

A Journey in Faith

A History of Spring Branch Presbyterian Church

1952 - 1998

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Preface

When Wix Thorpe was asked to write the history of the church late in the summer of 1998, he called me to say that he would help with the research if I would write it. Many of our records were burned in the fire in 1989, and we decided the Session and Congregational Minutes would be the source for this history. I have included only major actions and events recorded there. However, during the years of 1952 through 1998, the elders fulfilled weekly and monthly many of the routine duties that were necessary in the life of the church. Information on the dedication services for the Sanctuary came from church bulletins. All other information came from the Minutes unless otherwise noted.

Wix and I contacted the ministers who have been called to our church to ask them to write letters to be included. Those letters are in one section. In another section is a list of officers and the year their terms began. A register of this information is on file in the church office as well as a register of all members including an alphabetical listing and a numerical listing based on when each one joined the church.

My thanks are to many: to my husband Keith, who encouraged me to undertake this project in the beginning but did not live to see the final copy; to the Rev. Pat Clark for her encouragement and suggestions and for lending me a copy of the history of St. Andrews Presbyterian Church written by the Rev. Dr. M. Douglas Harper, Jr., which was very helpful; to Bill Bryant and Lavon Barris for making additional records available and helping with duplicating them; to John Robinson, whose letters gave interesting information and to Wix, who read the first draft and added information, and to my grandson Chris for his assistance with the computer. Several of you have helped by remembering details and confirming information: Bob and Laverne Coller, Kitty Goodrich, Byron Goodrum, Jimmy Heeter, Frank LaMore, Cecil Stinson, Thelma Stockton, Lu Taylor, Dr. Newton Todd, and Hebert Wilbourn.

Special thanks go to Joan Belk for her editing skills and to Kate Wright for her computer expertise in making the final copy ready for printing.

The writing of this history has taken several months, but it has been a "labor of love." Reading the Minutes reminded me of events I had forgotten and of many members whose friendships I treasure. Wix and I hope our efforts will also bring you many happy memories.

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The first worship service of Spring Branch Presbyterian Church was held on March 23, 1952, at what was called the Dad's Club but is now the YMCA on Voss Road, with the Rev. Dr. M. L. Purcell, Executive Secretary of Church Extension of Brazos Presbytery, as preacher. In attendance were eighty-seven people who came to this service with enthusiasm and dedication and sang from hymnals borrowed from St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church.

Much had happened to bring about this first of many worship services. In the early 1950s Spring Branch was a rapidly developing community west of the Houston city limits at Wirt Road. In 1951, members of the Third Presbyterian Church of Houston, several of whom lived in Spring Branch, became interested in establishing a mission. A committee was formed, and Dr. Purcell met with them to formulate plans for the future. All Third Church officers were invited to sit in. After the committee approved plans, they took them to Presbytery's Church Extension Committee on November 8. They were approved with initiation of services to begin in the spring. Three committees, Finance, Personnel, and Meeting Place, were set up. It was decided that Dr. Purcell would preach on alternate Sundays as often as possible until summer. He and Mr. Cook, Third Church minister, were authorized to seek a student for summer work. Third Church put \$500 in its budget for the first year's operation, members of the woman's organization and individuals contributed \$280, and Memorial Oaks Presbyterian sent \$140. Matthew Dikeman, Sr., a deacon at Memorial Oaks, was named temporary treasurer. Taft Lyons, an Austin Seminary junior was secured to preach on the Sundays Dr. Purcell was not available. He also worked in the congregation on Sunday and Saturday afternoons and began full-time work in June while the Pastor Nominating Committee looked for a permanent pastor.

The Dad's Club was engaged for holding services. Letters were mailed to over one hundred families in the area, and advertisements and a story concerning the new church were run in the Western Star, the community paper. Church School began the second Sunday in April with thirty present. Also in April, a Steering Committee was named to guide in organizational preparations. A petition for organization had acquired forty signatures by this time, and the personnel of the committee was chosen from those signing, as follows: Phil Nathans, Matthew Dikemen, Frank E. Williams, G. John Robinson, Mrs. S. Cecil Stinson, Mrs. W.H. Davis, and J.W. Huddleston. This committee organized itself by electing Phil Nathans as chairman and Matthew Dikeman as secretary-treasurer.

By June 1 the Steering Committee decided to present the petition for organization to the Church Extension Committee and ask for the appointment of a commission to organize the church on July 13. This action was taken. Fifty-five charter members were enrolled by July 13. The Charter Roll was closed September 14, 1952, with seventy-two members. Their pledge to God and one another was this: "We do solemnly covenant and agree to walk together as disciples of Jesus Christ in a church relation according to the provisions of the constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States and under authority of the Presbytery of Brazos. We promise to support this church by attendance at its services, by our prayers, our efforts and our gifts and to seek to glorify the name and to further the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Minutes 9-19-52).

In a church business meeting in June, Frank E. Williams was appointed clerk. A committee appointed by the Steering Committee to nominate officers presented their report. Nine Session members were elected with a three-year rotating system. They drew names for terms of one, two, or three years. Three trustees were elected, and the date of January 1, 1953, was set to elect a Board of Deacons. The Session was instructed to choose a name for the church and recommend a Pastor Nominating Committee by September 1. The name, Spring Branch Presbyterian Church, was selected three weeks later. The Biblical references to the name are in a letter from Dr. Al Moreau in the section "Letters from Ministers." Elders were ordained and installed on July 20.

What an amazing group of men that first session was! Their strong faith and dedication are evident in the Minutes of the session. Their accomplishments in a few short months led the church into becoming an active, growing Body of Christ. They met monthly during the third week in the homes of members including Matt Dikeman and Phil Nathans and often met following worship services to receive new members, who were joining frequently, and to conduct any business that had occurred during the week. They met at the home of the parents for an infant baptism. Appointments of Church School teachers and officers of the Women of the Church were confirmed. Among the committees appointed were Pulpit, Site, Welcoming, and Visitation. Delegates were appointed to meetings of Brazos Presbytery and the Synod of Texas. The names of Matt Dikeman, Phil Nathans, John Robinson, Wix Thorpe, Cecil Stinson, and Walter Pye appear regularly in the Minutes.

The Site Committee proposed the purchase of land in Campbell Place, which was financed with the assistance of Presbytery. On November 3, 1952, the Pastor Nominating Committee presented the name of the Rev. Lamar Hicks, who on the following Sunday was recommended to and accepted by the congregation. On November 10¹⁹⁵² the Session authorized the sponsorship of Scout Troop 478 with nine charter members and the construction of a Boy Scout building on the church site. At the same meeting a Building Committee was appointed to make plans for a church building. In December a contract was signed to purchase a manse, again with the assistance of Presbytery, in the Ridgecrest Addition. January 1, 1953, a board of six deacons was elected to join in the work of the church. Membership had grown to 160 with Church School enrollment of 221. All of this was accomplished before the end of the first year.

Mr. Hicks preached his first sermon as Minister on the first Sunday in January. His installation service was scheduled for January 11, 1953. He and his wife Jeanette moved into the manse at 8317 Highcrest, and the Session began to meet there regularly. Jeanette became an active member of the Women of the Church and the Church School.

Early in 1953 plans were made for the Scout Building at the back of the property. In a letter to Hebert Wilbourn, John Robinson, chairman of the committee given that responsibility, recalls that Frank Williams succeeded in getting Brown and Root to donate used form lumber and plywood, which was delivered to the job site on a flatbed truck. That material was used by John and several volunteers to construct the Scout Hut. John was also named chairman of the Church Building Committee. They believed that a master plan was the first necessity and began their work with that. They recommended that the first unit, an integral part of the over-all plan, should have twelve classrooms, a fellowship hall seating 250 to be temporary sanctuary, a kitchen, and restrooms (2). These plans and the implementation of them are frequently found in the Minutes until completion of both buildings.

The church was growing, and the number of classes was increased. Among the teachers approved were Ann Dikeman, Marge Robinson, Margaret Stinson, Bill Yeager, Sheldon Fitze, and Lillie Anderson with Marie Cowan as Church School Secretary.

The Men of the Church was organized at Chapman's Corner, a local restaurant, on February 24, 1953. Soon after, youth groups for fellowship and a Cub Scout troop were organized. Early in March Mr. Hicks suggested that a revival should be held. June was

chosen as the time, and the elders discussed the possibility of renting a tent from the Baptist Union; however the cost proved to be prohibitive. The Spring Branch High School was secured, ads were placed in the local paper, circulars were distributed, and signs were placed at major intersections. The Women of the Church were asked to provide baby sitting and to provide meals for the evangelist, Dr. Thompson. Ann Dikeman was asked to supervise the nursery, a position she and Maggie Stinson graciously and efficiently filled on Sundays and during various church activities for many years. Five members joined during the revival, the first of many held the over years.

In July of 1953, Harry D. Payne was selected as architect for the projected building and was asked to present a comprehensive plan. In October of 1954, the congregation approved those plans. The ground-breaking service was held on November 28, 1954. The building was completed by the following summer. Dr. Purcell spoke at the Consecration Service on July 24, 1955. During those months the regular business of the Session continued, including providing scholarships for seminary student Don McCune and Austin College student Shirly Dirr. Don became an ordained minister and Shirley completed her studies. The Session also approved a request by a garden club to use the building as a meeting place and voted to make the building available to other civic organizations as long as they did not disagree with the policies of the Presbyterian Church. This was a precedent that has continued to be followed through the years. By the end of 1955 the membership had grown to 398 with 477 enrolled in Church School.

