

SCW

## Dr. Jerry Elrod of SCW United Methodist Church Retires From the Ministry

By Chet Lacy

Members of SCW Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church last Sunday bid farewell to their senior minister, Dr. Jerry Elrod, who is retiring from the active ministry of the church.

Now on leave, he and Mrs.

"While I have dedicated the last 42 years of my life to the Church, having received my local preachers license in 1954, I will have 37 years of pension credit at this session of the annual conference, thus qualifying me



William W. Dew, Jr. (center), Bishop of the Desert Southwest Conference of the Methodist Church out of Phoenix, congratulates Dr. Jerry Elrod, senior pastor of the SCW Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church, on his and Mrs. Elrod's retirement.  
Photo, Chet Lacy

Elrod, who also has her Ph.D., were feted at a congregational open house following his final worship services here last Sunday.

Said Dr. Elrod, in making the announcement of his retirement to the congregation, "We rejoice in the four years of ministry with you here at Shepherd of the Hills Church. We are pleased that many of our goals have been addressed and most of them accomplished.

for retirement from the active ministry of the United Methodist Church."

The Elrods plan to build a home on a farm in Texas that has been in his mother's family for more than a hundred years.

This summer and possibly into the fall, they will be at home near Cripple Creek, Colo. He plans to do much writing, reading, gar-

**Elrod**

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## Dr. Elrod Retires From the Ministry

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dening and to pursue hobbies, such as antique collecting and furniture refinishing. They plan to develop a foundation to support Habitat for Humanity and to assist persons who need financial aid in attending school.

In closing, Dr. Elrod said, "Sharon and I have deeply appreciated the support for our ministry at Shepherd of the Hills Church and know that you will continue to provide similar undergirding for your next senior pastor.

"We have truly enjoyed our years here and our many friends and acquaintances. We will miss you all and pray a bright future for Shepherd of the Hills Church. Know that our decision to retire is based solely upon our personal and collective readiness.

"As members, we know that your continued commitment to the Church will include your continued growth in personal discipleship as you offer ongoing service to the Church. May God's influence and guidance prevail," he concluded.

Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist

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Thursday, Apr. 24, 1997 THE WESTER Page 5

## SCW Methodist Church Adds Parish Nurse to Congregational Care Program

By Chet Lacy

In cooperation with the Sun Health Corporation, the SCW Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church has added the half-time services of an additional parish nurse as part of its expanded congregational care program.

Barbara McGinn, RN, who, for the last five years has worked for Sun Health as a home health nurse, staff nurse, community liaison nurse and case manager, has been added to the Shepherd

crises, Stephen Ministry long term one-to-one relationships, counseling, home care assistance, and numerous interfaith service programs such as blood pressure clinics, medication education, stroke prevention, home safety and dietary planning clinics.

Ms. McGinn originally served as a registered nurse in hospitals in New York and Long Island and was a missionary in India and many other countries "working among the poorest of the poor in varying capacities rang-

Conferring on the expanded congregational care program of the SCW Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church are Mrs. Pat Niere, RN MS (r.), who heads the program and Barbara McGinn, RN, newly added to the church staff.

Photo, Chet Lacy



of the Hills United Methodist Church staff to assist in providing health education services and to focus on hospital discharge needs of church members.

She will be working with members of the staff congregational care team including Mrs. Pat Niere, RN, MS; Dr. Jerry DeGrow, and Dr. Jerry Smith with Dr. Jerry Elrod, senior minister. The extensive caring services of the church include health and welfare, assistance during and following hospitalization, problem solving and meeting of

ing from nursing to running soup kitchens to constructing/renovating convents and night shelters for the homeless."

Sun Health Corporation is willing to provide assistance to other churches who want to start a parish nurse program, according to Ms. Niere. For further information contact Ms. Genny Rose, executive vice president, Extended Care Service, Sun Health, 10601 W. Santa Fe Drive, P.O. Box 2209, Sun City, AZ 85372, phone 974-7000.

Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist

# Pastor's wife commands respect

Years ago, a minister's wife was expected to be dedicated to church business and helping the less fortunate. Although some ministers' wives have continued in the tradition, others live a different life. Some may pursue careers of their own. Others may take liberal positions on issues their husbands' congregations do not support. The following article is the fourth in a series that explores the lives of ministers' wives today.

By **KIMBERLY HICKS**  
Daily News-Sun staff

**S**he is a driving force behind mental-health care services for Arizona children and families in need, and is among the estimated 5 percent of Sun City West residents who continues to be part of the workaday world.

Her full-time job requires a commute between Sun-City West and downtown Phoenix, Monday through Friday.

And for nearly two decades, Sharon Shaw Elrod has been striking a balance between being a career woman and a minister's wife.

Although she said she is forced at times to make choices — such as between activities in her husband's church and the demands of work — Sharon said she has never let others' expectations affect her life.

"I have never felt put into a stereotype as a minister's wife," she said. "I've always felt free to be who I am and do what I want. And I've always

**'She is so totally generous. Sometimes I think she is not a good critic because she is too generous. She gives me so much praise, and I'm not sure if others see me the way she does.'**

— **The Rev. Jerry D. Elrod,  
Shepherd of the Hills  
United Methodist Church**

had a career."

