

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NAPA

The Church Through the Years

1908



1908 The large Memorial window on the north wall was given by Hugh Crawford in memory of his wife Judith. It is thought to be a Tiffany creation with its jeweled top, lack of a signature, and use of gray opaque glass to simulate marble pillars. Tiffany installed windows for the Mare Island Chapel in Vallejo about this same time.



1919 The first gym was built where *The Table* dining room is today. It extended out to the sidewalk, and during the 30s, 40s, and 50s, teas, roller skating parties and dances were held in this "Fellowship Hall." In addition, it was rented out to the local Intermediate School.



1922 Palm Sunday: the Rev. Richard Wiley retired this year.

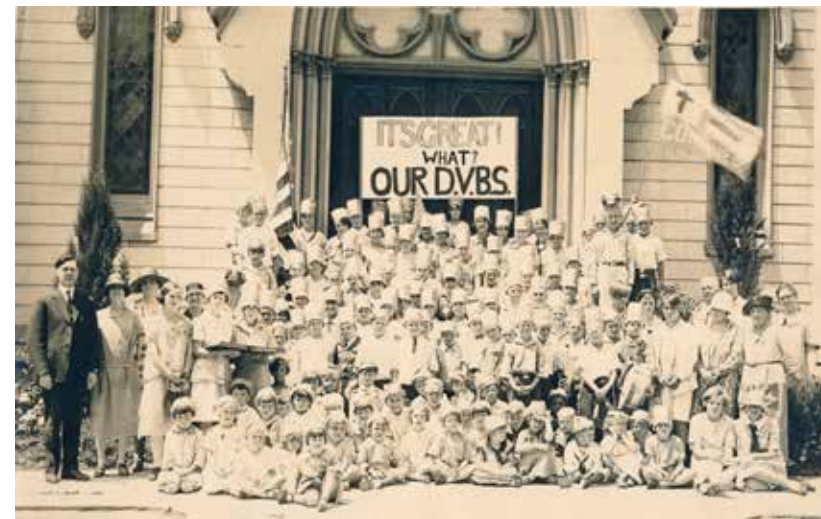
1920

The **1920s** and **1930s** were hard times. The Great Depression impacted the lives of many local residents. As a result of economic hardships, the pastor, organist, and janitor all took salary cuts.

1922 The organ was moved from the balcony to the front of church. Organist Laura Pugh Smith retired in 1942, after 43 years. Dorothy MacLean became the organist and served 32 years.



1926 The Ladies' Aid Society held many fundraising activities to help support the general fund of the church. They chose themes such as May Day Breakfast, Daffodil Tea, and Ice Cream Social.



1928 A very successful Vacation Bible School was held this year.

Presbyterians Will Not Sell Their Old House of Worship

Will Keep and Improve Handsome 67-Year-Old Structure

The Presbyterians have decided to keep the handsome and inspiring old edifice that has stood for so many years at the corner of Third and Randolph streets, rather than to sell it and to build a new house of worship at some site in the residential section of the city further from the rear of traffic and the hum of business activity.

This decision was made at a big meeting of the congregation of the church last evening.

An offer had been made to purchase the property, now valuable at a business site, for the sum of \$80,000. And there were many among the congregation who believed that it might be well to dispose of the old building and to use the money in erecting a new structure more in accord with modern requirements and in a location more suitable to church purposes. There were many opposed to such a move. It was figured that a new church, with 300 seats, would cost at least \$60,000. It was also figured that to properly repair the old one would cost approximately \$12,000.

The question was discussed for an hour and at full length. Finally a vote was taken and it resulted in a verdict in favor of keeping the old church. Immediately the result was made known it was moved and recorded that the decision be made unanimous, and it was so voted and so ordered.

The church trustees were authorized to go ahead immediately with the repair of the property. A new roof will be put on and the structure will be painted both inside and out. New plumbing will be installed. And it will be necessary to build new class rooms for, under the leadership of the popular pastor, Rev. Lee Vernon, church activities have of recent years rapidly expanded.

It is believed that, from sentimental reasons, if for no other, the entire community will be pleased to know that the church structure which has stood for so many years on its present site, is to live on, and, refitted and re-valued, is to remain where it is during the years to come for future service to its congregation and the community as a whole.

BRIEF HISTORY

The late pioneer, Nathan Coulton, gave the lot at the corner of Randolph and Third streets, to the Presbyterians in 1837. The original church was erected there. Later in 1874 the original church was removed and the present church was built at a cost of \$17,500.

1930

1930 Gas burners were installed in the old coal burning furnaces in the basement of the church. It was no longer necessary to load coal into the furnace in the middle of the night to warm the church for Sunday morning worship.

1936 The Women's Association became official, replacing the 63 year old Ladies Aid Society. The new organization operated with five small groups named Circles which met monthly. In 1939 there were 148 members and in 1947 evening circles were formed for the convenience of working women.

