

Desert Garden United Church celebrates 20 years Sunday

By Marie Scotti

Desert Garden United Church, in Sun City West, will celebrate its 20th Anniversary on Sunday, March 26. Plans are to have an 85-minute service from 9:30 a.m. to 10:50 a.m.

The service will feature the Red Mountain Brass Quintet as special guest and will include performance by the bell, choral and dance choirs which will create a true worship and celebration service. During the service, a special art form of the Last Supper attached to the communion table will be dedicated and a time capsule, to be opened in 2080, will be filled with mementos.

A catered barbecue meal will be served following the Anniversary Service for members and invited guests of the church.

A commemorative bulletin will be Desert Garden's gift to mem-

bers.

The first service of the newly formed United Church of Sun City West was held Dec. 2, 1979, in the Johnson Recreation Lecture Hall. One month later, on Jan. 6, 1980, a Founders Class of 21 individuals was received into membership and Rev. Frederic James (now deceased) became the organizing pastor.

After meeting in the Lecture Hall for four year, the congregation moved into its new church building for services on Christmas Eve Dec. 24, 1983.

With this move came a new name Desert Garden United Church of Christ. The name reflected the theme of the sanctuary's stained glass windows, the garden setting of the church and the desert planting in the landscaping.

As the SCW community continued to grow, so did the church family, encompassing members of other Protestant denominations, and Desert Garden Church became a truly community church.

It became clear in 1988, with a membership now exceeding 400, that the church facilities needed to expand. Phase II of the building program was started, and in November 1990 this phase was completed with a fellowship hall, expanded sanctuary seating, added office, a library/meeting room

and a Memorial Garden and Columbarium. In 1992, with membership now over 600, an assistant minister was added to the staff.

In 1995, a church visitor and a care ministries coordinator were added to the staff. The music program was expanded with a Bell Choir and a new Rodgers 960 organ was installed in 1996.

On April 14, 1996, 17 years after the founding of the church, the congregation burned the mortgage. Desert Garden Church was now debt free.

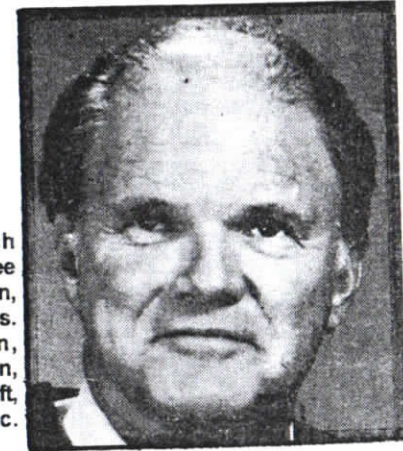
In 1997, the congregation of approximately 700 members voted to move forward with a pledge campaign for a two-step expansion program. The first step, a remodeling of the Chancel area, an expansion of the Narthex and new office space was com-

pleted by the fall of 1998.

In October 1999, the membership reaffirmed its desire to proceed with the original step-two plan and build a music/multi-purpose building. In a separate vote the membership approved funds for an additional office to house the Care Ministries program.

Desert Garden's main focus continues to be increased mission giving. The membership continues to be strongly supportive of meeting the needs of those beyond themselves in nearby communities and the world at large.

Rev. Ed Beck has been serving Desert Garden United Church as pastor since December 1993. The Associate Pastor is Rev. Howard Schenk. Rev. Roger Bourland is pastor emeritus.



The Desert Garden United Church 20th Anniversary Planning Committee is (seated front, l. to r.) Hank Hanson, Jim Ward, chairman and George Ellis. (Standing, l. to r.) Lois Nelson, Dorothy Maijala, Harold Richardson, Marie Scotti and Ralph Novak. At left, is Rev. Ed Beck, pastor since Dec. 1993.

Ex-hoop star still makes points

By BRITT KENNERLY
Daily News-Sun staff

Life has been a series of goals for the Rev. Ed Beck, the new senior pastor at Desert Garden United Church of Christ.

