

RUCC Annals: 1975-2002  
By Kathie Blakley, 2009

*Note: Information for these Annals are drawn from the Clerk's records, Annual Meeting Minutes 1975-2002, Wanderings 1975-2002, and personal recollections of committee members ( Kathie Blakley, Carol Buchanan, Barbara Hauser, Betty Jacobs, and Shirley Marks)*

**Thursday, June 26, 1975-** 1<sup>st</sup> official meeting of RUCC at the Morey House, owned by member, Curtis Allen was held.

**Sunday, June 29, 1975-** 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the RUCC at 1<sup>st</sup> Methodist Church, Redlands  
Sunday, February 29, 1976- RUCC joined the San Bernardino Association of the United Church of Christ.

**Year: Nov. 16, 1975**

minister: Rev. Bruce Van Blair  
Rich Blakley, Associate Minister

Event: Special meeting for the purpose of voting on Constitution and Bylaws  
Place: Weeks' Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> Methodist Church.

The constitution and Bylaws were approved and a church name was decided upon, Redlands United Church of Christ.

“ As the meeting closed with the singing of the Doxology and a prayer by Bruce van Blair, the prevailing feeling among the members was one of deep love for one another, joy in present opportunities to serve God's Kingdom, and confidence in the future of our new church.” *Barbara Hauser, Clerk*

**Year: 1976**

ministers: Bruce Van Blair,  
Rich Blakley, Associate Minister

Event: Annual Meeting  
Place: Week's Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> Methodist Church

The first Annual Meeting was held on Jan. 18, 1976. The clerk reported that approximately 150 members had signed personal covenants and would be considered charter members of RUCC. A motion was made by Kirk Dewey and approved that the church should seek to have an OCWM (outreach) goal of 10% of the Church Budget.

Event: Special Congregational Meeting  
Date: August 19, 1976

Two Church Members were recommended by the congregation for Ordination into the United Church of Christ, Richard Blakley and Richard Skidmore.

**Year: 1977**

ministers: Bruce Van Blair,  
Rich Blakley, Associate Minister

Event: Annual Meeting

Place: Week's Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> Methodist Church

The major discussion was about a possible merger with State Street Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). After discussion it was moved by 'Nita Huntington, and approved by the congregation, that we proceed in the direction of a full merger with SSCC.

Other notable firsts were that Barnraisers, a Men's Study and Service Group, had begun (as reported by Joel Hauser), a Women's fellowship had begun, and that Frances Collins had begun compiling scrapbooks about Church activities and members.

**Year: 1978**

ministers: Bruce Van Blair,  
Rich Blakley, Associate Minister

Event: Annual Meeting

Place: Week's Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> Methodist Church

A report was made of the continued work toward a possible merger with State Street Christian Church. A Lenten Series was planned with members meeting at the Church (Week's Hall) on Wed. evenings for a brief service, followed by breaking into groups to go to individual homes for dessert and discussions. The Choir director, Marianna van Blair, announced that the senior choir had adopted the new name of Covenant Choir.

**Year: 1979**

ministers: Bruce Van Blair,  
Rich Blakley, Associate Minister

Event: Annual Meeting

Place: Week's Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> Methodist Church

Bill Dean reported on the formation of a Property Committee which would begin planning for a time when the Church would be independently housed.

Event: Special Congregational Meeting

Date: March 11, 1979

There were 3 major concerns for this special meeting:

1. to approve the internship of Cindi Donald. Approved.
2. to request ordination into the UCC of member Devon Allen. Approved.

3. to approve purchase of property at 1500 W. Olive Ave. The property had approximately 3 ½ acres of land with a house and orange trees, and 4 shares of water. The price for the property was \$ 105,000. Moved by Betty Rothenberger, seconded and approved that the church should proceed with the purchase of this property.

**Year: 1980**

ministers: Bruce Van Blair,  
Rich Blakley, Associate Minister

Event: Annual Meeting

Place: Week's Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> Methodist Church

Ellen Stanley asked for helpers to work on the Harris' Department Store inventory, with the money from this going to the church's annual income. A Farewell luncheon was announced for Feb. 10, honoring Rich and Kathie Blakley. Rich Blakley was leaving to assume his own parish in Dowagiac, Michigan.

Several Special Congregational meetings were held.

The property on Olive Avenue was completely paid for, thanks in a large measure to a \$75,000 gift from the UCC's Plymouth Foundation. A Building committee was formed and empowered to hire an architect for a Church Building on the Olive Ave. property. Leon Armantrout was hired as architect with Dr. Dave Conover as contractor.

A pastoral Search committee was formed for the purpose of hiring a new senior minister after the resignation of Rev. Bruce Van Blair.

**Year: 1981**

minister: Bernard Crist served as interim from January – February 1981. Afterwards, Church members, particularly Dr. Jim Hester, provided Ministerial support during this time.

Event: Annual Meeting

Place: Week's Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> Methodist Church

The building plans were explained. They were somewhat scaled down from the original plans with different options presented.

