Northbrae Centennial History Tidbits

February 8, 1914—February 8, 2014

Northbrae Community Church Berkeley, California

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Printed by:
Medius Corporation
1800 Dobbin Dr.
San Jose, CA 95133
408-519-5000

ISBN 978-0-615-94782-2

Printed in the United States of America

Introduction

Northbrae Community Church has served the surrounding communities for a full century. Its history is rich with stories of the changing times and the pastorates of five ministers.

Frances Conley, our former Northbrae historian, in celebration of Northbrae's 70th anniversary, wrote a pamphlet entitled *The First Six Years*. At that time she stated, "The time has not yet arrived for the writing of a definitive history of Northbrae Community Church." For our Centennial Celebration, we offer a booklet of vignettes about Northbrae's history in an attempt to show the ongoing spirit of our church.

Northbrae has had many different chapters. With Frances' help, we have looked most intensely at the early history, while simply acknowledging some parts of our more recent history. In some cases, many years are covered in a single page.

Please enjoy these stories and appreciate some of the contributions that Northbrae Community Church has made over the past century in its role as a broad religious and civic home for this North Berkeley community and beyond.

We dedicate this book
to Northbrae members and leaders
who have been
"Our Northbrae Family"
For 100 Years

The Northbrae Centennial History Committee
Barbara Hill, researcher and author of most of these pages,
Ruth Brayton and Dianne McNenny, Centennial Committee Co-Chairs,
and Carol Coon, Centennial Booklet

Special appreciation to Barbara and Curtis Hill for the gift of this book to honor and preserve our Northbrae history.

Acknowledgments and Notes on Sources

We would like to thank everyone who helped make this booklet possible, even those who may not realize that a chance remark or suggestion they made was followed up. There are so many to whom we are indebted that we cannot name them all and are certain to leave out many important people. We apologize for any "sins of omission."

Special thanks go to Richmond Cross, the youngest son of Rev. Laurance Cross, for his many generous comments; to Harley Jessup, son of Rev. Craig Jessup, for his beautiful artistic centennial poster and excerpts from his father's memoirs; and to Marjorie Jessup, Craig's widow, who shared memories about their life together at Northbrae. We also thank Bill Roberts and the staff of the Berkeley Historical Society for the use of their collection of material about Rev. Cross. And of course none of this would have been possible without the constant help of Dianne McNenny, our Church Administrator.

Other thanks are owed to Allan Sugarbaker; Barbara Foster; Jay Miyazaki; Sharon Lewis; Don Ellis; everyone who contributed their memories; the late Frances Conley; and Peter Shelton and Russell Lachelt (grandsons of Rev. Cross).

We are very grateful for eyewitness accounts and memories of events at the church provided by members, either formally or informally. Other sources included newspaper articles found on the Internet or on microfilm at the Berkeley Public Library (direct quotes are cited in the text); books about Berkeley's history found in local public libraries; genealogical databases found on the Internet, including but not limited to Ancestry.com; and material from our own church archives tucked away in a closet in Haver Hall. Our late church historian, Frances Conley, collected many valuable photographs and memorabilia in a scrapbook. Often several sources were consulted on a single topic, then combined, synthesized, adapted, and condensed, and sometimes supplemented by the accounts of participants, making it nearly impossible to sort out every contributing source.

Much of the text was originally published as a series of "Centennial Tidbits" inserted in the Sunday bulletin over several months, but this booklet includes additional information from our church website (as of 2013) and a selection of photographs, most of which are in the church's possession. Limitations on our time and available space have meant that many of our wonderful church members and volunteers remain unsung, even those who have contributed so much time and effort to our community life at Northbrae, and many stories remain untold. Although the definitive history of our church has yet to be written, this centennial exercise has been a voyage of discovery into the unique history of an unusual institution. We hope you will savor its uniqueness.

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The Beginning

1914—1950s





Why Are the Sidewalks Pink?

Northbrae Community Church takes its name from the name of the subdivision in which it is located, which was developed by the Mason-McDuffie real estate company in 1907.

According to the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association, the subdivision was named "Northbrae" by Charles Mills Gayley (namesake of Gayley Road, which runs through the UC Berkeley campus between Bancroft Way and Hearst Street).

Northbrae was an unusually well-planned subdivision, with roads and streets and much of the landscaping installed before lots were sold. It covered nearly 1000 acres, roughly from Solano Avenue on the north, Eunice and Hopkins on the south, Spruce on the east, and Tulare on the west. The fountain and balustrade at the Marin traffic circle, and the stone corner pillars still to be found sprinkled through the area, were designed by John Galen Howard, noted architect of much of the UC Berkeley campus.

Sidewalks of pink concrete were poured throughout the subdivision. Except where they have been replaced, many of these pink sidewalks still remain throughout the Northbrae district, and are still in good shape after more than a century. Even some replaced portions have been tinted pink to match. Take a look outside the Chapel! Is history literally underfoot?

The developers offered to donate 40 acres of the subdivision to the state in exchange for having the state capital moved from Sacramento to Berkeley. In fact, the Marin traffic circle was intended to be a grand entrance to the site. This is the reason the subdivision streets were mostly named for California counties. So many people were enthusiastic about moving the capital that a measure was put on the ballot in November of 1908, but the majority of the statewide vote was not in favor of the move.

The East Bay in general, and Berkeley in particular, were growing rapidly following the 1906 earthquake and fire which displaced so many people from their homes in San Francisco. The Northbrae subdivision had seemed almost rural at first, but improved transportation in the form of electric train lines made commuting easy and the area grew rapidly. Many well-known Berkeley architects designed homes for the new owners, including Walter Ratcliff, Julia Morgan, and John Hudson Thomas, the latter being the architect of what we now call Haver Hall.

Pioneer Founders of Northbrae (Part 1)

According to an article in the Oakland Tribune on December 24, 1920, "The germ of the Northbrae Community church originated in the mind of the late Rev. George Eldridge, pastor of St. John's Presbyterian church, Berkeley. Mrs. Annie Little Barry co-operated with Dr. Eldridge and it was through her efforts that the first group gathered together at the home of W. B. Pressly for the first meeting."

George Granville Eldredge (the proper spelling), born in Iowa in 1870, graduated from the San Francisco Theological Seminary (which is in San Anselmo, Marin County) in 1897. He became pastor of St. John's Presbyterian Church in San Francisco. The 1906 earthquake and fire devastated the homes of many of his parishioners, who moved to Berkeley rather than rebuild, and who founded a new Presbyterian church in Berkeley named after their old one. Rev. Eldredge accepted their call to become the first minister.

During the years following the 1906 earthquake, Berkeley was the fastest-growing city in California. That rapid growth probably gave Rev. Eldredge the idea for the founding of a new church to serve the Northbrae subdivision.

Rev. Eldredge died at the age of 47 on October 9, 1918. A brief history of St. John's Church in Berkeley says he was a victim of the great Spanish Influenza pandemic; however, the Marin Journal, discussing his death in an article

published Nov. 28, 1918, said he "died recently of pneumonia, super induced by hardships that he underwent while in war service work in the Vosges mountains with the American troops." Both could be true; after six months in France he returned with his health ruined, and may have caught the flu which turned into pneumonia.

Mrs. Annie Little Barry was born in 1864 and grew up in the Hollister area. She and her husband, Edward Stanley Barry, lived at 1935 El Dorado Ave. in the Northbrae district in 1914. He died in 1924, and she moved to Regent Street in Berkeley, where she was a member of St. John's Presbyterian Church. She was also a member of several women's clubs, which in those days were extremely important in bringing about civic improvements; and in 1931 she was elected president of the California Federation of Women's Clubs. Her skill at organizing was probably critical to the founding of our church. She was one of the first women in California to enter the field of parliamentary law, and became an instructor and lecturer on the subject in the University of California's Extension Division. She wrote a short "Manual of Parliamentary Usage" which can be found on the Internet.

Annie and her husband had three sons, one of whom died during World War I. She died in 1939 and is buried in Hollister near her husband and one of their sons.

Pioneer Founders of Northbrae (Part 2)

The first meeting that led to the founding of Northbrae Community Church was reported by the Oakland Tribune (in 1920) to have taken place "at the home of W. B. Pressly." William Burrows Pressley (the proper spelling) was born in 1847 in South Carolina. He was a cadet at the South Carolina Military Academy during the Civil War. In 1869, he came to California with several other family members, sailing to Panama, crossing the Isthmus, and taking another ship to San Francisco. The family first settled on a ranch near Suisun, in Solano County, but William later moved to Rio Vista in 1871. His first wife died in 1883, and he married his second wife, Mary, in 1895. They had two children, Eva and Jackson Pressley. Eva married Neil Hamilton, and her descendants operate the Hamilton Bros. Ranch in Rio Vista to this day.

In 1910, William and Mary Pressley moved to Berkeley so Eva and "Jack" could attend high school and later UC Berkeley. The Oakland-Berkeley city directories list their home consistently from 1912 until William's death in 1930 as having been at 1003 Mariposa Street, in the Northbrae subdivision; and Mary continued to live there until her death. It is certain, then, that Northbrae Community Church was born at that address.

William B. Pressley died on October 17, 1930, one day before his 83rd birthday, and Northbrae's second pastor, Rev. Lawrence L. Cross, officiated at his funeral. His obituary noted that Pressley was "one of the founders of Northbrae Community Church." 1003 Mariposa Street is at the corner of Los Angeles. It appears that the house has been remodeled at some point and now opens on Los Angeles and has an address on that street; yet, "1003" is still prominently marked on the side fence on Mariposa Street. As it turns out, Northbrae Community Church's former parsonage was at 2064 Los Angeles, where our second minister, Rev. Laurance Cross and his family lived, and the house at 1003 Mariposa was (and is) its nextdoor neighbor. Rev. Cross's son, Richmond Cross, remembers some of the Presslev grandchildren coming to visit their widowed grandmother. Mary died June 23, 1941 at age 81; she too should be remembered as a founder.

The Tribune article of 1920 said that the first task of the church founders was "to find a man far seeing enough to labor in the new field, carrying a vision of a new church and all that it would mean to the community. Such a man was found in Rev. Frank S. Brush, then pastor of the Presbyterian church of Alameda."

Frank S. Brush

The stained glass "Torchbearer" windows in the chapel of Northbrae Community Church run chronologically from the front, near the pulpit, to the back of the sanctuary along the north wall. Near the rear pews, one of the windows bears the name of Frank S. Brush, and depicts a man in a suit standing in front of a small temple (done in red), with a little yellow inset carrying the name Northbrae Community Church. Frank Brush was the first minister of our church, serving for ten years.

Frank Spencer Brush was born June 7, 1857 in Zanesville, Ohio. He graduated from Marietta College in Marietta, Ohio, in 1878; attended Princeton Theological Seminary, and graduated from Lane Theological Seminary, Cincinnati, in 1881. From 1881 to 1886 he was a pastor at the First Presbyterian Church of Bloomington, Illinois. He married Elizabeth Peters Spencer in 1886 in Zanesville; she was born in 1861, and together they had three children.

Frank Brush was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas, N.M., from 1889 to 1892; then worked in Los Gatos, Calif.; then became pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Alameda from 1894 to 1914, a period of twenty years. During his tenure in Alameda, the congregation outgrew its original building and erected a new church at the corner of Santa Clara and Chestnut which has been in continuous use since, and in 1977 was declared an Alameda Historical Monument. Rev. Brush received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree conferred by Marietta College in 1897, and was

often referred to as Dr. Brush thereafter. In the spring of 1914 he was called to become the

pastor for the new church being founded in the Northbrae residential subdivision in Berkeley.



The *Oakland Tribune* of
June 19, 1914,

reported that "Dr. and Mrs. Frank S. Brush and family are to remove to their new home in Northbrae this coming week, when the pretty residence will be completed and ready for occupancy... Dr. Brush is in charge of the new parish, which is being established in the rapidly growing district of beautiful homes and has been engaged on his duties for the past month and more." The new home was at 1929 El Dorado Ave., and it was in his home that the new congregation met for some time. Outgrowing that, they met in a garage on his property for a while; although it no longer exists, a cabin-like structure was built on the original footprint by later owners. The next home for the rapidly-growing new congregation was the Mason-McDuffie real estate tract office located where the round firehouse is now, on Marin Avenue.

Rev. Brush was well-traveled, and was a member of the Commonwealth Club and several other organizations. He died on March 13, 1940 at his home on El Dorado Street at the age of 82; his widow Elizabeth died April 3, 1953 at the age of 91. They are buried (or at least have markers) in Greenwood Cemetery, Zanesville, Ohio.

Northbrae Walks Alone

On Saturday, February 7, 1914, the Berkeley Daily Gazette reported: "The Northbrae Presbyterian church, recently organized, will hold the first service at 11 o'clock tomorrow morning at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Pressley, southwest corner of Los Angeles and Mariposa avenue, Northbrae. Rev. Frank Brush of the Alameda Presbyterian church will preach."

Two years later, when the Princeton Theological Seminary's class of 1881 was about to hold its 35th reunion, members of the class were contacted with the purpose of updating their biographies. Rev. Brush responded from Berkeley as follows:

"My dear Classmate:

"Your letter and genial invitation to our class dinner sent a thrill through me; it started all the memory cells to work and the old times at Princeton came back with lingering and longing thoughts. ...

"You have asked for something like a narrative of the past five years; out of a fraternal regard for my assembled classmates permit me to omit it. In our Presbyterian system the deadliest thing is the "narrative." I wonder sometimes how the church has survived this sore affliction of all our ecclesiastic bodies. ... "I may add this, that the life of the minister never seemed to me more alluring and the work never more enticing than now. I have never had a happier or more joyous experience in my life than in my present pastorate. I took up a pioneer work in a newly laid out suburb and became a home missionary without any of the hardships or picturesque experiences of the old fashioned heroes who have laid the foundations of our Christian civilization in America. This year will complete my home missionary career and the Northbrae church will walk alone."

By "walking alone," we can infer that he meant Northbrae would be self-supporting from then on, paying for its own minister rather than relying on the Presbytery, and would no longer be what was then called a "home mission" (as opposed to a mission established overseas). Frank Brush remained pastor of Northbrae until his retirement in 1924.

Northbrae Presbyterian Church submitted its Articles of Incorporation to the State of California on February 5, 1916. A year later, on February 1, 1917, "Northbrae Presbyterian Church, a religious corporation," purchased lots 23, 24, 25, and 26 of Block no. 1 of "Berkeley Square." (More lots were added later.) And after Northbrae left the Presbyterian denomination to become a truly independent community church, Reverend Brush's words sound almost prophetic.

THE DREAM OF A NEW BUILDING - 1916 - 1920

In January of 1916, there was discussion of the possibility of building a church. In March, the session (the governing body of a Presbyterian church) voted to take a three-month option on two lots at the corner of The Alameda and Los Angeles, where they planned to erect a tent! Eventually the lots were bought, but we hear no more about the tent idea. The annual report in March shows support of the denomination at about three times the amount of the previous year. Membership has doubled to sixty-five. The Sabbath School too has doubled to one hundred and fifteen, with average attendance of sixty-eight children.

We have no account of exactly how they taught that many children in the little chapel the size of a garage. However, it is no surprise that by Easter Sunday they have found a new meeting place, which was in a building they called the Mason McDuffie clubhouse. Probably Mason McDuffie has closed the sales office by this date, and has left the building as a clubhouse for the neighborhood.

There were one hundred and forty worshipers at the Easter service, and one hundred and sixteen in the Sunday School. The minutes of the session report that 'The building was found to be much more commodious and comfortable than the chapel formerly used." An evening service was held for the first time. January 6, 1917, the United States entered World War I, but there is never any suggestion that this had any impact on the church at all.

On January 7 we are told that the communion service was postponed "on account of the unsettled state of affairs regarding the zone ordinance and the church lot." This probably refers to gaining permission to build a church on land zoned as residential. But what this has to do with the postponement of a communion service remains a mystery.

In November there is the only reference to the war. One hundred special war emergency envelopes were ordered.

On Easter Sunday in 1918, at the suggestion of Dr. Brush, "a union sunrise prayer meeting" was held for the first time at Cragmont Rock.

At the end of July reference is made to a Daily Vacation Bible School already held.

We learn that in October "The completion of the addition to the present building has greatly facilitated the work of the Sunday school, especially by providing three separate classrooms." More research will be necessary to interpret this information. It may indicate that the church has bought the Mason-McDuffie building, and has added three rooms to it.

November 11. There is no mention of the end of World War I.

December 4. At last there is an event in the outside world which cannot be ignored by the session. Sunday evening services will not be resumed because of the influenza epidemic. Sunday School was closed January 12. Dr. Brush secured a permit for worship service on January 23, and a short service was held, but communion was postponed. Study classes are postponed until February.

GROUND BREAKING - 1919

In March of 1919, there are plans for another sunrise service at Cragmont Rock.

In April a need is expressed for three ushers, one at each door. (This must be a clue as to the nature of the building being used.)

Plans are made for a Daily Vacation Bible School to last for four weeks. The annual report shows a gift to foreign missions of \$104.20, with \$264 to home missions - six times as much as had been given just three years earlier.

At Easter there were two hundred twenty-eight in the congregation, and some were turned away.

In April plans were progressing for the badly needed new church. An agreement has been reached with the Church Extension Board of the Presbytery in which they will pay the interest on a \$10,000 loan from the time of ground breaking for the new church to the time that \$10,000 is received from the Board of Church Erection, but

not for more than one year.

Obviously the new church is being built during the rest of the year, but there is no mention of it in the minutes of the session.



THE NEW CHURCH IS COMPLETED - 1920

In January of 1920, with the new building almost finished, new hymnals are ordered, and the Pilgrim Hymnal is chosen. This is a Congregational hymnal, and may be a small hint that there is some movement away from Presbyterian ties.

On Saturday, April 3, the following paragraph appeared in the news article reporting Easter observances on the first page of the *Berkeley Daily Gazette*: "The Northbrae Presbyterian Church will observe Easter by holding their first church service in the new building at The Alameda and Los Angeles Street. Holy Communion will be held at 6 and 8 o'clock in the morning, with morning prayer and communion at 11 o'clock. The church school festival will be held at 7 o'clock in the evening."

On the church page we read: "The congregation of the Northbrae Presbyterian Church will meet tomorrow morning for the first time in the new building, corner of The Alameda and Los Angeles Avenue. Dr. R.S. Donaldson and Dr. Weston Johnson will assist in the morning services. The music will be in charge of Mr. Alexander Perie, organist and musical director. The evening service will consist of special Easter music and a Resurrection Tableau. Hours: 9:45 am; 11 am; 7:30 pm."

There were six hundred in attendance at this first service in the new church, and sixty-six new members were received. With almost four hundred in Sunday School that day, even the brand-new church must have seemed scarcely large enough.

The annual report for this last year before moving into the new church is significant primarily because it reveals a good deal of selectivity as compared with the first years, when a standard amount seems to have been given to all causes. Most of the amounts have been increased---not much considering the seven-fold increase in membership, but now there is a big building fund to support. There must not have been much enthusiasm for the cause of temperance, which has increased from \$2.00 in the first year to \$2.63 in 1919.





Northbrae in 1920

The Oakland Tribune, on December 24, 1920, published an article about Northbrae's history although it was only six years old at the time. The headline read "Nine Sects in Northbrae's Church Colony" and the article was accompanied by photos; one taken in 1915 showing the garage/real estate office which was originally used for meetings; one of Rev. Frank S. Brush, our founding minister; and one taken in 1920 in front of the newly-completed Haver Hall, with hundreds of church members covering what is now the front lawn. Worthy of note is that although Northbrae was founded as a Presbyterian church, it was already known in 1920 as "Northbrae Community Church" when the photo captions were written.

