesa church with a high senior membership.

"I loved the experience of working with this age group," Wood said.

Arriving in Sun City, Wood found that previous Willowbrook senior pastor William Griffith had bequeathed him a church in good financial shape, growing membership and great "spiritual health."

Of his fellow seniors, Wood said he was pleased to find that "Their worship attendance is very high." He also appreciates the amazing vitality of his congregation.

"One, they share their financial resources readily and generously," he said. "Two, they still want to be active in life and, three, they participate — they volunteer, and they thrive on being useful."

Wood has shown considerable vitality of his own: Since arriving last summer he has made 350 home visits to Willowbrook members.

"Just getting acquainted," he said. "I've been listening."

Wood recalled how he and his wife, Martha, informed Willowbrook's many community groups that they were available for social functions at which the new pastor could get to know his flock. Little did the couple know how many dinner invitations would ensue.

"My calendar is full," he said, laughing. "And my waistline is suffering."

KrisKrafters
VF CLUBS



JOY LAMBERT/DAILY NEWS-S

Clara Toon is making sweaters for needy children. She says she likes to knit while watching sports on television.

Giving to needy is no sweat

YARNS: KrisKrafters take cue from prolific sweater maker Toon

HAYLEY RINGLE
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Clara B. Toon of Sun City keeps herself busy while watching sports on television by knitting sweaters for disadvantaged children.

She's on her 94th one, which she makes each one in multicolored, children's sizes.

Using donated yarn from Willowbrook United Methodist Church in Sun City, she makes the sweaters for the KrisKrafters, a craft club at the church. The sweaters are donated to Dysart Community Center in El Mirage.

The KrisKrafters also make dresses, robes and toys for the children and sew the buttons on the sweaters Toon makes.

"We make clothes for children because of the need they have," said Bea Hall of Sun City, a member of the KrisKrafters and Willowbrook. "Clara is the only one

making the sweaters in huge amounts."

The sweaters are made in sizes of two to four, for kids ages 4 to 6.

"She's the one that sits and watches TV and does all the work," Hall said.

Toon has been knitting the sweaters since last summer and it takes her about three days to make one sweater, depending on what's on the television.

"If there's a lot of baseball, tennis or basketball on I'll get a lot done," said Toon, a resident since 1979. "It's so easy to knit when you're watching these programs."

The sweaters are knitted in one piece, so it doesn't take long to make them, Toon said.

Each sweater requires six buttons, and four women in the KrisKrafters club, including Hall, sew the buttons on the sweaters.

"The big problem is finding the button that fits the button hole," said Hall, who takes about a half an hour to sew on the buttons. Hall has collected hundreds of buttons from the community.

"I make the sweaters because of the fact that somebody's going to use them,"

To donate yarn for sweaters for disadvantaged children, call Bea Hall at Willowbrook United Methodist Church at 974-5637, or bring them to the church at 19390 N. 99th Ave., which is north of Union Hills Drive in Sun City.

KrisKrafters

said the 78-year-old Toon. "It gives something to do and little kids r them."

Toon is working with 80 don skeins of yarn, and has ten different ors she works with.

Some are red, white and blue, v others are yellow and green.

After she finishes her 100th swe Toon said she will take a break.

She said she has been knitting years and years, but has never con trated on a situation like this before.

"It keeps my fingers from getting with arthritis," said Toon, who also unteers at the Boswell thrift shop the Attorney General's office at Fai Recreation Center.

Daily News-Sun • Wednesday, April 25, 2001

Willowbrook Church celebrates 25th year

STAFF REPORT

On Easter Sunday, 25 years ago, Willowbrook United Methodist Church members met for the first time as a congregation.

Their place of worship was in the Bell Recreation Center — a far cry from the expansive church the members today call home, at 19390 N. 99th Ave. Now with more than 1,000 members, Willowbrook has accomplished much in its first 25 years.

