

A VISIT WITH MAURICE AND CONNIE BEAM

Voices from our past: We are reminded of their many years of productive service to our church when Connie and Maurice Beam contact us from St. Peter, Missouri.

Maurice and Connie Beam were introduced to the church in early 1953. This was a time soon after Maurice graduated from Cal Poly, in San Luis Obispo. Maurice and all four of their daughters were baptized at the 9th and C Street church. They were involved in many of the church groups (church school, fellowship groups and service groups.) Maurice was treasurer of the Board of Trustees and wrote several of the early checks.

The foundation for the mosaic altar was built by Maurice and Don Lettrel in our garage from scrap lumber from Convair (General Dynamics). It was then transported to the Mission Valley property when the artist, Reginald Inwood had the mosaic waiting. It was face down on the floor. After glue was applied to the foundation piece, several people raised it up to perfectly fit the form. The artist filled the areas between the tiles and the beautiful picture evolved.

Also Maurice and another man, Jack Jacobs, were in charge of the church move from 9th and C to the valley. That day people were asked to wear work clothes to church and bring pickups, vans, trailers and personal cars and be ready to move. Numbers or letters were put on each piece that was to be moved. Through walkie-talkies, people were stationed at strategic locations to direct the vehicles to the appropriate buildings. There was a worship service that evening complete with folding chairs.

The Beams stopped by the church several nights later and helped apply one inch square glass pieces to the cross that tops the building. One of the Sunday School classes made the tie tacks and cuff links from these same pieces of glass. (Connie claims that she still has this set.)

The bells were moved from 9th and C on a fork lift type machine and placed on the property to await the day when they would be placed in the bell tower.

Connie Beams recalls that her family truly “grew up” at First Church and values that time very much. She also remembers that they were the delegates to the National Family Life Conference in Chicago in 1958 representing First Church.

Highlights of their church experience, according to Connie, was, of course, the purchase of the Mission Valley property, the building of the modern cathedral, and the move. “Most of the major changes have transpired since our move in 1965,” Connie said, “But the beautiful mosaic work and the stained glass windows created an outstanding worship experience for us.”

When asked to describe any particular incidents of interest, Connie recalled that their first major introduction to the church came through Lois Johnson. “She had such a welcoming personality that this led us to become very involved.” Connie recalled that Maurice gives Reverend Dr. Kells Swenerton credit for leading him to embrace Jesus as his Lord and Savior and added that First Church was a very important part of their lives. Connie commented that the most proud accomplishment of this church for her, personally, was that it helped to make her strive to become an instrument of God’s love, mercy and justice.

Interviewer: Margaret Shafer – November 20, 2005