

40 Years of Blessings (1956 - 1998)

Sept. 1956 • The Rev. Robert M. Visser urged the California - Nevada District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod to invest in a site in south Sunnyvale.

Summer 1957 • Full time lay workers were assigned to canvass in the vicinity of the proposed mission. With a small nucleus of members drawn from neighboring congregations, a new congregation began.
 • Services began at 11980 Warner Avenue, Sunnyvale, where the garage was enlarged to provide a 20ft. x 50ft. chapel.

August 21, 1957 • Organizing meeting took place at Wally Daehn's home, electing temporary officers:

Chairman	Robert Barnwell
Secretary	Norman Markell
Treasurer	Harold Peters
Sunday School Superintendent	Wally Daehn

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January 19, 1958 • ST. LUKE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF SUNNYVALE was formally organized with the following officers and boards:

President	Robert Barnwell
Vice-President	Alvar Hillberg
Secretary	C. Ernie Wrahtz
Treasurer	Gordon Tange
Financial Secretary	Clayton Johnson
Elders	Eugene Hansen & Marty Husmann
Trustees	Ted Beltz & Bob Husmann
Mission	Vernon Hillmer & Carl Meinheit
Stewards	Jim Temple & Willis Kleven
Education	Jim Werner & Rev. Albert Kurtz, Jr.
S. S. Superintendent	Wally Daehn

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1978 • A "Special Missions" fund incorporated into the annual budget for local missions; continued until 1987.
 • St. Luke's 20th Anniversary was held in January with the Rev. Robert Visser as our guest speaker.
 • Women began to serve as lay readers.

- Landscape renovation around sanctuary and paving of “Meditation Walk” supervised by Russ McKay.
 - October “Open House” week was held in October with Pastor Norm Pfothner as guest evangelist, and culminated in Reformation Service, all interpreted for deaf by June Munro.
 - Pastor Mitchell begins leading congregation members in Christmas caroling to the neighborhood and to shut-ins after midweek Advent services, returning to the church for cookies and hot chocolate.
- 1979
- Kitchen remodeling was planned by Women of St. Luke and work completed in 1980.
 - One service in August and summer Sundays began.
 - Vietnamese refugees, the An Thieu Banh family, were sponsored by St. Luke through LIRA.
- 1980
- Planning began for an Associate Pastor.
 - Small Group Home Bible Studies were started.
 - Pastor Harold Mitchell observed 25 years in ministry.
 - S.A.M. (Single and Married) young adult group was formed.
 - Board of Evangelism was functioning as a new Board.
- 1981
- Lenten services held at alternating locations between St. John’s, Sunnyvale; Los Altos Lutheran; Immanuel of Los Altos; Redeemer of Cupertino; and St. Luke.
 - A Dialog Witnessing Class held.
 - Area Joint-Lutheran Reformation service held at St. Luke.
 - The Rev. George Thune installed as Associate Pastor on November 8th.
- 1982
- Abdon Parish Leadership Seminar held in March.
 - Al-Anon group meeting in end classroom every week.
 - Eden Korean Baptist Church began using facilities to February 1983.
 - Use of the LUTHERAN BOOK OF WORSHIP was **begun in August.**
 - **Cantors were added as worship assistants.**
 - **Plans begun for adequate administration space was reworked by Russ McKay to prepare for long-range growth.**
 - **VBS cosponsored by St. John’s at St. Luke with enrollment near 100.**
 - **“Doctrine in Diagram” and “CROSSWAYS” training attended by Pastor Thune.**
 - **Interstudy Group from Japan hosted by St. Luke with Angela Kendall coordinating.**
- 1983
- St. Luke 25th anniversary celebrated with Pastor Robert Visser as guest speaker, and using the theme “Come, You Thankful People, Come.”
 - First “Doctrine in Diagram” class taught.
 - “Witness Workshop” held.

