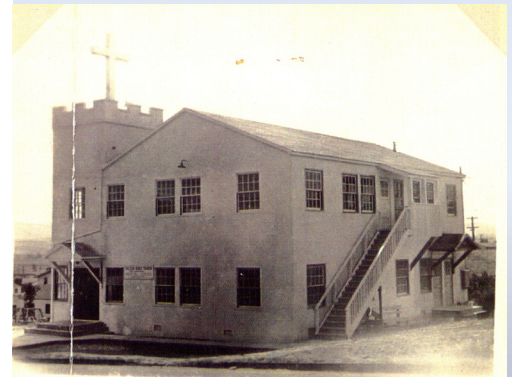




# *The Story of Vallejo Bible Church*







When Pastor Mike West asked us if we would write the history of Vallejo Bible Church, we said, “Yes! That’s a good idea.” We were impressed that he wanted the story written down.

Lois, church historian and librarian, began sorting through boxes, albums, more boxes, photos and old files. Bob and Lois Higgins were part of the beginning of Vallejo Bible Church, and they saved many papers and artifacts throughout the years. Lois gathered materials, and Angie carefully read through every ledger and annual report in the church office and made notes.

Later in the winter, the project became a challenge, similar to climbing up a sand hill. We carried on bit by bit and interviewed Mrs. Esther Freeman one afternoon in March, and continued asking several of the “old-timers” about their remembrances. The story began piecing itself together.

Encouragement came with the development of the big picture. It is God’s church—we see that we are part of the New Testament church—His Story. We are the family of God, and together we experience the joys, accomplishments, the hurts and sorrows, the mundane, and the unexpected blessings. We are lights in a dark world.

It was fun looking at early church photos with Joan Leone, Paul Gillies, and Lois. Thank you, Pastor Mike, for giving us this blessing.

Lois Higgins, Historian and Angela Hanlon  
2013

*Vallejo Bible Church*  
448 Carolina Street  
Vallejo, CA 94590  
vallejobiblechurch.org

Cover photos clockwise:

Don Grable and friend in front of Servicemen’s Center, 1954

Carol Hastings and her brother Delbert standing by her trailer at the roadhouse, 1945

Pastor Bill and Madge Graves and David, 1938

VBC on Phelps Street, 1953

Dr. Harold and Esther Freeman

VBC on Marin & Carolina Streets

Bottom row: left: 1969 VBC choir, right: Kary Losness, Amy Celeri, Rebecca and Melissa Kelly, E.J. and Jireh Alberto, Serena Santos, Kristina Dacquel, Shantel Peterson, 2007

Cover design and layout by Penny Harden.

Printing undertaken by Dave Theders.



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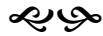
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*60th anniversary of Vallejo Bible Church  
September 2001*







“When God’s people crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land, He told their leader, Joshua, to choose 12 men, have each one take a stone from the middle of the river, and carry it to their campsite that night (Joshua 4:1-5). Joshua set up the stones as a memorial so that when future generations asked, ‘What do these stones mean to you?’ they could tell them about God’s faithfulness in holding back the water while they crossed (vv.6-7).

As followers of Christ, it’s good for us to have tangible evidence of God’s help in the past. Those mementos remind us that His faithfulness continues today, and we can follow him confidently into the future....

The memories of what God has done for us can become building blocks for today and tomorrow.” — *David McCasland*



## **The Story of Vallejo Bible Church**

Years ago as the sun shone on the brown hills and blue waves of San Pablo Bay, Mexican Commandant Mariano G. Vallejo rode horseback throughout his enormous rancho. Could he have sensed that God would use his land for His purposes? Did he know that a Light brighter than the sun would shine in the lives of many people who would come to live on these hills and valleys?

Vallejo's Mexican land grants stretched all the way from the border of Mendocino County to the Carquinez Straits. These became the familiar counties and cities we know such as Petaluma, Sonoma, Sausal Boulevard, Napa, Mare Island, Vallejo, Benicia, Cordelia, Suisun, Fairfield, Rancho Solano, Green Valley and other areas of this region. Eventually John B. Frisbie married General Vallejo's daughter, Epifania, and became the founder of Vallejo and donor of many parcels of land for churches, a school, the city park, a bank, and was instrumental in convincing the government to purchase Mare Island as a naval base. The corner of Marin and Carolina Streets was donated by Frisbie for a church which became the spot of the First Presbyterian Church—well known for its tall spire and beautiful stained-glass windows.

Across the street on the corner of Marin (where the large former Post Office stands), was the Victorian home and office of Vallejo's first female physician, Dr. Rachel Lain, in the late 1890s. She was a Christian and attended the Methodist church on Virginia Street. Directly across the street from her was a busy beer brewery. A church, a medical clinic, a brewery, scattered stores, homes and apartments all surrounded this familiar corner on the outskirts of downtown. As time went on, buildings and businesses changed, and by 1920 the Presbyterian church decided to construct a new building on the same site. They knocked down the wooden church and built the present-day tan building with its two towers, placing the historic windows into the modern design.

Fast-forwarding to 1952, First Presbyterian Church had grown to over a thousand congregants. Senator Luther Gibson, who was related to members in the church, helped to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars to buy a site for a larger church at the corner of Amador and Nebraska Streets, across the corner from Vallejo High School. They wanted to sell their lovely church building downtown. As it turned out, another church was interested in buying that building on Marin and Carolina. This is where the story of Vallejo Bible Church on Marin and Carolina Streets begins, but the church really began back in 1941 in south Vallejo....



## Beginnings, 1940s and 1950s

In 1940, people from all over the nation began pouring into Vallejo to work at the Mare Island Naval Shipyard. The great need of getting the gospel to this multitude became the passion of the heart of Rev. William G. Graves, founder of Vallejo Bible Church. War housing was quickly built in several places in Vallejo, such as Carquinez Heights Defense Housing on the hills by the Carquinez Bridge off of Hwy 29, and Federal Terrace, Roosevelt Terrace, Guadalcanal Village, Floyd Terrace, Hillside Dormitories, Northside Dormitories, Amador Apartments, Solano Apartments, and Victory Apartments.

Bill Graves was an evangelist who began his ministry in Vallejo in 1941 with large tent meetings—the old-time revival meetings. He conducted two weeks of these meetings. Pastor Graves' nephew, Rev. Dan Graves, a former minister, teacher and principal in Santa Rosa, who now lives and ministers in Galt, California, said he thinks that somewhere along Sonoma Street was the area where Uncle Bill's large tent meetings were held. He remembers that a young naval officer named Lloyd Sutcliff had a beautiful voice and would sing at these gatherings. Bill Graves used object lessons in his messages as well as posters and a large chart of Revelation.



*1941 Carquinez Heights War Housing*

Dan's wife, Shirley, recalls that her family came to Vallejo at this time and attended the meetings (long before she met Dan in Bible school). Her family lived six months in Carquinez Heights. Shirley remembers the large anti-aircraft balloon barrages on the hill which frightened her, and the rows of war homes. She and her family were invited to a tent meeting to hear Pastor Graves who used music, visuals, object lessons and evangelistic messages to reach the hearts of the civilian and military people who were in Vallejo during WWII. One object lesson that Shirley still remembers is the lesson he gave by using a shiny copper penny to illustrate the dangers of smoking. He held up the penny and then somehow applied tobacco to it, which discolored the penny—quite a visual lesson upon a young person. His large chart of Revelation and the end times is still remembered by a few of the old timers.

Camping ministries were also very important to Bill Graves. He started camps before he started Vallejo Bible Church. The first camp was Mission Springs in the Santa Cruz area, which is still in existence. Beulah Park was another camp ministry in the area. There were several camps. Perhaps Bill's love for the outdoors and camps began when

he was young, growing up in Lake County, California, on a farm which is now the area of Lake Pillsbury. Dan Graves wrote out his remembrances and tells more of the story of his Uncle Bill who was born in 1892. (As a comparison, General Vallejo died in 1890.)



BILL, MADGE + ARTHUR GRAVES

My dad and uncle were raised in Lake County; they were about 40 miles from the nearest town, and there were no churches in the region in which they lived. My Dad did tell me about a school teacher who talked about the Lord, but there was no response on their part at that time.

Uncle Bill was injured in a haying accident when he was 14 years of age. At that time his hip was dislocated. At the time of the accident they thought that it was just a bruise and he didn't receive any medical help at that time. When they finally did go to a doctor, after several weeks, an x-ray showed that the hip was dislocated. It was then put back in place but because the tendons had shrunk, it didn't stay in place

and his leg was about 6 inches shorter. He lived with that the rest of his life.

My uncle was saved as a young adult down in San Francisco when he was in his twenties. He became greatly convicted of his sin and was seeking relief. He visited a pastor in the city and told him of the burden that was on his heart. The pastor told him that he thought it would be good for him to be baptized, and according to his testimony, he went into the baptismal tank a sinner and he came out a sinner. Living in San Francisco, he was walking along Howard Street and went by a rescue mission and heard them singing a gospel song, and went in and sat down. He heard the gospel for the first time, and when the invitation was given, he went forward. His own words were that when he went forward, a man came to deal with him. Uncle Bill said, "I'm a sinner." The man's response was, "Praise the Lord." My uncle then responded, "I'm an awful sinner." The man responded a second time, "Praise the Lord." The man then went on to explain the plan of salvation to him and my uncle trusted Christ at that time.

After he was saved, I believe that he started attending First Baptist Church in San Francisco. He also attended a Bible study called "The One By One Club" which was dedicated to reaching people with the gospel one by one. I believe that the Bible study had a great impact on his life. It was through the church and the Bible study group that he heard about the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, and he along with my Dad went off to LA. At that time the Bible Institute was a two-year course, but because my Dad and Uncle Bill had not gone beyond the eighth grade they took a third year of post graduate study to learn English grammar and the other things that were offered.

During the 30s and 40s, Uncle Bill and Aunt Madge lived in Berkeley and traveled all over Northern California in their ministry of Highway and Byway Evangelism. God used them to start a number of churches in remote areas of the state. In my early years of ministry, I had many people ask me if I was related to Bill Graves, and then they would tell me how he had come to their community many years ago and preached and led them to Christ.

In 1941 my cousin, David, was in school and they felt the need to settle in one location because travel was not possible with a boy in school. Vallejo was where the Lord led them and the Vallejo Bible Church was started. . . . My Dad, who was pastoring in Berkeley, helped out in these meetings. In the early days of the church they also had a radio ministry over the local radio station. I believe that the studio was in the Casa de Vallejo Hotel [there was a radio studio at the very top of the hotel]. From the roadhouse on 5<sup>th</sup> and Magazine, the church moved from several locations in Vallejo using the community center buildings until they built the first building on Phelps Street.

In regard to Bill Graves' accident up in Lake County, Nathan McCauley and Mary McCauley Grable add to the account by telling that young Bill was working with mules on the farm (which is now at the bottom of Lake Pillsbury) and would swear terribly at them. He was convicted of this and his sin. One day while working the mules he fell and injured his leg and hip. There were no doctors for miles, but a veterinarian was contacted who helped repair the injury. After that Brother Bill wore a special thick sole attached to one shoe. Apparently God got a hold of his leg and his life, and eventually turned him around (not the mules) but this was later.

It should be mentioned here that Pastor Robert Graves, the long-time pastor of Santa Rosa Bible Church, was the brother of Dan, the sons of Rev. Arthur Graves who started the Berkeley church. We can give thanks to the Lord for the Graves Family and their influence in Northern California and the IFCA which affected many individuals spiritually. This effect still ripples outward from here and around the world.

Lois Higgins, our church historian, remembers Brother Bill from those early days of camps and starting the church in Vallejo. She tells about her early connection to VBC and how God used Pastor Graves to give her an opportunity to attend camp as a young person. Before coming to Vallejo, Lois' family lived in Santa Rosa. Lois got saved in November, 1942, and attended Santa Rosa Bible Church on Orchard Street. Pastor Roth was the preacher. Lois' father died and her mother got a job on Mare Island. They moved to Vallejo and were able to get war housing. Their family was very short of funds as so many were at that time. Her mother was sick, and her sister was very ill with encephalitis. Lois had two brothers and there was not much money or food. Clothes were few and she had one pair of brown shoes. Lois came to Vallejo Bible Church (then Carquinez Heights Bible Church) when it was in the roadhouse. The church grew quickly during those days with many families living in Carquinez Heights.

Pastor Graves was concerned for Lois and gave her the money to go to camp at Mission Springs because she could not afford to attend. She was sixteen. There were several other young people who attended the church and camps, such as Bob Higgins



(her husband-to-be), Stan and Betty Cairney Tilley, the Cairneys, the Gillies family and others. These camps had a wonderful influence upon the lives of the youth in those days.

Through compassion and a great heart for lost souls, Bill and Madge Graves grew a gathering of people from the tent meetings and outreaches. The group was organized in 1942 as the Carquinez Heights Bible Church and the first meetings were held in a rented building which had been occupied by the “Rendezvous Roadhouse” at Magazine and Fifth Streets. Bill Graves was quoted in the *Vallejo Times-Herald* on May 15, 1953: “I was able to rent the building. The entrance was through the bar room—the old bar and big mirror were still there. People went up three or four steps from the bar room to the dance hall and that’s where we held our meetings.” The building was available because its license as a tavern had been suspended or revoked. “There were about half a dozen at the first preaching service, and Sunday school had an enrollment of twelve children.”

“As the Carquinez Heights homes were filled up,” Graves went on, “we began to grow and within a few months we filled the place up with people.” The church met there for about four years and then moved to various locations in Vallejo before completing the building near Federal Terrace Elementary School at 65 Phelps Street in 1949. This main structure is still there as a Baptist church off of Daniels Avenue.

During the Carquinez Heights days, a young nurse from South Dakota named Carol Hastings came to Vallejo after having been invited to a summer camp at Mission Springs. Carol had gotten her nurse’s training at Eitel Hospital in Minneapolis and went on for Bible training at Phoenix Bible Institute in Arizona. Fellow students and the president of Phoenix, Rev. Roy O. Bancroft, influenced Carol to pursue her interest in mission work in India. Friends invited Carol to attend a summer Bible conference at Mission Springs in the coastal hills of Northern California. The biographical book *To India with Love* (available from the church library) tells how Carol was led to Vallejo.

Camp Director Bill Graves met her when she arrived at the conference grounds....

“I’ve heard that you want to serve the Lord, and that’s enough for me,” (Graves) went on. Then, as if an afterthought, “Say, would you like to be our camp nurse? We could use one.”

“Why, I’d be glad to,” Carol answered, recognizing her opportunity to serve the Lord and get to know many of His people as well.

During the conference week Carol recognized Bill Graves as a man of faith. When the week ended, she returned with him and his family to the Vallejo Bible Church where he pastored. The church was newly organized and excited about missions. They voted to give Carol \$25 a month to help in their children’s outreach program and to continue giving



that amount as the Lord led her out to the mission field. Within the next few months they incorporated as a church and Carol became one of the charter members.

This small church had an interest in missions; thus, the first missionary to be sent out and supported was Carol Hastings in India. Carol traveled to India on an Army troop ship in 1945. The church supported eleven mission organizations, including the Midwest Messianic Center, a Jewish ministry.

The work continued to grow and their first building became inadequate. In 1953 the old First Presbyterian Church building on the corner of Marin and Carolina Streets went up for sale and was purchased with the first contract signing in May, a sale which included its beautiful stained glass windows. (There is a photo in the newspaper showing Robert Stanley, treasurer of VBC, and Tom McLaughlin, VBC secretary, signing the papers.) *The Times-Herald* newspaper quotes Rev. Graves after the sale as saying, "We never thought, when we started meeting in the old roadhouse, that we'd be buying a fine church building in down town Vallejo for \$75,000. Since the church was started in the one-time roadhouse, 26 young people from our group have gone to Bible schools and seminaries. And 20 have gone out into Christian work during those years.... I firmly believe that God has wonderfully blessed this work these few years in Vallejo. The simple preaching of the Bible as the infallible Word of God and salvation and forgiveness of sin through the blood of Jesus Christ has been truly honored by our Lord."

## **An IFCA Church**

At the beginning Vallejo Bible Church was founded as an IFCA church, a member of the Independent Fundamental Churches of America. Pastor Graves and several ministers in California were associated with this organization out of their concern about the Modernist Movement in churches in the 1920s and '30s. The following paragraph is taken from the IFCA's website:

Following the 1930 Convention, those who had assembled under the leadership of the Holy Spirit publicly advocated an open and complete break with Modernists and Modernism as an act of loyalty to Christ, to His Word, and to His program for His Church, for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. In the new fellowship of IFCA, sincere believers who could no longer conscientiously continue under the denominational management of aggressive, domineering Modernists found a spiritual home. Many pastors and congregations left the mainline denominations to find a haven of fellowship and cooperation in the IFCA. ([www.IFCA.org](http://www.IFCA.org))

VBC has continued to support the IFCA nationally and regionally. Over the years, several people have attended the national convention and youth convention held in various states. The church has been an active participant in Northern California region-

als, at times hosting regionals in Vallejo. As the IFCA grew into an international ministry, VBC has supported international outreaches as well.

In the 1940s, the new church grew quickly with many of the wartime population remaining to work on Mare Island and in Vallejo and at the Benicia Army Arsenal. Lives were in transition after the war and this stable group of VBC members and attendees remained active in visiting and inviting people to attend their new church which taught the Bible.

### **Vallejo Christian Servicemen's Center – 1942 through the Korean War and 1950s**

Two servicemen's centers have been a vital part in the life of VBC. The first one was created in 1942 to meet the needs of Solano County's three military installations: Mare Island Naval Shipyard, Benicia Army Arsenal, and Travis Air Force Base. The Vallejo Christian Servicemen's Center at 238 Georgia Street welcomed these servicemen as well as personnel from Hamilton AFB in Marin County and Camp Stoneman in Contra Costa County.

VCSC was open day and night to offer hospitality and spiritual help. *The Vallejo News-Chronicle* of October 27, 1953, ran a positive article, summing up that "the main purpose of the center is to encourage military personnel to lead Christian lives and to make available to them Christian literature, good books, the Holy Bible, and a guide of local churches of their faith." This refuge provided coffee and refreshments, writing desks, game rooms, a music room with a radio, a prayer room, reading parlor, an office and a small galley.

Lieutenant John S. Schwab, USN, stationed on Mare Island in WWII at the Naval Ammunition Depot, saw the need for having a Christian servicemen's center. He contacted the local Gideon's Bible Society which enthusiastically backed the project by enlisting the aid of many local clergymen and businessmen. 238 Georgia Street became available at a reasonable rent. People donated money and furniture and contractors renovated the rooms at cost. Gideons provided Bibles and literature.

A typical Sunday at the center started with a meeting of the Java Club at 9:30 when coffee and donuts were served followed by Sunday school at the YMCA. The servicemen were then transported to their own churches and would return to the center for Sunday dinner cooked by the Vallejo Bible Church women. A time of singing around the piano with Mrs. Nancy Arthur at the keys brought moments of joy for these men.

The Vallejo newspaper quotes a spokesman for the center: "Many of the servicemen who visited the center from time to time during WWII are now doing church and missionary work, some in India, some in Haiti, some in Equador, and many in Japan." The work continued, and in the 1950s Don and Ron Grable from Elysian Fields, Texas, visited the center where they were led to the Lord and became a part of VBC. Don and



Ron were strong in witnessing to other sailors on Mare Island. Don led Robert Delaney to the Lord, who led his wife to the Lord, and they were disciplined at church by Mr. and Mrs. Lytle. Bob Delaney became active in witnessing to others on Georgia Street and in a San Francisco rescue mission. He and Elaine went on to Bible school and he became a pastor and school teacher. Later, Don and Mary became missionaries in Honduras and Ron and Willie served in the Philippines.

John Goodmanson of VBC was the manager of this ministry, and others from the church such as businessman Bob Oliver, Bob Higgins, Stan Tilley, George Schreiner, Doc Christopherson, Rex Lane, Art Messing, Bob Dean, Pop Cairney, Dan Nuncio, Don Mutru and Warden Webster provided leadership and support. The mayor of Vallejo, George Demon, was supportive of the center and encouraged the work.

Bob and Lois Higgins' photo album of the VCSC holds many photographs of the young men who came through and photos of their ships given in appreciation. One touching picture was taken on board the USS *Los Angeles* of a young sailor standing with his Bible open and speaking to a large group of sailors sitting on the deck around him. An officer stands to the side, holding his hat off in respect.

By the time of the 1945 Fourth of July festivities downtown, the war was over in Europe but still going strong in the Pacific. VCSC was meeting many servicemen on Georgia Street in those days. The cruiser USS *Indianapolis* was at Mare Island getting battle damages repaired and being readied for a Top Secret mission. Bob Higgins worked on this ship during the repairs. He had top security clearance and worked under guard and could not tell what he did or where on the ship. On July 4 the crew had an open house for family and enjoyed the holiday in Vallejo. Her mission was to transport

part of the atomic bomb to Tinian Island to be loaded onto the bomber *Enola Gay*, the plane that would drop the first of the two atomic bombs on Imperial Japan. On July 16 the ship set sail for Hunters Point where she was given the highly guarded and dangerous crates that would be shipped to the bomber on Tinian. After successfully accomplishing her secret mission to Tinian and Guam, the cruiser set course for the



*Rey Christopherson, Rex Lane, Art Messing,  
John Goodmanson, Bob Dean, George Schreiner, Stan Tilley,  
Pop Cairney, Dan Nuncio, Warden Webster,  
Bob Higgins, Don Mutru, Bob Oliver*

Philippines. Before the USS *Indianapolis* got there, she was torpedoed and went down on July 30. Out of eleven hundred men on board, only one-third survived after floating in the ocean for four days—one of the worst naval disasters. One has to wonder if any of the crew had attended the services at Vallejo Bible Church (Carquinez Bible Church) and the Vallejo Christian Servicemen's Center during her time in port. There may have been a few who came and heard the clear gospel.

In the ensuing years, a concern arose about the situation of providing transportation for servicemen to other church services which were of different denominations and VBC discontinued participating. Servicemen still came to VBC and were saved.

Connected with this time period was a civilian shipyard worker named Charles Arthur. He and his wife, Nancy, attended VBC and had a burden for reaching the lost. Mr. Arthur conducted Bible studies during lunch breaks on the yard, teaching and preaching the truth. Years later people in Vallejo would remember and ask about the tall white-haired man from VBC who taught their lunchtime Bible studies. This is the same Charles Arthur who developed the design that perfected the Navy's water-tight doors and hatches, and won a large monetary award from the government. Nancy Arthur and other women from church conducted Bible clubs for children in town.



*John Goodmanson, Frank Comi, Don Grable, Cpl. John Abney, seated Ron Grable, 1953*

## Vallejo Bible Church Pastors

"I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction...be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry." 2 Timothy 4:1,2 and 5.

We thank the Lord for our pastors who have come and ministered to the flock.

1941 Getting the church started, Rev. William Graves  
 1944 Church constitution accepted  
 1946 Incorporation

August 1944 — August 1945 Rev. Roy Bancroft (President of Phoenix Bible Institute/missionary)  
 August 1945 – July 1947 Rev. William Graves (Returned from outreach ministry)

July 1947 – July 1948	Mr. Ruben Kile (Ordained, called to mission work)
July 1948 – September 1956	Rev. William Graves
February 1957 – October 1963	Rev. Richard Cantrell
October 1963 – June 1964	Rev. William Graves (Interim)
June 1964 – October 1977	Rev. Harold Freeman
December 1977 – May 1978	Rev. Joseph Arnett (Interim)
May 1978 – March 1980	Rev. Joseph Arnett
June 1980 – August 1990	Dr. Francis Stiles
September 1990 – June 1992	Rev. Daniel Graves (Pulpit minister on Sundays)
June 1992 – November 1996	Dr. Harold Freeman
November 1996 – July 2010	Rev. William Baxter
July 2010 – March 2012	Leadership of VBC Elders and Official Board
April 2012 –	Rev. Michael West
December 1975 – August 1977	Education Pastor, Rev. Jay Reed
November 2004 –	VBC for the Deaf, Rev. Brad Ketterling

Sunday services since the beginning consisted of Sunday school classes held before the morning worship service and the evening service. Bible study and prayer meetings were and are still held on Wednesday evenings. Communion was on the first Sunday of each month. The church board met on the second Tuesday evening of the month with the congregational meeting held the next evening, Wednesday. A congregational form of voting was established. Men and women attended, participated in discussions and voted. The quorum changed accordingly over time. Church clerks wrote the minutes in ledgers.

### **Notes from the Earliest Ledgers to Annual Reports**

In compiling our history, it was not possible to mention every family name and individual. As someone wrote in her yearly report, "God knows and remembers what each person did."

The church annual reports are kept in cardboard office boxes inside the room across from the pastor's study and they are available for reference. Bob and Lois Higgins, who kept the earliest ledgers and a large collection of the history of VBC, have saved many photos and interesting papers. Other people also have kept photo albums, bulletins and papers about church life. The earliest ledgers of business meetings that Lois found began with 1946 and were written in through 1957. The first copy of a typed annual report is dated 1956 and begins the collection of the yearly reports of the VBC ministries.

Some events and names in this writing are mentioned in order to create a weaving of our church story, and perhaps these will call to mind other related remembrances and blessings. The following pages are an attempt to present an amazing story full of grace and blessing.

It is interesting to note that the individuals who have served as greeters or door watch or ushers have had a special unheralded ministry. Inside the long reports come sentences now and then describing how a visitor decided to continue coming to VBC because of the greeter's warm welcome and helpfulness. A young man was led to the Lord one early morning when the greeter, Don Weaver, took time to tell him about the Lord and gave him Bible verses. Friendly conversations outside by the front entrance have brought quite a few visitors inside the building. The door keepers who gave newcomers directions as they walked in and gave a warm smile and a church bulletin, were the first contacts and often the draw to "come and see." "I would rather be a door keeper in the house of the Lord...."

Almost 75 years ago, a fragile seedling of a church was taking root when churches in Europe were getting bombed into rubble. Today we look back at those years and think of those we know who experienced the uncertainties. No one will forget the testimony of Leonisa Sitjar, who as a child ran and hid in the Philippine jungles during WWII. Her father, a sniper, was shot and killed, leaving Leonisa's family alone to survive by running in darkness and hiding by day. Who can forget the testimony of Rev. Stan Tilley, a star football player at Vallejo High, who testified that he was a sailor on a ship sailing into a Philippine harbor in total darkness trying to avoid the enemy when brave Filipinos all along the shore lit lights to direct his ship to safety. Brother Tilley loved to sing the old hymn "Let the Lower Lights Be Burning." Cion Dumlao's husband, Miguel (Mike), who is now with the Lord, was able to escape out of the Bataan Death March and became a major in the U.S. Army. Jean Hawk's mother in London endured German bombing raids; her father was in the British Army in North Africa fighting General Rommel, Germany's Desert Fox and troops, and was severely wounded. Pastor Freeman was in the U.S. Army fighting his way up the mountains of Italy, enduring horrible battles and praying that he would see Esther and Phil, a toddler, again. Betty Fox did her part for the war effort as a "Rosie the Riveter" in a facility in the Central Valley. Back in Vallejo, a small congregation had been organized and was growing.

In 1944, Pastor Graves felt led to step out of his ministry here and Rev. Roy Bancroft, President of Phoenix Bible Institute in Arizona, came to be the minister in August, 1944, and pastored until August, 1945. The church would support Brother Bancroft and his good teaching and missionary work in Arizona for many years to come. Roy Bancroft had a great influence upon the lives of many young people. In 1983, Angie Hanlon wrote to him asking if he was the same Roy Bancroft who had influenced Isobel Kuhn (missionary/author in the Far East) for service. His reply:

I was a classmate with Isobel at the Moody Bible Institute in 1925-26. Her name then was Isobel Miller. We were very good friends, and Isobel often conversed with me and sought my advice. My answer to her letter written to me after graduation apparently impressed her deeply and changed her mind and attitude concerning the will of God for her life.

Isobel was a remarkable person and greatly loved and respected by all the students. Her life as a missionary was most fruitful. I highly recommend all the books she has written. Her romance with John Kuhn is most unique. Both of them were greatly used of God in China.

Thank you for enquiring. Sincerely yours,

Roy O. Bancroft

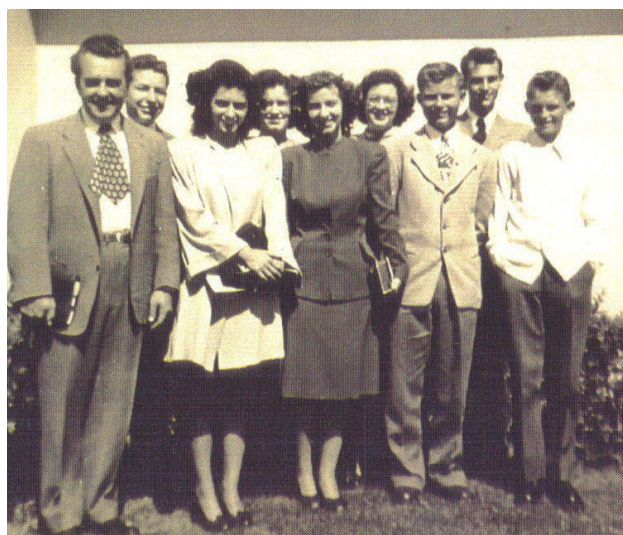


*Brother and Mrs. Rhys Miner.  
Photo taken in 1968.*

Later in 1945, Bill Graves came again to pastor VBC, and the ledger records that he baptized Mr. L. Bradley in the Napa River because the new church did not have a baptistry. They did not have a baptistry for a long time, and the ledger entry of May 26, 1946, says several people were baptized by Brother Graves in the Petaluma Baptist Church baptismal tank.

Brother Rhys Miner was a man of God who was also holding meetings in Vallejo and combined his work with Bill Graves'. Today the upstairs north hall is named the "Rhys Miner Hall".

A young man named Reuben E. Kile with his family became the pastor of the church in 1947 for one year. He was ordained during this time and felt led to do missionary work. Pastor Graves took up the ministry in VBC again. The congregation was also concerned about the world beyond their own lives, for the 1947 church ledger has an entry about their concern for the destitute people in Europe after the War. A collection of clothing would be sent overseas through the Agency of the American Council. This motion was voted upon and passed unanimously. Europe was still recovering from Hitler and the Holocaust when in 1948 the nation of Israel was born.



*1947 Pastor and Mrs. Kile and youth*

The church needed a larger place to worship. They rented community buildings, and then in the late 1940s the people



built their own church building on Phelps Street near Federal Terrace Elementary School. The church was constructed of sections of walls and panels that were available from buildings taken down at Beale AFB near Marysville and hauled to Vallejo. The Higgins family still has the building blueprints. People were baptized in the Bible Baptist Church baptistry on Benicia Road during this time.

Much activity occurred among the congregants in inviting others to attend their new church. Madge Graves started a Young Mothers' Club and ladies' prayer meetings,



*1950s young people's dinner on Phelps Street*

children's clubs, and there were youth clubs, outreaches, the Women's Missionary Society and the Men's Fellowship. The Tuesday ladies' prayer meetings were started. Charles and Dorothy Gillies were the youth leaders. A photo and newspaper article captures a spring banquet of the Young People's Society held at the church on Phelps Street. David Graves, son of Pastor Graves, Paul Gillies, Bob Higgins, Lois Waterbury (Higgins), Rev. and Mrs. Ray Stedman of the Palo Alto Bible Church, Pastor Bill and Madge Graves, Carol Hastings (on her first furlough), Charles

and Dorothy Gillies, Mr. and Mrs. Wiebe, Glenn and Glee Wiebe, Stan and Betty Tilley, George and Ellen Luiz, and a large crowd of young people wearing evening gowns and suits are dining and celebrating the spring graduates.

