

JUBILEE CENTER PROJECT

LAKEVIEW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Report on Reflection Process

"What does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

Micah 6:8

"Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

--Luke 12:32

LAKEVIEW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH: A JUBILEE CENTER

In the mid-1960s, the Lakeview Presbyterian Church in St. Petersburg, Florida, faced a crisis in ministry. A large, successful, traditional church in a middle-class white neighborhood, it was confronted with a racially changing community. Unlike other churches in the neighborhood, Lakeview decided to remain at its location, to integrate its membership, and for a while its pastorate, and to embark on an experimental community ministry. Urged by its pastor, Rev. Robert D. Miller to discover what it meant "to be the church" for its community, Lakeview provided leadership in meeting the racial tensions in the city at that time, including a sanitation workers strike, a teachers strike, and the integration of the public schools.

The decisions made in the mid-sixties set the future of the church: it would be interracial, socially active, and oriented to community ministry. It undertook a series of venturesome social programs. The longest-lasting of these is Operation Attack, a center distributing clothing to children and emergency food and financial assistance to families, which is now supported by nearly thirty churches. For more than a decade it sponsored a community youth program for at-risk teenagers, which has now moved to another location. In the mid-1980s, the church led in the establishment of the Johnnie Ruth Clarke Health Center, a federally-financed community health program located in the church building.

Yet like many interracial churches located in inner-city neighborhoods, Lakeview has faced problems of declining membership and deteriorating financial condition. For two decades, the church has been living at the edge of its financial resources. At least twice, in the mid-1970s and the late 1980s, the church has undertaken a full self-study and consideration of its future alternatives: move, merge, close, or continue in mission. At both times, ecclesiastical authorities urged the congregation to move or merge. In 1976 the church was told by a consultant on church development that with its present resources Lakeview could not survive more than three years. In 1990 Presbytery was urging Lakeview to merge with another congregation that did not share its vision of mission. In each case, the church decided that it would remain at its present location and to continue its ministry as long as God called.

The commitment to mission also defines the internal life of the congregation. Lakeview underwent something of a renewal under the leadership of Rev. Tom Beason in the 1980s. Congregational life was strengthened by an emphasis on spiritual renewal, an innovative Christian education program, and a very active Stephen Ministry. Individual members of the congregation became increasingly involved in peace and justice activities in the city and the nation, including leadership roles in Witness for Peace, Habitat for Humanity, and the Florida Farmworkers Ministry.

Following the latest crisis in self-study, the church decided to keep on going on with its mission under the leadership of its new pastor, Rev. Earl Smith. Within a few months of making this decision, the church voted to turn over its entire educational building for an expansion of the health center, which by then had become the chief provider of indigent care in the county. It established a support group, People of Color AIDS Coalition, for people infected with HIV+. The church made space available for a counselling program for domestic violence and sexual offenders. Earl Smith took the leadership in organizing Congregations United for Community Action, now supported by some twenty-eight congregations, black and white, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim, that has been dealing with problems of drugs and crime, education, economic development, and interracial relations in south St. Petersburg. This organization has already succeeded in improving community relations with the police, winning concessions from a major banking chain to make mortgage loans available to low income neighborhoods, and pressuring the school board to improve education for minority students and students from economically deprived homes

In 1993 Lakeview was chosen by the Urban Ministry Support Team as the Jubilee Center, in a pilot project in Urban Ministry. It has been teamed with the Tyler Place Presbyterian Church in St. Louis and the Pine Avenue Presbyterian Church in Chicago in a project to develop urban ministry. This project has already energized all three churches.

Lakeview still struggles with problems of membership, financial difficulty, fatigue, and strengthening the internal life of the congregation. Yet the church sees its future not as one of survival but of faithfulness to the gospel and bringing new life to its community. It continues its interracial witness, with a membership and leadership that is substantially integrated. It finds continued opportunities to work for peace and justice. In its mission statement, the church offers a spiritual sanctuary, an open, worshiping congregation, a center for education, a place of healing, and a model for reconciliation. "Following Christ's example, we willingly share our vision, nurture and support ourselves and others, take risks, and struggle for justice."

I. OUR HISTORY

OUR UNDERSTANDING OF OUR HISTORY

"History is what we remember." --1066 And All That

The Process

The following is an exercise in collective memory. At the Session Retreat on June 4, 1993, Thomas Hawkins and Dirk Ficca led the Session in a reflection on the history of Lakeview Church. We constructed a time-line listing important developments and events in the both community and the life of the church. We expanded on the events that had been of particular significance in the development of the church's understanding of its mission, and we then reflected on the themes which characterize the development of our mission and the conclusions which we drew from our history.

At a congregational dinner on September 12, 1993, Bill McKee led the congregation through a similar exercise. We posted the time-line that had been constructed by the Session and then asked the congregation to reflect on the history. We added events, decisions, and themes to gain a fuller perspective. Bill McKee, who is a professional historian, researched the church records to verify facts and dates, and interviewed some individual members for their recollections. Katharine and Bob Meacham interviewed Robert Miller and Mike Elligan and contributed material on the Experimental Ministry. The Session reflected on the themes and conclusions that emerged from this process. Bill McKee wrote the narrative.

What follows is not intended as a detached, objective history of Lakeview Church. It is history as we remember it. It is in a sense a log of the spiritual journey of this congregation as it has developed its understanding of its mission in this community.

The Early Years

Lakeview Presbyterian Church was founded in 1948 as a mission outreach of First Presbyterian Church of St. Petersburg. Rev. Donald Kramer, who served as assistant pastor of First Church, was the organizing pastor. The church was formally organized in 1949, and the first chapel (later the Fellowship Hall and now the building housing the Johnnie Ruth Clark Health Center) was constructed. Virginia Montgomery, a charter member whose husband was the first Sunday School superintendent, is still a member of the church.

At that time the Lakeview Avenue community was a white middle-class community made up of primarily single-family homes, with a sprinkling of expensive houses along Lakeview Avenue. The city was racially segregated at that time, and the black community was located some seven blocks and more north, between 15th Avenue and Central Avenue. 15th Avenue marked the boundary line between the black and white communities, and was strictly observed. Lakeview was the first Presbyterian Church located in south St. Petersburg.

The church grew rapidly in the early years. It reported an average attendance of 368 at worship the year the chapel was built. Rev. Sam Milton came as pastor in 1953, and served for the next dozen years. Members describe the church as a traditional family-oriented church, with a growing congregation. A new

sanctuary (the present sanctuary building) was built in 1959, along with two wings of the educational plant. In 1961 the church reported a peak membership of 632, with a Sunday School membership of over 400. The church boasted the full array of active church programs: Women of the Church, Women's Sewing Circle, Men of the Church, Wednesday night prayer meeting, Kindergarten, nursery, Westminster Fellowship, Senior High and Junior High Fellowship, senior and youth choirs. The church participated in local causes through the United Churches of St. Petersburg, Church Extension Council of Greater St. Petersburg, United Women of St. Petersburg, For several years there were two worship services, and the sanctuary, including the balcony, was frequently full.

In 1960 Florida Presbyterian College was founded in St. Petersburg. It intended to be an innovative, church-related liberal arts college, a pace-setting institution in higher education. A considerable number of the faculty and staff of the college joined Lakeview and some of them moved quickly into positions of leadership in the church. They were eager to place the college and the church in the vanguard in confronting the problems of society. Several members have said that the college people "shook things up" and "got things going" in the church.

Longtime members speak with some affection of those years. They remember Sam Milton with some fondness. Members from those years have been generous with bequests to the church. The church could not have survived through the last two decades without the generosity of members who joined in those years.

In the early 1960s, especially in the years 1963-65, black people began moving south into the area between 15th Avenue and Lake Maggiore. White people began moving out and by the middle of the decade white flight was apparent both in the community and in the church. Several white churches left the neighborhood. The Episcopal church down the street, the oldest church in St. Petersburg, moved its building board by board twenty blocks south. The Lakeview congregation seems to have been divided as to how to respond to these changes in the community. In 1963 the Christian Action Committee of the Session proposed conducting a joint survey with other churches of the conditions and opportunities in the neighborhood, and the committee invited Rev. Lawrence Bottoms, who was in charge of Negro work for the denomination, to visit the church and to preach. Other members of the Session were resistant to efforts to respond to the changes in the community. Members differ in their opinion of whether the pastor was resistant to change, but they agree that he did not regard it as a part of his ministry to take the leadership in promoting social change. He left the church, and the ministry, in 1964.

By the last year of Milton's ministry a few black people began attending the church. Most of the present members who were here in those days have said that the integration of the membership was "no big deal." They say that "it was always expected" that black people would move into the neighborhood sooner or later and "it was always assumed" that they would be received into the church. This is the recollection of Northern liberals and native Southerners alike, as well as some who resist sectional and ideological classifications. But it is also the recollection of the people who stayed with the church. Clearly it was a big deal for some people, because between 200 and 300 members, including some on the Session, left the church between 1963 and 1967. Nevertheless, there does not appear to have been any single event or dramatic decision to integrate the membership. Black people began attending the church and the congregation received them. People in the church responded to the situation created by the changes in the neighborhood, and they responded in accordance with their understanding of the nature of the church. One who is theologically inclined might say that this is the way the Holy Spirit works in our midst.

The Miller Years

There was no interim minister during the brief interim. Revs. Raymond Allston and Hunter Blakeley supplied the pulpit. Elder Bob Meacham provided leadership of the Session as Vice-Moderator. The most heated controversy during this time was over the election of women to church office. The congregation elected two women elders and two women deacons. One longtime member of the Session threatened to resign because he believed the election of women was not scriptural, and the women withdrew.

In January 1965 the congregation called Robert D. Miller as pastor. Miller had been pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Tuskegee, Alabama. He was being squeezed out of his pastorate because he refused to accommodate to the climate of segregation. He had attracted national attention for personally serving communion to a group of students from Tuskegee Institute who were conducting a "church-in" after the elders had refused to serve them. The pastoral nominating committee decided that he was what Lakeview needed, and Lakeview was what he needed. It was proved to be so. A member of the pulpit committee has said, "We saw this as God's Holy Spirit moving in an obvious and wonderful way."

Miller immediately confronted the Session with a study of the question, "What type of Church are we going to be." Members assert that he preached the same sermon over and over for the first year: "Let the church be the church." The Session undertook long-range planning on the theological understanding of the church, stewardship, membership, and future activities of the church.

In October 1965 Jo Ballard was received into membership, the first black member of the congregation. In June 1966 her son Randy was received on profession of faith after completing the communicants' class. Mrs. Ballard was followed in the next two years by Thelbert Bing, Louise Lynch, and the Perkins sisters. Most of these people came by letter of transfer from the Trinity Presbyterian Church. After Rev. Mike Elligan became Associate Pastor there was a rapid increase in black membership.

In 1965-66 there were some discussions with Trinity Presbyterian Church about a possible merger, but these came to nothing. Several times in later years, particularly in 1972 and 1990, there were discussions with Trinity about a possible merger, but they also came to nothing.

At about the same time the issue of women elders was settled. In 1965 Mildred Schanbarger was elected elder and Hilda Tohla was elected deacon. Women were regularly elected in every subsequent year. In 1971 the Session and Board of Deacons were combined into a unicameral board, with much of the role the Deacons being done by the Business Administration committee.

In 1966 the church received a grant to support an experimental ministry that would develop programs to relate the church to the racially changing community. The grant enabled the church to employ a black Associate Minister and a social worker. In April 1967 the church extended a call to Rev. Irwin (Mike) Elligan to be Associate Pastor of Education and Outreach. Mr. Elligan was then Associate Director of Churches and Society for the PCUS. He stayed at Lakeview for two and a half years, leaving at the end of 1969 to become pastor of the New Covenant Presbyterian Church in Miami.

Members of the church thought of the Experimental Ministry in two senses. In one sense it was an experiment in an integrated congregation and an interracial pastorate, to demonstrate the character of the church and its mission. In another sense, it was an experiment in relating the church to the critical social problems in the community.