- “CROSSWAYS” classes began.
- New Member dinner held with presentations from each Board and organization, including a sing-along led by Rusty Watz, and other entertainment.
- Monarch Montessori Christian School leased space in Education building.
- Classrooms renovated and new washrooms added to the building.
- Church office moved to temporary quarters with Pastor Mitchell in former library area of Kurtz Hall, Pastor Thune at back of the sanctuary under the balcony, and secretary June Munro in “Cry Room.”
- Pastor Mitchell and Al Neubieser attended Stephen Ministry Leadership training and the first class of Stephen Ministers was recruited.
- Pastor Thune began Doctor of Ministry program at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley.
- Barbecue grill area built back of Kurtz Hall.
- Hosanna Korean Presbyterian Church began using facilities on Sunday afternoons, until 1986.

1984

- Our first attempt to combine a Lutheran Epiphany service with Immanuel, Los Altos; St. John’s, Sunnyvale; and Redeemer, Cupertino.
- First Liturgy Workshop held to train worship helpers.
- First “Seasons of the Son” concert held under leadership of Joyce Vaughn and drawing singers from many Lutheran churches in the area; later expanded to include singers from churches other than Lutheran.
- No-Host barbecue/potlucks began - scheduled every two weeks.
- First Stephen Ministers commissioned.
- Pastor Mitchell began pre-retirement sabbatical in July.
- Pastor George Thune and Roger Vaughn attended Stephen Ministry Leadership Training and trained another group of St. Luke members.
- Parish Education Associates Leslie Swetnam assisted part time September through December.
- Vacation Bible School included students and teachers from Monarch Christian School as well as from St. John’s Lutheran Church with enrollment continuing between 75-100 for the next several years.
- First St. Luke Advent Devotion book issued

1985

- Prayer Survey for Doctor of Ministry program utilized.
- Monthly discussions on books about prayer led by Jim and Donna Wichelman.
- Constitution revisions begun, affirming St. Luke fellowship with other Lutheran bodies.
- Joint St. Luke & St. John’s confirmation classes were led by Pastors George Thune and Dan Lindstrom, assisted by future pastor Renee Geiger.
- Continued “summer schedule” of one Sunday service on permanent basis with worship at 9:00 AM and Sunday School/ Bible classes at

10:45.

- First “Early Communion” group instructed,
- A Prayer Seminar held.
- The Women of St. Luke Prayer Chain was active.
- St. Luke Softball team in action, coached by Bob Linse.
- 22 St. Luke members went for tour of Jordan and Israel.

1986

- Voters removed all gender reference for offices from the St. Luke Constitution.
- First women were elected to the Board of Elders.
- Parish Assistant Karen Merkel added to staff in May, until August 1987.
- Karen Merkel attended Stephen Ministry Leadership training and led a class for congregation members.
- Groundbreaking took place September 28 and work began for an office wing attached to the sanctuary, other sanctuary remodeling, and to provide new work/storage area for the Trustees.
- John Kessel hired part time, especially for Young Adult ministry.
- S.A.M. Bible class regularly scheduled until 1989.
- Information meetings were held on the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches and the planned merger of three Lutheran church bodies.

1987

- Voters formalized from Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LC-MS) to Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC) to be part of the future Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).
- T.D.D. Answering Service for Deaf ended after 16 years. Occasional interpreting of worship service continued.
- John Kessel became Pastoral Associate, under part-time contract.
- Taping of Sunday services began.
- Mission Awareness month held in May with guest speakers.
- Pastor Thune completed his thesis and received the Doctor of Ministry degree at PLTS.
- Office construction and remodeling completed and dedicated.
- Church office moved into new wing.
- Landscaping of entire St. Luke property finally accomplished. (No longer “the church in the weeds”).
- St. Luke represented at Constituting Convention of the Northern California-Northern Nevada (Sierra Pacific) Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America held in San Jose in July.
- An answering machine was purchased for the church office.
- Pastoral Associate “Intern” John Kessel married St. Luke member Lori Wyckoff.
- St. Luke Leaders’ Retreat held at Mt. Cross in September.
- St. Luke represented at Constituting Convention of the Sierra Pacific Synod Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (WELCA).