In 1956 individual members of the Session were appointed to serve as representatives to Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly. Individuals also represented the church to such groups as the Greater Houston Church Extension Committee, The Houston Council of Churches, and Texas for Christ. The Pres-Press with H. J. Wilbourn as editor was printed monthly, and even included Session Minutes for the first few months. It has been the church paper since that time and is now mailed to homes of members twice monthly. Our mission benevolences to Presbytery were designated for the Garland Goodrums, who were in the mission field in Africa. They continued to receive aid though the years from this church, and when they completed their mission field, they became active members of Spring Branch for several years.

Because of the rapid growth of the membership, additional classroom space was needed. Late in 1956 Architect Payne was asked to make working drawings for the south wing of the church plant, which were approved by the congregation in March of 1957, and work began. The Broadway Plan of Church Finance was selected to raise necessary funds. The building was completed early in September with the move-in date of September 15. Consecration of the new wing was held on October 13, 1957, with the Rev. Tom Currie as speaker. By the end of the year membership had grown to 555 with 558 enrolled in Church School.

In September of 1958 the Session and the Minister conducted an evaluation of their work and formulated goals for the future. A survey of members was conducted in the Under-Shepherd Program which divided the membership into small groups for suggestions to improve the over-all program of the church. Church officers were assigned to call on every member in their group. Florine (Killer) Miller, D. C. E. of Brazos Presbytery, surveyed the needs and practices. As a result, Sunday School classes were organized to meet during both early and eleven o'clock services to accommodate the enrollment and make the best use of available space. The number of elders was increased to fifteen and the deacons to twenty-four. Margaret McCune was hired as part-time secretary. At the end of 1958, membership was 546 with 750 enrolled in Church School.

On March 14, 1959, Mr. Hicks informed the Session that he had received from and accepted a call to the Alexander Memorial Presbyterian Church at Decatur, Georgia. He and Mrs. Hicks moved early in April. He died in a car wreck in Louisiana in the 1970s, and she died in March 1999.

During the time when the church was without a minister, Herman Anderson was elected moderator of the Session, and Mrs. McCune became the full-time secretary. Session members accepted the responsibility of visiting new members and persons who were ill. They also placed the manse on Highcrest on the real estate market. It was sold late in the year. Dr. D. R. Nolen preached in May and June and continued on several other Sundays until December.

In the early summer of 1959, Presbytery purchased three and one-half acres at Gessner and Emnora for the establishment of a new church. In August the Men of the Church of both

Spring Branch and Memorial Drive volunteered to survey the surrounding area residents to aid in establishing the new church, which became John Knox Presbyterian Church.

On October 25 the ^{SBPC} congregation approved the report of the Pastor Nominating Committee, and a call was issued to the Rev. H. Harold Wells, Jr. He accepted the call and preached his first sermon as Minister on December 13, 1959. A manse was purchased for Mr. Wells, his wife Charlotte, and their four children at 9768 Cedardale. Charlotte became an active leader in the Church School.

In January of 1960, an unusual request was received from the Lions Club. They asked permission to ring the church bell at regular intervals to remind people to pay their poll tax. The request was granted by the Session. In additional actions they voted to participate in the "Mission to Nation" to be celebrated throughout the Presbyterian Church U.S. in connection with the Centennial Celebration. They also voted to pay tuition of all students going into full-time Christian service.

In September of 1960, the congregation agreed to a proposal to purchase the property adjoining the church on the south side of the building. Because space was needed as the membership had continued to grow, they made plans to pave the front section for parking.

Minutes of the Session for 1961 are not available.

On March 6, 1962, the Session made plans to celebrate the "Decennial Observance" of the church on July 15. Mr. Wells was asked to focus his sermon on goals rather than on the past, and Mr. Lyon and Mr. Hicks were invited to attend the Sunday service and the church-wide fellowship gathering. A short history of the church was printed in advance of the observance in the Pres-Press.

On April 10 the church extended a call to D. C. E. Margaret Cater to serve our church in that capacity. When the Covenant Life Curriculum was chosen for study, she led training sessions for Sunday school teachers in preparation for the use of the new material. The theme was Christian unity. In addition to Church School classes, special services were scheduled to hear speakers representing the Anglican, Catholic, and Greek Orthodox churches. Also in that year a successful Vocational Guidance Program was organized to council young people on career choices for their future.

In May our church hosted the meeting of Presbytery and soon took part in the "One Great Hour of Sharing." In September the Revised Standard Version of the Bible was chosen

to be used in all church services. Later in the year money was earmarked from the Session Contingency Fund for the use of neighbor churches in financial distress.

Because of the increasing membership, on Easter of 1963, three worship services were held. Early in the year the Evangelism Committee organized visitation teams to call on visitors and new members. Each team consisted of two men who made calls on one Monday night of each month. These teams rotated so that calls were made each week.

Soon discussions of the need for a Sanctuary and additional education space led the Session Planning Committee on July 2 to recommend that a committee be appointed to work with an architect to resolve problems regarding location of this proposed addition and to begin negotiations with various lending agencies for necessary financing. They presented these findings to the congregation, which accepted them on September 15, 1963. Building and Finance Committees were organized to work with details of construction, special gifts, bond redemption, memorials, mortgage, and publicity. Floyd Clark was named chairman of the Building Committee, and that group began making plans for the Sanctuary.

On June 28, 1964, a congregational meeting was called to define the duties and authority of the Building Committee. Various church members had become concerned because the new plans did not follow the original master plan for the building, and they opposed the new ones. After a lengthy discussion and many questions to and answers from members of the Building Committee, the congregation voted to authorize a contract with Koetter, Tharp, and Cowell, architects.

During the '60s the role of women in society was a major concern. This was reflected in the Session of the church. Late in 1964 the first women were elected to serve as church officers. Lois Chappell and Margaret Stinson began serving as elders and Lillie Anderson and Edith Clark as deacons in January of 1965. Also in 1964, David Goodrum was given scholarship money to begin full-time study for Christian service.

On February 14, 1965, a Ground-Breaking Service was held with over two hundred members present. Various members dug a shovelful of dirt beginning with charter members and then every group in the church. The service closed with a Congregational Act of Dedication and Praise (Reporter. Sec. 3:1)..

Members of the Worship Committee soon began visiting other churches to hear their organs and to talk to Directors of Music before the organ was chosen for the sanctuary.

The Session began discussions of personnel changes early in the year. Norwood Preto's title was changed from Choir Director to Director of Music, and Mrs. Judith Preto became organist. The need for an Assistant Minister rather than a D. C. E. was discussed, and the position of D. C. E. was terminated. Miss Cater sent her letter of resignation effective June 30¹⁹⁶⁵. David Goodrum received additional scholarship money to study for the ministry. He completed his studies and was later ordained. On September 7 the Session voted to issue a call to the Rev. David Sharp to begin as Assistant Minister in January of ¹⁹⁶⁵1966. They looked at various properties for a home for Mr. Sharp, his wife Nancy, and their two daughters. The house and tract of land south of the church, which served as a manse and is now the Gathering Place, was purchased. Nancy Sharp became an active leader in the Church School.

The new building was finished in late September, and on October 31, 1965, Dr. Thomas W. Currie led the dedication at 3 p.m. This was followed by three evening services on consecutive nights. Speaker of the first of these was Dr. S. J. Patterson, Jr., Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, assisted by the Rev. Joe Owen of St. Luke's Presbyterian and the Rev. Charles B. Fraser of John Knox Presbyterian. Speakers for other services included the Right Rev. J. Milton Richardson, Bishop of the Diocese of Texas of the Episcopal Church, the Rev. C. Rodney Sunday, Pastor of Pines Presbyterian, the Rev. Joe Strother, Pastor of Terrace Methodist, Dr. John W. Lancaster, Pastor of First Presbyterian, the Rev. James Brock, Associate Minister of Memorial Drive Presbyterian. Music for those services included the Sacred Chorale from First Methodist, the Spring Branch High School Choir, and choir members from other neighboring Presbyterian churches who joined members of our choir.

Also in October our church participated in the "Billy Graham Crusade" held in the Dome.

In March of 1966, a motion passed to have a Family Vacation Church School in August to be held in the evenings for a week, and various classes were held both for children and adults. This plan was followed later in the year and proved to be very successful. Also in March thirty-eight young people who had completed the Communicates Class were received into the full fellowship of the church. On October 9 a call was issued to the Rev. David Sharp to serve the congregation as Associate Minister and to engage in a joint ministry with the pastor. The effective date was January 1, 1967. On November 20 permission was granted to

the Women of the Church to organize and operate on the premises a Mothers-Day-Out Nursery. This activity was successful for many years.

On March 5, 1967, at a special meeting of Session at 3 p.m. forty-four young people joined the church. In April the first African-American applied for membership and was received into the full fellowship of the church. In September the Session extended an invitation to the Senior High Fellowship to attend a Session meeting of their choice. No membership numbers were reported in the Minutes.

At a called meeting of the Session on January 14, 1968, Mr. Wells announced that he had been invited by First Presbyterian Church of Bryan to be their pastor. He asked to leave on February 5, and on February 18, Mr. Sharp advised that a call had been extended to him by first Presbyterian Church of Houston to serve as one of their pastors. He requested that his pastoral relationship with Spring Branch Presbyterian be dissolved. Because his young children were students in Spring Branch schools, his request to continue in the manse until the end of the school year was granted. Dr. Charles King served a Interim Supply Minister beginning April 28 and served as moderator of the Session.

On April 7, 1968, at a special meeting of the Session, twenty-five members of the Communicates Class were introduced and received into the full fellowship of the church. On April 28 the Senior High Fellowship planned and presented the first Folk Mass at a Folk Vesper Service in the Sanctuary under the supervision of the Worship Committee. It was well received by many members who attended.