The years between 1966 and 1972 were years of turmoil in the community. There was continued black migration into the neighborhood and white flight, so that the area between Lakeview Avenue and Lake Maggiore became almost entirely black. There was tension in the black community, with increasing demands for desegregation and better services for the black neighborhoods. There was unrest in the community following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., and civil disorder in the summers of 1968 and 1969. There was a garbage workers' strike in the summer of 1968 that caused sharp divisions in the city. There was increasingly effective political organization in the black community, including the appearance of some black nationalist agitation. Black and black-sponsored candidates were elected in the city elections in 1969, resulting in the ouster of the racist city manager. There was a statewide teachers' strike in the spring of 1968; Pinellas County was one of the areas where the teachers' action was most effective and complete. The teachers' cause was lost, and there was some retaliation by the school authorities. There was a beginning of desegregation in the schools. In 1970 the six elementary schools south of Lakeview Avenue (two black and four white) were paired in two clusters for desegregation. In 1971 all the schools in Pinellas County were desegregated by court-ordered cross-busing. This caused intense political controversy in the county for several years in the early 1970s.

Lakeview Church responded to these crises in various ways.

The church offered office and meeting space for the sanitation workers during their strike, and both the ministers and several members marched in their demonstrations. The church provided a meeting place for community meetings in support of the teachers. During several periods of civil disorder, Mike Elligan walked the streets to calm tempers. At the time of the school integration, the church provided several programs to support the families of children in the neighborhood who were being bused to distant schools. Robert Miller served as president of the Parents' School Advisory Committee at Maximo Elementary School. Several members of the church served on the Human Relations Program established by the school system to ease the tensions caused by desegregation. Robert Gemmer, a minister with the St. Petersburg Council of Churches who attended Lakeview, served on a variety of committees of the Human Relations Council, the NAACP, and the School Board to become the community's leading spokesman on school integration. These activities caused some further loss in membership, as some members who had stayed through the integration of the membership left because of the church's involvement in politics, especially the support of the garbage workers and the teachers. On the other hand, the church gained some members because of their conspicuous stand on these issues.

In April 1966 Lakeview became the site of the first Head Start program in St. Petersburg. Head Start continued to be located at the church for the next ten years, until it moved into a public school building.

Operation Attack was established at the church in the fall of 1968. It began as a clothes distribution center for children, but quickly expanded into center for food distribution and other emergency aid for needy families. It has been the most continuous of our mission programs.

The Experimental Ministry supported a wide array of activities to relate to the social problems of the community. For a year the church employed Nancy Hilton as a social worker to work with neighborhood families and with students. Then for a year the church employed Mose Henry to work with young people, both in the church and the neighborhood. Mose Henry directed a coffee house program called "The Catacombs" that met in an old house owned by the church. A Teen Council representing neighborhood youth met at the church. There were neighborhood dances in Fellowship Hall that attracted both church and neighborhood young people. The black young people in the neighborhood referred to the youth

programs at the church as "The Prez," and many people in the community still remember "The Prez" with affection.

The church organized a Boy Scout troop, which for several years was the only racially integrated troop in Pinellas County. The church sponsored a neighborhood youth basketball team in the city recreation league which won the city championship one year. The church opened its doors to a variety of community groups and organizations. Neighborhood children, some of them from the Headstart Center, attended Sunday School.

For several summers the church organized summer recreational programs for middle school children in the neighborhood. The most notable of these was as Summer Program on Black Culture in the summer of 1971, directed mainly by black students from Eckerd College. It was notable as an effort to reach out to the young people of the community, but it caused a great deal of resentment from members of the congregation because of the misbehavior and vandalism by the children, and because of a black power worship service that many church members considered blasphemous.

It was also at this time that we began innovations in worship. Members remember the frequent dialogue sermons between Bob Miller and Mike Elligan. One Sunday a month was set aside for "experimental worship." It was also at this time that we rearranged the sanctuary. Exemplifying the theological concept of the priesthood of all believers, Miller asked that we all be on the same level. The lectern was moved to the floor of the congregation and most of the pews were arranged in a semicircle. This arrangement continues today and is so much a part of our worship that we cannot imagine it being otherwise.

It was also in these years that Circle 6 was established as a non-traditional circle in the Women of the Church. Originally composed mostly of younger women with small children, it met in members' homes in the mornings so the mothers could bring their babies. In later years, when many of the women went to work, Circle 6 became a kind of support group for women who were changing the circumstances of their lives. It attracted participation of a number of women who were not members of Lakeview but shared the concern for women's issues.

Robert Miller left Lakeview in 1972 to become pastor of the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Montgomery, Alabama, returning to carry his witness to the presbytery he had left seven years earlier. He later went to work as an executive in the national missions office of the General Assembly of the PCUS in Atlanta and the Presbyterian Church (USA) in Louisville. After a brief pastorate at the First Presbyterian Church in Louisville, he is now Executive Presbyter of Coastal Carolina Presbytery.

Members describe the years of the late Sixties and early Seventies as interesting, stimulating, active, innovative, courageous, turbulent, exciting, controversial, and risk taking. Clearly they determined the character of the church for years to come.

The Corbett Years (1972-77)

In contrast, members describe the years of the mid-Seventies as dull, coasting, consolidating, and sometimes controversial. They were years of consolidation. The excitement of the pioneering years was gone. The initial witness of integration had been courageous, but by the mid-Seventies other community organizations had been desegregated and Lakeview's witness was not so unique. During the Sixties the

issues had seemed to be clearcut, but now the mission of the church was less clear. Even before Robert Miller left there was a sense that the church was drifting. The church continued to lose membership gradually throughout the Seventies, and developed serious financial difficulties. Nevertheless, the church's character as a racially-inclusive and socially-active church was strengthened.

In the neighborhood, there was an almost complete turnover in home ownership. More and more black churches moved into the neighborhood along Lakeview Avenue. Many of these had buses to transport residents to their services. Recreational and social centers that served the black community were established at Bartlett Park and later at the Enoch Davis Center. These developments preempted some of the efforts of Lakeview to relate to the residents in the neighborhood. At the same time, there was a significant increase in crime and drug use in the neighborhood around the church. This touched the church in the form of frequent burglaries and theft of church property, and in occasional purse snatchings and thefts from cars in the parking lot.

Lawrence W. Corbett was called as pastor in the summer of 1972. He was a young minister who had been on the staff of a large urban church in Cleveland, Ohio. He and his wife Meredith had adopted two interracial children. He was attracted to the church by its reputation as an integrated and socially activist congregation.

Some of the mission outreach programs continued. Head Start continued to be located at the church until near the end of the decade, when it moved into an elementary school that had been made vacant by the desegregation plan. Operation Attack expanded its work, eventually moving from the houses behind the church into the basement of Fellowship Hall. The Junior High School tutoring program continued for several years. The Boy Scout troop was discontinued when one of the scoutmasters moved away. The neighborhood programs of "the Prez" dwindled.

The one significant new program that was developed in these years was the Community Youth Program. Shortly after coming to Lakeview, Larry Corbett had the Session set goals and priorities for development of its mission, and the top priority was to develop some kind of program for the youth of the community. Just at this time, Elder Nancy McIntosh brought to the Session a proposal that had originated out of the Human Relations Program of the school system to establish a motivational program for middle school students who were affected by the school desegregation. The Session approved this proposal, and joined with a community group which was planning to submit a grant proposal. Funding was secured from city revenue-sharing funds, Presbytery, and the Juvenile Welfare Board. The idea was to recruit at-risk middle-school children from the neighborhood who were recommended by their schools, and to give them skills to enable them to think independently, to develop self esteem, and to cope with the adjustments caused by school busing. The program was developed by Nancy McIntosh and Jim Oliver, a black teacher in the school system, and the methodology was that of Transactional Analysis. A paid staff of teachers and counsellors, headed by Jim Oliver and Pat McKenzie, operated the program. The activities included motivational counselling in self-esteem, education in black culture and black pride, fieldtrips, and recreational activities.

In the early years, the Community Youth Program appeared to be quite successful and was closely related to the congregation. Members of the church served on the governing board of the CYP, members of the staff participated in church activities (Pat McKenzie joined Circle 6), and for a while Meredith Corbett was the grant administrator. In the late-70s, in an effort to provide more community control of the program, it was incorporated as Community Youth Services, Inc., and direction of the program was shifted from the church to representatives of the community. Jim Oliver returned to teaching, and Elithia Stanfield became

director. Relationship with the congregation became more distant.

The innovations in the internal life of the congregation continued. The congregation continued to be open to innovation in worship, and the usual worship style could be described as dignified informality. With the decline in membership the church began to have difficulty in maintaining a choir. Circle 6 continued to be a focus for dealing with modern women's issues. There was a major reform in the Christian Education program which resulted from a study by a task force on Christian education. The old grouping of classes by age was replaced by learning centers grouped by interest and ability. An innovative adult class was organized. Intergenerational events were scheduled almost monthly.

During these years the family retreats at Cedarkirk, the Presbytery camp and conference center, became a regular part of the congregational life. Members also remember the softball team that competed in the city softball league for several years.

There was increasing participation by women and blacks in the leadership of the church. Women were a majority on the Session by the end of the decade. Jo (Bellamy) Ballard was elected as the first black elder in 1968. Thirteen other black elders were elected in the next ten years. At least four of them, Monte Campbell, Viola Bates, Ernest Solomon, and Gladys Neal, served as Session committee chairpersons during the period before 1978.

Throughout his years at Lakeview Larry Corbett was frustrated by what appeared to be a contradiction between the appearance of a vigorous and progressive mission of the church and what he perceived to be very serious internal weaknesses in the congregation. He was particularly distressed at the number of members who seemed to have serious problems in their personal and family lives. Membership in the church was decreasing. By the mid-Seventies the church was in serious financial difficulties. It was running budget deficits of ten to fifteen thousand dollars a year. It would not have survived had it not been for a savings account that had been built up by the bequests of former members.

In 1974 Corbett began work on a D. Min. degree with McCormick Theological Seminary. His thesis project was a study of the resources and programs of Lakeview Church in an effort to redefine the church's mission. In May 1975 a Task Force on Lakeview's Future Mission was appointed to undertake a thorough self-study of the church and the possibilities for its future mission. The Task Force met regularly on Sunday Mornings in the time assigned to the adult church school class throughout the year 1975-76. During the course of this study the task force had occasion to approach the Home Missions Committee of Presbytery to ask what resources might be available from Presbytery to support Lakeview if that should be necessary. The Home Missions Committee offered to share the cost of a feasibility survey by James Earhart, a church consultant in Atlanta. After a brief survey of the church and its circumstances, Earhart concluded that given the present circumstances the church could not survive beyond eighteen to thirty months. He did not make a specific recommendation for the church's future, though he suggested as one alternative that "the Church could elect to actively use all of its assets to the point of exhaustion, including the sale of the facilities as a part of its planned death and resurrection and celebration, in a complete giving of itself!"

In July 1976 the Task Force reported to the Session, identifying five alternatives for the future of the church: (1) relocate, (2) unite with another PCUS church, (3) unite with a non-PCUS church, (4) rededication and commitment to be the church at this location, (5) close at the end of the year. There was intense debate on these alternatives throughout the summer, including a meeting of the congregation at which a straw vote indicated a plurality in favor of rededication. In October, after agonizing debate, the Session voted 12-6 in

favor of rededication to stay at the present location.

The Session immediately appointed a Renewal Committee to make recommendations on revitalizing the church. The committee made a number of recommendations on strengthening the life of the congregation. It proposed requesting Presbytery to provide support for a black Associate Pastor to assist the Pastor in relating the church to the immediate community. It also undertook an extensive program of building renovation, including the first systematic attempt to solve the water problems in the basement areas. The debate over alternatives had caused a lot of divisiveness and even some bitterness in the congregation. Nevertheless, the congregation plunged into the work of rededication and renewal. This work was still under way in the spring of 1977 when Larry Corbett announced that he was accepting a call from the Westminster Church of Phoenix, Arizona.

During the interim, which lasted for nearly a year, the coordinating committee of the Session, under the leadership of George Lofquist, Vice-Moderator, assumed responsibility for maintaining the work of the church, including continuing the commitment to rededication. Walter Hall assumed pastoral duties as interim minister. He shared the preaching with Alan Carlsten and Joe McClure, both at Eckerd College.