For the past week the church has celebrated its anniversary, which will conclude with a banquet Thursday evening at Union Hills Country Club.

"The banquet dinner will have the former pastors from the church sharing their fondest memories of working there," the Rev. Jim Wood said. "Portions of our choir will be there as well for some special music."

Wood is the fifth pastor at the church, having come aboard almost three years ago. He said his congregation is dedicated to the church's outreach programs.

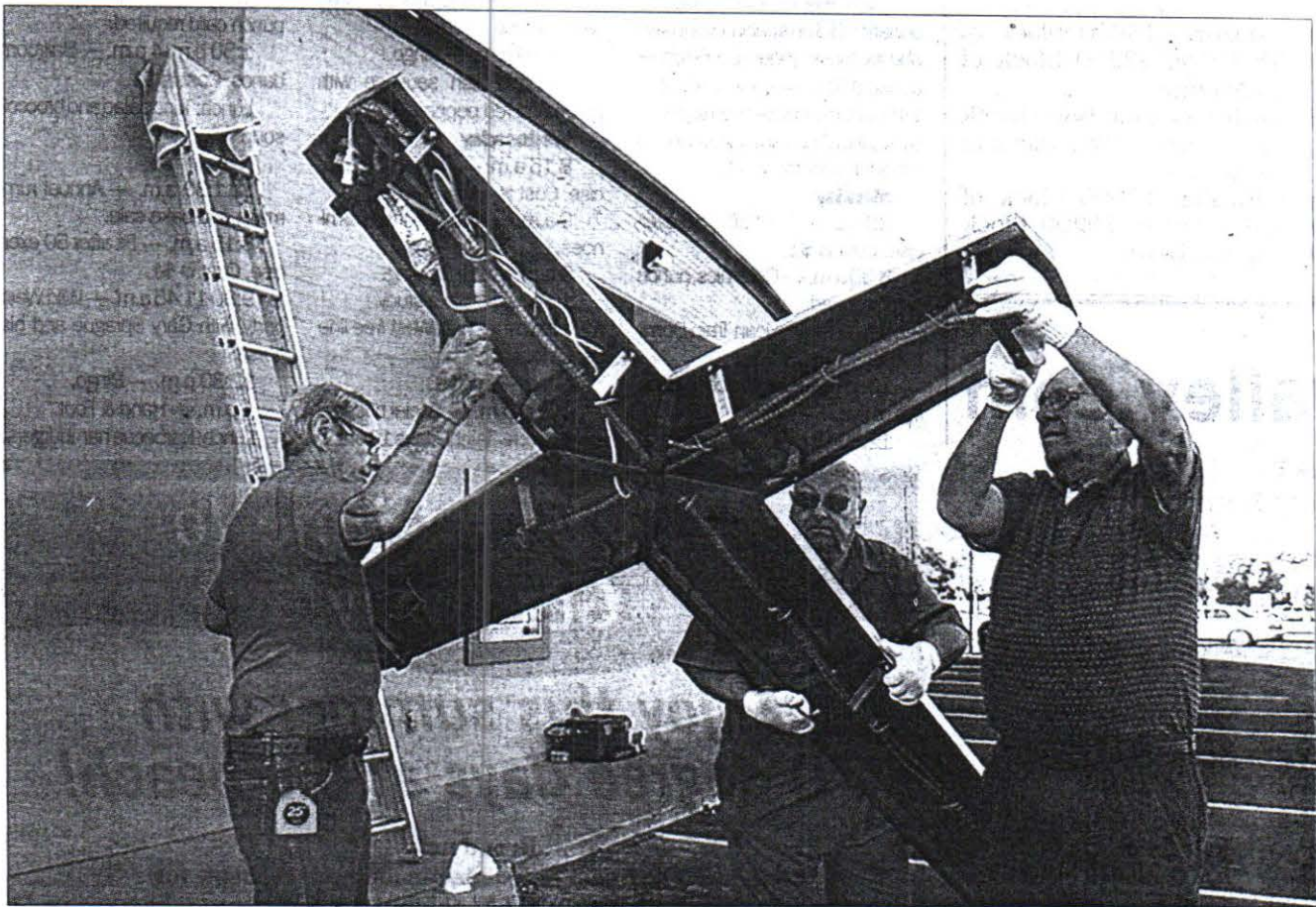
In addition to its Stephen's Ministry, the congregation recently funded a Habitat for Humanity House, which will be donated to a underprivileged family when completed.