Special Congregational Meeting:

A request for ordination was approved by the congregation for the following Church members: Dr. James, D. Hester, Cindi Donald.

**Year: 1982**

minister: Church members, particularly Dr. Jim Hester, provided Ministerial support during part this time until Rich Blakley was called and began serving as Sr. Pastor in August.

Event: Annual Meeting

Place: Week's Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> Methodist Church

The main discussion during the meeting was that the Search Committee was working.

Special Congregational Meetings:

On April 11, 1982 the church voted to purchase the Fritz Noack Organ for \$25,000. Rev. Rich Blakley was extended a call to serve as Senior Minister of the Congregation.

From **The Wanderings:**

The Church Meeting Place was moved to the 1<sup>st</sup> Baptist Church Chapel, after an invitation from that church. The move was made, after thanking the 1<sup>st</sup> Methodist church for their hospitality and support, because RUCC needed a place for the new organ and it was housed in the Baptist Church Chapel. Church organist and Choir Director, Rick England and his wife, Debbie, drove to Texas to pick up the organ (unassembled) and reassembled it in the Baptist Chapel.

**Year: 1983**

minister: Rich Blakley

Event: Annual Meeting

Place: Judson Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> Baptist Church

The first regular service at the 1<sup>st</sup> Baptist Chapel was held on Jan. 30, 1983. The entire Church processed on Sunday morning from the Sanctuary of the 1st Methodist Church to the Baptist Church's Chapel.

Church member Albert Landeros was thanked for his donation of his own art work for the Church Directory covers. The Building program was noted as being "in full force".

**Year: 1984**

minister: Rich Blakley

Event: Annual Meeting

Place: Judson Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> Baptist Church

Carole Wesson announced that the loan documents to begin building the first phase of the church had been signed two days previously. The news was accompanied by "fanfare and a cheer." 1984 was declared to be a "Year of Jubilee" for church renewal. Janie Hurley was celebrated for her years of service as church secretary. A Groundbreaking Dedication Service was held on March 5, 1984. As part of the service, helium balloons were released with a message about our church on it. 3 days later the Church received a note from a vacationing family from Arizona who found the balloon

on the dunes of Porta Lobas, Mexico. The Phase 1 building was dedicated on Oct. 7, 1984. Sunday worship time was changed to 10:30 a.m..

**Year: 1985**

minister: Rich Blakley

Event: Annual Meeting

Place: RUCC Church Building (later named "Covenant Hall")

This meeting, on January 27, 1985, was the first held in our own building. Attention was called to the beneficial results of the recent visits of members of the Mobile Missionary Assistance program which was based in Pasadena. Church members Margaret and Loren Barnett arranged for their visit. Included in their projects were the dividing wall, cabinets and sinks in the church school rooms, cabinets in the kitchen area, outside painting and improvements of the church house, steps and walkways.

**Year: 1986**

minister: Rich Blakley

Event: Annual Meeting

Place: RUCC Church Building (later named "Covenant Hall")

Rich explained the concept of the "Tent Making Ministry" to the congregation. The First Project of this ministry was the FOOD FOR ALL project which was introduced in a Redland's Market (Gerrards). The FOOD FOR ALL project was being developed by Redlanders Linda and Milan Hamilton. People had the opportunity to purchase bar coded cards at the local markets for designated sums. The money was then collected by the organization to sponsor projects to alleviate hunger. Our church was one on the founding sponsors of this program, and Rev. Blakley was on its first board.

**Year: 1987**

minister: Rich Blakley

Event: Annual Meeting

Place: RUCC Church Building (later named "Covenant Hall")

The church continued work with the Christian Counseling service and with Food For All. A Sunday School program was designed for students of all ages, and Summer Vacation Bible School was held.

**Year: 1988**

ministers: Rich Blakley  
Henry Rust, Assistant Minister

Event: Annual Meeting

Place: RUCC Church Building (later named "Covenant Hall")

The parking lot was resealed. The Rev. Henry Rust was called in the fall as a part time Assistant Minister. A Pastoral Search Comm. was formed after the resignation of Sr. Minister, Rev. Richard Blakley, in November.

From **The Wanderings**:

Doug Bowman, professor of religion and ethics at the U of R led a 4 week adult study class examining the relationship between Christian ethics and the ecological crisis.

**Year: 1989**

minister: Henry Rust, Interim Minister

Event: Annual Meeting

Place: RUCC Church Building (later named "Covenant Hall")

On Dec. 17, 1989 Rev. Robert Nuhn was called as Senior Minister.

From **The Wanderings**:

On Jan. 13, a Spiritual Renewal Retreat was led by Gal Glanville and Henry Rust. In September of 1989, Food For All reported that Southern California shoppers had contributed \$388,817 to local agencies since July of 1986.

**Year: 1990**

minister: Bob Nuhn

Event: Annual Meeting

Place: RUCC Church Building (later named "Covenant Hall")

Bonnie Kilpatrick was working on a Pictorial Directory of Church members.

