



CELEBRATING the past **WELCOMING** the future

#2 OCTOBER 2009

Photo Published in the
January 21, 1963 Post Intelligencer.
Pictured are Rev. David Meekhof,
from left to right — Bob Permann,
Alan Bunker, Joan Merritt, Don Lindsey and
in the rear, Wes Sikkema.

Trends in Newport's Leadership

The changing roles of elders and deacons

The original vision for Session was to address the spiritual matters of the church such as worship, mission and Christian education with minor attention to financial concerns.

On June 5, 1960, the day the church was officially organized and worship was being held at Sunset Elementary, Newport's first six elders were ordained and/or installed (some being ordained in previous congregations). In 1961, three more elders were ordained and/or installed as were nine members of a short-lived, Board of Deacons.

The Board of Deacons was created to allow Session to focus more specifically on the spiritual life of the church.

Deacons were to take responsibility for budget and stewardship, in addition to congregational care and the pragmatic details of worship such as setting up the gym, finding ushers and coordinating fellowship time.



Eventually, deacons wanted more input into the areas addressed by Session and elders desired more involvement in finances and parish ministry. In order to avoid tension between the two groups, all agreed to form one Board. In October 1964, the Board of Deacons was dissolved and those deacons who wanted to continue serving were elected and ordained as elders, increasing Session to eighteen members.

In 1979, eighteen parishes (like Ministry Units) were organized with an elder in charge of each. By 1983, a lay Care Group was formed to help elders with the growing number of aging members in their parishes. Six years later, in the Fall of 1989, the momentum to re-establish a Board of Deacons grew after a forum on that topic. This was followed by a special congregational meeting where the formation of a Board of Deacons was approved. On Pentecost Sunday, 1990, approximately twenty five years after the dissolution of the first Board of Deacons, a second was created. Twelve deacons were ordained and/or installed — seven women and five men. In November, twelve new Ministry Units were organized with a deacon assigned to each one. In 2009, the Board of Deacons is still organized into twelve ministry units and continues to address issues related to congregational care.

In September 1996, the formation of Stephen Ministry offered additional congregational care for those with intense needs.

In September 1998, the number of elders was reduced to fifteen plus a youth delegate. The same configuration has continued until the present.

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Remembering the Past

1. Clearing of the land for the church building began on February 11, 1962 with the official ground breaking ceremony on March 11, 1962. When was the first worship held in the church building?
2. What happened in early 1966 to make it difficult to get to the church?
3. The 1977 budget needed a 12% increase plus an addition \$200,000 to fund what project?
4. When was the church property taken into the City of Bellevue?
5. What was the purpose of a Capital fund drive launched in October 1984?

Women in Leadership

In Seattle Presbytery, women were ordained as deaconesses as early as 1918, so while noteworthy, it was not precedent-breaking, when Joan Merritt was ordained as Newport's first woman deacon in January 1963.



Susanna Strickler Smith

And the same was true for the first women at Newport ordained as elders — Sue Smith (January 1965), Mary Sikkema (January 1968), Joan Merritt (April 1968), Jane Wierenga (January, 1969), Harriet Boorkman and Janet Harron (January, 1970) — since women had served as elders in Seattle Presbytery since the 1930s. By 1953 half of the churches in Presbytery had ordained a woman elder. Still, the percentage of women elders was small — only 30 percent even as late as 1980.

Newport did break new ground, however, when Rev. Patricia Campbell-Schmitt became assistant co-pastor with her husband Tom in September 1974 — making Newport the first church in Seattle Presbytery to install a women pastor.



Rev. Patricia Campbell-Schmitt

Youth in Leadership

In June 1990, Session approved having a youth advisory delegate, subject to a by-law change which was then approved by the congregation. A month later, Session voted that the youth member be made a voting delegate. In November 1990, Heather McClure was ordained and installed as the first youth delegate. In 2009, Heather McClure-Coleman and family became members of Newport.

Answers to September Quiz

1. David Meekhof, David Yeaworth, Dennis Hughes, Gary Schwab, Jim Patten
2. Assistant Pastors: Patty & Tom Campbell-Schmitt
Associate Pastors: Patty & Tom Campbell Schmitt, Pat Mecham, Mimi Geibel, Greg Bobgan, Peter Crouch, Heidi Calhoun
3. David Yeaworth, Dennis Hughes and Gary Schwab are all left-handed – meaning they are all in their 'right minds (brains)'.
4. Joan and Dick Merritt, Dot Gregoire, Roy Gustafson, Sandy Kludas Hallberg
5. Six – all men, of course.