

History of the Redlands United Church of Christ
Building Process

March 11, 1979-September 16, 2001

By Carol Buchanan 2009

In the Beginning

At first the new congregation had no permanent home. From 1975 to 1984, they shared facilities, first at the First Methodist Church and then at the First Baptist Church. On March 11, 1979 the congregation voted to purchase 3 1/2 acres at 1500 W. Olive Ave. in Redlands. It included a house and citrus trees and four shares of water.. The cost was \$105,000 with a down payment of \$30,000.



Original “ Church House ” on the Olive Ave. property.

The first building was a multipurpose room including restrooms. The kitchen was used as a nursery. The historic house at 1500 W. Olive Ave. was used for office space and Christian Education. The architect was Leon Armantrout. The General Contractor was Dr. Dave Conover. Ground breaking was March 5, 1984 with completion in October of that year. The building was dedicated October 7, 1984. The pastor at the time was Richard Blakley. The President of the congregation was Helen Arth. By 1996 the Sunday school was using both the Church House and one end of the main building. A wall had been built to make a Christian Education Area.

The Fire

In August of 1998 a fire consumed the Church House and almost all of its contents. Some church records were saved. Many beloved and irreplaceable personal items of our staff and members were lost. A Phoenix Committee worked with the insurance company on the details of replacing the building. The pastor was James Vuocolo. The President of the congregation was Bettye Wheeler.

A New Sanctuary

The congregation now had to decide whether to build on the old site or on a different location on the property. A Building committee was appointed November 1998. Following the proposals of the committee the congregation chose to build a sanctuary adjacent to the existing building on the north side with office space on the west side. The Committee worked very hard identifying options for the building, working with the architect and contractors. After three years of fund raising which included building funds, insurance funds and in-house member loans, the sanctuary was dedicated on September 16, 2001. The architect was Gary Miller and Associates. [A labyrinth](#) was built on the site of the Church House using stones that had been part of the House. Our minister was the Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Nicks who had been hired as the Associated Minister Director of Christian Education. The President of the congregation was Dr. Don Kleckner.

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