Dedicating Our Church's Sanctuary*

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(First United Methodist Church of Sunnyvale, California, celebrates its centennial this year of 1998. To celebrate this, I, as chairperson of the Administrative Council, will read this devotional at the beginning of the December meeting.)

At our October Administrative Council, we talked about the Stollenwercks and the Melanders who both joined the church in the 1960s. This month, we read from the service of dedication for the church sanctuary.

1975 February 02, our current church sanctuary was dedicated. Bishop Stuart and former ministers William B. Johnson and Dodds Bunch joined ministers Larry W. Thomas and Arnold S. Vorster for the service that celebrated payment of the mortgage on the sanctuary.

The bulletin described the church:

> First United Methodist Church, the first church founded in Sunnyvale in 1898, continues its vital ministry in our community in many ways. Our Senior Citizens' Nutrition Programs servers 500 meals a week and sponsors programs for the aged. We cooperate with FISH in an ecumenical ministry of outreach. Members and friends of all ages are offered many opportunities for growth, learning, and fellowship.

Eighteen people attended the 26 January 8:45 a.m. worship service and 198 people attended the 10:00 a.m. service. Income of under $7000 exceeded expenses by about $500. The church had four ministers!: Arnold S. Vorster, Larry W. Thomas, Reva Kellner, and Dr. Davis O. Bryson, the last a minister at large. The schedule of church events in the worship bulletin listed the Nutrition Program's lunches each weekday.

We read from two hymns used in the 1975 February Service of Dedication [Fir75].

For the Dreamers

For the dreamers in our church
When they bought this orchard land,
For their planning and research,
For their working hand in hand.
Lord of all to Thee we raise
This our hymn of grateful praise.

For the tireless work of all
Meyer, Harrington and Plumb,
Sharer, Winters, Pool and Stahl
Tackled jobs so burdensome.
Lord of all to Thee we raise
This our hymn of grateful praise.

For the gals their praise unsung—
Edna Tibbitts, Elise Knipe,
Clara Hopkins, Lottie Young—
They slaved long without a gripe.
Lord of all to Thee we raise
This our hymn of grateful praise.

For many more — the list is long,
Friends on earth and friends above;
For that dedicated throng,
Their pure sacrifice of love.
Lord of all to Thee we raise
This our hymn of grateful praise.

Thank You, God

Thank you God that mighty chorus
Years ago our church began;
Father love has since reigned o'er us,
Helped us with financial plan.
Gone the clouds of monthly payments,
No more mortgage debt to pay,
No more juggling of defrayments,
Now we see the light of day.

We give thanks our church is paid for,
God of glory, Lord of love,
Reverent worship it was made for
Lifting to the heavens above.
Guide us now in future giving,
Steer us on a road you've blessed;
Lead us on in Christian living,
Serving, giving you our best.

Prayer

For our opening prayer, we modify a responsive reading from the dedication service.

Leader:	I was glad when they said to me, Let us go into the meeting of the Lord.
People:	**We are glad today to be in the Lord's meeting, but don't forget . . .**
Leader:	Don't forget what?
People:	**That our god is a great and mighty god; he cannot be contained by the meetings we hold.**
Leader:	But is this the Lord's meeting?
People:	**Yes! But he is also present to us in the world wherever we find our brothers and sisters in need.**
Leader:	Indeed, our god is a great and mighty god!
People:	**We are here to celebrate his presence both here in this meeting and throughout all our lives.**

References

[Fir75] First United Methodist Church, Sunnyvale, California. Service of dedication. Worship Bulletin, 02 February 1975. Available at the Holt-Atherton Department, University of the Pacific Library, Stockton, California 95211.