Since 1985, Sharon has worked for the Arizona Children's Home. The Tucson-based agency was the state's first orphanage, and is now a mental-health care provider for children and families in Arizona.

Now as director of the agency's Phoenix region, Sharon oversees programs related to outpatient clinical services, foster care, infant adoption, in-home family therapy and therapeutic group homes.

"There is a very complimentary bond

between what the church teaches and what I do," she said. "What I do is a daily expression of caring for other human beings."

Eighteen years ago, she married the Rev. Jerry D. Elrod, a United Methodist minister.

The two met in a professional setting: Sharon was completing her master's degree in clinical social work and doing field work for a United Methodist social service agency. Jerry was on the agency's board of directors.

They worked together for seven years and fostered a deep friendship before exchanging vows.

The couple lived in Nebraska, then moved to Arizona. Jerry started Desert Skies United Methodist Church in Tucson, where he was pastor until earlier this month when he transferred to Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church in Sun City West.

While in Tucson, Sharon was director of educational programs for the Arizona Children's Home. Instead of relinquishing her position because of her husband's move, she was promoted to the helm of Phoenix operations.

"Suddenly I found myself responsible for a whole series of programs, not just one," she said.

At the same time, she is completing her doctorate of education through Nova University.

Despite Sharon's busy schedule, Jerry said he turns to her "completely" for support in his ministry.

"She is so totally generous. Sometimes I think she is not a good critic

**'I have never felt put into a stereotype as a minister's wife. I've always felt free to be who I am and do what I want. And I've always had a career.'**

— **Sharon Shaw Elrod**

because she is too generous. She gives me so much praise, and I'm not sure if others see me the way she does," he said.

Sharon disagreed, saying Jerry doesn't know how good a minister he is.

"I provide a balance for him in understanding and dealing with his career, particularly in terms of his expectations of himself. He has fallen prey to what a lot of clergy have — they tend to expect too much from themselves. I help him balance that out and be more realistic," she said.

Sharon, who is admittedly assertive, said she will stand up for her beliefs even if others may be offended.

As a minister's wife, she said, she does not keep her views to herself but is careful how she expresses them.

See Minister turns, B2

# Minister turns to wife for support

— From B1

She cited her strong belief in the equality of all people, regardless of race, education or gender, as an example.

"As a professional social worker, I believe in the inherent dignity of all human beings. If people take offense to me or to that, I'll take 'em on any day. ... I really don't believe that God cares about the color of our skin, what our IQ is or about any of the little differences there are between human beings on this earth," she said. "I believe God cares about how much we love Him and about how we treat our fellow human beings."

Jerry said he and Sharon decided early on they would not change any aspects of their life together because of his ministry.

"Why play a part? We don't have to. We are who we are," he said. "In the declaration of who we are, we also say who we are not. ... We're not signing on to play a part."

Together, Jerry and Sharon have raised Jerry's son, Joel.

Joel, 25, will complete his degree in art illustration at Northern Arizona University next month.

Sharon, who beams with pride when she talks about Joel, refers to him as "our son."

"I raised him. He calls me Mom. He is not my natural child but he is my son in every other way," she said.

The rest of their "family" is comprised of dachshunds Zachariah and Katurah, whose names Sharon selected from the Old Testament.

Sharon said religion has always been part of her life. She grew up in the United Methodist Church, but also has attended the Episcopal and United Church of Christ churches. She reverted to the United Methodist Church

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when she met Jerry.

"He has reinforced my religious beliefs through his sermons," she said. "He preaches sermons with an incredible amount of depth. He challenges me and the people in the congregation. One of the most frequent responses people have to his sermons is that hereally made you think."

Jerry, she said, also has defined more clearly for her ways to act out her Christian beliefs.

"Being Christian means we are called upon to act in a certain way," she said. "Particularly how we act toward fellow human beings. It's not just throwing a couple of bucks in the collection plate on Sunday."

Jerry, who shows an obvious admiration for his wife, said other couples could easily become envious of their affection and dedication toward one another.

"I do not think of Sharon as a pastor's spouse," he said, taking hold of her hand. "I think of her as someone I love very much."

SCW



Rick D'Ella/Daily News-Sun

The Rev. Jerry D. Elrod listens as his wife, Sharon, describes his attributes as a minister. The Elrods, married 18 years, said they've been made to feel welcome since moving to Sun City West last month. They

share their home with family pets Katurah, left, and Zachariah. The dachshunds' names were taken from the Old Testament. Both dogs have been part of the family for a little more than a year.