The article began, "Through the desire of the church first established in Northbrae and the judgment of the people now comprising its membership, this church aims to provide acceptable worship, work and fellowship to all followers of Jesus Christ.... Its creed is simply the common faith of Christendom, belief in God the Father, in Jesus Christ our Saviour, and the obligation and privilege of practicing the Golden Rule."

The article noted that "No one is unduly urged to leave his own particular church but any and all who love God will be welcome to a membership that now comprises representatives of nine of the great historic churches." It didn't say which nine denominations were represented, but went on to describe the rooms in Haver Hall. It then

concluded, "By being non-sectarian the church has developed within itself a spirit that extends throughout the community. It is indeed a community church and as such has the entire community of Northbrae working actively for its success."

As we look back over Northbrae's past one hundred years, it is remarkable how closely our church has adhered to its original commitment to inclusiveness, becoming even more inclusive as the decades have passed. Our second minister, Rev. Laurance Cross, wrote a tiny booklet during his tenure entitled "A New Kind of Church." In it, he stated that Northbrae "is Christian in the sense that 99% of its members are Christian. It is not Christian in the sense that it will take into full membership a Jew, a Buddhist, a Muslim, a Hindu -- anybody who will promise to do good and be good."

In explaining Northbrae's beliefs, Rev. Cross said, "The difference between the creed of our church and the creed of other churches is that with us each member carries his creed in his own name and not in the name of the church. In other words, a member answers to his own conscience and to God and not to the church corporation." He then quoted our Statement of Purpose, which is printed on our bulletin every Sunday, and concluded, "This and only this is the statement required of all members."

Haver Hall in 1920

The April 1920 issue of "Home Lands," a Presbyterian Church magazine, contained a short article about Northbrae Community Church, along with a floor plan of the new church building that was then under construction. After a short summary of our church's founding, the article got to the heart of the new building's design: "The pastor and others had a vision of a Church serving the whole community, and so strong was their faith that rather than build a small denominational church building, they accepted an invitation to hold their services in a large real estate tract office until such time as their vision could be materialized."

In 1919, the congregation had mounted a hugely successful fundraising campaign and hired John Hudson Thomas (1878-1945) as architect. Born in Nevada, he grew up in the Bay Area, graduated from Yale in 1902, and obtained a degree in architecture in 1904 from UC Berkeley. He designed many notable homes in the Berkeley hills, and his own home is a Kensington landmark. The church he designed for Northbrae was unusual in that it was two stories, incorporating both church and community hall.

The "Home Lands" article said of the church, "It is designed to be the social center of the district. Any organization, whether political, social, or civic, may use the building on obtaining consent. ... Concerts and motion pictures both will be enjoyed, as well as public lectures. ... It is expected to be maintained by the ordinary church subscriptions of the church members,

although some charge will be made for the use of the bowling alley." (For a time there was a small bowling alley in the basement, used mostly by the Boy Scouts.)

The Oakland Tribune, on December 24, 1920, had more to add: "The building, as it now stands, contains five small club rooms, a men's club furnished with billiard tables, a room which has been converted into a Masonic room for the use of the Thousand Oaks chapter of the Masons, and a boys' club which is used as a kindergarten room during the week. On the main floor is an assembly room with a seating capacity of five hundred..." [This was where services were held until the Chapel was built.] "By being nonsectarian the church has developed within itself a spirit that extends throughout the community. It is indeed a community church and as such has the entire community of Northbrae working actively for its success."

Nearly a century later, Northbrae's original church building is still used daily for group meetings and community functions of all kinds. Our founders were indeed far-seeing. At first, and for many years, the building was not called Haver Hall; it was simply Northbrae Community Church.



NORTHBRAE COMMUNITY CHURCH

(Affiliation Presbyterian)

ROM garage to real estate tract office to a modern, up-to-date, wellequipped, sixty thousand dollar community church edifice. Is it the theory of evolution or perhaps the faith of the pastor, Rev. Frank S. Brush, D.D., that has scored a signal success? With a little group as a nucleus Dr. Brush commenced his ministrations to the Northbrae, East Albany, and Thousand Oaks communities in Berkeley, California, some five years ago. Meeting at first in the pastor's home, the number soon grew to such proportions that a garage was resorted to for Sunday School and public worship. The Presbyterian denomination was the only religious organization serving this growing district of homes, and consequently many members of other denominations welcomed the opportunity of co-operation in the Master's work.

The pastor and others had a vision of a Church serving the whole community, and so strong was their faith

that rather than build a small denominational church building they accepted an invitation to hold their services in a large real estate tract office until such time as their vision could be materialized.

In the Fall of 1919, it having become apparent that the time was ripe, an extensive and well-directed campaign was undertaken by pastor and twenty picked teams, in which all the homes making up the five thousand to six thousand people were reached. The membership of the church was one hundred and seventy, while over three hundred and fifty subscribers to the fund were obtained.

The community is largely made up of "young men on the make." As an illustration of the interest taken by such families in a church meant to serve all, out of three families that had come into the district within from thirty to sixty days of the financial campaign, one from Maine, another from Boston, and the third from Topeka, Kansas, one hundred per cent gladly subscribed. The subscribers have pledged so much per month for a period of twenty-four months. With the building partly roofed already, it is expected that 1920 will hardly have

gained momentum before services are regularly held in this concrete demonstration of what the faith of some and the needs of many can bring about.

The plant will be open to the community. It is designed to be the social center of the district. Any organization, whether political, social, or civic, may use the building on obtaining consent. It is planned to have basketball and tennis courts and a general playground for little folks. Concerts and motion pictures both will be enjoyed, as well as public lectures.

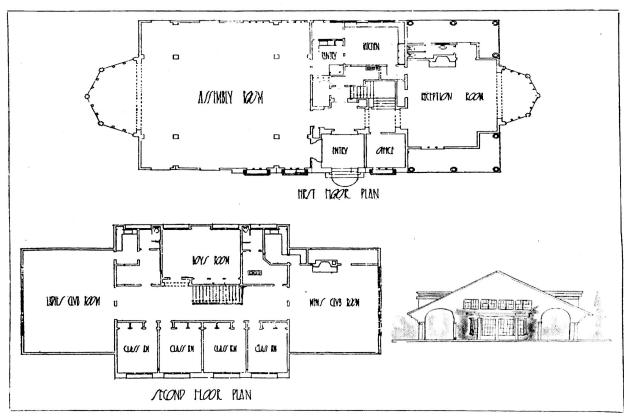
No effort has been made to get volunteer labor in the building of the church. It is expected to be maintained by the ordinary church subscriptions of the church members, although some charge will be made for the use of the bowling alley.

So great has been the interest taken and so loyal the co-operation that pastor and session have every assurance that within a short time the church membership, with the church distinctly a community church, will be doubled, while at the present time the Sunday School enrollment stands at 526.

April, 1920

Home Lands

9



Quoits and Clock Golf

In its very earliest days, Northbrae Community Church's Sunday School classes held an annual Field Day and Fiesta. The Berkeley Daily Gazette of September 15, 1922, gave a pretty thorough description of the plans for that year's festivities:

"The annual Field Day and Fiesta of the Northbrae Community Sunday school will be held tomorrow afternoon and evening.

"At 1:30 the events will start with an auto parade throughout the community, followed by a half-hour tournament [of] contests, including clock golf, quoits, nail driving contests, etc., for men and women. The grand costume parade will take place at 3 o'clock. At 3:15 the field events for all ages will take place... "

Quoits is a ring-toss type of game, with the rings being made of rope, to be tossed over pegs which have been assigned a numeric value. Players compete to reach a score that has been previously chosen.

Clock Golf is a putting game to be played on a lawn. Large numbers (usually Roman numerals) are placed in a circle just as they would be on the face of a clock, with a cup and flag placed in the middle, off-center so as to require some longer and some shorter strokes. Players take turns putting from each number, to see who can get around the clock with the lowest number of strokes.

That was just the beginning of the day. A special kindergarten party was to be held at 3:15 in the east parlor of the church (now Haver Hall). The rest of the festivities included a Boy Scout assembly on the grounds in the rear of the church, with a demonstration by Eagle Scouts of first aid and life-saving; a community sing with the Boy Scout Band from San Francisco playing; and children from the Sunday School classes performing playlets, dialogues, drills, and songs, lasting until 9 p.m.

Supper was to be served at 6:15 p.m. from a home cooking booth which would sell baked beans, wienies, cold meats, sandwiches, waffles, doughnuts, ice cream and cake, and coffee. Attendees could also bring their own supper and purchase coffee separately.

How much effort went into this special day? The *Berkeley Gazette* notes, "For the past two months 27 committees have been working hard to make this an event of the Northbrae church and Sunday school."

The Hut (A Northbrae History Mystery)

It has long been believed that "The Hut" on Northbrae's property was brought here in 1920 from the UC Berkeley campus and that it was formerly the "aeronautics building" there. A press release in December 1978 said, "The building with its unique

roof truss design was first used as a training facility on the UC campus for World War I aviators. The building was moved to its present site... in 1920." But a list of campus buildings indicates that the government-built wooden aviation building was over 14,000 square feet in size, and that it was torn down in 1926.

In the early 1990s, a geography student at San Francisco State

University wrote a term paper about Northbrae Community Church. She mentioned "The Hut" in her description of church facilities, and had apparently been told "It was once an S.P. trolley depot, purchased and moved by the church." Can both traditions be true, at least partly?

A Presbyterian magazine, "The Continent," in the May 22, 1919 issue, reported: "... Berkeley Northbrae Sunday school has within six weeks come up from an average attendance of about 108 to over 200. To accommodate this rapidly growing family one of the S.A.T.C. buildings of the University campus was purchased... and moved up to Northbrae." The

S.A.T.C. was the Students' Army Training Corps during World War I, the immediate forerunner of the R.O.T.C. (Reserve Officers Training Corps) on college campuses. Can this be the source of the first tradition?

The Berkeley Daily Gazette, on October 27, 1926, published an article headlined "Northbrae to Dedicate New Scouting Home." In it, we learn that "For the past five years [Boy Scout] troops have been meeting in a small scout hut which was totally

inadequate... A drive was made for funds through the church "Wireless", with the result that sufficient was collected to enable a start to be made... This building has now been completed and today stands as one of the finest of its kind connected with any church... There is a large assembly hall with a big fireplace, a well furnished kitchen, and a scoutmaster's office... and there is a large stage for entertainments." Was the original building enlarged or

replaced with wood from the campus aeronautics building which was torn down that year? Was an old trolley depot perhaps attached later?

The 1978 press release cited above had to do with another remodel, since which "The Hut" has been rented to the Dandelion cooperative day nursery. The fireplace has been covered and the stage is gone, but the roof truss is a sight to be seen and there is a most impressive archway between the anteroom and the main room. Howard McNenny oversaw the 1978 remodel and was responsible for the great sliding barn doors.



Northbrae's Second Minister, Laurance Cross

Northbrae Community Church's first minister, Rev. Frank S. Brush, retired in 1924. Our second minister was Rev. Laurance L. Cross (Laurance Luther Cross, or Luther Laurance Cross, or L. L. Cross, or even Larry Cross to some during his two terms as mayor of Berkeley).

Laurance Cross was born April 13, 1892 in Gastonburg, Alabama, the son of Rev. Luther B. Cross and Lillian Matthews. Laurance was the second of three boys, and all became ministers. He graduated from Maryville College in Tennessee in the Class of 1914. Attending Maryville was practically a Cross family tradition; in addition to his brothers, several nieces and nephews also graduated from Maryville.

The "Chilhowean" yearbook of Maryville College, for 1914, has a page devoted to "Luther Laurence Cross" with a photo of the young man. It says: "'Brother' got his nickname from the home folks, but because we could think of nothing more fitting it has stuck to him through his four years on the Hill. In 1911-12 ... we chose him as Treasurer of the Class. He was a member of the Class Tennis team for three years and although this is one of the few lines in which '14 has failed to score victory, none of the blame is Brother's, for he always played good tennis. ... Brother also has a reputation as an orator. In 1912, he won the Athenian Society Medal for the best oration ... Brother has strong prejudices....he intends to

be a Preacher." During World War I, "Luther Laurance Cross" registered for the military draft. A photo of his draft card shows that his address was "Lane Seminary" in Cincinnati, Ohio (Lane Theological Seminary,



L. L. Cross.

a Presbyterian divinity school which no longer exists). He gave his occupation as Preacher, and his employer as "1st and 2nd Presbyterian Church" in Portsmouth, Ohio. (Members of the clergy were exempt from the draft, although it is likely that childhood rheumatic fever was also a factor in Cross's not having enlisted.) On the same draft card, "Lane Seminary" was crossed out, and a new address written in: 2834 Stevenson Ave., Y.M.C.A. Club house, Los Angeles, where he had moved by the end of the war to begin his career.

The young Rev. Cross was already interested in civic improvement. The Los Angeles Board of Education minutes for April 7, 1919, note: "We report that Rev. Luther Laurance Cross and other citizens from Boyle Heights appeared before us and addressed us with reference to the great need of a high school in that section of the city." Theodore Roosevelt High School was founded in 1922 and opened in 1923 in that section of Los Angeles, perhaps partly in response to the expressed need.

By 1920, Rev. Cross was pastor of the Euclid Heights Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles, and his life was about to change. Rev. Laurance Cross, then at the Euclid Heights Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles, traveled to Oakland to hear a speech by Norman Thomas, probably some time in 1920. (Norman Thomas was an ordained Presbyterian minister; In later years, he ran for president several times on the Socialist ticket.)

In Oakland, Rev. Cross met a young woman named Erma Gilbert, whose family had moved from Connecticut to Berkeley several years earlier and lived on Walnut Street near upper Shattuck Avenue. Erma was a graduate of Mount Holyoke College and was a parish worker

employed by the San Francisco Presbytery, working at the Union Street Presbyterian Church in Oakland. During the summer of 1920 she was transferred to the Los Angeles Presbytery as a supervisor of parish work there; this must have greatly facilitated the courtship of the young Rev. Cross.

The Berkeley Daily Gazette for December 14, 1920, on the society

page, noted: "The Northbrae Community church will be the setting for a beautiful and impressive wedding on December 29, when Miss Erma Gilbert ... will become the bride of Reverend Laurence Luther Cross of Los Angeles." Yes, they were married here, probably never imagining that in a little less than four years, Northbrae would become their home and their life together for the next 42 years.

Richmond Cross, the youngest son of Rev. and Mrs. Cross, says that after the wedding, "They then traveled to L.A. in a model T borrowed from Pop's brother. It took several days. The

Grapevine was then a winding mountain road, hence the name. Likely Mother drove a good bit of the way because Pop was slow at learning to drive."

In 1924, Northbrae's first minister, Rev. Frank Brush, retired. The Pastoral Nomination Committee, composed of 9 church trustees, 15 elders, two other men and five women, unanimously voted to call Rev. Cross as our next minister. And so it was that the young couple, with their two oldest children, made the trip back to Berkeley.



The Berkeley Daily Gazette, on October 4, 1924, noted that the Cross family was expected to arrive that evening or early the next morning, and Rev. Cross would begin his duties immediately. A formal installation took place two months later, attended by Rev. Cross's father, Luther B. Cross, and both brothers, all of them Presbyterian clergymen. In fact, Rev. Robert C. Cross was

Laurance Cross's associate pastor at Euclid Heights Presbyterian Church at the time, and Rev. Frank M. Cross would later minister to that same church!

The Cross family stayed with Erma's mother on Walnut Street until they were able to move into the new "manse" at 2064 Los Angeles Street which had been purchased by the Women's Auxiliary of Northbrae Community Church; it was sold in 1986.

Little Bits and Pieces about Laurance Cross Northbrae's Minister 1924 to 1966

The Reverend Luther Cross, a minister in Alabama, had three sons, Robert, Laurance and Frank. All three sons became ministers themselves and all headed to Los Angeles where they actually had a triple pastorate for a time. Frank returned to the south, Robert had a church in San Anselmo for a number of years before he too returned to the south, and Laurance became Northbrae's minister for 42 years until his death in 1966.

It is interesting to note that Frank's son, Frank Moore Cross, was a renowned Professor of Religious Studies at Harvard University, and the first Protestant clergyman to study the Dead Sea Scrolls. He died in Oct. 2012.

The wonderful Christmas cards received by all Northbrae members every year revealed a family of six children. Their names were Barbara, Gilbert, Miriam, Marimae, Leland and Richmond. A recent correspondence with Richmond (Dick), the youngest Cross tells us that only Miriam and Richmond are still living.

Rev. Cross, often referred to as Dr. Cross (an honorary title) left such a mark on our history! He was Mayor of Berkeley and later ran for Congress, as well as for the Democratic Party's nomination for the Governor's office.

Rev. Cross and the Scopes Trial

In July 1925, the entire United States was fascinated by the media spectacle taking place in Dayton, Tennessee, which has come to be known as the "Scopes Monkey Trial." At Northbrae Community Church, pastor Laurance Cross preached a sermon on the subject of evolution, which was so well received that he was invited to give similar speeches to several civic organizations -- including the Optimist Club in Oakland, the Lions Club (of which he was a member), and the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco, among others.

Although we do not have transcripts, local newspapers quoted enough of Rev. Cross's statements that we are left with no doubt about his opinions. Here are some excerpts:

"Clarence Darrow is an avowed atheist. The late William Jennings Bryan was a confirmed fundamentalist. The two represented the utmost extremes of scientific and religious viewpoint. Between these two extremes lies a great bulk of liberal thinking which had no voice at Dayton.

"The man who wrote the Book of Genesis never looked through a telescope and never saw a test tube... [He] wrote the best that was in him, but it need not be taken to mean exactly what it says in the light of modern scientific discoveries. ... The first Biblical writings pictured God merely as the god of a tribe. The idea was evolved until in the end we find a Universal God pictured—a god of

all the people. There is evolution in the Bible itself.

"I accept evolution as to its basic principles...
But I do not accept evolution to the exclusion of
my religious beliefs. Even Charles Darwin, in his
last days, acknowledged the existence of a
creator.

"I cannot conceive why any thinking man will not accept evolution... However, I cannot accept atheistic evolution... Our fathers held to a certain rigid and arbitrary view of religion... Today we should utilize the stores of knowledge discovered for us by science and men's ingenuity and broaden religion to cover our whole lives, as it should, instead of attempting to lock it up as a dead matter of ancient tales and rituals."

Rev. Cross spoke of having been offered a teaching position at a Tennessee college, and said, "If I had joined the faculty of that university, I might have been in jail now -- for I certainly would have taught evolution." He described himself as a liberal, unorthodox minister, a believer in evolution with certain limitations. Today, we might say he believed in "theistic evolution," described as the position that evolution occurred as biologists describe it, but that it was set in motion by God. This position is accepted by the Catholic Church and most mainstream Protestant churches.

Cross Cuts

From the Log o' the Day

Northbrae's second minister, Rev. Laurance Cross, had a radio program five days a week for ten years - from 1929 to 1939 - called "Cross Cuts From the Log o' the Day." It was broadcast nationwide on the NBC radio network, usually in the mornings, and was a variety program which included jokes, music, and Rev. Cross's commentaries on the daily news. He also sometimes gave book reviews.

The half-hour program opened with an unusual choir

of birds and a Regina music box. Richmond Cross, Rev. Cross's youngest son, recalls: "The music box would be started and then the door of the light proof bird box would be opened. The canaries and mockingbirds would think it was morning and burst into song as if they were in the woods of the deep South. At a certain moment in the program the doors would be shut and the birds would be instantly silent."



The Cross family had two of the Regina music boxes and both are still owned by descendants, along with many of the metal discs that were played on the air. Our church has a photograph of Rev. Cross in his KRE studio office and the inside lid of the open music box can be seen behind his right elbow. Interestingly, our Northbrae Centennial chairperson, Ruth Brayton, owns an identical Regina music box, and recognized the inside lid in the picture.