- Pastor Intern John Kessel ordained October 31, and installed as Assistant Pastor under a part-time contract.
- 1988
- Conference #14 of the Sierra Pacific Synod - ELCA, held a combined Epiphany celebration of merger at Immanuel, San Jose.
 - Council and Elders had a retreat at Mercy Center in Burlingame.
 - Second group completed CROSSWAYS classes.
 - Pastor John Kessel conducted monthly German language worship services.
 - A special St. Luke “thread” and a special St. Luke “quilt square” were prepared by June Munro for the tapestry at the ELCA headquarters in Chicago and Sierra Pacific Synod office in Oakland.
 - An Every Member Visit program was led by the Board of Stewardship.
 - The evening Ruth Circle dissolved due to lack of attendance.
 - An evening Craft Circle began to meet in the church office, until 1990.
 - The Stewardship Board sponsored a special dinner with guest speaker Pastor Norman Pfothenhauer.
- 1989
- The Parish Nurse program was begun by Joan Thune and assisted by other RN’s at St. Luke.
 - The St. Luke choir combined with the choir of Redeemer in Cupertino and alternated singing at each congregation’s Sunday worship services.
 - Soup and Salad suppers were introduced before services in Lent and Advent.
 - The Women of St. Luke produced their Long Awaited Cookbook.
 - Pastor John Kessel left August 31 for a Call to Synod interim work.
 - Pastor George Thune attended Mt. Cross Shalom Confirmation camp with several St. Luke young people.
 - The Stewardship Board held Pie and Prayer gatherings to present their annual program.
 - St. Luke Sunday School and Monarch Christian School presented a combined Christmas pageant.
- 1990
- St. Luke involved in Lutheran Social Services’ Ventures in Caring program.
 - Secretary June Munro retired after 20 1/2 years in St. Luke office.
 - The Mimeograph machine was retired and new copying equipment purchased.
 - An IBM compatible computer was purchased for the church office.
 - Pastor George Thune accepted a Call to Christ Lutheran Church, Reedley, CA, and left the end of August.
 - Pastor Niels Carlsen appointed Interim Pastor - September, 1990 - May, 1991.
 - The Sunday School had special Family Nights.
 - Music Director Claudia Zichterman arranged to have Monarch Christian School children sing with St. Luke Sunday School children at

occasional worship services.

- 1991
- The first “St. Luke Neighborhood News” was issued in March and distributed to all in the area around the church.
 - Name Tags for all worshippers were introduced.
 - The Rev. Dr. Susan Hedahl appointed Interim Pastor from June-September.
 - The Rev. Roger Snyder arrived August 28 and was installed as Senior Pastor of St. Luke on September 29.
 - The Fred Prystas Education Resource Center at the back of the Sanctuary was dedicated.
 - A Phone Tree was begun utilizing the Elders as captains, for passing information about upcoming events to members
- 1992
- A Thursday evening Chapel service was introduced, following the no-host potlucks (which were changed from biweekly), to serve especially those unable to attend on Sunday.
 - Lent and Advent midweek worship now conducted on Thursday evenings.
 - St. Luke Bell Choir (affectionately named “The Ding-a-Lings”) was reactivated with musicians of all ages and led by Roger Vaughn.
 - The Board of Stewardship introduced Needs-Based Seminars.
 - A Seder Supper was introduced in Maundy Thursday, prepared by Frances Graham, Bonnie Prystas and Sandi Krutman, and led by Pastor Snyder.
 - Portable signs were utilized to aid visitors in locating St. Luke worship services on Sundays.
 - A Latvian festival was held to benefit Pastor Austra Reinis.
 - Work still continued on wording of the St. Luke Constitution to conform more closely to ELCA guidelines.
 - Mount Cross Lutheran Outdoor Ministries provided program leadership for VBS (27 students enrolled.) The Mt. Cross counselors continued to lead VBS for several years.
 - A Social Ministry/Mission Committee was formed.
 - Frances Graham helping direct St. Luke’s involvement in a “Feed the Homeless” program.
 - Kurtz Hall was renovated with a new paint and carpet and a chapel area once again set up at one end for Thursday evenings and other small group worship occasions.
 - An electric keyboard “Clavinova” was dedicated as a memorial to Grace Mitchell.
 - A Nursery Manager (Lisa Govorko) was hired to staff the Cry Room for every Sunday worship service and other times, as needed.
 - A Vision Committee was formed to consider how to match and utilize a special monetary gift designated for “Growth” at St. Luke.
 - Members contributed food and funds for 70 Thanksgiving baskets for

the needy.