The 6-foot-7-inch Beck was the captain and center of the University of Kentucky's 1958 NCAA championship basketball team, the "ugly duckling" underdogs who beat Seattle University 84-72.

While working as a minister years ago in Denver, Beck spearheaded the construction of Warren Village, a 97-unit apartment complex for single parent families, and founded the city's Gilpin Mental Clinic.

And in Sun City West, Beck hopes to help the "chronologically gifted" use their gifts productively.

Through the years, Beck said, his days as a Wildcat under legendary coach Adolph Rupp helped shape his attitudes.

Rupp, nicknamed "The Baron," lived up to his bombastic image, Beck said.

"He had a profound effect on my life," he said. "I can trace my sense of camaraderie and how we can move together to work for personal goals back to those days in Lexington."

Born near Chicago and raised in Fort Valley, Ga., Beck was senior pastor of Sunrise United Methodist Church in Colorado Springs, Colo., for 10 years before moving to Arizona in November.

Even as a teen, there was never any doubt in his mind that he'd be a minister: "In Fort Valley, our local congregation was sort of a preacher factory," he said.

By the age of 15, Beck was preaching in his community's rural and black churches.

"There was so much fermentation going on," he said. "The black churches were all a part of the civil rights movement."

Many times, Beck said, he'd be invited to preach at a black church and be the only white person in attendance.

He'd then be invited to a parishioner's home for dinner.

"I was too naive to understand just how much was going on," he said. "I'd sit and listen to their dreams, their hopes. They'd talk about Moses and the promised land, and you didn't know if they were talking about the future or about finding liberation in this life.

'Churches can't meet all our human needs — those are insatiable. The dilemma is what the church can do.'

The Rev. Ed Beck

Those days shaped a lot of my social consciousness."

A star high school basketball player courted by schools such as Duke and Vanderbilt, Beck decided instead to accept a basketball scholarship from the University of Kentucky in 1954.

Rupp was an interesting human being, an "institution unto himself," Beck said.

The Baron was not a religious man as such, but he had done an avid study of the New Testament, the minister said.

"He could quote Scripture verse after verse," he said. "He told great stories, and sprinkled his public speeches with Scripture."

Beck was the first preacher to play for Rupp, and on his first day at school, the young basketball player learned what that meant.

"I took the bus to my dorm, and found a local newspaper there," he said. "There was an article about my being the first preacher to play under Rupp. It said, 'Wonder who's going to leave first?'"

The question proved pointless: Rupp, who called practices "labs," approached the young player before the first Sunday practice and told him he could be excused from Sunday labs if it was against Beck's religious convictions.

Beck chose to practice.

"It would have had a negative impact on what I was trying to communicate," he said. "Part of my faith was to witness to other people."

The young minister went on to be named Most Valuable Player in the 1956 Sugar Bowl basketball tournament, capping his university years with the NCAA crown.

Along the way, there were personal struggles: Beck faced the loss of his first wife, Billie, to cancer while at UK, an ordeal he detailed in a 1989 book titled "Billie — A Love That Couldn't Die."

Drafted by the New York Knicks after college and then traded to the St.

Louis Hawks, Beck didn't have a problem giving up basketball and moving on to Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta.

It was simply time to move to the next step of his ministry.

"One of the Hawks players once asked me how much I loved basketball, if I loved it as much as life itself," he said. "I didn't. It got me a college education and I traveled across the

See Minister learned, B3

— From B1

world playing, but I wasn't obsessed with it."

In his tenure as a minister, Beck, who has been married to wife Faye for 33 years and has four sons, has remained firm about the church's role in the community.