On May 15, 1968, the Pastor Nominating Committee presented their choice of the Rev. R.L. Ferguson to the Session, and on June 2 the congregation voted to issue him a call. He and his wife Fran and their son John moved into the manse on Campbell. Their two daughters were grown and did not live in Houston. After teaching full time in Spring Branch, Fran continued graduate studies and received her doctorate in education. In addition to her activities in the church, she served in the Cy-Fair District as a Director of Curriculum. Mr. Ferguson preached his first sermon as pastor early in July. The manse at 9768 Cedardale was put on the real estate market.

On July 16 a discussion arose regarding the possibility of obtaining an Assistant or Associate Minister. Mr. Ferguson appointed a committee, later elected by the congregation as the Pastor Nominating Committee to study the possibility.

On August 20, pamphlets for distribution were received from General Assembly to be studied by the elders on the "Proposed Plan of Union between the Reformed Church in America and the Presbyterian Church in the United States." Also, a motion passed to place Bibles in all Sanctuary pews. The Bibles were purchased by special contributions. Many of those were made by members who purchased at least as many as their own family would need for worship. Scholarship money was allocated to Genie Pannell to continue her studies toward full-time Christian service. She became a Director of Christian Education.

On September 20, 1968, the Pastor Nominating Committee presented the name of the Rev. Walter B. Funk as Associate Minister effective October 15. This was passed by the congregation. Mr. Funk was single but planned to marry Elenor Newton of Rockdale, Texas, on December 28. She became a member of our church the following February 9 and later taught a Church School class for children.

In November the Worship Committee presented their recommendations for a "Wedding Policy" including the definition and Biblical background of the Christian marriage, the Minister's responsibility, and the bridal party's responsibility. Those policies have continued to be followed though the years with only a few revisions. The Session also accepted the "Presbyterian Survey Every Member Plan" recommended by General Assembly which provided that everyone who wanted a subscription would receive one. Late in November a teenage basketball team, organized earlier, participated in the City Church League and later won the championship. Membership at the end of 1968 was 1,004 with 797 enrolled in Church School.

At the beginning of 1969, two members of the congregation began plans for full-time Christian service. At a called meeting of the Session on January 12, Dr. Walter Hull stated that he was seeking their endorsement of his application to the Board of World Missions to serve as a medical missionary in a hospital in the Congo for a term of three years. Dr. and Mrs. Hull (Nancy) served in that capacity for many years. On January 21 Reed Montgomery was interviewed as a candidate for the ministry, and the Session recommended him to Brazos Presbytery. He later completed his studies and was ordained. On March 18 the amount of \$2,400 was added to the budget to sponsor two missionary families in the Congo for one year. On April 15 the Communicates Class of eleven members was received. Also on April 15, the Commitment Committee reported that a Special Needs Prayer Chain should be considered. It

was organized as the Prayer Chain and began operation with forty members in May. It continued and is an active group in the church today. On May 13 the Worship Committee presented a written report on "Christian Faith and Christian Funerals" which was adopted.

In November a Wednesday Evening Bible Study was organized with Mr. Ferguson leading the discussion. Membership in the church at the end of 1969 was 942 with 518 enrolled in Church School.

On January 20, 1970, the Worship Committee was given jurisdiction over Memorial Fund money. They decided that it should be spent according to wishes of the family, and if no wish was expressed, the money should be spent for a suitable memorial. This policy continues today.

In February Mrs. Ann Fosbury, chairman of Strengthening the Church Committee, reported the possibility of establishing a Day Care Center at the Church. The Session approved of the concept. A called meeting of the congregation was set for March after worship to hear the recommendation for the formation of an Interim Day Care Center Committee to study the possibility. Mrs. Fosbury was named chairman to develop a plan and determine the costs. Those plans were presented to the Session on April 21, and at a called meeting on April 26, the motion passed to establish a Day Care School; to prepare a non-profit charter, budget, and operating plan; to establish a special fund for donations from the congregation of approximately \$5,000.00 for equipment, administration, and necessary remodeling for the care of sixty children by August 17; and to obtain a supplemental loan of \$5,000.00. They voted to consider the center a mission of the church. On June 16 a permanent board was appointed with Ann Fosbury as Chairman, Betty Deutch, Gene McDivitt, Jim Lamar, and Nancy Mannel as members. By this date members of the congregation had contributed \$4,832.00, and on September 6 a loan of \$2,500 from Brazos Presbytery was secured to purchase a bus. Later Evelyn Farmer was named director, and on August 18 an "Operating Plan for Spring Branch Presbyterian Day School" was approved. By October 20 sixty-five children were enrolled.

Other significant changes were made during the year. On January 20 discussion began regarding a unicameral board for our church. The Session and the Diaconate met in a joint meeting on March 17 to hear two speakers, pro and con. Later this change was adopted by the congregation and is in effect today. In April a multi-denominational Christian Education

program was organized to be sponsored by Spring Branch area churches for some 133 retarded children in the area. Lewis Lee was appointed to be our representative in the neighborhood Council/Study Group to determine the need and mechanics for work with these children. On May 12 twenty-five members of the Communicates Class were introduced to the Session with confirmation set for May 17. These young churchmen were encouraged to attend a meeting of the Session and the Diaconate. The Session voted to have a youth member on each Session committee. They also gave approval for high school seniors, with parental consent, to teach in the Pre-School and Elementary Divisions of the Church School.

On September 15 Mr. Ferguson reported that he had been asked to serve on the Commission on the Minister and His Work for the Class of 1973 for Brazos Presbytery. He served in that capacity. At the same meeting a report was received from the Mothers-Day-Out that twenty-two children were registered. In November Mr. Ferguson and Mr. Funk were active in organizing a new parish in the Champions area of Houston. Later, Mr. Funk helped organize and staff the Children's Division of the new area church, and our Church School leaders were asked to help in setting up their education program. At the end of 1970, church membership was 939, and 506 were enrolled in Church School.

On January 3, 1971, at a congregational meeting, church members passed a policy stating that the church officers who had completed a full term of three years would not be eligible for a nomination to that office for a period of one year. An officer who had recently served only a part term would be eligible. This policy is in effect today. On January 17 thirteen members of the Communicants Class were received into the full fellowship of the church.

On February 16 the Service Committee reported to the Session on several activities. The youth were participating in tutoring and recreational supervision in the Carverville area. The Women of the Church began participating in the Laubach Reading Program, and the Men of the Church were giving assistance to the Savannah Collier Library with their building program. One member was working in the office at Irvington Village. Also in February Mothers-Day-Out increased from one to two days a week.

In April Mr. Ferguson and Mr. Funk conducted new member orientation of three or four hours known as "Welcome Aboard" during the Church School hour. Revival and renewal meetings, led by the Rev. Bob Frere of Presbytery, were held in the following month.

They were well attended. In September at the end of the first year, attendance in the Day School was ninety-eight with a staff of eleven plus a cook, bus driver, and part-time janitor. The director, Evelyn Farmer, was commended on her leadership. Also in that month Dr. Hull invited a high school student to spend the summer of 1972 with the mission in the Congo.

On September 5 Norwood and Judith Preto resigned their positions of leadership in the music program, effective October 3. Tim D. Wilborn was issued a call as Minister of Music and began on November 1. The fall Communicates Class of twelve was confirmed on November 21. Membership at the end of 1971 was 917 members with 504 enrolled in Church School.

On January 18, 1972, the Worship Committee proposed that women should be asked to serve as ushers. This recommendation was adopted and has been in effect since then. Also in that meeting our elders, as well as elders from all churches in Presbytery, were asked to attend a "Plan of Union Forum" at St. Phillip Presbyterian Church. On March 21 fourteen members of the Communicates Class were received. At that meeting a motion passed to solicit contributions of \$3,000.00 for two young people to accept Dr. Hull's invitation to spend two months during the summer at the mission in the Congo. A committee selected Andy LaMore and Karen Coller, who left in June. Andy worked on the water system, while Karen taught English to the male nurses at the hospital. Nancy Hull was in charge of the program. Karen also fed a young child who suffered from malnutrition and weighed only twenty-six pounds. On their return the Hulls reported that the work done by Andy and Karen was excellent.

Many changes occurred in the administration. On April 18 Mr. Funk advised that he had accepted a call from the First Presbyterian Church in Lafayette, Louisiana. Margaret McCune had earlier made her plans for retirement, but Mr. Ferguson asked that she serve as a part time "Parish Visitor." She assumed those duties on retirement. The Session voted not to call an Associate Minister at that time, and Tim Wilborn's responsibilities were changed to Minister of Music and Youth Activities. The Session voted to hire an executive secretary to serve as the manager of the church's administrative affairs and to be in charge of the church office. In December Carol Mellor was named Church Secretary and the Coordinator of Administration. The Session voted to recommend to the congregation the plan to eliminate the office of deacon and adopt the unicameral organization effective on January 1, 1973. At a

congregational meeting on July 23, 1972, after debate, questions, and discussion, the congregation voted in favor of the motion for the new organization. On June 4, Gary Clay was hired to serve three summer months as coordinator of Educational Services. At the end of that time, he was asked to remain until the following June.

In August, Don McGarity received scholarship money. He was the Spring Branch Presbyterian Church candidate to the Presbyterian ministry. He was later ordained. In the fall, in order to help the congregation know new members, Jesse Smith took a picture of each and placed them on the bulletin board for several weeks. On December 19 eighteen members of the Communicates Class were received and welcomed. Membership at the end of 1972 was 906 with 534 enrolled in Church School.

On March 20, 1973, "Concern '73" a plan to improve congregational communications for adults, youth, and shut-ins was approved. The three principal goals were to educate the congregation, to communicate with them, and to emphasize that their concerns would be heard and acted upon. By June 19 one hundred four adults, fifty youth, and thirty-one elders had participated, and several suggestions had been put into action.