SCW

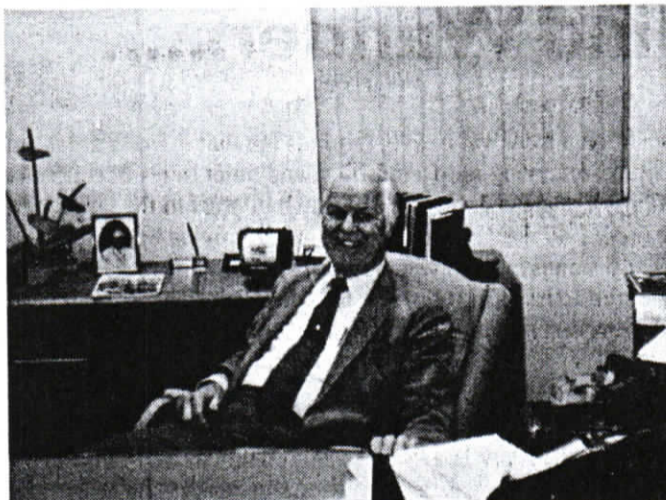
## Central East/Central West

"CONNECTION" Dec 18, 1992

### Shepherd of the Hills UMC consecrates new offices, fellowship hall & columbarium

Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church in Sun City West consecrated their new \$1,600,000 addition on Sunday, Dec. 13, with Kent Douglass, Superintendent of the Central West District, participating following their annual Church Conference. The addition doubled the church's library space, increased their office space with four new offices and provided a fire-proof vault. It added music and choir rooms with good acoustics and closets for music and robe storage, moved and enlarged their kitchen area, and provided a new fellowship hall complete with stage and sound booth.

The new addition makes Shepherd of the Hills perhaps the most handicapped-accessible church in the Conference. Particular attention was paid to acoustics since it was noted that it was difficult to hear people talk in the old fellowship hall. Wireless hearing aids have been provided in the new fellowship hall; all doors are electric and open upon approach; there are no steps to navigate; and there



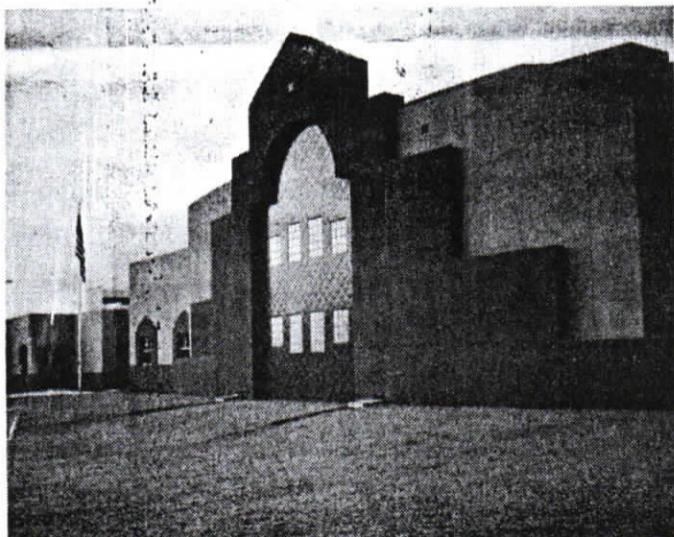
The Rev. Dick Peterson enjoys his new office

is an emergency exit from the sanctuary with ramps, railing, and parking immediately outside the door. They have provided a "life-line" room with first aid, stretcher, and bed between the sanctuary and fellowship hall.

The new fellowship hall is state of the art. A large stage with stairs and ramps leading up to it is a dominant feature. An elaborate sound booth controls the sound. A large hidden

screen can be lowered for use with a projector. Dressing rooms for men and women are close to the stage. The room can seat 408 at round tables; 650 in theater seating. Lemonade and coffee machines provide refreshments each Sunday.

Other by-products of the addition are an additional meeting room and workroom, a lounge with refreshment area, practice room for the bell choir and storage for the bells, and a better library.



New building at Shepherd of the Hills.

The addition was accomplished without the church assuming a mortgage. Personal notes were secured from members in amounts of from \$1,000 to \$20,000 with varying interest rates averaged from checking with three banks in the area. The church has the capacity of completely paying off their first indebtedness sometime in 1993 and the addition should be paid off in about eight years at a rate of \$225,000 per year. The members are not just focusing on their church, however. Fifty percent of their annual budget goes to mission projects.

Shepherd of the Hills has approximately 1350 members.

Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist

# Women clergy are heard in church

## SCW church appoints first clergywoman

By KIMBERLY HICKS  
Daily News-Sun

Scripture suggests women should be seen, not heard, in the church.

In 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35, Paul wrote, "Women should be silent during church meetings. They are not to take part in the discussion, for they are subordinate to men as the Scriptures also declare.

"If they have any questions to ask, let them ask their husbands at home, for it is improper for women to express their opinions in church meetings."

An archaic notion by today's standards, the admonition was enough to spur questions in the Rev. Cheri Whisler's mind when she began experiencing a calling to the ministry 10 years ago.

"Maybe being a woman I questioned it. I questioned why I was being called if the Scripture said

'Women should be silent during church meetings. They are not to take part in the discussion, for they are subordinate to men as the Scriptures also declare. If they have any questions to ask, let them ask their husbands at home, for it is improper for women to express their opinions in church meetings.'