Another sound effect heard on the program was that of a two-man saw cutting through a stump. The original saw has been displayed at times in the past in Haver Hall. Its whereabouts are now unknown, but it is thought that the stump is still tucked away somewhere under the eaves.

The Daily Star, a newspaper from Long Island City, New York, wrote the following on March 3, 1932: "The old theory that a bird sings just because it is happy, is not true, according to Dr. Laurence L. Cross, who pilots NBC's 'Crosscuts from the Log of the Day.' The bird choir heard in this morning's program includes mocking birds, canaries and a thrush, and all of them sing to compete with other music. They perform most brilliantly when a music box is played outside their cages just before they go on the air, causing them to sing as loudly as possible, in order to beat the music box."

A few years after the end of World War II, Rev. Cross tried to revive "Cross Cuts" but the public taste had changed, televisions were becoming more common, and the program did not attract a large audience or enough sponsors.

Note from Dick Cross: There a few minor errors in the article about the Cross Cut program. It was first broadcast from station KPO-NBC in San Francisco. That was the long running most successful segment of the program. The photograph in this booklet was taken in my Father's office in the church when he attempted to revive the program over station KRE in Berkeley. Most of his props were in the room but he lacked the dozens of technical staff and musicians from the earlier program.

Rev. Cross and

Margaret Mitchell

During the ten years that Northbrae's second minister, Rev. Laurance Cross, had a daily radio show on NBC called "Cross Cuts From the Log o' the Day," he received lots of letters from listeners and seems to have saved many of them. There is at least one box full of letters stored in Haver Hall, and the Berkeley Historical Society has more. Some listeners sent him jokes they hoped he could use on the air. Some took him to task for what they perceived as criticism of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, while others were peeved at what they thought was too much support for FDR.

One letter, however, was actually solicited by Rev. Cross. He had grown up in Alabama, and had made several references on his program to "Gone With the Wind," the novel about the deep South which became a bestseller in 1936. He wrote to the author, Margaret Mitchell, in care of her publisher, and on February 8, 1937, she wrote back. Here is most of her letter:

Dear Doctor Cross,

Mr. Holt Seale, of the Macmillan Company, has written me saying that you wish me to answer the following question: "In writing the book... did it enter into your consciousness that Scarlett personified the ruthless, do-or-die, goget-'em, stay-on-top-at-any-cost methods of the present day business person?"

... No, it did not enter into my consciousness that Scarlett personified that type of person. It

never occurred to me that Scarlett could ever have lived in any other era or any other place than those in which she lived. She was part of her era and fashioned by her era. I did not wish to have any parallels, hidden or otherwise, with modern times. I did not mean for any character to typify anything (I include this remark because people ask me so frequently "did you intend Melanie to typify the old South and Scarlett the new?"). I only wanted them to be themselves and nothing else, for I was trying to tell a plain story without pointing any moral, drawing any conclusion, passing any judgment, or having anything of an allegorical nature.

... May I think you for the many mentions you have made of "Gone With the Wind." It has never been my good fortune to hear you on the air. ... But I have seen items in Western papers about your kind references to "Gone With the Wind," and the San Francisco office of the Macmillan Company have made frequent mention of the nice things you said. I understand that you are from Alabama, and so, of course I am even more pleased that a Southerner liked my book enough to mention it frequently.

Cordially,

Margaret Mitchell

(Mrs. John R. Marsh)

(The original letter belongs to one of Rev. Cross's grandsons. Many thanks to the Cross family for all their kindnesses and help with our Centennial Tidbits!)

The Projection Room

Haver Hall has lots of interesting and somewhat mysterious nooks, crannies, and closets that usually go unnoticed. One of these is a projection room, included in the original blueprints when the building was erected in 1920, intended for the use of movie projectors. If you go to the north end of the auditorium (near the stage) and look back at the south wall (near the door to the kitchen), you will notice a long slot at the top of the wall; behind that slot is the old projection room, which still has a spotlight stored in it.

From mentions in newspaper articles, the names of two silent films shown at Northbrae in the summer of 1922 are known: "Black Beauty" (1921), a dramatization of the novel by Anna Sewell; and "The Son of Wallingford" (1921), a comedy-melodrama written and directed by George Randolph Chester and his wife Lillian. At least six movies were shown that summer, but we don't know the names of any others.

Richmond Cross, son of Northbrae's second minister, recalls: "I can remember portable 16mm projectors being used at the Wednesday night community dinners. The original projection room at the church was lined with sheet metal as a fireproofing measure. ... We used to climb the ladder in the janitor's closet into the projection room and look out on the auditorium." (Northbrae is lucky; in the 1920s, projection rooms were typically fireproofed by being lined with asbestos! Early filmstrips were extremely flammable, and theater fires claimed

many lives all over the world; "safety film" was invented about 1923, but it took a few years to become the only film in use.)

Harley Jessup, son of Northbrae's third minister, remembers that "Olga Bier wrote and directed several musicals during the 60s that were presented in Haver Hall and I know the spotlight was used for those shows. I ran the spotlight for the Junior Choir talent show one year, and I served as a very incompetent projectionist for a couple films -- missionary documentaries, I think."

Over the years, the projection room and access to it were altered. The janitor's closet was turned into an additional and much-needed bathroom. The ladder was moved to the front hall and is very cleverly concealed in a shallow locked cupboard. Richmond Cross also remembers, "The projection room front wall stuck out from the rear wall [of the auditorium] about 2 feet. It was an eyesore and had no function so it was removed and the main wall was filled and smoothed over."

There are remnants of the original sheet metal on some walls in the projection room, which might now be more properly called a booth; and over the years, teenagers who have been up there have left their autographs on the wall, souvenirs of a bygone era.

The Fire of 1938

About 9 o'clock on the morning of Monday, January 24, 1938, a refrigerator repairman working in a home on the 900 block of The Alameda went to his car to get some tools, and saw flames shooting into the sky from the roof of Northbrae Community Church. While he turned in an alarm at a fire box, other neighbors ran to pound on the doors of the church, which alerted the janitor, Fritz Nehre, who had been burning dried flowers and shrub clippings in the fireplace in the Parlor.

As the Berkeley Daily Gazette reported that day, "Starting from chimney sparks, the blaze quickly spread over the entire roof of the large two-story structure and ate into the rafters and cross beams." The flames were whipped by a brisk north wind and at times shot more than 50 feet into the air. The attic was gutted and the fire burned through the second floor plaster in several places. The Gazette noted that "the entire roof of the building will have to be replaced," and estimated the damage at more than \$6,000 (in 1938 dollar values).

Regular firemen responding to the blaze were supplemented by 30 volunteer fire fighters and a truck from Berkeley's corporation yard. An assistant fire chief fell through the burning roof, into the second floor, and was treated for possible broken ribs. The entire block of The Alameda between Solano and Marin Avenues was closed to traffic.

According to the Gazette, "Sparks carried by the wind during the height of the blaze ignited the

roof of a home at 921 The Alameda. However, the flames were immediately detected and extinguished."

The interior of much of the building was badly damaged by the streams of water poured onto the flames by the firemen. The large room on the south end of the second floor, just above the Parlor, was cited as having the worst damage; and the assembly room on the north end, used by Boy Scout troops in those days, was also mentioned, although several hundred dollars' worth of Scout equipment escaped harm.

Water seeped through the plaster to the ground floor, especially in the center and south end, soaking rugs throughout the building. The main auditorium was least damaged, but water "trickled into a moving picture projection room at the rear of the auditorium." Rev. Laurance Cross was not in the church at the time, and thoughtful firemen threw a "heavy canvas" over the books and materials in his second floor study, saving them.

Northbrae's office still retains paperwork concerning repairs done following this fire.

Preaching to John Birchers

For 42 years, Northbrae Community Church was led by a man with great skills as an orator. Rev. Laurance Cross was recognized during his seminary years for this ability, having won a medal in 1912 for the best oration. This skill served him well, not only during his career as a minister, but during the ten years he had a daily radio show, and also during his two terms as mayor of Berkeley.

On the latter subject, Robert W. Ratcliff, a local architect who was interviewed by the U.C. Berkeley's Regional Oral History Office (administered by the Bancroft Library), recalled Laurance Cross as mayor: "He was an awfully good speaker. He told me that he couldn't read a speech. He had to know the subject and think on his feet. When he came to give a speech, even a pretty important speech, his notes would consist of four or five words. That's all. The reason for those four or five words was to prompt him, perhaps, on the order in which he should bring up these things. He rarely brought a lot of statistics to meetings. He must have had a wonderful memory, but he was also just a very gifted speaker." 1.

Some of us remember when there was a John Birch Society bookstore in Albany at the corner of Solano and San Pablo Avenues; it lasted well into the late 1970s. The John Birch Society was a radical right-wing conservative organization, so the fact that there were local members was an odd kind of "balance" to the other radicalism for which Berkeley was then so noted. Apparently many of these folks had been members since the McCarthy era in the early 1950s, and some of them attended services here at Northbrae.

Richmond Cross, Rev. Cross's son, says about his father: "As a Southerner he grew up in the Democratic tradition politically. When he left Alabama his Mother admonished him that if he could not vote Democratic then not to vote at all.

"He would preach on Sunday ideas that were socialism with a small "s" and the conservative members of the congregation would compliment him on his sermon after the service. There were a number of John Birch Society members in the congregation and they thought he was right on target. He was a master orator and could preach the truth without ruffling any feathers.

"He often said that the congregation was not listening to what was being said anyway. After the new chapel was finished someone said to him that the new pews were too comfortable and that people would fall asleep. He replied that they would go to sleep anyway so might as well make them comfortable!"

1. Robert Williams Ratcliff, "The Ratcliff Architects: in Berkeley Since 1909," an oral history conducted 1989, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1990, p. 159.

Services at the Oaks Theater

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, Northbrae Community Church occasionally held special services at the Oaks Theater on upper Solano Avenue, because it had over 1,200 seats. The first such services were held on Christmas Eve and included a beautiful ritual of candles. Two hundred men would line up in the lobby in four lines, and file into the theater down the four aisles with unlit candles. Each man would stop at the end of a row of seats. At the appropriate time, Rev. Laurance Cross would light four candles which would be passed up each row as each man lit his candle. When all candles were lit, the men in the center aisles would face toward the front and the men in the side aisles would face toward the center, and everyone would sing two verses of "Silent Night." At the beginning of the third verse, the men would turn and march back out to the lobby, extinguishing their candles.

The Christmas Eve services drew such large crowds that other special services were tried out at the Oaks. On June 5, 1938, a service combining Children's Day, Commencement, and Demonstration Day was held. Another Demonstration Day was held on June 4th, 1939, but was the last to be held at the Oaks; attendance suffered due to competition with the Golden Gate International Exposition then taking place on Treasure Island.

In 1940, the first Mother's Day service was held at the Oaks, featuring banks of massed rhododendrons. The Berkeley Historical Society's collections include notes from Rev. Cross with his sketches of flower placement on the stage, names of florists from whom large quantities of flowers could be obtained, and retrospective evaluations of



attendance, the weather, and how the next service might be improved. In 1941 the rhododendrons were changed to a special "Testament of Roses." There was a hard rain that year, but over 1,000 people attended.

In June 1941 a combined Children's Day and Father's Day service was held at the Oaks, but the conclusion afterwards was that the effort wasn't worth it; it was too soon after Mother's Day and Memorial Day, and too close to the end of school, graduations, and summer vacation. In 1942 the "Testament of Roses" was repeated for Mother's Day, and the weather was good that year, but the rubber shortage due to World War II was noted. Still, over 1,100 people attended the service.

The Mother's Day services at the Oaks were stopped during the war, mostly because of the rationing of automobile tires and gasoline, which kept a lot of people from attending. The 1946 Mother's Day service was the first one held at the Oaks since 1942.

Northbrae's special services at the Oaks were subject to rather strict time constraints. Richmond Cross, Rev. Cross's son, remembers that as the congregation was leaving, they would meet lines of children waiting to get into the Sunday matinee.

Rev. Cross and Paul Robeson

Rev. Laurance L. Cross ran for Mayor of Berkeley in 1947, with the approval of his congregation at Northbrae Community Church, and was elected, and then re-elected in 1951 to a second term. His two terms roughly coincided with the so-called "McCarthy era" in U.S. politics, named for Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy (1908-1957) of Wisconsin, who inspired a witch-hunt for anyone deemed a Communist or a Communist sympathizer, often without sufficient evidence. Besides ruining the careers of many government employees and members of the military services, the temper of the times also resulted in the "blacklisting" of many people in the entertainment industry.

Paul Robeson (1898-1976) was an internationally famous African-American baritone singer and actor, well-educated and very outspoken about civil rights. After World War II, his public support of the Soviet Union and his open friendships with known Communists caused the State Department to refuse to issue him a passport. At the same time, dozens of his concerts were being cancelled throughout the U.S.

Robeson was scheduled to sing at the Opera House in San Francisco in May 1952, but thenmayor Elmer Robinson instigated a vote by the Board of Trustees to deny him permission to perform there. Oakland also refused the use of an auditorium. The next step was a request to the Berkeley Board of Education for the use of the Berkeley Community Theater, located on the Berkeley High School campus.

On May 6, two members of the school board voted No; two voted Yes; and Mayor Laurance Cross voted Yes. A furor erupted in the press by supporters of both sides. The school board called a public meeting on May 10 to review the case and drew more than 1,200 Berkeley citizens. A letter from the district attorney was read, which said, in part, "...Mr. Robeson has made certain inflammatory and highly provocative remarks and... his appearance[s] in other parts of the country have precipitated riots and disturbances of the peace." (This was a reference to rioting near Peekskill, N.Y. protesting a Robeson concert in 1949; see "Peekskill Riots" on Wikipedia.)

Mayor Cross responded, "I consider this letter as one which is inciting to riot. I have full confidence in the ability of the police to maintain order. Paul Robeson appeared in a concert in San Francisco only a few months after the Peekskill trouble and there was less disturbance than there would be at a Presbyterian prayer meeting."

As reported by *The Nation* (magazine) on June 7, 1952, in an article entitled "Berkeley's Example," one of the board members "asked the audience to indicate by show of hands how they stood on the majority decision to grant Robeson the hall. The vote was at least four-to-one in favor." The meeting adjourned with the board's decision unchanged. On May 23, Paul Robeson sang in Berkeley as scheduled, before a capacity audience. *The Nation* reported, "There was no trouble."

Rev. Cross and "The American Way of Death"

Jessica Mitford (1917-1996) was born to a titled British family. She found herself widowed in 1941 in Washington, DC, and two years later married an American civil rights lawyer, Robert Treuhaft. She became an American citizen in 1944 and eventually settled in Oakland, where she earned a reputation as an author and journalist.

As a result of his work with unions and death benefits, Robert Treuhaft became curious about the funeral industry and asked his wife to write an investigative article about it. This ended up as a full-length book, "The American Way of Death," published in 1963, harshly criticizing the funeral industry for using predatory practices to make huge profits from grieving families, many of whom went deeply into debt to bury their loved ones. It became a major bestseller and led to Congressional hearings.

In the course of researching the book, Ms.
Mitford interviewed Rev. Laurance Cross,
identified in the book as pastor of the "Berkeley"
Community Church. Rev. Cross had
accompanied many grieving families through the
casket-selection process and had dealt with
undertakers both good and bad. He emphasized
that many undertakers were honest members of
the community who deplored the practice of

taking advantage of vulnerable people. But he also described one of the ways that an unscrupulous funeral parlor might manipulate the casket selection:

The selection room would have only the most expensive and elaborate caskets on display. Surviving relatives were likely to think that there were no other choices, and buy one of those. But if they were forthright enough to say they could not afford one, they would be taken through a hidden door into a room with less attractive, but lower priced caskets. Again, relatives would think these caskets were all that were available; but if they still objected to the prices, there would be another hidden door, leading to a room with ugly caskets in garish colors which were cheaper still. All this was told to Jessica Mitford in Rev. Cross's distinctive Alabama accent, and his indignation was obvious to her.

As a result of Ms. Mitford's book, the funeral industry did make some adjustments to their practices, but they also looked for ways of getting around the abuses she had revealed. She was working on a revision of the book at the time of her own death, and according to her wishes, she was cremated and her ashes were scattered at sea.

Ms. Mitford's husband worked on completing the revision of her book, which was published in 1998 as "The American Way of Death Revisited." But he never got around to revising the text in which Rev. Cross appears, so it is identical in both editions. Many public libraries have copies of either edition and they make interesting reading. It is curious to think about Northbrae's small role in a national nonfiction bestseller and to realize it is now part of our history.

The Naming of Haver Hall

When our older two-story building was completed in 1920, it was simply called Northbrae Community Church; it didn't get the name "Haver Hall" until much later, probably about the time our Chapel was completed in 1957-58. There is a plaque at the front entrance to Haver Hall informing us that it was named for Philip J. Haver (1854-1945). Who was he?

Philip John Haver was born on October 25, 1854 in the state of New York. By 1877 he had arrived in San Francisco, where he lived for many years and can be tracked in the voter's registers and city directories. He worked variously as a "band sawyer," a "machine hand," and a carpenter, builder, and/or contractor. He married Emilie, a native of Germany, perhaps about 1880. They had three children, but tragically only one lived, a daughter Helen who was born in 1892. Emilie died in January 1906 at the age of 48. Philip Haver apparently never remarried.

Helen Haver married Cedric Wheeler Lutzi, an electrician, in 1919. They lived in the East Bay and had two children: Cedric Jr. in 1920, and Phyllis Helen in 1923. Unfortunately the older Cedric died in 1924, and Helen's son Cedric Jr. died of appendicitis in June 1928 at the age of eight. He had been a student at Marin School in Albany, and Rev. Laurance L. Cross of Northbrae Church officiated at his funeral.

Helen remarried in the 1930s to George Templeton Kerr and by 1940 was living on Euclid Ave. in Berkeley. Her father, Philip John Haver, was then 85 and lived in Oakland, having moved from San Francisco after 1935. He died in 1945 at age 90. Helen was an active member and strong supporter of Northbrae Community Church during her years in Albany and Berkeley. (She died in 1982 in Fresno.)

In 1948 an ambitious plot plan was drawn up for a new Northbrae Community Church which would have required obtaining the other lots on our block. The projected new church was to be built on the site of the original building, and was designed to reflect the Spanish architecture which has always been popular in California. The interior might have resembled one of the old missions, and a bell tower was planned for the center of the grounds. The old building could have been moved north towards Solano Avenue. Another building was projected for the site where our Chapel now stands, and is marked on the plot plan as "Haver Hall Youth Center." This is the earliest mention of a "Haver Hall" that we have found.

The construction was estimated to cost \$100,000 (in 1948 dollars!) and the fundraising campaign was projected to last 30 months. Only about half the amount was raised, but the funds were used about ten years later to build our Chapel. Some long-time church members recall "Haver Hall" being applied just to the auditorium (the original sanctuary) in the old building, but it has come to refer to the entire edifice.

Some descendants of Philip Haver and his daughter Helen still keep in touch with the church office.

Introduction to Our Windows - by Erma Cross, wife of Rev. Cross

For over forty years, the people of Northbrae Church dreamed of a special place of worship.

Dr. Frank S. Brush was the first minister of the new church, and the activity building was built under his leadership. Dr. Brush, by his tireless pastoral work, laid a fine membership foundation of dedicated men and women. When Rev. Laurance L. Cross was called in 1924, he was able to build on this base of leadership and growing community enthusiasm. By this time the need for a sanctuary was so pressing, we moved to the Oaks Theater for special services. All available funds were needed for the ongoing program and for the effort to become independent, as a true community church.

The dream for a new sanctuary persisted and in 1944, a campaign was organized to raise the needed funds to build; but at that time, the confusion of war made us hesitate. The sanctuary project was taken up again in 1949, and despite raising cost, it was decided at last to build.