In 1952 Brother Graves traveled to Haiti to have special meetings in Oran and Arshaloos Bell's work among the poor who also needed the Gospel. Oran Bell had attended VBC through the Vallejo Christian Servicemen's Center. Through the years, the Bells would return to VBC on furloughs and report on their ministry. Arshaloos told fascinating stories to the Sunday school children and held the entire group "spellbound" with descriptions of men, women and children in Haiti who had nothing and were bound in the spiritual darkness of voodooism—until they learned of the Light of the World, Jesus Christ.

As stated earlier, in 1953 the old First Presbyterian Church building was purchased and much work went into transforming the building to suit the needs of VBC. In 1955 they moved in and finally got their own baptismal tank put in at a cost of \$167.00. Plumbing for the baptismal tank also cost \$167.00. Song leader Bob Higgins led the

chorus that has been a tradition to sing after each baptism: "Hallelujah, tis done; I believe on the Son; I am saved by the blood of the crucified one!"

A young man who grew up in VBC's early days and went on to Midwest Bible and Missionary Institute in St. Louis, Missouri, (now Calvary Bible College) would become a well known choir director in the Bay Area. This young man was Paul Gillies. After living in St. Louis, Paul returned to Vallejo with his wife, Linda, who was from Hershey, Pennsylvania, and their twins, Debbie and Diana, and Danny. David Gillies and other young people from Vallejo had attended Midwest also. At VBC, Paul was one of the song leaders and got a good choir going, which has been a wonderful and vital ministry of the church to this day.

Having purchased the large building on Marin Street, the board made a recommendation in 1954 to have a Bible institute in the church to be held each Tuesday night from 7:30 to 9:00 consisting of two classes each evening. Brother Arthur Graves and Brother Calvin O'Dell would teach the classes. The name would be "Bible Institute of Vallejo." This idea was dropped in favor of the "West Coast Bible Institute."

Woven into the story of VBC, which has a lot of dates and ledger entries, we have to include other stories that would not make it into a report. The first of these is about two neon signs which were put up in the late '50s: the bright neon cross on the top of the bell tower and the neon sign near the front entrance. The front entrance sign was replaced after several years, but the bright neon cross high up on top of the bell tower, which could be seen from Georgia Street, was mysteriously taken down in the mid 1980s. Some VBC'ers never noticed it was gone. Others did notice. How could a neon cross way up there disappear? Someone strongly felt it was incongruous with the building and had seen better days. To take it down would need to be handled in a quiet manner. He climbed a ladder to the top of the tower in darkness and single-handedly dismantled the large neon cross, grappling with its weight in the wind. It mysteriously disappeared and never reappeared. Thank the Lord he was not killed in the process. The dismantler is not anyone who would be guessed. It's a mystery of the church.

1956 brought a change: the ledger entry of September 13 says the church will ask Rev. Richard Cantrell to hold some meetings here. On October 19, 1956, Pastor Graves announced a special church meeting to be held on the calling of Brother Cantrell. A few days later information on the background of Brother Cantrell was heard and a vote was held to have him be the next pastor. (He was the pastor of Silver Acres Community Church in Santa Ana. At that time he attended the Bible Institute of Los Angeles.) Rev. Richard



*The Bowles and the Cantrells  
in the late 1950s*



and Ada Cantrell began their ministry here in February 1957. Bill Graves was 65 years old when Richard Cantrell began as pastor.

The 1959 annual report by Pastor Cantrell begins with Psalm 34:2-4. He rejoices over the good hand of God upon the church during 1959. Twenty-three new members were received into the church; several people came to Christ as their Savior, and some dedicated their lives to Him. The highlight of the year was the series of meetings with Dr. David Schmidt in the fall. This was followed by a remarkable work of spiritual revival at the summer camp at Redwood Park. Many of the young people were touched by the power of God.

He also praises the Lord for "the good, solid work of Don and Mary Grable among our young people. We now have a fine group of Victor's Through Christ. Several of them have indicated a desire to take Bible school training, looking toward pastoral and missionary ministry."

Pastor Cantrell mentioned that the church property was at the \$16,000 mark, and that with the help of the Lord, the debt would be liquidated in 1963.

Sunday school superintendent, Warden Webster, writes that the Sunday School was down. "Several large families moved away; however, it appears that an increase is being noted." He records, "It is a marvel to me how Lois Higgins, the Supt. of the Nursery Dept., can keep those little ones so quiet and attentive." Lorien Hatchell, assisted by Vera Roberts, with Alice Loughmiller and pianist Nancy Newcomb worked in the Beginners Dept. Mrs. Gillies was Supt. of Primaries. Mrs. Cantrell was Supt. of the Junior Dept. The Jr. High Dept. met with older classes for the opening part of Sunday School. June brought the traditional annual promotion in which Bibles were presented to the graduates from Primary to Junior Dept. September 20 was S.S. Rally Day. "Our attendance was only 233."

A handwritten deaconess report by Doris Webster tells that the duties of the three deaconesses were fulfilled as shown in Acts 6:1 and 1 Timothy 3. They prepared the communion table, provided flowers for occasions, visited the sick, and sent cards.

The financial report shows that several missions were supported, including the Jewish Midwest Messianic Center, the IFCA National, Children's Church, Don & Mary's ordination service, funding for the VBC bus ministry, and a Jeep fund for Carol Hastings in India.



*Ada Cantrell, Lois Higgins, Margarite McLaughlin, Edna McCauley, Frances Lytle, Dorothy Shoaf late 1950s in Carolina Street kitchen*



## The 1960s

A new decade—the 1960s—came in quietly. The trustees reported there was a good turnout for the church work day. Much cleaning was done, removal of trash, minor repairs, sewing new pieces in the rug, and gluing down felt on the communion holders in the pews. Mrs. Clara Wehner completed the baptistry art work, and Mr. Winiford completed the baptistry wood work. Also, “Termites of all description—even the rarest—have been discovered in the church but that the church should not be alarmed by this.” A thank you is given to Nathan McCauley for renewing the eyebrow on the building, resulting in stoppage of water from entering the church. “The nursery was scraped down, sealed and painted by men of the church. When it came to doing the floor and base boards, the men faltered, but some of the women came to the rescue and finished the job. Overall, this room is the best painted room of the church.” The report was not signed, but perhaps someone might remember who the chairman was.

Lorien Hatchell said the Ladies’ Missionary Society had a good year with an average of 36 ladies. Seven missionary speakers spoke. The group supported the Bells in Haiti with \$6 a month and Carol Hastings with \$12 for a driver and Jeep maintenance. They also sent canned food to her. Clothes and flannel-graph lessons were made for Don and Mary Grable’s work. Boxes of clothes were sent to Shankulas who worked with migrants and missions in Mexico. Church socials were sponsored by the ladies’ missionary group. Their monthly meetings were held at 7:30 on Friday evenings.



*Women's Missionary Society  
at the Bays' Home in the 1960s*

Superintendent Charles Gillies’ Sunday School report praises everyone involved in the S.S. work. Each department was given full responsibility for its own part in the

Christmas program. As to the church's bus ministry, he writes that "Another Sunday school in town has been established in one of our most fruitful areas, and our Sunday school bus has been discontinued." Bob Higgins was one of the men who drove the first bus. Lois remembers those bus rides: "If anyone on board couldn't sit and behave, they were told that I just might need to sit with them and hold their hand! Yipes!"

Also in the early 1960s, Pastor Cal Probasco of Carmichael Bible Church often spoke at regionals and special events. He spoke at the Vallejo Bible Church Men's Fellowship Dinner in 1961. (Pastor Probasco will establish Sacramento Bible Institute in the late 1960s.)

The 1962 deacon's report says that Don and Mary Grable went to missionary dental school in Texas in 1962 and Paul Gillies was appointed to serve on the board in Don's place. Chairman Nathaniel (Sandy) Newman noted that no organized visiting program was undertaken, but individual visiting was done with blessings reported. George Luiz, deacon-trustee, writes that five work days were held. Many projects were done: repainting the church kitchen, pulling up old carpeting/contractors putting in the new carpeting, a gas pipe conversion of the furnace was accomplished, and the installation of the instantaneous gas heater for the baptistery put in, cutting down the railing on the speaker's platform [a photo shows that the original platform railing was quite high], and trimming of doors and other jobs were completed. George thanks the women for providing hot meals for the people who came on work days.

The Young Mothers Group reports that there were nine ladies averaging in attendance on the second Friday of each month. They sponsored baby showers and presented gifts to the new babies of the church. Gifts were also sent to children who were ill. They sent Christmas gifts to missionary children and supplied the Nursery Dept. with sheets, diapers, books and various needs.

While pastoring the church at this time, Brother Cantrell attended the University of CA at Berkeley, studying to receive his BA. In 1963, the Cantrells were led back to Southern California to another ministry. In the following years, Pastor Cantrell became Dr. Cantrell and spent years as a pastor and Bible teacher. In 1975, the Cantrells moved to San Francisco to teach in the Chinese Bible Institute and at San Francisco Theological Seminary. Brother Cantrell often spoke in various meetings and churches in California, and in later years they moved to Carmichael and served at Carmichael Bible Church, teaching extension classes and extension classes for Shasta Bible College. He was born in June, 1910, and went to be with the Lord in April, 2008, at the age of 97.

Pastor Graves became the interim pastor in October, 1964, as the board looked for a new pastor.

1963 and 1964 brought dramatic changes to America. President Kennedy had been assassinated; the Cold War was getting hot; the Beatles were a new music rage; young people were experimenting with drugs never before heard of; the civil rights movement

began showing great strength in making changes in racial discrimination; and the beginnings of a war was stirring in Southeast Asia. Around the same time in 1965, there was a kindergartner named Mike West playing on the little playground at Federal Terrace Elementary School. Down the road a ways he would become a pastor of VBC. Meanwhile, the church was interested in contacting Rev. Harold and Esther Freeman who lived in Kansas.

Esther Freeman, now living in American Canyon and still involved in the church, was gracious to spend an afternoon talking about her remembrances of the ministry that they had in Vallejo. Mrs. Freeman began with sharing how VBC contacted them to pray about coming to Vallejo. At the time, they were pastoring at Salina Bible Church in Kansas and had just completed a new church building. The church was growing, partly due to an Air Force base nearby which brought families to the church. Harold and Esther were graduates of Midwest Bible and Missionary Institute in Missouri and knew Paul and Linda Gillies there, as well as other students from VBC. Paul had been the choir director at Midwest.

Through connections and acquaintances at Midwest and the Gillies family (Mr. Charles Gillies had been in the audience for the commencement ceremony of his son David Gillies' graduation and heard Harold Freeman give the main message), the Freemans were eventually contacted by Paul Gillies in Vallejo about the possibility of coming to pastor VBC. They were happy at Salina and prayed, "Is this what God wants for us?"

God was moving. He would direct them to California. Tom and Marguerite McLaughlin met the Freemans at the San Francisco Airport and brought them to Vallejo. Interim Pastor Bill Graves was proud of VBC's church building on Marin and Carolina and showed them all around the auditoriums and rooms—but there was no parsonage. Harold and Esther earnestly prayed for the Lord's will in this major decision and were open to new direction even though Salina had a parsonage and it was hard to think of leaving that flock. If the Lord wanted them in Vallejo, the Freemans knew that God would provide a place for them to live. God spoke to Mrs. Freeman through Deuteronomy 1:33: "God...went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tents in...to show you by what way you should go...." She told her husband that she had peace, and they both agreed that they were willing to come and trust the Lord in this transition. The Freemans began their ministry in June of 1964. Mrs. Freeman recalls that at the time there were no places to rent that seemed right as a parsonage. In October, VBC decided to buy a house which had been up for sale for a year—the one at 918 Donner Pass Road. God provided.

We can only imagine the adjustment it must have been to move from Kansas to California in the 1960s. Pastor Freeman's report of June 14 through December 31, 1964, calmly continues on with the work and ministry of the church. Eight people professed faith, there were a number of assurances of salvation, one marriage, two funerals and four baptisms. Many hours of counseling were fruitful in the lives of the congregation and of others. Pastor Mert Haskell was installed in the ministry at a service in Potter

Valley. Pastor and Nathan McCauley participated in an ordination exam of Mr. N. L. Haire. Charles Arthur and Pastor participated in an ordination exam at Highway Bible Church. A visitation group of ten to twelve people had been active.

Jim Rhodes' trustees' report explains that the church apartment in the upstairs back area of the church was converted to a nursery. (Mr. and Mrs. Art Messing lived in this apartment for several years and Art was the building caretaker. The Messings eventually moved to Wilton, California.) During this year the church purchased a chair truck. Two new flags for the main auditorium were bought. Mr. Major Magarian donated new church sign boards.

In 1965 Rev. William Graves was made Pastor Emeritus of the church and a special service was held on April 4, 1965, with men of the IFCA Regional participating. The 1965 mission conference was held in October. The following missionaries participated: James and Betty Brown (Alaska), Richard Foster (Pioneer Bible Mission), Carol Hastings (20-year veteran in India), Ralph and Lina Henning (Ceylon & India General Mission), John Moseley (Europe), and Ira Ransom (Utah-Mormon work). Included in the folder holding the annual reports are copies of thank-you letters written by Pastor Freeman and sent to individuals who served in office.

1966 came along. Pastor Freeman helped Walter Wilson work on a project to achieve his God and Country Boy Scouts Award. A serviceman name Robert Haas came with Mr. and Mrs. Jim Bradley from Travis AFB and Jim led him to the Lord after the service. Robert was soon after sent to Vietnam. The Dr. Merrill Unger meetings were a high point of the year. Beulah Park family conference, Vacation Bible School, the missions conference, and the J. Elwood Evans meetings all had their place in enhancing spiritual growth and glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul Gillies' music report thanks Linda Gillies, Esther Freeman, Mrs. Nick Bays and Mr. Pierce Johnson for being accompanists and participating in helping with the music. Linda also played the pipe organ during the prelude on Sunday mornings. The choir had forty singers. Paul's Victors Through Christ report says that their theme song is "V is for Victory" and describes the blessings of working with the youth. They enjoyed participating in rallies with other Bay Area churches. The young people also ministered at the Heartwood Nursing Center.

The Vietnam War in 1967 was burning from a small flame into an uncontrollable forest fire. Young men and women were sent to Mare Island and Alameda Naval Air Station and other military bases in California, and the civil service work force was increasing. Victor McAllister was a young shipyard employee and tells his story of how he came to VBC:

In late 1967 I was working on the USS *Indra*, a small boat repair ship being prepared to maintain riverine craft in Vietnam. I used to take shipping tags and write Bible verses on them and leave them in the men's room on the pier next to the *Indra*. One afternoon, I was

working in the same compartment as a young sheet metal employee, John Winniford. We were both trying to witness to each other. John realized I was also a Christian and asked, "Are you the fellow who leaves Bible verses in the men's room? Yes! You need to come to my church, Vallejo Bible Church."

As a new resident of Vallejo, I had not found a local church. That Sunday, I attended an evening service at VBC. One of the attenders at VBC had died that day with her baby in an automobile accident. A small girl, Karen Dalugdug, was left as an orphan by the death of her mother and brother. Mrs. Leonisa Sitjar spoke at the service, stating that she was prepared to take care of the orphaned girl.

That was my introduction to how people in Vallejo Bible Church showed the love of Christ for each other, and I have been here ever since.

Many people were saved that year and several dedicated their lives for Christ. A Good Friday service was held on March 24. Several speakers attended: Pastors Mert Haskell, Potter Valley; Dr. John Bain, Guerneville; Robert Jeffcott, Cecil N. Self, Santa Rosa; Harold Freeman, Vallejo; Charles Knapper, Suisun City; Paul Reiter, Westbrae. Dr. J. O. Percy held meetings here May 3-7. VBC hosted the IFCA Regional on September 4, one of the best attended.

The choir presented the Easter, missionary, and Christmas cantatas, and also sang at the Oakland Chinese Bible Church, Travis AFB, and First Baptist Church in Pleasant Hill.

1968 brought more naval personnel to Mare Island's Nuclear Power School's intensive training on submarine systems and to other schools and commands. Various ships were coming in. This brought men and families to the community and to our church as well. Sunday school Supt. Bob Higgins begins his annual report by writing that it was the year of the world's first successful heart transplant and the first flight to the moon. Sunday school attendance was at 200 with 948 visitors in church.

This was the year in which Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was shot and later Senator Robert Kennedy. As in other cities throughout America, Vallejo was struggling with the turmoil of the civil rights movement, and violence began erupting in town and in schools. The year's annual report notes that "After a threat of rioting in downtown [due to the shooting of Dr. King], it was decided to hire one of the young men as a doorman."

Mixed in with all of this was the sudden death of Walt Hanlon in February. He had recently retired from a career in the Marines and Army. Michele and Angie had been attending Sunday school and church for about four years, and Michele was in the middle of her first year at BIOLA in 1968 when she came home for the funeral. Angie was in seventh grade at Solano Junior High. Clarice and the girls deeply appreciated the church family's concern and the help from Pastor Freeman.

Unknown to most people, there was another major problem taking place regarding the safety of America. "Early in 1968 a nuclear-armed Soviet submarine sank in the



waters off Hawaii, hundreds of miles closer to American shores than it should have been. Compelling evidence...suggests that the sub, K-129, sank while attempting to fire a nuclear missile, most likely at the naval base at Pearl Harbor." This is the opening of the book *Red Star Rogue*, which is a compilation of declassified military information revealing a major event that was kept secret. Also in May 1968, the submarine USS *Scorpion* sank in mysterious circumstances—the story is told in the book *All Hands Down*. Many of the people at church have read *Blind Man's Bluff* or have seen the documentary on TV. Also the USS *Pueblo* was captured by communists. Today we know more about what some of our Navy men and families experienced in those years. Sandra Thompson and Diana Bisler had husbands on the USS *Seawolf* which went out for long periods of time on missions of Cold War espionage, and there were many other subs silently sailing in and out of the Napa River.

Meanwhile, the Women's Missionary Society was trying out the use of "Triangles" to encourage women of all ages to attend and keep in touch with one another. They gathered Blue Chip stamps and bought a new coffee server for church, and Betty Crocker coupons brought in water pitchers. They had many speakers that year, one of them being Emma Lou Henning who taught in a mission school in Ethiopia. This was before her dramatic escape from the Communists who took over and forced missionaries out of the country.

Neal and Irmgard Webster along with the Rhoads family began holding meetings for the junior high-aged VTC'ers under the direction of the board and the help of the Gillies. A few problems with the youth were mentioned but overall it was a blessing. For the high school and career-age VTC, Lee Carlson was president; Mike Whited was vice president; Jeanette Parsons secretary/treasurer; Kathy Scott and Sue Kelly were social chairwomen. The VTC report says that they conducted a monthly service at Amberwood Convalescent Hospital, and hosted a Bay Area VTC rally.



*The Carlson's wedding and  
Mavis Skalland, 1968.*

Leroy Carlson walked into the scene at VBC and gives his testimony of how he found our church. He was in the Navy and had been going to a church across town. He saw our church building when he was riding by in a jitney that would drive down Marin Street to the downtown area. With the daylight time change one Sunday morning, he wound up not being on time for the service at the church he had been attending, so he decided to visit Vallejo Bible Church. As Lee walked through the front door, he heard children singing in Carol Hastings Chapel and it made him think of home. He said to himself, "I'm home!" The song they sang was "I Met Jesus at the Crossroad."

I met Jesus at the crossroad, where the two ways meet.  
 Satan too was standing there, and he said, "Come this way!  
 Lots and lots of pleasures I will give to you today."  
 But I said, "No! Here's Jesus too— See what He offers me;  
 Down here my sins forgiven, up there a home in heaven!  
 Praise God what He's done for me!"

At the same time, Judy Day had just gotten a job in the yardage department at The National Dollar Store on Georgia Street. Mavis Skalland worked there too and helped her in the untangling of yardage and the intricacies of the sewing world. Mavis invited Judy to church where she greatly enjoyed the fellowship and participated in youth meetings and rallies. After attending a youth rally in the Bay Area, Judy talked with Pastor Freeman and he led her to the Savior. Lee Carlson met Judy during these months, and it wasn't long before Leroy and Judy knew they were meant for each other and were married in Vallejo Bible Church.

1969 was the year that Neal and Irmgard Webster left for Brazil as missionaries with UMF. There was an ordination exam for Gershom Lee. Victor and Leonila McAllister were baptized in March and Betty Fox in April. There were many salvations and spiritual victories. Pastor Freeman was on the IFCA National Executive Committee and teaching on Thursday evenings at the newly established Sacramento Bible Institute. Rev. Joe Arnett gave evangelistic meetings for a week in November. George Goolde, a young Jewish man who came to faith in Jesus Christ and was a missionary with Servicemen for Christ, came to Vallejo with a burden to acquire a place to start a servicemen's center near the church. George was doing Saturday visitation to reach servicemen and had been talking to the board about possibilities of working together. The deacon-trustee report thanks Bill Pobanz for his work of trimming ivy away from the neon sign in front of the church and trimming other shrubs, making the place look attractive, and thanks Millie Pobanz for cleaning the inside. Mr. Arthur McCauley mowed the lawn and made it look trim and neat. George Luiz wrote that twelve projects were completed and there would be seven future projects, which will include the completion of the installation of a speaker system started by Milt Philips.



*Neal and Irmgard Webster and Dorothy Gillies  
 1968*

*L) Jr Dept. SS girls 1968  
R) Arshaloos Bell with the Gillies  
B) Young people's SS class*



## The 1970s

Changes hit in the 1970s. The city of Vallejo began knocking down old downtown buildings and the redevelopment program was on. The stately Carnegie public library with its stained-glass dome was demolished along with other beautiful old buildings. A new Marina Towers skyscraper on Sacramento Street was built on top of where the Carnegie library had stood. It turned out that this new tower building would be the residence of many of the older people who would come to VBC.

One of the ministries that Mrs. Freeman initiated was involving women to do Thursday morning visitation. She loves to tell the following Filipino story of a morning visitation. Going door to door in town, she met a lady who invited her in. The lady asked many questions. Mrs. Freeman talked to her about Jesus and told her the truth of salvation—it is not of works or going to church. Ursula Valdez listened to her carefully and then asked, “Why did you not come sooner?” This woman had a Jehovah’s Witness background. Mrs. Freeman left her to think and pray about what they had talked about. On the second visit, she brought Leonisa Sitjar with her and they talked some more. Ursula asked to be baptized. Leonisa and Mrs. Freeman wondered about this.... They tried to explain that baptism comes after receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.... Ursula explained that she was saved! She had asked the Lord Jesus to be her Savior after Mrs. Freeman’s first visit! Her husband was a Catholic and an officer in the Navy. Their little girl, Annabel, did not believe Jesus was God. Amazingly enough, the family came to church. Annabel attended Doris Webster’s Sunday School class and received the Lord, and later the other kids did too. Even Mr. Valdez came to know the Lord when Pastor Freeman visited their home.

Included in the reports there is mention of a Thursday night visitation as well. Some people were saved at home, others at church or later in the pastor’s study. The church hospitality program was very active too.

George Goolde was gaining ground in reaching servicemen for Christ. Special meetings were conducted by an IFCA Chaplain, Commander David Meschke, and men of the aircraft carrier USS *Coral Sea*. They were a unique gospel team of 15 men in sailor blue called “The Coral Sea Crusaders,” who visited churches around the world.

Mr. Henning led a man to the Lord on a Wednesday night prayer meeting. Jerome Fleischer with Friends of Israel presented his Jewish work. Mary McCauley started a Junior Choir. Norman and Jeanine Reece donated their Hammond organ to the church, and they had a baby dedication service for Deborah. A steel rod was put all the way around the roof to bind it together, and the men built a new ladies’ bathroom downstairs. Bible Memory Association had 45 enrolled for memorizing verses of scripture. The WMS made clothing for the Grables in Honduras and also prepared a house for them for their furlough in Vallejo.

In 1971 a decision was made to change the title of the office of Deacon to Elder, and Deacon-Trustee to Deacon. The pastor’s report also says that the church facilities were at the point of being taxed for space. He writes that two South Vietnamese Air Force lieutenants were saved after an evening service. They had been invited by Norman Reece, and Pastor Freeman led them to Christ in the Reece’s home where they were guests. Many others were saved that year. Dennis Coit gave public testimony of salvation at the Men’s Fellowship saying that Bill Baxter’s testimony had been effective in his life and bringing him to the Lord. New members on the roll included Jack and Bernice Cox and Bill and Joy Baxter.



Bob Higgins writes that 1971 was “The Year of the Freeze” but the Sunday school was not frozen—it was increasing. The WMS was not frozen either as they hemmed 1,000 flour sacks into beautiful dish towels for the missionaries. The 40-member choir was not freezing at all—they were packed in with new robes and the robe chairwoman was Mavis Skalland. Even the baptistry got a new water heater.



*Don Grable family and the senior McCauleys, 1971.*

Vacation Bible School was two weeks long and very successful. Their offerings went toward helping the San Francisco Chinese Bible Church. A note mentions that Pastor Emeritus Bill and Madge Graves were living in Seal Beach, CA, at this time. The ministry of a new Servicemen’s Center was beginning to take shape. George Goolde was looking at possibilities for a center.

January, 1972, began with a tragedy. Keith, the oldest son of the William and Betty Fox family, was killed on American Canyon Road when his motorcycle hit a telephone pole. He had graduated from high school and was entering a new phase of life when God took him home. The Fox family had many heart-wrenching times and challenges through the years, and later on experienced the loss of their grandson, Keith (who was named after his young uncle), but Betty never faltered in her faith and walk with the Lord. She suffered polio as a child which resulted in problems with her legs and feet, yet she was strong physically and enjoyed living out on their farm off American Canyon Road. Betty taught the young children at church for years and was active with the youth as well as in other ministries in the church. One of the church family’s memories is the social when the Foxes had everyone out on the farm. There was an unusual contest of who could catch pigs running around in the muddy pig sty. The participants became so muddy that today we cannot remember who took first place. Kathy Fox married John Barry, son of Ed and Eunice Barry. They grew up in the church and worked with Mr. and Mrs. Victor Bonilla in the youth ministry here for a while in the 1980s. Eventually they moved to Vacaville, and Betty is now in a retirement center in Vacaville.

Improvements were made in 1972 for the auditorium sound system with new speakers and mikes, and speakers in the remodeled nursery area. A new baptismal tank was put in downstairs. A divider wall was built in the north upstairs Sunday school room with carpeting put in. Also a new refrigerated drinking fountain was put in by the front stairs. The main roof was resealed.

Two of our young people, Roberta Hiteshew and Ward Cushman served as Whitefeet at Bible Memory Association camp. Vacation Bible School was led by Bernice Cox and the offerings were for two steamer trunks and an Icelandic Language Course for the Hubartt family in Iceland. Harold Sloper reported that the Men's Fellowship had a father-son retreat on Mount St. Helena where they fished at the lake and caught 267 trout. He noted that their food was not as good as what the ladies serve.

The IFCA Quiz Team memorized nine chapters of the book of Hebrews. The group was composed of Ruth Viss, Susan Hawkley, Debbie Gillies, Kim Rhoads, John Viss, Dan Gillies, Jane Hawkley, Diana Gillies, and the coaches were Dr. and Mrs. John Viss. Dan, Debbie, and Diana memorized the entire book of Hebrews that year!



*Quiz Team with Dr. & Mrs. Viss, 1972*

Sadly, 1972 ended with the sudden death of James (Jim) Rhodes. His life ended on November 19 when he was not given proper treatment by medical staff. The church earnestly prayed for Erma and Debbie, Tammy and Jimmy in their loss and shock. Jim had been active in VBC and a board member. We were comforted in knowing it was not the end—for there will be a day of beginnings in unending joy with loved ones in Heaven.

Bridal showers and weddings were occasions of fellowship and happiness. On January 8, 1973, Ken and Kathy Cox married, and on September 21, David and Jeanette Theders also exchanged vows.

An audio visual library was started in 1973. Teacher training was conducted and a Christian education conference was held in the church with Rev. Jay Reed from Westbrae, and Rev. Daniel Sauerwein, a C.E. instructor at Multnomah School of the Bible. During this time, some people were taking classes at Sacramento Bible Institute, and Pastor Freeman was teaching on Thursday evenings at SBI. In the annual report for the year, Pastor Freeman writes that he gave expository messages in I and II Thessalonians during the morning services, doctrinal and practical messages in the evening services, and on Wednesday evening he taught Bible survey. Mrs. Henning was teaching a neighborhood ladies' Bible study in her home on Daniels Ave., and Mrs. Freeman was also teaching Bible classes.



Michele Hanlon (now Charles) graduated from BIOLA that summer. In September she became an elementary school teacher in town at Grace Baptist Church School on Vervais Street. The following year Michele moved to Wilton to teach at Wilton Bible Church Christian School where she became a country school teacher, surrounded by the aroma of cows and chickens. During high school days, Michele felt called to become a missionary, and after good experience as a teacher, she returned to Vallejo to begin the process of becoming a missionary candidate with Worldwide European Fellowship. In a short time, Michele would become supported by VBC and be on her way to Luxembourg.

Although the Tuesday ladies' prayer meetings and Bible studies are not always mentioned in annual reports, this group met together from the earliest days and still meets each week to pray for the church and for anyone who has need of prayer. This faithful band of women has been a mainstay of the life of VBC.

Another quiet ministry, except for times of moving tables and chairs, is the hard work of church custodians. Some have been volunteers and some have been paid for their help. There have been many who have graciously stepped in to clean and set up furniture. Though the names of these people are not regularly listed in the ledgers and reports, we do remember Bill and Millie Pobanz, Ed Barry, George Luiz, Betty Fox and Don Gardner for their long years of tending to the building and making it



*Rob Higgins hands microphone to  
BMA memorizers, 1974.*

presentable, a good testimony to visitors and church family, bringing glory to God. Don Gardner also became the minister of the stair-climber, the apparatus that takes people up to the second floor main auditorium. Don looks out for those who need assistance, and while taking them up, he lends a listening ear of concern for them.

### **The Christian Servicemen's Center on Marin & Kentucky Streets**

The early 1970s saw the vision and reality of another servicemen's ministry become established at the corner of Marin and Kentucky Streets in a large Victorian house close to the church. George and Kay Goolde and Fred Mitchell worked diligently in reaching the military personnel stationed in this area. Cal Maritime students came as well, such as Rich Rockwood. Servicemen for Christ also had a ministry in San Diego

in which Fred served some time as an intern there. The work in Vallejo brought countless men and women and families to VBC resulting in many of them going on to Bible schools and ministries.

The church choir gained singers and musicians who participated in the worship services and special events. There are many memories of solos, duets, trios, and group singing that offered praise to the Lord. Floyd Patterson and Ray Miller joyfully sang “Farther Along We’ll Know All About It” in perfect harmony one morning that made all of us want to sing along with them. We also remember a young man named Ezra who stepped up to the pulpit to sing a solo, and some in the pews felt a little nervous for him as a new sailor standing up there all by himself. The piano intro began and Ezra leaned back to use his trained tenor voice to sing out about the love of God. We never felt nervous for him after that! Hopefully, these people are still singing, and we hope Sonny Janezek is still playing his trumpet.