- Bob Bertsch and Ralph Holiday (Trustees) active as “Honey-Doers” doing fix-it jobs for congregation members in return for donations that benefit property and equipment needs at St. Luke.
- 62 new members received in ‘92 - 21 infant baptisms and 41 by transfer or reinstatement

1993

- Ten Alcoholic Anonymous (AA) groups started weekly meetings at St. Luke, including the continuing Al-Anon group.
- Fifth Sundays used to raise mission funds for New Creation Lutheran Church in San Jose, Pastor Jose, Pastor Austra Reinis in Latvia, former members Seminarian Nick and Patty Wirtz, and Lutheran Social Services.
- “Honey-Do” funds used to purchase stacking chairs for Kurtz Hall to replace old folding chairs.
- Trustees built a horseshoe pit at the back of Kurtz hall.
- St. Luke hosted the Santa Clara Valley Lutheran Parish of the ELCA “Lay School of Theology” in January and February. Over 100 participated.
- Worship services are again being taped to take to shut-ins and those missing worship.
- An evening Women’s Bible study began again.
- Another Maunday Thursday Seder Supper was presented with the meal hosted by Guy and Arnie Pitmon.
- Nine couples went for a “Marriage Enrichment” retreat to Mt. Cross, led by Pastor Roger and Pat Snyder.
- The AAL mortgage was refinanced, paying off the individual landscape loans, and providing funds for major maintenance projects (parking lot resurfacing and building reroofing) as well as securing a lower interest rate.
- An all day Mission Festival was held in March with nine different area ministries participating. The World Mission League program was featured, the first time in Northern California.
- Boy Scout Troop #498 started using St. Luke facilities in March with Cub Scout Pack #421 beginning in September.
- The Vision Committee proposal was accepted and the congregation began interviewing for a Youth Director.
- St. Luke Youth Sunday was on Mothers’ Day with all aspects of the worship service led by confirmation age young people.
- Pastor Roger Snyder attended Stephen Ministry Leadership Training.
- Five youth participated in Shalom Confirmation Camp at Mt. Cross along with Pastor Roger Snyder.
- Monarch Christian School Ended use of St. Luke Education Building.
- A new Fellowship Committee was formed.
- A Fourth of July worship and picnic as well as the annual Rally Day worship and picnic were held outdoors on St. Luke property.

- A study began to determine the feasibility of opening a preschool day care center at St. Luke.
- The first annual Ralph and Bob Oyster Feed was held at St. Luke. (Ralph Holiday and Bob Bertsch)
- The 35th Anniversary of St. Luke was celebrated in October with an Oktoberfest.
- Baby Showers began to be given for firstborn babies

1994

- A new Director of Children and Youth Ministries, Christine Pobanz, began her service at St. Luke.
- The Santa Clara Valley Lutheran Parish Annual Lay School of Theology was hosted once again by St. Luke.
- Wedgewood Daycare School leased space in the education building.
- The S.A.M. Group was renamed the B.B.C. (Boomers and Busters for Christ) and began weekly Bible studies on Saturday evenings.
- Stephen Ministry training of congregational members began again.
- The first room of the education building was renovated into a room for youth gatherings and activities.
- A new telephone ministry began called “Pray with Me”, where one would call 408-736-6828 to hear a weekly prayer.
- St. Luke hosted the “Faith in Action” Rotating Shelter program for the month of March. This program provides food and shelter to homeless men while they help themselves to become independent again. St. Luke continued to host one month per year for several years.
- Global Mission Sunday was celebrated with an international potluck.
- Weekly Junior and Senior High Youth nights began in April.
- A Sewing/Craft group and Pinochle group was formed.
- St. Luke congregation elected their first woman president, Angela Kendall.
- The Pairs ‘n Spares group was revitalized.
- A new Saturday evening “Family of Christ” service began in September and lasted through 1996. This was a more contemporary service with special music, dance, singing, or skits. Mary Stahlke was the special services music coordinator.
- Quarterly Youth Sundays were introduced with the young people of our congregation involved in all aspects of the worship service.
- A Joyshop Planning Session was held for congregational input.
- St. Luke served as a teaching parish for seminary student Al Rinaldi.
- A yearly New Member Recognition dinner was initiated.