Mr. Reginald Inwood, a church architect, was contacted. When Mr. Cross told him we had limited funds but that we must make up for that with great beauty, he was delighted, for he too had dreamed of someday building a sanctuary unhampered by ancient tradition. We visited

some of Mr. Inwood's other churches and we learned mostly "what not to do with an A-frame structure."

Gradually our committee developed a new concept for a church interior – a single theme - "God's Love for His World." This theme was suggested long ago in legend and in God's Rainbow promise. We sense it in the miracle of life, growth, and beauty that surrounds us in all nature. The Rainbow Window is the initial statement of our sanctuary theme.

Hardest of all to depict was the upward reach of human nature and the gradual process of spiritual development. The Procession of Torchbearers is the result of this difficult task. Ancient history gives credit to an individual, but we know the individual builds on the values of the past, and on the best thinking of his contemporaries, as well as on his own ideas.

As we approached our own time the list of Torchbearers became longer and it was especially difficult to eliminate great scholars and dedicated leaders who have contribute to our understanding of Jesus' teachings. To illustrate this difficulty, after the sanctuary had been completed, a gentleman from India studied our Procession of Torchbearers and felt very hurt that modern India was not represented in the windows. At once Mr. Cross directed the artist to redesign a spot and Mahatma Gandhi's name was added.

So we come to the World Window. As we go out from our worship together, we go as messengers to carry the Rainbow promise of "God's Love for His World." The Procession of Torchbearers has no end.

The Stained Glass Artist

Dr. Jon Wallis of Pasadena created our stained glass windows. He participated in creating the glasswork at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and the Rockefeller-Riverside Church in New York. At Northbrae Community Church, Dr. Wallis and Rev. Cross worked together to build the design and symbolism around our sanctuary themes. The designers and craftsmen of the Wallis-Wiley Company crafted the three sets of windows in our sanctuary (The Rainbow Window, the Torchbearer Windows, and the World Window).

A Special Gift,

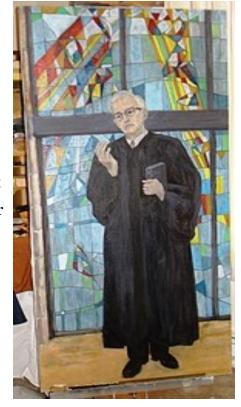
Fifty Years in the Making

A telephone call came into the church office one afternoon about two years ago. The caller was a lady who said she had a special gift for the church, and wanted a return call. Because some of the call back numbers were not audible, it took a little doing to decipher both the name and the number but soon we found that Mrs. Artis Vaughan of Kennewick, Washington was the voice on the line.

Artis said she had been painting a picture of Rev. Laurance Cross. She had started the picture many years ago, laid it aside at the time of Rev. Cross' car accident, and would complete it now if the church wanted to have it. Cross had been a very important person in the lives of Artis and her husband, Burt. The accident that badly injured Laurance Cross occurred in 1962, four years before his death. Clearly this painting has been more than 50 years in progress.

The portrait has unusual measurements being two feet by five feet long, almost life size, and it was being completed at Mrs. Vaughan's home in Washington state. We are still hoping to bring this gift home to Northbrae during the Centennial Year, so that Rev. Cross can stand once more in the beautiful Sanctuary that he designed and loved so much. Artis has been putting the finishing touches on the colors in the stained glass window recently.

Such a wonderful, thoughtful and meaningful gift coming back for our Centennial Year!



The Chapel is Dedicated January 12, 1958

Although Northbrae was originally founded as a Presbyterian church, in 1928 the decision was made to leave the Presbyterian denomination and become fully independent. This required a wait of 15 years, and the repayment of the remainder of \$60,000 the San Francisco Presbytery had spent on the construction of the original building. In 1943 these requirements were met, and Northbrae began to plan for a new church building, but the country was still at war. Finally in 1948 a campaign was conducted and about \$55,000 was collected. It was not enough to build the grand church that had been projected, so the money was conscientiously set aside. But costs kept rising, so after many delays, an architect was hired and new plans were made, and ground was finally broken on August 9, 1957.

By Dedication Day, every stained glass window was in place, the carpet was down, pews were in, the parking lot was paved, and landscaping was well under way. The great day began with the "Family Together Service" at 9:30 a.m. There was a responsive ritual of reading and singing followed by the Lord's Prayer. The Youth Choir, directed by Mrs. Shirley Kester, sang and Rev. Cross gave a "story sermon" before Sunday School classes began.

The Dedication Service began at 11:00 a.m. and featured soloist Jean Heywood singing "Open

the Gates of the Temple." The pastor and the people participated in a "responsive commemoration" during which Rev. Cross spoke about Northbrae's founding and noted that one of the original charter members, Mrs. Inez G. Dragon, was still a member, and a "living, devoted link to our past." The Building Committee presented the building, and the congregation responded with a "Declaration of Acceptance and Consecration." After other songs and prayers, Rev. Cross gave a sermon on "A New Kind of Church," and Jean Heywood sang "Bless This House."

At 4:00 p.m. that day, there was an informal "Recognition Service" of appreciation for everyone who had helped make the new sanctuary possible. The A Capella Choir from Berkeley High School performed, and Mr. Eugene Anderson sang "The Love Came Tricklin' Down," an old spiritual which suggested the theme of our Rainbow Window. Members of the Building Committee stood by to answer questions.

An interesting side note is that the old organ practically went to pieces a couple of years later, and was replaced by a new electronic organ built in Oregon. The builder, stymied by a truck strike, had it flown down by plane!

In 1967, following the death of Rev. Cross in 1966, the Chapel was rededicated as the Laurance L. Cross Memorial Chapel.

Our Sanctuary and Gardens

Architect Reginald Inwood of Carmel, California designed the Sanctuary of Northbrae Community Church, dedicated in 1967 as the Laurance L. Cross Memorial Chapel. Completed by the Lathrop Construction Company of Berkeley, California in January 1958, it took 120 days to erect at a cost of \$80,000 without furnishings. The building is an A-frame construction of redwood, stone and glass. Artist

Dixi Hall of Laguna Beach,
California designed the six pieces of
Italian glass mosaic. They include
the pulpit, the lectern, the altar,
and the altar symbols: the cross,
menorah, and torch. These
symbols represent the Christian,
Jewish and other religious
traditions from which Northbrae
draws its religious perspective of
openness.

The stained glass windows were designed and constructed by the Wallis Stained Glass Company of

Pasadena, California, in collaboration with Rev. Cross. The digital-sampling electronic organ is from the Rodgers Company of Portland, Oregon. The Northbrae Gardens are a gift of open space and beauty from Northbrae to the community. The gardens were the idea and great love of Rev. Cross. It is even possible to see and enjoy a garden area from within the Chapel.

The gardens are divided into sections, some carrying out specific themes and each containing selected plantings. The areas include the Plaza Garden, the Berkeley-University Garden, the California History Garden, the Appalachian Garden of Rhododendrons, the Cross Family Garden, the Sanctuary Garden, and the Peace Rose Walk and Rose Garden. Many rhododendrons are in the Northbrae Gardens. Two of the varieties are so old that even experts do not know their names. One new variety is named for Rev. Cross, to recognize his great love for rhododendrons. There are so many varieties in the church gardens that there is hardly a day

in the year when some rhododendrons are not in bloom.

Of special interest in the gardens is a redwood post, 2000 years old, which stands on the north side of the Chapel beneath two old Mexican mission bells. The plaque on the post is a replica of the one thought for some time to be by Sir Francis Drake, claiming the territory for England. The bench beside the post is a duplicate of the one on which Father Serra rested at the Carmel Mission in 1775.

Richmond Cross reproduced this bench. The statue of Saint Francis of Assisi, designed and cast in bronze by Miriam Cross Shelton, represents a young Francis about to take his first step into a life of service. Landscape architect Mashara Imazumi designed the Sanctuary Garden, discovered behind the altar by sliding the lower portion of the stained glass window aside.

The Resurrection Tree

In the late 1940s, Chinese botanists discovered a deciduous conifer in the interior of China, which matched specimens from the fossil record of a tree which had long been thought to be extinct. Word of this reached Dr. Ralph W. Chaney, a paleobotanist at UC Berkeley, who then made a trip to China in 1948 accompanied by Dr. Milton Silverman, science writer for the San Francisco Chronicle. They were able to bring back several thousand seeds for the propagation and study of "Metasequoia glyptostroboides." It was like finding a dinosaur alive, Dr. Chaney said. Today, dawn redwoods for home landscaping can be ordered through many plant nurseries.

Richmond Cross, son of Northbrae's second minister, Dr. Laurence Cross, recalled that his sister Barbara became a botanist and an expert on lichens. Knowing of her father's love of history, she gave him two young dawn redwoods, which he planted at Northbrae. It is likely that they were planted soon after the Chapel was completed in 1957. Because they are deciduous, they usually leaf out in the spring, near Easter time, fitting the seasonal theme of resurrection.

Over the years, roots from the trees have heaved up pavement and gotten into the plumbing at Northbrae in their search for water, much like willows do. Several years ago, a large root had to be pruned and the parking lot repaved; and the plumbing going to and from the choir bathroom has had to be cleaned out several times. Long roots are even visible on the surface, running along the north side of the Chapel.

In preparation for the Sacred Hoop Garden, the smaller of the two dawn redwoods was recently removed. It had been vastly outgrown by the larger tree and was no longer flourishing. There is concern that some day the remaining tree's roots may cause problems for the very foundation of the Chapel, especially under the stained glass window behind the altar. We cannot know what the future may hold for our lovely dawn redwood, but for now, this graceful tree will continue to shade our garden of beautiful native plants— a piece of our past anchoring a piece of our future.



Northbrae's Famous

Punch Recipe

Our Chapel, with its stained glass windows, was dedicated in January 1958 and immediately became a highly sought-after venue for weddings. It was especially popular with the "unchurched" because there was no membership requirement for having a wedding here. An estimated 150 weddings or more took place in the Chapel each year for many years.

Many of the weddings were followed by receptions elsewhere, but quite a few receptions took place in Haver Hall. Members of Northbrae's Women's Service League soon began catering these receptions, and for 24 years this was their service to the Church. In time, they managed to pay for a complete refurbishment of the kitchen in Haver Hall; they also contributed their earnings regularly towards patient recreation facilities at Napa State Hospital.

Service League members Monritta Ferguson and Emily Cofer were the backbone of the catering; other members, including Marghie Dunn, Nell Mengshol, Dorothy Perry, and Florence Morris, also worked in the kitchen. In addition to hot hors d'oeuvres and decorated canapés and appetizers, the ladies developed a recipe for wedding punch. This recipe has not been found on the Internet with quite the same ingredients, so it seems to be unique to Northbrae. It is still made today for large events; if you had any punch at the Mother's Day brunches, you've tasted it. Now, herewith, is the recipe, which you can add to your own family's collection of heritage recipes:

NORTHBRAE PUNCH RECIPE

3 cans (45-oz. size) Pineapple-Grapefruit juice

1 gallon of weak tea

1 pint Cranberry Juice Cocktail

1 pint Hawaiian Punch

2 cans frozen lemonade concentrate

3 large bottles of 7-Up

Float scoops of Raspberry Sherbet with above ingredients in a punch bowl.

Makes 4 gallons, or 64 cups.

(Always attribute this to the Women's Service League, Northbrae Community Church.)



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The Last Half of our Century

1960s-2014





The New Chapel

Craig Jessup, Northbrae's Third Minister

After the death of Northbrae's second minister, Rev. Laurance Cross, in 1966, interim ministers filled the pulpit. The church found it difficult to hire a new minister who could accept its firm non-denominationalism. The search committee finally learned that a minister had been dismissed from a Baptist church in Alameda due to his strong beliefs regarding civil rights, and believed he might therefore appreciate Northbrae's unique stance as an unaffiliated community church. Rev. Craig Jessup was interviewed and hired as our third permanent minister.

Northbrae is fortunate to have obtained excerpts from Rev. Jessup's memoirs. He grew up in Lindsay, a small town in the California foothills. After military service during World War II, he graduated from Oregon State University with a degree in agriculture, married, became a teacher, started a family, and owned a small cattle ranch. By 1954 he felt a call to the ministry, and moved to Berkeley where he studied at the Berkeley Baptist Divinity School.

Rev. Jessup served as a minister for several years in the small town of Fowler, in Fresno County, but in 1965 he was offered the pastorate at First Baptist Church in Alameda. The civil rights movement had become an important challenge to all churches, and Rev. Jessup was very straightforward with that congregation about his

stance on fair housing, which was a particularly hot issue in Alameda at that time; wartime housing was being torn down, which forced lower-income families to move.

At first the church in Alameda did make some attempts to integrate, and in the end some members did not want Rev. Jessup to leave, but rather than



cause a rift in the church he agreed to go when asked to do so by the deacons. He then worked as a substitute teacher in Alameda County until called by Northbrae. He said of Northbrae, "I loved the place and the people from the very beginning... Theologically I was growing up and Northbrae Community Church allowed me to do that. I felt turned loose."

With obvious amusement, Rev. Jessup recalled meeting with an interim minister, Rev. Vere V. Loper, a retired Congregational pastor, after Northbrae had called him: "He wanted me to understand that he had been making a tremendous effort to make the church a Christian church. He didn't believe that they really were a Christian church."

Northbrae's second minister, Rev. Cross, in a sermon given on May 6, 1962, gave the following definition of faith: "Faith is not: believing something in spite of the evidence; but living for something in spite of the consequences." It is a definition worth committing to memory. Craig Jessup was a man of faith.

Northbrae in the Turbulent Sixties

Berkeley's troubles during the 1960s are well known. They began with the Free Speech Movement and continued through years of problems dealing with school integration, People's Park, the hippie era, and demonstrations against the Vietnam War. The UC campus is nearly surrounded by churches and divinity schools, all of which were affected in various ways by everything that was going on around them.

Northbrae Community Church, by virtue of its location in a quiet, affluent subdivision, escaped a great deal of the controversy. Nevertheless, as Rev. Craig Jessup recalled in his memoirs, "Things were so desperate in Berkeley at times that I really did expect that our windows in our house might be shot out and this kind of thing."

Everyone in Berkeley seemed to be affected. Grade schools sometimes let out early so the children could get home, but many children encountered tear gas anyway. Many parishioners fled the "Sather Gate churches," as Rev. Jessup referred to them. Some of these people began attending church at Northbrae as a result. Jessup recalled, "I remember telling a woman that she didn't really want to belong to our church, that we were more liberal than she thought we were. She told me that she knew what she was doing, and she wanted to join our church... As hard as I tried I couldn't talk her out of becoming a member, and it turned out that she was really an outstanding person and

very open in her views. We were very fortunate to get her."

A different problem was the "street people" who came from all over the country. Rev. Jessup remembered that Northbrae had "characters" who came "literally by the dozens for help. In most areas we were able to help, and we made a real significant effort to help." This often took the form of vouchers to be used at local restaurants.

Rev. Jessup said, "The Sather Gate churches in a remarkable way provided help, had community dinners and this kind of thing... These churches were invaded at night. You couldn't keep the street people out. ... Of course, things were stolen. ... We had a lot of this at Northbrae but we didn't have it to the extent that they had it in the Sather Gate churches."

One man made his annual presence in Haver Hall known by his body odor, and used food from the kitchen to make his meals in the upstairs kitchenette. Rev. Jessup was concerned about a potential fire, so befriended the man, and consequently was able to trust him to a greater extent. "But it was impossible to keep him out and every year he came back."

"So much was given by the church to help people like this and improve their life and so on. Generally, we were able to give clothing after our bazaars and during the bazaar we were able to give used clothing and blankets and this sort of thing to these people."

Needy folks could also be furnished with items from "The General Store."

The General Store

Northbrae Community Church has had a decadeslong tradition of an annual bazaar. It was once known as the "Family Day Bazaar" and was very festive, with many church members attending in costumes of earlier days. Sale tables were set up by

theme, with baked goods, handmade crafts and knitted items, home-canned jams, jellies, and pickles, other items and goods, plus a clothing boutique upstairs in Haver Hall.

By the early 1970s the Bazaar had become so successful that it extended to two weekends plus the days between. Harley Jessup, Rev. Craig Jessup's son, painted signs and banners that hung over the tables. He decorated the church office to look like the front of a bank - that's where the money was! He made a plywood sign for the front of the church with beautiful lettering that read "THE GENERAL STORE."

Eventually there was talk of starting a thrift store to take the pressure off the annual bazaar. A search was made, and a building was found on Colusa Circle in Kensington with a double storefront (now the location of Nan Phelps Photography and Kensington Optometry). Northbrae negotiated a lease for one year with an option to buy and opened the store, naming it "The General Store," with Harley's sign in the window. The Family Day Bazaar returned to being held on just one Saturday, but it included many sale items on the sidewalk at The General Store.

The General Store did very well, and at the end of the year Northbrae exercised its option to buy the building. Marjorie Jessup was the first manager, then May Sinemus took over. In his memoirs, Rev. Jessup remarked about the fellowship and camaraderie among the people who worked at the store: "In fact, probably half the people that worked at the thrift store were not members of the church

but just wanted to be a part of it all. ... The store was very well run." Dianne McNenny volunteered in the store on Saturdays and concurs with this assessment.

The men of the church assisted with picking up donated items, fixing those which needed repair, and delivering heavy items when they were sold. Dianne recalls that the store was well laid out with displays, men's and women's sections, tools, and so forth.

Rev. Jessup noted, "The thrift store did all the things that we had hoped it would do. We

were able to take people that stopped by the church that needed clothing and/or even furniture and bedding... We could let them pick things out, and we would give them to them to set up housekeeping and fulfill their needs in this regard with whatever we had in the thrift store."

After about seven years, donations began to dwindle, revenue had leveled off, and the value of real estate had skyrocketed. A buyer made an offer to purchase the building for almost double what Northbrae had paid, so the church sold it for a tidy profit, and "The General Store" passed into Northbrae's history.



The Ted Cleveland Gallery

The second-floor room that is directly above the Parlor in Haver Hall still bears the name "The Ted Cleveland Gallery." Originally it was called the Shirley Kester Gallery, after the woman who led the Junior Choir for many years; but about 1970 the room was renovated, with recessed lighting and new windows, and renamed in honor of Mr. Cleveland.

Theodore K. Cleveland (1901-1987) was a member of the American Chemical Society and the editor of its magazine for 38 years. He also served on the advisory board of the Bay Area Air Pollution Control District from 1960 to 1970. At Northbrae, he was chairman of the church council for at least 15 years. He was also a lover of art; he was president of the Keith Art Association in Berkeley, promoting the works of the noted artist William Keith (1838-1911), who came to California in 1861. He served as President of the Board of Trustees of the Strawberry Creek Lodge (a senior citizen residence complex) for many years, up until the time of his death. (Northbrae members Earl and Frances Conley and Dietlinde Nossack were among those who lived there.)

The Ted Cleveland Gallery was used for many years as exhibit space, coordinated by an Art Committee which was long chaired by Arlene Larson until she retired and moved to Oregon. Many local artists held exhibits there, including members of the El Cerrito Art Association and other groups. There were also exhibits of crafts, macramé, needlepoint, etc. Special church exhibits included baby pictures of church members - "Guess who?" Frances Conley and Dianne McNenny prepared a couple of church history exhibits. Marion Martin (1903-2007), an illustrator and ceramic sculptor, and her daughter, Jean M. Loomis, also an artist, showed their works half a dozen times. Eleanor Weigand exhibited dance costumes from around the world. Japanese dolls were shown in a 1975 exhibit. Eighteen artists

participated in a "Beauty of Wood" exhibition of wood carvings in 1976. Most exhibits lasted a month, and gallery hours had to be scheduled around the many community meetings which still took place in the room. Northbrae's church life was greatly enhanced by the cultural variety.