Right next door to the church was a Christian bookstore, which played a large part in providing good Christian literature, study books and music for Vallejo and for all the servicemen walking back and forth from church to the center two blocks away. During part of this time, Skip Trease, an officer stationed on Mare Island who became involved in VBC and the servicemen’s center, operated the bookstore. His wife, Char, was like a mom at the servicemen’s center, always involved with creating delicious dinners. A young fellow named Virgil Parrill was the accountant at the bookstore and he too became a part of VBC. It is impossible to record all the names of the people who were a part of this military ministry at the center and bookstore, but some are mentioned in the following pages to further the story.



*Dan and Jill Driesenga’s wedding, 1975*

The flip side of having a lot of young people coming to the church is that they moved away. These were the days when visitors who came to the morning service would be invited to eat Sunday dinner (lunch) in someone’s home, and friendships were made quickly. (Stores were generally closed on Sundays in these years.) The hospitality leaders, McLaughlins, Carlsons, Bakkens, Weyandts, as well as many others, were busy and also gave many farewell receptions. In 1973 we said goodbye to submariner Dave and Jeanette Parsons Theders who were just married that year, Bill and Rana Challacombe, Chuck and Charlene Parsons Kurk, and the Ed Gregory family. Pastor Dan Driesenga

of Sequoia Bible Church in Eureka was a submariner here where he met and married Jill Spaulding. Thankfully, some of these loved ones who transferred have come back to us such as Dave, Jeanette, and Jennifer. The Driesengas returned to Vallejo and would eventually serve as the camp director of Hartstone Bible Camp in Potter Valley and later become the pastor at Sequoia. Their daughter, Ellie, is now a missionary in Brazil, supported by VBC.

To capture some of the personalities in the church, we think of Diamond and Alice Kyriazi. Alice is remembered not only as a member from the 1940s but also as a creative gift-wrapper. Alice loved to surprise the young women at weddings and baby showers, and there were a lot of these in the 1970s. As the church ladies and guests were seated around in the living room of someone's home during the opening of gifts, all eyes would focus on Alice's package coming into the hands of the unsuspecting bride or new mother. No one breathed a hint of what might be inside the decoratively wrapped gift box. After tearing apart the ribbons and wrapping, the grateful guest-of-honor would gently place her hands into the tissue papers to extract the gift—suddenly to jump up or over with a shriek as the plastic cricket or spider or beetle sprang out amidst the tissues. Laughter could be heard down the street. Diamond Kyriazi's creative side was in making duck decoys. He practically had a museum in his home of ducks: framed paintings of ducks, framed duck postage stamps, duck photos, duck lamp shades and curtains of hunting scenes. In the front yard his homemade colorful wooden whirly-gig ducks whirled their wings, and so many of them were sold or given as gifts.



*Paul and Linda Gillies, Diana, Dan, Debbie, 1974. Paul and VTC leaders for several years.*

VBC began a committee to look into prospective building sites in 1974. During this year our church library was started. An extension school of SBI began in VBC offering eight hours weekly for anyone interested; these were taught by Pastor Freeman and Jay Reed. Ambassadors for Christ, the college/career group, enjoyed a year filled with activity and spiritual growth...Bible studies... singing... outings...and the Friday night baseball games. Sponsors Bill and Joy Baxter wrote: "Ambassadors did encounter one small problem in our summer recreation program. On August 23—a day of infamy—we challenged the VTC'ers to a softball game. It was a great game—until the first inning. Somehow those 'youngsters' managed to acquire about 9 runs during their first time at bat and... 'nuff said about that...."

Another 1974 quote must be included from Harold Sloper's annual report about The Men's Fellowship:

Speaking of meals, this one had to be one of the most hectic nights I have ever spent. As you know, the Men's Fellowship decided to put on the Christmas dinner for the Ladies Missionary Society. Well, I just don't know where to start. First, to plan a meal of this size was new to me and to know what to have that might be enjoyable to all, and quick to serve. So I planned for 90—I was told that about 75 would be there—but 96 ladies showed up. If that wasn't bad enough, there were 22 men in the kitchen, and one lady who kept coming through there every five minutes. Coach Paul Gillies getting his serving crew together and Lee Carlson and Paul Bakken trying to make tea and coffee, and George Luiz and Dale Rhodes trying to put out 90 plates to start putting the salad on. Then serving the soup and every one grabbing for bowls which we didn't have enough of (the head table got their soup in sugar bowls); then we ran out of soup and had to use the hot water faucet to make the soup last; then, came the serving of the main course and we had enough to feed 100 but we gave the ladies' truck driver helpings and ran out of food. We still had four to serve and all the men, so Bill Weyandt and David McLeod went out and purchased some Kentucky fried chicken to finish out the meal. All I heard all evening from Dave Huss was, "Boy, I can hardly wait to eat some of that stroganoff." We ran out—Sorry, Dave, maybe some other time. The serving crew really had a system and ran it like clockwork. It was nice to see Warden Webster washing dishes and Nathan McCauley trying to light the candles on the ice cream dessert—and Jerry Annoni wanting to know when he was going to get something to eat—and Bob Higgins yelling, "We are out of soup! We are out of soup!" I want to thank all of the men who did an outstanding job. At the time it didn't seem like it was fun, but as I look back it was terrific.

The church library's collection of books increased in 1975 and continues today as a wonderful resource. The old, the young and the home schoolers have all benefited from this library. Serviceman Gary Esmond was the first official librarian. The board authorized the pastor to buy books on a regular basis and many people donated them. The collection totaled 356 books at that time.

Vacation Bible School, directed by Lois Higgins, had another good year and some of the children were saved. Jim and Kathy Cornell of UMF to New Zealand were the missionary project. Eunice Barry was the BMA director and '75 was the 12<sup>th</sup> year of our participation in Bible memorization.

The Baxters had changes in their lives during these last few years by deciding to leave the Navy and getting a job in Concord, and buying a home here on Glenn Street. During this time period, they attended a "Direction" missions conference designed for youth, and while there they felt the Lord leading them to work in missions. Joy and Bill, Julie and Dave left for Wilton where they also enjoyed the aroma of the country and began training at SBI while Joy taught in the Christian school.

Charles Moore, a Vietnam veteran, and his wife Edie, and Navy chief Art Schneider and family, the Challacombs, Fred Mitchell, Norman Reece, Judith Cook, Golden Cushman, Janice Higgins, Roberta Hiteshew, Angie Hanlon, Guy and Elizabeth Rimestad, Cindy Dobbe, and Ron Hand chose to attend SBI during these years. The SBI travel-



ing music ensemble came to VBC several times to sing, and Janice Higgins and Roberta Hiteshew participated in this school ministry. There were many young people from VBC attending SBI as well as the extension classes in the 1970s, and like the servicemen's ministry, the list would be too long to include all of those who studied there and graduated over the 20-year period of the good teaching ministry at the Sacramento Bible Institute on Fair Oaks Boulevard in Carmichael.

The annual report of 1976 shows that Rev. Jay Reed was called to be the Christian Education Pastor in December, 1975. A new office was built for this position, which is today's church office. He directed the teaching ministries and was involved in VBS and camps, and also ministered in the church services. On occasion Jay would lead the choir in Paul Gillies' absence. Five teacher-training workshops were held and a Christian education committee was established.

The church also decided to hire a part-time secretary, Judith Cook, and the small secretary's office was directly across the hallway from the pastor's study, which is now a closet and storage area. Throughout the years of ministry at VBC, there were people who helped with office work for the pastor. Some were pastors' wives, such as Esther Freeman and Joy Baxter who also were involved with other ministries and needs, and other helpers were members who volunteered. A few were hired part-time on staff. The secretaries on staff were: Judith Cook Boyken, 1976-1977; Angela Hanlon, 1977-1978; Eunice Barry 1979-1980; Lucille Perry, 1980-1982; Angela Hanlon, 1982-1985.

Henry and Penny Winkelman from Burney Falls (Henry and Penny attended SBI and Henry had recently graduated), came to Vallejo to learn from Pastor Freeman in a pastoral internship. Henry played a twelve-string guitar, and he and Penny provided special music at times. They were here for two years and then left to pastor Maranatha Bible Church in the San Jose area. Today Pastor Winkelman is the minister at Grace Community Bible Church up in Burney Falls.

During this year, the church held a memorial service for Dr. John Viss and his son, Philip, who were killed in an accident in Alaska. Dr. Viss decided to leave his medical career at Kaiser Hospital to serve in medical/missionary work among the native Indians of Alaska. The family had not been there long when the Lord called Dr. Viss and Philip Home to be with him. May their testimony and good works follow them.

There was also a memorial service during the IFCA Labor Day Regional at VBC for Pastor Bill Graves who died on August 22, 1976. He was born June 22, 1892, and went Home at the age of 84. A large crowd attended and several IFCA pastors had a part in the service for the man who fearlessly and faithfully preached the Word.

Many church library books were accessioned in 1976, given Dewey decimal numbers, and set in order on the shelves. Five cents a day was charged for a late book. Penny Winkelman and Cindy Sims Dobbe were the librarians.

Larry Harris was the coordinator of the Extension Services ministries at Heartwood Nursing Home and the Vallejo Retirement Center. Larry and Diana Harris were brought to VBC by way of the Navy and became very active working in the church. Larry and Diane went on to become the assistant pastor of Salina Bible Church in Kansas after graduating from Appalachian Bible College, and then went on to pastor a church in Ponca City, Oklahoma.

1977 would become a transitional year for VBC. Pastor Freeman writes that it was a difficult year. He includes in the report that Jay Reed's Christian Education ministry here was concluded and that he went to teach at the Chinese Bible College in San Francisco. Dr. Jay and Ethel Reed and family continued to attend VBC for years and have been a part of the fellowship. They live in Vacaville at the present time.

The IFCA headquarters asked Pastor Harold Freeman if he would come to be the Editor-in-Chief of the VOICE magazine, and after much prayer and seeking God's will, he accepted. Mrs. Freeman recalls that this was the hardest decision they ever made. Leaving the pastorate to work at the IFCA office in Chicago was quite a change and challenge, especially with long hours of traveling to meetings in various states, and yet it was full of blessings to work in this important ministry. In Chicago they attended Westchester Bible Church. Pastor Freeman later became the IFCA National Executive Director. The Freemans retired in 1988, and it was at this juncture in their lives that Calvary Bible College (formerly Midwest Bible Institute) in Kansas City, Missouri, contacted Harold to be on staff. The Freemans moved to Kansas City and taught at Calvary for four years. Mrs. Freeman mentioned that Harold received his doctorate degree from Florida Bible College and San Diego Bible College.



*The Freemans with Karen Dalugdug and the Stijars at farewell dinner, 1977*

Esther Freeman reflected recently on how the Ladies' Retreats were started years ago. She and Lou Reiter, the wife of Pastor Paul Reiter at Westbrae Bible Church, were attending the pastors and wives' retreat at Meteor Ranch, and one day they got to talking about how wonderful it would be to have a retreat for the women of the Northern California IFCA churches. Lou and Esther shared their thoughts and ideas that afternoon and decided to carry out the dream. During the year, the wheels began turning: calls were made, a committee was created, networking among the churches established, a retreat speaker was acquired and a facility found. The retreat was publicized in churches, and with smoothing out all the details, the vision became real. These ladies'



retreats have continued for nearly forty years with regional churches sharing the responsibilities for fall and spring retreats.

Arthur Schneider was ordained to the ministry on October, 21, 1977. Also in October, the Freemans were given a large IFCA regional-wide farewell fellowship in the William Graves Fellowship Hall at Vallejo Bible Church. Much prayer and love followed them as they began their new journey to Illinois.

For several months, VBC was without a pastor. Angie Hanlon worked in the church office and Nathan McCauley was the elder who coordinated many details of the ongoing ministry of the church. Tom McLaughlin suggested contacting Rev. Joe Arnett to come as an interim pastor and the board contacted him. Joe and Elnora agreed to come from the Midwest to minister as interim pastor during this transition. He had enjoyed ministering in Vallejo during his evangelism meetings.



*Pastor Joe and Elnora Arnett, 1978*

After several months of interim ministry, the church asked Brother Arnett to pray about being the pastor. In May of 1978, Pastor Arnett was voted in to be the new pastor of Vallejo Bible Church. The annual report of the first year tells of continued blessings and victories. Fifty decisions were made for Christ, six baby dedications, twelve were baptized, seven became members, there were two weddings, and four funerals.

A story about a baptism needs telling. That year Nancy Grable wanted to be baptized. Pastor Arnett talked with her about this important decision, and he also explained how it is done, how to step down the baptistry stairs and carefully enter the water, and that he would come to help her. To relieve any nervousness that she might have, Pastor humorously mentioned that the tank was not for swimming —knowing that Nancy, being from Honduras, liked water. The Sunday evening of the baptism came and Pastor Arnett stepped into the tank. Ed Barry was working the ropes to pull the baptism curtains open when everyone heard splashing. Nancy in her white robe launched off the steps and dog paddled to Pastor Arnett. He was quite surprised, smiled, and guided her close to the microphone where we could barely see her head. Nancy spoke of her trust in the Lord Jesus and was baptized. Everyone heartily sang out: "Hallelujah, 'tis done; I believe on the Son; I am saved by the blood of the crucified one!"

Charles Moore began a pastoral internship that year and Henry Winkelman got his ministerial license. Bill and Joy Baxter were appointed by WEF as missionaries to South Africa. The deacon's report written by Arnold Hiteshew mentions that fire

damage to the parsonage was completed. Bernice Cox reported there were definite decisions for salvation in VBS, and Eunice Barry wrote that six youths attended Bible Memory Association Camp. Fourteen others used their scholarships to attend Hartstone Bible Camp. Clair Weyandt and Judy Carlson gave good reports about the hospitality ministry.

1979 came along with a large number of individuals saved and baptized. Besides Pastor Arnett's messages, there were many visiting speakers that year. Pastor's messages were also broadcast over Radio Station KEAR, as were Pastor Freeman's in former years.

George and Delpha Schreiner (from the early days of VBC) and Rev. Ralph and Lina Henning celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversaries. Angie Hanlon resigned as church secretary to become the staff graphic artist at Worldwide European Fellowship in Pennsylvania for four years. A new week-night Bible class for married couples was established. The beautiful wedding of Don Weaver and Linda Abram was that year, and they established their home in Vallejo. "An Old Fashioned Christmas" was sung by the gifted choir, led by Paul Gillies. Church-sponsored Christmas Clubs for children were conducted throughout the city.

The annual missions conference was held and the monthly missionary budget was increased to \$2010, supporting over 25 missionaries. Arthur Arnett, Joe and Elnora's son, a missionary with Seamen's International, was also attending VBC and had an active ministry along with some men from VBC in reaching international seamen onboard ships coming into the Bay Area and the Sacramento River. They passed out the gospel and Bible literature in various languages to these foreign seamen.

The deaconesses were quite active and revived the prayer alert system. They sent gifts and flowers to the shut-ins: Charles and Dorothy Gillies, Sylvia Ross, Hazel Westfall, Lister Higgins, Brother Allinger, Vernon Cahill, Alice Cheever, and Mabel McKean. Jay Reed wrote that the Men's Fellowship had good turnouts in their meetings and thanks Mrs. Bill Weyandt and crew for the wonderful meals. Linda Gillies, WMS president, reported that the new cookbook was almost completed and lists all of the missionary guest speakers who came each month. She tells about the well-stocked missionary closet and its ministry to many individuals who come through. Their verses for the year were 1 Corinthians 3:9, 10: "For we are labourers together with God...."

In the middle of 1979, the Arnetts said goodbye to VBC to return to his former ministry of preaching and giving evangelistic meetings in places as the Lord would lead them. Joe and Elnora were in their years of retirement age, and yet Pastor Arnett continued to make himself available to churches and outreaches to "thunder forth the eternal verities of God," one of his favorite expressions. Brother Arnett passed the pastoral baton to the next pastor who would come to Vallejo Bible Church.

Rev. Francis T. Stiles and his wife, Barbara, were contacted by VBC during the year about the possibility of coming to pastor the church. Fran Stiles was working at

Worldwide European Fellowship in Langhorne, Pennsylvania, as the IOP Director (Internship and Orientation Program). He provided orientation and training for new candidates in missionary service and worked closely with Henry J. Heijermans, WEF's Director. Bill and Joy Baxter knew Fran Stiles from their time as missionary candidates in training. Through this and other contacts, Fran's name was suggested to the VBC board and church family. After seeking the Lord's will in this decision, the Stiles agreed to come to California. They left their home in Mt. Holly, New Jersey, headed west with their youngest child, Tim, and began their ministry during the last months of 1979.



## The 1980s

The work of the Lord at Vallejo Bible Church continued onward in 1980. Pastor Stiles reflects in his first report that he is very thankful for the stewardship that had been committed to him as pastor and was grateful for the congregation's devotion to the Word of God, their desire to reach the lost, for the love and concern for one another, and for the strategies in ministries. By God's grace the church will achieve mighty things, walking and working together with Him.



*Pastor Fran and Barbara Stiles, 1980s*

Victor McAllister reported that the parsonage had extensive work done on it, and the deaconesses replaced curtains and did a tremendous job cleaning and preparing the parsonage. The pastor's study was remodeled and many other church building work projects were completed. Judy Carlson and the deaconesses appreciated the church family for all of the hard work during work days and helping out in many capacities during the year.

Music Director Paul Gillies wrote in his report for the year:

Lenny Seidel, who ministered to us in May, 1980, made a strong case for good, God-honoring music and its inestimable value in the local church. It was good to be in Mr. Seidel's seminar and be refreshed with the truths from God's Word which emphasized the importance of good music with its beautiful melody and rich harmony carried along by a subtle rhythm containing a meaningful, accurate message. This kind of music has been the standard and norm in our church and was the cause for manifold blessings in 1980.

Charles and Edith Moore were bravely going forth with the Victors Through Christ ministry and poignantly wrote that there were challenges, disappointments, and

yet rich blessings. Keith and Cindy Dobbe worked that year as VTC assistants before leaving for Appalachian Bible College. Bill and Clair Weyandt were sponsors for Ambassadors for Christ and reported that they had 27 speakers in the year to share testimonies, Bible lessons, ministries, and whatever the Lord led them to share. Ambassadors had work days up at Hartstone Bible Camp and also enjoyed various outings. Clair was also in charge of hospitality and wrote three pages about the year's hospitality ministries. One of these happened on February 3, 1980: the pleasure of providing the refreshments for Bill Baxter's ordination. She noted that many families provided dinners in their homes for the men at the Servicemen's Center.

The Men's Fellowship invited Dr. John Schierling of Friends of Israel to speak at their dinner. He showed pictures of Egypt and Israel and told of what God was doing amongst His people, the Jews.

January, 1981, began with Christina Heckmann's first outing of her life. Baby Christina, Kurt and Janet Heckmann came to the wedding of Joe Charles and Michele Hanlon. A few weeks later, the Charleses left for their ministry in Germany to the U.S. Army personnel in Augsburg.

Apparently the first annual report of the church historian was written and submitted in 1981, for this is the first appearance of a historian's account of the year, which was written by Marguerite McLaughlin. Her records show that on February 8, 1981, the merger of Servicemen for Christ into the ministry of VBC was accomplished. Along with the merger came the appointment of Fred Mitchell as Missionary-in-Residence at the center.

The 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Servicemen's Center were celebrated in a combined event held June 26-28, 1981. Harold Freeman, Executive Director of the IFCA, was the speaker on Friday evening; an open house was held at the center on Saturday, and both Sunday services were held with a covered-dish dinner at noon.

In November, Lorien Hatchell received special commendation from her many students, former students, and church friends as she was honored for her faithful 25 years of teaching Sunday school. Mrs. Hatchell's last pin had a diamond on it which was added to the long row of pin attachments on her first VBC Sunday School attendance pin. Lorien Hatchell, Bev Hiteshew, Alice Kyriazi and Betty Fox taught the four and five-year-olds for years in The Beginners' Department.

Also that year, Charles and Edie Moore were called to the pastorate of Guerneville Bible Church in Northern California; the Baxter family embarked for the field of South Africa; and the Harris family accepted the call as Assistant Pastor at Salina Bible Church in Kansas.

JoAnn Luiz graduated from Multnomah Bible College in Oregon, and former serviceman Lloyd Gardner graduated from Frontier School of the Bible in Wyoming. Rusty and Lori Foster left for Appalachian Bible College in West Virginia and so did Russ and Sharon Kopis. Joe Dapra left for Calvary Bible College in Missouri.

In contrast to so many young people leaving, veteran missionary Carol Hastings came home from India in December of 1982 after 38 years of medical missionary work. December 11 was the day that the chartered bus (Judy Carlson got the huge bus and drove it) loaded up with the church family hastened to the San Francisco International Airport to greet Carol's plane from Bombay. Carol could hardly believe her eyes as she slowly walked down the ramp to be surrounded by her church family. The church helped her settle into an apartment in the tall Marina Towers building downtown. Carol's new plan was to be of service in Vallejo.

Highlights of 1982 also included the pastor and elders taking the responsibility of leading the Junior-Senior High School group, rotating leadership. The young people enjoyed fellowship, doctrinal study and three major outings. Halfway through the year Victor Bonilla assumed the Sunday evening teaching time and the Carlsons provided social activities. The College and Career group operated with a steering committee directly responsible to Pastor Stiles. Missions education and the missionary service each month were a major focus along with the annual missions conference.

Head deacon, Dan Driesenga, who had returned from Grand Rapids School of the Bible in Michigan with Jill, Angela, Elizabeth and Christopher, reported that the south tower was sealed against weather and remodeled. Pastor Stiles and family moved to their new home on Rollingwood Drive and the parsonage was leased to David and Jeanette Theders. The men were considering a bid to repair the water damage to the organ. Plans were also underway for a new church kitchen to be remodeled by Nathan McCauley.

In the 1983 annual report, Pastor Stiles and the board wrote that the purpose of VBC is to nurture its people so that they will be equipped and motivated to minister to one another, to evangelize the people around them, to incorporate the evangelized ones into the local body, and to fulfill the Great Commission by thrusting forth some of its own members and supporting them so that like faith and practice might be established. The motivating thrust of VBC is to have a valuable ministry to perform. The strategy is to minister the Word of God in keeping with biblical principles and prayerfully utilizing procedures and programs with the people and resources so as to achieve individual and corporate maturity in Christ. With this as background, the programs and activities of the church could be evaluated, changed, reinforced or dropped as the congregation seeks the Lord's will.

Kurt Heckmann served a one-year pastoral internship with Pastor Stiles and was the director of the Bible Club ministries. Neighborhood Bible clubs have been a good ministry conducted at various periods and places throughout the history of VBC. Kurt



and Janet had graduated from Baptist Bible College in Springfield, Missouri, and returned to Vallejo, Janet's hometown.

Eunice Barry continued directing the Bible Memory Association into its 20<sup>th</sup> year. Many people were blessed and strengthened through Bible memorization. The pastoral report states that Sunday school superintendent Bob Higgins had a task that was becoming harder and harder in the changing climate of Christian education. Through discussion and evaluation of the S. S. program, changes in it might become necessary. Carol Hastings began a Women's Bible Class in September. Carol was experiencing health difficulties such as dietary problems and severe nerve pain on one side of her face. The Lord opened doors for her as she was able to have an operation in San Francisco by a well-known neuro surgeon. During that time she had opportunity to tell him all about her medical and missionary work in India. Carol recovered well from this serious operation and carried on with her purpose in life.



*Kurt, Janet and Christina  
Heckmann, 1981*

The Stiles began a young couples' club that met every month. It covered topics of contemporary interest and gave opportunity for social interaction and Christian fellowship. Fryda Ruckman served as chairwoman of the Tuesday Ladies' Prayer Time. Jeanette Theders served as the chairwoman of the Women's Missionary Society. Dave Theders headed up the extension ministry. Linda Glover took over responsibility for the nursery when Barbara Rockwood moved away. Lois Higgins continued to develop the library ministry and it was moved to the tower room. John Barry and Kathy Fox were working with the teens. Gene Andersen helped to coordinate social activities for college/career young people and young marrieds. Fred Mitchell took responsibility for Saturday visitation when Keith Steinhoff was transferred. The report does not mention who was doing the tape ministry but that it was helpful to the shut-ins. Thanks is given for the consistency of Paul Gillies' music ministry and praise is given to God for this.

The 1983 October missions conference speakers were: the Fullers with UMF, the Garronis with WEFMinistries, the Iwaniuks with Gospel Mission Union, the Murphys with WEFMinistries, and the Skallands with SWBCN.

In the December 1983 congregational meeting, the traditional form of annual reports was discussed. The result was that the pastor would present an extensive yearly report, and also a statistical report would be given by the clerk, with a financial report given by the treasurer. These would be presented in lieu of many individual reports.

Vallejo Bible Church was blessed during times when Fran and Barbara's daughters and sons-in-law would visit from the East Coast, and some of them were highly skilled in music, presenting piano, brass and string concerts in the church services. The Stiles had three daughters and a son, and after completing schooling, Jenny Stiles came

to Vallejo to live with her parents and Tim. Jenny often played her violin for special music.

Fred Mitchell gave a report of the 1984 ministry of the Vallejo Christian Servicemen's Center writing that he was grateful to the Lord for all the servicemen and service families He had brought to them. Fred was active in passing out tracts, making friends and inviting people home to the center. He writes of the sad farewells and goodbyes to many of these young people which included Dan and Tammy Rhodes Lioy and Chuck and Jenny Stiles McGinnis. Chuck was on the aircraft carrier USS *Enterprise* at Alameda and came to the center. He married Jenny Stiles and they were active in the church until they moved away. Also during these years, Navy instructor Bob Boyken married Judith Cook, choir member and former church secretary, who had a ministry of hospitality. They eventually moved to Indiana. Serviceman Gene Andersen married the church organist, Kathy Hiteshew. Gene and Kathy remained in the area and were active in the church.



*Bob Boyken and Lee Carlson cooking food in McLaughlins' garage, 1983*

The idea of home schooling began to grow during the mid 1980s. Mike and Susan Myers and children lived a couple of blocks from the parsonage on Donner Pass and had been invited to attend VBC. They began attending and Susan became active in some of the women's and children's ministries. Susan decided to home school their three children even though this form of education was not so understood and accepted. The Myers continued to educate Christine, Valerie and Mikey in their home and did a wonderful job of training their children in academics, arts and crafts, outings, music, and with Christian values. They were pioneers in this form of education during a time when there were questions and debates about whether Christian families should keep their children in public schools to be testimonies to the world, or whether their children should be taught in more insulated atmospheres at home and in Christian schools. Over the ensuing years, the concern would become not just about getting a good education but also about the major issue of safety.

While at VBC, Pastor Stiles received a doctorate degree from Luther Rice Seminary. He enjoyed writing and also wrote the weekly "Pastor's Pen" for the back of the church bulletin. At times he used this page for children and the young-at-heart. One such story lesson was titled "Church: Mouse Manners" by Wesley Calvin Mouse.

Joe Dapra came to VBC via the servicemen's ministry and in 1985 became a pastoral intern. Kurt Heckmann and Joe Dapra worked together on The Youth Hour. Kids for Christ was a new work bringing together around twenty children and ten adults each week in a happy, Bible-oriented program. It was held at 4:30 on Sundays and Teens for Christ was also held at 4:30 before choir practice.



*Joe Dapra and crew at Servicemen's Center*

Apparently VBC decided to continue submitting individual annual reports instead of the suggested format of the one large pastoral report. The church clerk also submitted a yearly statistical report of membership and changes in membership. The church treasurer submitted the full financial report. The pastoral report mentions that the IFCA National Convention was not attended due to the church's financial situation. Also, the part-time position of Angie Hanlon as church secretary/artwork provider was ended after Christmas in 1985 due to finances. The Oran Bells had been dropped in 1983 and the Seamen's International mission had been taken off of regular missions support. Midwest Messianic Center was taken off at this time. Thankfully, individuals in the congregation have been able to continue supporting various missionaries and Jewish missions throughout the years. Tom and Marguerite McLaughlin decided to move to New Orleans, Louisiana, to spend the remainder of their retirement years in Marguerite's home state. Tom had been the church treasurer for years and his powerful solos are still remembered. Leroy Carlson took up the ministry of church treasurer.

During the 1980s, the church building was painted and given a fresh look as well as the interior rooms. The old choir roof was removed for a new roof with an extended gutter installation, and many more important projects were completed. New and used furniture came in at times, and at other times furniture went out.... A cartoon about church furniture could be portrayed and might lighten up the situation: the scene would show men carrying in furniture through the front door of the church and saying, "What a great deal we got on this!" while at the same time men are hauling furniture out the back door, whispering, "We'll deal with this later!"

In the sprucing up of the building, framed prints also quietly disappeared. Some of the prints could have been used as visuals in teaching, and some were valued as prints from the early VBC church to be hung in the library or offices, or other appropriate places.

On the subject of the building and furnishings, perhaps a word about the chapel room at the front foyer may be mentioned. When the Presbyterian congregation constructed the building, this room with the stained-glass image of Christ at the far end was designed to be a chapel. It was created for a place of prayer and meditation, and to be used for other church purposes. When VBC obtained the building, during a congregational meeting it was decided to name the room "Carol Hastings Chapel." This was not done to exalt Carol but to be a remembrance of VBC's first missionary sent out from Vallejo during the hard times of war and rationing. It was a reminder of the church's desire to keep Christ's commission.

The end of the 1980s introduced to the ministry of the Sunday school the helpfulness of teacher-training classes, and a central supply for craft materials was organized by Lois Higgins. A teacher resource file was made available and proved to be a valuable resource for everyone. Children's Wonderland was the destination for fun Sunday school picnics. Evangelism was the thrust with continued invitations sent out to homes in Vallejo.

On Wednesday evening, December 17, 1986, a terrible vehicular crash occurred at the corner of Tennessee and Sacramento Streets. Norman and Jeanine Reece and their five children along with a young girl from their neighborhood were in their van when the vehicle of a convicted felon being chased by the police hit them from out of nowhere. Everyone in the vehicle suffered injuries and shock. The Reeces' middle daughter, Carolynn, sustained traumatic brain injury and on December 29 was pronounced brain dead and taken off life support. Many churches in the community intensely prayed for the Reece family during this traumatic time. Church on the Hill provided their large auditorium for a memorial service on January 3, 1987, and brought together many families, friends, churches and the community. In the midst of sorrow and pain, songs of comfort were sung, testimonies shared, and the Lord Jesus Christ was lifted up and honored as the only Savior and Hope in a broken world.

1987 was a difficult year for several people, and yet God's hand brought blessing and new life. Linda Glover happily wrote that the nursery in 1987 had four new babies, and Everett Andersen, Samantha Barry and Erik Heckmann were past their first birthdays and toddling around. In the midst of the crying babies and busy toddlers, small Matthew Hiteshew was crawling about in the midst of it all....

The reports mention various items, such as the church participating in all of the IFCA regional meetings, and a computer was installed in the pastor's office—the first computer. Joe and Miriam Dapra were anticipating short term service in Puerto Rico. Larry Moyer conducted a four-day evangelistic program in March of 1987. Carol Hastings sadly bade farewell to VBC and moved to San Diego to be closer to a relative. Others moved away also, which has been the pattern of the years.

Still, there were young men and families coming into port, and Fred wrote that Robert Peterson was on the USS *Mauna Kea*, AE-22, and invited Byron French to the



Servicemen's Center. Some men set sail for Guam. Cal Worthington and Steven Luu, a young Vietnamese man, were on the USS *Pyro*, AE-24, and they invited seven men to the center. Cal then transferred to a Schools Command as an instructor. Steven left for medical school. Lt. Commander Charles Hettema and family attended VBC during a submarine overhaul and became part of the church family.

