

A Brief History of The Village Chapel

The Village Chapel was founded in October of 1990, when a group of SVE residents met and decided to start a Sunday Worship Service. The planning group was: Howard and Berniece Rauch, Jesse and Gerona Droke, Don and Betty Raisch, Howard Trullinger, Orlyon and Fern Raisch, Wyn and Ginger Olson, Jim and Audrey Van Ornum, Mary Lloyd, and Al and Better Erickson.

They received approval from the SVE Association Board to meet in the Saguaro Room, but in a few weeks they had to get approval to move to the auditorium. Wyn Olson was invited to speak during the month of November and at the end of that time he was called as the Pastor.

The Chapel was, and is, a nondenominational ministry operated for and by residents of Sunland Village East. Their objective is to glorify the Lord, teach Biblical truth and provide a place of worship and Christian fellowship for residents, and invite people to know Christ as Savior and Lord.

On November 4, 1990, the Chapel held its first worship service in our auditorium with 146 people in attendance. There was a beautiful new podium of solid oak, built and donated by Howard Trullinger.

The Chapel ministry is governed by the congregation under the leadership of the Pastor and an Executive committee that is elected annually by the congregation. There is a free will offering received each Sunday, and after all operating expenses are paid, the remaining funds are donated to local charitable organizations. These were (at the time) the Gideons, East Valley Food Bank, Sunshine Acres, Radio Bible Class, Hope Pregnancy Crisis, and Bells of Heaven Ringers.

Pastor Olson was the first pastor, Edith Lively the first organist, Bill Lively the first guitarist, Myrna Davis the first choir director, Fern Raisch made the first bulletin, and Dee and Jerry Blanc were the first coffee servers.

A quick time line for that first year: Christmas December 23, there were 189 people in attendance, the podium given by Howard Trullinger, was dedicated and the first communion was held. Easter Sunday was the 22nd worship service, March 31, 1991 and was held outside on the lawn behind the auditorium. November 3, 1991 was the first anniversary, celebrating with 252 people.

Pastor Wyn Olson served as Pastor for The Village Chapel from 1990 until his retirement in 2014 (24 years). Pastor Richard Koerselman served as pastor from 2014 until his retirement in May 2022 (8 years). Several guest pastors were invited to visit and preach throughout the summer of 2022, and following a thorough pastoral search by the Executive Committee, led by Moderator David Tohlen, Pastor Jim Burnett was selected by the Executive Committee and then approved by the congregation to serve as Pastor for The Village Chapel, effective September 18, 2022.

Click on the BACK ARROW to return to the previous page.