

GOLDEN HILLS COMMUNITY CHURCH CHURCH HISTORY

Golden Hills Community Church was born in the heart and mind of God and in the hearts and minds of several people who began to seek His will for a new church in the Antioch area. In January, 1983, a historic meeting took place in the office of Harold Carlson, pastor of Fair Oaks Baptist Church in Concord. Sheryl Philpott, representing more than 20 local residents, went to talk to Pastor Carlson about the possibility of receiving his help to start a new and vibrant church in this city of Antioch. Pastor Carlson had been praying about the same possibility. They got on their knees together and asked God to lead them in His will, and lead he did.

A Bible study began in the Philpott home in February. There was excitement and commitment as this small group began to grow under the leaderships of Pastor Carlson, Jarol Duerksen, and Roger Goodman. As the reality of a new church in Antioch began to take shape, they planned, worked, and prayed in preparation for the first worship service to be held in September in an old Lutheran church at 1911 "C" Street. That first service on September 13, 1983 was a day to remember. The people, under the leadership of Pastor Jarol Duerksen from Fair Oaks, had prayed and worked and given so much. Now the day had arrived. The music was set. Our Executive Secretary from the Northern California Baptist Conference, Pastor Cully Olson, was scheduled to speak. But the big question on everyone's mind was, "Would anyone come?" Beyond what even they could have asked or imagined, 130 people showed up, some from Fair Oaks, some from the community. The church was born and the ministry had begun.

In January 1984, Larry Adams and his wife Karla came to Antioch from Oregon to be the first full-time pastor. What began with a vision and a handful of people, God was pleased to continue to grow. The first Easter service saw 190 people in attendance, and by Christmas 1984 the church was averaging over 200. The building on "C" Street was becoming standing room only. There was no room for children. Sunday School was held outside. The people prayed and began to seek God's direction for a new facility in which to meet. He provided a new building at 913 Sunset Drive. Actually the building wasn't new; it was an old, deserted,

tin and steel warehouse that had been a furniture store and car repair shop. It was a real fixer-upper, and the rent would be three and a half times what they had paid before. But with no money, no fixtures, no furniture, but lots of faith, the people prayed, worked, gave, and sacrificed. What emerged was not only a new building but a united church. People had trusted God, sacrificed together giving their money, time, and possessions believing that God had called them to continue to expand His ministry. On Easter 1985, we held our first service in the new building and more than 350 people came.

Realizing what God had planned and with a vision for the future, the leadership of the church, with the congregation's approval, immediately moved out to buy a piece of land where future ministry expansion could take place. The people sacrificed again, and by God's grace they were able to pay for five and a half acres of ground five miles away on some farmland off Lone Tree Way near Brentwood. Some asked, "Who would ever drive to a church way out there?" The answer, "Very soon they won't have to drive there, people will be able to walk to church." For seven years, God blessed the ministry in the warehouse. With only 24 parking spaces on site and roadside parking along Sunset Drive, God grew the church to more than 1,000 people in three services.

In 1990, building plans began as the vision for future ministry kept unfolding. There were many battles. Many times we had thought we failed. Many thought the work too hard and the opposition too great, but the vision wouldn't die. God kept building His vision for His church in the hearts of faithful people who wouldn't quit. They prayed harder and gave often at great personal sacrifice. They worked hard and kept believing, and by God's grace, and in His timing and provision of the right people at the right time, the building was done while the number of people and new ministries continued to grow and to expand. On September 6, 1992, after years of trials, tears, prayer, and sacrifice, God had not only built a building, He had built and strengthened His people. With tears of joy, the worship began that Sunday morning, and 600 new people came and never left. The church went from 1,000 to 1,600 people in one day and has continued to grow. Since 1992, hundreds of people have come to

know Christ, have been baptized, and are now serving Jesus for His glory.

Seeing the population growth within our area and our deepening desire to see the nations of the world reached for Christ, we embarked on the largest ministry expansion in our history entitled "Kingdom Impact: Building to Advance His Kingdom." More than 1,000 people met in small groups in the fall of 2001. Challenged by the vision outlined by our leadership, the people responded, and through much prayer, giving, and sacrifice, a new ministry facility for worship, youth, and children's ministry began to take shape. Just two years later that facility was opened and the ministry expansion continues. Along with this growth has come increased focus on fulfilling the Great Commission of Jesus which is to "Make disciples of all nations."

Today, Golden Hills is a church of more than 3,500 with multiple services on two campuses involving hundreds more each week with a variety of programs and service opportunities. Our ministry has grown to include extensive children, youth, and adult ministries; Bible studies, small groups; counseling and recovery programs; music and drama; retreats, camps; a mission outreach center downtown; the Antioch Seniors Brown Bag Food Program; and a commitment to global outreach that involves bringing His gospel to unreached and unsaved people of the world. We are aware that the church is not buildings and services and programs, the church is people. It is our belief that God will continue to draw to Himself through this church and that He would be pleased to continue to use this body of believers to encourage all of the people and churches of our community and around the world. The challenges before us are great. If Jesus tarries in His return, ministry in the 21st century will be demanding. But if the people of Golden Hills will respond today, as they always have, with fervent prayer, sacrificial giving, faithful service, hard work, and unyielding faith, then God will prove again that He is more than sufficient to meet every need and continue to build His church for His glory until He comes.