

The Palm West Community Church expects to break ground Oct. 29 for its new building at Stardust Boulevard and Echo Mesa Drive.

Churches prepare to build new homes

By BRUCE ELLISON
Staff writer

Two organized churches whose congregations now worship in temporary rented quarters plan to break ground soon for their own sanctuaries.

They will join the 12 other churches and one synagogue that now have their own homes in Sun City West.

The Palm West Community Church, an American Baptist affiliate, expects to break ground Oct. 29 for its new building at Stardust Boulevard and Echo Mesa Drive, said the Rev. William Kearns, pastor.

The congregation now meets in the Social Hall at the R.H. Johnson

Recreation Center in Sun City West.

Kearns, whose church is two years old and boasts 145 members, said architect Dean Glasco of Phoenix has designed the new church structure, for worship and fellowship activities. It should be completed and in use by June 1996.

It will be called Hoover Hall, Kearns said. "The congregation unanimously voted to name the building in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Robert J. Hoover, honorary charter members of Palm West" in recognition of their generous gift to the church building fund "and their faithful Christian stewardship over the years."

Cost of the structure is estimated at \$1.25 million, the minister said.

Funds for its construction already have been raised, and the sanctuary should open with no mortgage, he added. "We've had some generous gifts," Kearns said.

Also planning to break ground, probably in January, is the Sun City West Christian Church, pastored by the Rev. Erskine Skates.

That church, which has been set up in January 1992 and has about 100 members and regular attenders, now worships in the Sun City West Community Services Center.

Its new quarters will be about a mile south of there, at 151st Avenue and R.H. Johnson Boulevard, on a 3.6-acre tract which the congregation bought on credit from the Del Webb

Corp. in January 1994 — and has since paid off.

Skates said an architect has been hired to help the congregation draw its building plans, which initially call for a sanctuary, parking area and appropriate landscaping. The sanctuary initially will be designed to seat 250 to 300 worshippers, Skates said, with expansion to 500 possible. Like Kearns, Skates expects his church to be holding services in its new quarters next year.

Another new church is being organized in Sun City West, but it plans to meet in temporary quarters for a time. That church is Mesa de

► See Churches build, B4

September 15, 1995

Sun City West is gaining two churches

■ From B1

Cristo Christian Church, whose minister is Keith Watkins. (See related story.)

Ministers say the increasing population of Sun City West, and the prospect new additional new residents in Sun City Grand, prompted them to decide now to build their own churches.

The small number of remaining church sites was also a motivating factor.

"When we wanted a place to build, we talked to Webb and saw there were only three places left to build," said Skates. "The site we bought, the place on Echo Mesa where Palm West is going, and a third site on R.H. Johnson Boulevard caddy-corner from what we bought.

"Webb also told us there would be fewer church sites in Sun City Grand than were left in Sun City West," Skates said.

The minister said the site his congregation bought is ideal, in part because it's only a half-mile from the Johnson Boulevard entrance to Sun City West, which will be directly across from the new Sun City Grand.

"It's central and convenient to serve parishioners from both communities," he said.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Phoenix has purchased a little over 10 acres in

the Sun City West expansion area for future use as a new parish, said Michael Minogue, pastor at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church in Sun City West.

That land is at 151st Avenue and Deer Valley Drive. Initially, the diocese bought six acres from Del Webb Corp., then, realizing that it might not have enough land, added another four acres bought from a private party, to create the 10-acre church campus.

But Marge Injasoulian, diocese spokeswoman, said the church has announced no plans to create a new parish in Sun City West, or to start building a church on the land. "It's land held for the future," she said.

Fr. Minogue said his parish now holds two Masses each Sunday in the Palm Ridge Recreation Center, serving about 400 people, and that he expects as many as 1,000 communicants to celebrate Mass in the recreation center by Christmas, when part-year residents return.

"We are somewhat overcrowded here now — in fact, bursting at the seams," Fr. Minogue said. "We have been encouraging the creation of a new parish as soon as possible. Certainly, we do need it."

Construction in Sun City Grand, likely with two years "will just add to the problems," he said.