The following year in 1988, Servicemen for Christ was in decline and its ministry terminated. Fred Mitchell made preparation to serve as a full-time missionary in England with WEF Ministries. He had grown up in an Air Force family and lived in



*Adult Christmas party, 1988*

England when he was young. The annual report states that the disposition of the center was to be determined. George Luiz recorded that the center was being painted and two pine trees were cut down and hauled away by Mike Myers. Thanks is given to Jack Cox for putting in exterior lights in the back areas of the church.

THE BERLIN WALL suddenly came down in 1989. Pieces of the famous barrier built in 1961 soon became collectors' items. Not that long ago Germany was in ruins yet would soon become a reunified

country and the most stable in the European community. This would bring about world-wide changes, and changes in military strategies as well as in mission outreaches. News stories reported amazing events and openness between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Eastern European countries were opening doors to the gospel. Bibles and literature in various languages were soon shipping out to these newly open countries.

What also came down in 1989 were the Bay Area freeways and buildings during the Loma Prieta earthquake. Mixed in with these upsetting news stories, that year also brought blessings with 30 teens attending Teens for Christ. The Sunday school morning breakfast time was well attended and brought people to Sunday school on time. Dan Driesenga began his pastoral internship and taught the Wednesday night Bible study. There were two special piano concerts that year, one given by Connie Canfield and the other by G. Richard Deal. Paul Gillies, the pianists, organists and choir presented the Easter and Christmas cantatas. Susan Myers established a new Bible memory program that made it possible for adults and children to choose however many verses they wanted to memorize each week during a twelve-week quarter. Children who participated and memorized four units got half-off at Hartstone Bible Camp.



*Dr. Jay & Ethel Reed in the '80s. His leadership in the Hartstone Bible Camp is still appreciated.*





## The 1990s

Dan and Jill Driesenga took their children and the church children, the youth, and anyone willing to go, on a hiking trip to Point Reyes in January to start the year off right. Some of them experienced the Alamere waterfall there by the coast for the first time. One of the best hikers was elementary schooler Brandon Weyandt. A parent-teen retreat was held and monthly get-togethers. On May 27, Dan was commissioned as a missionary under Bible Church Crusade. Kurt Heckmann, Terry Skalland and Dan Harrington continued on as leaders of youth and activities.

Edwin Verner, a brilliant structural engineer, was hired by the church to create an earthquake building improvement plan for the deacons. The properties at 918 Donner Pass and 1101 Marin Street were rented that year. 1101 got a new hot water heater and stove, and all of the furniture at the center was disposed of.

There were six deaconesses in 1990 who divided the congregation into six groups amongst themselves in order to stay more informed of individuals' needs and prayer requests. As throughout the years, the deaconesses prepared communion, provided meals and sent flowers and cards to the sick, and helped behind the scenes in the work of the church. They also served the VBC wedding reception of Robert and Jinky Peterson, although the wedding was in the Philippines. Everyone was excited to welcome Jinky who had left her family and everything familiar to begin a new life in America.



*Rev. Dan and Shirley Graves, 1992*

The new decade brought a major change to the church when Pastor Fran and Barbara Stiles resigned from their ministry at VBC in August, 1990. There had been much prayer in this decision and looking to God for direction. Acknowledgement was given by the church board and congregation for their ten years of ministry and appreciation for Pastor Stiles' extensive biblical knowledge. They remained in Vallejo for a few years until relocating to Florida.

Rev. Dan Graves from Santa Rosa Bible Church, who was the principal at their Christian school at that time, was contacted about coming to preach on Sundays in Vallejo. He and Shirley graciously accepted this ministry, which brought continuity

to the pulpit ministry and encouragement to the church. The journey to and from Santa Rosa on Sundays made for a very long day for them. People in the church graciously invited Dan and Shirley home for lunch and a place to rest in the afternoons. Vallejo Bible Church will always be grateful for their sacrifice, love and concern during a difficult time.

The difficult time turned into a time of deep sorrow in 1991 when on April 24, Secretary's Day, Linda Gillies suddenly left this life for her Home in glory due to a fatal heart attack in the morning. The prayer alert system relayed this shocking news and the need to earnestly pray for Paul and family throughout the day and days ahead. Her memorial service in the church brought hundreds of family, friends, school administration, staff and students from Napa who knew her as their school secretary, and church family who filled the auditorium and balcony. The Women's Missionary Society wrote in their report that year, "Linda had served in the WMS for many years and it had a special place in her missionary heart. We will miss her, and will continue on working for the Lord as she would have us to." Linda would want the church ministry to go on strong.

After the closure of the servicemen's ministry, Fred Mitchell went back to Pennsylvania to prepare for missionary work and began the long road of deputation to raise support. Fred met a southern belle in Maryland, and after seeking the Lord's will for their lives, Fred and Mary decided to go to England together. Witnesses say their wedding in Maryland was as beautiful as a coronation. Mary had spent years as a missionary/teacher, and with Fred's experience in missions and church work, they were well suited for service in England.

Men were sought to provide pulpit supply during 1991. This included Victor McAllister, Kurt Heckmann, Dr. Leonard Hillstrom, Dan Driesenga, Rev. Ward Cushman, Jeff Graves, Fred Mitchell, Bill Paul, Larry Leach, Joe Dapra, Rev. Bill Baxter, Richard Neville, Dr. Robert Jeffcott, and Rev. Doc Beale.

The church board prayed and sought God's guidance in seeking the man of God that He would have to pastor VBC. They were first considering Pastor Freeman, but God's timing was not right. The search continued as many resumes were reviewed. Larry Harris in Ponca City was contacted and this looked encouraging. Larry and his family came to Vallejo to seek the Lord's will in this possibility; however, the 1991 elders' report says, "In our eyes God allowed us to see a man that could provide a blessed ministry. In God's eyes, Larry's ministry in Ponca City was not finished." Later in time, due to financial circumstances at Calvary Bible College and changes in family situations, consideration was given again to Pastor Freeman. VBC extended a second call to him, and the long year of many prayers and seeking were answered when Pastor Freeman phoned on January 1, 1992, to accept the call.

Betty Fox wrote in her annual report for the deaconesses that year:

As we look back on 1991, can we do anything but fall on our knees and say 'Thank you, Lord, for what you have done for your work here at VBC...thank you for using us in whatever small ways you have...thank you for the strength you have given us, for the trials that have been gone through in your strength...for the love that has surrounded us...thank you that we are all different but all loved by you...thank you that we all have a place of service in your work...thank you for Pastor Dan Graves and Shirley. Thank you for the faithful men who you have used to keep your work going....'

In January, 1992, plans were set in motion to move the Freemans back to Vallejo as soon as possible. The deaconesses coordinated a food shower and the deacons coordinated a considerable amount of work to prepare the parsonage. During the first part of the year, Dan and Shirley Graves were called to the pastorate at Grace Church of Lockeford. A special appreciation banquet was held in their honor and a resolution of appreciation given for the 22 months of life-giving ministry at VBC. In the springtime, the Freemans sold their home in Raymore, Missouri, and arrived in Vallejo on May 23. An installation service was arranged and their first Sunday back in the ministry here was on May 24. They temporarily stayed with the McCauleys and then moved into the parsonage while looking for a home to purchase. Pastor Freeman's messages in the following Sundays were in Philippians, and in Romans and Hebrews during the evenings. Pastor Freeman said he loved to hear the soft pages of Bibles turning as people followed along in his messages.



*Ladies' Retreat at Mission Springs, 1992*

The Tuesday Ladies' Prayer meetings had taken a hiatus; however, Mrs. Freeman picked this ministry back up in July by inviting the women to the parsonage for lunch, fellowship and prayer. Testimonies were shared by the ladies summarizing their lives and telling how they came to know the Lord. Over the weeks, different individuals led the devotional time and Bible studies, and eventually the meetings were held in various homes.

Another highlight of '92 was the making of a photographic church family directory through the Olan Mills Company. Also, the church family witnessed the baptisms of Jinky Peterson, Ed Barry's brother Earl, and young Joanna and Elisha Rimestad in October, and in November William Brandon Weyandt, and Christina Wright were baptized.

A memorial fund was created to purchase a piano in memory of Linda Gillies. This fine instrument was but a small token in the effort to represent the love of God that Linda put into the music ministry of VBC. The purchase and delivery were

completed because of the efforts of Nathan and Mary McCauley, Kathy Andersen and Esther Freeman, the piano committee. A piano cover and piano light were also purchased. The choir and special music were a special source of blessing and encouragement throughout this year of transition.

Barbara Rockwood suggested that the nursery should be located downstairs in the room next to the kitchen. The work to transform this area into a nursery was accomplished in a short period of time. Money for the new nursery came in part from a memorial fund in memory of the Hettema's precious infant girl, Christine, who was called to her Heavenly Father, and a plaque in remembrance and appreciation was installed in the nursery. The junior/senior high school Sunday school class moved to the former upstairs nursery area.

Bob Higgins writes in his report about the church's sound system and tape ministry and lists the many details involved with purchasing, installing and maintaining a good system. He also thanks Victor McAllister, Jack Cox, Gene Andersen and Paul Gillies for their help in the sound system.

Leroy Carlson, Bill Weyandt and Mike Hiteshew, board members of Hartsone Bible Camp, submitted a good report about the work involved that year in keeping up the grounds and buildings, as well as reporting on the new camp director, Allen and Laura Gruber. Several of the church youth helped on work crews to maintain the property, and several attended the summer youth camps. The Spring Ladies' Retreat was held there with Shirley Graves as their speaker. Hikes to the rest rooms during the nights were challenging for some, but nevertheless, it was an enjoyable camp atmosphere.

The hospitality ladies reported many events and an update on the Mitchell family who arrived in Vallejo in December for a two-week stay and brought the church up-to-date on the progress of their work with Biblical Ministries Worldwide. Their son, Frederic Mitchell III, was born on March 13, 1992. Lodging and a car were provided for the Mitchells, and some families entertained them in their homes.

Meanwhile, in 1992, Cornerstone Bible Institute in Hot Springs, South Dakota, was established and opened its doors to students in 1993. Rev. Joe and Michele Charles had returned from Germany to teach at Frontier School of the Bible in Wyoming (Brad Ketterling was a student there at that time). After a period of time, Joe and Michele, and others who shared the same vision, decided to establish a three-year Bible institute farther north in South Dakota near Mt. Rushmore. CBI grew and students have come from all over the U.S. as well as from overseas. Many of them are now pastors, missionaries, church workers, medical workers, and others are serving the Lord in various occupations. Part of the library from Sacramento Bible Institute was sent to Cornerstone and helped establish their school library.

Carol Hastings' biography, *To India with Love*, was printed in 1993 and she visited Vallejo and had a book signing at the Western Christian Bookstore next door to the

church. Carol reported that she had good contacts with people from India in San Diego, and was visiting a Jewish woman who was open to the Gospel. She asked Jewish missionary Mark Robinson to meet with this woman, and the three of them studied the Scriptures about the Messiah. In heaven we will learn the rest of the story.

Leo and Tessie Santos became church members that year, and Leroy and Judy Carlson celebrated their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Pastor Freeman was once again giving devotional messages on KEAR Family Radio. Lynn Catchings, daughter of Dorothy Davis who was a member of the earliest group of VBC, has worked at KEAR for many years and has often been the contact for pastors to speak on this Bay Area radio station. Lynn would be the contact when Angelo and Nanette Santos called the station asking where they could find a good church in Vallejo. Lynn told them about Vallejo Bible Church. That year the Freemans attended the IFCA National Convention in Itasca, Illinois. VBC hosted the February Regional of Northern California.

The seismic repair work done in 1993 was a huge project. The deacons were George Luiz, John Barry, and Gene Andersen. Nathan McCauley and Bill Weyandt planned the seismic repair details, gathered materials, equipment, and scheduled work days. After much tearing out and hauling away, the repair to strengthen the roof began. The description is quite technical—for reference see the Deacon-Trustee Annual Report of 1993. Mr. Charles Brock of KOFAB Corp. kindly donated much of the materials. Of note: 50 sheets of T & G plywood (EXT) were nailed down mostly by our young people who were supervised by Bill. The head man, Nathan (who was also the Building Inspector on the job), was impressed by the way everything was done in accordance with plans, and for the way the men and young people showed up to work. Then the new roof was installed by Nathan and Victor McAllister. This was the first phase of many plans in seismic work to be done. This phase cost between \$6,000 and \$7,000.

Mike Hiteshew worked on a new drinking fountain installation upstairs at the north end. He and his sons also installed the new downspout at the northeast end of the church. Reno's Rug Company installed a new rug in the main entrance. George Luiz and Don Grable painted the window frames of the Pastor's study and installed the metal bars manufactured by Bill Weyandt over the windows.

Kurt Heckmann's report gave thanks for Vallejo Bible Church YOUTH! Mike Hiteshew and Kurt shared responsibilities for the youth work. Devotions were on the life of Joseph and of other topics. Guy Rimestad also taught a special series designed for young people and the issues they face. It was an active group that enjoyed ice skating, a snow trip, Hartstone work camps, softball, a Lake Berryessa trip, roller skating, horse camp, white water rafting, and VBC hosted a gym day at Hogan High School. Thanks were given to the Hiteshews, Bonnie Usher, Dave Theders, and the Glovers for their participation.

The music ministry continued unabated and Paul Gillies gave thanks for all the music done by choir, special music, and musicians. The organ and piano ministries were



capably handled (fingered) by Kathy Andersen, Esther Freeman, Mary McCauley and Jennifer Annoni Pinto. Jennifer was greatly used of the Lord as a choir accompanist. Paul signs off with, "...Most churches significantly larger than VBC do not have a regular choir. How blessed we are to have members who are willing to commit to hours of rehearsal time to produce the beautiful expressions of God's greatness and love."

1994 announced impending closure of Mare Island Naval Shipyard which resulted in gradual employee reductions until final closure in 1996. VBC realized that this would affect the church immediately with transfers and relocations. The congregation prayed that their church would continue to be a strong witness in the community no matter what happened. This closure would affect the city of Vallejo not only in its identity as an important strategic defense base but also economically.

Mrs. Jinky Peterson became a member of VBC, and three were baptized: Jacob and Joshua Weyandt, and Roselline Green. Children's church was held in the evening services from January into the summer by Gene and Kathy Andersen. BAR-W Club (Bible, Activities, Reading, Worship) meetings were on Wednesday evenings for ages 3 through 12 from February to May. Each age group had the name of a horse. Mrs. Freeman writes that John Barry created the wooden horse head stands using Angie's design of the horse, and she thanks Linda Glover for the various corral identifications. Adult teachers and workers were "wranglers." This pilot program was well attended. The church would need to ascertain if it would be feasible to continue if enough workers were available.

Two weddings occurred in 1994: Paul Gillies and Donna Parker married on March 25 with a church reception on April 16, and Rebecca Winniford and John Oliveira were married on June 18 with a church reception.

A Spring Bible Conference was held April 24-27 with Dr. and Mrs. Dick Mercado coming to VBC. All who attended the Sunday and weekday meetings were blessed by the music and messages on "Holding Forth the Word of Life." The church was blessed to have many visiting speakers throughout the year, such as Dr. Daniel Anderson, President of Appalachian Bible College with the Jubilate Appalachian English Bell Choir.

Three young people are noted as entering college in 1994: Ishmael Santos, Jason Usher, and John Winniford. Services of dedication of children were given for Matthew Cox on May 29, for Jordan Michelle Dillard on August 28, and Jordan Neil Keltner on November 27. Grandparents were involved in each of these special services.

Kern Valley Bible Church at Lake Isabella, California, called Guy Rimstad to pastor them. This was another example of a young adult at VBC who went to Bible school so that he could learn the Scriptures to teach to others who would teach the following generation.

The Elders Reports are usually signed "Board of Elders" without individual names given. Throughout the years, these individual men have worked with the pastor

in spiritual ministry, in prayer and encouragement, and decision making. They wrote in '94: "The past year has been highlighted with daily maintenance in the ministry of VBC. Pastor and Mrs. Freeman have worked tirelessly in the daily needs of the saints. The efforts of all involved in this year's ministry are recognized with deep appreciation."

Ed Barry, chairman of the deacons, listed the continuing work on the church building. More security lights were put in and a chain link fence was installed around the back and side of the church by the pastor's study. All the old water lines were replaced with copper tubing. He gave an update on the retrofit project of the south wing roof and wrapped it up with, "So many worked on the roof it is impossible to name them all. But to each and every one who had a part may we extend a sincere thank you on behalf of the church."

Sunday school had changes with the regrouping of elementary and junior high classes. Bob Higgins writes that although there were some changes and changes in teachers, one tradition in the Sunday school still happened: Hershey chocolate bars were given at Christmas time! Bob began giving out these bars way back at the beginning and he loved doing it.



*WMS Christmas Dinner, 1995*

*Lucille Furlong, Dorothy Davis, Fryda Ruckman, Mavis Skalland.*

*Background: Charlene Winnifred, Lois Higgins.*

The May Tea given by the Women's Missionary Society had 50 in attendance, and they enjoyed hearing Beverly Feters' daughter, Deborah Feters, speak about her recent trip to Russia. They also watched a film on some of the Russian customs, and heard a report about the many ministries starting up in this open country. The WMS also hosted the Westbrae (Berkeley) ladies at their fall banquet with Charlotte Trease as the speaker. She shared her testimony and spoke of the trials, tribulations and blessings during her recent serious illness.

Pastor Freeman writes in the 1995 annual report that the Spring Bible Conference presented by Dr. Al Platt, accompanied by

his wife, Gladys, and daughter, Brenda, brought the congregation much blessing during those four days of being in the Word. The theme was "Christian Maturity: A Focus on Faith Functioning." He also gives a report on the annual October missionary conference and says that this is always an important part of the church calendar. The participants

were: Philip Fleming, New Tribes Mission in Papua, New Guinea; Jim, Joan Hansen and family, Biblical Ministries Worldwide, Deaf and Deaf/Blind Ministry; and Dr. and Mrs. Richard Mercado, Mexican Gospel Mission.

His last paragraph tells of a possible church candidate. The church was conducting an extensive search for someone to take the pastorate of VBC, and Bill and Joy Baxter, members of VBC and missionaries with Biblical Ministries Worldwide in South Africa, agreed to candidate for the position. The Baxters would visit for a month in February, 1996.

This was another year of intensive work on the church building inside and outside, and continuing retrofit work. Along with the care of the building, other areas of sprucing up came about with preparations for Carol Hastings' 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of her leaving for India. Eunice Barry headed up getting the chapel fixed up for displays. She sewed new dark green curtains for the windows and the walls were painted by the deacons. Judy Carlson and Clair Weyandt planned and prepared the food. Many volunteers joined in decorating the fellowship hall, and it was a wonderful celebration.

Ed Barry reported that a new problem had emerged—rocks were thrown at windows, breaking several in the upstairs north room, and breaking stained glass in the balcony. The stained glass windows were repaired by Gothic Glass of Napa.

The Women's Missionary Society surprised Mary Grable with a bread machine to take back to Honduras (the Grables were in Vallejo for part of that year). The ladies also surprised Mary Paul (Mary Whited Paul was a youth in VBC years ago) with a shower in December. Bill and Mary Paul were with Global Outreach Mission in Callahan, California.



*Youth outing with Kurt Heckmann,  
Bonnie Usher, Betty Fox*



*Rev. Bill and Joy Baxter, 1996*

Vallejo Bible Church YOUTH! were continuing to traverse California in many outings from inner tubing Cache Creek, hiking the Sierras, cleaning up Hartstone Bible Camp,

shopping at the Great Mall, whale watching in Monterey, and enjoying Sunday evening youth services and Thursday evening youth prayer meetings. Kurt Heckmann, Bonnie Usher, Paul Gillies, Betty Fox, Victor McAllister, and Bill and Clair Weyandt did a tremendous amount of work in this ministry.

The issue of a church newsletter, *The VBC Visitor*, came out in May of 1995 with Esther Freeman as editor. It was created as a bi-monthly in-house publication, undertaken with the help of several people. In creating this newsletter, it was discovered that years ago there had been a newsletter called *Vallejo Visitor*. The new features would include "From the Pastor's Desk;" an editorial; listings of birthdays and anniversaries; a youth section. This newsletter was sent to congregants, missionaries, and others interested in the church.

Sunday school attendance was smaller and there was not a nursery class in 1995. At the start of the year there was a junior class, but all were promoted to the junior high/high school class. There were no students to promote from the middler to the junior class. When an alternate teacher was needed to help with Kurt Heckmann's work schedule, Paul Gillies graciously stepped in to fill the need.

It is a blessing to read in the annual reports that the church continued to support missionaries from many years ago, including the enduring ministry of Brother Roy and Ruth Bancroft, and Carol Hastings from the early days of the '40s, the Grables and Hennings from the '50s and 60s, Calvary Bible College (Midwest Bible Institute), and others on down to the '90s. Victor McAllister was treasurer at this time.

February, 1996, was an eventful month for the church family. Missionaries Bill and Joy Baxter took leave to come to candidate for the pastorate. Bill preached mornings and evenings on Sundays and brought the devotionals on Wednesday evening prayer meetings. Joy spoke to the Ladies' Missionary Society on February 9. One of the Wednesdays was given to questions from the congregation and answers from Bill and Joy. Bill also taught two Sunday school classes, the youth and adult groups. Joy brought messages to the Tuesday ladies' prayer meeting. They enjoyed spending an activity outing with the youth. The Baxters returned to South Africa at the end of February. Later, on March 3, a special congregational meeting was called after the morning service. A unanimous vote was cast to call Bill Baxter to be the new pastor. A phone call was made advising Bill of this decision, and Bill accepted the call. The Baxters set November 1 after the Missionary Conference to assume responsibilities as pastor and sever their missionary status with Biblical Ministries Worldwide.

The Freemans attended the IFCA Convention that year in June at Calvin College Campus in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The church also provided for Bill and Joy Baxter to attend the convention. Pastor Freeman writes that the fellowship with many friends and the ministry of the Word was most refreshing and helpful. The theme was "Sent Forth with Assurance."



Thomas B. McLaughlin went Home to glory in June, and his memorial service was held at Berean Bible Church in New Orleans, Louisiana, on June 25, 1996. Pastor and Mrs. Freeman were able to attend and be with Marguerite. Tom, a retired math teacher from Solano Junior High School, used to sing a song called "Some Golden Daybreak." Thanks to Barbara Partelow's marvelous music memory, here is a verse and chorus. Tom's voice can almost be heard singing:

Some glorious morning sorrows will cease;  
Some glorious morning all will be peace.  
Heartaches all ended, school days all done;  
Heaven will open, Jesus will come.

Some golden daybreak Jesus will come;  
Some golden daybreak battles all won;  
He'll shout the victory!—break through the blue;  
Some golden daybreak, for me, for you.



*Tom and Marguerite, 1991*

A church baby shower was given for Joy Kelley on July 13. It was well attended and was a blessed time of fellowship and rejoicing over a new baby girl named Melissa. Praise the Lord!

The first Filipino Sunday that is noted in an annual report is written in Pastor Freeman's report as taking place on the morning service of September 22, 1996. Many wore Filipino clothes, and a Filipino choir brought a special number in song. A noon dinner followed the morning service, which was greatly enjoyed by all. Hospitality chairman, Clair Weyandt, also contributes in her yearly report that Filipino Sunday was one of the church highlights of the year. Leonisa Sitjar headed up the huge job of decorating and planning wonderful foods with help from others. They also had a church-wide potluck with everyone participating. She writes, "It truly was a blessed time. Seems the Lord showered lots of blessings on us all."

A week later, on September 29, Rev. Ralph Henning's memorial service was held with a supper fellowship. He had been a faithful servant of God as a missionary in India. It was there that he met and married Lina in the 1930s. In later years, they served in Vallejo Bible Church with Mr. Henning as the teacher of the adult Sunday school class, and Mrs. Henning taught Bible classes, usually in their home. They lived on Daniels Avenue and enjoyed long walks every morning and evening in that neighborhood, often talking to people about the Lord just as they did in India. Dear Lina Henning was called to her home in glory a few years before. The Hennings are buried in Indiana, Ralph's home state. Emma Lou Henning had taken care of her mother and father and was now alone in Vallejo, praying for the decisions she would need to make for her future.



On November 1, 1996, Rev. Bill Baxter became pastor of Vallejo Bible Church. An installation service was held on November 3 at 2:00 p.m. Participating were Dr. Jay Reed; Brother Dan Driesenga, Pastor Vern Nakasone (President of the Northern California Regional of IFCA), and Pastor Harold Freeman. Leonila McAllister created beautiful corsages for the Baxters and Freemans to wear. A well-attended fellowship dinner was held after the morning service. The church's prayers were answered with this event.

The Freemans were living in their home on Sereno Drive at this time, and the Baxters moved into the parsonage at 918 Donner Pass, which had been a rental. Moving from South Africa was quite an involved task, and Pastor Bill gave thanks for the men who unloaded their container and for all those who worked on the parsonage and gave items to outfit their new home.

On November 15, Pastor Baxter and Pastor Freeman ministered in the funeral of Mrs. Ozellah Buckingham, a longtime member of the church. She and her husband were faithful in the church and in Mel's tape ministry. They prayed regularly for the church family.



*Submarine leaving during shipyard closure*

During all of these events during 1995 and 1996, several church people lost their positions of work on Mare Island Naval Shipyard either by not finding or not taking a transfer to another government position during closure. Several people did accept transfers into other positions on Southern California bases and relocated. Others were able to retire. These were years of transition and major decision making, yet the Lord would continue to go before His sheep and protect each one of them.

With the new year of 1997, the Women's Missionary Society decided to change their name to "Link-UP." Learning of Individual Needs and **Keeping Up Prayer** for them. Eunice Barry wrote that attendance was on the rise. The women listened to many speakers and also enjoyed watching videos about various ministries. One of their ongoing projects was to keep the Missionary Gift Shoppe (changed from missionary closet) well stocked with clothing and household goods, and new sheets and towels. Mavis Skalland was in charge of this department and was always able to learn about new sheets going

on sale because she worked at Kmart. Even as a retired person she was good at stocking supplies for missionaries.

Mavis was one of those individuals who had a natural gift of humor and funny one-liners. She was from the prairies of South Dakota and had sad memories of the catastrophic Dust Bowl of the 1930s. Mavis used to tell the story of how she met her husband, Harley, after WWII. She was young and had gotten a job in a meat processing factory. She was working either in the ham or baloney section when one day she clobbered her elbow on equipment and passed out. Harley was working there too, a tall Marine who had fought in the fiercest battles of the South Pacific. When Mavis opened her eyes, Harley was tending to her and their eyes met. That was how their relationship started, right there in the processed meats. She also told of how years ago Paul Gillies asked her if she would like to sing in the choir. She replied, "Well, Paul, I didn't know you had a need for a bull moose call in the choir." She sang from her heart. Her two sons, Tim and Terry, inherited her humor, and for his mother's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday party at church, Tim created a PowerPoint presentation about her life. With digitally enhanced photos, Tim showed us the earliest cave drawings of a primitive sketch of what looked like Mavis back then; Mavis crossing the Delaware River sitting next to George Washington; Mavis and her sister in the top hatch of a Sherman tank out on a shopping spree, and other candid shots of his mom throughout her long life. Quite a funny surprise for Mavis.

Meanwhile, all along behind the scenes, Lois Higgins was faithfully serving as the church librarian, and her reports each year include a sentence or two saying, "I'm not a librarian but I try to do a good job. I'm praying that a real librarian will come and do this." In 1997, she wrote that the library was doing well despite the fact that it was closed for several weeks in the winter because of a leak in the roof. This need was taken care of and the books were back on the shelves with many new books on display too. There is something for everyone in our church library.

A major high point of the year was when Don and Mary Grable returned to Vallejo Bible Church after 38 years of missionary service in Honduras. They went out from the VBC family with support and prayers, and it was their heart's desire to return in their retirement to this fellowship and continue serving the Lord in Vallejo. God provided a home on American Canyon Road and they looked forward to God's direction for their future. On a wall in their home hangs a beautiful painting by Ellen Luiz depicting the village of Tocomacho on the north coast of Honduras. The trail in the foreground leads to their house. Although the children are grown now, it is easy to imagine Philip, Lois, Andrew, and Nancy running about as children in the tall grass between the palm trees and villagers walking to the church building.

Pastor Bill's report at the end of '97 was thorough and detailed in all of the blessings and sorrows of the year. He mentions that the Freemans sold their home on July 3 and departed Vallejo for the Kansas City area on September 11, 1997. He was grateful to them for their gracious assistance, participation, love and prayer in this work. Pastor

Bill wrote of his belief that prayer, both individually and corporately, is a vital factor in the life of the church. Each area of ministry in 1997 was reported on, including a new outreach which took place on Monday evenings in the Weyandts' home. Bill and Clair invited their neighbors over for open discussions with Bill and Joy on topics and questions about the Bible that anyone might have. It was a small informal activity that is effective in evangelism and discipleship.

A long list brings back memories of all the special speakers, youth evenings, missionaries, cantatas, the Filipino choir, dedication of children, a memorial service for Thelma Ricks, aged 99—the oldest member of VBC. There were regionals, Hartstone events, ladies' retreats, farewells, hospital visits, an inspector's signoff on the seismic retrofit project, and personal sadness that Bill's mother died that year. Their daughter, Julie, visited at Christmas which was special.

The elders reported that the "Souper Bowl" project on Super Bowl Sunday brought in a good amount to give toward the Christian Help Center. They wrote about the tribute and farewell that was given for the Freemans for their part in the life of the church and prayers for their future. Many testimonies were shared during the farewell about how Pastor and Mrs. Freeman had touched lives.

In the deacons' report, Ed Barry wrote that a platform was built so that Pastor Baxter could be closer to the congregation when preaching. Many other jobs were done and thanks given to deacons Jack Brisbon, Robert Peterson, Leo Santos, and others who worked hard in keeping up the church building.

Joy Baxter gave a Junior Church report about the development of this program in the church. The workers consisted of two separate groups of four people each who rotated on a monthly basis. This would be an important ministry in the lives of the children. And on the subject of children, there were two families that year who had the joy of a baby coming into their lives: Kristina Dacquel was born to Robert and Rhodora, and Serena Santos was born to Angelo and Nanette.

Kurt Heckmann filled every inch of paper with small print and narrow margins on his report in detailing the blessings of Vallejo Bible Church YOUTH! and their activities. This was the year that they went to Broken Arrow Bible Camp in Vander Wagon, New Mexico. It was an adventure in travel with a purpose for the youth to help with work projects at Broken Arrow, and they also experienced attending a small missionary church with services in Navaho and English. Kurt writes that he "hopes Brandon, Christina, Jon, Josh, Keith and Tina received a sense of blessing in serving God and others in a very concrete way." Kurt concludes his report by saying that because of his decision to run as a candidate for Vallejo City Council, it had become increasingly difficult to provide a consistent ministry to the young people. He suggested a shared leadership, one that could be divided between an elder, a Sunday school teacher, a parent and a college age student, or any number or combination of this as a team for the youth

group. Kurt thanks the church, the kids, Bonnie Usher and Betty Fox for their invaluable assistance.