During the interim Lakeview entered into serious conversations about a possible merger or joint ministry with Covenant Presbyterian Church. After a period of bitter controversy within the church, Presbytery removed the pastor of Covenant, who split the church and took more than half the membership, the church records, and some of the church property to a nearby congregation in another denomination. Covenant Church was in shambles. Joe McClure, who had previously attended Lakeview, was appointed interim minister, and Lakeview began a series of joint programs with Covenant. We held joint church dinners. We sponsored joint Lenten worship services. There were efforts to create a joint youth fellowship. The net result of these overtures was not to move toward a merger but to help Covenant in reorganizing its own life. Meanwhile, Lakeview's pulpit nominating committee continued its search for a pastor. In the spring of 1978 Lakeview called R. Thomas Beason to be pastor.

The Beason Years (1978-89)

Tom Beason was a young man who had been working in Sarasota for several years as a minister to the counterculture. He had conducted a beach ministry for runaway teenagers on Siesta Key, then directed a storefront ministry for drug users in Sarasota, and was student minister to New College and the Ringling School of Art when he was called to Lakeview. He was well known to our congregation and had preached several times at Lakeview. He had read the Earhart Report and had been struck by the talk about death and resurrection. He said that he wanted to be part of the resurrection.

Within a month of coming to Lakeview, Beason sunk into clinical depression, a problem that he had experienced several times before. The Session coordinating committee, which had become accustomed to running the church during the interim, assumed the responsibility of maintaining the work of the church during the pastor's illness. Many have spoken of the healing effect that this had both on the minister and the congregation. The church learned how to minister to its pastor, and the pastor experienced the healing support of his church.

The church continued the work of internal renewal. A Spiritual Renewal Task Force was created, composed of the minister and six other members, who committed themselves to a two year program bi-

weekly meetings for sharing in spiritual growth. The task force sponsored several events for the congregation each year, including spiritual retreats led by Winston Lawson and Al Wynn. The original idea was that this group would be a pilot project for a series of such spiritual renewal groups throughout the congregation. This never developed, but for several years the task force provided a support group for the pastor and it strengthened the spiritual growth and commitment of a key group of church leaders.

There were two major efforts at revitalizing the Christian Education program. Early in the Eighties a Christian Education Task Force undertook a year-long study of Christian Education, based largely on the works of John Westerhoff. We organized the curriculum around the seasons of the liturgical year, and attempted to coordinate the educational program with worship. Church school met after worship, so that the themes of worship could be carried over. Instead of having a staff of church school teachers, we divided the congregation into a series of small groups, each of which was responsible for planning the lessons for a monthly period. There were frequent intergenerational events. The program generated a lot of excitement at first, but proved to be too cumbersome and too much work to sustain past the first year. It also proved difficult to include the children in the events that were developed by committees of adults.

A scaled-down version of the Westerhoff program was attempted in the late Eighties. Again, the Christian Education program was organized around the liturgical year. The teachers developed their own curriculum, often using material from Brethren House for the children and Sojourners for the adults. For a while we had both traditional classes before worship and an intergenerational event afterwards. Efforts were made to coordinate the Sunday School program both for adults and children with the worship service. The adult class often did Bible study on the text for the sermon. The minister met briefly with the small children just before worship and introduced them to the theme of the morning worship. One of the teachers prepared children's versions of the church bulletin, emphasizing some part of the worship service. Deliberate efforts were made to include the children in the worship service. Like the earlier Westerhoff program, this produced a lot of excitement at first, but eventually proved to be too much work for the four members of the Christian Education Committee who supervised it. The most successful result was to enliven the worship services, and to make the participation of the children a valued part of our worship.

The Community Youth Services continued its programs, but difficulties developed between it and the church. Lonnie Donaldson, a black power politician in the community, became director. He took the position that the program should be run by blacks. Friction developed between the program and the church in the early 1980s, and as a result of maladministration and financial irregularities the church asked the program to leave. It moved to another location, and eventually lost its funding and was terminated.

A year or so later Lakeview secured funds from Presbytery to employ Jim Oliver again to undertake a tutoring program similar to the original CYP, but on a much reduced scale. He worked with a small number of children who had been referred by their middle schools. After a year, this was taken over and financed by PAR, a community drug prevention and treatment agency, and was promoted as a drug prevention program for at-risk middle school children. Called the Beta Program, this became one of the more successful drug prevention programs. It expanded into several other centers in Southside St. Petersburg, and eventually left Lakeview because it needed more room and because the rooms we leased them were frequently flooded. The Beta Program is still in operation in another facility in the neighborhood.

For some years Lakeview had maintained an interest in a progressive pre-school child care center, the Circle of Children, that was located at Covenant Presbyterian Church. When Covenant asked the school to leave, Lakeview secured the assistance of Maximo Presbyterian Church in moving the Circle of Children to

Trinity United Methodist Church. The three churches sponsored the center, and several Lakeview people served on its board. After a few years it was moved back to Covenant. When it adopted educational methods that we could not approve, Lakeview ended its sponsorship.

In the mid-Eighties Tom Beason proposed that Lakeview consider establishing a holistic health center at the church. The Session appointed a task force that spent a year studying the possibility. It sought the counsel of Granger Westberg, a national authority on holistic health center. The Lutherans became interested in the project, and offered to provide funding for a pastoral counsellor. Then the church joined forces with a community group which was attempting to establish a health clinic in memory of Johnnie Ruth Clark, a pioneering black educator in St. Petersburg. The group had submitted a grant proposal to the federal government, which had been tentatively approved but not funded. Lakeview people, particularly Lloyd Horton, were able to secure the support of some of the local medical community and to secure sufficient political support to have the grant funded. The Johnnie Ruth Clark Health Center was located in the basement of Fellowship Hall, in space donated by the church, and operated as a primary health care facility for poor people in the neighborhood. Terry Bradley, a social worker with strong ties to the black community, was the first administrator, and David Gerber, a Lutheran minister, was pastoral counsellor and comprehensive care coordinator.

From the beginning, the Health Center had an extensive social service component that dealt with other problems in the lives of its clients. Advice was given on obtaining Medicaid and welfare, food stamps, and other social services. A special emphasis was given to pre-natal care. The center conducted Lamaze classes in space provided by the church. A black sorority sponsored a Stork's Nest program to teach young mothers how to care for their babies. The Health Center has been of increasing importance in the service of the church to the community.

In 1987 the church organized a Stephen Ministry program, a lay ministry to persons in crisis. Tom Beason and Carolyn Horton were trained as leaders, and they in turn trained the first two classes of Stephen Ministers. The Stephen Ministry provides one-on-one Christian care with complete confidentiality to persons in crisis. It has continued to be active to the present.

Problems of international peace and justice became increasingly urgent during the Reagan years. Early in the Eighties the church sponsored a six-week symposium on Economic Justice, which brought in nationally-prominent speakers for public forums. The church sponsored a Haitian refugee family, securing their release from the detention center in Miami, finding them housing in St. Petersburg, and employing the man as church custodian. The church conducted a community prayer vigil at the time of the 1980 rioting in Miami. Members of the church actively supported the work of the Farmworkers' Ministry and Beth El Mission. At the time of the Contra War in Nicaragua, the church became the center for meetings of the Pledge of Resistance. Clark Bouwman went to Nicaragua with Witness for Peace, and both Clark and Pat served on the national board of Witness for Peace. Bob Gemmer was one of the founders and a national board member of Habitat for Humanity. The church adopted the Commitment to Peacemaking. A study group discussed the Stone and Willbanks study of Christian resistance to nuclear war. A half-dozen members of Lakeview served on the Peacemaking Committee of Presbytery. Bill McKee was a delegate from this Presbytery to the International Consultation of Reformed Churches which was part of the process of preparing the General Assembly statement on Christian Obedience in a Nuclear Age. Several members of the church took tours of the Soviet Union with the FOR or similar groups. Ruth Uphaus kept members aware of peace and justice issues through the programs of Amity House. Kitty Rawson became one of the leaders of the CROP walk in the area, and church members participated in the CROP walk annually.

With all these accomplishments, the church still faced frustrations. It still experienced decline in membership and faced continued deficit budgets, in which we covered the deficit by a category called "faith." Members became fatigued and burnt out, and we had difficulty finding people to serve on the Session or as church school teachers. We faced continuing problems on maintenance of an aging building that had become too large for our use. The most serious of these was the water problem. The church was located over springs of living waters, which flooded the basement areas, including the health center, whenever there was a hard rain. Efforts to dispose of the water by pumping it into the street led to citations by the city for creating a nuisance. The cost of solving the flooding problem appeared beyond our means.

During his last year, the church granted Beason an six-month sabbatical, which he spent in meditation at a monastery in California and in the wilderness of the inner city of Chicago. Before he left he appointed another Task Force to study the future mission of Lakeview Church. This task force concluded that it was not likely that Lakeview could continue at the present location and should again consider the options of moving, merging, or redefining its mission. The task force made its report in the spring of 1989, just as Tom Beason accepted a call to the Presbyterian Church of Palm Harbor.

Members remember the Beason years as exciting, nurturing, different, introspective, intellectual. They describe them as a time of internal nourishment, spiritual growth, and a deepening awareness of the relationship of spiritual growth with social justice. But when Beason left, the issue of the future mission of the church was still in question.

To Jubilee

During the interim in 1989-90 the church continued to debate its future mission. Once again the Session and its committees assumed the responsibility for maintaining the work of the church. We were served by two interim ministers, first Jim Prickett and then Jack Laske. Interims are intended to be times of self-appraisal. Lakeview was pressured by Presbytery, particularly the Presbytery executive and the committees on ministry and congregational development, to reexamine our alternatives before calling a pastor. This self-examination was intense, and it continued for the next two years.

The problems were the same as faced the church at the time of the Earhart report some fifteen years earlier. The financial condition had become critical. The church was already running a deficit of approximately \$13,000 in the current year, with projected deficits of \$20,000 to \$25,000 in each of the next three years. The cash reserves of the church had declined almost \$57,000 over the last three years. An effort was made, unsuccessfully, to secure some distribution of the interest from the Robb Estate. Membership had continued to decline, and there did not seem to be much prospect that the traditional strategies of evangelism and church growth were relevant to our situation. The area was already over-churched. Many of the residents of the immediate neighborhood were already members of black churches which followed a much different style of worship from ours. People from outside the neighborhood were reluctant to come into a neighborhood that they regarded as unsafe. Members who had been active in leadership were fatigued, and the future of the church appeared dim. At one point the Session, at the urging of the Presbytery executive, did direct the Pastoral Nominating Committee to seek a part-time stated supply instead of an installed pastor, but later reversed this decision because of a belief that the church would not survive without a fulltime pastor. The Session did manage to convince the relevant powers in Presbytery that the mission of Lakeview was important enough to both the church and the neighborhood

that it should be continued, and Presbytery granted Lakeview support of \$15,000 over the next two years. This was enough to allow us to proceed to seek a pastor.

The most hopeful prospect for the future of the church seemed to lie in a merger with another congregation. While Jack Laske was the interim minister Lakeview began informal talks with Trinity Presbyterian Church about cooperation and possible merger, but these were not successful. Too much residual history in both church and society stood in the way. The strategy that appeared most promising to many in the Session and the congregation was a merger with Covenant Presbyterian Church, shifting the Lakeview congregation to the Covenant location, and converting the Lakeview property to a community center, supported as a mission of the entire Presbytery. This possibility would exist only if the pulpit at Covenant became vacant.

During this time the witness and membership care committee organized the Lakeview Links, a prayer chain and support network to provide communication among members.

In the summer of 1990 Lakeview called Earl J. Smith as pastor. Earl had been an industrial chemist, who had been called to the ministry as a result of his involvement with hunger, social justice, and peace causes with Presbytery. He had been Mission Enabler for Presbytery for a year, and was known to many members of our congregation who had served on the Presbytery Peacemaking Commission. He had just graduated from Columbia Seminary. His call to the ministry seemed to fit Lakeview ideally.

About this time the pulpit at Covenant became vacant, and the possibility of a merger became more immediate. Representatives of Presbytery arranged meetings between representatives of Lakeview, Covenant, and Trinity to explore the possibilities of merger. Trinity soon withdrew from these talks, preferring to continue as a church within the African-American tradition. Talks between Lakeview and Covenant became serious. The Covenant Session voted in favor of a merger, but it was unclear just what kind of merger they had in mind. In the spring and summer of 1991 both churches appointed a number of subcommittees to work out details of a merger. As we moved toward a decision in the fall of 1991 the Lakeview Session held its fall retreat in October. At this meeting, the Session decided that our mission programs were so important that whatever happened in the talks with Covenant we were committed to maintain the Lakeview Avenue property as a center of both worship and ministry. A month later the Presbytery Executive arranged a day-long meeting of the two sessions, along with the chairpersons of the relevant Presbytery committees, to make a final decision on whether to merge the two churches. At this meeting two things became clear to Lakeview. The Covenant people were not at all interested in joining with Lakeview unless we moved our Sunday programs to the Covenant building. Presbytery did not have any funds to support either the merged congregation or a continuance of the mission programs at the Lakeview location. The Lakeview Session therefore decided to continue our ministry where we were, to "just keep goin' on."