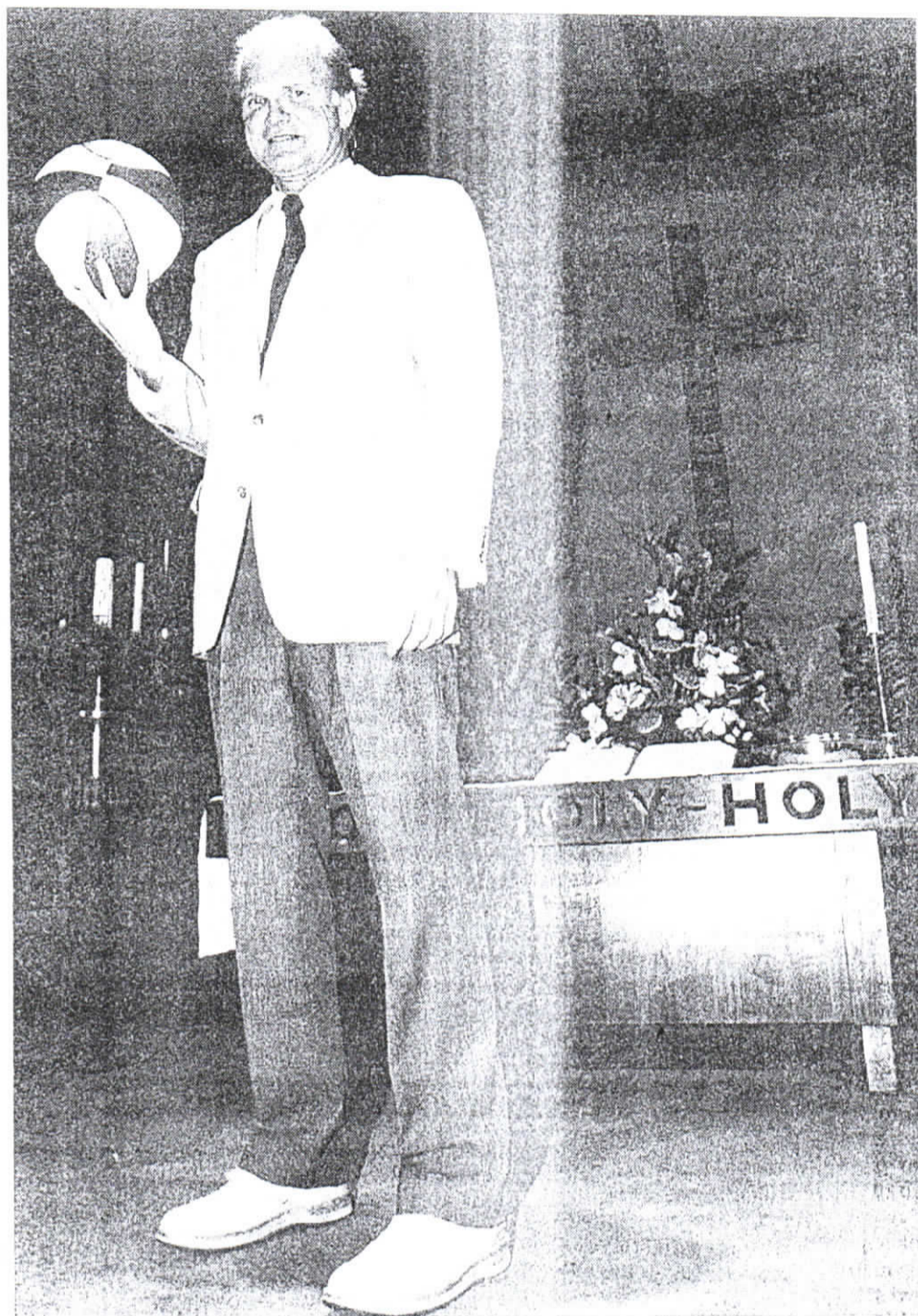
"Churches can't meet all our human needs — those are insatiable," he said. "The dilemma is what the church can do."

Beck sees that as taking one

thing at a time, and doing it well.

He hopes to inspire his Sun City West congregation to help "make the world a little bit better place and Sun City West more of what it could be."

"I am here to lead a group of people in a community of faith," he said. "Hopefully, I can help expand it where people who are visitors will feel at home and maybe join us."