The Stephen Ministry is a ministry in which trained and supervised lay persons, called Stephen Ministers, provide one-on-one Christian care to individuals facing life's challenges.

"That is an important part to our congregation," Wood said. "It serves many home-bound members as well as those who are struggling through a loss of a spouse or who are in the hospital."

The church and its members are active in the community in a variety of ways, Wood said, and the banquet is just another way to give back to the congregation that has done so much for others.

Tickets for the banquet are sold out, but Wood said the church's Sunday services are always open to new members.



MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Ray Morton, left, Don Michaelson and Earl Fulton maneuver a cross made by Fulton and Bell Metal Club member, Dave Shiffman. Dr. Marion McKellips, senior pastor of the Sun City Church of the Nazarene, wanted a cross for his church at Thunderbird and Del Webb boulevards. The group hung the cross Wednesday morning.

Cross adorns church in time for Easter

Sun City Church of Nazarene hangs new stainless steel emblem

JEFF DEMPSEY
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Pastor Marion McKellips stood outside the Sun City Church of the Nazarene Wednesday morning with a smile on his face a mile wide.

McKellips looked on as a small group of churchgoers carefully



Log on to
www.yourwestvalley.com
for accompanying video.

hung a new, stainless steel cross on the face of the building.

"This is a wonderful moment," McKellips said. "For this to come together the way it did, it's just beautiful."

Before the building was renovated, the church had only a small wooden cross on the roof.

But the constant beating from the sun weathered the cross badly, and a windstorm essentially destroyed it.

"When we were renovating the building, I heard from several church members who said, 'This is a Christian church. We ought to have a cross,'" McKellips said. "So that's when I approached Earl Fulton."

SEE CROSS, A5

Dave Shiffman uses a grinder to polish a second cross he and Earl Fulton made at the Bell Metal Club for the Sun City Church of the Nazarene. The second cross will be hung at a later date.



PHOTOS BY MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

CROSS

FROM A1

Earl Fulton, a member of the church and of the Bell Metal Club, told McKellips he would be happy to help. But there was just one small problem.

"I don't weld. I can't do it," Fulton said. "But I told the pastor I would ask this guy, Dave Shiffman, who is very good."

Shiffman agreed to help, and with that, Fulton and Shiffman set about building a cross. As a matter of fact, they built two.

"One for the side of the building facing Del Webb Boulevard, and one for the entrance of the church for all the people who cut through the intersection," McKellips said with a smile.

Fulton said he and Shiffman got the materials and settled on building crosses that were 9 feet high and 6 feet wide. In all, Ful-



ton estimates he spent roughly 70 hours on the crosses. "One day, we spent 7½ hours just cutting brackets," Fulton said. "And to be fair, Dave did most of the work."

Fulton said he was hoping to have the crosses finished two weeks ago so they could be put up in time for the dedication of the newly renovated building.

Though they were unable to meet that deadline, McKellips said he is not at all disappointed.

"It's heartwarming, what they've done," McKellips said. "All I've had to pay for is the material. For them to do the work for free, especially Mr. Shiffman who is not even a member of the church, it's wonderful."

Sun City Church of the Nazarene is at 14636 N. Del Webb Blvd., on the northwest corner of Del Webb and Thunderbird boulevards. Jeff Dempsey may be reached at 623-876-2531 or jdempsey@yourwestvalley.com.