On August 21 a letter was received from Presbytery's Witness Committee concerning plans for special services to apartment dwellers. As a result, our Christian Action Committee placed brochures and directories in apartment offices in our area.

On September 18 Lewis Holmes asked that he be recommended to Presbytery's Candidacy Committee. After interviewing him and reviewing his qualifications, the Session recommended him. He later served our church as a part of his training. An Order of Worship from the memorial service for the Rev. Harold Wells in First Presbyterian Church of Bryan on September 12 had been received by Mr. Ferguson and was shared with the Session. Plans were made for the securing of a student intern from the Family Study and Consultation Center beginning in September of 1974. The duties included individual and family counseling and leading church school classes, workshops, seminars, and retreats for ten months.

On December 18 nineteen members of the Communicates Class were received with confirmation scheduled for December 23. Membership at the end of 1973 was 906 with 410 enrolled in Church School.

Early in 1974 a "Be Kind to Elders Week" was observed. On March 19 plans for a School for Exceptional Children in connection with the Day School were discussed. At that

meeting plans were also presented by Spring Valley for construction of Spring Valley Municipal Building on property bounding the church property on the south. Mr. Ferguson helped in the dedication service. That building is the city office today. Also in March four members of the Communicants Class were received.

In April the position of Marriage and Family Counselor was filled by the appointment of Dr. Frank Moore, who began in September. His case load was full by November. Also that month a special fund-raising drive to establish a scholarship fund to be made available for persons preparing for full-time Christian service was begun. By August 4 the goal of \$10,000 was reached, and the church trustees were given the responsibility for investing the funds. The quarterly interest was placed in the Restricted Scholarship Fund.

Although new members were joining on many Sundays, others were moving away from the city. As noted in the letter from Mr. Ferguson, some members were moving to the suburbs of Houston (3). Letters of Transfer of Membership resulted. Some inactive members had periodically been removed from the active roll after they were contacted about their wishes. Houston, and our church, were becoming a part of the "mobile society" frequently referred to in the media. Actual church membership fluctuated but did not change significantly until later. Membership at the end of 1974 was 857 with 410 enrolled in Church School.

Several changes occurred in the church in 1975. In January we entered into an agreement with Columbia Seminary to have Lewis Holmes, a scholarship recipient, as a summer assistant for a supervised ministry as a part of his training. He participated in teaching in the Church School and Vacation Bible School and preached a few Sundays. After completing this ministry, he returned to the seminary and the next year became an ordained minister. In June Dr. Frank Moore signed a contract to continue as Marriage and Family Counselor. His duties included teaching in the Church School and preaching as needed. Minister of Music Tim Wilbourn resigned effective June 18, but a week before he left, he presented an organ recital and arranged for the "Joyful Noise Choir" from Cincinnati to sing. Jane Trawick agreed to serve as organist, and Jeanne Leverette agreed to direct the choir on a temporary basis. In October Donald C. Peterson was appointed Director of Music. Also in October Mothers-Day-Out was increased to three days a week. Membership at the end of 1975 was 875 with 306 in Church School.

In February of 1976 seminary student Cynthia Weeks was asked to serve as seminary student summer assistant. She accepted and began as Director of Christian Education on May 26. On April 4 seven members of the Communicates Class were received. A Bible was given to each one. That same month the Formosan Christian Fellowship, under the leadership of the Rev. Shun-Chin, asked permission to use the Sanctuary and Church School rooms on Sunday afternoons. They were here for several months.

In August our denomination expressed major concerns about the problems in society. A letter from the moderator of General Assembly stated the position taken by the Assembly regarding violence and immorality in commercial television and urged our members to give serious consideration to our Christian responsibility. The Session voted to place major portions of the letter in the Pres-Press so that all members could be made aware of the position.

Also in August Cindy Weeks was asked to continue as D. C. E. for one year, a position she accepted after noting that she later planned to become an ordained minister. She agreed to remain until September 1977.

At a congregational meeting on October 17, the recommendation of the Nominating Committee that each future committee nominate one qualified youth of junior or senior status, if available, to serve as an elder was approved. Membership of 1976 was 866 with 320 enrolled in Sunday School.

On March 15, 1977, the Formosan Fellowship was approved to become a new Presbyterian church, and they moved to another location. Also in that month, Mr. Ferguson reported that he had received a call to be the Consultant to the Commission on Ministry of Brazos Presbytery. He accepted this call and began his ministry with Presbytery on April 1. He was given the use of the manse until he and Fran could move into a new house. Dr. Jac Ruffin was assigned as moderator of our Session by Presbytery. On April 10 Carol Mellor submitted her letter of resignation as church office manager, and Mary Sweeney was hired to fill this position temporarily.

The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Celebration of Spring Branch Presbyterian Church was held on July 17 at worship and at a church picnic on the church grounds. A program of fellowship and fun and games followed. Mr. Lyons and Mr. Hicks participated in the celebration.

Cindy Weeks resigned as D. C. E. in September, and scholarship money was given to her to further her education at Austin Seminary. Peggy McSahn was hired as church secretary. Membership at the end of 1977 was 866.

On January 5, 1978, the Pastor Nominating Committee recommended that we call the Rev. Dr. Armand Joseph Moreau, Jr. as a minister. At a congregational meeting on January 22, members voted to issue the call to be effective April 16 with installation on April 24. The Rev. Dr. Charles King preached during February and March. Dr. Moreau, his wife Ruth, and two sons moved to 3213 Elegia in April. Ruth Moreau became active in the Church School and in addition served as a school nurse in the Spring Branch School District.

During the year the session became concerned about social issues. In March the United Presbyterian Committee presented a report affirming the ordination of homosexuals. Our Christian Action Committee presented a resolution to the Session opposing this report. All members signed this resolution, and copies were sent to Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly.

Organist and Choir Director Tony Carroll resigned effective April 1, and in June the Rev. Ralph Tamper was named Director of Music Ministry. Dr. Frank Moore, because of full-time work with Interface, terminated his working agreement with the church. A donation was made to Interface in appreciation of Dr. Moore's work with our congregation. In May Peggy McShan resigned as church secretary, and Jackie Rankin served as interim until Edith Pannell accepted the position effective in July. Later in the year Marva Reese resigned after serving four years as bookkeeper.

Changes were made during 1978 regarding church facilities. The Dorothy Aikman Memorial Fund was used to place sound equipment for the hearing impaired in the Sanctuary. In July Dr. Moreau appointed a Manse Task Force. After studying needs and available space, they recommended that the manse on Campbell Road be used for people-oriented activities, adult division classes, study classes during the week, Women of the Church and Circle meetings, adult fellowship, parlor weddings, receptions, and seated banquets for small groups. Later they recommended that the manse be renamed The Gathering Place. Their recommendations were approved.

Also in July Dr. Moreau called attention to the statistical data on a decrease in membership and giving. Fewer families were moving into the surrounding neighborhoods.

This was a trend in other churches in our area also. This decrease was reflected in our membership of 607 and 300 in Church School at the end of 1978.

In 1979 Margaret McCune retired from her position as Parish Visitor. She stated that this had been a very pleasant assignment. Three seminary students benefited from our efforts to assist in their education. Scott and Jo Leslie, a young couple who were students at Union Theological Seminary, were called to serve as summer seminary student interns effective May 26. Both participated in all phases of the activities of the church under the supervision of Dr. Moreau. The following summer they left for Korea for a year of intern service. Greg McDonell, a candidate for the ministry at Austin Seminary, was given scholarship money to continue his studies.

In April eleven members of the Communicates Class were received. That same month, leaders of the youth groups of the church expressed a need for space for social activities of this group. Plans were made and implemented for the garage of the Gathering Place to be converted into a rumpus room.

On May 15, 1979, the Session voted to reduce the number of elders from thirty-six to twenty-seven. This was approved at a congregational meeting on May 27. At another congregational meeting on June 3, a call was extended to the Rev. Daisy Holt (Mrs. David Holt) to become Minister of Education beginning August 15. She was examined by Presbytery in September and ordained and installed on November 18. In the summer we had a second very successful church-wide Family Vacation Bible School.

Early in the year a proposal was made to Synod to merge Brazos and Gulf Coast Presbyteries. A meeting was set, open to the congregation, to hear the pros and cons regarding the merger. It was held at the Church School hour in September. During the next months we received a few letters from other Presbyterian churches urging us to vote against it. This matter was not resolved until the next year. Church membership at the end of 1979 was 655 with 308 in Church School.

At several meetings the Session had discussed the possibility of sponsoring a refugee family. This became a reality, and in April of 1980 plans were made to sponsor a family of four from Laos. In May an apartment was rented for their housing needs. They arrived a short time later and were introduced at a Sunday morning worship service. In September a Loatian Task Force was appointed to assist the family.

On June 17 changes were made regarding memorial gifts. The new policy stated that the wishes of the donor or family of the deceased should be honored, the disbursement of undesignated gifts would be the responsibility of the Finance Committee, and appropriate acknowledgements would be sent to donors and families. On June 30, 1980, it became official that two Presbyteries would merge. The Presbytery of Gulf Coast of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and Presbytery of Brazos of the Presbyterian Church in the United States united to become the Presbytery of the New Covenant, a Presbytery of both denominations. In November a Korean congregation was given permission to use our facilities at prescribed times. Church membership at the end of 1980 was 602.

