



Bethel Lutheran Church



Celebrating 50 Years



The founders of our community named us “Bethel” meaning “House of God”

1957

EARLY — Home Mission Board of the Evangelical Lutheran Church decided to sponsor a mission church in the Cupertino area.

AUGUST — The parsonage was purchased at 134 Gilbert Avenue in Santa Clara.

SEPTEMBER — Pastor Torvend and his family arrived.

NOVEMBER 10 — 103 worshippers gathered for the first worship service in the basement of the old Cupertino Post Office.

1958

MARCH 15—Congregation formally organized with 50 communicant and 91 baptized members. Dr. Gaylerd Falde, President of the California District, officiated at this service.

MAY — Original three acre site purchased (pictured right), funds advanced by the Home Mission Department and the dedicated help of many people created Fellowship (now Torvend) Hall.

SEPTEMBER — First Mt. Cross retreat held. Pastor Torvend worked with the Council to develop the first retreat, which has always been at Mt. Cross over Labor Day Weekend.

NOVEMBER — Fellowship Hall ready for worship exactly one year after the first service in Cupertino. 168 people attended the first services in Fellowship Hall.

First confirmation class confirmed with 5 confirmands.

Average attendance at church services the first year was 94. Sunday School enrollment was 130 with average attendance of 72.



CUPERTINO — Bethel Lutheran Church will hold its first service at 10:30 a.m. Sunday in the Cupertino Post Office building according to Rev. E. Silas Torvend pastor. The church is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church whose Home Mission Department is financing this new congregation along with 32 others this year.



1959

JANUARY 25—Pastor T. Arnold Thompson (far right) officiated at the dedication of Fellowship Hall.

ALSO IN THE 50's — First choir director: Margaret Goodenow

1961

Dan Olson called to assist Pastor Torvend as the first intern (through '62)

JUNE — Work began to build four additional classrooms, an office, parking lot and other improvements. Credit for a "sponsorship loan" with the Home Mission Board provided by Zoar Lutheran Church of Canby, Oregon. Educational wing named Zoar Hall in grateful appreciation. Labor donated by members of the congregation.

1962

JANUARY 21 — Improvements and educational wing (Zoar Hall) building completed and dedicated.

1963

APRIL — Hired an architect to draw plans for a new sanctuary; financing plan established; consisting of a conventional loan combined with the sale of 6% interest-bearing notes to the congregation. Many differing opinions settled including choir placement, which was solved by creating a diamond-shaped sanctuary. Those who wanted to see the choir could sit on the right, those who wanted the choir behind them could sit on the left. (Building Committee pictured lower right)

Edward Miller interned.



Lutherans Dedicate New Unit

Bethel Lutheran church, 10181 Miller Ave., recently dedicated its new educational unit. Dr. Walter Hellman, executive vice-president of the South Pacific district of the American Lutheran church officiated.

The new unit is to be known as Zoar Educational building. It was constructed by donated labor from members and friends of the congregation, and consists of four large classrooms 25 feet by 30 feet each, an office and turnace room.

Two of the classrooms, divided by a folding door can be opened to make a large fellowship room. All four of the classrooms can be divided by partitions to form smaller classrooms.

The members of the congregation worked evenings and Saturdays for six months to complete the construction, and because of the donated labor, the building, valued at \$43,000 was constructed for a little over \$18,000. The construction was supervised by Frank Murphy and Kelley Seger, both members of the congregation.

Pastor of the congregation is the Rev. Silas Torvend.



ROOM FOR CLASSES — The new Zoar educational building of Bethel Lutheran church affords four new classrooms which can be divided into smaller rooms, if desired, or thrown together for fellowship purposes. It was built by the members and friends of the organization who worked evenings and Saturdays for six months to complete building.

Is The Church Steeple Too High?

City permission to construct a 95-foot high steeple for the Bethel Lutheran Church at 10181 Miller ave. is being sought by its congregation.

City planning commissioners will consider the request at a public hearing at 8 p.m. Nov. 25

in the administration building of the Cupertino Union School District.