It isn't Sun City Grand that prompted the Desert Palms Presbyterian Church to buy two acres across 135th Avenue from its church at 135th Avenue and Stardust Boulevard — it was increasing home sales in the expansion area and in Coyote Lakes in Surprise.

Bob Cotta, who heads the church's property committee, said there are no plans to build on the site, which is used for additional parking for worshippers, and has been

in church hands for two years.

"Thank goodness we got that area when we did," he said this week. "Almost as soon as we opened it for parking, we had two rows of cars in there using it."

Cotta said Desert Palms Presbyterian "is regularly running with about 100 more people at each service than we had last year," and attributes that to the new homes in the expansion area.

SCW congregation reminds of college

By JOHN MACHAY
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY WEST — When Dr. Roger Bourland joined the Desert Garden United Church of Christ three months ago, it was like going back to college, he says.

Coming from a 2,700-capacity church in Omaha, Bourland says the Sun City West congregation bears many resemblances to a college crowd.

"The church I came from had all kinds of people in the congregation," he says, "from older people, to teenagers, to infants.

"Sun City West is such a young retirement community and the people here have so much energy and enthusiasm. All being in the same age bracket, it's a lot like being in college."

Being similar to a school in a spiritual sense, Desert Garden United Church of Christ is an educational institution with a liberal admission policy. Centered in a firm belief in Jesus Christ, not a soul is ever turned away by the church, Bourland says.

As a result, Desert Garden's

370-member congregation is composed of people from a variety of religious denominations that include Christians, Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians and Jews, he says.

In fact, the most recent recruit was a Russian Orthodox Jew, Bourland says.

"It's incredibly fascinating to have such an assortment of worshippers in the congregation," Bourland says. "The input of new ideas is fantastic. All we ask is that everyone's individual beliefs are listened to and respected. Everybody gets a chance."

One of the reasons people abandon their denominational pasts, Bourland believes, is simple: They're tired of separation.

"I think (the people in the congregation) are tired of denominational differences," Bourland says. "Especially in a retirement community, they're trying to get peace."

After Desert Garden's worship services at 8:45 and 10 a.m. every Sunday, members of the congregation engage in an activity that

might appear in a college professor's dream.

Clustered in groups outside the church and in the lobby, they dispute different ideas and theories stemming from that day's sermon, Bourland says.

"What I try to do with my sermons is stretch people's imaginations," Bourland says. "I don't stand up there and give them cut and dried fact, I — at least I hope — give them something to think about. Like the Bible, it might be interpreted in different ways."

Bourland says his interpretation of the Bible is that it is a Book of messages. His sermons reflect these messages in stories and examples taken from modern-day life.

"I listen to the Bible's message and give it to the people," he says. "I don't try to entertain the people, just apply the sermon in such a way that it will appeal to them."

Desert Garden United Church of Christ celebrated its third birthday on Christmas Eve. Frederick James founded the church.

Bourland says he transferred from Omaha's 2,700-member

"I was surprised to see how incredibly active the people out here are," he says. "One might think a church in a retirement community would be deadening, but it's just the opposite. The people here are very bright and always willing to get involved."

Desert Garden's extracurricular activities include a Bible study class, a Men's Fellowship Club, a singles' club, golf, bridge and pinocle. The church also serves as a meeting place for Interfaith Services.

Bourland says high attendance at church activities reflects the people's willingness to expand and become exposed to new ideas.

"The people here are genuinely fun to work with," Bourland says. "They've got some time to open up and stretch their minds. The last time they were able to live that sort of lifestyle was when they were still in school."



DR. ROGER BOURLAND

Two SCW churches set for fall completion

By HELEN ALLEN
Staff Writer

Completion of two Sun City West churches is slated for the fall.

Sun City West Baptist Chapel, whose start was delayed by winter rains,

is now expected to be finished in early October instead of September.

Completion of the 8,300-square-foot United Church of Sun City West on 128th Avenue west of Pebblebrook Golf Course clubhouse, is scheduled for Nov. 1.

REV. C. Melvin Ratheal, pastor of the Baptist Chapel, said winter rains delayed construction

about a month.