Rev. Craig Jessup's son, Harley Jessup, had two shows in the Gallery: one in 1972 during his senior year at Berkeley High School, and another in 1978 after having earned his Master's degree in graphic design from Stanford University. Harley is now an Academy Award-winning designer with Pixar Animation Studios, and is responsible for Northbrae's beautiful centennial poster.

Special exhibits of quilts were shown annually for at least nine years. These involved taking out extra insurance and scheduling volunteers to watch over the quilts during gallery open hours. Community groups had to meet elsewhere during these times, due to the great historic value of many of the quilts and the issue of security.

Although the Ted Cleveland Gallery is seldom used for exhibits these days, it is still available for that purpose, if the logistics concerning community meetings can be worked out. Arrangements are now made through the church office.

Nancie Kester Irwin comments: "You mentioned my mother, Shirley Kester... I thought I might elaborate, because she actually made a huge contribution to Northbrae. She was a music teacher by training and also sang in the San Francisco Chorus... For years and years she directed the Northbrae Junior Choir. Every single Sunday (unfailingly), the choir performed in the first service, and my mom held an extensive rehearsal for the group afterward. She also was responsible for Christmas pageants, extensive Easter programs, etc.

"My mother was also a fine artist in her own right. I could be wrong, but I think she was the one who suggested Ted Cleveland's name for the gallery. She was very giving and never felt she needed any glory for the tremendous work she did for Northbrae."

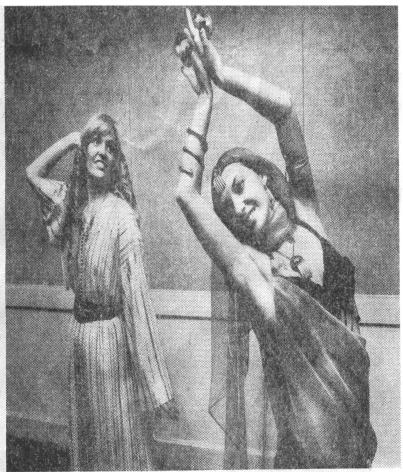
about people

Exhibit of costumes



COSTUMES — Dance costumes from around the world are on display at the Ted Cleveland Gallery of Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda, through Feb. 16. The gallery is open Sundays 12 to 1 p.m. and Wednesdays \$10.6 p.m. The costumes are the property of noted Berkeley dancer, Mrs. Clarke Weigand (Eleanor

Edson) and her daughters. Here Mrs. Weigand models a costume from the State of Chiapas in Mexico. It is a black silk knit embroidered with flowers of all bright hues. The bodice and underskirt are taffeta. On the wall is a Peruvian dance costume in pink with colored braids. At top is a Honda of dyed flama wool used in the dance.



DANCERS — Mrs. Donald Berz, left (Janine Weigand), and Maryse Weigand model two of the dance costumes now on display at the Ted Cleveland Gallery, 941 The Alameda. Janine is wearing a Moroccan costume, made from a nylon-like fabric. Origina Moroccan costumes were

made from silk. The costume is aqua with a gold thread and was brought from Morocco by Maryse. Maryse is wearing a belly dance costume with Egyptian influence. The bra is jet black encrusted with beads, pants are bright green, and her diaphanous scarf is amber. —I-G photos by James Pease

The Navajo Rug

The Navajo rug hanging in the main stairwell in Haver Hall has an illustrious history. For some years in the 1940s, the Navajo School in rural Arizona was sponsored by the Northbrae Sunday School. Dr. Harold Bakker, who was a Northbrae member and Berkeley dentist, spent time each year at the reservation providing free dentistry.

The Teecnospos Community School in Navajo County presented Northbrae with a certificate stating that the sponsorship will help to:

- Bring about a more complete enrollment and attendance of school age children
- Assure provision of necessary clothing
- Make possible a daily lunch
- Provide school equipment where possible
- Improve health conditions
- Encourage community participation and cooperation
- Make possible a fuller and richer experience for the School children

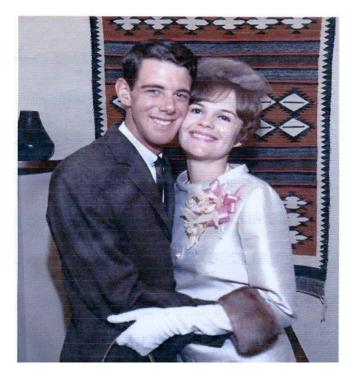
The beautiful rug hung in the stairwell for many years. However, it was stolen in the 1960s. The reservation was informed and they replaced it with another extraordinary rug. In the 1990s Earl Conley built a Plexiglas cover to protect it

and the replacement rug proudly hangs in the stairwell. At the time of the sponsorship, the Navajo also presented Northbrae with a fantastic and very valuable black pottery vase that is safely stored in a confidential place - but can be viewed on



special occasions. We recognize and value the past relationship with the Navajo as we enter into a new era with our Sacred Hoop Garden honoring Native Americans.

—-Dianne McNenny



Larry and Karen Queen's wedding photo in front of the original rug.

Two Wedding Near-Disasters

During Rev. Craig Jessup's tenure at Northbrae (1967-1979) there were often four or five weddings in a single weekend. Scheduling of so many weddings was sometimes tight, although a streamlined system had been developed. It was possible to have a wedding at 1 p.m. on Sunday, immediately after church and coffee hour, until one particular wedding caused a scheduling change.

A Sunday School class had been using water colors that day, and a little girl went into the women's lounge upstairs in Haver Hall to shake her brushes out. She accidentally splattered about eight lines of light blue dots on the bridal gown which was hanging there. By the time it was discovered, the dots had dried and could not be dabbed out with water. Some of the church women called several dry cleaners but none could help on a Sunday. Rev. Jessup said, "The bride's mother was just absolutely coming apart."

Rev. Jessup had to put on his robe and join the men in the wedding party, so did not know how it was all going to be resolved. But when the bride came down the aisle, she looked beautiful, her gown looked wonderful, and there was no sign of any spots on it.

After the wedding, Rev. Jessup learned that the ladies of the church had very carefully and skillfully pinned the dress material over the lines of dots in such a way that not a soul noticed. But the bride's family never paid a penny for the

wedding. As a result of this near-disaster, Sunday weddings were scheduled to begin no earlier than 2 pm, well after church services, Sunday School, and the coffee hour.

In 2004, a routine inspection of our Chapel revealed extensive wood rot in the beams, and the Church Council voluntarily condemned its use. This was on a Wednesday, and a wedding was scheduled for Saturday. Dianne McNenny, church administrator, was out of town and Ruth Brayton was covering the office. The bride was called and informed of the situation; her dreams were falling apart and she was hysterical! She had carefully chosen Northbrae with her groom as the special place they wanted to be married. Relatives were arriving in town that very day in anticipation of the weekend. There were meetings and tears and frantic attempts to make alternative plans.

Ruth called the minister of the nearby Epworth Methodist Church. We'll always be grateful for their help and cooperation, as their church was available that day, and when the bride saw it she exclaimed "Thank you, Jesus!" Our Rev. Ron Sebring, undergoing radiation treatments at the time, was exhausted from all that had happened, but was the epitome of kindness and diplomacy; and Connie Sebring was gracious as the wedding coordinator, as she moved the bride from one church to the other. Two Northbrae members stood on the corner of Los Angeles and The Alameda that Saturday, handing out directions to those wedding guests who were arriving at the right wedding, but the wrong church. Everything went off without any further problems, whether Jesus had a lot to do with it or not...!

Barbara Hill and Ruth Brayton

Reverend David Sugarbaker

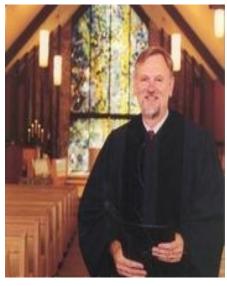
David Sugarbaker attended seminary in Berkeley from 1966-1969, and met Craig Jessup during that time. After serving a church in upstate New York for a short time, he came to Northbrae Community Church in March of 1971 at the invitation of his friend, Rev. Craig Jessup. Dave served as associate minister at first, and then became co-minister with Rev. Jessup until his retirement eight years later. He served Northbrae for 27 years in all, retiring in 1997.

The Sugarbaker years were very important ones in the lives of several of our current senior members, including the Miyazakis, the Queens, the Fosters, the Shahs, and the McNennys. Their children attended church school and junior choir which were the areas Hazel Sugarbaker enjoyed taking a role in. Hazel, now Hazel McCrury, directed the junior choir for over a decade. Their music was an important part of every Sunday service. Michael and Allan Sugarbaker were among those children, and were classmates of several of our members' offspring.

David was thought of as a gentle man. He had insightful skills as a counselor and guided many of the young couples who were married at Northbrae. As was true during the Cross years, Northbrae continued to be a popular venue for young couples to have their weddings performed. Weekends were very busy with weddings, and evenings with counseling. Working with the high school students was also

an important commitment of his.

David and Elaine Sugarbaker were married in 1987, and assisted one another in the raising of their respective teenagers. Elaine helped to



decorate Haver Hall and made all the curtains for the parlor.

One new congregant met David Sugarbaker in 1992 at a new member's session and was impressed with his description of Northbrae as not Unitarian, but offering a broad umbrella where people of varying beliefs could find a church home. Congregation Netivot Shalom used the Sanctuary if their High Holy Days fell on a Sunday, while Northbrae folks graciously moved to Haver Hall. It was about this time that Kehilla Community Synagogue, a new Jewish renewal group, also made its home at our church.

Dave retired in 1997, and moved with Elaine to Kentucky where he became active in hospice counseling. Allan Sugarbaker assists Dianne McNenny in the church office and Michael works in Portland, Oregon. Emma Sugarbaker, Dave's granddaughter continues to help with the Wednesday night dinners.

Don Felt, Interim Minister 1998-2000

Donald Felt, Don to us, came to Northbrae as an intentional interim minister between the ministries of David Sugarbaker and Ronald Sebring.

Don is a kind and sensitive man, and extremely competent. He was just the right person to carry Northbrae from one era to another. A very successful San Francisco lawyer before doing interim ministries, Don had a keen eye for where adjustments and refining needed to happen before we searched for our fifth permanent minister.

Don cared deeply for our congregation, and we felt it, so we moved easily with his advice and his expertise. He went through a health crisis of his own during his time with us, and we pulled for him as he pulled for us.



Priscilla and Don Felt have recently moved to Ashland, Oregon where they are building a wonderful new house. They celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with their children and grandchildren in Colorado.

You are part of our Northbrae extended family. Thank you for all you did for us!

Quilting History at Northbrae

As we read back over the many years of history at Northbrae Community Church, we cannot help but notice the number of times that quilting is mentioned. We see stories of quilt displays upstairs in the Gallery, and there are names of women who are still active members of the church.

We read of a quilt being pieced by a single person, but quilted by the ladies of the Northbrae Community Church. An email note was sent to Northbrae in 2008: Ms. Janet Miller, a quilter had seen a quilt in a quilting book that looked very much like one she had just purchased. When she wrote back to the American Museum in Bath. England, she was told that this was quilted by the ladies of Northbrae in the 1930s. Curiosity and some Internet

sleuthing led us to the daughter of the original quilter, who explained that she had visited the Bath museum and thought this was just the place for her mother's heirloom quilt. Mystery solved!

Though we no longer have the quilting group that used to be so active here, we do have a lot of latent interest in this art. Dianne McNenny and Sharon Lewis have been leading the effort for the Northbrae Church to produce a Centennial Quilt. Their idea is to have the stained glass window

which represents the theme, "and the love comes a tricklin' down" as the main body of the quilt. This design is made with pieces of fabric representing the rainbows that are prominent in our large altar window.

On either side of that center, there are blocks that were embroidered and decorated by various Northbrae members. The century has yielded some changes as we had a Northbrae gentleman

> assigned to one of these squares! These blocks depict ten of the Torchbearers that we see along the side window. The block for Northbrae founder Frank Brush in on the back and contains a list on the quilt. We do not claim expertise, but a willing spirit to try to leave a quilt that represents our 100th birthday.



Roberta Horton, a well known expert in

quilting, happens to currently live with her twin sister, Mary Mashuta in the very house that was originally occupied by Frank Brush and his family here in Berkeley. Roberta has graciously lent the ladies her quilting frame to use while they are working on the new quilt. While reading the weekly Northbrae tidbits, these twins discovered that they were born on the very day that Frank Brush passed away. How is that for coincidence and continuity!

The Easter Bunny's "Wardrobe Malfunction"

Northbrae has had a traditional Easter Egg hunt for children on the front lawn of Haver Hall for many years. The hunt is accompanied by a visit from the Easter Bunny, and a bunny suit and mask are kept for that purpose. Our bunny's duties are quite simple. He waves to the

children, pats them on the tops of their heads, gives out some candy, has a few pictures taken and hops a few hops to add to the spirit of Easter. Over the years, many people have played the part of the Easter Bunny; our church Administrator, Dianne McNenny, can name about a dozen off the top of her head.

One Easter, during the interim ministry of Don Felt (between Rev. Sugarbaker and Rev. Sebring), the personwho-shall-remain-

nameless who was scheduled to play the Easter Bunny was running late. He hurried into Haver Hall, hastily jumped into the bunny suit, and ran out the front door. Unfortunately, he had managed to put it on backwards, so the pink pouf of a tail was hanging in front instead of in back.

Everyone out on the lawn looked up to see the Easter Bunny with this strange new appendage, just at the moment when he began to hop! Great

hilarity ensued. People laughed until they literally cried, they held their sides to keep them from splitting, they went weak in the knees and could hardly stand up. Many of the eye-witnesses are still with us, and memories of that moment still bring on a smile. The identity of the poor bunny is known to some, but we won't tell, will we?



Rev. Felt got a great color photo of the occasion, as the bunny was a good sport. Don had it framed and presented it to Northbrae last year just

before he moved to Oregon. It is now hanging on the wall in the church office, where you can see it almost any Sunday after coffee hour. It will definitely brighten your mood!

Reverend Ronald Sebring

Reverend Ron Sebring was called to Northbrae from Independence, Missouri in the year 2000, to begin his ten year ministry. His gentle, modest, Midwestern demeanor belied his strong educational background. He became known as simply "Preacher."

Ron brought with him not only these qualities, but also a sparkling and lovely wife, Connie. Over these years Connie endeared herself to the congregation. She had a flair for fashion, decorating and flower arranging, the latter of which was perfected under the tutelage of our beloved senior, Marion Martin.

We look back on the Sebring years as a time of warm interactions and sermons that were low on doctrine and high on humanity. These sermons were interspersed with deep understanding of history, religion, philosophy, and scientific thought, all presented in a low key manner that seemed without the use of notes. There were many "Connie and I" stories within the sermons that brought warm smiles from the congregation.

During his years with Northbrae, Ron set into motion a structure with a Chairperson of Church Life, overseeing five separate church focus groups, each with individual chairpersons of their own. There was Fellowship and Community, Networking and Growth, Education, Spirituality and Worship, and Local and Global Concerns. The latter started out as two separate groups, but merged shortly after the structure was in place.

Ron brought with him a history with an appreciation of Native American thought and culture. He felt that Native Americans deserved a place in our torchbearer windows. During his years with us the Capital Improvements
Campaign, our website, the Rite of Passage and plans for the Sacred Hoop Garden took shape.
John Oldham and his garden/columbarium committee elected to honor Native American culture in the Sacred Hoop Garden. This is a tribute to both American Indians and Ron's long held desire to honor American Indians as torchbearers.



We said farewell to "Preacher" Ron Sebring in 2010, when he retired and took his own interim minister position in Vallejo.



Jewish Congregations at Northbrae

Northbrae's history would be incomplete without mention of two Jewish congregations that held worship services here. The first, Congregation Netivot Shalom, usually met in the Berkeley-Richmond Jewish Community Center on Walnut Street (now called the JCC East Bay), but during important holidays they needed more room, and Northbrae was able to provide it. The thoughtful inclusiveness designed into our Sanctuary and

stained glass windows made it flexible enough to

serve as a synagogue by simply exchanging the

altar cross with a menorah.

One year, Yom Kippur fell on a Sunday. Northbrae Church members, with Rev. David Sugarbaker, agreed to hold their own service in Haver Hall that day (which had been our original church, after all), while Netivot Shalom had their service in our Sanctuary.

On one occasion in 1995, when Netivot Shalom was meeting at Northbrae, someone noticed a young man pouring a liquid on the cars in our parking lot. It turned out to be gasoline, and the young man had lit a match when a member of Netivot Shalom got into a scuffle with him and managed to put it out. Meanwhile the young man ran into the kitchen of Haver Hall. Dianne McNenny was there arranging flowers for Mother's Day the next day; he pushed her aside and ran upstairs, pounding on doors, yelling, and breaking every window he could reach.

Hearing the commotion, Sabbath School children and teachers crouched under tables or hid. Rev. Sugarbaker was working in his office at the time and the intruder threw a chair at him. Dianne called 911, and police and firefighters responded. The cars in the parking lot were hosed down, and the intruder was subdued after being pepper-sprayed three times by the police.

It turned out that the young man had no quarrel with either the Jewish congregation or Northbrae Community Church. He was schizophrenic, had stopped taking his medications, and had been missing from home a few days. He had come to Northbrae searching for a mental health counselor who had worked with him years before, when a counseling group had rented space at Northbrae (but had long since moved away). He broke so many windows that the upstairs carpets had to be replaced because there was no way to get out all the shards of glass. Both congregations prayed for the unfortunate young man.

Netivot Shalom eventually bought a building on University Avenue and moved there in 2005. During much of the same time that Netivot Shalom was using Northbrae for High Holy Days, another Jewish congregation, Kehilla Community Synagogue, was using Northbrae for regular Shabbat services. The overlap was interesting: on days when Netivot Shalom needed more space and came to Northbrae, Kehilla also needed more space and rented a hall in Oakland. Everyone got along very well!

Kehilla had been worshipping here on Saturdays for several years already when Rev. Ron Sebring came to Northbrae. Ron remembers that Rabbi David Cooper "was in tune with the life of Northbrae" and sent Ron a kind, warm letter of welcome. The two men developed a great relationship during their times together at Northbrae and Rabbi David gave Ron many insights into Jewish traditions.

Ruth Brayton recalls, "I particularly remember one weekend of workdays, when we were caring for the facilities. Northbrae people worked on Saturday and Kehilla folks on Sunday, each being careful not to disturb the other's worship service going on in the Sanctuary." Rev. Sebring says, "Kehilla's time at Northbrae was very special, with the shofar ringing in our hallways and their congregation dancing around the Torah in Haver Hall."

Dianne McNenny specifically mentioned a joint service of both congregations, called hastily in response to the terrorist attacks on 9/11. A sense of community seemed to help ease the shock and pain of such an incomprehensible event.

Kehilla found a location in Piedmont, and on the Sunday they moved to their new home, both the Northbrae and Kehilla congregations joined in a brief ceremony at 10 a.m. Our choir sang "May the Good Lord Bless and Keep You," and Rabbi David Cooper shared memories of their time with Northbrae, and gave a special blessing in Hebrew for Northbrae's ministry and future. Kehilla members then carried their Torah, walking on foot all the way to Grand Avenue in Oakland. Northbrae members walked a few blocks with them, gave them a gift of a mezuzah for their door, and wished them farewell; then returned to Northbrae for the regular church service.





The Rite of Passage Program

Over the years, there have been various comingof-age plans for our Sunday School youth. One program, which took place 30 years ago, was the "Northbrae Connection," a year-long pairing of children aged 12 to 14 years with a Northbrae adult (not their parent) as a mentor. Parents were asked to pledge their support by making sure that their child would attend the entire program, and Northbrae congregants were invited to volunteer as adult mentors.