SCW

Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

The Rev. Ed Beck, new senior pastor of Desert Garden United Church of Christ in Sun City West, was captain of the University of Kentucky basketball team that won the national championship in 1958.

CHRIST TO GARDEN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
 SCW •

National church officials gather for SCW dedication

Dedication services and an open house have been set for March 25 by the Desert Garden United Church of Christ in Sun City West.

Taking part in the 4 p.m. dedication service and 7 p.m. open house will be church officials from Phoenix and New York.

Christ Southwestern Conference will present greetings of area churches.

Smith will lead the litany of dedication and the church will officially be accepted by Rex Ireland, board of trustees chairman, from Colin Monfore, chairman of the building committee.

Tours of the church will be conducted during the evening open house. "It's an open house to the community," Smith said.

Construction of the church, designed by the Dean Glasco architectural firm, was started last May. The first phase includes a 260-seat sanctuary, offices, a fellowship hall and a meeting room.

Stained glass windows on the north side of the church depict biblical desert plants which have religious symbolism and windows on the south side look out onto an enclosed patio.

The church has a congregation of about 200 members.

Although the congregation has been holding services in its new building on 128th Avenue since Christmas Eve, pastor Rev. Lester Smith said the dedication could not be scheduled earlier as the detail work in the church was incomplete.

Preaching at the dedication service will be Culver Nelson, senior minister of the Church of the Beatitudes in Phoenix.

John Potts, who heads the church building office of the United Church of Christ in New York City, will offer greetings of the denomination and Ted Hastings, a minister with the United Church of



Desert Garden Church of Christ, Sun City West

3-10-84

A6 NEWS-SUN THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1983

SCW church to open for Christmas services

Members of the Desert Garden United Church of Christ congregation will hold services in their own sanctuary beginning with Christmas Eve.

The Christmas Eve service will be at 7 p.m. and the one on Christmas morning will be at 10 o'clock in the community's first completed Protestant church building.

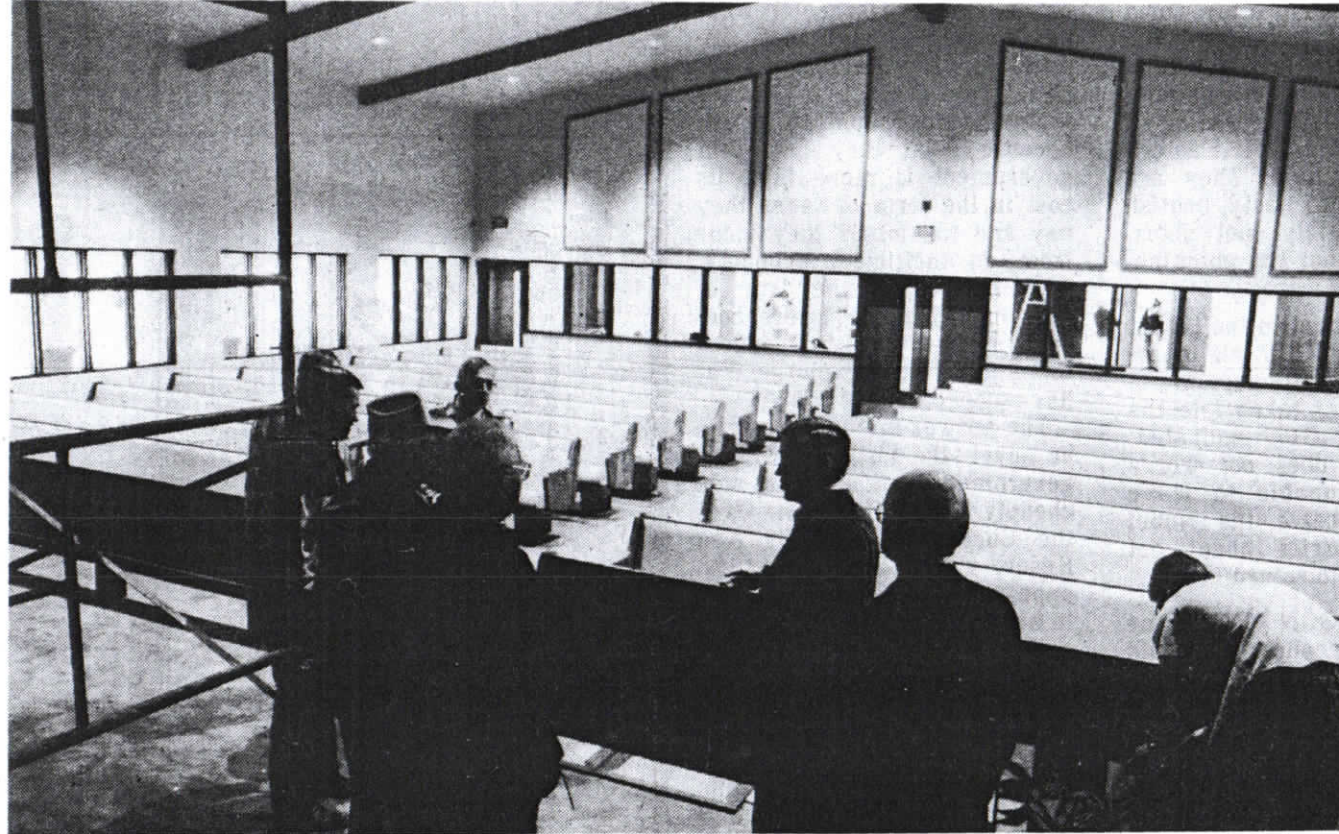
Keys to the newly completed building on 128th Avenue were turned over this week to officials of the Sun City West church.