1995

- A committee, led by Mary Hendrickson, began work on rewriting St. Luke’s Organizational Chart, Constitution, and By-Laws, to be in accord with the E.L.C.A. Synod.
- A bi-monthly Kid’s Night (3rd through 5th grades) became part of the youth program.
- A brick patio was built by the Honey-doers next to Kurtz Hall.

- On Good Friday, the events of Christ's last week on earth were reenacted throughout St. Luke's property. This first annual dramatic musical called, "The Way of the Cross", was directed by Carol Czyzewski and sixty plus youth and adults participated.
- Our Santa Clara Valley Lutheran Parish Congregations joined together to Adopt-a-Home for two Habitat families. These homes were dedicated in July.
- St. Luke started sponsoring Christian Camp opportunities at Mt. Cross for all ages of children of St. Luke.
- St. Luke hosted the annual fellowship dinner of the World Mission Prayer League.
- Pastor Roger Snyder earned his doctorate in theology from Fuller Theological Seminary.
- "Goin' Whole Hog" was the theme of Rally Day and Church Picnic in September, which featured a roasted pig.
- The church office became more efficient with donations of memory for the computers and the purchase of the Risograph (rapid copier) and fax machine.
- Besides being used as a polling place for elections, St. Luke also reached out into the community by offering our facilities to various organizations including fourteen Alcoholic Anonymous groups, the Adult and Community Education Program, Boy Scout and Girl Scout Troops.

1996

- St. Luke created our own web page on the Internet. (<http://www.unidial.com/~stlukechurch>)
- Two stained glass Memorial Windows, on either side of the main door, were dedicated in memory of Shirley Peterson and Charles (Chick) Holm.
- Sheldon Heitz and other volunteers planted vegetable garden next to the education building.
- A Mentor Program, pairing youth and adult members of St. Luke, was established.
- The new Constitution, By-Laws, and Continuing Resolutions of St. Luke were adopted by the congregation in a voters meeting in June.
- Working with Lutheran Border Concerns, eleven youth and eight adults of St. Luke went to Mexico to work and serve the Lord for a week in July.
- Pastor Roger Snyder resigned.
- In August, Pastor Niels Carlsen became St. Luke's interim pastor.
- Christine Pobanz, Youth Director, left in September after two years of service.
- In September, Brett Fowler served as St. Luke's interim Youth Director until June 1997.
- The Honey-Doers and friends renovated the choir loft.
- The Sunnyvale Senior Day Care Center began meeting at St. Luke four

days a week. This program is designed for older adults who find it difficult to stay at home alone.

- A Call Committee was formed to begin the process of calling a new pastor.
- The Men's Breakfast completed its 20th year of serving Saturday morning breakfasts.

1997

- Remodeling Project and Organ Fund was initiated with both gifts and loans.
- The Education building was renovated with new paint, carpet, and hard flooring.
- A new group called The Babes of St. Luke was established for children preschool-aged and under. Along side, St. Luke's Mothers of Preschoolers, SLMOP, was also established as a support group for the mothers.
- The Babes of St. Luke's Nursery Remodeling Project was initiated to renovate our nursery facilities.
- A new email address for St. Luke was established: stlukechurch@unidial.com
- The Witness Board continued to reach out to the community by sending and/or hand delivering over 2700 "Neighborhood Newsletters" to residents in the Sunnyvale area.
- Gwyn and Bill Carpenter donated the "St. Luke Van" to be used for youth and other church activities.
- St. Luke actively participated in the Bay Area Billy Graham Crusades held in September and October.
- The new Allen Digital Organ was installed in August.
- The Reverend Robert McKee (and his family) arrived in November and was installed as Senior Pastor of St. Luke on December 7.
- The renovation of the Sanctuary began in Fall of 1997 and was completed in January of 1998. This included new hardwood flooring, new carpet, refinished and reupholstered pews.
- Nursery manager, Lisa Govorko, resigned after five years of service

1998

- The renovation of Kurtz Hall began in January.
- The new Allen Digital Organ was dedicated in February. The service featured several organists, including our own organist for the past 25 years, Claudia Zichterman.