

Grace Methodist Church Has Its 50th Birthday

By Laura Rawson

Grace Methodist church, Soquel avenue at Cayuga street, celebrating its 50th anniversary this month, had its all-church anniversary banquet in its Friendship Hall Friday evening with approximately 200 seated at the festively-decorated tables. Gold and silver arrangements and colorful seasonal flowers emphasized the happy golden anniversary in which all departments of the church shared.

The women of the church served a bountiful banquet, all home-cooked and baked, which was especially appreciated by the Fort Ord Soldiers' chorus, guests of the evening, which furnished entertainment in the sanctuary following the banquet.

Rev. Elmer H. Podoll, pastor of the church, welcomed the members and guests. He introduced Dr. Eliot Fisher, superintendent of the San Jose district, and Mrs. Fisher; Rev. and Mrs. H. F. Doran (Rev. Doran was pastor of Grace church, 1939-46); Mrs. Mary Hornaday Justin of San Jose, daughter of Rev. W. H. D. Hornaday who was pastor here, 1922-1930; Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Peterson (the former a member when but a young lady); Mr. and Mrs. Irvin Smith (the latter one of the charter members); Mr. and Mrs. Paul Baker (he is also a charter member); Mr. and Mrs. A. Webb; Miss Bertha Hinds and Mrs. Alice Laverty. Seated at the head table, they were introduced and spoke briefly, some in humorous vein which brought out Methodists are not superstitious for they chose Friday the 13th for the celebration.

Very heartily welcomed were Rev. and Mrs. Reneau who came to Grace church in 1946. Both were injured in an automobile wreck, and they came to the anniversary under difficulty. Both spoke of the wonderful friendship of Grace church and of their happiness in being able to attend the 50th anniversary. There are but five charter members of the church who live in Santa Cruz: Paul Baker, Mrs. Irvin M. Smith, Mrs. Bessie Christensen, Mrs. Hugh Hamilton and Mrs. Stella Dice. These members were especially honored by the church.

There was community singing of old-time favorites and the two young sons of Clarence Peterson, Clarence Jr. and Clifford, played marimbas with their father at the piano.

Adjourning to the church sanctuary, the soldiers' chorus (formerly the Red Diamond chorus) gave a delightful concert, beginning with a "Fanfare for Christmas Day." Their program was varied, for in addition to chorus numbers, there were solos and duets.

"The Creation" by the chorus was a very dramatic number and the "Choral of the Bells" very beautiful. They closed their program with Malotte's musical setting of the Lord's Prayer, a fitting close for their excellent

This chorus attained great acclaim in Europe, having audiences numbering 200,000 and won the title of Europe's best soldier

chorus in the army's annual soldier singing contest.

Kenneth Wilson, 25-year-old graduate of the Eastman School of Music where he received his bachelor's degree in 1953 and Yale University School of Music, where in 1955 he received his master's, is a musical genius. He obtains exactly the effect he wishes from the 20 men singers, who sing as though they love to.

Paul Baker, charter member, spoke of interesting events of the past, paying special tribute to Edward Leedham, blind pianist who was most faithful to music needs of the church. Also of Otto Kunitz who always gave his music services so willingly. He read a poem written by Mrs. Cora Lucking, a well-loved and faithful member of the church. Clarence Peterson added a patriotic note with a piano solo.

Clarence Day spoke of future plans for the church, some now in operation, which will highlight 1958.

Sunday, the golden anniversary was continued in the morning service, when Dr. Hugh K. Hamilton preached the anniversary sermon. In reminiscent mood, Dr. Hamilton told of being sent to organize a church out of the Sunday school organized by the First Methodist church of Santa Cruz, which met in Lottman's hall. He was fresh out of the seminary and thought he knew all the answers. But he soon found out how little he knew about starting a church.

He recalled the horse and buggy days with automobiles just coming into use. Then the era of airplanes and radar with the church growing and keeping up with the progress of time. "The church has always had a habit of success. The church should be warm-hearted and a church of the Living God," he concluded. Dr. Hamilton has presided over the 25th, 27th, 40th and 50th anniversaries of Grace church.

Following the service in which music played a large part, Rev. Podoll invited the congregation to adjourn to the large room at the right, where an anniversary party was enjoyed and a happy birthday song sung.

Centering a serving table, a huge three-tiered birthday cake was served with coffee. Mrs. Hamilton cut the first piece, followed by Mrs. Podoll cutting the second piece.

Fifty candles topped the cake.

Church groups participating were members of the choir; Cheerios; Grace Fellowship, Grace Guild; MYF; WSCS and YAMR.

Decorations were unusual and beautiful with gold and silver flower arrangements on tables and on the walls and the entrance to the sanctuary. Old Bibles, and scrapbooks, etc., were displayed on a table and found eager old-timers poring over them.

Santa Cruzans Give 81 Pints At Blood-Drawing