

# 1868 to 1968—100 Years in Soquel

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In the early 50s there was a general store, a tannery and a post office in Soquel. One or two hotels served the loggers and mill workers when they came to town to spend their cash . . .

There also was a little one-room schoolhouse, but no church to take care of the community's spiritual needs. Of course, there were plenty of saloons! And dancing was about the only form of public entertainment.

This was the scene in Soquel when a young schoolteacher, Miss Lulu Hall, decided to do something about the lack of a church. A series of prayer meetings was the result; they were held in the kitchen of the Joshua Parrish home. The little group decided to start a Sunday School in the one-room public school building.

The Sunday School started with an average of 75 children attending; Rev. W. T. Tenney was the acting pastor.

On May 17, 1868, the church was organized by the following persons: Mesdames Narcissa Parrish, Phoebe Feely, Lucy Burrell, Lelilah Mattison, Hester Packwood, W. A. Tenney, J. M. Noble, Rachel Hall, Jane McKay, Miss Lulu Hall and John S. Mattison and Rev. A. D. Tenney.

Joshua Parris donated a lot and the present church building was constructed at a cost of \$2700 with a ship's carpenter, S. A. Hall, doing the work.

The Ladies Aid Society was organized in 1891 and four years later raised enough money to build the church hall with kitchen, pantry and auditorium.

The old church stood staunch and strong, until several years ago when it showed signs of "age." Dry rot and termites had undermined the fine workmanship of S. A. Hall.

In 1964, a cement block foundation was put under the entire church structure and sidewalks, curbs and parking pavement were installed. Next project was repair of the church belfry and reconditioning of the church bell. Reroofing, repainting and redecorating followed. Originally it was thought that about \$25,000 would do the entire restoration project. But the congregation found that costs totaled much closer to \$35,000.

On February 21, 1967, the fire alarm sounded in Soquel and residents were horrified to learn that the historic church, fully restored, was on fire.

The prompt action of the Soquel and Capitola fire departments and a recently-installed "fire wall" prevent the flames from consuming the building. Generous gifts and concentrated cooperation joined to replace charred walls and blackened furnishings. By Easter Sunday the church was ready for services again.

Dr. and Mrs. Arthur Seebart came to the Soquel church on July 1, 1958, instead of retiring as they had originally planned. The Seebarts again—recently—have set their retirement date. Now it's July 1, 1968. This time, even amid the expressions of regret from their church



Rev. Arthur Seebart

## Centennial Events Set

Members of Soquel Congregational Church will observe their church's 100th anniversary with a series of special events starting tonight. A Memorial Communion service is set for 7:30 o'clock.

Tomorrow at 2 p.m. a tea and reception will feature historical audio-visuals. The anniversary dinner will follow at 6:30 o'clock.

Two puppet show presentations of the church history will start at 7:30 p.m. tomorrow, with the second showing to follow directly.

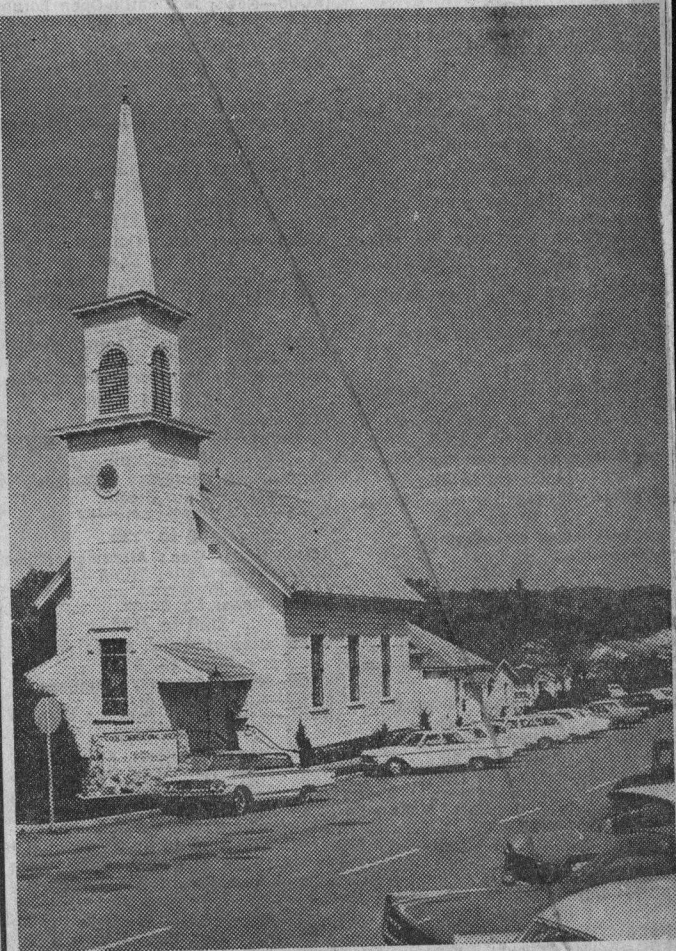
A Centennial church service is set for 10:30 a.m. Sunday with a rededication service at 11:30 o'clock.

Audio-visuals and open house will be conducted from 2 to 5 p.m. and Vespers with a Chancel Choir concert at 7:30 p.m.

members, the hard-working couple plans to go through with it.

A booklet telling the church history has been prepared by church members. Material for this story was taken from it.

Margaret Koch  
Sentinel Church Editor



Soquel's "Little White Church in the Vale"