— I Corinthians 14: 34-35

women should not speak in church...I remember thinking, 'Me?' " she said. "But I'm glad I had that questioning. I feel strength in my calling."

She feels so much strength that she and her husband, Steve, relocated to Glendale in July to follow her career. The thirty-something Rev. Whisler is the new associate pastor of Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church in Sun City West.

She is among the first female ministers in Sun City West, said Rev. Ralph Daniel, past president of the Sun Cities Ministerial Association. She is the first female minister at Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church.

And with the new title comes a new challenge: being accepted.

"I'm sure I will encounter some problems," she said, realizing not all parishioners will accept a young female minister.

"I take it in stride. I know that no matter what church I'm in I won't be fully accepted...people have visions about what a pastor should be."

Perhaps no one knows that better than the Rev. Peggy Lindamood of Faith Presbyterian Church in Sun City. She was in her 20s and fresh out of the seminary when she took the pulpit amid a congregation made up of people three times her age.

Five years later, she said she is comfortable with the role. Although she realizes some parishioners may not turn to her for counseling or advice, she said she feels accepted.

"I was very blessed by going to a particular church where there had been three women before me," Lindamood said. "The ideas about women in the ministry had already been challenged.

"The issue is helping people realize women can be warm, caring, com-

petent pastors," she said.

Just as Rev. Lindamood did, Rev. Whisler is adjusting to life — and death — in a retirement community.

Both ministers had worked primarily with youth ministries before coming to the Sun Cities.

Rev. Lindamood said there are issues unique to retirement communities that can undermine people's faith, such as death and degenerative disease.

"It has been an adjustment," Rev. Whisler agreed. "But I look at death in that it's sad because we miss the person, but for the person who is dead, it is a release, especially if they have had a painful illness."

Rev. Whisler said there are many positive aspects as well. Throughout the Sun Cities she has noticed a spirit of volunteerism often not found in other communities.

"The church is much more active. These are retirees. They've got more time to be involved in their church," she said.

Rev. Whisler's goals for the church are rooted in spreading the word of the Bible to both home-bound worshippers and active parishioners. She plans to visit each of the church's Friendship Groups, and she will lead "Disciple" Bible study, which aims to

— See Shepherd of, C2



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

## Shepherd of the Hills appoints clergywoman

— From C1

bring the church back to its Biblical base, she said.

Both tasks reflect her devotion to her faith, which began changing the course her life would take a decade ago.

Her original career plan was to become a diplomat to a European country. Along the way she was sidetracked by a Kerygma Bible Study, which emphasizes the apostolic preaching that Jesus is the Christ.

"I became excited to know more, to know more about the Bible and about who God is...I felt a sense of purpose. I wanted to devote my whole life to God's work, not just a portion."

She sought advice from the pastor who had led her Bible study. He suggested she work outside the ministry for two years. She did and, in 1984, graduated from the University of Arizona in Tucson with a bache-

lor of arts degree in religious studies and a second degree in Italian and French.

But her calling did not go away.

She enrolled in the Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif., and received a master's of divinity degree in 1990.

She met her husband, Steve, at Fuller Seminary and the two were married the first day of spring break in 1989. The Rev. Steve Whisler is now pursuing work as a minister in the Valley.

"I know it's not the norm, but my husband decided to step back and let me go forward with my career," she said.

Rev. Whisler said she feels fortunate about being chosen to work in Sun City West.

"I plan to be here for a long time," she said.

The Rev. Cheri Whisler is the new associate pastor of Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church in Sun City West. Whisler is one of the first female ministers in Sun City West and the first female pastor at Shepherd of the Hills.





Daily News-Sun photo by Stephen Cherneski

**GOODWILL PLANTING** — Phyllis Krauss, left, and Louise Welsh watch as their husbands Duane Welsh and Otto Krauss, move a Peace Pole into place at Unity Church of Sun City in celebration of Earth Day. The message "May Peace Prevail On Earth" has been printed on the pole in English, German, Arabic and Spanish. Peace poles number about 65,000 worldwide, with 2,000 in the United States. Other locations include the magnetic North Pole and the pyramids in Egypt.

## Congregation fulfills mission

### Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY WEST — "A support group or family extension."

Those labels define Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church, said Pastor Richard Peterson.

"Most people want to become a part of a congregation in a real sense," Peterson said.

The family-type congregation has grown to 1,200 members in its 11-year history, which includes a move into a permanent home in 1985.

Peterson works with two associate pastors, Rev. Franklin Greene and Rev. Melvin Pritts. The church is part of the United Methodist Church denomination, which has about 10 million members nationwide.

The denomination believes in the Trinity and the humanity and divinity of Christ.

"When people join here, we welcome them in and they become part of what we call our extended family," he said.

To ensure that all members have contact with others in the church, Shepherd of the Hills operates several ministries, both

**'We are open and receptive and anxious to be of service.'**

The Rev. Richard Peterson  
Shepherd of the Hills  
United Methodist Church

spiritual and social.

Recently, the church initiated the training of Stephen ministers, or people who undergo 50 hours of training in psychological skills, the art of listening and dealing with grief.