The program was to last ten months, September to June, with a meal and gathering on the fourth Sunday evening of each month. The after-meal program ranged from discussions to gameplaying. One such game was a United Nations food distribution game, which addressed how a rich nation might share its food with poor nations. The month of January was an exception; instead of a group meeting, pairs went off to enjoy an activity of their choice. For example, one pair went to a comedy club and another pair went to a rifle range. About 15 young people passed through the "Northbrae Connection" program.

The graduation ceremony was a regular Sunday morning worship service planned and conducted by the participants, including the sermon. At that time, graduates were allowed to be voting Northbrae Church members, although the current By-Laws limit voting memberships to those aged 18 years or older.

In 2004 there was a church-wide "retreat" to set priorities and goals for Northbrae. Phil Shain suggested having a formal plan for our youth passing into adulthood spiritually, similar to a Bar or Bat Mitzvah for Jewish children, or other coming-of-age rituals in other denominations and religions. This found wide support and became the "Rite of Passage Program."

Rev. Ron Sebring took the leadership position in getting the program going. Several meetings were held with parents of children of all ages, to clarify what they wanted to see in the development of religious experiences for their children. A list of ten overall goals became the basis of a curriculum for the Rite of Passage Program. These included: Biblical literacy; values clarification; peer fellowship; interreligious exposure; the Torchbearer concept; intergenerational engagement; sensitivity to social concerns; music; experiences of awe, mystery, wonder; and leadership opportunities.

The first round of youth-to-adults to go through the program were Sarah Nunn and Sam Shain. Rev. Sebring and Dianne McNenny facilitated monthly or bimonthly meetings lasting two hours: one hour for supper and conversation, the other hour for the program. Activities were designed to engage the thoughts, ideas, and concerns of the youth. Other adults were sometimes brought in for intergenerational engagement.

Upon completion of the program, there was a "Spirituation" Service on Sunday, April 24, 2011, which Sam and Sarah planned entirely on their own and took a major part in. The intention was to establish an annual Spirituation Service for

the Sunday before Palm Sunday, but it has since been moved to June. In addition, the first round followed a one-year plan, but the program was envisioned to evolve into a two-year plan, allowing more time for activities that would focus on the ten goals.

After Rev. Sebring retired, interim minister Rev. Dr. Christy Newton and Dianne McNenny kept the Rite of Passage Program going; the second round of youth-to-adults held their Spirituation Service in June 2013. This group consisted of Will Shain, April Elder, and Perry Nalle. The third round is already well under way with Rev. Mike Burch; this group includes Romeo Swan, Kellen Reid, Lucy Bretall, and Robert West, who are expected to "graduate" during Northbrae's centennial year.

Our children are our future. No effort is too great when it comes to providing them with the tools for leading the kind of spiritually fulfilling lives that we hope for them to enjoy.

There is a lesson though that has stuck with me the most throughout the whole partaking of Spirituation; the action of forgiveness. ... Learning to forgive has helped me immensely and prepared me to be a better man and that is why Spirituation is such a valuable part of the Northbrae experience.

Quoted from Sam Shain's Rite of Passage speech.



Rev. Sebring
with Sam Shain
and Sarah Nunn
receiving their Rite of Passage certificate
Sunday, May 2011.

Frances R. Conley Northbrae Historian

Frances Conley, our church historian for many years, and her gentle husband, Earl who used his retirement years to be a skilled Jack-of-all-trades handyman here at Northbrae, left a legacy here that we would like to honor.

Frances was a graduate of Berkeley High School and U. C. Berkeley. She and her future husband, our beloved Earl, first met in a young adult group led by Rev. Cross, which took place in the gallery in Haver Hall. She and Earl married, had two sons (Roy and David) and lived many years in El Cerrito.

The stories of their early life together are fascinating. Frances worked as a Rosie the Riveter during the war at the Kaiser Ship Yard. She knew how to sew and, based on her ability to put together a sewing pattern, she was hired to design and cut the metal used for ships during the war. Earl was in the Navy and stationed in the Aleutians.

For many years, Frances and Earl spent summers in Salt Lake City doing genealogy research with the Mormon records. They studied the history of California as well as their respective family histories. They also volunteered for many years as docents for the Castro/Alvarado Adobe historical building in San Pablo.

Frances was a lady with strong opinions. She loved the old favorite hymns, all the while questioning doctrinaire church philosophies. Kathy Oldham remembers her (in more recent years) sitting quietly at the Tuesday book group, seemingly lost in her own thoughts.....and then suddenly she would read something that she had a strong feeling about.....and Frances would be back again!

The Dolters remember many RV trips with the Farris and the Conleys.

Others of us recall the Sunday that Frances was reading the 23rd Psalm during the church service. Suddenly there was a rolling earthquake! Frances continued on without missing a verse. When she finished Rev. Sebring announced, "When Frances reads Scripture, the earth moves!"

Frances and Earl Conley contributed so much to the Northbrae family. Earl maintained Northbrae's facilities and even put up the red peace banners that hung so long on the Torchbearer Wall. Frances was a most remarkable historian, and we are all the richer for her insights and attention to historical detail. We envision them both continuing their skilled jobs in the heavens!

The Set of Hymnbooks— Unitarian and Friends

We have had inquiries and compliments about the unique set of hymnbooks that is used at Northbrae Community Church. You will find the Unitarian hymnal, the silver book, which has so many wonderful responsive readings, and the Friends hymnal, the green book, which holds so many old Christian favorites, adjusted to the peaceful leanings of the Quakers.

Debbie Golata, our music director, found our previous hymnbook lacking in wording that fit well with modernity. Week after week, she would ferret out a non-hymnal piece of music with more sensitive lyrics and produce inserts for the bulletins. The old red hymnal was becoming obsolete.

Discussions ensued about how to remedy this, but there could be no agreement. One suggestion was to produce our own Northbrae hymnbook, but that would entail a great deal of work and royalty concerns. It was clear that the Unitarian hymnal held some of what we wanted, but it was not generally felt that it fully represented Northbrae's broadness of thought. Discussions were going nowhere, when Carolyn Rosin and the Braytons offered to donate a set of the Unitarian hymnal to go alongside the current red hymnal as a set. The gift was accepted by the Council and the books arrived.

They were a good addition but there was not universal joy! The older hymnals, the red books, looked somewhat tired beside the new silver books. This was not quite the full answer. So, privately, Ruth Brayton sent for a hymnbook that might have the Christian songs, without the war songs. The Gulf War had begun and there was sensitivity to songs such as Christian soldiers going off to war. The green Friends' book with so many of the old favorite songs that Frances Conley found missing in the Unitarian book, could be a fitting replacement for the retiring red book. Thus, another gift was offered to Northbrae, and it was also accepted. Now we had a new set of books, silver and green, with the words and readings of the Unitarians as well as the Christianity and peaceful philosophy of the Friends. Very Northbrae, it seemed.

There was a bit of luck involved as well, because a second hymnal arrived for consideration after the green book was donated. It was called *Hymns of Truth and Light* and could easily have won out over the green book had it been seen sooner.

It has all worked out well. Congregants have purchased the books individually to dedicate to loved ones and to causes, creating also a much appreciated fundraiser for the church. Peggy Newgarden designed the lovely dedication plates now seen on the inside cover of so many of the hymnals.

That is the story of how we happened to get this set of hymnbooks that pleases so many people. Perhaps it was simply serendipity!

Ge Qun Wang Affectionately Known as GQ

Over the years, thanks to our accomplished choir director and several paid musicians, Northbrae Community Church has been blessed with rich choral and sacred music. During the first decade of the 21st century, beginning in 2003, we were especially enriched by the presence and performances of Ge Qun Wang, a Chinese vocalist affectionately known as GQ.

GQ was born in ShanDong, China in 1971 and became a lyric tenor trained in both Chinese and Western music, both sacred and secular. Among other places, he was trained at the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and the Curtis Institute of Music which is noted for producing world renowned musical performers. He has performed all over the world, Beijing, Shanghai, Canton, Hong Kong, London, New York, the list goes on. In October 2009, GQ performed at Carnegie Hall with Chinese pianist Lang Lang. Locally, he brought music to St. Vincent DePaul church in San Francisco and became a loyal and vital part of Northbrae Community Church's music program. He has numerous music awards.

Northbrae worked closely with GQ to help enable him to receive his green card. Privatization under the G.W. Bush administration and the cultural suspicion in the wake of 9/11 created both mismanagement and confusion in the immigration services, laws, and procedures at the time. Muriel Wallen worked with Northbrae



Community Church and Senator Diane Feinstein to understand the process, secure funding, and hammer out a job description to employ GQ for non-contractual, "At Will" work, all to conform with the requirements for an H1B visa. Under the terms of the contract, GQ provided Northbrae with tenor vocal music, was a cultural resource for Northbrae providing programs and group experiences, interpreted for Northbrae the Asian religions represented by our torchbearers, consulted with Northbrae's functional departments, and served as a resource for the minister.

GQ enriched our church and surrounding community in many ways. At Northbrae, GQ led programs on Chinese culture and language, and provided Northbrae with a wider perspective on the Asian torchbearers in our windows (Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism). He shared insights from his unique perspective with reviews of movies and art. GQ provided many private consultations with the minister (many times while sharing tea at the local coffee shop on Solano) on the Mandarin language, intercultural and interreligious issues. GQ provided several fundraising concerts for

Northbrae. On one occasion, GQ shared a dialogue sermon with the minister, lacing it with his characteristic humor and subtle observations. GQ loved animals, dogs especially, and advocated for animal rights.

Most significantly, GQ enriched our worship experience with his choral contributions, duets with Debbie Golata, and solo performances. His vocal talent and rich voice touched the deeper parts of our souls.

The minister at the time (Ron Sebring) recalls an occasion when he and GQ met in his home to discuss the Mandarin language. GQ received an urgent phone call from a neighbor and the two of them went to check on him. The minister recalls watching GQ, a large man in stature, reach down and lift the elderly

gentleman who had fallen. He lifted him with such tenderness and gentleness. Such was the spirit that this wonderful gentleman brought to our congregation.

GQ's mother painted a beautiful wall hanging for Northbrae and it has an honored place in the Parlor.



GQ was not the first time Northbrae helped newcomers to the U.S. After the Vietnam War the congregation sponsored a Vietnamese family for two years. During the Vietnam War the congregation planted peace roses along the front sidewalk.



The Bees

When we look back on the past, we can sometimes recognize a chain of events that begins with a seemingly minor event but leads to a greater change. Such a chain started with the incident of the bees in the Sanctuary.

By the early 2000s, the lead holding together our beautiful stained glass windows was deteriorating and beginning to buckle. At about the same time, a swarm of honeybees decided to build their new hive in the east wall of our Chapel, near the top of the A in the A-frame, accessed by a crack in the outside wall high above the little fish pond. After a while, since nobody was harvesting the honey, excess honey began running down the outside wall. This attracted ants! But the last straw was when the bees began getting into the Sanctuary through places where the stained glass windows had buckled, large enough to put a hand through.

Tom Farris, a CPA who served as Northbrae's treasurer for many years, was an amateur beekeeper. He dressed up in his protective bee suit and climbed up a ladder and smoked the bees, and was able to remove them so the hole in the wall could be patched. (Tom has since retired and moved to Ojai.)

Someone, in an attempt to inject some humor into the situation, brought up the Bible story of "Samson's Riddle" (Book of Judges, chapter

14:1-18). This story tells of Samson, who, on his way to visit a lady he fancied, met a lion and killed it with his bare hands. On his way home, he made a detour to look at the carcass and found that a swarm of bees had made a hive in it. Later, when he married the woman, he made a bet with her countrymen at the wedding feast which required them to solve this riddle: "Out of the eater came something to eat. Out of the strong came something sweet." The wife's countrymen got her to wheedle the solution out of Samson and pass it on to them. (You may recall something similar happened later with Delilah.) Samson's response to the countrymen was the famous Bible quote, "If you had not plowed with my heifer, you would not have found out my riddle."

The buckling of the windows and the bee invasion foretold problems with dry rot in the beams supporting the Chapel and led to the Capital Improvement Campaign of 2005-2008, with 2004 being a year of intense planning and investigation. Ideas that were successful at other churches were evaluated for their suitability at Northbrae. The Capital Improvement Campaign was a success, the lead in the windows was replaced, the beams were repaired, and our new Sacred Hoop Garden was developed, which will be dedicated during our Centennial Year. And it all started with a swarm of bees.

The Capital Fund Raising and Improvements Campaign—

Let It Shine 2004-2008

Things were deteriorating. The Sanctuary was over forty years old and Haver Hall itself was about eighty years old at the turn of the century.

It had been noticed for some time that the beautiful stained glass windows that we took such pride in had begun to buckle. It would not be long before pieces of glass would fall. We dreaded the idea of an earthquake because it would not take much to shake that glass loose. Looking around the chapel one could observe that, within a few years, there would also be a need for new carpeting. The parking lot had great heaves where the roots of the dawn redwood had lifted the asphalt. There were signs of a great deal of unseen deterioration which would become evident all too soon.

Haver Hall was showing problems as well. The large porch off the office opposite the parlor and several smaller verandas on the front of the building were deteriorating and needed to be removed. The large hall had peeling paint dropping from the ceiling. This room appeared to have a great deal of potential for community use, but the acoustics were bad and the room was in need of drapes, sound tiles, and redecorating. The kitchen floor was covered with linoleum that obviously needed replacing and there were spots of wood rot near the door. As with the Sanctuary, there were hidden problems that were growing worse all the time. The parlor windows were loaded with wood rot, and it was

later discovered that dry rot was also present under the building and high on the building as well.

There was unease about all this, but no action was taken until one fateful day. Dianne McNenny was away visiting Nebraska, Bob Davis (council president) was in Grass Valley and Ruth Brayton was covering the office. A routine inspection of the facilities caused an ashen faced gentleman to come to the office around noon. All of the external Sanctuary beams were discovered to be loaded with wood rot. As the inspector spoke with Howard McNenny, the monetary figures for repair that were being discussed were astronomical. What we knew for sure was that the building should not be used, and we voluntarily condemned its use until this was fixed.

A wedding was scheduled for Saturday. The panic that this caused is a whole other story but for now we focus on our Sanctuary and the terrible situation we found ourselves to be in. Bob and Howard summoned the church men for a discussion. Fortunately, among that group, we were lucky to have both Jim Wert and John Oldham who had experience that we came to rely on. Jim worked for the University of California and had heard of a process that was being used in Palo Alto where dry rot was more common. A process had been found where rotted wood could be infused with a kind of epoxy that would render the wood strong again. This process was a life-saver for the church because it put the repairs within our financial reach.

While this was being done, a full-fledged Capital Campaign began. Bob Davis appointed Peggy Newgarden as the Chairperson and she set about planning a January retreat and investigating possibilities for fund raising. The church retreat was scheduled for January at the Berkeley City Club and, in the meantime, we brainstormed ideas. Dreams and possibilities were discussed. Practicalities were not the focus of that time.

Peggy spoke to people at the Orinda Church where a fundraising and improvements campaign had just been completed and they shared their plan with her. With that in our hands, we had the retreat and set out to begin the campaign. The Orinda plan called for contributions and grants. We publicized our plan in the Penny Post and had several planning meetings. Committee members went off to investigate various possibilities. One important one, investigated by John Oldham, was the Orinda church's columbarium garden that served their church in several ways, including some maintenance funds. We discussed this, decided that perhaps in the future this would be something to consider.

At the time the suggestion was that the Capital Campaign must go forward as planned. A garden study committee was formed. Because of Rev. Sebring's interest in honoring Native American culture, John's group went off to study the history of American Indians who had once lived in this area. There was hope that these two could someday meld into something special for the church. And eventually they did!

But for now we return to the Capital Campaign in full swing at our church. It was to be a three year campaign, starting in April of 2005, with 2004 to be a year of preparation. The campaign kicked off in 2005, and lasted until April of 2008. The hope for grants did not work out, but membership contributions began to come in. Peggy resigned at the end of year one and Ruth Brayton took over as Chairperson as the campaign continued. Most of the aforementioned projects were eventually completed, with the exception of a comprehensive plan for the Sanctuary. A beautiful piano was purchased, but carpet and full refurbishment of the Sanctuary needed to be delayed for another time. The kitchen received a new floor and a coat of bright red on the walls, generously painted by Bob Davis and Larry Queen. Furnaces still needed to be replaced in Haver Hall. We had a Giving Tree poster in the parlor, and all members contributed what they could over the 3-4 year period. Approximately \$250,000 was donated and our church facilities showed great improvement as a result of that generosity.

There was more to come. We will tell you about that in the Sacred Hoop Garden story. Perhaps too, the Sanctuary project can finally be part of our Centennial Year Celebration. Some further church improvements were achieved with the Angel Fund which was started during the Council presidency of Linda Restel, a few years later. Reverend Ron Sebring was ever present as most of these capital improvements took place.

Ruth Brayton

The Reverend Dr. Christy Newton

Following Rev. Ronald Sebring's departure from Northbrae in the Spring of 2011, our church called Rev. Dr. Christy Newton as the interim minister. Christy had an impressive resume of study and world travel.

Rev. Newton arranged for a church retreat, where members, in a beautiful, rustic, informal setting, could reflect on where the church was, our varying ideas for where we wanted the church to go and the kind of minister we would like to have lead us into our second century.

A very special milestone in Rev Newton's life occurred in the summer of 2012 as she and her partner welcomed a new baby boy into their family. Clive is a beautiful blue eyed, blond baby boy who captured the hearts of the congregation.

During Christy's maternity leave, we experienced the opportunity to hear a good number of substitute ministers from the local area as well as from the Pacific School of Religion.

During this time, the Ministerial Search Committee, headed by Judy Roberts, worked diligently to search the nation for Northbrae's sixth permanent minister. In August of 2013 Rev. Newton assumed leadership at a Vallejo Christian Church. The chosen candidate for Northbrae, Michael Burch stepped into the pulpit at Northbrae to begin his pastorate.



Sacred Hoop Garden History

The Sacred Hoop Garden at Northbrae Community Church was ten years in the making. It was conceived in 2004 as a way to provide a substitute for a torchbearer window. Our chapel did not have one for Native American spirituality and a garden with a medicine wheel was a possibility. It was also an outgrowth of the Capital Campaign to provide income from a columbarium.

Reverend Sebring drew the first sketch in July 2005 and John Oldham provided the first formal detailed plan in November 2005. A committee was created in 2006 to further develop the plans. The members of the committee read *The Ohlone Way, 1491* and *Where the Lighting Strikes* to develop an understanding of the local Indian culture, history and spirituality.

The Berkeley ordinances and permit requirements were studied and it was found that columbariums were not allowed in the city. Since sales for the columbarium niches were the only way to finance the garden, a two-year effort was started to change the ordinance. On March 9, 2010, the Berkeley City Council passed an ordinance allowing 400 niches.

Proposals were requested from three architects to provide formal plans for the garden. Howard McNenny was selected with Sue Oda as the landscape architect. Sue selected native plants used by the Indian

tribe that lived in this area, with a narrative of how each plant was used. Every element was designed as circular in keeping with their "circle of life" spirituality. The name "Sacred Hoop Garden" was selected from a reading in one of our hymnals.

The cost estimate was \$213,000. A financial analysis was done and then a pledge drive was started to presell niches and plaques and get donations. Approximately \$100,000 was raised. Bank loans were investigated for the remainder but in the end, church members loaned the amount needed with a five-year payback. Sales of niches are expected to provide the funds to pay off the loans.

A congregational meeting was held to vote on whether to proceed with the project. On May 20, 2012, the congregation voted overwhelmingly to proceed with construction within cost constraints.

Three contractors bid on the project and Spencer Wolfe won the contract with a bid that was very close to the cost estimate. Before construction started, a meeting was held in the garden to bless all the plants that would be removed, particularly the large Monterey cypress tree. Reverend Christy Newton and Reverend Ron Sebring officiated in an early morning ceremony. A cherry and apple tree that were planted in memory of Stephanie Thomas's father were transplanted out of the garden.