Making the tour were church pastor Rev. Lester Smith, members of the building committee, and representatives of the Dean Glasco architectural firm and R.E. Spurr Construction Co.

The first phase of construction, started last May, includes a 260-seat sanctuary, a fellowship hall, offices and a meeting room.

There is also a large outdoor patio and an enclosed garden.

Stained glass windows on the north side of the church depict Biblical



Members of Desert Garden United Church of Christ in Sun City West inspect the interior of their new church with representatives of the architect and builder.

(News-Sun photo)

desert plants which have religious symbolism. Windows on the south side look out onto an enclosed garden and water fall.

A dedication ceremony is expected to be held next

spring with church officials from Phoenix and New York attending.

Church services, until now, were held in Johnson Lecture Hall.

Desert Garden Church,

formerly known as United Church of Sun City West, was organized in 1980 under the part-time ministry of Rev. Fred James. Taking over later, still in a part-time capacity, was

Dr. Walter Witt.

Mr. Smith, who served a California church before becoming pastor of the Sun City West congregation last year, is the first full-time minister.



Statement of Faith

SCM

We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father, and to His deeds we testify:

God calls the worlds into being,
creates humanity in God's own image,
and sets before Him the ways of life and death.

God seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

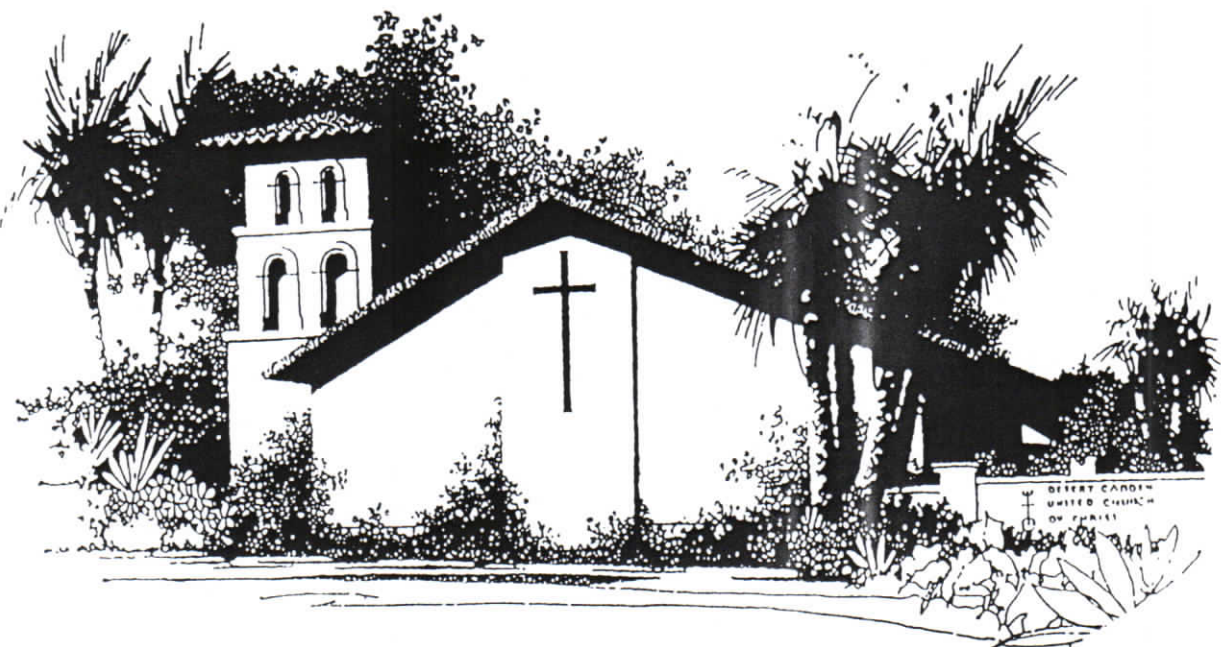