"The Stephen ministers are available for long-term support relationships," Peterson said.

Another ministry is that of the health and welfare group, which helps people find transportation to church, provides respite to caregivers and gives service referrals to people who need various kinds of help.

More typically, the church offers several Bible studies, which don't separate men from women, Peterson said.

"Most of these men and women have been married and living together for 50 years.

Why separate them now?" he said.

Sunday morning services are hosted at 9 and 10:30 a.m., and often feature the musical ministries of a 75-voice choir and a bell choir, Peterson said.

On the social level, the church hosts 40 neighborhood friendship groups, two bowling leagues, and golf and bridge groups.

As the church grows, the ministries and small groups become more important because they bring people together, Peterson said.

"We are open and receptive and anxious to be of service," he said.

As a whole, the church supports foreign and local mission projects, including Centro Adelante and the Westside Food Bank.

"The mission of our church is to help people understand the grace and love of God available for them for every situation in life," Peterson said.

VI CHURCHES: Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist SCW



Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church, Sun City West 12-31-83



10-19-83

### **Shepherd of Hills Church women prepare parking lot sale**

Edna Wells, center, savors smell of freshly baked rolls held by Maxine Driscoll, right, who looks at antique quilts held by Jeanne Phillips. Many items

will be available at parking lot sale for Shepherd of the Hills Methodist Church from 7 a.m.-4 p.m. Friday at Sundome Plaza, Sun City West. (News-Sun photo)

# Three churches buy Sun City West land

Three Sun City West church sites were sold by the Del E. Webb Development Co. for a total of \$850,000, it was announced by the firm Thursday.

Purchasing the sites were Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church, the Covenant Presbyterian Church in America and Lord of Life Lutheran Church.

"I believe it's a strong indication of the continued growth of Sun City West," Devco President George Reeve said in reference to the sales.

Construction work on all three churches is expected to be held off for about two years.

The eight-acre site purchased by the Methodist church, for \$457,143, is on the southwest corner of Pyracantha Drive and Meeker Boulevard.

Bill Mason, treasurer of the church's building fund and site selection committee, commented: "We purchased the site with the idea that this would be the only Methodist Church in Phase I. We wanted a lot large enough to allow

for expansion and plenty of parking space."

Mason added that no arrangements have been made by church members in regard to architectural plans.

The three-acre site purchased by the Presbyterian Church, for

\$147,726, is on the southwest corner of Aleppo and Spanish Gardens drives.

The Lutheran Church obtained a 4.6-acre site on the northwest corner of Meeker and Johnson boulevards. The purchase price was \$262,857.



Paperwork on the purchase of a site for the Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church in Sun City West is signed by Bill Mason, left foreground. Standing are

Devco officials Phil Brant, left, and George Reeve. Far right is James Lyles of Los Angeles, an official of the United Methodist Church. (News-Sun Photo)

12-31-82

# SCW church offers fellowship

by CONNIE STEELE-ILLER

News-Sun staff

SUN CITY WEST — Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church welcomes newcomers. In fact the congregation wants residents and newcomers to know they have a standing invitation to, as the hymn says, "walk hand in hand," "at one in the Spirit," with them or wherever they prefer.

They not only welcome all who come through their doors, they also invite new Westers to attend the church or synagogue of their choice. Providing times and locations of various religious services is a courtesy extended in the absence of a ministerial association, says the Rev. Richard H. Peterson, pastor.

"It's a service we provide, much like Welcome Wagon, but without the coupons," he says.

Welcoming newcomers has marked the Sun City West congregation since it first began meeting in 1979 at the R.H. Johnson Social Hall.

After a slow period of growth, it now gains about 200 members a year, says its minister.

Peterson estimates the 973-member church at 13568 Meeker Blvd. is the largest Protestant church in SCW. Because they believe Christians will be known by their love, providing a spiritual home and an extended family to its members is important.

"We look at the person as being a whole person and we minister to that whole person," says Peterson.

Ministering to body, mind and spirit takes many forms, he says. From worship to recreation, there is a group to help meet nearly every need of its congregation.

"There's a singles group coping with loneliness; Lifeline, a

cardio-vascular support group; Bible class on Tuesday; grief group, formed just this year; about 30 neighborhood friendship groups, golf club, bowling team, 6 or 7 circles of United Methodist Women's groups and a men's group," Peterson says.

"One member even offers pool lessons. Not here, of course," says Peterson and laughs during an interview in his office looking out to a section of R. H. Johnson Recreation Center.

"We even exhibit our own artists in Wesley Hall. It gives them a chance to exhibit and there's a lot of talent here," he says.

Peterson and the Rev. Howard Higgins, associate pastor, marvel at how involved with one another the congregation is.

"I'm amazed at this congregation. They're very, very supportive of each other. They've become an extended family," Peterson says.

One of the ways they've done this is through some 30 neighborhood groups comprised of roughly 20 persons from the same neighborhood. At least monthly these Methodist neighbors get together in one of their homes.

