

# Trinity United Methodist Church

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## A Brief History

Albuquerque grew rapidly during the 1940s as it became the urban hub of New Mexico, a center for defense-related research, and the site of Kirtland Field, later Kirtland Air Force Base. With a population expanding from the Rio Grande Valley up toward the Sandia Mountains, the community needed places for people to worship in new neighborhoods. In 1941 Methodists formed the Albuquerque City Missionary Society to initiate new churches. In that same year Trinity Methodist Church began its life as a Sunday School, meeting first in Monte Vista Elementary School and later in the Lobo Theatre on Route 66, Central Avenue.

Bishop W. Angie Smith told Methodists that where 50 persons could be found who had no affiliation with a church and wanted one, they could form the core of a new church. Reverend James L. Stewart canvassed the neighborhood around Nob Hill and found more than the required number of potential members. By late summer of 1944 two new churches could be organized--Trinity Methodist Church on



*Rev. James J. Stewart*

Silver Street and the Harwood Methodist Church on North 4th Street. The official organization of Trinity with 58 charter members took

place on September 21, 1944 at the Bank of New Mexico. Two of those charter members remain members in 1994: Nancy Cahill and Dorothy Logan. Trinity Women's Society was initiated in November of 1944 at the home of Dr. I. L. Morgan, District Superintendent.

The new church built a parsonage in 1945 at 400 Morningside and began construction on an education building that same year, with Don Shaffer, a charter member, as the building contractor. (Don's wife Polly is still a member in 1994.) By 1946 the education building was in use as a temporary sanctuary seating 300. Trinity's chimes could be heard on Sunday mornings throughout the neighborhood.

Trinity's membership increased steadily, more than doubling in 1949-50, so that by 1951 it stood at 859. This burgeoning membership--the slogan in those days was "A Member a Day



*l. to r. Key, Stamm, Read, Cox, Pollard, Chapman, Cole*

Coming Trinity Way"--boded well for the building campaign begun in 1950 for a new sanctuary to cost \$110,000. James R. Cole chaired the campaign. In 1951 the Women's Society of Christian Service at Trinity set up a booth at the State Fair to raise funds for pews. While the church was working hard on funding for the new sanctuary,

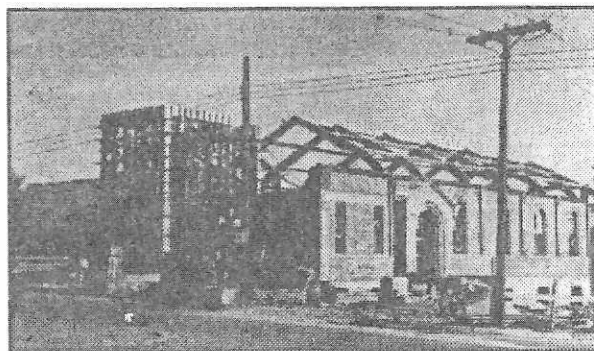
it also acquired a residence at 124 Hermosa SE, known as Epworth Hall, for the use of Sunday School classes. As former pastor John L. Carpenter recalls, "We were fairly pushing out the walls, with classes crowded into rooms which were entirely too small."

Successful fundraising by the growing church allowed Trinity to pay for its property on Silver and for Epworth Hall, as well as to begin construction on the sanctuary. The groundbreaking ceremonies took place on Valentine's Day, 1954. The sanctuary building designed by Britelle, Ginner, and Associates would include a basement banquet room and kitchen and a first-floor chapel. The style of the building was described as Spanish Colonial, considered appropriate for a city with a rich Hispanic heritage.



*Rev. John Carpenter*

The new sanctuary was formally opened for worship on November 14, 1954. By that time Trinity's membership stood at 1071, and it was one of the fastest-growing churches in the conference. Reverend Carpenter attributes this period of growth to Trinity's location, its friendliness, and its enthusiastic recruitment of new members.



*1954...the new  
Sanctuary is  
underway!*

In the late 1950s the church continued to require more space and so purchased a store building at 112 Hermosa for use by Sunday School classes and the Youth Department. It was named Ribble Hall in memory of the Tom Ribble family, members who were killed in an airplane crash.

In the 1960s Trinity paid off its indebtedness on the sanctuary building and Ribble Hall. It acquired a parsonage at 609 Alvarado, first occupied by the family of Reverend B. C. Goodwin, Jr. But Reverend Goodwin remembers that Trinity activities did not always take place inside its buildings; they spilled out into the neighborhood during what was known as Fall Roundup, when the street was blocked off for games, food, and fun all day long.



*Rev. B. C. Goodwin*

The first 25 years of Trinity's life had been occupied to a large extent with accommodating its growth in membership from 58 to the 1427 reported at annual conference in 1960. By 1975 the mortgage on the parsonage on Alvarado had been paid off. It was symbolically burned in a service of dedication in September of that year; the remodeled education unit was consecrated at the same time. Trinity had built, bought, and remodeled for years in an effort to create spaces for worship, for Christian education, and for housing its ministers and their families. Now Trinity's

devotion of so much of its energy to buildings and growth had reached a plateau. The large, active membership could turn more attention to further enriching worship, outreach, and service.

In 1976 Trinity celebrated the nation's Bicentennial with a special service on June 27. Ron and Ruby Burke wrote a pageant for morning worship, and Lou Archer arranged for an exhibit. Many members brought handcrafted items and heirlooms for display in the parlor.