God judges humanity and nations by His righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord,
God has come to us
and shared our common lot,
conquering sin and death
and reconciling the world to Himself.

God bestows upon us His Holy Spirit,
creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ,
binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

God calls us into His church
to accept the cost and joy of discipleship,
to be His servants in the service of all,
to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil,
to share in Christ's baptism and eat at His table,
to join Him in his passion and victory.

God promises to all who trust Him
forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace,
courage in the struggle for justice and peace,
God's spiritual presence in trial and rejoicing,
and everlasting life in His kingdom which has no end.



DESERT GARDEN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
18818 N. 128TH AVENUE
SUN CITY WEST, ARIZONA 85375
602 - 584 - 1795



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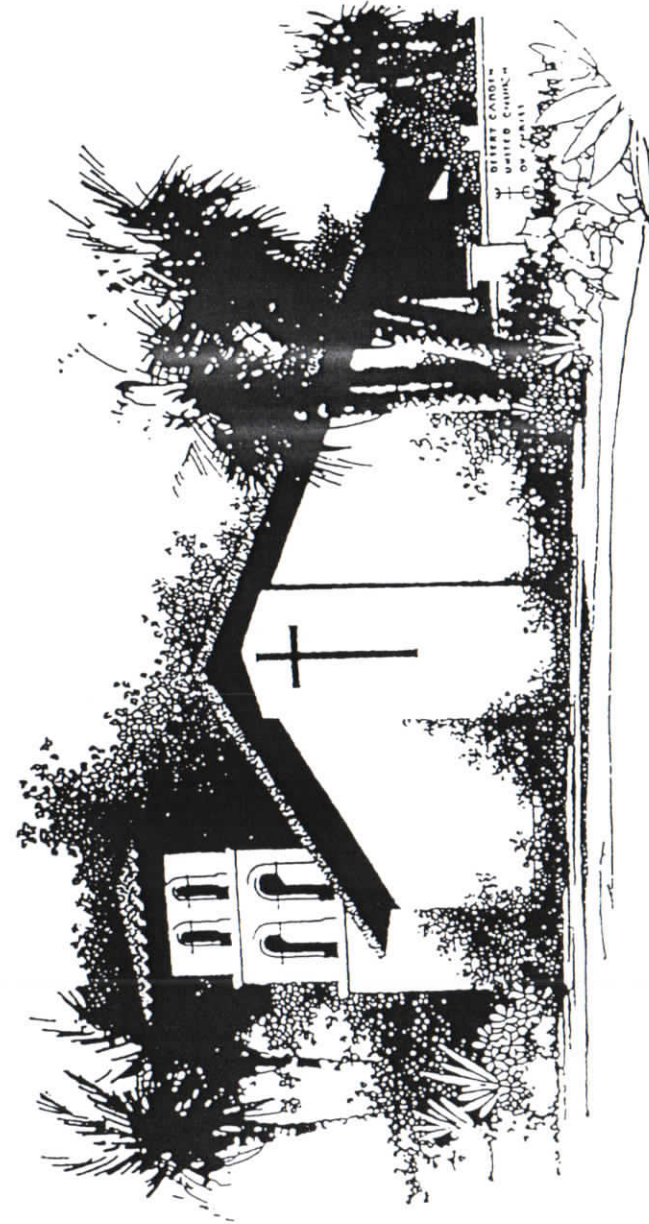
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God has come to us
and shared our common lot,
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God promises to all who trust Him
forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace,
courage in the struggle for justice and peace,
God's spiritual presence in trial and rejoicing,
and everlasting life in His kingdom which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto the Living God revealed
in Jesus Christ. Amen