Various church committees help provide other solutions. Through the Health and Welfare committee meals and needed transportation can be provided.

Membership and Evangelization has plans for an adult Sunday School class in the new year. And Peterson says he and Higgins will visit any local person attending a service.

Shepherd of the Hills opened in its present location Dec. 22, 1985. The new facility has won architectural design awards for energy use and lighting. The sanctuary boasts soft fabric sculptures of biblical symbols by Susan Caffrey of Scottsdale.

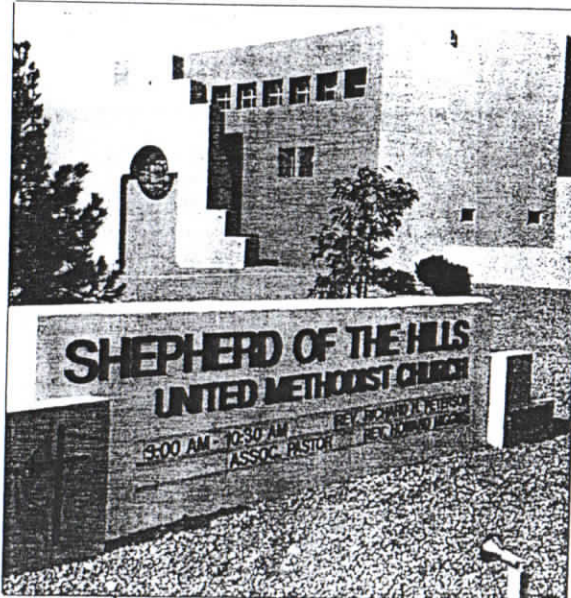
"No commercial money went into building this church. All the money came from our members who accepted notes. That's exciting," Peterson says.



Peterson



DESCENDING HOLY SPIRIT — Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church displays a series of soft sculptures by Susan Caffrey of Scottsdale in the sanctuary. The two-year old church building has won three architectural awards.



## SCW Methodists welcome new pastor



Pastor Mike and Nancy Downing bring interesting backgrounds to Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church.

Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church in SCW will welcome Pastor Mike Downing, along with his wife Nancy, on July 1 as the new minister of the congregation. The Downings have been married for 33 years and have two sons, William, 24, and Jonathan, 20.

They are no strangers to Arizona, having lived 12 years in Prescott, where Pastor Mike was the Yavapai County Archaeologist for four years, and then became Director of Public Works for the City of Prescott. Nancy worked on inter-library loans for Yavapai College, then served as church administrator for the senior pastor of the Prescott United Methodist Church.

In 1989, Pastor Mike responded to God's call to serve in the Ordained Ministry, and in August of that year, he and his family left their home and jobs so he could begin studies at Claremont School of Theology.

The Rev. J. Wesley Neal, the founding pastor of Shepherd of the Hills was one of his mentors throughout his Seminary training. In June of 1992, he completed his Master of Divinity degree and one year later, completed his course work for the Doctor of Ministry degree.

He then served as associate pastor at University UMC in Las Vegas, Nev., and one year later, was appointed as senior pastor of Sedona UMC. On July 1, 1997, Pastor Mike returned to Nevada and began his tenure as Senior Pastor of Trinity UMC, which has become the leading UM church in the Las Vegas Valley in Missions, the Alpha course, Emmaus, Evangelistic Outreach and Christian Education.

Nancy helped launch the Law Library at UNLV's new William Boyd School of Law, serving as the Law Library Serials Supervisor for the next eight years.

Pastor Mike will lead his first worship services at Shepherd of the Hills on July 2 and 3.

## Summer survivors at SHUMC



Quilting, demonstrated by five of the participants, is just one of the many activities offered during the summer at Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church. The women meet often to share ideas and to work on their favorite quilt. Shown (l. to r.) are Ginny Kowalski, Jo Clayburg, Sue Kerr, Marion Ensor and Ruth Carver.

# SCW church celebrates 25th anniversary

**KATY O'GRADY**  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

When Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church was founded, Sun City West was but a fledgling community of a few hundred residents.

Yet from that relatively small population, the church attracted 54 founding members who started meeting in December 1979 in the R.H. Johnson Recreation Center after deciding they had enough interest to break off from the nondenominational community church.

"Each denomination wanted their own church, and the Methodist homeowners who were some of those earliest people to move into this community decided they had enough members," said Robert Weber of the church's 25th anniversary committee, which has been organizing activities throughout the year to honor the church's founding.

In the last 25 years, the church's ranks have exploded from 54 to about 1,700 members who continue to fulfill the church's missions while meeting the needs of many in the community of some 30,000 residents.

Sitting on 8 acres at Meeker Boulevard just north of R.H. Johnson Boulevard, Shepherd of the Hills is Sun City West's second largest church. The campus is abuzz seven days a week with hundreds of volunteers carrying out a host of activities aimed at aiding others, both locally and around the world, while also providing members with spirituality and camaraderie.

There were advantages and disadvantages to seeking volunteer help from a

seniors-only community, said Peggy Wickham, a founding member who remains active with the church.