From **The Wanderings**:

Betty Jacobs put ecological awareness hints into each edition of the Wanderings. In February, Katie Barton, Youth Director, announced that the Youth Group would separate off into two separate groups, Jr. High and Sr. High.

**Year: 1991**

minister: Bob Nuhn

Event: Annual Meeting

Place: RUCC Church Building (later named "Covenant Hall")

Jerry Greenfield worked on putting the kitchen back to the original plans instead of using it as the nursery.

In March, Phase 1 of the building was paid in full. The original loan, taken out in 1984 was for \$167,000. A gift of \$385,000 was received from the estate of Katherine Peak.

Bill Hodson presented the Next Phase Committee who would be working with Terry Hayden, architect. Bill Dean, chairman of the Building Committee made a model of this phase.

From **The Wanderings**:

Jim Gray built a church BBQ. On January 27, the Next Phase Committee asked for volunteers to begin working to "Envision the Future" in these areas: Building Committee, Next Phase Committee, Co-ordination for Children's Ministries, and Co-ordination for Fellowship Time.

**Year: 1992**

minister: Bob Nuhn

Event: Annual Meeting

Place: RUCC Church Building (later named "Covenant Hall")

The Church mentioned its support for, and of, the Mentone UCC Church.

**Year: 1993**

minister: Bob Nuhn

Kemery Baldwin, Associate Minister

Event: Annual Meeting

Place: RUCC Church Building (later named "Covenant Hall")

On Sunday, June 6, Kemery Baldwin was ordained as Associate Minister for Children's Christian Education.

**Year: 1994**

minister: Audrey Turner, Interim Minister  
Kemery Baldwin, Associate Minister

Event: Annual Meeting

Place: RUCC Church Building (later named "Covenant Hall")

Rev. Bob Nuhn resigned on January 25, 1994, and Rev. Audrey Turner was called as Interim Minister. She served from February 1994- November 1994.

**Year: 1995**

minister: James Vuocolo  
Kemery Baldwin, Associate Minister

Event: Annual Meeting

Place: RUCC Church Building (later named "Covenant Hall")

The Rev. James Vuocolo was formally installed as Sr. Minister on Feb. 14, 1995.  
At the Annual Meeting on January 22, 1995 Jill Kirchner was recommended for ordination. Barbara Hauser turned the office of church clerk over to Miz Becker.

**Year: 1996**

minister: James Vuocolo  
Kemery Baldwin, Associate Minister

From **The Wanderings**:

Kemery Baldwin started a Youth group for upper Elementary and Middle School students who called themselves, "Pilgrim Spirits". Women's Fellowship provided lunch for workers building a local house for Habitat for Humanity. Katie Barton and her daughter, Lauren, led the children through a retelling of the Christmas story for the Christmas program. Helen Arth continued the tradition of helping children and adults build Christmas Gingerbread Houses.

**Year: 1997**

minister: James Vuocolo  
Kemery Baldwin, Associate Minister

Event: Annual Meeting

Place: RUCC Church Building (later named "Covenant Hall")

A bylaws committee was appointed to develop a plan for a new structure for the church "for a more clearly defined outline of operation." They were to have a 2 year working period.



**Year: 1998**

minister: James Vuocolo  
Elizabeth Nicks, Christian Education

Event: Annual Meeting

Place: RUCC Church Building (later named "Covenant Hall")

Elizabeth Nicks was recommended for ordination.

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From **The Wanderings:**

There was a fire on August 10, 1998 which destroyed the Church House at 1500 West Olive Avenue. The cause of the fire was later attributed to arson to cover up a theft. In Sept. of 1998 a "Phoenix Committee" was formed, with Carole Wesson as chairperson, to consider steps after the fire. A Building Committee was then formed in November of 1998. Dianne Landeros was Chairperson of the Building Committee

On Oct. 11, 1998, the Church's Vision Statement was adopted.

**Year: 1999**

minister: James Vuocolo  
Elizabeth Nicks, Associate Minister  
for Christian Education

Event: Annual Meeting

Place: RUCC Church Building (later named "Covenant Hall")

The Annual Meeting was chiefly concerned with building options.  
Dianne Landeros was Chairperson of the Building Committee.

**Year: 2000**

minister: James Vuocolo  
Elizabeth Nicks, Associate Minister  
for Christian Education

Event: Annual Meeting

The Church Building Committee was working hard with plans going forward.

From **The Wanderings:**

In September, James Vuocolo resigned and a Search Committee was formed.

Year: **2001**

minister: Elizabeth Nicks continued as  
Associate Minister with members of the  
congregation helping also

Event: Sanctuary Dedication Service

The church Sanctuary was completed. A Worship Service was held in the new on September 16, 2001, and former minister, Rev. Rich Blakley, preached the first sermon in the new building. A Dedication Service was held that afternoon with many church members and former church members participating, including founding minister, Rev. Bruce van Blair.

Year: **2002**

minister: Sharon Graff  
On March 3, 2002, the Rev. Sharon Graff was called as the Senior Minister.