Several church-wide events occurred in 1981. Beginning the first Sunday in February and continuing for seven consecutive Sundays, neighborhood group meetings were held. The congregation was divided into twenty groups, with each group attending one meeting to share concerns and suggestions for the church. These meetings were very successful. Also in February, a Faith Renewal Weekend was planned and held in April. Ed Keller was named coordinator. As an outgrowth of this weekend, two new sharing groups were formed to meet on a weekly basis. On March 17 Pastor Kang from the Korean Church invited the congregation to a Korean dinner on the grounds after church on April 26 in appreciation of their use of our facilities. The invitation was accepted and attended by many of our members who enjoyed becoming better acquainted with the Korean group.

On April 12 seven members of the Communicants Class were received. Also in April the motion passed for the church to become a member of the Spring Branch Memorial Chamber of Commerce. On May 19 scholarship money was granted to Donna Harper, a ministerial student at Austin Seminary. That same month the Formosan Church, which had used our facilities, invited our Session to attend the dedication service of their new church building. In June Jane Trawick was appointed Associate Organist and Choirmaster. In November both ministers served on committees at General Assembly, Mrs. Holt on the Camping Conference Committee and Dr. Moreau as Chairman of the Mission and Development Committee. Membership at the end of 1981 was 581 with 287 in Church School.

On January 19, 1982, the Benevolence Committee told of the need of a vehicle for Dr. and Mrs. Hull to use in their mission work in Zaire. The church pledged \$5,000 but by March 16 \$11,378 had been contributed. A Land Rover was purchased to be used by the mission. Union of the northern and southern Presbyterian churches became a major topic for discussion by Presbytery. The Rev. Dr. Douglas Harper, as a representative of Presbytery, spoke on the pros and cons of union at a church supper on January 23.

On April 4 five members of the Communicants Class were received. The congregation voted at the congregational meeting on the same date to increase the Session to the previous number of thirty.

On April 20 the Spring Branch Presbyterian Church Endowment Fund was established. The purpose was to preserve in a perpetual fund all undesignated bequests and/or legacies conveyed by Testamentary Wills, Living Trusts, real estate, securities, personal property or gifts of money. The fund was placed under the supervision of an Endowment Committee to be approved by the Finance Committee. It was invested with the income to be used to augment the on-going work of the church. Although only a small amount has ever been placed in the fund, the structure of the fund is still in existence today with a committee to administer it.

The celebration of our Thirtieth Anniversary was held on August 29. A covered dish luncheon followed the 11:00 o'clock worship service with a special music presentation. Charter members were presented, and a program of skits and name games followed. Membership at the end of 1982 was 549.

On February 15, 1983, the Benevolence Committee set up a \$200 scholarship per month, if needed, for a child to be enrolled in the Learning Center, the need to be determined by the Learning Center Board. Use of the Pres-Press was granted to offer individual church members the opportunity to sponsor a child. Also approved was the donation of a plaque for Camp Cho-Yeh indicating the furnishings in one room were given in memory of Carl Riesel.

On March 27 eight members of the Communicants Class were received. On April 19 Presbytery of the New Covenant selected Richard Tatum to be the youth alternate delegate to General Assembly. At the same meeting the Session agreed to co-sponsor an Afghan refugee family. A relative was the other co-sponsor.

In the spring a Facilities Planning Task Force began studying major remodeling needs of the building. The also asked for and received suggestions from church members. After final plans were completed, they were presented to members at a congregational meeting on August 21. Members toured the building in groups with members of the task force. At a second meeting on August 28, after considerable discussion, the congregation approved the plans and agreed to secure the assistance of the Church Financial Campaign Service in raising necessary funds.

On November 15 Dr. Moreau was named by Presbytery to be an Alternate Commissioner to General Assembly in the summer of 1984. In the summer of 1985 he would be expected to serve as Commissioner. In December the Session discussed the challenge confronting the church regarding the decline in membership. Again they were aware of the decreased number of young families moving to the Spring Branch area. Church membership at the end of 1983 was 503.

Early in 1984 acoustical problems in the Sanctuary became a concern. A study was made, and in March the major change was moving the choir to the balcony. Pews in that area were removed to accommodate the choir and the organ, and additional electrical equipment was installed. On April 17 four members of the Communicants Class were received into the full fellowship of the church. Also in April the architectural firm of Starnes, Stovall, and Daniels was selected to make plans for remodeling the church. The plans for Phase I were presented and approved at a congregational meeting on September 16 with the work to begin on that phase by December.

On May 15 the Session approved a summer program for twenty retarded children, ages three to twelve, to be held in the "White Building" and fenced yard. The program included special education students in the Learning Center. It was financially self-sustaining. One Learning Center teacher would assist the ARC staff. In addition in May, a representative of the Congregational Care Committee reported that letters of appreciation for cookies had been received from our college students. Volunteers of the church had furnished cookies for the students for end-of-year study periods, and the committee had mailed the packages.

In June plans were made for a Bible study class to be held after the Wednesday evening hamburger suppers, activities that remained well attended through the years. In the fall the Boy Scouts repainted parking lot and driveway areas as one of their projects.

Two major issues were discussed at Presbytery meetings during the year: consideration of ministry to homosexuals and the right to life and abortion. At the last Session meeting of the year, Dr. Moreau was named a Commissioner to General Assembly in Indianapolis, Indiana. Church membership at the end of 1984 was 497.

On January 15, 1985, a special offering to be taken on Pentecostal Sunday was approved for the purpose of supporting ethnic ministries. It was recommended that it be taken yearly in the future. In February the pews that had been removed earlier were donated to the Young Nak Congregation. On March 31 ten members of the Communicants Class were received. On April 29 Dr. Moreau advised that he had accepted a call to serve as pastor of Trinity Presbyterian Church in Midland, Texas, effective August 15. At a congregational meeting on October 27, the pastoral relationship with Mrs. Holt was dissolved effective October 31. However, the church continued payment of items on her Terms of Call until May 31. The Rev. Phineas Washer agreed to serve as moderator until a new minister was called. Bob Deutsch was elected Moderator Pro-tem for occasions when Mr. Washer was not available. Dedication Sunday for the dedication of the renovated building was held on November 3, 1985, with the Worship Committee in charge of the program. Membership at the end of 1985 was 454.

On March 16, 1986, at a congregational meeting, the Pastor Nominating Committee recommended the call of the Rev. Jerry L. Rice as Minister. This was approved, effective March 18. He and his wife Myra moved into their home at 10411 Metronome. Their four adult children lived in other cities. Mr. Rice was also a doctoral candidate with McCormick Theological Seminary and began work on his thesis during the summer.

In May, at the recommendation of the Session, the congregation voted to change the term of elders to take office on January 1 rather than September 1. All those who had been elected for three year terms agreed to serve the additional four months. At the request of Mr. Rice, the accrued interest from the Scholarship Fund was given to the College of the Ozarks for 1986 only.

In June special parking places were marked for visitors, special needs, and handicapped. Also that month each Session committee was required to have as a member one elder as liaison to the Session to increase communication. Plans were made to reduce to

fifteen the number of Session members to the beginning of 1987, excluding the clerk, who would not be an active elder. Terry Austin was named full-time financial secretary.

On September 30 our church enrolled in the Stephen Ministries Series to be effective in 1987. Funds were made available for the training of the Minister and one lay person, Helen Hogg. This series, an outreach of the Congregational Care Committee activities, was designated for lay people to help lay people. The Stephen Ministers have increased in number since that time and serve today.

On November 18 a need for a Director of Christian Education was discussed, and a search committee was established. On December 16 the Property Committee requested that a special restricted fund for "Capital Improvement and Major Repair" be established, with an original deposit to consist of the entire unspent funds of the Property Committee at the end of 1986 and also any funds remaining from the building fund. An additional amount of \$3,000 would be added each subsequent year. Membership at the end of 1986 was 473.

In March of 1987, Spring Branch Presbyterian entered the computer era with the purchase of the first computer for use in the office. The same month a study began of the need for a new sound system in the Sanctuary. Later in the year a ban was placed on smoking in all church buildings.

A study had begun earlier on the relationship of the Learning Center Board and the Session. In March "Rules for the Board of Directors of the Spring Branch Presbyterian Learning Center" were approved, which defined the responsibilities of the board. This brought about closer communication between the two groups.

In April the Mothers-Day-Out program was discontinued, and all unused funds and the equipment were integrated into the Christian education activities. A letter was sent to Gaye Pachall thanking her for her work and dedication as director.

Early in May a gift of \$2,000 was given to Dr. and Mrs. Hull to help in the purchase of a Land Cruiser to be used in the work of the mission in Zaire. On May 17 the work of the search committee for a Director of Christian Education resulted in naming Mickey McGall Meyers to fill that position.

In October a tract of land approximately one-third acres at the back of the church property was donated to the church. The cost was any accrued taxes, interest, and penalties. At a congregational meeting on October 12, this agreement was passed unanimously.

Recognition was given to our minister and two members late in the year. Mr. Rice was named an Alternate Commissioner to the General Assembly. In December Karl Melroy and Garth Heishusen were given the God and Service Award for full-time scouts. Membership at the end of 1987 was 475 with 105 in Church School.

In February of 1988, a letter was received from the Freeport Presbyterian Church stating their opposition to the program, "Presbyterians and Peacemaking: Are We Now Called to Resistance?" and asking our church to take a stand. It was referred to the Church School study class on social concerns. In April Dr. Doris Wright reported for the class their opposition to the program, and letters were sent by the Session to the Freeport church, the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, and the General Assembly Advisory Council on Church and Society stating out position.

Changes were made in the office staff in June. Billy G. Bryant was hired to be office manager of the church, and on June 26 a reception was held for Edith Pannell, who left as secretary in the church after ten years of service.