In the meantime, the Session had made a tangible commitment to remain at the Lakeview location by making some major improvements to the property. We spent over \$5000 to paint the exterior of the building. We moved to solve the water problem. We had initial estimates that it would cost over \$12,000 to do the engineering work necessary to channel the water into the city's storm sewer system. We made a special fundraising appeal to the congregation, and raised over \$11,000 for this purpose. It turned out that the cost of the project was much, much more than this. The Johnnie Ruth Clarke Health Center applied to the City of St. Petersburg for block grant funds, and received \$41,000 for the water project. The church agreed to a 25-year lien on the property to secure the grant, payable only if the property ceased to be used

to serve the needs of low-income people. The work was done over the summer of 1991, and it has appeared to have solved the problem.

After deciding to stay in our present location, the Session moved to reaffirm our mission. Session adopted the Covenant for Evangelism, adopting our own statement of the "Theological Basis for Faithfulness." Session adopted an overture to Presbytery to overture the General Assembly to begin the constitutional process to add "A Declaration of Faith" to the Book of Confessions. This overture was adopted by both Presbytery and General Assembly, though it was not finally ratified by the subsequent General Assembly. At the time of the Gulf War the Session sent a letter to President Bush calling for peace, and the church sponsored a community prayer vigil for peace and reconciliation. Members of Session studied the Human Sexuality Report and were among the few representatives to Presbytery to vote against a motion to quash the report.

Session also moved to respond to community needs. In the late summer of 1990 the Gulfcoast Jewish Family Services, the major community agency serving people with AIDS, approached Lakeview about beginning an AIDS program for people on the Southside, primarily drug users. In the fall Earl Smith, Tony Heyward, Gwen Jenkins, and several others organized the People of Color AIDS Coalition, and began holding support group meetings at the church every Wednesday night. The group followed a 12-step support format, and the meetings were conducted largely by the people themselves. Earl was present as a facilitator and listener. He was sometimes joined by Harriet Cale, pastor of the Gulfport Presbyterian Church. Then in the spring of 1992 Joan McKee joined the group as her Stephen Ministry assignment. The People of Color AIDS Coalition has expanded its work of education, service, and support to people with AIDS, and has become one of the primary organizations serving people with AIDS in this community. The support group continues to meet at the church.

Lakeview also took the leadership in organizing Congregations United for Community Action. In September, 1991, Earl Smith and Kitty Rawson attended a conference in New Mexico entitled "Congregational Renewal Through Community Mission." The Session then agreed to start a program of congregational renewal using the model that was taught at this workshop.

At about this same time, Rev. Paul Cromwell, an experienced community organizer, arrived in the St. Petersburg area and in November 1991 helped organize other churches to join with Lakeview Presbyterian Church in this community mission. In the spring of 1992 a group of 36 clergy and religious leaders from twelve denominations organized the Interfaith Sponsoring Committee to help build Congregations for Community Action. In February 1993 the organization was formally constituted at an Issues and Covenant Assembly. This assembly set the priorities for the group, and established a number of task forces to implement them.

In the spring and summer of 1992 St. Petersburg became racially divided and close to violence over the firing of its police chief, who was said to be insensitive to issues in the black community. After a series of controversies, charges of racism by black community groups, and insensitive statements by the chief, he was removed from office by the acting city manager, who happened to be black. The chief's supporters immediately began a petition drive to call an election to reinstate the chief. The election was scheduled for June, and there were fears of violence if the chief were reinstated. At the last minute, the City Council reached a legal settlement with the chief, and the election was averted. During this crisis Lakeview Church and its pastor let the way to reconciliation and peace. Four interdenominational and interracial prayer services and vigils were organized in response to this crisis. The newly formed Interfaith Sponsoring

Committee, co-chaired by our pastor, was the only interracial coalition of pastors capable of responding to such a crisis. In the spring 1993 city elections, the former chief ran for mayor and there was another possibility of division in the city along racial lines. Again Lakeview and CUCA worked for peace and reconciliation and for responsible political participation. The chief was not elected mayor, and the city has been relatively calm on this front.

The Issues and Covenant Assembly which constituted CUCA identified four priority areas: drugs and crime, education, race and denominational relationships, and economic development/ jobs/housing. Task forces have been constituted in each of these areas. Lakeview people have been active in these task forces, particularly those on drugs and crime, and race and denominational relationships. Earl Smith and Delores Brown serve on the leadership team.

In 1992 Johnnie Ruth Clarke Health Center faced a critical need for more space to house their expanding programs. They had received a grant from the federal government to make this possible. After exploring several alternatives, they came to the Session to request additional space in the church building. The Session voted to turn over the entire fellowship hall building and the second floor of the east wing to the health center. The construction grant would make possible the relocation of the educational classrooms to the balcony of the sanctuary and the meeting room to the area under the balcony. A special fundraising appeal to the congregation raised an additional \$38,000 to renovate the sanctuary. The renovation work was done in the winter and spring of 1993, and was completed in time for worship on Easter. In this process of giving its educational building and renovating its sanctuary the congregation has experienced renewal and resurrection.

In 1992 Lakeview Church applied to become a Jubilee Center in a pilot project sponsored by the Urban Ministry Support Team of the General Assembly. We received the endorsement of our Presbytery, and after a visit by representatives of the program Lakeview was chosen as the first Jubilee Center. We have felt honored and affirmed by our selection. It has strengthened our sense of renewal and made us increasingly aware of what it means to live in the resurrection. Since June of this year we have engaged in the reflection process which is designed to prepare us for this ministry. We hope that our participation in this project will strengthen our understanding of what it means to be the church, to be faithful to God's Kingdom in this place.

What THEMES are to be found in the history of this congregation?

1. We are a mission-oriented church, stressing community outreach.
2. Programs evolve in response to the needs of the community.
3. Programs evolve as an outgrowth of the church's sense of what it means to be the church.
4. We have been willing to make changes as needs developed.
5. Some programs result from self-assessment, careful planning, intentional decision (e. g., the CYP, Health Center, Stephen Ministry); but others are spontaneous response to need (e.g., the AIDS ministry).

6. The crucial turning point in the history of the church was the integration of the membership in the mid-1960s. This appears to have been the result not of any definite, conscious decision, but a faithful response to the conditions created by the changes in the community. Probably the most important event in its history came from its people's understanding of what it means to be the church of Jesus Christ. The pivotal years were 1965-70, when the future shape of the church was determined.

7. The church has had courageous, innovative, committed pastoral leadership.

8. The church has had strong lay leadership. It has had a strong Session with a strong committee structure. The initiative for some new mission programs have come from lay leadership. The Session has been able to take responsibility for the life of the church in the absence of pastoral leadership. The Session has been able to make fundamental decisions about the future of the church without, or sometimes in opposition to, pastoral direction.

9. The church has been open: open in membership; open to innovation; open to new opportunities for mission. It has been willing to take risks, indeed, to risk its life for sake of the gospel.

10. The church has been most vital when the commitment to service is supported by a strong internal congregational life.

What transferable learnings about urban ministry could be shared?

1. A small church, made up of very ordinary people, with few financial resources, can be engaged in extraordinary ministry.

2. Programs evolve in response to the needs of the community.

3. Programs evolve as an outgrowth of the church's sense of what it means to be the church.

4. We don't need to be in a hurry. We cannot always create opportunities for service; we most often respond to the opportunities that God presents to us. We can take time for prayer and reflection before acting.

5. Programs often develop into something very different from what we originally intended, but that is O.K.

6. Take care to maintain the dignity of the people we serve. Let them participate as much as possible.

7. Diversity is enriching, liberating, even empowering.

8. Being engaged in a broad range of service ministry will not necessarily result in church growth. We have gained individual members over the years because of our service programs; we have probably gained more members for many other reasons. In total, we have lost membership over the years. We undertake programs because we believe they are the thing to do, without thought of whether they will bring

us new members.

9. It is best to keep the congregation informed and involved in decisions.
10. Hope is not mindless optimism for the future, but how we live our lives.

II. OUR BIBLICAL / THEOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING

BIBLICAL / THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

In preparing to be a Jubilee Center Lakeview has engaged in Biblical reflection and theological discussion in order to discern our corporate theology. This was done over the Summer in seven house meetings. A total of 63 people attended these meetings, some attending more than one. Earl Smith and Theda James were the leaders in this process. Earl Smith wrote this report.

Two instruments were used to facilitate discussion. Worksheet one (see attached) was used to gather information about personal theologies. Each person was asked to list their three favorite Bible passages. They then were asked to share them with the group and to give a one word description of what these passages were saying to them. All of the passages shared were listed on flip charts for the group to see. After all had time to share we then went back and looked at the various themes that developed. After this process was complete worksheet two was introduced.

Worksheet two (see attached) is a listing of eight images of the church from early Christian writings. Each of the biblical Greek terms were explained to the group. They were then asked to choose no more than two that describe Lakeview Church. Narrowing down to two was very difficult since all of these images describe Lakeview to some degree.

The results of this second exercise are easy to report. All seven groups chose Diakonia - A Serving Community - as their first choice. We understand Diakonia to mean service, ministry, aid to those in need especially as described in Acts 6:1ff. Four of the groups chose Koinonia - A Community of Fellowship - as their second choice. We understand Koinonia to mean fellowship in the sense that we share our lives with each other, a close relationship, a sharing in ministry as described in 2 Corinthians 8:4. The other three groups chose as their second choice Ecclesia - A Gathered Community of the Spirit, Kerygma - A Community proclaiming the Gospel, and Lasis - A Healing Community.

The results of the first exercise are quite fascinating. They demonstrate both our diversity and our unity. Hundreds of different scripture passages were shared and in all of these some common themes developed, even common to each of the seven groups. These ably describe our corporate theology. One passage in particular was selected by each of the seven groups. This passage sums up so very well who we are in relationship to our God. It is Micah 6:8, "What does the Lord require of you but to do Justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God."

Lakeview's theology begins with a clear understanding of the sovereignty of God. Group 1 expressed this understanding through Psalm 103. Our God forgives all our sins, heals all our diseases, redeems our life from the Pit, crowns us with steadfast love and mercy, and satisfies us with good as long as we live! Group 1 also used John 3:16-17 to express God's love for all the world; love expressed in the giving of God's son that the world might be saved. For Group 2 the providence of God is best expressed in Psalm 23. God is in close relationship with each of us God's sheep, leading, restoring, and watching over us; therefore we need not be fear. And for Group 1 Psalm 1 reassures us that the Lord watches over the righteous; it is the wicked who will perish. For group 3 God's sovereignty and providence are expressed in Psalm 121, "I Lift up my eyes to the hills - from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth...The Lord is your Keeper." And also for group 3 Psalm 46 teaches us that "God is our refuge

and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear..." Group 4 also used Psalm 121 to describe God and also Romans 8:31-39, nothing in all of creation can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. For Group 5 the sovereignty of God is demonstrated through God's creating power (Genesis 1). "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." This God is to be trusted (Proverbs 3:5). For Group 6 God's providential care for us is expressed in Psalm 23 and also in passages such as Matthew 11:28-30, "Come to me all that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest..." and in 1Corinthians 10:13, "God is faithful and will not let you be tested beyond your strength." There is special hope for those who wait upon the Lord (Isaiah 40:31), "They shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint!" Group 6 also pointed out that God provides us with covenant laws that insure just and righteous relationships not only as expressed in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17) but also as expressed in the Beatitudes of Matthew 5:3-12. Like several others Psalm 23 expresses our understanding of God's care for Group 7. We place our faith and trust in God and God's son, Jesus Christ (John 14:1). God is love - to know God is to love (1 John 4:8).