Pastor Bill wrote an addition to the youth report covering the latter half of 1997. The church was unable to find someone to replace Kurt, so Bill and Joy agreed to oversee the youth for the remainder of the year. Kurt and Pastor alternated bi-weekly in teaching the high school Sunday school class. Pastor wrote about the summer youth activities and Sunday evening fellowship times at the Cox's' home and Barry's' home. He also wrote that the last four months of '97 were a disappointing time for the youth ministry. At the Family Camp at Hartstone, there were serious problems with some of the youth group which were not able to be resolved adequately, making it necessary to cancel any remaining special youth activities for the year. Pastor Bill asked for the prayers of the church with the hope that there will be a start-up of a new phase of youth ministry in the coming year.

The annual report about Hartstone Bible Conference Campground shows that the full-time director left. Interim director, Rev. Robert Graves, voluntarily provided oversight of activities during the camping season. Later in the fall, on October 18, the Hartstone board appointed Dan Driesenga as new director of Hartstone. Dan and Jill and family would move onto the camp property in April of 1998.

1998 saw six people step into the waters of baptism. They gave their testimonies of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, trusting Him alone for salvation. Pastor Bill baptized Allen and Kathy Bray, Bill Deabenderfer, Christina Heckmann, Jacob Andersen, and Erik Heckmann.



*Dave and Jeanette Theders*

In April of 1998, Jeanette Theders received a kidney transplant after a very long time of sickness and waiting on a transplant list. The Theders family was delivered from the difficulties of this life-threatening trial in their lives when the kidney match went well with a good recovery. The church rejoiced with Jeanette and family, and thanked the Lord for his mercy and healing.

The summer of 1998 saw major modifications to the church building in the upstairs main auditorium and the sound system. It was desired that the pulpit and choir areas be renovated by removing the existing platform and taking away the wooden railing that the choir sat behind.

The piano and organ would each have a platform on either side of the choir area and closer to the audience. Steps would be built from the main floor on both sides of the pulpit up to the choir area. Nathan McCauley designed, supervised, and constructed

this complicated project with precision and excellent carpentry skills. Others assisted him along the way. New matching carpeting was put in and attractive choir chairs. This project involved many changes in the sound system wiring with seven mike lines reinstalled. Speakers were repositioned. A mike was placed so that the sound of the piano would go through the sound system, and the output of the organ was wired to go through the sound system. Bob Higgins thanked Bob Partelow, Ed Barry, Victor McAllister and Pastor Baxter for their help in improving the intricate system. Nathan and each one involved with this major renovation were greatly appreciated for the hard work done to improve the auditorium.



*Nathan McCauley reconstructing front of auditorium*

A funeral was conducted on June 5, 1998, for dear Brother Charles Gillies, a charter member of VBC. He had been a teacher and elder in the church for many years, one of the faithful men who attended every service and prayer meeting. His wisdom and counsel on the board helped in decision making, and his friendly handshake and interest in each individual was appreciated. Mr. Gillies' children and their families have continued to walk in the paths of faithfulness to the Lord. Our church family would miss him.

Paul Gillies conducted the first Vallejo Bible Church Spring Concert in May of 1998. With accompanists Joy Baxter and Kathy Andersen, the choir sang melodious praises to God, and there were a variety of solos and special music selections presented. The evening of joyful music in praise to God was followed by a dessert and fellowship time.

In 1998, Dave Theders was at the helm as Sunday school superintendent. This was the year in which the Sunday school hour was changed to 9:30 to 10:25 a.m. On June 27, combined Sunday school classes watched a New Tribes Mission video called "EE Taow." This was presented in preparation of Jennifer Theders' return from Papua New Guinea on a short term mission.

On September 6, 1998, Shantel Peterson was dedicated to the Lord by her parents Robert and Jinky Peterson.

The deaconesses were busy in many aspects of their ministries as well as in helping with all of the fellowships along with the hospitality team. Remembrances are written of the church-wide Shamrock dinner in March, the Missions Conference in



October and the second Filipino Sunday in November. Flowers were sent to the sick: Chris Santos, Fryda Ruckman, Jeanette Theders, Mary Grable and Virginia Bradstreet. Meals were also provided for Mary Grable, Jo Whited and Jeanette Theders during various times of illness. Food baskets were provided to shut-ins during the holiday times. They sent bereavement flowers to people who had lost a loved one, to Lucille Furlong, Mike and Cion Dumlao, Paul and Donna Gillies, Ophelia Parker, and Jo Whited.

Throughout the years, the WMS/Link-UP ladies created the church directory and Link-UP handbook. It was one of those behind-the-scenes projects that took time and attention to update and produce. This small annual directory became a useful tool in the church family with keeping addresses and information updated as well as birthday and anniversary dates of everyone. The back portion was kept current with information about supported missionaries and their addresses/emails were included.

The infant/toddler number was growing—a future generation of VBC'ers—and Kathy Andersen, the nursery coordinator, wrote that it had become necessary to relocate the nursery to its previous place upstairs. This would provide the required separate spaces for infants and toddlers, and provide more privacy to nursing mothers. Renovation of the upstairs space was being handled by Bill Weyandt and helpers, and the move would be completed in 1999.

The completion of the year 1999 and the beginning of the year 2000 is a significant event in the history of the world. In the book of Acts after Jesus was taken up into heaven, the disciples were asked, "...why do ye stand gazing up into heaven?" This was not the end, but the beginning of the Church Age. The summation of Jesus' previous commands to the disciples was, "Go ye, therefore...till I come." Vallejo Bible Church is a continuing part of this age.

— Elders, Vallejo Bible Church

The above quote was written at the end of 1999 after another year of various ministries that were undertaken by willing individuals in the church. One of those ministries was outreach with Bible clubs. These clubs have been a beautiful golden thread of evangelism woven throughout the fabric and patterns of VBC. Looking back at each decade, there can be seen in the overall design some form of a club that was used by God to reach children. Carol Hastings began a club among the Carquinez Heights neighborhood when she lived in her trailer behind the roadhouse while preparing for India, and later Mrs. Graves, Mrs. Arthur and others had clubs in the formative years of VBC. Viola McCoy was a Child Evangelism Fellowship missionary in Vallejo and the Bay Area during the late '50s and '60s and had been supported by VBC. Mrs. Henning held clubs in their small apartment amongst the B and C and D Street homes off of Daniels Avenue, and Gladys Carlon out on Kit Carson Way held clubs. Linda Gillies and others conducted clubs in their homes—and each one of these had its own dynamics and personality. Eunice Barry told in her testimony that in the early '60s she and her children

attended a neighborhood club and that was how she came to Vallejo Bible Church.

In 1999, Vallejo Bible Church held five 5-Day Bible Clubs in various parts of the city to reach children with a gospel witness. Joy Baxter organized this outreach and the church purchased materials, lessons, visuals and songs from CEF to equip the workers who were willing to go into neighborhoods. Janet Heckmann, Angie Hanlon, Jeni Theders, Jean Hawk, Christina Heckmann and Joy Baxter went through training given by Les and Marlene Grindling of CEF in June in preparation for the clubs. Four homes were available to host these outreaches at the Petersons', Gillies', Wildmans' and Theders', and a club was held at church. When Jean had a bad fall in July, Christine Wildman and Charlene Winniford took the job of hosting the church club, and Renee Hamblet stepped in to teach Jean's missionary stories. This outreach also involved many others who went throughout neighborhoods placing door-hanger invitations, giving fliers, giving telephone invitations and by word of mouth. Others provided various snacks, stamped tracts and helped in many ways. Seventy children were involved and twenty visited Sunday school at least once.

Along the same lines of children's outreach, it was at this time that Les and Marlene Grindling with CEF were checking into possibilities of establishing several released-time religious education clubs in the Vallejo elementary schools. VBC also held three Christmas Bible Clubs (one session each) during the holidays to try to keep contact with some of the children who attended the clubs.

A new ministry was about to begin when Penny Harden, a graduate of Sacramento Bible Institute and Denver Baptist Bible College, and a missionary to the deaf with Biblical Ministries Worldwide, arrived in Vallejo on January 30, 1999. She was very familiar with VBC because of attending IFCA regionals and knowing SBI students from Vallejo. Penny had served in BMW's deaf ministries in Denver and Sacramento, and was then seeking to establish a new deaf ministry in the San Francisco Bay Area. Pastor Bill was instrumental in providing VBC as a place to begin for ministry to the deaf in the North Bay. People from the church helped her move into a condo on Lighthouse Drive, and from there she began the difficult task of making personal contacts with the deaf in our area. Penny taught



*Penny with deaf ladies Eleanor Orellana, Alice W Poon, and Dottie Kear. Dottie came to the very first deaf church service and is still coming.*

a series of signing classes to people in VBC, and plans were underway to have a deaf service at VBC. The church voted to take on Penny as a regularly supported missionary.

Pastor Bill recorded in his annual report that year that he participated in an ordination council for Dan Driesenga in Laytonville on April 17. Dan was successful in passing the ordination council and became Rev. Dan Driesenga. He was another former serviceman from Vallejo who followed through in serving the Lord.

That summer, Pamela Reece married Michael Dougherty, and Tammy McMillan married Ben Rockwood. New members to the church were Pattie Dunham, Art and Christine Wildman, and the Hamblet family: Jamie, Marj, Renee, Julie, and Stephen. There were five funerals in 1999 for: Lee Parker, Fryda Ruckman, Mary Ann Ramirez, Jo Whited, and Trudie Brown. Christine Wildman, Tammy McMillan, and Matthew Cox were baptized, and that year Phil and Cora James dedicated their son Steven to the Lord. The church gave a farewell fellowship to Emma Lou Henning, who retired from teaching math/calculus at a Christian high school in Walnut Creek and was relocating to Indiana to live near her brother and his family.

The hospitality report was written by Jeanette Theders who wrote that it was a privilege to serve as the hospitality chairperson for the year. It was a new job for her and she found it rewarding. There were three occasions that she was called upon to arrange housing and meals. The first was for Lynn Croxton and his wife Carol when they came to speak. The second was for hospitality in July for the young people from Appalachian Bible College, The Gospel Heralds from West Virginia. The final occasion was in October for the Missions Conference with participating missionaries: Robert Greer, Elizabeth Driesenga, and the Ray Smith family. Robert Greer was a 1977 graduate of SBI and had gone on for further schooling, eventually becoming Dr. Greer. At the time of this conference, he and his family were missionaries in Mexico. Ellie Driesenga was a Cornerstone Bible Institute graduate and desired to serve in Brazil. Ellie had spent several years growing up in VBC when the Driesengas lived in Vallejo, and the church family voted to support her work on the north coast of Brazil. After ministering for several years in Brazil, she returned to the U. S. and attended Calvary Bible College in Missouri for a year for her bachelor's degree and returned to Brazil after deputation.

The watch night service on December 31, 1999, was a time of reflection, fellowship and prayer amongst the faithful and the night owls. The year and the century were concluded by ringing the old church bell several times. A few sturdy people went up into the balcony and shared turns pulling on the heavy rope as our bell announced in the dark midnight:

## THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY HAS ARRIVED



## 2000-2009

“Y2K”—2000—the year in which some feared that all of the computers throughout the world would either crash or become so tangled up with the digits of 2000 that some people bought software to protect their systems and stockpiled food in case the grocery stores were closed.

Pastor Bill began the year with a study in Romans, “God’s Perspective on Today’s World.” The evening messages began with a study in 2 Corinthians, “Joy in Ministry.” The most special of all was gathering around the Lord’s Table to focus upon remembering Jesus.

In February, the first American Sign Language (ASL) Service for the Deaf was held at VBC—a major event for the beginnings of establishing a deaf ministry. The ASL service was held once a month in the downstairs auditorium.

Also in February, Bill and Clair Weyandt celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary at the church, a testimony to family and their church family of their journey through life with Christ. This was also a time mixed with sadness for Bill and Clair as their daughter, Bonnie, was struggling with cancer during those months. Later, on May 23, a large memorial service was held at VBC for Bonnie Weyandt Usher. Many people from schools and churches, work, the community and our church family attended to hear the gospel given and words of comfort in knowing that Bonnie’s life was not over, it was beginning in heaven.

In the month of March, VBC welcomed Jewish missionary Rev. Mark Robinson with Friends of Israel from Southern California to speak about the ministries to reach Jews with the truth of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. In April a farewell was given to Nathan and Mary McCauley who were moving to Vacaville, and a plaque was presented to Nathan in deep appreciation for his skill and time in the remodeling and care of so many areas of the church building.

Four people were baptized in 2000. On May 21, Lisa Pullon, Leanzey Peterson and Steve Shogren were baptized. On December 31, Audrey Peterson was baptized—a wonderful testimony to give at the end of the year.

Hartstone Bible Conference Campground in Potter Valley, Mendocino County, continued to be a vital asset for VBC. Dan and Jill Driesenga were camp directors, Pastor Bill was a board member, and other men in the church had served on the board and were active in this camp ministry. There were youth camps of different ages, Family Camp, and ladies’ retreats held regularly. People reminisce about the night hikes to

Satellite Rock...and gazing through Victor McAllister's large telescope at the multitude of stars....

Vacation Bible School 2000! was held July 31 to August 4, which was an answer to prayer that a VBS would restart some summer. It was successful and the Friday evening Program Night had 120 in attendance. Joy Baxter was the director, and with the help of many people who participated in various ways from the distribution of literature to the activities and Bible lessons, to the good food prepared in the kitchen, it was a wonderful and encouraging time. A special thank you went to Kathy Cox for her amazingly creative and delicious large cakes. Praise the Lord for a blessed outreach and the cakes.

The summer of 2000 was also the time when the church brought on staff Angie Hanlon to help in children's ministries. During the previous months, Angie had been asked about the possibility of working part-time on church staff to participate in setting up the new ministry of having a Release Time Good News Club with Lincoln Elementary School and to coordinate the children's ministries in the church. After much prayer, Angie felt led to leave her first grade teaching position at North Hills Christian Schools to work on staff at VBC and supplement with other part-time work.

Les Grindling of Child Evangelism Fellowship had approached Pastor Bill about Vallejo Bible Church conducting a Release Time Good News Club with Lincoln Elementary School (the oldest school in Vallejo). Les and Pastor began the process, and with the church's prayers, the contacts were made and permission was given to begin the first week of October. An amazing door opened to give the gospel to these children in the downtown area.

Mrs. Carolyn Jackson, the school principal and a Christian woman, was enthusiastic about this ministry and helped to promote the club. Her office door was open and she gave opportunities to enter the classrooms to personally invite the students to club. Principal Jackson and Les also took care of the paperwork and questions down at the school district office.

Good News Club began on October 5, 2000. Twenty-three school children were escorted from the school, down the street and into Carol Hastings Chapel where they enjoyed



*Jean, Debbie, and Les escorting the Good News Club kids, 2000*



Bible lessons, singing, puppets, learning Bible verses, games, and a good snack. These were third, fourth, and fifth graders and some of them were quite challenging; however, the children were hearing truth from the Word of God—for some of them it was the first time. The fearless workers were Jean Hawk, Bernice Cox, Mavis Skalland, Norman and Jeanine Reece, Bob DeShaies, Vern Hendrickson, Pastor Bill and Joy Baxter, and Angie Hanlon. Gathering and escorting a flock of energetic students across Sonoma Boulevard (before the street light was put in) and then to walk straight down the street in an orderly fashion was a true missions adventure.

Meanwhile, the move of the church nursery back to the upstairs was underway and the work was intensive but well worth every minute. Pattie Dunham, nursery coordinator, was thankful for Rich Rockwood and other helpers who worked in creating the new area, and Pattie was appreciative for the convenience of having their own kitchen and restroom areas. She also thanked everyone who worked in the nursery during the services. “The church nursery is the foundation of a child’s future relationship with Jesus, and it is an honor to be a part of that.”

*The VBC Visitor* newsletters were filled with photos and articles about VBC and its ministries. A quote from Joy Baxter’s annual report captures it all:

They run the gamut: joyful and tearful, toddlers and those finishing the journey of life, men and women, hearing and deaf, hilarious and pensive. It is a microcosmic snapshot of our life together with each other and with the Lord. We are a diverse congregation—vive la difference!

The infamous year of 2001 began quietly. A monthly Men’s Prayer Breakfast at Country Waffle on Highways 29 and 37 was started with good results of many men gathering for fellowship and praying for one another.

George Luiz and Ed Barry were busy taking care of the church building as well as the parsonage which needed a new dishwasher, garbage disposal and a window in the master bedroom. There had been a flood of rain water over the church nursery, resulting in the need to take up the carpet to dry it and disposing the padding. Leaks were repaired over the nursery, the ramp door, and the Marin Street door. George’s expert



*Bill Weyandt, Jack Cox, and George Luiz fellowshiping*

painting skills were put to the task of refinishing the pulpit and replacing window panels in the balcony and painting them to match existing windows. Don Gardner took over vacuuming all the church carpets for which Ed was extremely grateful.

The deaf ministry was progressing well. Dennis Smith from Sacramento was teaching a series on “Basic Bible Truths for New Christians” on Sundays. A web page was created for the ministry, and sign language classes continued on Monday nights from 7:00 to 8:30. Penny Harden writes in her annual report that two people came to the Lord in 2001, and two followed the Lord in baptism. Two Bible studies were started and the video tape ministry was continuing. The Vallejo deaf group joined Sacramento Bible Church for the Deaf again that year in Hartstone for their annual family camp.



*Dennis Smith commuted monthly to preach at the deaf church*

Jamie and Marj Hamblet were sponsors for the VBC youth ministry and were also the Sunday school youth teachers. The teens were invited into several homes for evenings of fellowship and fun, and for the opportunity to grow closer to other members of the church. They also enjoyed a camping trip to the Redwoods which gave them a chance to learn more about each other. The youth group got involved in opportunities of service by helping to clean the church, working in the kitchen, and being involved with Vacation Bible School. When Jamie was absent on Sundays due to his work schedule, Pastor Baxter taught in his stead. The teens participated in the IFCA International Youth Rally in Santa Rosa, and Renee and Julie Hamblet competed at the IFCA National Convention at Appalachian Bible College in West Virginia—they brought home First Place in the vocal duet competition! The young people attended Hartstone for their winter, summer and family camps. Regular attendees at this time were Erik Heckmann, Alon and Arra Dacquel, and Renee, Julie and Stephen Hamblet.

Art Wildman was the shepherd in charge of the Scripture Memory Program for the year. There were twenty-three participants. Art writes, “It was truly a blessing of committing His word to heart and to witness participants standing before the Lord and those gathered to quote the truth and wisdom of His word. It was wonderful to see how the Lord worked through the people involved.” The youngest participant, Melissa Kelley, received a special completion reward before the congregation for her faithful commitment to memorizing God’s Word.

Bernice Cox shared in her report about the Tuesday Ladies’ Bible Study and Prayer Group that they had completed the big undertaking of studying Revelation, and now were studying “An Overview of Bible History and Prophecy,” presented by Penny Harden. The ladies always enjoyed having lunch together and welcomed anyone to come, even if it would not be possible to stay for the entire time.

Dear Lois Higgins remained diligent serving as the church librarian. Sometimes it was hard to track down those overdue books and some books had disappeared over the years. New books and videos were donated, and the library continued to grow as a resource.

Lois wrote a poem about:

#### Our Library

Our library is a place so sweet,  
with lots of books that are so neat,  
Some for boys and some for a girl.  
Some for Dads and Moms in a whirl,  
and for students and scholars tall,  
teachers, Pastors, and layman all.  
Books with solemn words to share  
of God's great book, our Bible fair;  
of how to die and how to live,  
and how to others His word give.  
Then, some are of other lands,  
of people, places, and Mission bands.  
There are books of adventure and of fiction,  
of great biographies and of diction.  
Devotions too, and ancient history,  
prophecies, references and things of mystery.  
Won't you come and take a look?  
I know you will find a worthwhile book.

Jeanette Theders thanked everyone who participated in the Women's Missionary Society. Many speakers came throughout the year, and one of them was Joy



*Robert Dacquel*

Baxter who reported on her mission trip to Moldova to teach and minister to the women there who were hungry for the Word of God even in their poverty. Rita Goodchild came from South Africa, Nellie De la Fuente from Argentina, and Christina Heckmann from Austria. The annual May Tea and WMS Christmas dinner were held, and she gave thanks for Clair Weyandt's decorations for the May Tea, and to Lois Higgins and her daughter, Gail, for the decorations at Christmas. Dave Theders and crew provided the Christmas dinner and table service for the Christmas dinner.

Robert Dacquel labored hard in coordinating the annual Filipino Sunday and also the "Filipino Evening" at

the Labor Day Family Camp at Hartstone. Robert would translate the Tagalog messages during the morning message and the Filipino choir sang in Tagalog. The fellowship luncheon was filled with delicious Filipino dishes, and the traditional large roasted pig was the amazing centerpiece.

A milestone in the life of Vallejo Bible Church was the celebration of the church's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary over three days, September 7 – 9, 2001. Special guests included Dr. and Mrs. Harold Freeman, David Graves who is the son of Pastor Bill Graves, Carol Hastings, Charles and Edie Moore, Rev. Dan Graves, Dr. Bob Graves, Mario Cimbaro (a 1950s sailor), and a host of former members, friends and family members from the years past. Bill and Clair Weyandt and the anniversary team worked hard on the decorations and buffets, and Lois Higgins produced the pictorial displays which brought to life the heritage of the church.

The shock of the terrorist attacks on the United States on the morning of September 11, 2001, permeated throughout the nation and created an upheaval in our own church as guests of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary could not travel home due to all of the airports and transportation centers getting put on total shut down. Those who came to the anniversary from other states were left waiting in airports and hotels. Ed and Eunice Barry drove Carol Hastings back down to San Diego so that she could get home for her medications, and then drove all the way back up. On Sunday morning at the pulpit, Pastor Bill and others stood and prayed for our country during that time of tragedy and attack, beseeching the Lord for His protection and guidance, and asking that our country would turn back to God.

Our daily lives continued on with somewhat normal routines, although it was not normal to see National Guard trucks and armed soldiers patrolling the Golden Gate Bridge. The Coast Guard Station in Vallejo had been relocated from Mare Island to the harbor area next to the east side of the Mare Island Causeway. Their efficient ships and boats could be seen vigilantly patrolling past oil refineries and up and down the Carquinez Strait and bay. Other federal and state agencies were joined in working

together to protect the coastal areas. It may be interesting to some old-time Vallejoans that the U.S. Coast Guard has a small gated apartment building for personnel quarters on the top of the same lookout hill of what used to be Carquinez Heights in WWII.



*Bob & Lois Higgins with Tilley's, 2001*

In comparison to these new situations, it was comforting to have the fellowship of those in the congregation who had lived through major world events and found their lives kept safe and secure in Jesus. Some of these people attended the 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary of Bob and Lois

Higgins on October 13, 2001, in the William Graves Fellowship hall downstairs with many guests from the days of the '40s and '50s. A photo shows Stan and Betty Tilley standing with Bob and Lois Higgins—just like they did in the wedding. We rejoiced with them.

The church family experienced sorrow with the news that on November 23, 2001, Mrs. Ester Green Robinson died in a car accident on her way home from work in Sonoma. VBC provided a memorial service and fellowship for the family, and 150 people attended—a good testimony to the Filipino community. Ester's family had come to VBC years ago because of the Navy, and Matherine and Roselline grew up in the church. They were young women at the time of their mother's Homegoing. Leonisa Sitjar, their close family friend, once again stepped into the role of being a mother—this time it was for Matherine and Rose. In later years, they and their boys, Tre and Shane, attended VBC, and even now when the families are in town, they stop by to visit Leonisa and the church family here.

This was also the year of remembering Paul Carr Gillies' 40<sup>th</sup> year of choir directing. On December 23, the day of the Christmas musical "Joy Came Down," Mr. Gillies was honored with a plaque from the congregation with grateful acknowledgement of his long years of music ministry in Vallejo Bible Church. Paul thanked everyone, the choir, his accompanists Joy Baxter and Barbara Partelow, and all who participated in music and in the congregation. He ended his annual report with the question: "Will the church board name me as music leader for 2002? ...I am ready to do year forty-one, with God's help!"

Church attendance throughout America in 2001 and 2002 was on the rise in the wake of the destruction of Manhattan's World Trade Center Towers, the destruction of large sections of the Pentagon, and the destruction of the hijacked plane flying over Pennsylvania on a flight path to destroy the White House. The flag of the Stars and Stripes was still flying proudly on top of reconstruction sites. Major security changes were made in airports and in large federal and state buildings. People were once again attending church and prayer meetings. Christian news media featured stories about those who had lost loved ones in the disasters and how in their grief they turned to Jesus Christ and found forgiveness and everlasting life.

O beautiful for heroes proved  
In liberating strife,  
Who more than self their country loved,  
And mercy more than life!  
America! America! May God thy gold refine  
Till all success be nobleness  
And every gain divine!



O beautiful for patriot dream  
That sees beyond the years  
Thine alabaster cities gleam,  
Undimmed by human tears!  
America! America! God shed His grace on thee,  
And crown thy good with brotherhood  
From sea to shining sea!

The church elders in 2002 were Donald Grable, Bill Weyandt, and Paul Gillies. Chairman Don Grable writes in the annual report about events of the year and asks for continued prayer that the elders might lead well in spiritual matters, and that they would have the wisdom of Solomon and the love of the Apostle John in his later years. "We have come to understand a little more the meaning of the words, 'In the latter days...' as well as how the Arab nations can have such a deep hatred for the Jews and those nations that stand with them. We are admonished to pray for the Nation Israel as well as for the leaders of our country."

The year brought many challenges and times of illnesses and memorials. In February, Mavis's grandson, Joshua Skalland, a senior in high school, succumbed to cancer. Josh visited Mavis in Benicia often and had become a friend to the VBC youth. His memorial service testified of his faith to a large crowd of young people from his high school and family members.

On April 11, 2002, Dr. Harold Freeman was called Home to hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of the Lord!" He was born on March 1, 1918, in Swink, Colorado, and grew up in suburban Kansas City, Missouri. Pastor Freeman left this world at the age of 84 after a long life of ministry devoted to the Lord. A bereavement donation was sent from the church family in his memory. Many people from all over the country attended the memorial service in Missouri on April 20 to honor the man who so faithfully and lovingly preached the Word. Mrs. Freeman was in our prayers for the major loss in her life. *The VBC Visitor* included a special edition in April about Dr. Harold Freeman's life and ministry.

In June, Bob Partelow was going through an extremely difficult illness. The church prayed regularly for him and Barbara. Pastor Bill and Joy and others visited and prayed that he would recover if it be God's will. Bob's ministry on earth was not finished, and the Lord continued to use him in the lives of many people at church and in places wherever Bob went. He was always ready to give the gospel to those around him. Some prayed to receive the Lord on the spot right after Bob told them of the Good News.



*Bob singing in concert  
"We Shall Behold Him."*

Deaconess leaders, Clair Weyandt and Jeanette Theders, wrote about the needs of those who experienced illnesses and surgeries during the year, and there were many names listed. God always met the needs.

Encouraging events were happening as well. Junior Church had an average of thirteen children with several visitors. Vacation Bible School had 36 children attending, and the program night saw many families and friends come to see the children review their week of VBS and receive awards. The seeds of the Gospel were being sown. The Good News Club with Lincoln Elementary was going well with several children receiving the Lord as their Savior. In the spring of 2002, school principal Carolyn Jackson announced that she was retiring, which was a blow, for she had participated in the club a few times and had been the key to a good start of the outreach. Mrs. Jackson told the club workers that this Good News Club was one of the highlights of her career. But God had a plan and kept the door open by providing another supportive principal: Mrs. Diane Clark. She also was a Christian and believed in the spiritual value of the club. Mrs. Clark was supportive each year until her fight with cancer was over in 2008.



*John and Laura climbing into balloon basket.*

In the summer, some of the youth, the Hamblets and the Baxters were able to attend the IFCA Youth Convention at Cornerstone University in Michigan. An auction had been held to raise support for the expenses to the convention. The auction was successful and many thanks were given to those who bid and donated so that the young people could have this experience. One of the most unusual auctioned items was for tickets for a hot air balloon ride in Santa Rosa. This was a hot item, and after several bids, John and Laura Weeks won the tickets. (John and Laura reported back that the balloon ride was wonderful—no flight sickness at all. They floated all over the Santa Rosa area with Pastor Bill down below on the ground taking many photos—from John and Laura climbing into the balloon basket

and ascent to their return onto solid ground.) At the IFCA Youth Convention, the VBC youth won awards in music categories, and thanks was given to Donna Gillies for the music training and coaching she provided in preparing them for the competition. A church from California—Hanford Bible Church—won First Place in the Novice Category in the Bible Quiz competition.

Sunday school classes were held faithfully, and the annual Sunday school picnic was held at American Canyon Community Park in August. Many people young and old joined in on the balloon toss—no doubt due to the hot afternoon! Steve Shogren provided wonderful guitar accompaniment for group singing.

In September, VBC hosted the IFCA Northern California Regional. Mary Grable gives thanks in her annual report for the women who did a superb job of putting the noon meal together.

Sandy Brisbon and Linda Weaver's mother, Mrs. Kathleen Abram, went to be with the Lord in November. Flowers were given and a reception held in the church after her funeral. This was also the year that Pastor Bill's father died, and he was able to preach at his funeral in Baltimore, a special time for him and family.

Gary Bletsch, a 1970s crew member of the USS *Enterprise* at Alameda Naval Air Station who had recently returned to Vallejo with his wife, Cheryl, was serving as the chairman of the deacons in 2002. Gary's report tells of the unforgettable rain storm on November 7 that blew the roof off the choir loft area and damaged the piano and carpeting. Insurance covered the replacement of the roof and the damaged piano. The carpeting would be re-installed as soon as the work was completed on the interior. Regular church services would be held in the downstairs auditorium during reconstruction. At the time, it seemed as if the world was falling apart, and along with it sections of the church building.

Still, God's hand was seen building His work. The IFCA Northern CA Regional along with Bible Church Crusade, Pastor Baxter and other pastors of the area, were working together on a transition regarding Westbrae Bible Church, our sister church in Berkeley. Westbrae had grown small and only a few people were left in the church by 2002. They asked for help in the decisions of the future of their church. An agreement was implemented with an English-speaking Korean congregation pastored by Rev. John Shim, and as a result, the church continued on in a new and amazing way. It became a thriving Asian congregation with most of the congregants coming from the University of California at Berkeley.

In the midst of adjusting to the reconstruction areas in the church building, the new ministry of the first Tagalog Bible Study came into place on February 21, 2003. Robert Dacquel took the leadership for this monthly Bible study and fellowship time, first held at the Dacquels' home and then shared in various homes. Mike Dumlao celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on April 5 with a large fellowship at church which brought many Filipino friends from the community and family members.

Nanette Santos was baptized on June 1, giving her testimony to friends and family. Also in June was the wedding of Renee Hamblet and Steve Shogren on the 21st. This was followed on July 5 by a wedding reception for Beth (Reece) and Justin Mahoney. The following Sunday on July 6, Charles Moore came to VBC as the guest speaker. It seemed not so long ago when Charles and Edie began attending the church and grew so fast in their hunger to learn the Scriptures and serve God.

July 21-25 was the week of VBS 2003! with the theme "Knowing Christ." 45 children were reached and heard Bible lessons on the "I AMs" of Jesus Christ: "I am the

good shepherd," "I am the bread of life," "I am the resurrection," "I am the light of the world," "I am the way, the truth, and the life." During the VBS opening exercises, puppet shows were presented each day. That year Matthew Cox and Leazy Peterson were the cow puppeteers. As in most of our amateur puppet presentations in VBS, small foibles occurred. On one morning, a gust of wind blew down the cardboard puppet theater, revealing the people behind the scenes—whoops! There goes the neighborhood!