On August 16 a motion was passed to investigate the construction of a bell tower which would be dedicated to charter members. Also, new furniture was purchased to refurbish the church offices. On November 15 plans were made to purchase two oversize notebooks for keeping all 1989 monthly Session Minutes, committee reports, and financial statements. They were to be placed in the church library with each book containing a note stating that they should not be removed from the library and that no pages should be removed. The only exclusions would be items noted as confidential by the Session. Membership at the end of 1988 was 524 with 185 in Church School.

Late in 1988 a Facilities Improvement Committee had been appointed to study renovation of the building. On January 15, 1989, they reported that much more space was needed for office staff, a working area for volunteers, and for storage. In addition more space for meetings was needed, and the Sanctuary needed refurbishing. The possibility of a separate building for the Learning Center was discussed. A public address system was purchased for the Fellowship Hall.

On March 12 five members of the Communicants Class were received into the fellowship and communion of the church. On April 25 Dr. Rice, who had received his doctorate earlier, stated that he had accepted a call to the University of the Ozarks as Dean of

the Chapel and Professor of Religion, effective May 31. Mr. Tamper, left in April. The Rev. Mac Turnage of Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church served as moderator of the Session for a few months.

The most devastating event in our history occurred when the educational wing was totally damaged by fire on August 13, 1989. A passer-by saw smoke coming from the roof and immediately notified the fire department, which arrived with many firemen and much equipment. News spread, and many members of the congregation came to the church on that Sunday night. The Fire Marshall stated that the fire, which spread rapidly to the attic, had started in a breaker in the janitor's closet in the main hall. The Fellowship Hall and the kitchen had heavy damage from water and smoke, and with the exception of a few rooms, the rest of the building was totally damaged. Fortunately, the Sanctuary had only minor smoke damage.

Early on August 14 parents who had not heard of the fire began bringing their children to the Learning Center. Board President Murray Jones and several others were in the parking lot to assist in any way possible. Some of the Learning Center teachers volunteered to keep several children in each of the homes of the parents. Later the Learning Center was moved to the Woodhaven Baptist Deaf Church on Long Point and opened the day after Labor Day.

We were amazed and very thankful for the help offered to us. We felt a sense of community that had never been so evident. The Rev. Jack Boelens from Presbytery assured the Session at a called meeting on August 14 that Presbytery could assist in getting loans and that all churches in Presbytery had us in their thoughts and prayers and would help as much as possible. Offers of the use of their facilities for church services, weddings, funerals, and the Learning Center came from many other churches in the area including Presbyterian, Catholic, Lutheran, Christian, Baptist, and Methodist. Even Waltrip Funeral Home offered their chapel. We accepted the offer of John Knox Presbyterian Church for the use of their Fellowship Hall for various activities. Wednesday night suppers were discontinued. A task force was set up to coordinate, lead, and provide communication to the Session and the congregation for all activities to get the church facilities back in order.

On August 22 the Spring Branch Presbyterian Men's Organization became a part of the Men's Association. On August 31, the Rev. John D. Craig was called to serve as Interim Minister.

At a congregational meeting on November 19, the congregation approved, after much discussion, razing of the remaining damaged building. They voted to hire an architect who would complete conceptual drawings, to move forward with financing plans, and to establish a Master Building Committee composed of seven members as widely representative of the congregation as possible. Membership at the end of 1989 was 506.

The year of 1990 was a year of looking at the past and planning for the future, a time of concerns, suggestions, discussions, and decisions. On January 21 the Master Building Committee, consisting of Wallace Henry, Bob Coller, Kay Craig, Sam Craig, Paul Lavery, Ron Tremble, and Mike Wright, was elected by the congregation. After independent adjusters had determined the monetary loss from the fire, the insurance company paid for the damage in February. Suggestions for rebuilding the educational wing came from many members. Some wanted to rebuild exactly as it had been before the fire, others wanted to build a larger facility. Some members expressed concern regarding the continuation of the Learning Center as a mission of the church. In February a task force was organized to study the cost of the center and the impact on the church, especially in making plans for the new building.

A committee was organized to make plans to present all information to the congregation, and a congregational meeting was held on Sunday evening, May 20. Many members attended and expressed their ideas. After lengthy discussion motions were made, seconded, and passed to continue sponsorship of the Learning Center as a mission of the church; to build a one-story facility to accommodate two hundred for Church School and one hundred fifty for the Learning Center; to provide spaces for recreation, fellowship, and a kitchen; to build with planned capability for expansion with plans subject to approval of the congregation; and to study the approach for financing the project to the approval of the Session. In June, Herman Smith was named chairman of the committee to study financing methods.

Other business had occurred earlier. On February 27, Christopher Hathaway was hired as Director of Music. On March 27, four members of the Communicants Class were received. Also on that date, a proposal was made to have the Church Nominating Committee composed of representatives from organizations within the church. This was passed on April

24 and is still in effect today. On July 24 Mr. Craig stated that he wished to leave on August 5 when his contract ended.

On August 26, 1990, at a congregational meeting a motion was passed to issue a call to the Rev. William Newton Todd, Ph.D. who accepted our call effective September 30. He and his wife Sherrill and their son John moved into their home at 11909 Barryknoll. Sherrill became an active member of the Women of the Church, and John became a student at the University of Houston. Their daughter was a medical student in Virginia and did not live in Houston.

At a congregational meeting on October 14, the Master Building Committee chairman Wallace Henry introduced architect Clarence Shaw of Century Builders, who presented the plans for rebuilding the educational wing. After he answered questions from members, a motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to approve the plans and to authorize the committee to take bids for construction, arrange financing, make contracts, and purchase necessary furniture and fixtures. The meeting was closed with the singing of the "Doxology" and a prayer.

On November 27 the Session voted to participate in the "Adopt a Home Program." This decision was the result of recognition of the continuing and worsening problems of the homeless and the efforts of the Homeless Task Force of New Covenant Presbytery. The Session supported any efforts by the Benevolence Committee as well as individual members. Membership at the end of 1990 was 494.

On January 22, 1991, a motion passed to have a Capital Funds campaign to challenge members to pledge for three years for the construction of the building with a goal of \$400,000. Construction of the new building began on March 27.

On March 26 copies of a report prepared by the Task Force on Human Sexuality, which was scheduled for consideration at the meeting of the General Assembly in June, was made available to any members who wished to study the report. At the June 25 Session meeting a letter from the General Assembly moderator was read, which provided information on the position taken. That letter was read at both worship services on June 30, and it was included in the next Pres-Press.

On June 25, 1991 Carol Ann Widdon was named Choir Director, and in August Betsy Beeson was named organist. The library in the new building was named in memory of

Geraldine Collier, and Mary Cole was approved as official representative of our church to the Presbyterian Children's Home in Itaska, Texas.

On September 24 the Memorial Committee presented a policy for memorial gifts, which was passed. It included provisions that all gifts must be accepted and approved by the Property Committee. The Session had final approval on how to spend restricted and undesignated funds and on any conditions placed on donations. A memorial book recording all contributions was to be kept by the financial secretary, and a "wish list" maintained by the church staff as a source for suggested donations. This policy is in effect today.

On Sunday, November 10, an open house was held in celebration of the completion of the new building. Invitations were extended to New Covenant Presbytery and to all churches in the area that assisted our church during the time that our facility was under construction. Membership at the end of 1991 was 383.

On March 24, 1992, six members of the Communicants Class were received into the membership of the church. Betsy Beeson resigned as organist and was replaced in April by Anita Butt. Another change occurred in November when Vernon D. Carey filled that position.

On May 17 the Master Building Committee was released with an expression of appreciation from the congregation for their dedication and work. Any remaining funds were disbursed by the Session for projects they deemed worthy. On May 26 a letter was received from the Presbyterian Historical Society of the Southwest concerning preservation of records of the churches in the Synod of the Sun. We participated in their plan to microfilm the records. Also in May an ad hoc committee was named to study needs for refurbishing the Sanctuary, and members of the congregation were given the opportunity to contribute to a fund for the bell tower.

On July 27 the request of the Chancel Choir to have an evening fellowship with "dinner-theatre" style entertainment was approved. Members of the choir prepared and served the dinner and presented a delightful program. This was the first of several, and it and the others were very successful. A fee was charged to cover the cost of food, and any profit was used to purchase choir robes.

In November our members collected items to be given to victims of a tornado in Harris County. Membership at the end of 1992 was 384.

On January 26, 1993, the sponsorship of George Thomas on the inquiry phase of his preparation for the ministry was approved. On January 17 at a congregational meeting, the Sanctuary Refurbishment Committee presented their report. The committee was authorized to take bids, make contracts, authorize work orders and take any other necessary actions. On completion of their task in June, they were commended on their work. In March we conducted a food drive for the Memorial Assistance Ministries for their food pantry.

On June 22 a fund was established to purchase an organ for the Sanctuary, and an anonymous gift of \$2,000 was placed in the fund. Profits from the Chancel Choir dinner theater were designated for the fund and special music programs. On June 27 nine members of the Communicants Class were received.

In July the request of the Korean Presbyterian Churches to use the Sanctuary for a three-day meeting scheduled in the evenings was granted. In September a donation was given to Dr. and Mrs. Hull and the Good Shepherd Hospital in Zaire. Also funds were made available for completion of landscaping of the church property. Membership at the end of 1993 was 355.

On March 6, 1994, a congregational meeting was called at 4:30 p.m. to discuss goals for the church. The Session had begun this process at their fall retreat in 1993. Many good suggestions were offered.

In April the Session received a letter from Presbyterian Women Circle One requesting that our church send a letter of condemnation to General Assembly for participation in and financial support of the "ReImagining Conference" held in November 1993, and requesting that the staff involved be removed. An informal group agreed to discuss the Session's options and make recommendations for a written response to General Assembly. Later they reported their progress to Circle One.