Having experienced the providential care of God in our lives, having experienced God's amazing love and grace, having experienced God's holy presence we are called to respond in many ways. For Group 1 this call is expressed best in Isaiah 6:1-8. We respond to God's love by loving one another says group 2 (1John 4:7-8). We place our faith and trust in this God says Group 3 (Proverbs 3:5). Group 4 uses 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 to demonstrate the relationship between God's expression of love and care for us and our response to God's reconciling love - the ministry of reconciliation that God has given us. It is God in Jesus Christ who empowers us, says group 4, that we might bear fruit (John 15:4). That fruit is often expressed as works (James 2:17) or as love for one another (1John 4:7-12). We put our treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:19). Group 5 answered the question, "How do we respond to God?" through the words of Ephesians 5:1-2, by being imitators of God, by living in love as Christ loved us and gave himself for us!

Almost every group expressed our response to God's love and care for us through acts of worship and praise. For Group 1 Psalm 103 is very meaningful, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name." For Group 2 it was Psalm 100, "Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness..." For Group 3 it was Psalm 19, "The heavens are telling the glory of God...Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer." For Group 5 Psalm 68:19, we praise and worship God who is our salvation. For Group 6 Psalm 117 expresses our response of praise to the Lord whose faithfulness and steadfast love toward us endures forever. And for Group 7 Psalm 111:1 expresses this response to God, "Praise the Lord, I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart..."

Lakeview also responds to God's love and care for us through acts of love and care for others. The words "Service" and "Justice" have special meanings for Lakeview and all of our members. Every group selected Micah 6:8 as one of their favorite passages and as perhaps the best passage that describes the nature of Lakeview and its ministry. But our ministries of Justice and Service are undergirded by a wealth of scripture. For Groups 1, 2, and 3 Luke 4:18-19 is very meaningful. We are called to respond to God's love as Jesus did: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." We are doers of the word (James 1:22), says

group 1. We do to others as we would have them do to us (Luke 6:31). For group 2, our response to God always includes the element of justice and care for those not as fortunate as us - the poor, the needy, for this is what it is to know me, says the Lord! (Jeremiah 22:13-16). Group 3 points out that our salvation is a gift through God's son, Jesus Christ, not the result of works. Yet, we are created in Christ Jesus **for** good works (Ephesians 2:8-10). For Group 4 Amos 5:24 provides another voice, "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an everflowing stream." Group 5 looks to Proverbs 22:22, "Do not rob the poor because they are poor, or crush the afflicted at the gate!" Group 6 looks mainly to the New Testament for guidance: The love of God through Jesus Christ compels us to serve others (John 21:15-17) through ministering, preaching, teaching, giving. This is our spiritual worship! (Romans 12:1-8). And for us, "love" is so much more than just a word; Paul defines this agape love for us in 1 Corinthians 13. Finally, Group 7 chose Isaiah 58:6ff to express their understanding of our response to God's love and care for us. Like Micah 6:8 it beautifully describes the nature of this church and its ministry:

"Is not this the fast that I choose: to lose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the Glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am."

There is one last word in our corporate theology and that is Hope. Our sure hope for a new heaven and a new earth where there will be no more tears, no more mourning, no more pain, not even death (Revelation 21:1-4). We share John's vision and look forward to a day soon to come when the Lord will dwell with us as our God, and we will be God's people - all things shall be made new!

III. OUR MISSION

MISSION STATEMENT OF LAKEVIEW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

adopted September 20, 1993

Because God first loves us and all the world,
we are called to respond by sharing our gifts.

Our response is to help meet the needs of God's people by offering:

- a spiritual sanctuary
- an open, worshiping congregation
- a center for education
- a place of healing and
- a model for reconciliation.

Following Christ's example, we willingly

- share our vision,
- nurture and support ourselves and others
- take risks and
- struggle for justice.

CREATING A NEW MISSION STATEMENT
IN PREPARATION FOR BEING A JUBILEE CENTER
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)

Report prepared by Kitty Rawson, who led us in the process

The Session of Lakeview Presbyterian Church met in retreat with Jubilee Center project manager Dirk Ficca, a member of the Urban Ministry Support Team of the General Assembly and on the faculty of McCormick Theological seminary, and Thomas Hawkins, a dean at the seminary, June 4-5, 1993. Together, we created a time line of the history of the church. We included all major church events as well as important community events from the time the church was started in 1948 to the present. We also selected several Bible verses which we felt best reflected the church's activities throughout its existence.

On July 19, the Session met to create a new mission statement. During the opening worship, Pastor Earl Smith used two of the Bible verses selected by the session at the retreat. We also recalled themes from other verses. We looked again at the time line and projected into the future some of our dreams for Lakeview. We had an understanding that we wanted to start with where we are now as a Jubilee Center, reflect on our past, and look to the future of Lakeview. We wanted our mission statement to include an understanding of who we are from both a Biblical or theological perspective as well as a historical perspective, to share who we are and what we value, and what we do as a community and in ministry.

We looked briefly at the mission statement we had created three years previously. We tried to remember how we had gone about writing that statement. It was very soon after Earl Smith had arrived as minister. We were in a retreat setting at Lloyd Horton's home. Fran Sims led us through a number of exercises culminating with small groups writing mission statements. All statements were presented and an effort was made by the overall group to combine the statements into one. A smaller committee worked together and then presented the unified statement which was again slightly revised by the entire group before being adopted. This mission statement is included in Earl Smith's opening letter inside the church directory (copy attached) and may have been included in the church newsletter. It is not otherwise used.

To create a new mission statement for ourselves, members broke into four groups, repeating the exercise of three years previously. Later, as we shared those mission statements, we looked for common themes and phrases which stood out. Once again a subcommittee worked to unify the four statements into one. After combining the statements, the subcommittee looked at the old mission statement. They were pleased with some similar themes and important new phrases. The combined mission statement was sent out to all session members for their consideration.

The draft statement was discussed/debated/revised and then adopted at the Session meeting on August 23. The unrevised mission statement was included in the monthly newsletter and then was shared with the congregation at a congregational lunch following worship on September 12. As a whole, it was well received. Bob and Katharine Meacham proposed a slightly edited version, with their justifications for some minor changes. At the September 20 meeting of the Session this finally revised statement was adopted.

Now it will be published in the newsletter, and perhaps will be used frequently in a prominent place, such as the front of the bulletin.

This mission statement is thus the product of a collective deliberative process. It is a statement of the whole church. Members of the Session and congregation alike affirm that this states who we are.

Some Earlier Statements

There are two earlier statements which were adopted by the Session in an effort to define the mission of the church. They are included here to show that there has been a continuity over recent years in the church's understanding of its mission.

The first is a Theological Basis for Faithfulness that was adopted by the Session in December 1991. We had been asked by Presbytery to adopt the General Assembly's "Covenant for Evangelism," along with a statement of "A Theological Basis for Faithfulness, or, it was suggested, we could develop our own statement consistent with the Reformed faith. The Session adopted the Covenant for Evangelism, and also our own statement on "Theological Basis for Faithfulness" to go along with the General Assembly's statement. This statement was drafted by Bill McKee, and is made up of statements from Scripture, the Book of Order, and A Declaration of Faith. These statements, we believe, define our rationale for being Lakeview.

The second statement was adopted by the Session in 1976. It was an effort during the self-study on the future mission of Lakeview to draw up a mission statement for the church. This was intended as the theological preamble to a comprehensive mission statement. This statement was drafted by a committee that included Katharine Meacham, Bill McKee, and Meredyth Corbett. It drew heavily on "A Declaration of Faith." It was one of the documents that was presented to James Earhart during his report on the church. It was circulated to the congregation and used often during the late Seventies.

A Theological Basis for Faithfulness (1991)

Jesus began his ministry with the proclamation: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Luke 4: 18-19.)

Jesus sent out his disciples "to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal." (Luke 9:2.)

"The great ends of the church are the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind; the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God; the maintenance of divine worship; the preservation of the truth; the promotion of social righteousness; and the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world." (Book of Order, G-1.0200)

"We believe that God sends us to tell all nations that Christ calls everyone to repentance, faith and obedience. We are to proclaim by word and deed that Christ gave himself to set people free from sin and self-hatred, from ignorance and disease, from all forms of oppression, and even from death." ("A Declaration of Faith")

"We invite people everywhere to believe in Christ and become his followers. We urge them to join us in telling others the good news and in struggling for justice, compassion, and peace." ("A Declaration of Faith")

"We believe God sends us to risk our own peace and comfort in compassion for our neighbors. We are to give to them and receive from them, accepting everyone we meet as a person; to be sensitive to those who suffer in body or mind, to help and accept help in ways that affirm dignity and responsibility. We must not limit our compassion to those we judge deserving, for we ourselves do not deserve the compassion of God. ("A Declaration of Faith")

"Our confidence and hope for ourselves and other people do not rest in the powers and achievements of this world, but in the coming and hidden presence of God's kingdom. Christ calls each of us to a life appropriate to that kingdom: to serve as he has served us; to take up our cross, risking the consequences of faithful discipleship; to walk by faith, not by sight, to hope for what we have not seen." ("A Declaration of Faith")

"We know our efforts cannot bring in God's kingdom. But hope plunges us into the struggle for victories over evil that are possible now in the world, the church, and our individual lives. Hope gives us courage and energy to contend against all opposition, however invincible it may seem, for the new world and the new humanity that are surely coming." ("A Dec. of Faith")

MISSION OF LAKEVIEW CHURCH (1976)

The Christian Church is a community of believers who

respond to God's calling by

affirming God's claim on their lives
knowing God through the two-fold Word
the living Word of Jesus' life and
the written Word of the Bible
acting as an instrument to do God's work in the world

The Christian Church is a community of believers who

worship God by

preaching the Word
reaffirming commitment through the sacraments
communicating with God through prayer
sharing time and possessions selflessly

support the spiritual growth of its members by

encouraging study of the faith
practicing a disciplined life of prayer
developing a way of life sensitive to the earth's
limited resources and to the needs of others

tell all people the Good News that Christ intends us all to be free

from sin and self-hatred
from ignorance and disease
from the oppression of the powerful

intends us to be reconciled

to God and to each other
as people and as nations.

The Christian Church is a caring community which sustains and renews its own fellowship.

The church is called also to work for Justice, Compassion, and Peace.

God Sends us to root out prejudice from our hearts and institutions

to stand with men and women of all ages, races, and classes as they struggle for dignity

and respect the chance to exercise power for the common good

God sends us to risk our own peace and comfort in compassion for our neighbors

to give to them and receive from them

accepting everyone we meet as a person

to be sensitive to those who suffer in body or mind

to help and accept help in ways that affirm dignity

to humanize helping agencies including the church

itself

We must not limit our compassion to those we judge deserving, for we ourselves do not deserve the compassion of God

God send us

to act as an instrument for peace and reconciliation in our community

and to invite others to join this community of believers in responding to God's call.

IV. DESCRIPTION OF CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

This section was written by Bill McKee

At the Session retreat in June, Dirk Ficca and Thomas Hawkins led the Session through a brainstorming exercise listing the qualities that describe the character of congregational life. We were asked to fill in the descriptive adjective in the sentence, "Lakeview is a _____ congregation." The following adjectives were suggested: loving, caring, diverse, activist, accepting, relaxed, homogenous, small, personal, dedicated, giving, non-materialistic, teaching/teachable, serving, open, flexible, challenging, faithful, risk-taking.

The Session was then asked to boil these qualities down to four which seemed to be most important and inclusive. We chose: loving, serving, faithful, and diverse.

Then we were asked to list all aspects of the congregation's life under one of the qualities chosen. Our list was as follows:

Loving

Stephen ministry
AIDS ministry
Lakeview Links
Fellowship activities
Cedarkirk
Recognition of new people
Pastoral care

Serving

Operation Attack
JRC Health Center
CUCA
Crop Walk
AIDS ministry
Presbytery activities
Sex offenders group

Faithful

Respond to community crises
Integration
Openness to life-long learning
Openness to faith journey
Faith fund in budget
Faith in vision
Remained here in neighborhood
Faithful to each other
Endowments and bequests
Worship

Diverse

Racial
Ethnic
Age
Believers & seekers
Interests
Education
Religious history/experience
Southerners & Northerners
Forms of service

We attempted to repeat this exercise at the congregational dinner in which we discussed the history. The congregation agreed that these categories were an accurate description of our life. The meeting had been so full of reflection on Lakeview as a community of memory that there was no time for further quibbling on

what other aspects of the congregational life should be included on our chart.