According to city officials, the church will have to qualify for a variance for the steeple, since the city ordinance permits only a height of 75 feet.



1964

MAY 17 — Groundbreaking ceremonies held for new sanctuary. Much dedicated work was given by faithful members during the next year.

Bethel Nursery School started under the direction of Mrs. Geneva Schenk. 41 children were enrolled by the end of the year.

OCTOBER — Miss Lorraine Solberg became Parish Assistant.

Dan Hassenpflug interned at Bethel.

1965

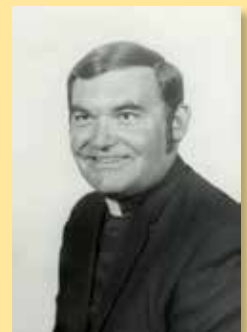
APRIL 4 — Sanctuary was dedicated, being finished just in time. Altar rail was installed the morning of April 4th at 5:00am.

Total cost of the sanctuary: \$250,000.00



1967

AUGUST — Pastor Paul Blom became Assistant Pastor.



1968

FEBRUARY — Construction began of another educational wing for the Nursery School.

MARCH 17 — Celebrated 10 year anniversary with Bishop Dr. Falde.

1060 confirmed and 1900 baptized members after ten years. 1967 budget reached \$144,126. Lorraine Solberg resigned to move back to the Midwest.

1969

JULY — Marjorie Zibbel accepted our call as parish assistant and was installed.

Nursery School building was completed through dedicated service of building committee and donated labor of members. Building completed at \$12.70 per square foot. (Dedication Ceremony pictured.)

ALSO IN THE 60's — Bethel Bible Series began; Women's Bible Study Circles were formed.



AERIAL VIEW, CIRCA 1965

1970

Pastor Paul Blom resigned to take a call in Del Mar, CA.

1971

Pastor Jim Kintzi accepted our call. 757 students in Sunday School (far right). Nursery School opened with 80 students.



1972

Pastor Torvend accepted a call to Emmanuel, North Hollywood, CA. Parish assistant, Marge Zibbel, accepted a call to Denmark. Hugh Carter led Sunday night youth program, associated with Young Life. Koinania fellowship began at Bethel as a small group ministry – included breaking bread, scripture, and sharing about life with one another. Some participants helped with the youth as well. The original group(s) went out to start new groups and spread the ministry.



1973

Art Gerlock (National Stewardship Office) conducted a Resident Counseling Program focusing on the Biblical basis and reason for our stewardship of time and possessions.

AUGUST — Pastor Harold Brown accepted our call as Senior Pastor. He restructured the church council.



1974

FEBRUARY — Dorothy Meyer became Parish Worker.

SUMMER — Paul Hedin became first full-time youth director.



1975

JANUARY — Pastor Jim Kintzi accepted a call to a church in Concord, California.

High school youth choir and drama group started (now called *Common Ground*).

SEPTEMBER — Paul Hedin resigned to continue his education. Paul Benz accepted our call and served us for 15 months.

DECEMBER 21 — Pastor Verl Clausen installed as Worker Priest.



1976

FEBRUARY 8 — Pastor Bill Gutknecht installed as Associate Pastor (far right).

OCTOBER 10 — Robyn Winegardner installed as full-time youth director.

1977

MAY — Expanded facilities by adding additional classrooms, office space, and an adequate kitchen.

NOVEMBER 20 — New facilities dedicated with Bishop Dr. Falde officiating at the Rite of Dedication.

By the end of 1977, we had 2034 baptized members and 1398 confirmed members and a budget of \$294,000.00. Parish Shepherds (a member to call and listen/share with) and Facts about Faith (new members class) began.

1978

JANUARY — Christian Day School, grades K-3 voted into action.

1979

JANUARY — Vote passed to rename Fellowship Hall Torvend Hall.

ALSO IN THE 70's — Youth program expanded; a Stephen Ministry project trained and hired youth leaders; First annual Easter Sunrise Service; the Evergreens senior group was started; Lynn Kintzi organized the first Women's Retreat (initially a one day retreat at Bethel, went on to extend a whole weekend at Asilomar, Mission Springs, Mt Hermon, Redwood Glen and Mt Cross.)