"Having never started a church before, I don't know if it was easier or harder. I would say it wasn't any harder because we had enthusiasm for starting a new church," Wickham said. "We were small enough that everyone had to do one or two jobs."

Added Rev. Franklin Greene, who has been with the church more than 16 years, "Retirees here sometimes pick up on church activities because they're retired and have time. But there are retirees who say, 'No, I've been there, done that.' So it's probably the same as any other community."

The primary effort in the early years, aside from spiritual guidance, was addressing residents' health and wellness needs, such as driving them to and from medical appointments or visiting them in the hospital.

That work has continued and expanded, with Shepherd of the Hills becoming one of the area's first churches to have a registered nurse on staff, said Phyllis Lucchesi, who heads the church's office staff.

"The mission outreach is in this community, but it also goes international from this church," she said.

Outside of Sun City West, the church's efforts can be seen as close as El Mirage, where members are building a Habitat for Humanity house, to as far away as south Asia, where they are helping tsunami victims. And there are many other projects

in between.

Twenty five years ago, the church's building pastor, the late Rev. J. Wesley Neal, set a goal that Shepherd of the Hills would spend just as much on missionary efforts as it did on itself.

"We haven't reached it yet, but we're getting very close," said Wickham.

Shepherd of the Hills is the second-largest church in its conference, which includes 137 churches in Arizona, part of Nevada and part of California.

Just as they did 25 years ago, members continue to have fun while serving God and each other. Whether they're raising scholarship funds to send a Dysart High School graduate to nursing school, or packing Christmas shoeboxes of toys and hygiene items for South American children, their upbeat attitudes are evident.

"When you're doing something for someone else, that's a warm fuzzy, and everyone gets into it," Lucchesi said.

Wickham explained, "One of the things people ask me consistently is, 'What draws people to your church?' I think that goes back to our original days when we had friendship groups."

Those small groups, arranged in neighborhoods as a sort of welcoming and support committee for members, still exist.

"When you get to be 1,700 members, you don't know everybody, but these friendship groups have continued through the years," Wickham said.

Added Green, "We've tried to become a family over the years for people, even away from home."

OVER



JOY LAMBERT-SLAGOWSKI/DAILY NEWS-SUN

From left, Rev. Franklin Greene, Peggy Wickham, Phyllis Lucchesi, Robert Lucchesi, Robert Weber and Rev. Jeff Ebrigh, in the Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church on Thursday.



THE WESTER Thursday, January 6, 2005

## Month-long 25th Anniversary events at Methodist church

The 25th Anniversary Celebration at Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church, 13658 W. Meeker Blvd., Sun City West, continues Jan. 8 and 9 with a visit from Rev. Dr. Jerry Elrod, senior pastor from July 1993 through June 1997. Dr. Elrod will preach at the weekend services and he and his wife, Sharon, will be honored at a reception between services on Sunday, Jan. 9.

The celebration continues Jan. 15 and 16 with Rev. Bill Denlinger preaching at all the weekend services. Rev. Denlinger and his wife, Gloria, who served the church from July 1997 through June 2000, will be honored at a reception between services on Sunday, Jan. 16.

At 3 p.m., Jan. 16, it will be "Opera Tunity"—they're Opera Singers! They're zany!! They're ba-ack!!! But this time as pigs...and a wolf...to Mozart. No. Really!! Ken Goodenberger directs this merry band of musicians as they present some fun musical favorites to start out the Performing Arts New Year. Tickets at the door are \$5.

Charter Sunday and the Sanc-

tuary's Service of Consecration held on Jan. 26, 1986, will be commemorated at all services on the weekend of Jan 22 and 23. Founding and Charter Members will be recognized in all services. At 1 p.m. Jan. 23, the congregation will have a 'sold out' Celebration Banquet at the Palm Ridge Recreation Center.

The banquet will feature a deluxe buffet dinner with Anniversary Cakes; unique table decorations; and entertainment by "Just Friends," three professional musicians (Nancy Strand, Ruthanna Metzgar and Dorothy Anderson) performing classical Broadway and gospel music.

Rev. Fannalou Guggisberg has composed a special hymn for the 25th Anniversary which will be introduced by the choir at the beginning of January and later in the month, the congregation and guests will have opportunities to sing it. A special mission project and additional performances in the Performing Arts Series are planned.

For more information, call the church office at 623-584-2280.

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DAILY NEWS-SUN • FRIDAY, NOV. 22, 2002

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## Shepherd of the Hills dedicates new chapel

Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church dedicated a new chapel and courtyard Wednesday on its campus, 13658 W. Meeker Blvd., Sun City West.

The design of the new chapel complements the other buildings on the church campus which include the original sanctuary completed in 1985; an office wing, choir rooms and the fellowship hall added in 1992; and a columbarium and scattering garden added during the '90s. The new project includes a landscaped courtyard with benches and a central water feature. Participating in the dedication were the Rev. Mary Bullis, district superintendent; the Rev. Geoffrey Ebright, senior pastor, and members of the pastoral staff; members of the chapel building committee, chaired by Phil Lintner; representatives of Rowland Companies, the general contractor; CCBG Architects; and members of the church council and congregation.



MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Roberta Van Cleve, left, Javais Vice, Elaine Jacobsen and Agnes Downs, members of the bell choir, welcome folks into the new chapel at Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church for communion Wednesday afternoon. The Chapel is on the Church campus at 13658 W. Meeker Blvd., Sun City West.

Daily News-Sun • Friday, May 3, 2002

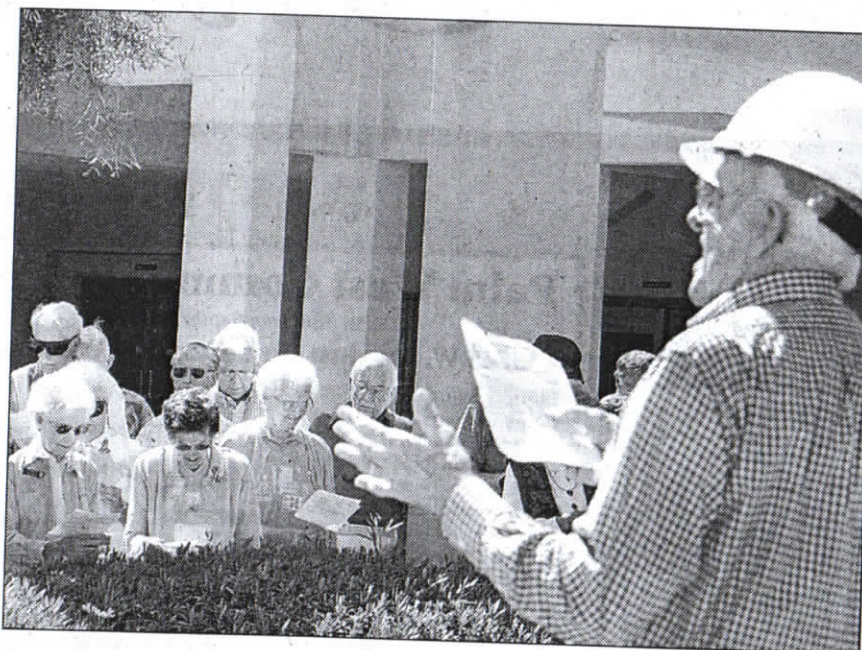
# Construction begins on new chapel

STAFF REPORT

**M**embers of the congregation and pastoral staff of the Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church participated in the ground-breaking ceremonies for a stand-alone chapel on Thursday on the church campus at 13658 W. Meeker Blvd., Sun City.

The chapel will supplement the existing main sanctuary by providing a more intimate setting for private prayer and worship, small weddings, baptisms, memorial services and funerals. It will also be used for Bible studies and other religious education programs.

The architectural design of the new facility will complement other buildings on the church campus. It will be on a redesigned interior courtyard featuring a fountain, benches and enhanced landscaping. The interior will have a narthex, a private gathering room and cushioned pews to accommodate about 132 people. Stained glass windows will complement those in the main sanctuary. Completion of the chapel, expected in the late fall, fulfills the vision of the 53 founding members of the Shepherd of the Hills, which had its



JOY LAMBERT/DAILY NEWS-SUN

The Rev. Franklin Greene addresses the crowd with a scripture reading during the ground-breaking ceremony for the new chapel at Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church in Sun City West Thursday.

first service in temporary facilities in 1979. Following acquisition of the Meeker Boulevard property, the initial phase of the new church facility was consecrated in early 1986 with a sanctuary, social hall, offices and choir rehearsal rooms. A large fellowship hall was com-

pleted in late 1992 along with expanded office space, meeting rooms and choir rooms.

The Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church, with a membership of 1,700, is a Stephen Ministry church serving Sun City West and the West Valley.

Page 6 THE WESTER Thursday, June 29, 2000

## Rev. Ebright is named new senior pastor of SCW Methodist Church

By Chet Lacy

The Rev. Godfrey G. "Jeff" Ebright has been appointed senior pastor of SCW Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church effective July 1. He will succeed the current senior pastor the Rev. Bill Denlinger, who is retiring.

Ebright has been serving as senior pastor of the Cross at the Desert United Methodist Church in Phoenix.

Known informally as "Jeff," he is a fifth generation United Methodist minister who was born in

Kansas and raised in Illinois.

He met his wife, Lorraine, at Taylor University in Indiana.

After marriage and graduation, he and Lorraine moved to Pasadena, Calif., where Jeff attended Fuller Seminary, and Lorraine taught school. Jeff was ordained in 1969 and served two churches in California. In 1975 the Ebrights moved to Arizona to serve St. Andrews UMC in Mesa.

The Rev. Godfrey Ebright, newly named senior pastor at SCW Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church is shown with his wife, Lorraine.



Jeff and Lorraine have four grown children, one grandchild and another on the way. Lorraine earned a Master's Degree in Counseling at ASU and has been

a therapist in private practice for 15 years. Jeff enjoys camping, sports, reading, gardening and music.