"Everytime we were ready to pour the foundation and floor, it rained, putting everyone off schedule," he said.

There was another slight delay on the building at 17419 Conquistadore Drive, when the wrong steel braces were delivered.

RATHEAL added that work on the 9,600-square-

foot church, designed by Design Three Associates and being built by Alma Building Contractors, is about half done.

The \$500,000 project, covering land purchase and building, includes a sanctuary with seating for 275 persons, a fellowship hall, three classrooms, a library-classroom, a combination choir rehearsal and conference room and

office space.

The footings and floor of the United Church were poured last week, following underground electrical and plumbing work, according to Rev. Lester Smith.

SMITH SAID that although the ground-breaking ceremony was held in April, actual work began a month later as a general contractor had not been

selected until then. Handling the work is R.E. Spurr Construction Co.

Designed by the Dean Glasco architectural firm, the first phase of construction includes a 240-seat sanctuary, a fellowship hall, office space and kitchen.

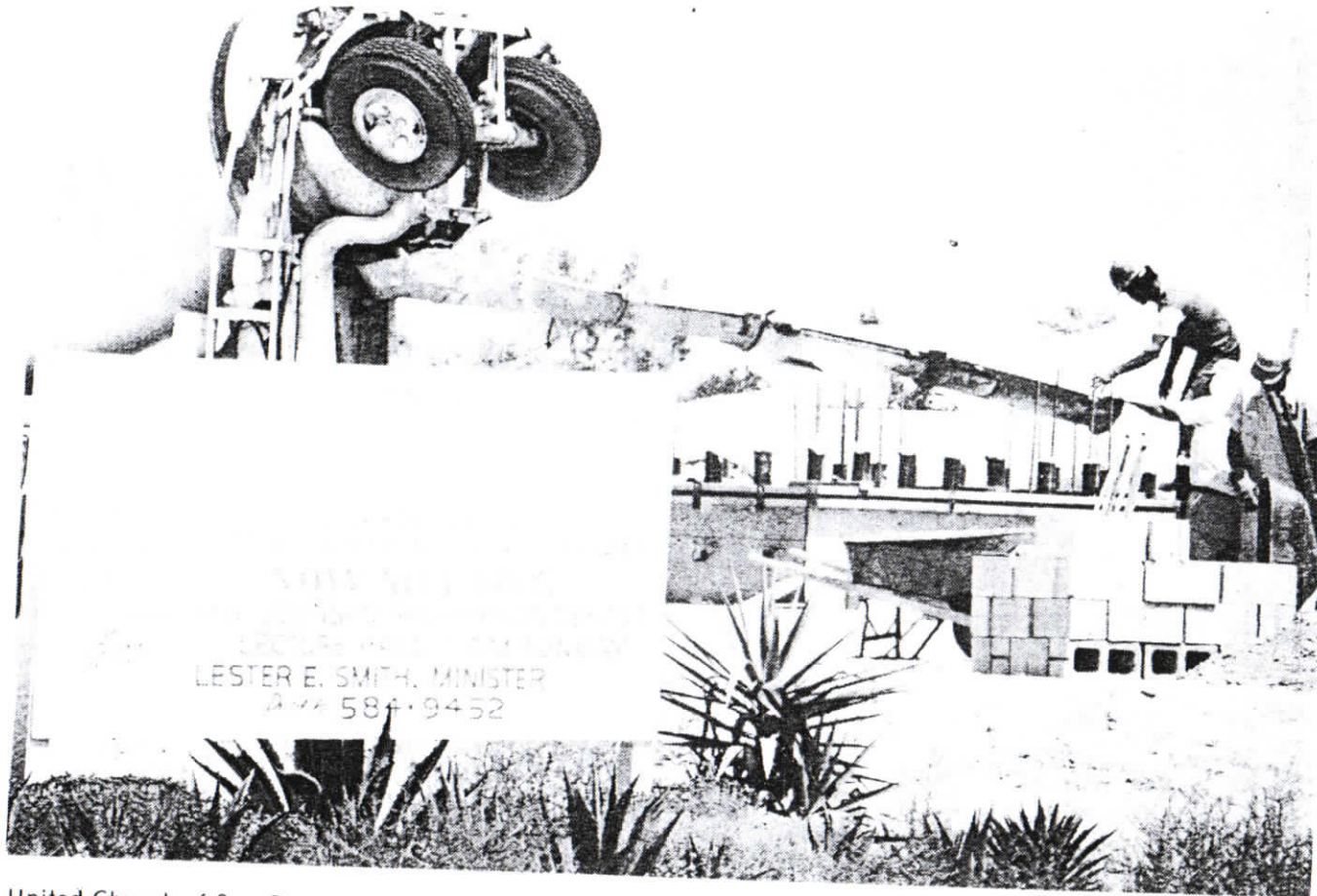
Total cost of the project, which includes both land and construction, is \$750,000.