*Debbie Reece, Clair Weyandt, Kathy Cox, Christina Heckmann,  
VBS kitchen crew, 2003*

VBS was a wonderful summertime outreach and a melding of many different talents and spiritual gifts amongst the workers. Joy Baxter went down in church history for her memory verse lessons by wearing creative and unusual costumes each day that depicted a character who would teach the Bible verse. As Darlene Jolly, a teacher in Good News Club, put it, "This is the only church I know of where when it's time to learn the memory verse, the kids stampede into the room eager to learn the new verse of the day." Dave Baxter was with us in 2003 and helped in various ways with the VBS.

Perhaps many humorous stories could be told about something going wrong in the church kitchen, and these could cover a separate section. There is one unusual blooper about a cake that was on "special order" for one of the summer church socials that year. When Dave Baxter, a professional baker, was helping in different ministries at VBC while living in Vallejo for a time, word got out about his baking skills. One day, Charlene Winniford and others were standing around in the kitchen and came up with the idea of having Dave bake a cake to look like an aircraft carrier for a social. He was game to create one and went home to bake the secret aircraft carrier in the Baxter's home kitchen. He sculptured a gray cake in the form of a powerful carrier and used gray icing on the flight deck. This was to be a surprise, so Dave's mission was to sneak the carrier into the church kitchen and hide it. Other people were bringing small plastic planes and flags to place on the cake when it arrived, and this would be done before the church social. It may have been an undercover agent in the church—a mole, but in the afternoon before the event, someone came into the darker parts of the kitchen and discovered a



long, weird-shaped gray cake. Without ceremony, the carrier was deep-sixed into a trash can as just another moldy leftover. Meanwhile, the other agents were arriving to place flags and planes on the ship—but the carrier was missing. A brief inspection was made resulting in a failed mission: the aircraft carrier was a sunken cake. This was hushed up for the sake of peace. For some, this incident was the final closure for the Navy in the Bay Area. For others, the idea of a cake aircraft carrier still haunts the imagination.



*One of the efficient kitchen crews, Christmas Dinner, 2003*

A mission that was successful was the growth of the deaf ministry. Dennis Smith announced in the spring that he would be phasing out of the Vallejo ministry to take on more responsibilities at Sacramento Bible Church for the Deaf. Much prayer went forth asking the Lord for a man to come to work in the ministry at VBC. In June of 2003, Penny Harden attended Biblical Ministries Worldwide's annual field conference of missionaries working with deaf people. It was there that missionary Brad Ketterling expressed an interest in coming to Vallejo each month to disciple the men and to preach. Brad came in July for a visit and then transitioned into ministering regularly in the deaf outreach at Vallejo Bible Church.

In contrast to the quiet deaf ministry, the annual report states that the VBC sound system moved back upstairs after the storm damage repairs were completed. Two new choir loft microphones were purchased. A CD/DVD player was purchased to replace the CD changer that was stolen. A new amplifier was purchased for the downstairs sound system. The technology was challenged during the Missions Conference to coordinate CD, DVD and VCR taped visual and audio presentations. Alon Dacquel assisted Dave Theders in the sound system. Bob Higgins continued to maintain the tape library and tape ministry and making copies of tapes for whoever requested them.

Art and Christine Wildman were the youth leaders in 2003. Learning to stand up for Jesus in all aspects of life was the primary focus of the Sunday school youth lessons. The group held three youth services in church that year and had a monthly meeting and Bible study. There were hopes of creating a monthly youth newsletter, and having more activities in the coming year.



2003 was the year of the beginning of the “Leave-A-Legacy” program which was led by elder Kurt Heckmann. The time had arrived to face the complex issues of the future of the church in its present facilities. Another legacy that was started during Pastor Bill’s years of ministry in VBC was the awareness of the need to pray for the Persecuted Church, our brothers and sisters throughout the world who are suffering and dying for their faith. The emblem of the Persecuted Church remains on our prayer sheets each week.

In the morning of January 23, 2004, a funeral was held for Carol Hastings in El Cajon, California. The last few years of Carol’s life were spent in gradual decline with illnesses. Pastor Bill had a part in her funeral in El Cajon and returned to Vallejo with some of her belongings: books, artifacts from India, prints of scenes of life in India, and a small suitcase she used in traveling. These have been placed in a display case in Carol Hastings Chapel. Pastor Bill wrote: “This lady was a legend in our midst and definitely one of my heroes. She is missed, but we rejoice that she is with our Savior.” Words of that song come to mind: “Welcome home, children, this is the place I’ve prepared for you....”

Daily life and ministries went on, and on February 25 the church office got equipped with a Ricoh color copier. When one thinks back to how the church office was equipped years ago with one manual typewriter and a mimeograph machine, this professional color copier seemed like a dream. In the 1970s, Mrs. Freeman found a cylindrical scanner that helped with creating bulletins, and the office was updated with an electric typewriter, which was an event at the time. Word processing on a computer was an adjustment, and floppy disk computers with small memories were challenging. The church office now had an efficient computer and professional color copier with all the features, plus Victor McAllister’s computer help.

In 2004, Rev. Stan and Betty retired from the pastorate and returned to Vallejo. Stan participated in leading a series of Bible studies on Wednesday night prayer meeting. Alice Samson and Lisa Pullon celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> birthdays on June 12, and the following day there was a farewell for Josh Weyandt on June 13. Josh and Dave Baxter had been helping in youth ministries, Vacation Bible School, and in the Good News Club. Josh would be missed and we prayed for his future. Joe and Michele Charles came in July to give an update on their lives and the ministry of Cornerstone Bible Institute.

Charlene Kurk’s battle with cancer ended and her funeral was held on September 1. Her service was beautifully decorated by the displays of her handmade quilts. These were a visual testimony of how the Lord takes the fabric and colors of our lives to create a stunning piece of work that displays His glory, love and purpose in everything that happens to us. We would miss Charlene.

September was quite packed with the blessing of Desiree Young’s visit from South Africa so that she could be the speaker at the IFCA Ladies’ Retreat at Lucerne. Desiree

Young was a friend of the Baxters in South Africa. Penny Harden was the retreat director and the Vallejo ladies were responsible for preparations. Desiree Young is still fondly remembered by the women. Her accent was a bit challenging, such as when some of us thought she was talking about a piano beater in her story (who would beat a piano?) but it turned out to be a panel beater (an auto body worker). Her testimony about faith and overcoming life's dee-FEE-culties was well received. Later in September, we were sad to hear that Joy Baxter's mother had left this life for heaven, but it is a comfort to know that one day there will be a reunion. Joy was able to leave for a short trip to Chicago to attend her mother's funeral.



*Ladies Retreat at Lucerne, 2004*

On October 9, 2004, Don and Mary Grable celebrated 50 years of marriage. They told about their honeymoon adventure at Mt. Herman Conference Center and arriving there late, which resulted in wandering around in the coastal darkness trying to find their assigned cabin. This was probably an experience that would sharpen their abilities to follow trails in Honduras.

Later in October, Rev. Charles Moore was taken to be with Lord, and a memorial service was held for him at VBC on October 24. He was 56 years old. Charles had served as a pastor in Carlsbad, New Mexico, for many years. Edith and daughter Elisabeth joined us here in the memorial service.

Continued blessings came into the lives of individuals and the church family with the birth of Steven Jeffrey Shogren, Jr. to Renee and Steve. Renee's brother, Stephen Hamblet, was attending Cornerstone Bible Institute, Christina Heckmann was at Montreat College in North Carolina, and Jamie Hamblet was studying in Texas at Tyndale Seminary. A major joy for the deaf church was the beginning of Brad Ketterling's full-time pastoral ministry at Vallejo Bible Church for the Deaf.

An important highlight of 2004 was the work on the damaged church building that was getting done, and Robert Peterson's report gave an update on certain areas. He

also notes that the south tower was opened up and the interior was sheathed with wood. Leaks were stopped in and around the tower, and the interior of it was painted. The ancient church brass bell could now be seen from the street. The cross on the top of the roof was repaired, water proofed, and securely installed. Perhaps this was when those two pigeons who lived on the tower were adopted by Kurt Heckmann, who named them Harley and Mavis. They even made it into the PowerPoint presentation at the annual congregational meeting.

The new year of 2005 began on a sad note. Gary Merkel's mother, Mrs. June Merkel, died on January 1. She was a longtime friend of Dorothy Davis and Joan Leone. A few days later, Dr. Robert Graves, a well-known pastor in the IFCA Northern California Regional and former pastor of Santa Rosa Bible Church, was called Home. His memorial service was held at Santa Rosa Bible Church on January 11 and was a memorable gathering of people who knew him from churches and organizations all over. A few days after this, several people from VBC attended the memorial service for Bill Glover in Vacaville. His wife, Linda, went Home to glory in 2003, and their young lives will be remembered by many friends. Bill and Linda were active in the college/career group at VBC in the '70s and fellowshiped here until moving to Vacaville. Bill, a former cook in the Navy, created countless Christmas and fellowship dinners for the church.

Mrs. Lucille Furlong, who faithfully attended church from the early days of VBC, also left this world for her new Home above. Mrs. Furlong attended all of the services and women's meetings for as long as she could, often bringing her grandchildren to church and VBS.

Ed and Eunice Barry decided to move to Tennessee, Ed's home state, and a well-attended farewell was given for them in the William Graves Fellowship Hall on the evening of March 6, 2005. Ed and Eunice had a huge part in the life of VBC. They served in almost every area of church life over the years and were faithful in prayer at church and in their home. Ed was always down at the church working in the building, and Eunice was always alert to needs in the church and would cook a delicious meal for someone and deliver it. They had the gift of hospitality. We sadly said good-bye with the prayer that they would come back to visit.



Top: Ed and Eunice Barry  
Bottom L to R: Joy Baxter, Ann Hults, Penny Harden, Barb Partelow, Jennifer Huffman.

Thankfully, some people do return and in June of 2005, Mrs. Esther Freeman moved back to be with loved ones at VBC. Joy Baxter flew to Kansas City to accompany Mrs. Freeman in the drive across the prairies back to Vallejo. The church family was grateful to have Mrs. Freeman with them again. She settled into a home close to the Grables on American Canyon Road.

The situation with our sister church, Westbrae Bible Church, was taken care of in a remarkable way. Pastor Bill served on the transitional board and helped with the decisions of this changing ministry. The church became the East Bay Baptist Church of Berkeley with Rev. John Shim as their pastor. The congregation became an English-speaking Korean congregation with many young people from the Berkeley campus and other areas attending and inviting their friends. Today they have a newly planted church in Taipei, Taiwan, entirely served and supported by people and resources from their church.

Five people were baptized in 2005: Razel Alberto, Jireh Alberto, Shantel Peterson, Ann Holtz, and Jesse Parsons. Hallelujah to the Savior!

Another longtime faithful member went Home, Mrs. Gladys Carlon. She attended church alone most of her life as her husband did not believe the way she did. Gladys died on May 27 in Shawnee, Oklahoma. She was active in the church and enjoyed sponsoring children's clubs. If it were possible to write about everyone's life, each one would be included—people like Margaret Reynolds, a tough nurse from the old school but a gentle soul—and Adeleine Harned who lived in the hexagon-shaped house on Florida Street—and Clem Furlong who used to hop on trains in the late 1930s and whenever he wanted to get off, he would just jump. The church family grieved when our brother in Christ, Jack Cox, was called Home after suffering asbestosis that he got from years of working around asbestos on the shipyard. Jack was a faithful soul who ministered quietly in the background and a praying man who kept a journal to remember the needs of people in the church.

The children's ministries were going forth with good attendance in the After School Good News Club. The workers consisted of the Baxters, Darlene Jolly, Bernice Cox, Jean Hawk, Kurt Heckmann, Debbie Reece, Norman and Jeanine Reece, Carol White, Don Gardner, Angie Hanlon and the puppets. Sandy Brisbon and others were faithful to donate prizes for the Praise Bucks Store. Jeanine set up prayer partners to pray for each student and for their teachers. At Christmastime, VBC donated reading books to Lincoln School as an expression of our care for the children.



*Tory and Purita Busilig's farewell with Sandy and Jack Brisbon and Angie Hanlon, 2005*



Miss Angie, who was coordinating children's ministries, came up with the idea of giving guitar lessons to the church children. Student guitars were bought at the Lincoln Loan Center on Georgia Street, and free individual lessons of simplified chords and strumming were taught weekly in the homes of the kids who wanted to learn. On occasion, the children and Miss Angie played their guitars and sang in church, making a joyful noise unto the Lord. The name of the short-lived group was "The Proclaimers." Someone thought we said "The Bangers." At any rate, eventually the lessons went flat and lost momentum, but the photographs are precious.

The Junior Church kids enjoyed singing in the church services. Sometimes they would wear hats, or use rhythmic instruments and Miss Angie played the guitar. On one evening service, the kids were asked to sing "He's Still Working On Me." The children wore hard hats and each one used a rhythmic instrument while singing the song. Little Timothy Sawusch, John and Lois Grable Sawusch's son, was visiting that night and joined in with the kids. They sang out and made a lot of construction sounds. At the end, Timothy stepped up to the edge of the platform and said, "My name is Timothy. I love to sing. If you ever need me to help you sing again, my phone number is \_\_\_\_\_. We wished he could come and sing with us often!

2006 was upon us and Brandon Weyandt started the year with a presentation about his mission trip to New Orleans which was devastated by Hurricane Katrina. Brandon would continue ministering on mission trips in various places around the world, and he returned to give interesting reports and videos about giving the gospel to people in places that are not open to Christianity.

Paul Gillies and the choir presented the Easter cantata at the Merrill Gardens Retirement Center, which was appreciated by those who came to hear the glorious truth about Jesus Christ and His resurrection. The choir presented this program at church on April 16. Also in April, Kurt Heckmann organized the church-wide two-day camping



*Del Valle camping trip*



adventure at Del Valle Regional Park in Livermore, California. This time together in the outdoors amidst the oaks and creeks and the beautiful lake was a relaxing family fellowship. Outdoor cooking, devotionals, campfire singing, hiking, sleeping, swimming, and praying together was a refreshing time of coming away from the world. Later in July, Kurt was given a 50<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration by his family, and testimonies were spoken in appreciation for his life and ministry. His brother, Reed, a pastor and missionary, spoke about Kurt's life and testimony.

2006 was the year that the deaf ministry got an additional team member when Brad and Hannah married, now serving together as Pastor Brad and Hannah Ketterling. Penny Harden's report says that a Deaf Kids Club was started in July and Penny also began a once-a-month ladies' Bible study. Their deaf church service at this time was averaging between 20 and 26 people.

The "Leave-A-Legacy" program was in full gear. Much had been accomplished that year with re-doing the church secretary's office and the floral storage room upstairs, re-roofing three porch areas, installing a new ceiling and overhead lights in the library, upgrading the main electrical service with new grounding, and installing a new drainage system for the rear of the building. The goals for 2007 were to complete the downstairs restrooms, construct the downstairs storage area, repaint and refurbish the William Graves Fellowship Hall, expand the upstairs restrooms, and repair exterior cornices.

Ken and Andrea Jack and children, missionaries on furlough that year with New Tribes, came to stay with their family, Paul and Cindy Losness, who were living in Vallejo and attending VBC. This was part of God's plan in bringing Ken, a qualified construction worker, to help the church with projects such as reconstructing the plumbing and locations of the new restrooms. Ken and Andrea were the missionaries that year for Vacation Bible School in representing their work in Papua New Guinea and the need for Kodiak planes.

May 20 was the evening of the Missionary Dinner and Silent Auction hosted by Carol White. This too was a fun time of fellowship with the purpose of raising funds for the needs in missions. Several of these dinners and auctions were held through the years under the direction of Carol.

We said goodbye to Mavis Skalland in November, 2006. She was staying with Terry and Betsy Skalland in Rocklin when she stepped onto the shore far beyond this life. Her memorial service was on November 11, which was an unusual service in the sense that Betsy was also gifted with a way of speaking humorously. As she gave the eulogy, guests were crying and laughing at the same time. Most of all, Mavis would want us to continue being faithful and giving out those tracts that she so often placed around town and in the mail.

2006 ended with the blessings of Christmas and the joyful sounds of the choir and musicians presenting "The Canticle of Christmas." The evening service was well

attended by church family and visitors. Paul thanked all those who participated in the ministry of music at VBC: "Instrumentalists Chris Celeri, Steve Shogren, Renee Shogren, Jeni Siegfried, and the mainstays, Barbara Partelow and Joy Baxter. Sound technicians Nikko and Angelo Santos and mainstay Dave Theders...valuable visuals created by Nikko Santos, Matthew Cox, Leazy Peterson and mainstay Jeni Siegfried, with stage and lighting help from Robert Peterson and Don Gardner."

Also a high point in December was witnessing the baptism of Angelo and Nikko Santos. Baptisms are beautiful testimonies of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. These evenings at church with the old baptistry are filled with great joy. The Baxters held the Widows' Luncheon on December 30 in their home, honoring the widows in the congregation, and the following evening concluded the year of 2006 with the watchnight service.

Time seems to go faster with the passing of each year, and already 2007 was full with calendar events and ministries, but also full of quiet time in prayer and Bible study. The reverent time and stillness before God during The Lord's Table is a most wonderful time. VBC prayed for the Lord's guidance through the year.

Melissa and Rebecca Kelley were baptized on March 25, 2007, and gave their testimonies of faith in Jesus who died for them. Three people passed away during 2007: Marguerite McLaughlin in New Orleans, Louisiana, James E. Baxter in Baltimore, Maryland, and Paul Courtois in Vallejo. This was the year that Steve and Renee Shogren and family moved to Utah and we prayed for their future. The Shogrens often visit us here, for which we are thankful.

Vallejo Bible Church for the Deaf was making solid progress in their outreach, and added a Sunday school time. The hearing and deaf enjoyed a Game Night in March in the downstairs auditorium. On March 2-3, the IFCA International Northern California Regional Faithful Men's Conference was held at Galt Bible Church.

A great moment of accomplishment happened in April when the new bathrooms in VBC passed the Vallejo City inspection! One of the highlights in the music ministry that year was the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Concert on May 27, 2007. Vacation Bible School's "Waterworks Park" theme was directed by Kurt Heckman and drew many children from outside the congregation as well as our own kids. Cathy Jackson and Ann Hultz's help in VBS was greatly appreciated. The After School Good News Club began its eighth year in the beginning of October, and the monthly Tagalog Home Bible Study, directed by Robert Dacquel, continued to be an important part of church life at VBC.

"Vallejo Bible Church—little church, BIG GOD!" came from Kurt Heckmann's report in 2007 and was a good reminder of what can be accomplished through the church by faith in our powerful God. The city of Vallejo had changed over the years in almost every way. Vallejo was in hard times economically; the schools were going into bankruptcy and Lincoln School was facing closure, and the city was going down the

same road to bankruptcy with layoffs and a reduced police force. Vallejo got tagged with the nickname "Pothole City." Crime statistics were on the increase. Immigration laws and demographics were changing. We were in the midst of experiencing language changes with English and Spanish spoken equally. We've almost gone full circle since the days of Alta California of Mexico, and live in the midst of many cultures here in the Bay Area. VBC continued to reach out to the diverse groups of children coming to Good News Club, in the deaf outreaches, in the outreach of Vacation Bible School in our neighborhood, in the music presentations and invitations, in the Tagalog Bible studies, and through other contacts of inviting people to church and witnessing to them one-on-one.

The sound system report of 2007 written by Dave Theders recognized and thanked Bob Higgins for his many years of faithful and dedicated ministry to VBC. He was instrumental in the installation of the sound system wiring and purchase of equipment, as well as inheriting the Tape Ministry from Mel Buckingham. A cassette tape-to-CD duplicator was purchased that year, and Dave asked that we pray for the direction needed as we continue to evaluate modifications concerning the sound system.



*Men singing with a great sound system!*

Julie Celeri was appointed as the nursery coordinator, and she reported that they were making an effort to have a little more structure to the classroom time by breaking the hour up into fifteen-minute segments of playtime, snack, reading time and "craft" time. She wrote, "The biggest accomplishment thus far is having developed a collaboration with the deaf ministry since currently our nursery serves both the hearing and the deaf church. This past month for the first time one hearing person (who knows sign) and one deaf person were assigned nursery duty and all seemed to go well."

Janet Heckmann served as president of the Women's Missionary Society and wrote that 2007 was a year of change. In January they voted to change the constitution, making a change by deleting the clause making Friday night meetings mandatory. The group moved the monthly meeting time to Saturdays at 2 pm. Also the annual Christmas Dinner was replaced with an afternoon luncheon. At the luncheon, Jessie Parsons and Jeanette Theders presented to the Baxters one of Charlene Kurk's hand-stitched quilts, the wedding ring quilt. The WMS accomplished nine projects that year

which included collecting soup labels for the Shepherd's School in Wisconsin, supporting Broken Arrow Bible Ranch projects, giving donations to several missionaries, as well as providing for the Missionary Closet and sending birthday cards with a monetary gift to VBC's supported missionaries.



*WMS at Bradfords*

The new year at church began on January 6, 2008, with the blessed time of the Communion service, a reverent time for self-examination and prayer, for focusing on the Lord Jesus Christ and His sacrifice and love for us individually and as a church. The Annual Congregational Meeting on January 13 was held after the morning service and reviewed the events of 2007. After School Good News Club had a special event on January 21: the students experienced a Spanish concert with Chocy Suená. Most of the children who were attending the club were Hispanic, and it was possible at times to get Spanish-speaking guests and Hispanic missionaries to attend the club. VBC was praying for someone to come who could regularly minister in Spanish as well as in English.



*VBC Snow Play Day, 2008*

February 18 was VBC Snow Play Day at Adventure Mountain near Lake Tahoe. A good photograph was taken of the church family sitting in the snow with a sign in front: VBC SNOW PLAY DAY. It was a fun time in snow activities and unusual events, such as making the world's largest snowball and watching the men roll the huge white ball down to an area where it could be seen for miles. Robert Peterson's strength and determination got the giant snowball to a spot where it could be seen by passing motorists on Hwy 50 and probably on Google Earth. A few of the Good News Club students came on the trip, and for some it was their first experience in snow.

Those who were baptized in 2008 were E. J. Alberto, Fely Obado, and Kent Kelley. New church members that year were Fely Obado, Lisa Pullon, Joy Kelley and Kent Kelley. Our hearts were sad to lose three people in death: Ninfa Velasco, Erma Rhodes, and Dorothy Davis who was a member of the 1940s VBC church. Heaven will be a wonderful reunion.

After eight years of working part-time on church staff in children's ministries, Angie Hanlon quietly resigned in July, 2008. Her evening part-time job had changed again, and getting a sustainable job that was flexible enough for children's ministries was difficult. Even though there were some good results in children's work, there had not been much traction with getting children from Good News Club to attend church, and the kindergarten through fifth grade Sunday school class continued to remain small. Vacation Bible School had brought a few to church. Miss Angie stepped out with the hope and prayers that a younger, more dynamic youth leader or perhaps an intern would come and take up children's work. Jinky Peterson became the teacher of the K-5<sup>th</sup> grade Sunday school class, Joy Kelley took over Junior Church with Sandy Brisbon assisting, Kurt Heckmann became director of the After School Good News Club and of Vacation Bible School. Perhaps a bilingual children's worker would come. Later in the year with the beginning of the new school year, the Good News Club name was changed to Bible Adventure Club.

October brought the annual Missions Conference and its daily meetings along with the famous Soup Luncheon served by the Tuesday Ladies. The October Harvest Party was well attended with a concert given by "God's Country Band." On November 9 in the evening service, Norman Reece introduced his missionary friend, Pushpan Pappu, who is from India and had come to present his ministry. Pushpan gave his testimony of how he became a Christian as a young adult and the Lord burdened his heart to reach out to his own people in India, even amidst the persecution going on in his country. He lives in the Bay Area and frequently takes extended trips to India to minister. We thought of Carol Hastings and the Hennings and were blessed to see that the Lord was using national believers in India to tell the good news of Jesus Christ.

Interspersed with these blessings, it was a great encouragement to see and hear the VBC youth participating in special music. Kristina Dacquel played her violin and



the piano on special occasions, and Jireh Alberto played his clarinet. Serena Santos joined in group singing. Melissa and Rebecca sang duets, and they also play piano. Today Jireh Alberto and Nikko Santos are skilled on the guitar, and E. J. Alberto plays trumpet and uses his good voice to sing for the Lord. Leanzy and Shantel Peterson bless us with their singing and so do Amy and David Celeri. Kary Losness and many others have been a part of children's music in the past. The adult choir is blessed to have the younger ones desiring to participate in music presentations. VBC now has Josiah West and Carolyn West singing in the choir and playing the piano. Praise the Lord!



*The Ketterlings, Carol White, Joy Baxter, Joan Leone, and the Grables  
enjoying Christmas dinner at the parsonage, 2008*

2009 began with the Homegoing of Rev. Joe Charles on January 7. Joe had been struggling with health issues for a long time and yet continued on with his leadership and teaching at Cornerstone Bible Institute in South Dakota until the Lord called him. The Baxters and Angie Hanlon flew to Hot Springs to be with Michele, and Pastor Bill participated in the funeral service. Brother Miguel Dumlao also was called to glory that year, and his service was held on April 16, 2009. Mike was born in 1913. A ceremony was given by the Filipino-American Retired US Armed Forces Association. We would miss Mike and Cion's duets. Doris Webster, who was an active member of VBC in its earlier years and a faithful Sunday school teacher, was called Home to see her Savior face to face. A memorial service was held on May 7 with many friends and family members attending from the North Bay Area and Sacramento.

The church family warmly welcomed Julio and Razel Alberto as new members in VBC and was grateful for them.

There were several missionary speakers in 2009, including Kady Smith with Brazil Gospel Fellowship and Ellie Driesenga also with BGF, Matthew Bates with Biblical Ministries Worldwide in Denmark, David Andrusyak of Russia with SEND International, Paul Ortiz with Action International in Manila, Karissa Smith with CEF, Michele Charles' Recommissioning Service and the Cornerstone Bible Institute Singers and Bell Choir, Rev. Roberto Livio of IPM in Metro Manila on Filipino Sunday, Jeremy Skalland with Village Care International, Jim Barron with ABWE in China, Pushpan Pappu of India, as well as the October Missions Conference.

An unusual outreach was held on Saturday, April 25, 2009, in an evening service at VBC. This idea came to Paul Gillies who pursued the opportunity of having missionary Gracia Burnham present her story at VBC about the ordeal that she and her husband, Martin, experienced when members of the Abu Sayyaf terrorist group in the Philippines captured them along with several others in 2001. Pastor Baxter, Robert Dacquel, Paul Gillies, Kurt Heckmann and many others worked together in the planning and preparation of hosting Gracia. The advertisements went out, and Gracia came (along with bodyguards) and gave her testimony before a large crowd who came to hear about the Burnhams' horrific year as hostages in the jungles, and of her experiences since returning home.

Martin was killed in the rescue and Gracia returned to her family alone. She gave a beautiful testimony of God's grace and shared how she is rebuilding her life by God's grace alone. She asked for prayer for the terrorists, that they would know the truth of the Word of God and receive Jesus Christ as their Savior. The story has not ended, for God has been working in many lives since then. Gracia Burnham also spoke at Galt Bible Church and Santa Rosa Bible Church.



*Gracia Burnham and VBCers at the Dacquels' home, 2009.*

The more normal activities returned, and projects for Leave-A-Legacy were tended to. The main accomplishment for 2009 was the total renovation and expansion of the upstairs women's restroom. This also involved more than was anticipated when it was discovered that the roof over the restroom was wet and rotting. This led to the installation of a new drain on the flat roof of the west side of the building. Victor McAllister and Don Weaver devised a new way to re-contour the old roof in order to reuse an old drain. The damaged section was removed, replaced and recovered. There were other projects tended to and the library renovation was moving closer to completion. Everett Bradford, a skilled cabinet maker, constructed new library shelves and

helped in various other ways. Everett has restored and built several wood work projects in the church.

Bible Adventure Club with the students at Lincoln School got off to a rocky start in 2009. The new principal at Lincoln was unfamiliar with the program which brought a situation of new rules being imposed by the school district. VBC was no longer free to present the program and distribute literature in person to classes. Invitation flyers underwent district scrutiny and modifications, and then were distributed by Lincoln's teachers. Also, the Encore program, an after-school program at Lincoln, took away a large portion of the students who would come to the church club. At the beginning of the year, it looked as if the club might not happen; however, Kurt Heckmann and workers did not give up and an average of six children attended. The plan for the following year was to go back to working under the auspices of Child Evangelism Fellowship as a Good News Club, which provides a level of accountability, creditability, liability, and legal protection unavailable as an independent program. Encouragement came in spite of the setback when four of the students began attending VBC and two were coming with their parents. Praise the Lord!

Vacation Bible School in 2009 had an Egyptian theme as the backdrop for the Bible lessons on the life of Joseph. Janet Heckmann was the director and many people served as teachers and helpers. The missionary lessons were brought by Victor McAllister via PowerPoint presentations on Brazil. They collected \$122.58 as a missions offering for Itamar Santos' children's ministry in Brazil. The overall attendance was 27 children consisting of 18 juniors and 9 beginners.

The Sunday school teen class included Shantel, Asa, and Serena. The teachers were Dave Theders, Pastor Bill and Joy Baxter. They were using the video series *The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus*, and the emphasis was to ensure that the teens see the "big picture" of the whole Bible. Jinky Peterson taught kindergarten through fifth grade. Victor McAllister continued to stretch the knowledge of his adult class participants. The annual Sunday school picnic was held at American Canyon Community Park on August 16, and the potluck picnic food theme was "chicken." Dave gave the devotional, and Nikko Santos and Leazy Peterson were in charge of the balloon toss.

Paul Gillies gave thanks in the music report of 2009 for the "balcony helpers" who worked with the visuals and sounds: Jireh Alberto, Kristina Dacquel, Nikko Santos, Angelo Santos, Leazy Peterson, Joy Baxter, and Dave Theders. The instrumentalists were Jeanine Reece, Donna Bradford, Esther Freeman, Chris Celeri, Barbara Partelow, and Joy Baxter. Those who served as leaders in congregational singing were Paul Gillies, Dave Theders, Chris Celeri, and Kurt Heckmann. Joy Kelley served as leader of the children's singing group. The choir sang "The Big Three" of the year: the Easter presentation, the Spring Concert, and the Christmas presentation. In addition to the VBC presentations, the choir sang at Evangel Bible Church of Berkeley, Merrill Gardens, Alma Bella Manor, and Evergreen Healthcare Center. Many thanks

were expressed for the Carlsons and helpers in food preparation, and for Don Grable as door watch/greeter, all the nursery providers, and ushers Bill Weyandt, Robert Dacquel and assistants.

The Women's Missionary Society continued to minister in the usual ways of inviting missionaries to speak, sharing devotional times, praying for missions and contributing toward mission projects. WMS is also an outreach. Several visitors who have attended the luncheons and Christmas events have continued coming to VBC. The annual WMS Christmas event is a special time of singing carols, enjoying a delicious meal, hearing a speaker, revealing Secret Sisters, and opening Christmas gifts. In 2009, the speaker was Michele Charles from CBI. Donna Bradford, Jeanine Reece, and Angie Hanlon sang a song written by Mrs. Freeman in 1966 titled "Mary's Son." Jeanette Theders was president that year. Dave Theders cooked the Christmas meal, and Everett Bradford, Norman Reece, and Pastor Bill served the food. The WMS was also preparing the new church directory for the year 2010.