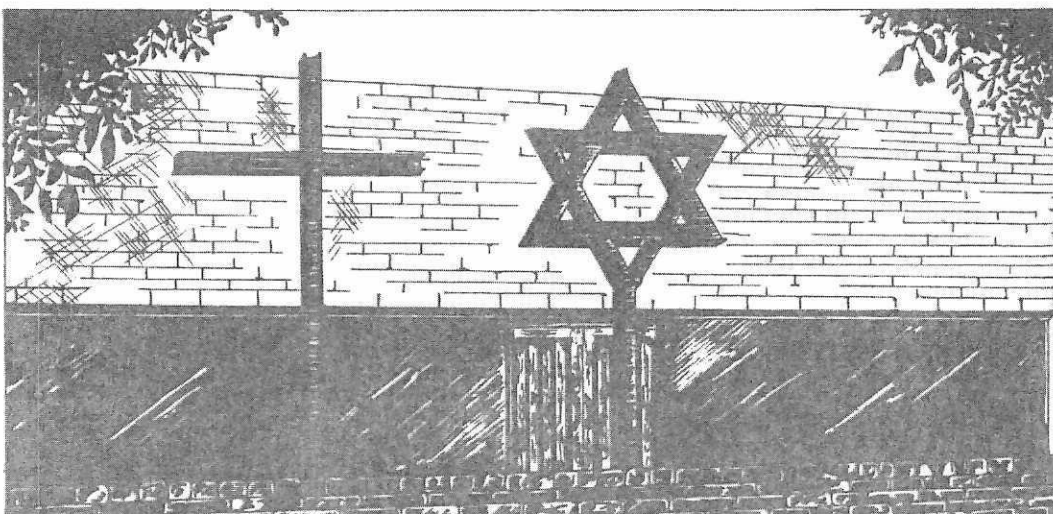


*Florence Hageman*

Two years later, in July of 1978, a new organ was dedicated, an Allen 301 electronic organ, described by organist Florence Irene Smith Hageman as a "definite answer to my personal prayer."

The decade of the 1980s began auspiciously with the inauguration of a tradition that continues into the present. On November 23, 1980 Trinity joined with Temple Albert in "An Interfaith Celebration of Thanks." The two congregations were brought together in worship through the efforts of Florence Hageman, who served both church and synagogue as organist. The Rev. Loyd Cain from Trinity and Rabbi Paul Citrin from Temple Albert led the service. Temple Albert's Zamir and the Trinity Chancel Choir, along with Israeli dancers and the Trinity Handbell Choir, enhanced the combined worship with music and dance. By 1985 Monte Vista Christian Church had joined Trinity and Temple Albert in the annual celebration.





## Psalms of Praise

marked the  
beginning of a  
tradition at  
Trinity in the  
celebration of  
Thanksgiving  
shared by Jews  
and Protestants.

*The Genesis Sanctuary of Ann Arbor, Michigan inspired organist Florence S. Hageman to initiate an annual worship service of Praise and Thanksgiving whereby several distinct faiths might come together, to give God the glory. In Nov. of 1994, Trinity United Methodist Church will host the 14th Annual Interfaith Service of Praise and Thanksgiving.*

Besides Thanksgiving other celebrations became traditions at Trinity. They included a Valentine's Day dinner served by the Climbers' Class, a summertime family campout in the mountains, and an annual trek to cut the Christmas tree for the sanctuary. The congregation commemorated its 40th anniversary on September 30, 1984. Morning worship included a "Parade of Saints," and members attended a potluck dinner and birthday party on Sunday evening. Carolyn Murphy chaired the anniversary planning committee, and Reverend Jeffrey Symonds urged the membership not to forget the witness "that we will be called to make during the next ten years of Trinity's history."

Other worship services at Trinity were enriched in the 1980s by dramatic banners created by church secretary and artist Cheryl Hicks and performances from the Elizabeth Waters Dance Workshop, Inc., whose studio was in the church building. The building Trinity's membership had worked so hard to establish would serve as a meeting place for various groups during the 1980s, including Alcoholics Anonymous, the nondenominational Community Bible Studies, infant care classes for young mothers, and a karate class that counted among its students Reverend Steve Trout.

That ten years of witness from 1984 to 1994 included the development of a plan in 1986 to participate in Project Share. The Mission and Evangelism Committee presented the idea to the congregation, which approved it and immediately raised over \$700 to start serving meals once a month to homeless people, an ongoing effort.

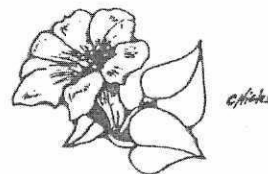
Outreach to the community and sharing of the church's facilities continues. Trinity made a major decision in 1993, during Reverend Rodney Roberts' pastorate, to help a sister congregation of Korean Methodists. The Korean congregation needed space for worship and teaching just as Trinity had almost fifty years earlier. Trinity welcomed the Korean church, under Pastor Hak Soo Kim, into the building for cooperative use.



*1989 worship bulletin epitomizes faithful spirit at Trinity.*

From 1944 to 1994 Trinity grew and changed as Albuquerque did. The church's earliest tasks were to build and expand along with its neighborhood, which was near the city's first shopping center at Nob Hill on Route 66. Later, as its urban community became more diverse, the church reached out to the homeless and to other congregations, emphasizing its commitment to interfaith and multicultural accord in worship and in service to all God's people.

There are no strangers  
here, only  
friends we haven't met.



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