Bill McKee was asked to write a summary description reflecting on the connections between what we had said and the interpretation of what it means.

We like to think that we are a loving congregation, open to the wide diversity of God's people, accepting people for who they are. We try to affirm and support each other. We express this in such programs as the Stephen Ministry and the Lakeview Links. We express it in worship. We like to think that we express it in our personal relations with each other. We hope this is so.

We see ourselves as a service-oriented congregation. We take great pride in our service activities and programs. Some of these are direct service activities by the congregation, sometimes in ecumenical partnership with others (e.g., Operation Attack). Some of these are collaborative coalitions which attempt to address community problems (e.g., CUCA). Some of them are efforts to empower the people we serve to take charge of their own lives (e.g., People of Color AIDS Coalition). Some of them are programs that we helped to bring into being but have become independent and are financed and administered by other sources (e.g., JRC Health Center, Beta program). Some are services for which we simply provide space and legitimacy (e.g. sex offenders group). Some of these service programs have been undertaken by us mainly because of our location and the opportunity we have to serve. In each of them we try to affirm the dignity of the people we serve.

We frequently argue about whether we are a homogeneous or a diverse congregation. In some ways we are very homogeneous. We are mostly middle-class, well-educated professionals. Most of us are professionally involved in education or social service. Those of us who are employed work largely for not-for-profit organizations. (We are, after all, Presbyterians.) But having said that, we are also an enormously diverse group. We are diverse in race, ethnicity, age. We include both orthodox believers and seekers. We come from a variety of religious backgrounds and experiences, though a significant number of us have had professional connections with the church. We even have a few Republicans. We were founded as a congregation in the "southern" Presbyterian Church, but we joke that we are the Church of the Reconstruction, that coalition of carpetbaggers, scalawags, and blacks, which is a noble and sometimes forgotten Southern tradition. We are diverse in our forms of service.

Something needs to be said about worship and Christian Education, which are hard to fit into our four categories. We have a small number of people in the church school, but we try to present a high quality program. The children use the "Celebrate" series, which is the most innovative of the curricula published by the church. Though there are only a few children in each class from the pre-school to the youth, the children learn to experience the love of God and the congregation. The children are welcome, and participate in the worship service. Perhaps there is nothing that is more distinctive of our church than the way we value the children.

The adult class is the largest class in the church school, with a membership that ranges from about 10 to 18. It is a discussion class (even an argumentative class), that is almost always lively and provocative. We are presently using the denomination's adult foundational curriculum, but we have used a variety of other material, discussion books, articles from Sojourners, and study series from groups as diverse as Pax Christi and the American Baptists. In 1992, in observance of the Columbus Quincentenary, we used a Pax Christi study series by Ched Meyers that compared Columbus' journey to the disciples' journey in Mark and to our faith journey. We have tried throughout to have a Christian Education program that is Biblically

based, theologically sound, and socially relevant.

We are willing to be open and innovative in our worship, probably more so than we often are. Members often complain that we need more life and joy in our worship. For decades we have had difficulty maintaining a choir because of the small number of people in the congregation. We struggle to provide a musical component to worship, but it is frequently of extraordinarily high quality.

We need to say something about faithfulness.

Having said all this, there is something else that needs to be said that we seldom say when we are being celebratory, but which we say in our sober moments. We are a fragile congregation. There are only a few of us. Though we have over 120 members on the rolls, the truly active membership list is more nearly 80 to 90. Many of us are very busy in our lives, and some of us are very tired. Our financial situation is very precarious. We carry enormous budget deficits every year, and we have the audacity to list our deficit as a revenue category called "Faith." Every time our pulpit has been vacant since the Earhart Report we have been told by Presbytery to reexamine our options because we really can't afford to call a pastor. All of the statistics suggest that they are probably right. Indeed, all of the statistics probably should prove that the church did not survive the early 1970s.

But we live in hope. And we have come to understand that hope is not mindless optimism about the future, but how we live our lives. And we are coming to understand that faith, and hope, and love are not three things, but one big thing. They are all the same thing. And so we put our future in the hands of God.

We are called to be faithful, and this is how we "exhibit the Kingdom of Heaven to the world."

V. OUR OUTREACH MINISTRY

JUBILEE CENTER PROJECT

Outreach Program Description

Outreach Program: Operation Attack

Members of Description Team: Phyllis Bloomfield, Director, 1981-
Virginia Reeder, Treasurer, 1967-93
Wilma Hoff, Elder, Treasurer, L.P.C.

HISTORY

In 1967 a local pediatrician, Dr. Edward Cole, asked Lakeview Church to serve as a distribution center for clean, good used clothing for children. He asked his patients to contribute and provided a container for any clothing worthy of being reused. The Session approved the request and provided a small house on our property as a distribution center. A \$1000 gift was used to prepare and equip the space for use.

Colleen Shannon Huss and Carolyn France (Horton) were the first directors of Operation Attack. Telephoners were recruited from the congregation and from some other churches. Since 1981 Phyllis Bloomfield has been director. Virginia Reeder has been treasurer and loyal worker from the beginning.

Emergency food and small amounts of money were provided later in response to requests from social workers. A few other congregations assisted with the program (mending, laundry, etc.) at the beginning. Many others have joined, making it an ecumenical mission.

CONTEXT

Seventy agencies in South Pinellas call on O.A. for help for clients. Calls are made to the church office. Our secretary directs the caller to the telephoner of the morning, who facilitates the response.

All clients must have a referral through a social worker, school personnel or pastor. Clients come to the center for clothing or food. Moneys for emergency needs are sent directly to the utility, landlord, pharmacy or whatever.

The Center is open M-W-F 9:30-11:30, staffed by Lakeview volunteers plus folk from many other churches.

ACTIVITY

Operation Attack provides:

- (1) Good clean clothing for children (some used, some handmade, some purchased).
- (2) Assistance with utility payments or rent (approximately \$25.00 per family), prescriptions, uniforms for work, chauffeur's license, etc.
- (3) Funds for summer day camp.
- (4) Back to school clothing and shoes.

A newsletter is mailed to individuals and congregations requesting financial support. Monies are used for some new clothing, especially underwear and shoes. Some food items are purchased to augment the food donations, i.e., peanut butter and bread.

Some 4000 persons receive clothing per year. Some 4000 receive food. There are an average of 28 churches, 12 organizations, and 25 individuals who contribute every month. Usually the gifts include money, food, and clothing. The annual income is \$36,000, 99% of which serves the clients directly.

There are 18 workers who volunteer regularly in a variety of ways. There is a great need to add new workers to this list.

RELATIONSHIP TO CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Lakeview is very proud to serve people in this way. We provide space, utilities, custodial service, and above all secretarial service, the link between the client, social worker, and fulfillment of the need. Because of Lakeview's support 99 cents of every dollar is used for the clients' needs.

A special offering for Operation Attack is received each month during our worship service. Our Thanksgiving service provides an opportunity for gifts of food.

The director and treasurer are members of our congregation. Some other members serve as volunteers, and many regularly bring donations of food and clothing.

This program allows our congregation to serve God in a very tangible way.

JUBILEE CENTER PROJECT

Outreach Program Description

Outreach Program: Johnnie Ruth Clarke Health Center

Members of Description Team:

J. Lloyd Horton, Ruling Elder at Lakeview and member of Founding Board of Directors of JRCHC
Ronald F. Lipton, Executive Director of JRCHC
Bill McKee, Elder and Historian

HISTORY

In the mid-Eighties Tom Beason proposed that Lakeview consider establishing a wholistic health center at the church. The Session appointed a task force that spent a year studying the possibility. Beason shared this concern with an ecumenical group including members and clergy of several churches in St. Petersburg and a Lutheran chaplain at Bayfront Medical Center. Through the latter's contacts, Granger Westberg, Lutheran pastor, teacher and author became involved with our group, known then as Interfaith Health Services. Dr. Westberg's philosophy of health care was, as he described it, "wholistic", in that it embraced physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. He had begun several clinics throughout the country using this philosophical approach and had received church and local support to operate them on a small scale.

In the late 1970's and early 80's, the catchment area around Lakeview Presbyterian Church was subject of a federal government survey which revealed that it was the most medically underserved area in Pinellas County. Prior to the formation of Interfaith Health Services another community group had attempted to meet some of the glaring healthcare needs in the community. It was known as the Johnnie Ruth Clarke Health Center Board of Directors. They wished to establish a health center in memory of Johnnie Ruth Clark, a recently deceased education and civic leader, active in the civil rights movement and a promoter of health and education rights for all citizens. The Johnnie Ruth Clarke Board had been successful in obtaining approval of a federal grant for a pilot program through the guidance and direction of a member of the local health planning agency, Dino Contis. Unfortunately the funding for the center was cut from the budget by President Reagan and the Board dissolved. The Interfaith Health Services resurrected the project, merged the two boards, and with the assistance of Congressman Bill Young, had the initial grant of nearly \$350,000 funded, and with space provided by Lakeview, began the Johnnie Ruth Clarke Health Center. When it opened in 1985, the center occupied only the basement of Lakeview's Fellowship Hall, but, with congregational acceptance, it now occupies the entire Fellowship Hall building and several adjacent areas. The budget now exceeds \$3.5 million, with federal funds accounting for less than 20%.

Terry Bradley, a social worker with strong ties to the black community, was the first administrator, and David Gerber, a Lutheran minister, was pastoral counsellor and comprehensive care coordinator. Bradley was succeeded by Gerber as administrator. Then in the late 1980's, Dr. Ronald F. Lipton became

executive director. He presided over a considerable expansion of the services and programs of the center.

From the beginning, the Health Center had an extensive social service component that dealt with other problems in the lives of its clients. Advice was given on obtaining Medicaid and welfare, food stamps, and other social services. A special emphasis was given to pre-natal care. The center conducted Lamaze classes in space provided by the church. A black sorority sponsored a Stork's Nest program to teach young mothers how to care for their babies. The Health Center has been of increasing importance in the service of the church to the community.

The center grew in the 1980's into a major health provider for south St. Petersburg and was no longer able to provide the type of "wholistic" approach to healthcare which had been envisioned. The spirit of concern and outreach support continues, however, through an active social service program and in cooperation with our church leaders, church volunteers and Operation Attack, as well as providing support groups for AIDS patients and others.

In the late 1980's the center opened an outreach clinic in Jordan Park, a low cost housing project located a mile from the church. Using residents from local hospitals, it began seeing primarily pregnant women and children, referring others to the clinic.

An up-county hospital then approached the center and asked that the Johnnie Ruth Clarke Health Center Board and staff open a center in Clearwater for prenatal and care of many of the indigent population, most of whom were receiving no prenatal care or using the hospital emergency room as a primary care service area. With the opening of the Mother and Child Care Center of Clearwater in 1990-91, it became advisable to form an umbrella organization to incorporate the various centers and programs. Thus the organization was reincorporated as Community Health Centers of Pinellas, Inc.

It recently received federal grants under the Ryan White Act to open a HIV+/AIDS clinic.

CONTEXT

Pinellas County is the most densely populated county in Florida. Although it is often viewed from the outside as a retirement community, there are large pockets of poverty throughout the county, and, since the county is largely dependent on service industries, a major portion of our population exists on minimum wages with limited access to medical care or insurance. As the public health program in this county, and indeed in the entire State of Florida, continues to provide less and less services, the demands upon Community Health Centers is increasing drastically.

The Community Health Centers of Pinellas began with one small clinic at Lakeview, the Johnnie Ruth Clark Health Center, and can now respond to the needs of the entire county. It maintains four primary care facilities in close conjunctions with three area hospitals which provide indigent care. The staff of over 75 (including pediatric, general and internal medicine physicians, nurses and technicians, as well as administrative, social service and clerical support) provide a continuance of care not provided in any other provider service in the county. It has grown from approximately 650 patient encounters per month to well over three thousand. It has added major Outreach and Social Work components. It has, in the past two years, become the largest provider of Prenatal Care in the area. It is the only public clinic on the west

coast of Florida that provides primary care for asymptomatic HIV+ patients.

As the program of the center has expanded it has established a model of developing new programs only in conjunction with services offered with other agencies, in order to provide the most comprehensive range of services to its clients. It continues to be a model for both the state and the nation through its focus on joint programs and its ability to efficiently meet rapidly changing community needs.