1981-1982

Four young adults at Bethel (Norita Johnson (Hoegel), Tom Hoegel, Brian Hildebrand, and Rhonda Johnson (Nyberg)) formed musical group "Lifeline" and toured the country with Lutheran Youth Encounter.

Chris Crays became youth director.



1983

Church and school staff grew to 23 people. Bethel celebrated the 25th anniversary by giving \$25,000.00 to Coastside Lutheran Church.

1984 - 1985

Pastor Clausen left Bethel in 1984 and Pastor David Place (pictured right with intern Rhonda Carlson in 1991) joined Pastor Gutknecht in 1985. Contemporary services began on a once-a-month basis at the 9:00am worship service. The sanctuary received a new roof. Supper Club had its beginning. Caregivers were trained through the Stephen Ministry program.



PASTORS (LEFT TO RIGHT) KINTZI, CLAUSEN, GUTKNECHT, BROWN AND TORVEND CELEBRATE BETHEL'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY.

1989

Further expansion to church facilities completed and the new organ installed. In June, Pastor Gutknecht left Bethel. Sunday morning structure changed to include three worship services (traditional, meditative, contemporary) and an education hour. Norita Hoegel and LaVinnia Pierson were hired as worship coordinators. The worship team was formed with piano and two singers. Flute, acoustic guitar, bass and percussion were added gradually over the next three years. Pastor Erwin Walz became Visitation Pastor.

ALSO IN THE 80'S — Pastor Gutknecht and Pastor Clausen implemented a co-pastor ministry; Tom Hoegel became Youth Director; Chris Christensen and Pastor Place implemented weekly Search Bible Study Series.

1990

FALL — Bible Times Village (Children's Sunday School program) was implemented and led by Sandy Frame.

1991

Celebration Choir formed under Norita Hoegel's direction. Began with approximately 15 singers who helped lead contemporary services and occasionally offered special music piece. This slowly expanded to include 35 singers and singing an anthem on most Sundays (pictured here in 1994). Bethel began its 14-year run of (typically) summer musicals directed by Carol Hooper.

1992

SUMMER — Outdoor worship began



1994

Pastor Jim Cords joined Bethel as associate pastor. The worship team added electric guitar and drums. Tom and Norita Hoegel began coordinating the Labor Day Retreat at Mt. Cross.

1996-1999

Several classrooms added to Zoar Hall to better accommodate the growing elementary school. In 1997 two Handbell Choirs were created and directed (primarily) by Carol Hooper. New nursery was created, grand piano purchased, and worship team space created up by the organ.

2000

Pastor Place retired; Pastor Cords became Senior Pastor; Pastor Walz retired, though still on call for visitation; Pastor Ken Bancroft joined us as new visitation and care pastor.

2001

Pastor Rick Sherrill accepted our call as associate pastor (pictured lower right in 2004).

2002

FALL — Kid Connection (Children's Sunday School program) implemented, led by Laura (Reichard) Leonard.

Church Council meetings were restructured to include Bethel ministry leads.

2003

A Lucille Packard Foundation award enabled the school to construct new preschool and elementary play structures. Pastor Cords accepted a call in Arizona.

FALL — *Visual Connection* project began (upgraded lighting and two projection screens installed at the front of the Sanctuary).

2004

JANUARY — The *Welcome Zone* project began - a major landscaping and front patio facelift.

DECEMBER — Rev. Dr. Randal J. Pabst ("Pastor Randy") accepted our call and was installed as Lead Pastor.

2007

OCTOBER 28 — Congregation voted unanimously to move forward in partnership with new Asian-American (Lutheran) Ministry in Cupertino (on Stelling Rd).

Sanctuary and Celebration Choirs merge to form new Adult Choir, offering all styles of music in worship.

NOVEMBER 9 - 11 — Bethel celebrates 50 years of ministry and service.



to be continued...