Sunday School Superintendent William K. Hooper*

Jeffrey D. Oldham

1998 March 22

(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 March meeting.)

Last month, we discussed how apportionments helped build the church. Today, we will discuss another important contribution to the church's growth. William K. Hooper served as Sunday school superintendent for fifty years.

1 *Sunnyvale Standard* article

Every week the *Sunnyvale Standard* newspaper was published, it ran the "Among the Churches" column. The Friday, 1921 December 16 column contained this information about the Methodist Church. (The original is available at the Sunnyvale, California, Historical Society.)

> A home-like church and the Mother Church of Sunnyvale.
>
> 9:45 a.m. Sunday School, W. K. Hooper, Supt.
>
> Morning theme; "Preparing The Way For The Coming of The Lord."
>
> No Epworth League service, but there will be a joint service Epworth League and the regular church service, beginning at

7 p.m. at which time the newly elected officers will be installed. Short sermon, good program.

Our midweek meeting Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

Christmas entertainment, Friday evening, December 23, Santa Claus and all the fixings will be there.

A general invitation is extended to all, come to these services, you will receive a right warm welcome,

J. T. C. Smith, 147 McKinley Ave.

2 Hooper's Service

We may have been introduced to Mr. Hooper in our January devotional. In that story, preacher David Ralston heard the Sunnyvale Land Company would donate land to the first church in Sunnyvale. By the evening of the next day, a load of used bricks was dumped at South Murphy and McKinley to indicate the site of the new Methodist church in Sunnyvale.

There seems to be some confusion about the participants. A letter from David Ralston indicated "Brother Brooks" was the person who hauled the used bricks and lumber from Mountain View to Sunnyvale. The church history indicates otherwise.

We know for sure that Mr. Hooper was Sunnyvale's first postman, starting deliveries some time before 1902. Thus, he was likely to have been the person who first heard of the Land Company's offer to donate land. The church history also indicates he hauled bricks and lumber from Palo Alto to the church's new site.

Not in dispute is that William and Eva Pearl Hooper were the first couple married in the Sunnyvale Methodist Episcopal Church. He served as Sunday school superintendent for over fifty years! The Hooper contribution to the church was so important that the church built them a new home when their previous home burned in the 1950s. He died in 1961 at age 89.

3 Opening Prayer

God, thank you for the hard work of the saints such as William K. Hooper. We pray that the decisions made today will further your work in this world. Amen.

4 Closing Prayer

undecided

5 Acknowledgments

The following people and libraries provided a lot of assistance:

- Dodds B. Bunch for his church history written in 1972–73 (as provided by Pat (Patricia) Tubbs),
- Stanford Special Collections for permitting use of its collection,
- Librarian Don Walker at the University of the Pacific for his excellent help with United Methodist archives, and
- Lisa Christiansen of the California History Center at De Anza College.