2009 saw the farewell of Christina Heckmann who left for her mission field in Tanzania, Africa. Many adventures in Tanzania and blessings from the Lord would be in store for her as she worked with children and young people at En Gedi. The use of electronic mail and instant text messages communicate news and needs daily—an amazing improvement over the slow airmail letters that missionaries used to send periodically with the hope that their communications were received.



## 2010-2013

The VBC church family rejoiced with Lisa Pullon as she received her U.S. Citizenship at a ceremony in Sacramento on February 17, 2010. Lisa is affectionately called "Mama Lisa" by all of us, and we are thankful that she is not only a part of the church family, but also a citizen of America.

Phil and Jill Freeman came to Vallejo at the end of January to assist Mrs. Freeman during her hip surgery and recovery. They were able to stay with her until May and gave us daily updates on Mrs. Freeman's progress via email messages and photos. Mrs. Freeman also had a personal touch in the lives of the medical personnel who were caring for her at Evergreen Healthcare Center. It was wonderful to get to know Phil and Jill more, and we appreciated Phil's messages and hymn stories on Sundays. It was hard to say goodbye when they returned to Georgia.



During this time, Don Gardner and Jackson Jean were creating a stained-glass window for the upstairs northeast window by the staircase. This was an involved project requiring the skill of patiently cutting and fitting intricate pieces of stained glass into a design that Don envisioned. The finished window was carefully placed into the window frame and became a beautiful picture of the open Bible under the Christian flag with a dove at the top, bordered by a floral design. When the morning sun shines through the window, the Bible and flag become brilliant and a reflection of colored lights falls upon the church wall and staircase. We appreciate Don and Jackson for their skill and creation of a new stained-glass window to glorify God.

Change was in the winds in February for the church. The Baxters and the Board of Cornerstone Bible Institute were considering the possibility of Bill and Joy becoming a part of the faculty and staff there in Hot Springs, South Dakota. Pastor Bill was a board member of CBI and during a trip for the February 28, 2010, board meeting, he and CBI President, Rev. Harold Friesen, discussed the possibility of Bill becoming a faculty member at the institute. Pastor returned to Vallejo and talked with Kurt Heckmann and Paul Gillies about this situation. The men and Head Deaconess Bernice Cox prayed for God's will in this major decision. On April 1, Rev. Harold Friesen told Pastor Bill that he had been accepted for service at CBI. Later on April 18, Pastor Bill read a statement to the church concerning their decision to move to South Dakota to teach at Cornerstone. In May, the Baxters made a trip to CBI for board meetings and the school's graduation ceremony. The following weeks turned into a busy transition time for both the Baxters and Vallejo Bible Church.



*Erik Antonson,  
USAF*

The month of June, 2010, was filled with a mixture of church events, illnesses, packing, anticipation, sadness and blessing. The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Concert was held on June 6, and on June 13, dear Brother Bob Higgins went into the hospital in a serious condition. The church prayed for him and Lois, and their family. It is hard to watch a loved one experience the physical struggles of life departing here, such as the struggle of a butterfly transforming out of its cocoon into a beautiful creature toward a new life unhindered. We prayed for strength for Lois and the Higgins family. We were also praying for Erik Antonson, the Higgins' grandson, who was serving in the USAF in Afghanistan. The Wednesday night prayer group prays for our servicemen.

June 27, 2010, was Filipino Sunday with guest speaker Dr. Roberto Livioco visiting from the Philippines. July 4 was the day of the morning Communion Service, the last one with the Baxters. July 10 was the well-attended farewell dinner for Pastor Bill and Joy, a time of sharing remembrances and thanks, tears, and hopes for God's best in the future work of Vallejo Bible Church and for them at Cornerstone Bible Institute. July 9 was the day when Rev. Stan Tilley met the Lord Jesus face to face, and we prayed for Betty in her loss and for her future. July 18 was Bill and Joy's final Sunday as pastor of VBC. The church voted to take on monthly financial support of the Baxters as missionaries at CBI.



Head Elder Kurt Heckmann wrote in the elders' report for 2010, "What a year it has been! Change is the only constant in this life while we serve a changeless God." He was sad that the Baxters were gone but grateful that they left on a high note. It was challenging to find speakers for every service, but God was sending men to speak, from the outside and from within our church. Victor McAllister was willing to speak almost anytime and anywhere, and Dave Theders led the Wednesday evening Bible study. Dave and Jeanette took up the task of working in the church office.

Three VBC stalwarts went into the presence of the Lord in 2010. Stan Tilley went Home on July 9, Robert Higgins on October 18, and Bob Partelow on October 25. Kurt wrote, "We grieve with the widows and loved ones of those left behind whose lives will never be the same. May they find God's grace sufficient, and may we never forget that true religion involves ministering to widows and orphans in their time of trouble." These were men of God who gave of themselves for His work, always conscious that what really mattered was putting the Lord first and serving Him.

The Leave-A-Legacy monthly workdays were suspended but the care of the church building was ongoing. Victor McAllister worked hard in this area and had the oversight of caring for the building. With the professional assistance of Justin Ramos, the church office was remodeled and numerous security measures were put in place. Many people helped in the workdays that were held in 2010: Julio Alberto, Bill Baxter, Chris Celeri, Robert Dacquel, John Dee, Kurt Heckmann, Brad Ketterling, Victor McAllister, Rich and Patty Rockwood, and Dave Theders.

Bernice Cox wrote in her deaconess report that it was a privilege to organize the provision of food for the sick and bereaved. In 2010, three of the church family went into the presence of our Lord and the deaconesses organized luncheons for families and friends. The women were responsible for the communion preparation, floral arrangements, kitchen laundry, assisting those who are being baptized, working with the hospitality ministry, and being in charge of the spring and fall workdays. Colossians 3:17, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

In the Junior Church ministry, Joy Kelley was grateful for the help of Sandy Brisbon and Linda Weaver, and for Victor McAllister's willingness to teach at a moment's notice when Rebecca was ill and in the hospital. Joy noted that the attendance had changed with Kristina Asa Dacquel, Jireh Alberto, Shantel Peterson, and Serena Santos graduating out. Melissa and Rebecca Kelley were helpers and Melissa was conducting the prayer time.

The good news about the after school club in the spring of 2010 was that many of the obstacles coming from the school district had been resolved as the outreach worked under the auspices of Child Evangelism Fellowship as a Good News Club. There was a need for workers at this time and prayer that the club would continue. Jean Hawk

volunteered to teach the memory verse, Christi Ramos provided snacks, Don and Mary Grable helped in various ways, and Victor, Norman and Jeanine Reece, and Kurt Heckmann continued in their roles of teaching and working with the children. The new principal of Lincoln, Robert Ingham, was extremely cooperative, and the Encore kids (Lincoln's after school program) were allowed to attend Good News Club without reprisal. Ten to fifteen students were attending, a great answer to the church's prayers for this outreach.

In 2010, VBC the deaf church started a mid-week Bible study for adults. A bulletin board ministry was placed on a wall downstairs to provide encouragement, photos, information, and challenges. The group also continued to enjoy monthly social events, special events and camps, and a deaf expo evangelistic opportunity with Deaf Baptist Church from Fremont, California. Several individual home Bible studies were held through the year, including the startup of a new individual study. Brad Ketterling reported that they have an intense discipleship ministry within the deaf church family.

Two young women came as interns in 2010 and participated in all of the church events over a three-week period. They also were involved in the Deaf Family Camp.



*Hannah and Brad passing out tracts at Deaf Nation Expo*

The sound system report told that the Bose amplifier and controller and the choir loft monitor speakers were replaced after a break-in in November. The downstairs sound and projector system was installed in April with a special thanks to Rich Rockwood who helped install the conduit for the ceiling projector. Angelo Santos and Alon Dacquel operated the sound system when Dave Theders was not available. Dave gave thanks for Bob Higgins and Bob Partelow for their work on the sound system. The "Bobs" were the foundation of the sound system and the organ speaker system that is being used.

The Tagalog Bible study group completed their study of two books in 2010: Philippians and Ephesians. Kurt Heckmann had been attending even before the Baxters left, and Robert Dacquel wrote that he was grateful for Kurt's help as they shared the teaching. Many people hosted the study in their homes. Bob and Editha Deshaies were new to the group but did not mind crossing the Martinez bridge and came to most of the studies. TBS would celebrate its eighth year in February, 2011. Robert Dacquel signed off on his annual report with, "Humbleness and joy, unity and love among our family, the body, the church. These are the dominant themes we learned from the books. May we apply them experientially in our lives and extend it to the needy ones. All for His glory!"

A new ministry and outreach began in 2010 under the guidance of Julio Alberto. “Fit 4 the Lord Day” began when Julio saw a need for the church family to be healthy and in shape to do God’s work. It was held two or three times a month on Saturdays from March through October. The VBC basketball team was formed with Paul Gillies as coach. The team members were Julio and Jireh Alberto, Kurt and Erik Heckmann, Kent Kelley, Justin Ramos, Robert Dacquel, Angelo, Nikko and Serena Santos, John Dee, Chris Celeri, James Cabanatan, Robert Peterson, Matthew Cox, and Officer Adam Haskins. Others enjoy running or walking on the track and field. A devotional is given and prayer. Julio reported that they played in three tournaments in 2010. The first one was the 3 on 3 sponsored by Community Bible Church held in the American Canyon gym on March 12. VBC won the first two games. The second tournament was the one VBC sponsored against Calvary of Grace Bible Church on August 28. VBC were the champions there. The third tournament, sponsored by Delta Baptist Church, was held on September 18 and 25 in Walnut Creek. Six teams competed and VBC won third place. Bob and Editha Deshaies provided hospitality in Walnut Creek during those two Saturdays. It is their prayer that this outreach will continue and many people will come to know the LORD.



*Fit-4-the-Lord trophies*



*Betty Fox with hymnal*

Carol White began an outreach for the elderly in 2009. In 2010, this ministry was in its second year as a successful nursing home outreach at Evergreen Healthcare Center in Vallejo. Cion Dumlao, Paul Gillies, Don and Mary Grable, Kurt Heckmann, and Carol were regular participants, and Whitney Dee and Tom Winniford came when they could. Carol wrote in her report that it was a joyful event. One of the elders opened and closed the meeting. They sang songs with the people and paused to talk about the meaning of the song. “There is an unmistakable presence of Jesus as we all sing these wonderful songs of the faith.” At the end of the year a special card was given, signed by each participant, and everyone sang Christmas carols with a beautiful solo by Cion Dumlao. It was their prayer that this ministry would continue in the following years.

The work and ministry of VBC carried on into 2011 undaunted. Some of the challenges for the board were the ongoing searches for a pastor, getting weekly pulpit supply, overseeing every area of ministry and maintaining the stewardship of the church building and parsonage, as well as attending to the practical needs of the flock with assistance from the deaconesses.

Dave and Jeanette Theders managed the church office which entailed countless hours of work. Victor McAllister was faithful in teaching the Word of God in Sunday school and in providing messages from the pulpit. Brad Ketterling shared the ministry of the deaf church with the hearing church by combining services at times. Brother Jon Jackson drove to and from Santa Rosa to give the Sunday evening messages from the Book of Hebrews. Dave Theders continued to teach every Wednesday evening Bible study and work in all of his other responsibilities. Lee and Judy Carlson oversaw the extra hospitality needs that came during the year, and Bernice Cox also provided hospitality in her home for those who filled the pulpit and for others. Meanwhile, the men were searching for a pastor.

In February, 2011, a pastoral candidate was being considered for VBC. The board and the church family were praying for wisdom and guidance in this important decision. On Sunday, February 20, the candidate and his family came from Michigan to meet the church and gave the Sunday messages. A potluck fellowship after the morning service was arranged to give people an opportunity to meet him and the family. Three weeks later, on March 13, a congregational meeting was held after the morning service to vote on this candidate. The vote was not in favor of selecting him. There were mixed reactions after hearing the result of the vote. Ultimately, the church family continued to pray and seek what God wanted for His church. We would trust Him.

A Vallejo Bible Church survey was conducted by the church board asking the church family to respond to written questions asking for input on a variety of matters regarding the church. A lengthy period of time was given to return the survey so that people could thoughtfully answer the questions and provide comments. Many participated in this anonymous written survey and felt free to express their views and suggestions. The challenge lay ahead for the elders and official board as they reviewed each response and made decisions in the future.

Razel Alberto, Bernice Cox, Mary Grable, Jinky Peterson, Leonisa Sitjar, and Clair Weyandt were the faithful deaconesses of 2011. They worked quietly behind the scenes, and sometimes not so quietly when work in the kitchen really got busy. In 2011, the deaconesses sponsored one church-wide workday in April which had an excellent turnout. At the end of the year, dear Leonisa, after 25 years or so of being a deaconess, asked to take time off. She was always faithful and willing to help wherever needed. The women expressed that it was a privilege to serve and work together.

Louise Bobbitt went Home to be with the Lord on June 6, 2011. Janet Heckmann's mother, Louise, had been attending VBC for some time during her last years of physical difficulty and had become a loving part of the church family. Louise often attended VBC's special occasions over the years, and for those of us who have known Mrs. Bobbitt from the 1970s, it is hard to believe that we will not see her at the women's luncheons or sitting in the church pew anymore. We prayed for Janet and family, and for the Bobbitt family.

VBC's faithful choir and choir director ministered in music throughout each Sunday and for special presentations throughout the year. The Easter music was from several cantatas, and the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Concert on June 5 was a blessed time of singing before the Lord and praising Him. "It Took a Miracle" Christmas cantata was combined with some songs from "The Dawn of Redeeming Grace." The choir again did Christian ministry at Merrill Gardens during the holidays of Easter and Christmas.

Evergreen Ministries had a change in 2011 when the room they normally met in got changed to an exercise room. The group switched over to using one of the dining areas. Carol White reported that they had as many as 30 people in this small room. They also tried a new way of singing the hymns but returned to the regular way of doing things. Group singing was done with the use of a CD, and there were several solos sung by Cion Dumlao and Paul Gillies. Others from VBC spoke on different subjects to those who attended the services. Carol's brother and his wife, Bill and Sue White, were able to participate when they were visiting that year. Carol wrote, "Those elderly people who are growing weaker and older and more disabled are hearing about God's love for them once a month."

It was a sad day when Laura Weeks called on the prayer alert system and relayed the news that Jeanette Theders died. She left us to meet her Savior on October 8, 2011. We knew she was getting weaker, but we were not expecting her life to end and had been praying about the medical procedures she needed in San Francisco. Some of us said good-night to Jeanette at the conclusion of Wednesday night prayer meeting thinking we would see her again soon. A quietness came over the church family on Sunday. We prayed for Dave, for Jennifer and family, and for Jeanette's mother, Jessie Parsons. This loss was another hole in the life of the church. Jeanette bravely lived her life with serious medical conditions, and yet she stayed busy and faithful in her walk with the Lord. Carol Hastings was the one who led Jeanette to the Lord during Vacation Bible School when Jeanette was a teen. Perhaps Carol was standing there when Jeanette came Home.

VBC prayed for the Lord to guide us into the new year of 2012. The regular services and meetings continued, and plans were placed on the church calendar. The congregation continued to pray for the right pastor for the church, and Kurt Heckmann and the board continued to seek for this man. God would go before us, just as He always had.

Kurt had an internet contact with someone who might be a possibility. Interestingly enough, the West family visited Vallejo Bible Church on a Sunday morning while they were in the area. As they came into the church, some people thought that this was the special speaker for the morning and welcomed him and his family. When the nice family sat down in the middle of the pews, some of us were thinking that they might be missionaries traveling through. During the handshake and greeting time, quite a few people clogged the aisles trying to meet the Wests, but because of gridlock in the aisles, some of us never did get to shake their hands. Looking back on those moments,



somehow there was a recognition. Some of us wondered about this man and his family.

The weeks were fleeting and another thought in our minds was that Bernice Cox would be leaving us soon for Tennessee. Every Tuesday ladies' meeting and every Wednesday prayer meeting night and every Sunday marked off time with this faithful lady. People were taking her for lunch and praying for her during those hard days of sorting through belongings, deciding what to take and what not to take.

Church activities and outreaches continued as VBC kept praying for help and guidance. Eventually, it turned out that Brother Mike West way up in Susanville, California, was of interest as a possible pastoral candidate. After the search committee's diligent inquiry over a period of time, the congregation was informed about him and asked to pray for God's will in the matter. Brother West was invited to speak at VBC on a Sunday, and the process began with getting to know this family whom we had met earlier. Over a period of time, the church was able to hear him speak on other occasions and to become familiar with him and Kim, Josiah and Carolyn. Time was given for asking Mike questions and learning about his thoughts and beliefs.

Rev. Mike West gave his testimony and we learned that he was born in Vallejo and grew up in a Navy family. He attended Federal Terrace Elementary School in his earliest school years and later at Vallejo Senior High School. Mike lived in various other locations such as Mississippi, Hawaii, and Tennessee. He was saved at the age of 21 while serving in the U.S. Navy as an aviation ordnanceman aboard the USS *Constellation*. Brother Mike had a hunger to learn more about the Word of God and to tell others about forgiveness of sin through faith in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice on the cross. God gave him many opportunities to share his faith with unsaved family members and friends, which instilled in him the desire to give his life to vocational ministry. After being discipled by his first two pastors in California, that desire continued to grow and he entered Northland Baptist Bible College in Wisconsin, graduating with a BA in Biblical Studies. Mike continued receiving practical training at Huron Baptist Church in Michigan under Pastor Steve Thomas. In 1997, Mike married Kim, also a Northland graduate. He entered seminary training at Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary and graduated with a Master of Divinity degree in 2001. He was ordained and commissioned by Huron Baptist Church for ministry to plant a church in Santa Rosa, California, and after several years of ministry there he accepted a call to pastor Calvary Baptist Church in Susanville. He has been involved with various aspects of church ministries during his life.

It was clear that Brother Mike West loves the Lord and greatly desires to serve Him and bring others to Him. The church appreciated his expository messages and ability to speak well, his interest and concern for our church and ministries, and enjoyed his humor as well. He knows Vallejo firsthand and understands the needs here. His beliefs matched our beliefs.

On March 25, 2012, the congregation voted on whether or not to call Rev. Michael West as the pastor of VBC. After the collection of the ballots and the count, it was announced that the vote passed—we would ask him to be our pastor. With gratefulness to God for His faithfulness to us, we rejoiced when Mike West accepted. We had a pastor to shepherd the flock again.

Pastor Mike came down from Susanville and spoke on Easter Sunday, April 8. His message was “Have You Seen Him?” He wove together the scenes and conversations of the various people who saw Jesus after His resurrection from the tomb. It was a wonderful message about the heart of the gospel, and the question at the end was, “Have you seen Him?” On Easter night the choir presented the resurrection story in music, and our hearts were filled with joy. The service was well attended and the fellowship sweet.

The following weeks were once again filled with transitions in preparing the parsonage for the West family, and the Wests were busy getting ready to move out of their home. Here in Vallejo, Leroy and Judy Carlson and others went into high gear with the details of getting 918 Donner Pass ready.

Other situations in the lives of the church family were happening too in April. Donna Bradford was struggling with a shoulder injury, Jack Brisbon was having shoulder surgery around the same time in the middle of the month, and Sandy Brisbon was having surgery as well. Meanwhile, the Durochers—the traveling musical family—came on April 22 and lifted us up with their country style of music. On April 29, Tommy Jenkins came to speak in the morning service. He is the father of our sister in the Lord, Joanna O’Brien, and spent many years in the ministry as a pastor and later as a missionary to Native Americans in Montana. Even though Brother Jenkins has physical struggles, he would come at times to speak at VBC.

Cion Dumlao celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on May 8, 2012. Cion, a quiet and godly woman, looks like a queen. The church family is thankful to the Lord for our friends who have lived closely with Jesus for many years and serve as examples. On May 27, Ruth Haynie, a teacher at Cornerstone Bible Institute, came to present her ministry and updates on the school, and brought a student with her, Claudia Stephanek. Also at the end of May, Bill and Joy Baxter drove out from CBI and stayed with Bernice Cox while in Vallejo. It was good to hear about their ministry at Cornerstone and to learn of their new adventures in the culture of South Dakota, quite different from the Bay Area here. We were glad to hear that Bill and Joy were able to explore the Black Hills and travel through Mavis Skalland’s territory. They are also ministering in a church plant, Black Hills Bible Church, in the town of Pringle.

VBC is always blessed to see young people who grew up in the church and return to give testimony of how the Lord is working in their lives. Nikko Santos, a student at San Diego Christian College, came with his worship group to honor the

Lord in music and praise one Sunday morning. Nikko skillfully played the guitar and sang with others as they played the piano and various instruments for the glory of God. The arrangement of “Be Thou My Vision” was beautiful as we listened to the ancient words of St. Patrick’s prayer, and they still touch us today.

An installation service was held on June 2, 2012, for Pastor Mike West at Vallejo Bible Church in the William Graves Fellowship Hall. Several men of the IFCA Northern California Regional attended this service which was led by Head Elder Kurt Heckman and the church board. Rev. Aaron Graves, son of Rev. Dan Graves, the nephew of Rev. Bill Graves, was one of the speakers. The group of pastors and VBC leaders stood behind Pastor Mike and placed their hands upon him as they prayed for God’s blessing and enabling for Pastor West’s ministry as pastor of the church. Cake and refreshments were served and many photos were taken of this memorable event.



*Pastor Mike West's installation service at VBC*

One of the first outreaches that Pastor Mike orchestrated was inviting the Open-Air Campaigners to come to VBC on the weekend of July 12-15, 2012. OAC is an evangelistic ministry of preaching the Gospel to lost people and mobilizing the body of Christ through effective open-air outreaches. Their mission is to take the gospel of Christ out from the church and into the public arena. Paul Adams, a leader from the East Coast OAC, and his wife and several enthusiastic young people came to Vallejo to present their work in outdoor evangelism and to train us. This was an exciting weekend of watching and participating in painting simplified watercolor pictures on an easel to visually portray truths of the Word of God. The Campaigners and several participants from VBC went to Vallejo’s City Park on Sacramento Street on Saturday and proclaimed through visual messages and interaction with the crowd that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and faith in Him who died for our sins is the only way of eternal salvation. Invitations were given to people to attend VBC just down the street a few blocks. On Sunday, the young people used a large puppet stage and fun puppets in the front of the auditorium to give another gospel message. Several of the summer interns gave their

testimonies and Paul Adams gave the morning message. This interesting weekend awakened our hearts to be faithful to go out to the world with the good news.

On a different note, one of the first prayer requests from Josiah and Carolyn West was concern for their dog, Patches, who was missing and needed to be found. For those of us who are animal lovers, this hit home, and we prayed that their Australian shepherd would be found. The prayers were soon answered. Apparently, Patches had been doing her own door-to-door outreach in visiting homes in their neighborhood. She was safe and taken home, and continues to be a friendly door greeter.

The After School Good News Club ended the semester in June after a successful year with the Lincoln Elementary School students. They heard many Bible lessons and applications to their lives, memorized many Bible verses, played games, earned awards for shopping on Store Day, and enjoyed PIZZA! Perhaps one of their favorite things about attending club is walking from the school down to the church building and being escorted by people wearing cosmic orange vests. Kurt Heckmann and the Good News team were looking forward to the next club in the fall of 2013.

Jean Hawk gallantly volunteered to organize a small Vacation Bible Club during this year of transitions. August 8-10, 2012, were blessed days of ministering to children in the neighborhood as well as to our regular church children. Good reports came from this time of Bible lessons, memory verses, games, singing and lunchtime. A few of the children came to church on the following Sunday, and we pray that they and others will return.

Two sad events occurred in August. On August 19, the church gave a farewell luncheon for Bernice Cox after the morning service. Many photographs were taken of Bernice standing and sitting with family and friends. Penny Harden stepped into Pastor Baxter's place as church photographer and has a collection of Bernice with the VBC family. Bernice drove to Bakersfield to visit family and friends there on August 22, returned to Vallejo, and on the 28<sup>th</sup> left for her new life in Tennessee.

On August 20, the day after Bernice's farewell luncheon, Jessie Parsons fell asleep and woke up in Glory. We wonder if Charlene and Jeanette and other family and friends were standing there to welcome Jessie. Mrs. Parsons outlived her husband and two daughters. Jessie had not been able to attend VBC for years, but in the latter part of her life she was there almost every Sunday and involved in the church. She loved crocheting bookmarks and creating thoughtful gift items for the women's socials. With help from her son-in-law, Dave Theders, Jessie was able to attend church for as long as it was physically possible.



Visitors have been coming to VBC and new members have been added to the church. Kim West's parents, Mike and Carolyn Riley, retired and drove out to

California in their retirement RV and wound up staying in Rio Vista. They are so close to Vallejo that it is an added blessing to get to know them. Carolyn recently became a member. Another new member is Dolly Medina, who is related to Julio Alberto. Dolly walked into church one day, saw Julio who welcomed her, and began attending faithfully. Rosemary Frigal, the mother of Paul Ortiz with Action International, and her husband, Antonio, began attending and are members now also. Julie Celeri's mother, Lila Riser, has been fellowshipping with us for some time and appreciates the services. Setsuko Cherechukin, friend of Linda Weaver, has been coming for a few years, and Officer Adam Haskins from the basketball team has been with us in the morning services, and Mark King and Richard in the evening services. Monique from Honduras started coming in 2012, joined the choir and sang in the Christmas cantata, but she moved back to Honduras with the promise of coming back to visit. Fely Obado has been with us for several years and is a choir member. Her father was a pastor in the Philippines, and she has an interesting story of how she came to America. We are also grateful for the friendship of Ching Alberto and her testimony, and the guests that she brings with her. We pray for all of the visitors who come through the church door.

When some of the younger people who attended VBC a few years ago visit at church, it is always a special time of reminiscing and finding out about their lives. Some are serving in the military during this era of the War on Terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan. When Jinky Peterson said that Ricky Calonsag was getting out of the military and desiring to become a fireman, it seemed as if he had only been sitting in junior church a short time ago. Some are in college and others are settled into ministries and careers. We were glad to see Christopher Santos at different times, and appreciated his China mission trip presentation a few years ago. We are grateful for answer to prayer with the employment that he obtained recently. A few of the Good News Club kids come back and let us know how they are doing. Hannah came to visit and quietly mentioned that she is receiving a large scholarship to the college of her choice and needed prayer for which one to choose.

Brandon and Adriana Weyandt gave another interesting PowerPoint presentation during a Sunday evening about Brandon's latest trip to China, and it was amazing to see their unique ministry of reaching those who need Jesus. The ability to speak Chinese is not necessary. Brandon teaches high school and Adriana is a doctor at Kaiser, but they make time for short-term missions.

At the end of 2012, all of the regular church services, prayer meetings and activities had continued, and new ideas regarding ways of reaching out to the community were in our prayers. Pastor Mike obtained *The Gospel of John* printed in attractive booklets from The Pocket Testament League, and the small handy reference guide has been effective in finding Bible passages as we talk one-on-one with people. There are the hidden ministries too that go on behind the scenes, such as Sandy Brisbon's ministry of sending cards and notes to people, and Linda Weaver's ministry of sewing parachute materials to be used in dropping Christian literature and items to people in closed countries. She also sews clothing for disabled vets.



The outreach of the choir's Christmas cantata at Merrill Gardens was held on December 16 and at church on the evening of December 23. It is a joy to sing of our Savior's birth and to see visitors coming to hear about the true meaning of Christmas. 2012 was a year of trusting and seeing that the LORD is faithful.

January 6, 2013, was Communion Sunday, the first communion of the month and the year. "This do in remembrance of me...." A time to come before the Lord in reverence and remembrance of our Lord Jesus Christ who gave Himself to die for our sins. We concluded this service with a hymn and went out into the world and into the new year.

A new feature in the church services is the music that Pastor Mike has been bringing by playing acoustic guitar and teaching us additional songs of praise. On Sunday mornings, Pastor concludes the service by singing and playing the guitar as the congregation joins in singing. Jesus and his disciples did the same: "And after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives." Matthew 26:30. The song "O the Wonderful Cross" sung after the communion service is especially meaningful. In the evening services, Josiah and Carolyn West pass out new song folders to everyone, and these selections are sung along with traditional hymn singing. The evening service continues to have testimony and prayer time, and the message from the Word of God. Pastor Mike's evening messages have been in the Psalms, starting with Psalm 1. It has been a blessed study.



*Linda Weaver and granddaughter Malia welcome the new year in the nursery.*



*The Newmans, Ellen and George, and the Freemans.*

Ellen Luiz had been growing weaker with heart difficulties and also lost her eyesight. We prayed for Ellen and George. She was a professional artist for most of her life and received numerous awards for her paintings. The loss of sight brought a deep sadness, and yet Ellen trusted the Lord and desired to share her testimony with others. She completed her biography *My Search for Love* with the assistance of her granddaughter, Michelle Luiz. A copy is available from the church library. Ellen donated some of her beautiful paintings to the church.

On March 2, 2013, Lorene Ellen Luiz received new sight and saw her Savior for the first time. We grieve with George and are comforted that Ellen is released from pain and enjoying the beauty of heaven with her Savior.

February 3, 2013, was the first-time event of having a Super Bowl fellowship in the downstairs auditorium. The food was tasty and the fellowship sweet as we watched the football game on a large screen—but the San Francisco Forty-Niners lost. This was the same Sunday that Ellie Driesenga came to present her ministry about Campo Bon, Brazil. She gave two presentations: one in the morning service and she played a

beautiful violin solo, and gave a PowerPoint presentation in the evening after the Super Bowl game. Our hearts were cheering for Ellie—for she is the faithful competitor who will receive that special crown from the Lord.

February 16 was the day of the Valentines fellowship which included everyone, the young and old, married and single. Kurt Heckmann gave a devotional after the dinner and dessert, and Jinky, Shantel and Serena presented a fun game time. There were a lot of laughs when several couples came to the front, and the men had to answer various questions about their wives and predict what their wives would do in certain situations. Some husbands “missed the mark” with their answers, but some were right on with what their wives answered. Pastor Mike and Kim won the contest and received a gem-studded crown.

In 2013, the Vallejo Bible Church website was upgraded and given a new design. This attractive site gives updated information about VBC and also Vallejo Bible Church for the Deaf. Pastor Mike’s Sunday morning messages can be heard on the web, which is an effective outreach tool. Dave Theders monitors the website regularly. Visit VBC at [vallejobiblechurch.org](http://vallejobiblechurch.org).



*Pastor Mike and Josiah on Boy Scout Sunday, 2013.*

In March, the church board presented proposed goals for VBC for 2013, and these were approved by the congregation. Some of the goals are to update the prayer alert system (this has been updated) and to increase participation at all church meetings. The new website was completed. Plans are being formulated for formal outreach plans for various church ministries. Vacation Bible Club would be conducted on July 8-12, 9:00 to noon. A permanent storage space will be created for church materials, supplies and crafts at the back of the stage in Carol Hastings Chapel, and updating the Sunday school classroom on the east side of the downstairs stage. The elders plan to establish a leadership mentoring program. The deacons plan to complete the waterproofing of both church towers, refurbish Rhys Miner Hall upstairs, install security grates on vulnerable windows, upgrade the men’s restroom upstairs, and varathane the banquet table tops so that they will have a smooth finish.