ACTIVITIES

The Johnnie Ruth Clark Health Center, located at Lakeview Church, provides the following types of medical services:

Internal Medicine. Much of this practice is devoted to chronic diseases, such as diabetes and hypertension.

Prenatal. This is a joint program with Bayfront Medical Center and is staffed by OB residents as part of their training program and by parttime mid-wives who are employed by CHCP. Lamaze classes are offered on a six week rotating format.

Pediatrics. The pediatric program is rapidly growing and includes pediatricians on staff, as well as rotations of pediatricians from All Children's Hospital.

The clinic is open six days a week, with varying hours in different services. The center is open for some services three nights a week.

RELATIONSHIP TO CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

The Johnnie Ruth Clarke Health Center is the most substantial outreach of our mission into the community. Though the center is financed largely by public funds, the church has been crucial to its existence.

Lakeview people, particularly Tom Beason and Lloyd Horton, were crucial in putting together the coalition of church, community, medical, and political forces that were necessary to secure the support necessary to have the original grant funded. Lakeview provides space for the center, rent-free. Originally, this space consisted of the basement of Fellowship Hall. When the center was established, Lakeview secured a major grant from Presbytery to pay for part of the rehabilitation of the space that was not covered by the federal grant, and to pay for the relocation of Operation Attack. Lakeview later secured a loan from the trustees of Presbytery to buy a small house on 13th Street to be used for some of the operations of the center.

Lakeview and JRHC jointly provided funds to solve the drainage problem, which benefitted both the church and the center. The church accepted a lien on its property to secure the block grant from the city. This is a \$41,000 mortgage for 25 years, payable if the property ceases to be used as a center for service to indigent people.

In 1992 the Lakeview Session voted to turn over the entire Fellowship Hall building and much of the East Wing to the health center. A construction grant made possible the renovation of this space for use by the clinic and the relocation of classrooms to the balcony of the sanctuary. The facilities used by the clinic

include examining rooms and offices, all of which have been beautifully designed. The church has thus given more than half its physical plant to the health center, rent free, and has mortgaged the rest of its property in its behalf.

Several members of the congregation volunteer at the center and many use the clinic's services.

JUBILEE CENTER PROJECT

Outreach Program Description

Outreach Program: Congregations United for Community Action (CUCA)

Description Team: Delores Brown

HISTORY

In September, 1991, Earl Smith and Kitty Rawson attended a conference in New Mexico entitled "Congregational Renewal Through Community Mission." They talked about it with the Session. The Session then agreed to start a program of congregational renewal using the model that was taught at this workshop.

At about this same time, Rev. Paul Cromwell, an experienced community organizer, arrived in the St. Petersburg area and in November 1991 helped organize other churches to join with Lakeview Presbyterian Church in this community mission. After 80 one-on-one visits and numerous small group meetings with area pastors and religious leaders, on March 3, 1992, a group of thirty-six area clergy and religious leaders (40% black and 60% white) from twelve denominations formed the Interfaith Sponsoring Committee to help build Congregations for Community Action.

Lakeview Presbyterian Church became a leader in this effort, starting the one-on-one empowerment process before other area congregations had become actively involved.

In the spring and summer of 1992, when St. Petersburg became racially divided and close to violence over the firing of its police chief, who was said to be insensitive to issues in the Black community, it was Lakeview Church and her pastor who led the way to reconciliation and peace. Four interdenominational and interracial prayer services and vigils were organized in response to this incident. The newly formed Interfaith Sponsoring Committee, co-chaired by our pastor, was the only interracial coalition of pastors capable of responding to such a crisis.

In the summer and fall, 1992, leadership teams from 16 Congregations (over 200 leaders total) participated in 3 two-hour workshops on doing an effective one-on-one empowerment process in their congregations.

Empowerment Process Phase I: One-on-ones: Lay leaders are trained in and carry out at least 5 to 10 forty-five minute one-on-one visits with others in their congregation in order to build relationships and to listen to peoples' concerns and visions for their congregation and community.

Empowerment Process Phase II: House meetings and Congregational Meetings: Lay leaders are trained to recruit for and conduct house meetings and a congregational meeting. They begin to utilize the relationships they have formed and their awareness of other's self-interests to invite others into more active

participation.

The training of leadership teams occurred in clusters of 2 to 7 congregations at a time bringing together leaders of diverse racial, geographic and denominational backgrounds.

Fifteen lay leaders made 100 one-on-one visits at Lakeview Church. A total of 1270 one-on-one visits were conducted by participating congregations.

In February 1993, four hundred leaders from thirty-five congregations gathered in an Issues and Covenant Assembly to form Congregations United for Community Action. This Assembly identified priority community issues to be addressed by the organization, based on the concerns and visions expressed by members during the one-on-one visits and congregational meetings. From the reported list of issues, four priority areas were democratically selected: Drugs and Crime, Education, Race and Denominational Relationships, and Economic Development/Jobs/ Housing. These are the four Task Forces organized at this meeting. However, the leaders voted overwhelmingly to make Drugs and Crime CUCA's top priority.

During this time a powerful foundation was built for Congregations United for Community Action. Relationships of trust and mutual respect were built across racial and denominational lines among significant numbers and networks of pastors and lay leaders, and an organizational structure has been built. Community issues were identified for research and action in 1993 and beyond.

CONTEXT

The purpose of Congregations United For Community Action (CUCA) is to build a congregational-based community organization (with initial focus on the greater St. Petersburg area) that will work to:

1. Strengthen the internal life of member congregations, and
2. Link congregations together to be a more powerful and effective voice in shaping community issues with a special concern for the involvement and issues of low and moderate income people.

Having been founded by religious congregations, CUCA is based on the values of justice and compassion as found in our religious traditions and the moral, spiritual, and democratic ideals of our society.

Congregations United currently employs one full-time experienced community organizer, Rev. Paul Cromwell. It is governed by its Interim Board of 7 clergy and 21 lay leaders, including our pastor, Earl Smith, and an elder of Lakeview Church, Delores Brown. Leadership Team assemblies with leaders from all member congregations are held periodically to make major organizational and issue decisions and evaluations.

A non-profit organization, CUCA is funded through grants from various organizations, membership dues from member congregations, and organizational fund raising drives conducted by member volunteers.

Congregations United receives consultation and leadership training opportunities from Direct Action and

Research Training Center. DART works with other congregational-based community organizations in Florida, Ohio and Kentucky.

ACTIVITIES

Congregations United for Community Action operates through an annual Issues and Covenant Assembly, and through four issues task forces that usually meet monthly.

The Drugs and Crime Task Force launched a Hotspots Campaign in May 1993, asking church members and the public to anonymously report (on Hotspots cards) the locations of suspected illegal drugs and crime activity, names of suspects and the vehicles involved. The Hotspots cards were distributed in April and early May during worship services in member congregations. In May, at a meeting at Bethel Community Baptist Church, 155 completed Hotspot cards were turned in to Mayor David Fischer and Police Chief Darrel Stephens of the City of St. Petersburg. Hopefully, this campaign will let police know of suspicious illegal activity and will alert them that the community expects something to be done about it. It will also give CUCA and its member congregations a means to follow up with police for reports back regarding specific police responses. Future meetings with the mayor and police chief and prayer vigils/marches are being planned in order to create safe and drug-free neighborhoods.

In June 1993 over 65 leaders attended a "Public Education and At-Risk Students" workshop; 50 leaders attended an overnight Board and leaders Retreat; and over 200 attended a very spirited "March and Prayer Vigil for Drug-Free Communities" at Jordan Park Housing Complex.

During 1993 more than 400 area leaders have participated in over a dozen leadership development workshops on topics such as "How to Research and Act on Community Issues," "Creating Drug-Free Communities," and "Leading Effective Meetings." All were sponsored by the various Task Forces.

In November 1993 the Race and Denominational Relations Task Force sponsored a weekend retreat on diversity at Dayspring Conference Center. It was attended by about 50 people who explored issues of diversity and unity among races and denominations.

RELATIONSHIP TO CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Lakeview Church was one of the lead churches in the development of CUCA. Earl Smith was one of the key leaders in its development, serving as co-chairman of the organizing committee. Twenty-three members from Lakeview attended the organizing Issues and Covenant Assembly, and many of them have been active on CUCA task forces. Lakeview supports CUCA financially through the payment of annual dues and through a current fundraising campaign.

In the initial process of congregational renewal, most of the members of the congregation were interviewed by members of Lakeview's leadership team. This process succeeded in uncovering members' concerns about the church and its programs. It did not result in any immediate specific program, but it did rally the membership just at the time Lakeview was being chosen as the Jubilee Center and at the time that the decision was made to renovate the sanctuary.

Lakeview Presbyterian Church has gained a well deserved reputation in the community as a reconciling congregation. Its pastor has gained respect as leader in building relationships with other congregations.

The church leads the community in ecumenical and inter-racial efforts. We can all feel proud of the substantial progress CUCA has been making and the role Lakeview Church has assumed in leading this community organization.

JUBILEE CENTER PROJECT

Outreach Program Description

Outreach Program: Stephen Ministry

Description Team: Joan McKee, Stephen Minister Leader

HISTORY

The Stephen Ministry is a program founded by Dr. Kenneth C. Haugk, designed to equip laypersons to do caring ministry. It provides a complete system of training and organizing lay persons for caring ministry in and around congregations. Lay persons receive over 50 hours of training in topics and skills related to caring ministry, are commissioned by the congregation, and provide ongoing Christian care to people experiencing a wide range of life needs or crises.

In late 1986 or early 1987 Tom Beason gave material he had received on Stephen Ministry to the Witness and Membership care Committee. The committee studied the material, became interested, and attended a workshop in Tampa presenting the concept and outline of the program. Several members attended, including Alice Klamer, Harold Hoff, and Lottie Chamberlain.

In the spring of 1987 the committee recommended to the Session that Lakeview become a Stephen Ministry Congregation. The initial fee was paid, and Tom Beason and Carolyn Horton were sent to a Leader's Training Course in San Francisco in July 1987.

In the fall of 1987 the congregation was informed about Stephen Ministry through the newsletter and announcements at worship. A congregational dinner was held for all interested members after worship, where the concept was presented, including some role-playing activities.

There have been three training sessions to date. During the fall of 1987 and winter of 1988 nine Lakeview members took the course of 50 hours training, with six being commissioned in March. Five took the course from February to May 1989 with three commissioned. One of the other participants was Jim Prickett, who was interim minister and was assisting Carolyn Horton with the leadership of the Stephen Ministry. The last class had four members with three commissioned. Earl Smith and Joan McKee have also been trained as leaders.

Since Stephen Ministry was begun at Lakeview, there have been twenty-seven care receivers, fourteen active Stephen Ministers, and four trained leaders. Several of the care receivers were terminally ill. Others were facing a period of crisis in their life.

CONTEXT

Stephen Ministry acts under the Witness and Membership Care Committee of the Session. Most of the

care receivers are members of Lakeview, but some have been in nursing homes and three were terminally ill with AIDS. All of the Stephen Ministers are active church members, six of the seven are ordained elders as are the two lay leaders. Some of the crises faced by care receivers were impending death, death of a spouse or loved one, anger and bitterness, entering a nursing home, prolonged grief, and disability. The skills the Stephen Ministers learned during the training are often used with others in the congregation, even without a formal relationship. People listen to each other in a more caring way.

ACTIVITY

The Stephen Ministry provides one-on-one Christian care with complete confidentiality to persons in crisis. Stephen Ministers take 50 hours of training, are Commissioned by the congregation and commit themselves to serve for two years. There are seven Stephen Ministers currently, serving with three trained leaders. All active Stephen Ministers meet once a month with the leaders for supervision and continuing education on areas of interest, such as assertiveness, listening skills, and the sharing of one's faith. When a church member (or friend) faces a crisis, the minister may suggest a Stephen Minister. If the person wishes one, a formal relationship is set up with a Stephen Minister. When the individual has worked through the crisis, the relationship is formally ended. Usually a Stephen Minister will meet with the care receiver once a week for one-half to one hour.

RELATIONSHIP TO CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

All the Stephen Ministers are active members of Lakeview. They are commissioned during the worship service. I have observed that the Stephen Ministers are among the most faithful in attending worship. The Stephen Ministry represents a ministry to the congregation and an extension of our ministry to others.