In August a Sexual Harassment Policy was adopted. All church employees, Session members and Church School teachers were asked to sign a policy at the beginning of their service. In September a new church organ was purchased with the dedication set in October. Membership at the end of 1994 was 355.

On March 28, 1995, solicitation of gifts from members to purchase the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible for use in the Sanctuary was approved. In May, Jay McKissick gave prints of the twelve apostles and two of Jesus which were placed in the narthex.

On June 1, 1995 Lisa Schultz became the youth leader for the church, and on June 4 six members of the Communicants Class were received. In September the Spring Branch Presbyterian Men became affiliated with the National Council of Presbyterian Men. In October Robbie Jones retired as secretary of the church after many years of service.

In December the Session declined acceptance of the "General Assembly Commitment to Peacemaking" documents but encouraged the continuation of our own peacemaking efforts at home and in our community. Membership at the end of 1995 was 363.

In January of 1996 Lavon Barnes became church secretary. On March 26, 1996, a spring carnival was approved for members to have booths to sell items which they had made. In May, Karen McAllister and Bob Collier were named as nominees for Alternate Commissioners to the 209th General Assembly in 1997 and as Commissioners in 1998. Also in May, Greg Sauer was named Christian Education Youth Leader for the period of June 1 through August 24 and approved to teach the church school during the summer. Membership at the end of 1996 was 357.

In late 1996 the need for a Director of Christian Education was determined, and on February 25, 1997, a committee of nine church members was appointed to act as the initial search committee to fill that position. On March 16 five members of the Communicates Class were received. That same month a motion was passed to approve the participation for three years in a new coalition of Presbyterian churches, to be named *The Houston Academy*, and to name Dr. Todd and two other persons of his choice to serve on the board. Bert Eakin and Frank LaMore agreed to serve. On July 22 a motion passed to pursue the formation of a Cub Scout pack to be chartered by the church.

The staffing in the church office was reduced to one full-time administrator/secretary and one part time receptionist/secretary in November. Membership at the end of 1997 was 357.

Other changes occurred in the church staff during 1998. On March 1 the D. C. E. search committee presented their report, and Denise Wilbourn was hired to fill the position with emphasis on youth leadership. She began a part-time schedule on March 16, 1998 and full-time work on June 1. In addition to her responsibilities in Christian education in the church, she was asked to help the Learning Center with Bible Activities, chapel, and teacher training. On March 24 Dr. Todd stated that he wished to retire. He requested that his last

Sunday prior to retirement be July 31, 1998, and that the month of August be designated as unused vacation time. This was approved at a congregational meeting on May 24 with his retirement date set on August 31, 1998.

The Session appointed an Interim Pastor Search Committee composed of seven members and arranged for pulpit supply ministers for several Sundays. On August 6 the committee recommended the Reverend Pat Clark (Mrs. Forest Clark) as Interim Minister to begin in October. In September the Session prepared a slate of eight nominees, from suggestions made by the congregation, to comprise the Pastor Search Committee. At a congregational meeting on October 11, after a nomination was made from the floor, they were elected by ballot.

Other actions occurred in the Fall of 1998. In September, Church School offerings were designated to sponsor one or more children to attend the Thika Bell House Academy in Kenya. In October, a policy for use of the Gathering Place by a senior high youth was adopted. It included provisions that two active adult church members should supervise all activities, that no drugs, alcohol, or smoking be allowed; that any youth outside of the church attending functions should be known by one of the parents; and that the youth would be responsible for leaving the building clean. In November a request that a new Hispanic fellowship, Adelante!, be allowed the use of church facilities was approved. Membership at the end of 1998 was 357.

As we look back over the forty-six years of our journey in faith, we remember the challenges faced and the dedicated leaders who brought us this far. We look to the future asking God's blessing on this Body of Christ. Other leaders are now facing new challenges, and with their ability and dedication, Spring Branch Presbyterian Church will continue to be an active place of worship and fellowship.

A JOURNEY OF FAITH
A History of Spring Branch Presbyterian Church 1952 - 1998

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Session and Congregational Minutes, Spring Branch Presbyterian Church, 1952 - 1998.

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Letters

From

SBPC

Ministers

BOBBIE & TAFT LYON, HR

6206 LLANO WAY
EL PASO, TEXAS 79904

Ph: 915-562-7792

November 7, 1998

Mr. Wix Thorpe
8622 Lanell
Houston, Texas 77055
(Ph: 713-465-1522)

Dear Wix:

My records show - it was on March 23, 1952 that Dr. Malcolm Purcell, responsible for missions in Brazos Presbytery (Houston etc.), preached the sermon at the first official gathering of the Spring Branch Presbyterian congregation, Houston. Meetings were held in the YMCA building on what is now I-10 westbound.

I was in the second semester of my first year as a student at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Houston was home for Bobbie Jean and me (I grew up in Second Presbyterian Church and Bobbie was a Baptist). I was a graduate of San Jacinto High School, 1947; and Rice Institute class of 1951 (now Rice University).

On that same Sunday, March 23, 1952, I preached my first sermon at the Presbyterian Church in Liberty, Texas.

Sunday, March 30th I came to Houston to preach for my first time (your second worship service) for the congregation which was to become Spring Branch Presbyterian Church.

The "Call to Worship" was:

"O give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name, make known His deeds among the people. Sing unto Him, sing psalms unto Him; talk ye of all his wondrous works. Glory ye in His Holy Name; let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord." - Psalm 105:1-3 (Taken from my copy of that first bulletin!)

The first hymn was: "O Worship the King".

The Scripture Lesson was: Galatians 3:22 - 4:7.

Sermon title was: "Jesus Christ, Redeemer of Sons"

My brief notes indicate there were 45 persons in attendance. The only names I have written down are Carstens, Dirkman and Lyon.

Throughout the Spring, and until seminary was out for the Summer, Dr. Purcell and I alternated Sundays preaching for the fledgling Church. Bobbie and I came down from Austin, and stayed with her parents for the week end.

That summer I was invited to be your summer supply, and we spent three months with you. I was preacher, pastor and visitor. Bobbie played the piano at worship. You were a vibrant group, and here was a lot of love and excitement. You all were winsome, and a lot of new folk visited and cast their lot with us.

As I remember it, when the Fall Semester began I came back to preach every week end until the end of the year. The first Sunday in January 1953, Spring Branch was chartered as a church with 100 members, and you called your first Installed Pastor.

Bobbie and I remember our experience with you all as being one of the finest of our entire career. We kept up with some of the folk for awhile, and always kept in touch with Phil and Helen Nathans and their family. Phil served on my Ordination Commission at Port Aransas, and on every Installation Commission except the one here in El Paso. However, Phil and Helen did come out to El Paso to join us in celebrating the 25th anniversary of my ordination.

While I was pastor at Trinity Presbyterian Church Houston (1962-73), Phil III (Butch) and family were members of my congregation.

This about tells everything that I had to do with your early years. I do recollect that we were invited back, along with other former Pastors, to celebrate one of your anniversaries. I believe it was the tenth???

I am deeply grateful to God for your congregational life and ministry, and for my part in getting you off and running. I will be 70 yrs. old in January of 1999, and have difficulty remembering the names of all those who were important to the early life of your Church. However, I do remember you; and I clearly remember that all of you were a very dedicated, sincere, caring, hard working and lovely bunch of Christians. Bobbie and I were most blessed to have begun our ministry with such a fine group of Servants of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Wix, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to remember and write down this formative part of my life and ministry and of your Church. I give thanks for Malcolm Purcell and each of you. I would appreciate having a copy of the final product of your compilation. You are loved and blessed!

In God's Grace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Taft Lyon', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Taft Lyon

Selected Memories from Spring Branch Presbyterian Church
December 1959 -- February 1968

From the start of our ministry, the congregation loved us and provided well for us. A larger manse was bought for the Wells family, across the street from the elementary school the four children attended. It was an ideal location for us.

I remember many changes and signs of growth: an excellent new curriculum (Covenant Life curriculum); our first D.C.E., Margaret Cater, now Margaret Swarts at Presbytery's office; simultaneous church school and worship services in the fellowship hall; our first associate minister and family, the David Sharps; the Garland Goodrums, missionaries in Zaire home on furloughs; visiting ministers for a week of service (Martin Singleton, e.g., whom I married some years after Harold's death!); strong youth groups and Boy Scout troop; but the highlight of our life there was the building of the sanctuary in 1967. Such a lot of work by all involved and such a beautiful building!

But not all memories are happy ones. Two sad ones stand out: the assassination of President Kennedy, and the reaction of several elders to our receiving a black family into church membership. The sixties were often turbulent and we felt this unease in the church as well.

Rearing our four children in the Spring Branch community and church was a wonderful opportunity. They all loved Houston. I'm sorry Harold Wells did not live long enough to write this himself, but I believe I can say for our family that the eight years here were some of the best of the 25 we had together. Thank you for sharing yourselves so lovingly with us.

Charlotte Wells Rogers

March 24, '99

Dear Anne ~

Nearly everything was special about the Spring Branch Presbyterian Church; from the Pulpit Committee coming to Worship at the St. Mark Church in Lubbock from all different directions, watched by the greeters and the gathered congregation through the floor to ceiling glass windows, to the big farewell luncheon in the fellowship hall where we left over nine years later to work in Presbyter's office.

Our memories include living in an I-10 Motel with two dogs & a cat for a week because the mover from Lubbock broke down between Lubbock & Abilene; And four church officers resigning when we voted to pay our benevolence first every month. (The church was never late or short of its benevolence commitment again.)