VERNON MEMORIAL HALL



1937 Inspired by Rev. Vernon, the church began collecting pledges and forming many new groups: a Men's Club, Mariners, Luprina Adult Bible Class, Merrymacs, and Drifters. Rev. Vernon worked with the Napa Ministerial Association and his enthusiasm was instrumental in acquiring Westminster Woods Conference Center for the Presbytery of the Redwoods. The Dining Hall is named after him.

1939 The years of financial difficulties during the last two decades left the structure in grave need of major repairs. During the 1939 annual meeting a vote was taken on whether to repair the building or dispose of it and find a new location.

1940



OLD



NEW

1941 Money was raised to begin extensive repairs to the sanctuary and a new roof was installed. The interior was completely re-decorated, the foundation strengthened, new light fixtures installed, and pews reupholstered.



1947 A set of tubular nickel plated Deagan chimes for the organ was donated to the church by Eliza Ann McMillan, in memory of her husband, Edmund H. McMillan. They owned the home next door to the church and had taken care of Rev. Wylie in his later years.



1949 The Sunday School tripled in size from 1944 to 1954. To accommodate this growth, the church bought the Annex, formerly an apartment house on the corner of Third and Franklin Streets. Church members built three modern classrooms in the basement to provide more church school rooms. It was named Clark Hall for Ray Clark, chairman of the project.

Approximately \$15,000 was spent on this restoration. Two years later the entire building was repainted and the stained glass windows in the sanctuary were re-leaded.

1950



1954 The church bought the McMillan house on Randolph, next door to the church, for \$20,000. In its place the leaders began planning for a new Christian Education Building and a small chapel. Members of the church tore down the old manse, removed trees, prepared the site, and began fundraising for the project.



1956 W.S. Bickford was granted a contract to build the new Christian Education Building and chapel at a cost of \$128,108. The building was dedicated June 23, 1957. The second floor interior was completed in July 1957 by a group of volunteers.



1959 The Austin Organ was purchased for \$26,438. The Church Organ Committee travelled around the country to hear various makes of pipe organs. After much deliberation, at the January 9, 1957 Congregational Meeting, it was determined that our church should enter into contract with Austin Organs, Inc. to purchase a new console pipe organ. This company has been in business since 1899 and only the best materials are selected for sound quality, durability and appearance of their organs.

1960

1966 Plans were approved for an extensive addition- renovation of the sanctuary interior, including the removal of the chancel rail, the addition of new offices, a library-conference room (preserving the gothic ceiling and stained glass windows), and the addition of a new Fellowship Hall/ kitchen-dining complex to replace the existing gymnasium and annex.



1967 The first gym comes down.

1968 The new Westminster Fellowship Hall (current gym) was completed and dedicated, providing social and meeting facilities for the church: seating 435, cost \$180,000. Mid-week "Happenings" was a program for grades 4-9 and it attracted hundreds of young people.



1970 A new roof, the third one, was installed on the Sanctuary.



Registered Historical Landmark plaque states the church is an "outstanding example of late Victorian Gothic architectural style."

1975 The church applied for and received recognition on the United States official list of districts, sites, buildings, and structures deemed worthy of preserving for their historical significance. A California

1970



1975 The Centennial Celebration committee published a booklet, held a festive banquet, and honored Edith Imrie, who became a communicant before turn of century.



1980 The large Memorial Window on the eastern wall above the entry doors was given by Thomas Wright in memory of his parents, Thomas and Nellie Wright, longtime church members and supporters. Nellie was a charter member of the Ladies Aid Society.

1985 The Abbott Window above the chancel at the peak of the eaves was given by the Abbott family, longtime members of the congregation. The shape depicts the Trinity, and the circles within represent teaching, preaching, mission, music, the Redwoods, and the UPC Moderator's cross, in honor of their daughter Harriet Abbott Nelson, 1985 Moderator of PCUSA.



1986 The stained glass windows above the interior doors of the narthex were made by Kim Moore, daughter of Evelyn Price, in memory of her grandmother. She used 100 year-old hand painted kiln-fired glass discovered in the church basement.

1980

1988 A new roof was installed and copper was chosen due to its many advantages. Besides having a distinctive look, copper is very durable under extreme conditions, it's environmentally friendly, non-flammable, and a deterrent to squirrels and termites.



2006 The church purchased the apartment building at 720 Franklin in anticipation of future growth and space needs.



2014 The church suffered significant structural damage in the 6.0 August 24, 2014 earthquake which occurred on the West Napa Fault. It was the largest in the San Francisco Bay Area in over 25 years. The sanctuary was yellow tagged. Fortunately, the congregation was able to hold worship in the Fellowship Hall during the ensuing months of fundraising, repairs, renovations, and seismic retrofit before moving back into the sanctuary July 10, 2016.



2000