JUBILEE CENTER PROJECT

Outreach Program Description

Outreach Program: People of Color AIDS Support Group

Description Team: Joan McKee

HISTORY

JUBILEE CENTER PROJECT

Outreach Program Description

Outreach Program: Offender Services

Description Team: Earl Smith

HISTORY:

Offender Services is a community agency that provides counselling for sex and domestic violence offenders. Lakeview Church provides space for weekly counselling sessions.

Offender Services began ten years ago with one program, the Adult Sex Offenders' program. A second program, the Domestic Violence program, was started two years ago. It was at this time that Lakeview Presbyterian Church became involved with these programs.

The Sex Offenders program grew out of a perceived need of counselors who were working to treat and support the victims of sex offenders. Inevitably the spouse or parent who was the offender in the case was returned to the household without treatment - sometimes after a brief prison term or other form of corporal punishment. As a result sexual offenses were often repeated causing even greater damage to the victims.

The Sex Offenders program is a court ordered program. The majority of their clients come by court mandate for therapy and treatment that lasts a minimum of two years.

The Domestic Violence Program started as a result of a Pinellas County task force that was charged to respond to the increase in violence against women. This increase is reflected in the number of violent deaths among women nationwide. The task force included law enforcement personnel and professional counsellors. As a result the task force established this organization to counsel perpetrators of domestic violence. This is the only county-wide domestic violence organization in the country and has been used as a model for treatment of domestic violence offenders. This program needed space for counseling and came to Lakeview with this request. Lakeview accepted them two years ago and provides them with space for a monthly fee that covers overhead expenses. Now, both programs are meeting here on Thursday afternoons and evenings.

CONTEXT:

There are presently 80 clients per week who are coming here for ongoing counseling. The Domestic Violence program is twenty-six weeks minimum. The Sex Offenders Program is two years of weekly counseling.

Counseling is done mainly in a group setting and also one-on-one. These are therapy groups where lives

and attitudes are changed.

Most clients have gone through the court system and became a part of the program as a result of a court order. This is a county-wide program. Family members and others are allowed into the groups even though they are not clients.

Don Sweeny and Denise Hughes are the program directors.

ACTIVITY:

The heart of these programs is the group counseling sessions. These are therapy groups whose purpose it is to change lives and attitudes. Professional counselors are used for all groups. Group dynamics and pressures are utilized to get offenders to first admit their harmful actions - in the language of the church, to confess their sins publicly. Denial in these cases is the most difficult thing to overcome. Once a client is past denial, attitudes can change. In the language of the church - repentance, a turning to God and away from sin, is possible. Other activities include education, psycho-social therapy and peer support.

RELATIONSHIP TO CONGREGATIONAL LIFE.

Lakeview Presbyterian Church has for a number of years supported CASA (Center Against Spouse Abuse), a shelter and treatment center for victims of spouse abuse, as a part of its outreach ministries. When Offenders Services came to Lakeview looking for space, the Session was open and willing to extend this to them. We could see the need for treating offenders as well as victims. We also realize that very few other congregations would openly welcome sex offenders and domestic violence abusers into their midst. As Jesus said, "I came to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance." (Luke 5:32)

VI. OUR OUTREACH MINISTRY -- OLDER PROGRAMS

These are programs from our past, which we do not have any more, but which have been important in shaping the church, and from the history of which we may still learn.

JUBILEE CENTER PROJECT

Outreach Program Description

Outreach Program: Experimental Ministry Program, 1967-70

Members of Description Team: Bob and Katharine Meacham talked with Robert Miller and Mike Elligan about their recollections of the Experimental Ministry. Bill McKee researched the church records.

HISTORY

During 1966 the church applied to the Church Extension Board of the PCUS for a grant to support an experimental ministry that would develop programs to relate the church to the racially changing community. The request was to employ a black Associate Minister and a social worker or Director of Christian Education. The church received a grant which was originally set at \$37,000 in decreasing amounts over 5 years. \$16,000 was available for the first year. In April 1967 the church extended a call to Rev. Irwin (Mike) Elligan to be Associate Pastor of Education and Outreach. Mr. Elligan was then Associate Director of Churches and Society for the PCUS. He stayed at Lakeview for two and a half years.

Members of the church thought of the Experimental Ministry in two senses. In one sense it was an experiment in an interracial pastorate, with one white and one black minister equally sharing a ministry with an interracial congregation. It was the only such pastorate in the PCUS (the "Southern Presbyterian Church) at that time; indeed, it was the first time such a staff had existed in the PCUS in the twentieth century. In another sense, it was an experiment in relating the church to the critical social problems in the community. It was intended to meet the challenge "to be the church" in a changing neighborhood. As Miller said, "Lakeview church, it seemed to me, might show what the Kingdom could be here and now."

Mike Elligan was the key to the Experimental Ministry program, but there were other staff. For a year the church employed Nancy Hilton as a social worker to work with neighborhood families and with students. Then for a year the church employed Mose Henry, to work with young people, both in the church and the neighborhood. He directed a coffee house called "The Catacombs." The church opened its doors to a wide variety of community groups and sponsored a number of programs for neighborhood youth that were collectively called "The Prez."

Mike Elligan left Lakeview at the end of 1969 to become pastor of the New Covenant Presbyterian Church in Miami. Mose Henry resigned about the same time in order to attend the Presbyterian School of Christian Education in Richmond. Shortly thereafter the Board of National Ministries terminated the grant for the Experimental Ministry. Vin Harwell, a student at Florida Presbyterian College, was hired to replace Mose Henry. He tried to continue the coffeehouse ministry, but he soon shifted his activities to become the church organist. Some of the programs begun by the Experimental Ministry continued, but there was no longer a coherent program by that name.

CONTEXT

The years between 1966 and 1972 were years of turmoil in the community. There was continued black migration into the neighborhood and white flight, so that the area between Lakeview Avenue and Lake Maggiore became almost entirely black. There was tension in the black community, with increasing demands for desegregation and better services for the black neighborhoods. There was unrest in the community following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., and civil disorder in the summers of 1968 and 1969. There was a garbage workers' strike in the summer of 1968 that caused sharp divisions in the city. There was a statewide teachers' strike in the spring of 1968. Desegregation of the public schools began in the fall of 1970 with a pairing, in two clusters, of the six elementary schools south of Lakeview Avenue. County-wide desegregation began in the fall of 1971 with court-ordered cross-busing. Most of the children who were bused were from the black neighborhoods, including those around the church.

The church tried to relate to these problems by outreach programs to the community, by opening its doors to community groups, and by developing programs that would relate members of the congregation to the people in the neighborhood.

ACTIVITY

The Experimental Ministry supported a wide array of activities to relate to the social problems of the community.

Mike Elligan involved himself in a wide variety of civic and other community interests. He described them at the time in a review of the Experimental Ministry: "The events ranged from appeals and appearances at city council meetings, conferences with individuals and groups of councilmen; drawing clergy and other churchmen together for crisis events when regular organizations were not inclined to act; becoming personally acquainted with certain volatile elements of the black population and seeking to help them rationalize their expressions of unrest; sharing concerns of people involved in several stages of the educational crisis, including desegregation, teacher unrest, ghetto attendance problems and recruiting students in need of tutoring."

Elligan served on the Board of Trustees of the NAACP, the Council on Human Relations, the Pinellas Opportunity Council, Citizens for Civic Action, Religions United in Service for Community.

At the time of the garbage workers' strike the church allowed the workers to use the church as a meeting place and provided office space as well. The pastors and some members joined the garbage workers in their daily marches to City Hall. Some were arrested. With Miller and Elligan present as intermediaries, the city manager was better able to have some dialogue with the striking garbage workers. Illustrative of this, the city manager asked Elligan to sit with him when he declared the strike over.

Mose Henry directed a coffee house program called "The Catacombs" that met in an old house owned by the church. Members remember that the young people painted the inside of the coffee house black. Mose was a long-haired young man armed with guitar skills and warm intentions. He was formerly a member of the folksinging group "The Highwaymen," who were best known for popularizing "Michael, Row the Boat Ashore." He was particularly interested in religious theater, and the group wrote and produced a play, "When in Rome, Cop Out," which was performed at Montreat and on tour among churches.

The Lake Maggiore Teen Council representing neighborhood youth met at the church. There were neighborhood dances in Fellowship Hall that attracted both church and neighborhood young people. These sometimes "got out of control" in the minds of some church people, and eventually they were discontinued. Elligan said: "They didn't know the difference between bawdy house dancing and ballroom dancing." The black young people in the neighborhood referred to the youth programs at the church as "The Prez," and many people in the community still remember "The Prez" with affection.

The church opened its doors to a variety of community groups and organizations. At one time in 1969 the following organizations were meeting at the church: Alcoholics Anonymous, Lake Maggiore Teen Council, Citizens for Civic Action, Lauback Literacy Training Program, a tutoring service staffed by St. Petersburg Junior College students, a Black Pride Organization for high school and post-high school students.

Another outreach to the younger children in the neighborhood, was a Boy Scout Troop which met at the church. The troop was interracial, though most of the boys were black kids from the surrounding area. The organizer and scoutmaster was a man from the congregation. For several years the troop was the only racially integrated troop in Pinellas County. It led in desegregating Camp Soule. The church also sponsored a neighborhood youth basketball team in the city recreation league which won the city championship one year.

RELATIONSHIP TO CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Beyond all these specific programs and community activities there was a goal of creating an interracial ministry that would minister to the needs of a changing community. In reflecting on these years, Elligan recently commented: "The first thing that comes to my mind is that there was a readiness on the part of the congregation. Some people were moving away but many stayed to meet that challenge." There was a readiness both to accept Mike Elligan as a pastor and to plunge the church into the turmoil of racial issues in the community.

Although his title was Associate Minister for Education and Outreach, Elligan shared fully in the pastoral work of the congregation. Almost monthly he and Robert Miller had dialogue sermons or other special worship programs. Elligan shared in officer training and church orientation courses, communicant classes and church school courses. He shared in pastoral calling, hospital and shut-in visits, and prospective member contacts.

Both ministers were called to represent the experimental ministry in Presbytery and General Assembly activities. Both served on General Assembly agency boards. They were frequently asked by other presbyteries to help them with programs emphasizing experimental work.

Perhaps the greatest achievement of the Experimental Ministry was the creation of an interracial congregation at Lakeview. The contributions of Robert Miller and Mike Elligan were crucial to this. The appearance of a white boy from Virginia, who still spoke with a strong Shenandoah Valley accent, and a black colleague in ministry, the experience of a black minister administering the sacrament of baptism to a white child of the covenant, and the sight of white and black children playing together on the playground, were all tangible witness against centuries of racism in church and society, and witness to what the church could be. Though there continued to be evidences of bias, there was abundant evidence of barriers being

overcome.

Elligan gave this testimony in his summary of his ministry in February 1970:

Barriers in huge chunks have fallen, even at the expense of some former family relationships, some former associations, clubs, and institutions. It was less startling for black members to introduce their white pastor but a virtual sacrifice for some white members to present their black pastor. Not only have some demonstrated the courage but they show measures of sincerity that mean they have overcome some old barriers.

There are many hurdles left in the integration struggle but already among us there is ground for appreciating Lakeview's being a focal point, an "exhibit A" among local churches because of the staff and membership integration. As the coffee house ministry, the Teen Council contact, Operation Attack, Head Start, and the more meaningful and modern approach in worship continue, the interest of people who crave an adequate Christian experience will turn toward Lakeview. It is not a sudden process but requires a new kind of patience, the risky kind that lets non-traditional forms and people draw near enough to make an impact or be influenced. . . .

Some northern parishes have earlier undertaken projects like Lakeview and their history is less glamorous to date. A few have finally given in to black racist pressures and white participation diminished. Some died because of artificiality, a few others are vigorous because they are courageous and honest. What must be kept in mind and worked at hard is the consistent application of the Gospel to people conditioned by ages of erroneous religion and culture. Causing blacks and whites to identify with each other is a task of this generation's churches.

The character of Lakeview Church was irreversibly set during the years of the Experimental Ministry. What had been described previously as a "traditional" church had become a church of social activism and reconciliation. What was called experimental almost thirty years ago is now as deeply a part of our church's character as it is part of our history. For all the people who have contributed so faithfully in trying to "be the church, a piece of the Kingdom" we are grateful.