OVER

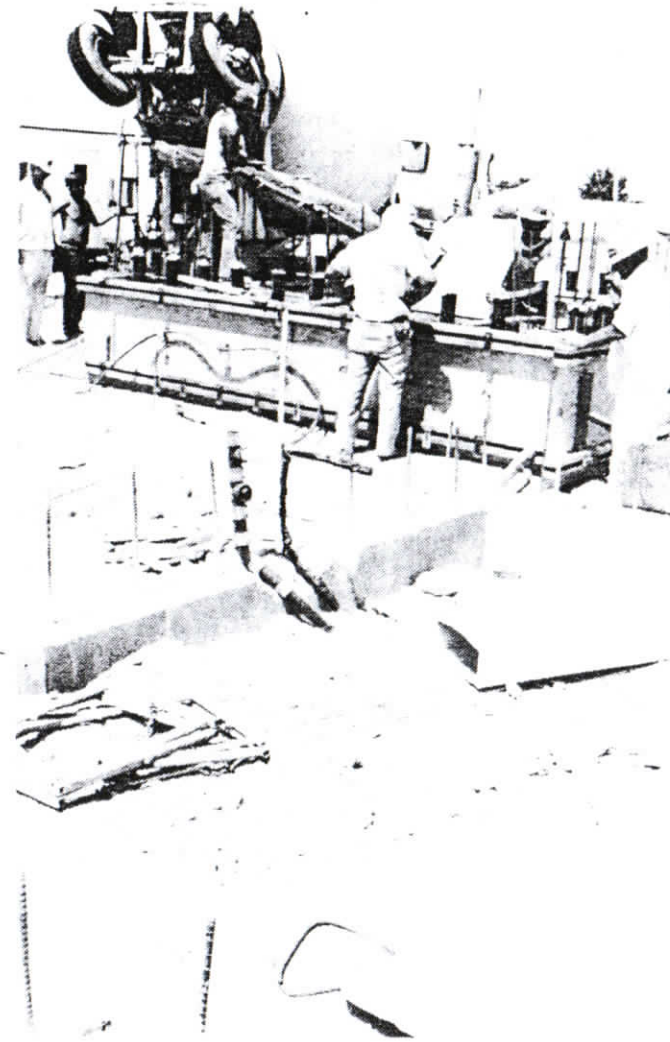


Sun City West Baptist Chapel shows progress.

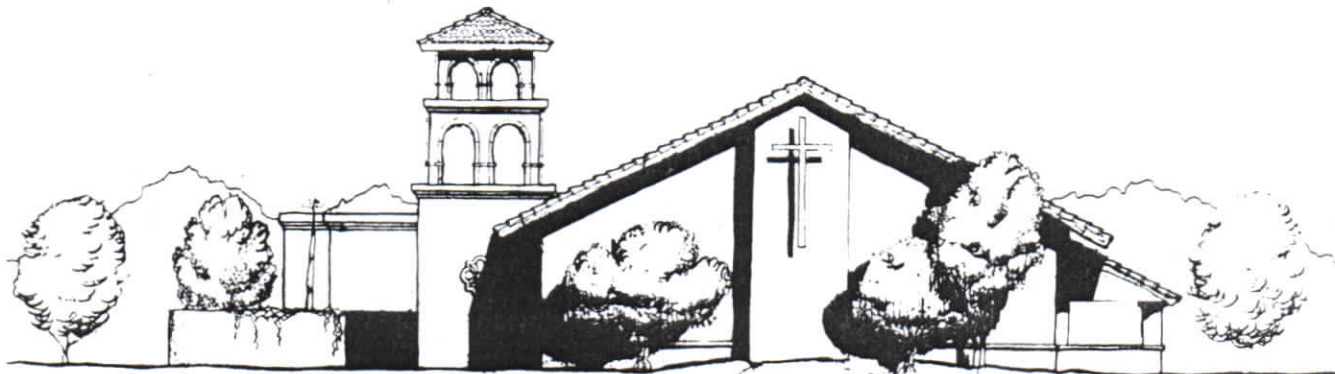
(News-sun photos)