Another significant accomplishment was adopting a new church constitution. The Elders’ annual report of 2012-13 says, “This new constitution included a much needed update of the language and format of the former constitution, an expanded doctrinal statement, new quorum standards, change of election cycle and conformity to current legal standards for churches.”

The Tuesday Ladies’ Prayer Meeting still meets every week at 12:00 for lunch, Bible study and prayer time. The prayer list is updated at each meeting. It is a sweet time of fellowship, and all ladies are welcomed to attend as often as their schedules

allow. Out of this group Rosemary Frignal and Dolly Medina have been visiting the sick and others in their homes.

On April 18, 2013, the morning service was ably led by the youth. Each one had a part in the service by giving the welcome, announcements, leading the singing, providing accompaniment, reading the Scripture passage, passing the offering plates, and giving the congregational prayer. This service was well done and the church looks forward to more youth services.

The Durocher Family arrived on May 5 to present an evening of wonderful country-style music. Professional invitations were printed and given out throughout Vallejo and advertised in *The Times-Herald*. The auditorium was packed that night with many visitors and regular attendees, and the Durochers (nine of their twelve children performed) sang and played traditional favorites and new originals using a variety of stringed instruments. Brother Durocher gave a message and testimony, and VBC prayed that the enthusiasm and music would touch the hearts of many who came.

On May 15, 2013, at the Wednesday night congregational meeting, the members voted to name the upstairs auditorium "The Harold F. Freeman Auditorium" in honor of Pastor and Mrs. Freeman's ministry for so many blessed years at Vallejo Bible Church. The following Sunday evening, Esther Freeman was honored with a birthday cake fellowship for her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. She and Cion Dumlao (91) were photographed as the two oldest and most beautiful women among us.



*Esther Freeman and  
Cion Dumlao.*



*Carolyn West,  
Spring Concert 2013*

At the time of this writing, we are in the month of June, 2013. We were blessed with the annual Spring Concert led by faithful choir director, Paul Gillies. Many individuals participated in solos and group singing, and the choir sang several songs old and new. Several old-timers and new-timers came for the special evening of music and fellowship.

One of the old-timers is Peter Webster, who grew up in VBC. His parents, Warden and Doris Webster, were leaders and teachers back in the earlier years. Peter moved away years ago but has been able to attend VBC in recent times. He reminisced about the Bible Memory Association program in the 1960s when he participated in memorizing Bible verses as a young person. Peter said that was one of the best things that happened to him—he learned many verses that he knows by heart, and these have been of great help to him throughout his life. Peter mentioned that most churches today do not have programs of memorization. He can say a passage or verse of Scripture to himself while others are trying to find them in their Bibles during a message. Several of us would agree with this



experience—how grateful we are that we were able to memorize Scripture together as young people.

Ron Grable, Don Grable's twin brother, was called Home to glory on June 3, 2013. Ron and Don were sailors stationed at Mare Island during the days of the first Servicemen's Center on Georgia Street. Both became missionaries and gave their lives in mission work. Ron and Wilma (Willie) served in the Philippines and other places until their retirement. We have supported them and prayed for them during the years, and now pray for Willie and family in their loss.

On Saturday, June 8, 2013, Michele Charles of Cornerstone Bible Institute spoke at the Women's Missionary Society meeting at the Heckmann's home in Hiddenbrook to give a report on her ministry as a teacher of women's classes and directing the traveling CBI choir and handbell ensemble. Michele also gave her testimony and presented an update about the school on Sunday, June 9.

VBC excitedly anticipated Filipino Sunday scheduled for June 30, 2013. The morning service and afternoon fellowship was presented by our Filipino family with many guests attending. Pastor Mike West welcomed everyone by speaking in Tagalog! Nikko Santos also opened the worship service with prayer and singing. How blessed we were with the music and hearing the Filipino choir sing in Tagalog, led by Julio Alberto. Pianists for the service were Barb Partelow and Vic Dumlao. Devon Dumlao, Shantel Peterson, EJ Alberto and Jireh Alberto played instrumental special music, and Leonisa Sitjar sang a solo. Brother Antonio Frigal gave his testimony at the pulpit, and we heard about his young life in the Philippines and of his career as a newspaper editor, and how the Lord redirected his life to give him everlasting life and fulfillment. Antonio survived a brain aneurysm operation and serves the Lord with his wife, Rosemary, here in Vallejo. We are grateful that the Lord directed them to VBC. Pastor Mike gave the morning message, and Cion Dumlao led the choir in a closing song. The luncheon fellowship downstairs brought many visitors and regulars together to enjoy Filipino dishes and a variety of other foods and desserts. May Filipino Sunday continue regularly as an outreach with many new ones attending.





*The Bradfords and Reeves are  
the last ones out on Sunday nights.*

In this historical remembrance, we did not write about changes in morés and styles of clothing over the past 75 years. The photos from the '40s and '50s were quite conservative compared to the '60s and '70s, and even photos of the church sanctuary/auditorium show transition from a formal Presbyterian design with a tall platform divider (sometimes called a modesty panel) behind which the choir sat. The four platform clerical chairs of mahogany and maroon velvet were eventually sold in Southern California during the auditorium modifications. There used to be spotlights on the outside walls that illuminated the two stained-glass windows on either side of the pipe organ, but these were removed during renovations. Sunlight illuminates the windows today.

Our golden pipe organ was still being played through the '70s by Linda Gillies during the prelude before the morning service when congregants spoke softly and ushers helped visitors find a seat. The morning service began with "Please stand for the doxology," and strong voices filled the auditorium as the pipe organ sounded notes of full harmony. "Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him all creatures here below; Praise Him all ye heavenly hosts; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen."

In the '40s and '50s and early '60s, women wore hats and dresses. Men wore suits and ties. Easter Sundays saw people coming to church wearing new outfits and white gloves and shoes. This was traditional in churches for most of America. Photos of the mid '60s and '70s show changes in hairstyles and clothing. Women were wearing beehive hairdos and shorter skirts, and men's hair styles were of longer cuts. Men's suit jackets changed toward stripes and brighter colors. Norman Reece remembers back to days when he was in the military in Hawaii and ordered a custom-tailored suit from a reputable clothier in Taiwan. The suit was aqua blue, and with it he wore a wide orange tie with matching orange pocket handkerchief, and white socks and black shoes. In the '70s, suits changed into several styles such as the Taj Mahal and casual jackets with bell bottom pants and platform heels. Young women had long hair. Women were beginning



to wear pants on occasion, and the hats and gloves disappeared. In the '80s, women were curling their bangs into tsunami waves, and men were also sporting hairstyles with surfer waves. In the '90s, eyeglass frames changed. Have we ever seen before or after such large eyeglass frames? By 2000, suits and dresses had faded into casual attire, and hairstyles now range from long hair to no hair.

The conclusion of church services has also changed over time. In years past, the organ would softly play "Just As I Am" or "Softly and Tenderly," and quiet moments of an altar call were given for anyone to come forward to pray. In those days, people would step forward. This has changed in most churches today. Some of our services in the past have ended with prayer and a challenge for people to think about it. We have reached out to people gently. The church prays for wisdom and guidance in helping individuals who are without Christ to take that step toward Him.

On a historical note about the church building today, the St. Vincent Hill Historical Committee advised that our pipe organ (one of two identical organs; the other one is in Seattle) and the church bell and stained-glass windows are historic and vital to the original building. Their advice is that these should not be removed.

In 2041 (28 years away), the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VBC will no doubt be celebrated by the church family. Some people today will live to see it. Perhaps the Lord will come for us before that. What will become of VBC during the tribulation period?

The early Christians painted and engraved Christian symbols on places of worship and in secret places to give fellow persecuted believers encouragement. Today we still see the symbol of the fish with the Greek letters: "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior." Symbols of a shepherd holding his sheep were common on early places of worship, as well as the symbol of the Cross, and the symbol of the anchor. The anchor was engraved in areas and ports of Ephesus and can be seen in ruins along the coasts of modern-day Turkey. We have the symbol of an anchor on the inside of our new Vallejo Bible Church brochure, and it is a wonderful connection to the New Testament churches with the truth that Jesus Christ is our hope and anchor. Perhaps an anchor should be engraved somewhere on the rock upon which our building rests, for Jesus is coming soon and will take us to be with Him. Someone might see that anchor and know that Christians worshipped here. May Vallejo Bible Church be faithful till He comes.



*1 Peter 4:7-11*

*The end of all things is at hand;  
therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit  
for the purpose of prayer.  
Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another,  
because love covers a multitude of sins.  
Be hospitable to one another without complaint.  
As each one has received a special gift,  
employ it in serving one another,  
as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.  
Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God;  
whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength  
which God supplies;  
so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ,  
to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

Charter Members of Vallejo Bible Church:

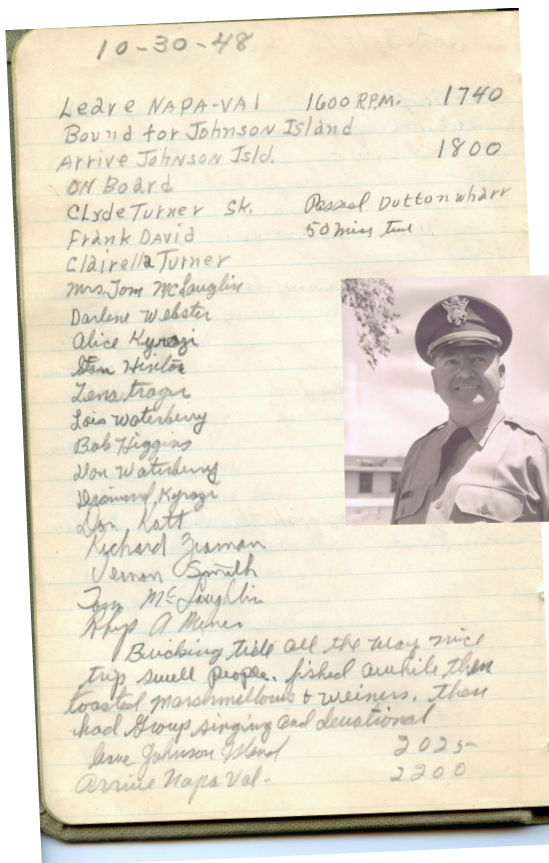
Anderson, Robert	Suttie, J. Lloyd
Anderson, Christina	Suttie, Bess
Cook, Vernon	Wiebe, Arno L.
Freeman, Arnola M.	Wiebe, Edna M.
Gillies, Charles	Wiebe, Glenn
Gillies, Dorothy	Wiebe, Glee
Gillies, David C.	Wiebe, Arnola
Graves, William	Wiebe, Tony
Graves, Madge	
Graves, David	
Hastings, Carol	
Hays, Flota M.	
Hays, Asahel W.	
Hays, Ida May	
Kerr, W. C.	
Kerr, Mrs. W. C.	
Maroni, Sarah	
Schreiner, George	
Schreiner, Delpha	
Stanley, Robert D.	
Stanley, Frances	



*Pastor Bill and Madge Graves and David, 1940s.*

## 1948 Fellowship Outings

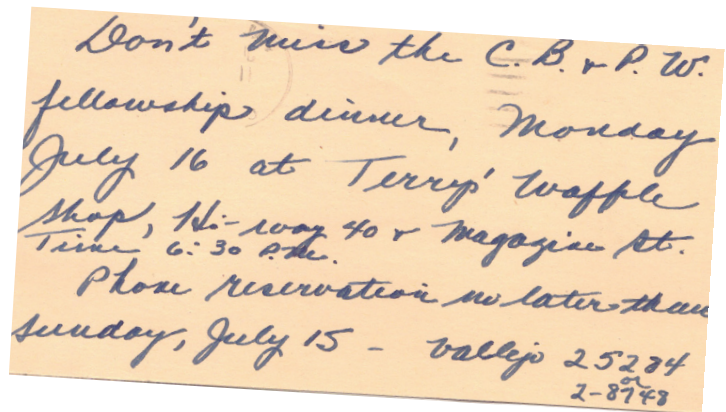
The *Geronimo's* log book shows that church members took this boat from Napa-Vallejo to Johnson Island. They passed Dutton Wharf in 50 minutes time. The log says: "Bucking tide all the way—nice trip—swell people. Fished awhile then toasted marshmallows and wieners. Then had Group singing and devotional." Skipper Clyde Turner, First Mate Lynul Turner, and Bill and Clair Weyandt sailed the last trip on the *Geronimo* on July 2, 1950.



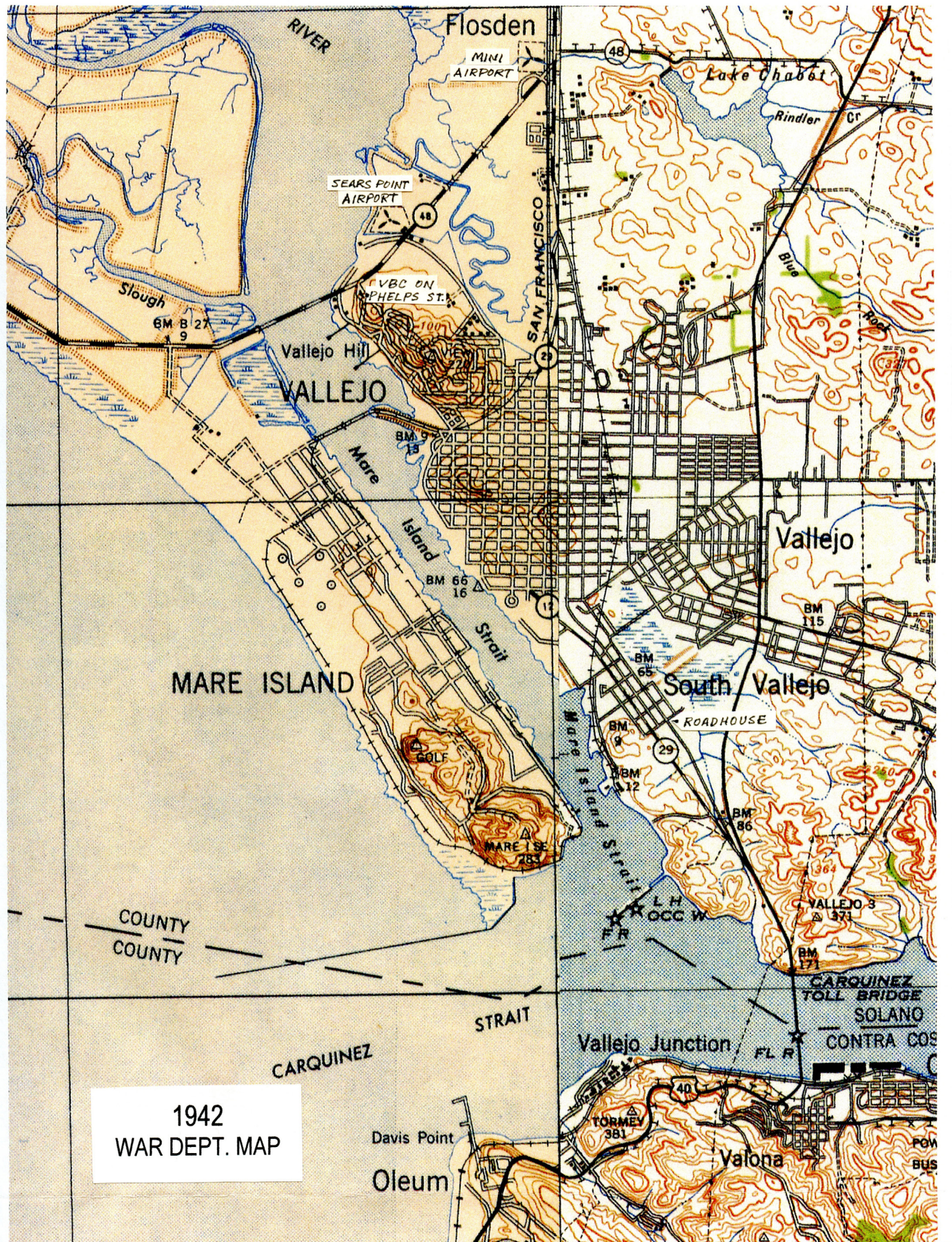
Skipper Turner and his log sheet.



Invitation to young people's fellowship sent to Lois (Waterbury) Higgins in 1948.





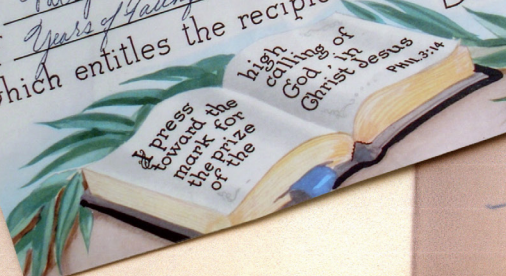




# Certificate of Recognition

This Certificate

is awarded to Robert Higgins  
 of Vallejo Bible Church in Recognition  
 of Vallejo, California  
 of Years of Faithful Service as Sunday School Superintendent  
 which entitles the recipient to Honorable Mention.  
 Date December 23, 1973  
Harold Freeman  
Pastor



CARQUINEZ HEIGHTS BIBLE CHURCH  
 1000-5th St., Vallejo, Calif.  
 WM. G. GRAVES, PASTOR



220.93



To Mr. Schreiner  
 With gratitude to the Lord  
 for your fellowship in the  
 service of our Blessed Lord  
 in the Junior Department of the  
 Sunday School of the Vallejo Bible  
 Church. May God continue  
 to bless as you visit the homes,  
 and witness, and teach the boys.

Madge Graves

Feb. 3, 1957

Prov. 3: 5, 6

CITY OF  
 LE CHURCH  
 CALIF.



Notes from someone's study during the early days.

#### SECURITY OF GOD'S CHILDREN

The true children of God are according to the Scripture eternally safe because:

1. They are born not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible. (1:23).
2. His sheep shall never perish (John 10:28).
3. Their lives are hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:33).
4. They are chosen in Him before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4)
5. They are already seated in the heavenlies in Christ (Eph. 1:3; 2:6).
6. They are sealed by the Spirit until the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30)
7. The Lord knoweth them that are His (II Tim. 2:19).
8. Having begun a work, He will perform it (Phil. 1:6).
9. They are already living stones in the spiritual building of God of which Christ Himself is the Chief Corner Stone (I Pet. 5; Eph. 2:20-22).
10. They are members of the Body of Christ, each with a peculiar function - without the least member of the Body would not be complete (I Cor. 12:12-17).
11. They are kept by the power of God (I Pet. 1:5).
12. The inheritance is reserved for them (I Pet. 1:4).
13. God's people are a gift to Christ (John 17:6,7).
14. Backsliding is a sin, but "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin" (I John 1:7).
15. He is able to save to the uttermost (Heb. 7:25).
16. They are already "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:6).
17. Nothing can separate them from the love of Christ (Rom. 8:38,39).
18. Because He loves them "to the end" (12:1).
19. By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified (Heb. 10:14, 19)
20. They are never more reckoned in the first Adam, but have passed through in the Second Man Christ (Rom. 5:2-19)
21. They cannot be unborn (John 3:6-8).
22. Christ dwelleth in them (II John 2).
23. He gives His sheep eternal or everlasting life (John 10:28).
24. Whom He foreknew, He also predestinates, calls, justifies (Rom. 8:28-30).
25. In their flesh dwelleth no good things; they are saved by grace (undeserved favor... not by works (Eph. 2:8,9).



COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Publicity.....Lucille Perry  
 Music.....Linda Gillies  
 Hostesses & Homes.....Alice Kyriazi  
 Spec. Occasion Food.....Betty Kelly  
 Missionary Package.....Adeline Harned  
   Fryda Ruckman  
 Posters.....Esther Freeman  
 Triangles.....Gladys Carlon  
 Special Projects.....Alice Loughmiller  
   Eunice Barr  
 Jewish Letter.....Leone Boswell  
 Coupon & Kitchen.....Mildred Pobanz  
 Decorations.....Charlet Rhoads  
 Secret Pals.....Delpha Schreiner



Itamar Santos  
 Mission:

RON AND WILMA GRABLE, (Phil)  
 Wycliffe Bible Translators  
 P. O. Box 1960, Santa Ana,

Thurs., Feb. 3, 1983

# Bible Church Missionary Group Meets

The Women's Missionary Society of Vallejo Bible Church meets tomorrow at 7:30 p.m. at the church, with Carol Hastings as guest speaker.

Hastings has returned to Vallejo after 37 years of missionary service under the TEAM missions in India, where she worked among the national tribes.

Special music will feature a duet by Judy Carlson and Mary McCauley. Hostesses are Jeanette Glover, and Susan

Jeanette charge of and Mavis S present letters sionaries and co prayer time.



ORAN AND ARSHILOOS BELL,  
 Cap Haitien, Haiti, W



DON and MARY GRABLE, Philip, Lois and Andrew  
 HONDURAS, CENTRAL AMERICA

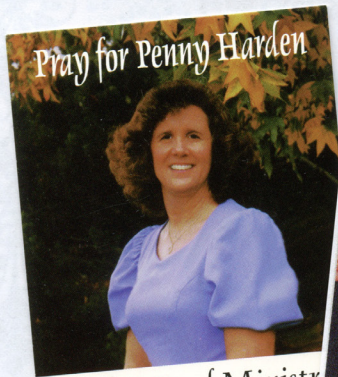


Lina Henning Carol Hastings Ralph Henning

How many  
 cups of  
 coffee  
 in  
 thing

Brad and Hannah Ketterling  
 Mission:  
 Biblical Minist  
 1505 Herring

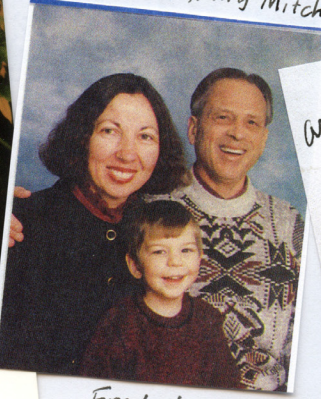




Pray for Penny Harden

Vallejo Deaf Ministr  
BIBLICAL  
MINISTRIES  
WORLDWIDE

BMW  
Fred and Mary Mitchell



Frederic

Argentina



Daniel and Nelly  
De La Fuente



Pray for  
Ellie Driesenga



Brazil

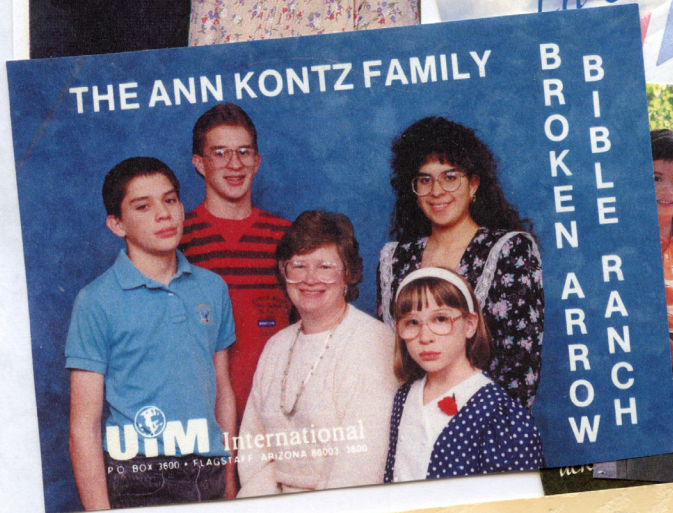


joe & michele  
charles

Please Pray For  
Christina Heckman  
En Gedi-Th



Paul Ortiz  
Family  
Philippines



THE ANN KONTZ FAMILY

BIBLICAL  
BROKEN  
ARROW

UIM International  
P.O. BOX 3690 • KLAUSSTADT ARIZONA 86003-3690



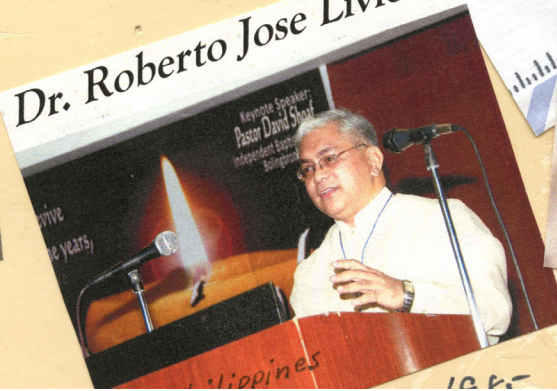
SOUTH AFRICA

Dr. Roberto Jose Livioco



BILL & JOY BAXTER

Julie David  
4/5/70 4/28/72



The  
Barrons

China







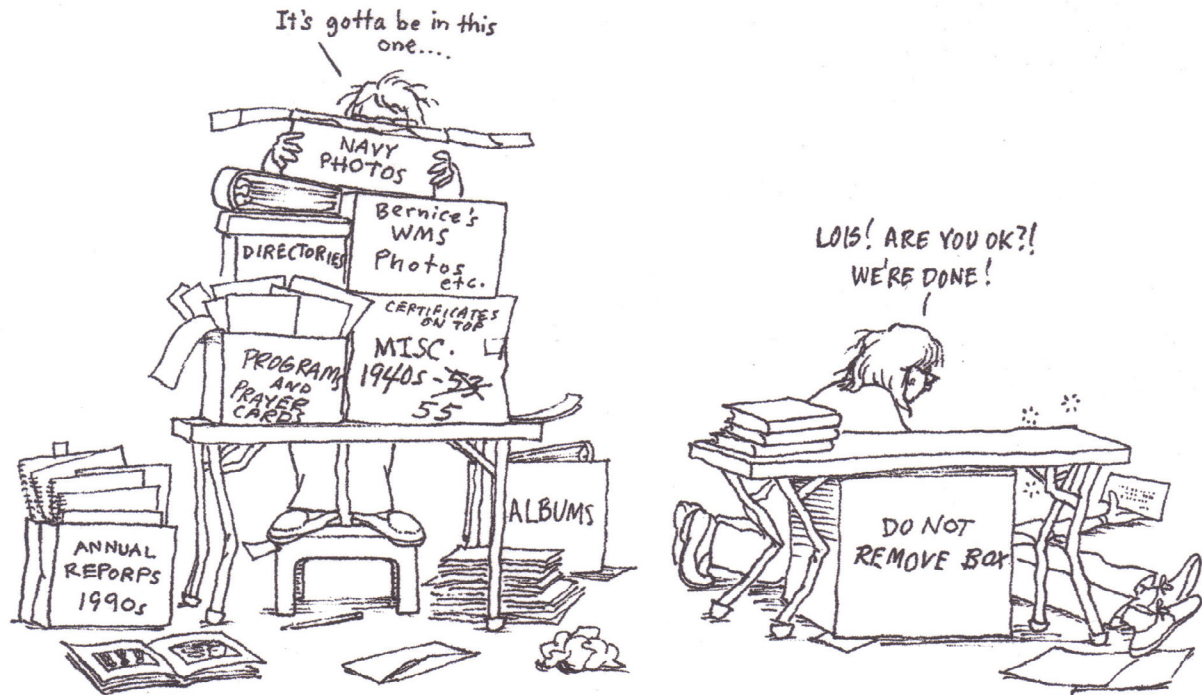
**VBCD**







## Our Story—A Blessing!



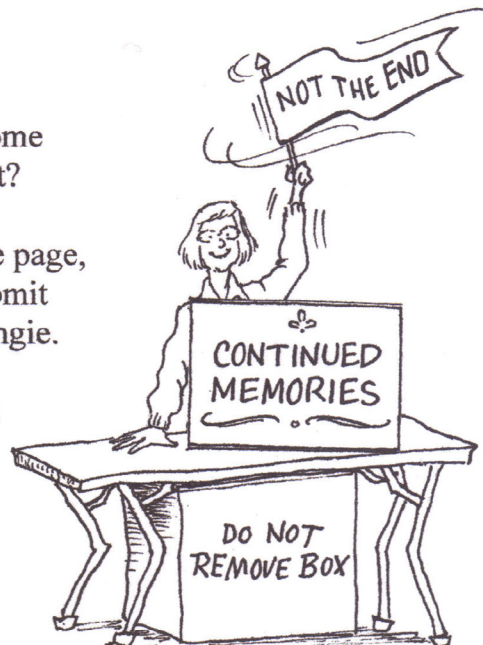
It's not the end of the story....

Do you remember some special story or event?

Write it down on one page, binder size—and submit to Lois, Pastor, or Angie.

A continuing journal supplement....

Tell your story!



Share a photo and memory!



## Vallejo Bible Church Ministry Updates

### Vallejo Bible Church for the Deaf Update

The history of Vallejo Bible Church was published in the summer of 2013. At that time Brad and Hannah Ketterling were still serving at Vallejo Bible Church for the Deaf. After Christmas 2013 Brad started privately telling people they were moving on to Washington state, and in early January publicly announced it.

Starting in August of 2009 Mark Renke came occasionally to fill the pulpit when Brad was on deputation or vacation. By 2011 Mark was coming several times a year to fill the pulpit. His desire, when he retired from the State, was to pastor a deaf church — and God gave him the desire of his heart.

Mark and Nancy applied with Biblical Ministries Worldwide to be in the “national pastor” status. That is a status when a church is ready for a “national pastor” — one of the same language and culture as the people, but the church is not yet ready to call a pastor independent of the mission.

The application process took a few months. During that time Brad and Mark shared responsibilities. On May 18, 2014 there was a farewell party held for Brad and Hannah, and the following Sunday, May 25, there was an installation service for Mark. BMW Area Director Dominic Gonino flew here for the service. Starting in June 2014 Mark became the deaf pastor.

As this update is written in February 2016, Mark’s wife Nancy is not quite ready to retire, and their daughter Katie still has a little more schooling to complete, so for now they commute each week from a suburb south of Sacramento. They do hope to eventually move to Vallejo.



*Mark Renke's Installation Service  
BMW Area Director Dominic Gonino, Mark Renke (seated), Brad Ketterling, Kevin Maki (missionary to the deaf in San Jose with Baptist Church Planters) and Penny Harden interpreting.*



## VBC Choir-Reunion Christmas Cantata - December 13, 2015

Requesting indulgence from each reader, I am inclined to write this article/report in the first person.

Christmas cantatas are decided upon during the summer before. During the summer of 2015, I prayed, seeking direction from God. A faithful choir participant appealed to me, requesting we sing the glorious work by Tom Fetke, *The Canticle of Christmas*. Good input about which to pray. The powerful music was possibly beyond what our choir of twenty-five could handle.

The idea of a larger choir was stirring within me. I remember singing in a large Billy Graham Crusade choir in the late 1950's in St. Louis, MO. At that time I dreamed of directing that choir, asking Cliff Barrows to step aside. It did not happen.

Somehow my mind and heart moved to the thought . . . I will be eighty years old about 2015 cantata time. I asked God to permit me to dream of leading a choir of eighty capable, willing singers, sounding forth the inspiring cantata, *The Canticle of Christmas*, on December 13, 2015, 6 PM at Vallejo Bible Church, Vallejo, CA.

From whence will the voices come? I prayed for God to put it upon the hearts of present and past choir members to respond positively to an invitation to come and join.

God is always good, and this time He brought together 48 voices to be incredibly blessed and be an incredible blessing to a large audience. During that reunion time we sang, visited, laughed, shed tears, ate delicious food -- serving our Gracious Lord with thanksgiving. Many traveled great distances, some from as far away as Kansas, South Dakota and Iowa.

How sweet it was. A small foretaste of Heaven — and oh, the message — Jesus Christ came and brought salvation to needy man.

Sincerely,

Paul Gillies  
Feb. 2016