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SCW

ABOUT THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

If you moved to Sun City West from a community where there was a Congregational Church, an Evangelical and Reformed Church or a Christian Church, you are already familiar with the roots of the United Church of Christ. The "UCC" was formed in 1957 when these denominations united.

The religious heritage of the UCC stems from the great traditions of the Protestant Reformation - Lutheran, Calvinist and Congregational. These traditions were brought to America by Protestants fleeing persecution in Europe.

Today the UCC has more than two million members; one of the vital main-line churches in America.

Probably the most theologically dynamic church on the contemporary scene, the UCC believes in doctrinal freedom. Members of churches of all persuasions find a stimulating atmosphere of faith in congregations where no one has all the answers. We believe that all Christians are brothers and sisters in Christ and are called to work together in harmony. We affirm the validity and the vitality of the Hebrew tradition. We rejoice in God's influence wherever and whenever it is found.

We believe that each generation is responsible for rethinking its beliefs, as God's word continuously unfolds and conditions change. We affirm the central and authoritative witness of the Holy Bible.

The United Church of Christ offers: Unity - for Christians of diverse traditions; Action - opportunities to work and witness for Christ throughout the world; and, Freedom - for congregational and individual decisions under the influence of Christ.

ABOUT DESERT GARDEN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Desert Garden United Church of Christ, like all of the churches and the synagogue in Sun City West, is new. Organized in 1979, the congregation moved into its lovely sanctuary on Christmas Eve, 1983. In 1989 the facilities of its 128th Avenue campus were expanded with the construction of a new fellowship hall, a columbarium, an enlarged sanctuary, a spacious patio and additional parking space.

The church is characterized by dynamic worship services, a warm and supportive congregational fellowship, simplicity in style and freedom of thought.

Desert Garden is in a phase of growth. New members join the church from all parts of the country and virtually every denomination. It is truly an ecumenical fellowship.

The Rev. Ed Beck is our pastor who brings vigorous leadership, stimulating preaching and teaching and thoughtful pastoral ministry to our church and community. His Pastoral leadership at Desert Garden began December, 1993 after a distinguished 10 year pastorate at Sunrise Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Desert Garden Church especially appeals to people who enjoy quiet simplicity in their faith. It is a church made up of people who are able to chuckle over their own foibles, who enjoy thinking for themselves and who work out their own conclusions. It is a gracious, thankful and profoundly reverent congregation of people who try to embody the Christian life in their daily lives. It is an extraordinary young and vibrant growing church.