We remember: the excitement & the work involved when we decided that all that building should not stand empty & unused most of each week, and started the Day school; the constant weddings & funerals in all their variety. One Saturday we had two Weddings and two funerals. This was possible because of the faithful & efficient group of "Church Hostesses"; the growth & improvement of the education program due mainly to a church member that was a doctoral candidate at the Univ. of Hartford and also became parttime Christian Education Director, planner & administrator, the teacher of teachers; the ups & downs of the music program that developed a youth musical program which attracted youth from all over the area, and a Wednesday night choir program for all ages as well as Bible study groups. We also

Recall the big effort to develop a Seniors' Retirement facility on the church property using a Federal F.H.A. program. It ended with including our Presbytery & the Episcopalians Diocese & there are now three such facilities.

Significant demographic changes began in the Memorial-Spring Branch area in the early 1970's that brought fewer people to all the area mainline denominations as the Suburbs extended to the North, the west & the South of Houston.

Finally, we recall, with thanks to the Lord & to all them, the scores of fine spirited, energetic, full-of-faith folk who made it all work week after week, month after month & year after year.

Love & Prayers

Bob Ferguson

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Pastors: Dr. A.J. Moreau

The Reverend John E. Ritchie



February 5, 1999

Dear Wicks,

It really was good to hear from you the other day. Ruth and I feel blessed to have been a part of Spring Branch Church for seven years. Our good memories and ties with members of the congregation are a lifetime gift we treasure.

I am not good at keeping track of numerous incidents or unusual remembrances to go in your history. I am enclosing a copy of what I found one time in the Historical Foundation in Montreat. I hope this is of interest to the committee.

We are very happy here in Mexico—North of the Rio Grande!!! We are completing our fifth year here. Ruth took early retirement this past year and is enjoying that. Next week we go to Richmond, Virginia to visit our children and grandchildren. Our younger son, Mike, who graduated from Northbrook and then Temple Junior College and then Texas Wesleyan is varsity basketball coach at Meadowbrook High School in Richmond and we will get to see two of his games next week.

Our older son Mark is probably still on the inactive roll at Spring Branch. He is associate director for the Arlington-Alexander Coalition for the homeless. His address is: *2809 BOLLING RD. FALLS CHURCH, VA. 22042*

Perhaps someone from the church office would write him to encourage him to transfer his membership to the congregation he attends in Virginia.

I hope your celebration captures the essence of the past history of the church and is a strong challenge to the future at Spring Branch.

Cordially,

Al

A JOURNEY OF FAITH
A History of Spring Branch Presbyterian Church 1952 - 1998

HOW DID OUR CHURCH GET ITS NAME?

At a Congregational Meeting on July 27, 1952, the following names were placed in nomination: John Knox, St. Giles, and Spring Branch. The name "Spring Branch" received the most votes.

- Spring** *to start or rise suddenly; the first stage or early portion; the source of supply, especially that of a stream - an issue of water from the earth, a natural fountain.*
- Isaiah 58:11 And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden and like a *spring* of water, whose waters fail not.
- John 4:13-14 Jesus answered and said unto her, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again, but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water *springing* up into everlasting life."
- Branch** *A shoot growing from the main stem; an out-growth of the larger body; a tributary of the larger stream.*
- Proverbs 11:28 He that trusteth in his riches shall fall; but the righteous shall flourish as a *branch*.
- John 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the *branches*. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.

Mrs. T. E. Hickey of Third Presbyterian Church sent the above definitions and Scriptures along with the following prayer to Taft Lyons, a Seminary student who was helping the church:

"God grant that the Spring Branch Presbyterian Church may be a branch bringing forth rich fruit for the Kingdom, because it is an outgrowth of the Spirit of Christ, who is the source and supply of the spring that never faileth but leadeth the way to Life Everlasting. Amen."

Synod of Texas, Presbytery of Brazos
Spring Branch Church
Houston, Texas
1957 - Church History

Note: "How Did Our Church Get Its Name" was published in the SBPC *Press-Press*, June, 1957. It was provided by Dr. Al Moreau who found it in the Historical Foundation files at Montreat.

William Newton Todd

11909 Barryknoll Lane
Houston, Texas 77024-4301
713/465-2705

8 August 1999

I was delighted to receive the invitation to write a letter to be included in the history of Spring Branch Presbyterian Church. You are to be commended for undertaking and completing the task.

Your invitation gave me the opportunity to reminisce about eight of the wonderful, happy and challenging years of my forty years of active, ordained ministry. As I look back to try to understand the nature of a Call to serve a particular church, I am never sure how to express my own sense of Call and the factors which have led up to the final decision. It is the work of the Holy Spirit, but there are also human factors. First, I really liked the people that you had selected to serve on the Pastoral Search Committee. They were the kind of people with whom I felt like I would enjoy serving Christ. Eight years later, I liked them better than when I first met them! I also like a challenge; and, when I saw the vacant slab and aftermath of the fire, I really liked the challenge it presented. A challenge even more interesting when there were those (not the members) in the Presbytery who doubted that Spring Branch would ever rise from the ashes. Even the true believers were, I think, surprised that we not only rebuilt a beautiful facility but refurbished the sanctuary and installed a fine, new organ and were debt free in three years!

Finally, as I warned the Pastoral Search Committee, this was likely to be my last Call before retirement and that I would probably be with them eight years if things worked out as we hoped. I had never served a church the size of Spring Branch, but all the church study books indicated that a church the size of Spring Branch was the size that was the most enjoyable of which to be a member and to be the minister. I was hoping to share such a joy with a congregation during my last years of installed ministry.

And a joy Spring Branch is. In reflecting back, I have come to the conclusion that we too often don't sit back and appreciate the gifts and joys we have. I would like to recall and share some of those joys. The joy of a wonderful Staff--I know of no church better or more faithfully or efficiently served by her Staff than Spring Branch. Clearly this could not take place without the co-operation, support and assistance of the members. We had the right number of the right people doing the work. I do not ever recall a problem within or between Staff members. We enjoyed working together and for you.

Sundays were special days as they should be. There was a sense of family, fellowship, reverence and dignity as we gathered together to worship God. The music was outstanding for any congregation, but especially for one our size. In all honesty, I have to admit that our congregational singing wasn't always so great. Most of you thought that, if only the Pastor could pick the right hymns, you would sing at the top of your lungs. I tried but never remember anyone really singing at the top of their lungs, although I did occasionally (rarely?) pick a 'good' one. Faithful members (no hired hands) opened the church doors and readied it for worship and greeted all who came. [Ask Paul Hayslip to describe the one he welcomed early one Sunday by helping change his car tire.]

Have you ever really thought about the quality and numbers of Church School classes and Bible study groups? I remain amazed at the intelligence and diligence of the members in their study and

preparation. It was unique in my ministry. It is a place for intelligent and inquiring minds. Think about the mixture of minds and professions searching the Word of God. Some of the most perceptive and penetrating thoughts came from those with no 'formal' higher education and fortunately still does and hopefully always will.

Have you thought how special the intergenerational life of the congregation is at worship and in times of fellowship? It is a time when the church is one big family with all ages mingling and calling one another by name. It is a place where every child and young person is loved and embraced and encouraged to be themselves and to be all God created them to be. It is a family who cares for one another. Personal needs were noted and responded to, anonymous givers always sought out ways to help one another. I do not remember a time when helping another member of the church family went unattended because of the lack of financial gifts. Times of crisis and times of joy are remembered and celebrated by the whole family--times of birth and death, times of joy and sadness and times of sickness and renewal of health. Visits and chains of prayer go out in time of need.

I remember a church full of leaders and workers who cared for the church and who participated in the community and Presbytery. Spring Branch provides outstanding leadership to the larger church. Where would Men's Ministry in the Presbytery and General Assembly be without the leadership from Spring Branch. When Cho-Yeh, MoRanch, the Pan American School were in need, Spring Branch responded far beyond our numbers and anyone's expectations. You supported a Learning Center in good times and in difficult times, keeping it a leader in the community.

Yes, it was a joy to be the Pastor of Spring Branch Presbyterian Church for it is truly a loving and unique Family of Jesus Christ.

May God Bless the Future as He has the Past,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Nanton", with a horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

MY MEMORIES OF SBPC

When my husband and I were students at the University of Texas, Darrell Royal was football coach, and the Longhorns were number one in the country. When they scored a touchdown during a home game, a feeling of such unabashed joy came over us that we could hardly stand it. Three times I had a similar feeling at Spring Branch:

- * when our new Hispanic congregation celebrated Mother's Day in the fellowship hall with live Tejano music and homemade tamales.
- * when news of Hurricane Mitch's devastation prompted a spontaneous outpouring of food and clothing which filled a truck, a van and a car.
- * when the chancel choir performed Handel's Messiah.

My nine months at Spring Branch as the interim pastor were indeed special, and some memories continue to touch my heart and make me smile. These are only a few:

- * Bob Coller and his magnifying glass sitting outside my office
- * the passion members felt for their church while sharing joys and concerns during the listening sessions
- * Pentecost and all those children with wind chimes
- * the Tuesday prayer group which prayed for me warmly and sincerely every single week
- * the invitation to walk intimately with those who were sick, grieving or in crisis
- * Mattie and Sarah (our new cows) grazing on our farm
- * laughter and prayer with Lavon, Bill, Denise and Sandra
- * the warm sendoff and deep affirmation of my ministry among this rare and wonderful group of people

May God continue to bless SBPC and use her gifts to bless the world.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Pat Clark". The signature is written in dark ink on a white background. The first name "Pat" is written with a large, looping capital "P", and the last name "Clark" is written with a large, looping capital "C". The signature is positioned in the lower half of the page, below the main body of text.