United Church of Sun City West begins to take shape.



Workmen pour cement on site of United Church of Sun City West.



United Church of Sun City West 3-7-83

Church construction begins

By **HELEN ALLEN**
Staff Writer

Construction will start next month on a new sanctuary being built by the United Church of Sun City West.

Work on the 8,300 square-foot building is to begin soon after groundbreaking ceremonies set for April 10.

The church will be erected on a 3.6 acre site on 128th Avenue, west of the Pebblebrook Golf

Course clubhouse.

THE SITE was purchased in 1979 by the United Church Southwest Conference.

Rev. Lester Smith, church pastor, said a brief worship service will be held in Johnson Center Lecture Hall at 11 a.m. April 10. Following the service, the congregation will go by caravan to the building site.

There will be another brief worship service at the site at noon, followed

by the groundbreaking. Members of the congregation who would like to participate in the ceremony, Smith said, are being asked to bring along shovels.

INVITED to attend the ceremonies was the Rev. Dr. Ted Hastings, minister of United Church's Southwest Conference, and representatives of the Dean Glasco architectural firm, which designed the church building.

A general contractor is expected to be named shortly.

The total cost of the project, including site and construction, was estimated to be about \$750,000. Church officials reported that approximately one-third of the funds already have been raised through contributions and pledges.

Colin Monfore is chairman of the building committee.

SMITH SAID the first phase of construction, expected to be completed by the end of the year, will include a 240-seat sanctuary, a fellowship hall, office space and a small kitchen.

Second and third construction phases, part of future plans, will include enlarging the sanctuary and building a separate fellowship hall.

Smith said enlargement of the sanctuary may take place in about five years, but this "depends of the economy and growth of the church."

United Church currently has a congregation of 120.

SCW

SCW United Church receives charter

11-7-80

United Church of Sun City West received its Charter as a church in full standing in the fellowship of the United Church of Christ during a ceremony Sunday, November 2nd, in Johnson Center lecture hall.

The church is one of five Protestant churches comprising the Interim Chapel, an ecumenical consortium invited by the Del E. Webb Company to

conduct Protestant worship services in Sun City West, starting in April, 1979.

UNITED CHURCH is the first of the five to be chartered and fully accredited within its denomination. The church owns property at 18600 128th Ave. in Sun City West, and is now drawing up building plans.

Participants in the chartering service and in-

stallation of Rev. Frederic James as pastor included Rev. Edward Hastings, minister of the Southwest Conference of the U.C.C.; Rev. Bruce L. Jones, regional minister of Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); Rev. Robert Chapman, executive presbyter of Grand Canyon Presbytery of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.; and Rev. Jack Holtz, representing the

committee on ministry of the Southwest Conference, U.C.C.

Local participants included Rev. Robert Duff, pastor of Church of the Palms; Rev. Don DeCoursey, associate pastor of United Church of Sun City; Rev. Hugh Shelby Lee, Rev. William Halter, and Rev. Arnold

Brown, all of Sun City; and Rev. Arthur Dahlberg, pastor of Desert Palms United Presbyterian Church of Sun City West.

Other participants included Rev. Donald Arey, Tempe; Rev. John Hollowell, Prescott; and Rev. Arnold Koriath and Rev. Alan McLarty, Phoenix.