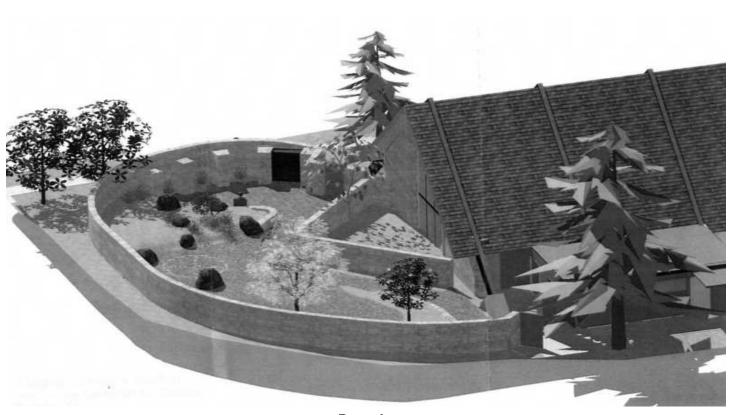
Construction started in May 2013, and concluded in November 2013. The craftsmanship by the workmen was excellent. The columbarium by Mathews Cremation has 80 niches with 5"x 5" marble covers, with room for expansion to 320 niches. The centerpiece for the garden is a large coast live oak tree where the Monterey cypress once stood. When the cypress was removed, we saved the main trunk, then had it cut into planks. Some of these planks now are incorporated into the new rear gate facing Los Angeles. The rest are in storage and may be used for a future bench or other uses as we may determine.

The purpose of the garden is to:

 Honor Native American spirituality, as a torchbearer.

- Honor and remember the Huchiun tribe of Indians that lived here before the Europeans arrived and to honor their culture.
- To honor all people who came before us and lived in this community.

In this spirit, the garden is intended to be a special spiritual place, a place of refuge, to meditate, to be alone, a place to remember those that came before us. The garden is another symbol that this is an interfaith inclusive church, a church for the whole community, a place where all are welcome no matter where they are on their spiritual path.



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The Rock in the Sacred Hoop Garden

Introduction

The rock in the center of the Sacred Hoop Garden came from a crystal dig just outside of Hot Springs, Arkansas. The concept of the rock developed over a ten-year period and represents an ethnic struggle for political correctness and a serious search among non-churched peoples—people who have been burned by Christianity—for meaningful spiritual experience, both legitimate concerns needing a healthy balance.

Origination of the Idea

During the late 8os, a gentleman from the church I served in Independence, Missouri began reading books from my library on Native American spirituality. His interest grew. He joined a group of open-minded Indians and others drawn to "Native Americans" spirituality, a group loosely representing Siouan and Cherokee traditions. Called the "Pipe Circle," this group needed open land upon which to meet. Connie and I invited them to our acre and half backyard where they constructed a "medicine wheel" for gatherings and ceremony, a circle formed on the other side of a spring-fed creek and within a grove of apple trees. We created what became known to us as the "Peace Circle." Each month, about twenty or so gathered to pray for peace, pass the talking stick, sing and dance and create their own ceremonies.

Construction of the Sacred Hoop

Our Peace Circle was constructed from rocks brought by various members of the group. The circle encompassed an area about nine feet across. It represented to us the cycle of our own lives, from our birth in the east to our death in the west, from our experience in the world (south) to the fullness of spiritual potential (North). We often sang a round profoundly consilient with Christian Spirituality: "O Great Spirit, / earth, sun, sky, and sea. / You are inside, / and all around me." (Luke 17:21, "Nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you." In Greek, the preposition means both 'among' and 'within.')

The medicine wheel needed a center to represent what the Hermetic tradition calls, the "everywhere center, nowhere circumference." Since Connie and I were hosting the wheel, the group asked us to find a rock for the center. As it was explained to methrough humor, irony, and much good-natured teasing—each of us has a unique sacred song that expresses exactly who we are, and we are not to sing someone else's song, but find our own. Each sacred community has its own ceremonial expression, and we are not to duplicate someone else's, but discover what uniquely expresses our own worship. Every person and group represents a sacred hoop, each manifesting the center of a universe, each looking out in four directions, each with its own destiny and making a journey through a maze of happenings. We needed a rock that uniquely represented our circle.

Procuring the Rock

Just for the sheer fun of it, Connie and I journeyed to Hot Springs, Arkansas and spent a day in a crystal quarry digging for crystals. We found many, some broken and lying in the dirt, some still encased in their matrix. At the far end of the dig, we found a rock that seemed to represent our Peace Circle. An open gap in the sandy matrix exposed a vein of tiny crystals, like many different people pointing in many different directions all

gathered under one shelter. It seemed to represent the universe, from the Latin, 'uni-,' meaning 'unity' and '-verse' meaning 'many.' For about ten years, that rock became the center of our Peace Circle for our monthly, spontaneously created ceremonies.

My Personal Ceremony

From a world where culture, institutions, and traditions dictate our identity and regulate our practice, for me personally, finding this rock freed up a kind of inner permission to create my own path and corresponding ceremony. I call it the "Kata Mudra." It includes gestures representing moral and spiritual precepts from various religious traditions and beads representing the chiasmus structure of the Lord's Prayer. It is personal and quite meaningful, and I have shared it with the Pipe Circle, and on occasions here at Northbrae. I have prayed this way for over twenty years, and invite anyone (individual or group) to find their own narrative, their own song, their own ceremony, their own mission for the world, and their own way to honor significant loved ones who have made the journey of life before them.

Bringing the Rock to Northbrae

In September, 2000, when Connie and I received our call to serve Northbrae Community Church, we sold our home. Our Peace Circle disbanded, having served its mission. We brought the rock with us to California.

In all of my experience of ministry, Northbrae Community Church, with its stated purpose and rich history, best represents for me the ideal for what a modern church can be—truly catholic (universal), truly respectful of the Shema, truly manifest in the pointed finger of a Muslim kneeling on the prayer rug, truly present in a compassionate people eager to 'bear one another's burdens,' a true manifestation of Mitakuye Oyasin. It is a real joy for me to see our Sacred Hoop garden draw towards completion and accept this rock as a part of it. My prayer is that this

garden will inspire the unity-with-diversity spirit that has been so much the ambiance of this rock.

Our Sacred Hoop Garden and the Northbrae Memorial Columbarium

We have two spaces, architecturally differentiated from one another, each inviting a different function. One space is our Northbrae Memorial Columbarium, a place to sit and sanctify our memories, to recall the exemplary lessons our loved ones, and like all indigenous peoples, to honor the gifts of our own ancestors. The other space is our Sacred Hoop Garden. This is not a 'memorial garden;' it would be a mistake to consider it such. The only thing in the Sacred Hoop Garden symbolizing indigenous spirituality-taking its place in the spirit of our torchbearers—is the native rocks and plants. Anything else is a merely a tool for focus. Our Sacred Hoop Garden is an inclusive space to enhance growth and discernment, a quiet space to sit and reflect on who we are, an inviting space to name our place in the world, an open space to sing and dance our own ceremonies, an opportune space to share perspectives by passing the talking stick, a nourishing space informed by all our torchbearers, among them the indigenous peoples of the world, including our Ohlone sisters and brothers.

Ron Sebring

Northbrae Has Chosen a New Minister Michael Burch

The Ministerial Search Committee and the Church Council are delighted to announce that they have called Rev. Michael Burch to be the next minister of Northbrae Community Church.

Reverend Burch promises to be an excellent fit for our community. He is someone who sees and respects various faith traditions on equal terms; he has a long, dedicated history of studying and teaching other religions in addition to Christianity, and a commitment for learning and drawing from religious practices and ideas of multiple faith traditions. He views Northbrae as a model for the church of the future, focused on spiritual growth; and he is, in his own words, "filled with enthusiasm to partner with such a prophetic and explorative community."

Michael Burch grew up in Northern California and attended Cal State Bakersfield, where he earned a BA in Psychology with a Religious Studies minor in 1983. He received an MA in History from Berkeley's Graduate Theological Union in 1992, and a second MA and has completed all coursework towards a PhD in the History of Religions (Ancient Mediterranean Religions and Philosophies) from Brown University.

He began his ministerial career in 1986 as a youth minister at



the First Presbyterian Church in Redding. While at GTU he served as the Chair of Christian Ed at Berkeley's First Baptist Church. In 1992 he moved to Providence Rhode Island for graduate studies, and served as Associate Minister at the Community Church of Providence and later at the First Baptist Church in America, also in Providence. He was ordained in 1994.

In 2009 he became Minister of Lime Rock Baptist Church in Lincoln, RI. Concurrent with his ministerial positions he has been teaching courses in Religious Studies including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and theories of religion at two Rhode Island colleges. On August 4, 2013, Rev. Burch preached his first sermon at Northbrae.

Unforgettable People at Northbrae

For all of us, no matter when we have been part of the Northbrae family over the past century, we have memories of unforgettable people who were part of the church while we were there. We cannot begin to cover all of them, but you know who they are.

For those of us who have been here for the past 20 years, some names keep coming up over and over again. We have already mentioned Earl and Frances Conley. Others that are so much a part of our warmest memories are Jim Crooks and Marion Martin.

Jim Crooks is remembered as the man who took so many wonderful photographs, and the man who lit the fire in Northbrae's parlor fireplace on the cold winter Sundays. He and his wife, Helen, were beloved members of our church for many years.

Marion Church Martin is another member we hold in our hearts. Who could forget Marion's warm hospitality and sense of humor as she prepared the flowers every Sunday morning in the kitchen? Marion's hundredth birthday was celebrated in Haver Hall. The mere mention of her name brings a smile to many of our faces. There is a plaque honoring her in the pew where she sat so many Sundays, and there is also a tile plaque, 'Marion's Corner', in the kitchen where she cut and arranged beautiful floral arrangements on so many Sundays.

We know you also have special people who you remember as part of your Northbrae experience. Please consider them and remember what made them memorable to you as you think back on those special days at this church.

In Appreciation

Dianne McNenny



An Outstanding Administrator

and

Pebbie Golata



A Superb Choir Director

MEMORIES OF NORTHBRAE

Northbrae Memories

Every attempt has been made to uncover and relate the facts in our tidbits. We do, however, take into consideration that memories of the same period or event can differ from one person to the next. In that spirit, please enjoy these for the memories they evoke in your own mind.

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Here are some memories of growing up a preacher's kid in Northbrae **Richmond Cross**

We were very much aware of the respect my Father had from the public because of his good works and speaking ability but at home he was just Pop, always rushing off to one meeting or another or spending great amounts of time in his church study. One aspect of his professional life that the congregation did not see was that he was in fact the manager of a small business. This is what the family saw and heard discussed more than anything else. He had to recruit staff either paid or volunteer, plan a budget for the year then raise the money to operate the church and organize the many activities and meetings. The building had to be maintained and the garden always kept full of seasonal blooms. Despite not having a business back ground he was a very good attendance at Northbrae. manager.

He would have made a very successful modern promoter and public relations man. I like to think he would have been a great circus promoter. The need to attract new church members was always there. The Community Dinners were started in the 30s as a public service and entertainment for church members during the depression. I remember sometimes terribly boring slide shows of folks' recent trips. Other times there were speakers from the University on current events or new scientific discoveries. People asked for printed sermons so he provided them and

charged 10 cents a copy with the proceeds going to the Flower Fund. The beautiful garden was widely known and was a constant advertisement. He was always on the lookout for things that would make things more beautiful for the enjoyment of guests or members of the congregation. After the new sanctuary was built he noticed that at a certain time during sunset the sun's rays came though the stained glass window and threw a path of rainbow colors along the white carpet for the bride to walk along. He had flood lights installed on the roof next door so the rainbow path could be generated at night.

His activities were often questioned by other churches in Berkeley because he flaunted tradition. There was a yearly Scout Sunday with awards for church attendance and public service. Practically every troop in Berkeley would come. This was resented by other churches because on that Sunday their troops would all be in

After the war, church attendance dropped because the public had automobiles and recreational interests that took them away on Sunday morning. To counter this Rev. Cross announced a 9:30 service. Other churches disapproved but seeing it was successful, soon followed suit.

The original church sanctuary was not big enough the hold what Pop called the "two timers," folks who came to church on Easter and Christmas.

Much to the disapproval of the other ministers he rented the Oaks Theater on Solano for two Sunday services on Easter and Christmas. As we would leave the theater after the service there would be a line of kids waiting for the Sunday matinee.

During the war he saw that a great many servicemen about to ship out from San Francisco were eager to be married. Some churches would not marry couples who were not members of that church and most would not marry those of mixed race or religion.

Northbrae became a wedding center with everyone welcome. With the flowers, the candle ceremony and the white carpet even brides who were members of other Berkeley churches would demand to be married at Northbrae. Most churches would not allow outside ministers to perform ceremonies but at Northbrae the brides could bring their ministers with them.

The Community dinners were prepared in the ancient and inadequate church kitchen. To serve the demand for wedding receptions the kitchen was slowly modernized to the benefit of reception preparation and other church activities. A walk-in refrigerator was installed that Rev. Cross utilized to save flower arrangements from weddings. A couple wanting the simplest, least expensive service would often find the alter decorated with a flower arrangement costing hundreds of dollars that was left by a wedding service the week before.

In the early days the caterer for the receptions was a wonderful Irish Catholic lady named Mrs. Doyle. To keep the candle lighters from

sneaking bits of delicious food from the carefully arranged trays she would provide a small tray for us kids to keep us out of the way.

Eventually the catering business was taken over by a church group creating another church activity and the proceeds made further improvements to the kitchen.

When Rev. Cross was Mayor of Berkeley he went on an official tour of Europe that scheduled a group audience with the Pope. He was told to fill his pockets with rosaries that were conveniently being sold at stands outside the Vatican. When the Pope blessed his guests after the audience the pocketed rosaries could truthfully be proclaimed to have been blessed by the Pope. Rev. Cross then could present his Catholic friends with a very treasured rosary. Mrs. Doyle the caterer was absolutely thrilled.

Two other incidents involving my Father that stands out in my memory: When Henry Wallace was running for President as a third party candidate he was unfortunately endorsed by the Communist Party. He was in no way a Communist but this endorsement gave the opposition plenty of ammunition. The University of California refused to allow him to speak on campus so he asked the City of Berkeley to allow a rally on Oxford Street on the west edge of the campus. There was plenty of opposition but the City granted the request after quite a debate. Oxford was blocked off with a speaker's platform. The trolley cars were stopped and the crowd spilled up onto the campus to the east. As Mayor, Pop addressed the crowd stating the City position and invoking the doctrine of Freedom of Speech.

He did not mention Henry Wallace. Later Pop got into the security files that the City of Berkeley had kept since the 30s to keep track of the liberals and subversives on the Berkeley campus. There he was introducing and backing Henry Wallace. Because of his liberal stands and activities, his files in the FBI prevented four of his children, including me, from ever getting military or State Department security clearances.

In another instance a black dentist bought a house in the then all white Claremont district. It created a terrible stir with violence threatened. Pop called for calm citing Isaiah 1:18 "Come now let us reason together." His comments were entered into the *Congressional Record*. Eventually things calmed down and the white neighborhoods were integrated over time.

The old style Ministry got two for the price of one. The Pastor's wife was expected to be an unpaid employee. This on top of raising six kids. Mother worked with the women's groups and organized Sunday school. When a volunteer teacher could not be found for a Sunday school class Mother would often teach that class. When she needed to go to the Church for work on week -days or early Sunday morning, I was often taken along.

The church was not a sacred place to an exploring boy. It was a place of many interesting spaces to explore and a huge basement full of exciting things. One Sunday before the congregation arrived I crawled into the large hollow pulpit in the old sanctuary. After the service started I showed myself to my Father. He kept quiet about my presence and completed the service and his sermon. He loved a joke and I am surprised he did not call attention to my presence.

The church got a lot of unpaid labor from the family of the minister as well, especially during the war when janitorial help was not easy to find. We set up the folding pews for services. Took them down and set up tables for community dinners, served the guests at community dinners. Many Saturdays were spent weeding the garden and planting the flower sets for the next flower display. We did get paid for lighting candles - 25 cents a wedding and sometimes the bride's Father would give us very generous tips.

I had a lot of friends in the area and one sold the Sunday Chronicle on the corner of Solano and the Alameda every Sunday morning. Apparently a church member noticed me selling papers to customers wearing my blue suit when I should have been at church and reported to my parents. I was not in trouble but my church attendance improved for a few weeks. As the son of a minister there was an assumption that I was a little different than other kids and was expected to behave myself at all times.

Richmond C. Cross

THE YOUNGEST CROSS



Letter from Russell Lachelt

Sadly, I was just five or six years old when my grandpa Cross died; my memories of him consist primarily of a tall black robe with gray hair.

However, my uncle Richmond, the youngest of the Cross six, said I could pass his email address along to you in case you'd like to contact him for Northbrae memories. R.C. spent his childhood in and around the church and could provide you with some interesting and amusing stories.

Two of the six original Cross siblings are still living. Here's a brief overview of the original clan in order of their appearance at 2064, The Cross Front Door:

Barbara Cross Lachelt: (San Anselmo, CA) recently deceased. Three children: Eugene (Las Vegas, NV, one son). Linda (San Anselmo, CA, died 2004: breast cancer, one son). Russell (myself) Mill Valley, CA.

Gilbert Mathews Cross (died Sept, 2010) lived in Portland, Maine most of his adult life with wife, Pat. Two children: Caitlin and Tim.

Miriam Deane Cross: Currently living in Laguna Beach, CA. An artist\sculptress for all of her life. Four children: Peter (Ridgeway, CO), Wendy (Wash, D.C.) Polly (died 4-5 years ago) Tommy (Long Beach, CA). As of this year, Miriam has four great grandchildren.

Marimae Cross (died approx. 2000). Spent most of her adult life living in Pinecrest, CA, site of the Cross family summer cabin. Marimae spent many, many years driving down to Berkeley to spend one week per month helping her mother, Erma Cross, at 25 Rock Lane.

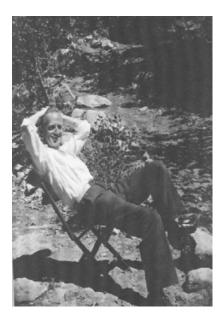
Leland Cross (died approx. 1995) A wandereralways rather a mystery to we nieces and nephews--Lee spent many years in Spain and the Orient before returning to Oregon where his brother, Richmond, helped care for him as a Parkinson's-like condition eventually took his life.

Richmond Cross: Currently living in Eugene, OR. A woodworker by trade, a master canoe restorer by retirement. Three children: Sue (Seattle, WA), Frannie (Eugene, OR), Robin (Dallas, OR). Richmond has five grandchildren including Phoebe, recently adopted by Frannie from Vietnam.

We are still connected as a family by the Pinecrest Lake cabin bought by grandpa and grandma Cross back in the 1940s. We hold an annual "Cousins' Weekend" as a means of staying in touch with far-flung Cross descendants: twenty-plus sleeping bags covering the decks and on up the terraced hillside.

Pinecrest Lake was the getaway for Erma Cross and kids. The full summers at the cabin held some of the fondest memories of the Cross kids' lives (the same can be said for my generation). Grandpa Cross would drive up for a visit after his Sunday sermons. He always arrived to a warm and excited welcome, "Daddy!" much to a frazzled Erma's chagrin after her many days of trying to contain the chaos of six children in a small cabin.

I'll attach one of my mother's favorite pictures of grandpa Cross at Pinecrest. He's leaning back in a straight-backed chair wearing dress shoes, slacks, and a white shirt; "tanning his forehead" (my mother said he claimed it was important that he appear hale and hearty in the pulpit).



The running joke later in life was that grandpa would always find a reason to go back to Berkeley early in the week so he could enjoy the Northbrae parsonage without the clamor of twelve little feet pounding the floorboards.

After my grandmother, Erma Cross, died we brought her ashes down to Northbrae to fulfill her wish of being scattered near my grandpa in the garden on the side of the chapel (this was back in the day when scattering on land was frowned upon). We felt like early-morning lawbreakers looking up and down the street as we dug a small hole. Since few crimes go unpunished our shovel nicked a small irrigation pipe and water spouted out and flooded things a bit. It was, perhaps, a soggier send-off than my grandmother would have preferred although I think she would have gotten great pleasure watching our antics. My uncle said he would send the church an anonymous donation for the pipe repair; I do hope that he followed through.

Northbrae Memories

It is with great fondness that I write of my Northbrae memories. I met my husband, Henry VanBrocklin and eventually married him and had two children, Eric and Seth, who were both baptized at Northbrae. I started attending the church when I was in my mid-twenties and eventually joined. I was looking for a spiritual home, a place with an open heart and mind and Northbrae met those specifications perfectly. I became very involved and close to many of the members of the church and the older members were like the grandparents I never had. I had a wedding shower and two baby showers at Northbrae. Throughout the joys and the trials of marriage and parenthood, the people at Northbrae were there for us. I will never forget how kind, compassionate and generous people were and continue to be. As we celebrate Northbrae's one-hundredth anniversary, I am blessed to be a part of that history. Northbrae will always have a special spot in my heart.

Linda Lew VanBrocklin

All the best, Russell Lachelt

Carol Wills, a former Northbrae congregant, called the church office and wished to have a telephone interview regarding her Northbrae memories. Ruth Brayton called Ms. Wills and received the following information.

Carol Wills was born in 1947 to Ruth Bradley and Charles D. Thurmond. These parents had married in 1939. Ruth Bradley was the aunt of our current congregant, Meredith Bradley. Ruth Bradley's mother, referred to by Carol as Grandma Bradley, was named Harriet Smedley Bradley and she was very involved in the early years at Northbrae. Ruth was born in 1915; just one year after Northbrae was first founded.

Carol's parents received many Christmas cards over the years from the family of Laurance Cross, which they eventually returned to the Cross children because of the wonderful family photographs that they would treasure.

Carol remembers specifically what she refers to as the Cross Cuts Saw. She describes it as a long saw that Laurance Cross ran a metal piece over and made beautiful music. She also remembers with fondness the beautiful metal disc music box that Dr. Cross kept in Haver Hall and played for people on special occasions. (The photograph is from Ruth Brayton who owns a similar music box.)

Carol recalls that her mother taught at Northbrae and gave out Easter lilies.



She believes that the YWCA group that her mother was active in met at Northbrae and it is possible that a group called "Mother Singers" was also part of the church, although Carol is not sure of that. Her mother sang solos with that group in the late 1950s.

These memories were reinforced by Carol's older brother during phone conversations that they recently shared.

Richmond Cross on His Father's Run for Governor

I am very poor with dates and have to rely on where I might have been during a certain event. I have a very hazy memory of my Father's run for Congress so it might have been before or after the attempt at the nomination for Governor. Likely it was before. I will state what I can recall and perhaps you can put a date to it.

Republicans had been in control of the drawing the boundaries of the Congressional districts for some years. The 7th district for which my Father ran was a classic gerrymander. The City of Piedmont was very conservative and had a very small voter roll. The district included Piedmont then ran west for several miles only a few hundred yards wide to west Oakland which had a large black population. The residents of that area were from an older generation who came to California to work in the war industries. My Father was very popular personally but they had the first hand memory of fear of registering to vote in the South because of discrimination and no amount of effort could get them to register. The small Republican population of Piedmont turned out to vote and easily outnumbered the greater population of West Oakland thus electing the Republican candidate.

His run for the nomination for the Governor's office was at the Democratic Convention in Fresno in 1954. I recall that date because I was in the Army stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas. He

had strong backing from wealthy liberals in San Francisco and was very popular among democrats in general but was disliked by the Democratic Party machine. It was remarked that they did not trust him anymore than they would trust a rattlesnake. The reason for this was that he was so honest that they could not count on him to do what the party leaders wanted.

A great number of delegates to the convention had all their expenses paid by the party and they were expected to vote as directed. Goodwin Knight was the sitting governor having taken over when Earl Warren was appointed to the Supreme Court. Knight was very weak and it was generally considered that my Father could beat him in the general election. Dick Graves was the Manager of the League of California Cities and had become good friends with my Father during his terms as Mayor of Berkeley. Dick was a very good man and an excellent administrator but totally unknown to the general public. The Democratic Party decided that they would rather lose the Governorship than win with my Father. Dick Graves was nominated by the convention and was handily beaten by a wellorganized Republican Party and only halfhearted support by the Democratic Party.

Hope this is useful. Sorry about the dates.

Dick (Richmond Cross)

Greetings to all my old friends at Northbrae from Beverly Lyon

I am delighted to hear about your memories project! Being a chatty person, I do indeed have a few tidbits of history.

When my father Robert Magovern graduated from college in Texas, he immigrated to Berkeley to take a job with Shell Development. He and a friend took up lodging at a boarding house a couple of doors down from Northbrae Church. Somewhat to his surprise, and perhaps dismay, within a year or two his parents and siblings moved here too. Shortly thereafter, his mother Elizabeth Magovern (Nana) joined Northbrae.

My father and mother met at the church's young people's group. They were married there in December 1943. When I was born, I was baptized there by Rev. Cross. During this time, Northbrae participated in a church basketball league (I think I heard it also included a team from the School for the Deaf). My parents became the youth advisors, and I became the basketball team mascot, attending games in my bassinet.

Rev. Cross held Easter services at the Oaks Theater to accommodate the large crowds. I still recall the thrill of hearing the heralding trumpets sound from the sides of the stage.

All the Magovern family (eventually some 15-20 aunts, uncles, and cousins) events and gatherings were celebrated at Northbrae: several weddings, Mother's Day, Easter, Christmas and

eventually the memorial services for both my grandmother and my father.

After the retirement of Rev. Cross, Rev. Craig Jessup arrived as our minister, and sometime during that period, Nana became the Church's part-time secretary. She dearly loved Rev. Jessup and made a retirement gift to him of one of my father's paintings, which he had seen and admired when my father had a showing of his work upstairs in the Gallery.

Rev. David Sugarbaker next arrived on the scene. In the meantime, I had drifted away from the Church, attending only on those family occasions when Nana brought us all back together. Following her death in the early 1980s, however, I sought Rev. Sugarbaker's counsel. His empathetic advice brought me back to Northbrae for several more years.

Thanks for the opportunity to travel back in time.

Very Truly Yours, Beverly M. Lyon

Marjorie Jessup, wife of the late Rev. Craig Jessup, pastor of Northbrae from 1967 to 1978, writes:

Craig and I came to Northbrae with our five children in the summer of 1967 and we filled the big parsonage that was located at 2064 Los Angeles Avenue. It was a perfect place for our family. Craig had been asked to leave our previous church in Alameda because of his strong stand on civil rights and it was wonderful for all of us to be welcomed so warmly and for Craig to be appreciated again.

By following Rev. Laurence Cross as minister at Northbrae Community Church, Craig knew he was stepping into very big shoes. Rev. Cross had ministered at Northbrae for over 40 years, served as mayor of Berkeley and hosted a national radio program on NBC called "Crosscuts in the Log of the Day."

Berkeley was in turmoil during much of our time at Northbrae. The civil rights movement and the protests against the Vietnam War were a backdrop to the work going on at the church. In Craig's tape-recorded memoirs, he says "I loved the place and the people of Northbrae from the very beginning. Theologically I was growing up and Northbrae Community Church allowed me the freedom to do that. I felt turned loose."

Here are a few more of Craig's memories about Northbrae:

"I was always very proud of the Northbrae gardens, Haver Hall and the beautiful sanctuary. Haver Hall is a great old building and it was a tremendous resource for the Berkeley community. More than thirty groups met in Haver Hall and they all had one thing in common, their purpose was to help people and providing that meeting space was a big part of Northbrae's outreach."

"We held a community dinner every Wednesday night in Haver Hall, charging \$1.50 for dinner that would be followed by a slide program or concert. The kids from the youth group would serve a dinner to more than 150 people prepared by a chef and his staff in the church kitchen. The people attending were mostly older residents of North Berkeley who had been coming to the dinners for years. I remember one night; two homeless men in their mid-twenties showed up and introduced themselves to me as "Damon and Pythias They asked me if they could help serve at the dinner in exchange for a meal. I agreed and they came regularly for several weeks and I suppose they were not as clean as they should have been because we got several complaints about them. I felt responsible for them and I tried to get them to bathe before they came. After several months the resentment toward them was building. The last straw came when Pythias, while serving, was sick all over the table, making a huge scene. The next day Damon phoned to say that Pythias was in the Marine Hospital in San Francisco. When I went there to visit him, the doctors told me that Pythias had served in Vietnam and that he had returned with a very bad shrapnel injury to his head. So it was a very silent crowd the next Wednesday night when I explained that Pythias was in the

hospital and that he was a war veteran and we all realized that he wasn't just a hippie trying to cause trouble. These kinds of experiences helped Northbrae to have a better perspective on who these street people really were and it made it easier for us to reach out to help them."

One of my favorite sayings often quoted by Rev. Cross was John Wesley's question, "Though we cannot think alike can we not love alike?"

"Reverend Cross had an amazing sense of history and I especially appreciated his concept for the Torchbearer Windows in the sanctuary. There has been a lot of debate over the years about the people that were included in the windows - that Jesus in fact is just another figure in the procession of torchbearers. It fits with Northbrae's Statement of Purpose that makes it possible for people of all religions as well as agnostics and atheists to be members of the church.

Our years in Berkeley were good ones. My children responded immediately when I asked them, "What memories of Northbrae come to mind first?"

Craig Jr., the oldest, said that the windows and beauty of the sanctuary had always remained with him.

Christine wanted to thank once again the women and men of the Service League for the beautiful wedding reception they gave for Chris and her husband Fee when they were married at Northbrae.

Harley remembers having terrific times with the Northbrae youth group (9 brilliant, funny girls and only 2 boys). He also enjoyed printing the

Sunday bulletins with the print crew on the Harold Baker Press in the basement of Haver Hall. The church was a fantastic outlet for Harley's artistic energy and he thanks the Northbrae members, especially the late Arlene Larson who encouraged and helped him so much.

Nathan recounts the great time he had with the Northbrae youth group at Mr. & Mrs. Howard's park-like compound in the Berkeley hills. Working under the trees, they made Yule logs wrapped in greens and raised enough money to go on a ski trip.

Graham agreed that the youth group was "where it was at" for him. The same group continues to get together over thirty years later. Graham also remembers, when he was about five, falling into the fountain in the sanctuary garden and Mrs. Cross hurrying to get paper towels to dry him off.

There are so many wonderful experiences that I could include here such as memories of The General Store, Shirley Kestor and the Junior Choir, the Senior Choir, the Evening Circle, the Sociables, our Christmas open house, Mrs. Cross, Harold Baker's printing press, the gardens, Arlene Larson and the Art Gallery, Ted Cleveland's children's stories each Sunday, the Family Day Bazaar, and most of all the kindnesses of everyone to our family. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of such a great community.

Marjorie Jessup

Hollywood Comes to Northbrae

Northbrae has been a hub of activity during its first century of existence. Naturally, bay area political figures such as Ron Dellums or Shirley Dean held public meetings at our church over the years. But even noted celebrities have stopped by our church from time to time.

Richard Gere and Juliette Binoche were seen in and around Northbrae for the filming of *Bee Season*, a movie based on the Myla Goldberg novel. Released in 2005, *Bee Season* was shot in and around the Northbrae district of Berkeley, especially in the Mariposa Avenue neighborhood just above the Marin Circle. The movie's production company arranged to park all their trailers in Northbrae's parking lot for the week they were in town, and made use of Haver Hall as the movie crew's fully catered cafeteria. Several church members reported seeing the actors having lunch, and some were invited to dine alongside them.

After a nasty spill off the stage at the David Letterman show, Counting Crows singer Adam Duritz – on crutches at the time – came to Northbrae to be best man at a friend's wedding. As buzz about the singer's identity circulated amongst church staff, Rev. David Sugarbaker learned more from the groom's father. In fact, the wedding party was particularly excited Duritz had brought his then-girlfriend, *Friends* star Courtney Cox.

In 1998, a year before his role on the award-winning show *The West Wing*, Martin Sheen gave a talk in our chapel with his longtime friend, Father Bill O'Donnell, as a benefit for a local charity organization. Sheen and O'Donnell talked of the hundreds of protest rallies they had each been arrested at, and promised to continue protesting whenever necessary. Governor Jerry Brown was in the crowd that night, sampling the brie and crackers.

Many other celebrities have passed through our church's doors – from Oakland Raiders and a former Miss America to teen idols the Jonas Brothers. Northbrae is obviously the place to be!

Allan Sugarbaker

No Hollywood celebrity could match our own Marion Martin, seen here in Haver Hall celebrating her 100th birthday. She just missed her 104th birthday.



NORTHBRAE

MEMORIES

by Nancie Kester

When I think of my Northbrae memories, there are so many, it seems overwhelming to recall them all! I grew up at Northbrae in the 1950s and 60s. In my early years, Lawrence Cross was the Minister. Later, Craig Jessup served in this capacity. For me, the church was almost like a home away from home. Going way back in history, I do remember when the new Sanctuary was built. This was a monumental project and when it was completed, we were all struck by its dramatic beauty.

My mother, Shirley Kester, was very involved in many aspects of Northbrae. Her most significant contribution was as Director of the Junior Choir for more than 10 years. My mom singlehandedly organized the choir, which rehearsed and performed every Sunday without fail. As a former music teacher, my mother chose an interesting and varied repertoire that she taught to a faithful group of choir - members, ages 6 through 18. For this effort, my mother accepted no payment. She felt this was her gift to Northbrae. Every year, the choir would have a party in which all members were given a special decorative pin (hand-crafted by my mother) as a reward for having participated throughout the year. On the collar of our choir robes, we would wear our various pins with pride. I still have my collection.

When my mother passed away in 1972, for a few years I too served as Junior Choir Director. But when I look back, it is clear that Shirley Kester was the real beacon of light in this endeavor. After her death, in honor of my mother, the choir room was designated "the Shirley Kester Room." This was an appropriate tribute because of the love and passion she had for the Junior Choir. Today, I am a music teacher, and I must say, I still draw from the song material I learned from my mom at Northbrae.

I also remember my teenage years at Northbrae and my involvement with the Youth Group, which met every week at the hut. We had great fun serving at the Wednesday night dinners, holding car washes, going on retreats and just hanging out. It was such a vibrant group that I even invited non-Northbrae friends from high school to join.

Other memories stand out in my mind: the yearly carnival, Christmas, Easter and another event tied to my mother: Northbrae's production of "Heavens to Betsy." This was a lively musical performed in Haver Hall in the late 60's. My mother played the part of "Agatha." It was a real hoot - and I have some great pictures from the production!

On April 21, 1979, my husband, Charles Irwin and I were married at Northbrae. This was Craig Jessup's last official duty as Minister. He did a magnificent job. It was fitting to hold our wedding in a place with such profound significance to me.

Northbrae Usher Corps of 1970s Memory of Jay Miyazaki

My wife Sarah, our son Joe, and I arrived at Northbrae in 1978 for the first time. As we entered the Chapel to attend the worship service, we were greeted by four ushers: Eldon Cofer, George Carlson, Clarence Mengshol, and Jim Crooks. My understanding was that Eldon was in charge and the other three worked with Eldon as a team.

George was a gentle giant, a retired Marine, always with a big smile and a hearty hand shake. He and his wife Dorothy were part of the Sociables.

Clarence was a gentleman and was very active in many Northbrae committee functions such as being the lay leader at the weekly Wednesday night dinner, and our liaison to Boy Scout troops and Sea Scout troop that were based at The Hut.

Jim was the worship attendance reporter. He would get up on the corner of the bench in the narthex so that he could count the congregants from a higher vantage point. The attendance averaged about 150 on many Sundays, and all the pews and extra chairs brought in were occupied by the congregants on any special days such as the two Easter morning worship services.

Jim also was the one who made sure there was fire in the Parlor fireplace, especially on cold winter and often non-winter days. To commemorate his many years of service to keep us warm, a plaque was placed above the fireplace mantle.

These four gentlemen were always at the front doors to the Chapel for worship services, memorial services and other special Northbrae functions such as the Midnight Christmas Eve services.

Jay Miyazaki

Thomas E. Farris

Middle Seniors,
Calling Your Memories

I remember a short period of time when
Northbrae Community Church was a Jewish
Temple on Saturday and non denominational
Protestant church on Sundays. I can't remember
whether the temple was destroyed by fire or was
just rebuilt from the ground up, and we agreed to
rent the church to them on Saturdays.

I was on the Board of Directors and Treasurer of the Northbrae Community Church Corporation. For a while, Earl Conley, Bill Dolter and I mowed the front lawn and generally cleaned up the Church property. Dianne Mc Nenny was the Administrative head of the church. I look forward to see what the Middle Seniors have sent in!!!

Sincerely,

Thomas E. Farris

Memories by

Peggy Newgarten

Memories from notes and cards

I am a Berkeley resident and have been a member of Northbrae for over 25 years. In addition to providing a wonderful spiritual retreat and learning community that has become a central part of my life, I also entrusted Northbrae to provide my two sons, Michael F. and Elliott T. Seals with their religious learning and practice.

Some of the memories that convinced me that Northbrae was to be my church home were the following:

Long ago there was a member, Ted Cleveland, who gave short lectures that married religion with physical sciences during the church service before our present day children's story sermon format was started. He always shared different types of creatures that had been preserved by taxidermists and taught the children about them with the adults' keen attention, also.

Northbrae provided a special place for my children who were exposed to a non- dogmatic religion and church.

The congregation is a diverse group of Christians believing in the freedom of religion and welcoming to us who were seeking a church home

Communion has been held in the chapel the first Sunday of the month. It has connected me with people in small groups out of the mainstream congregation worshipping over the ages, following the words of Jesus and I still feel it.

Ed, Shannon, David and Michael Noland

It has been two years since we moved. We miss our friends at Northbrae. This church is such a special place-a jewel. Of the churches we visit, we are always comparing them to Northbrae and they never measure up. Being at the church from 1997 to 2011 is a special memory living in our hearts.

Ruth Kittel

A big thank you for sending me the sermons and mini-sermons. They both fill a gap in my life. I especially am grateful for the Easter sermon about rolling away the stone. That image has stayed with me. Sarah Miyazaki asked how paradise is around this time of year. There are beautiful fall colors and blue skies when it is not raining, hailing and threatening snow. So far this year the snow has been higher up the mountain. I love it here and your sermons allow me to have all of this and a bit of Northbrae. With thanks!

Vicki Pierce

Getting valentine greetings from you all at Northbrae was soooo Northbrae! I was happily surprised and once again reflected on how much Northbrae has meant and continues to mean to me. It is unique. Thank you so very much!

Bob Davis' Why Northbrae?

Around 1982, Merle and I were looking for a church when we came across Northbrae Community Church. Somehow, this church seemed different from the mainline churches that we had both been connected with over our life time. After attending worship services for a few Sundays and we agreed to the Northbrae Statement of Purpose and joined the church. A few Sundays later we were formally introduced to the congregation by Rev. David Sugarbaker.

At that time there were two social groups where new members were assigned; the First Friday Group of young people and families, and The Sociable's of old, older and very old people.

A few weeks after joining, Orville Norris retired. He had been the church treasurer for more than 30 years. A few years later, Ted Cleveland retired. He was missed as he told interesting stories on Sunday morning, often using props in getting his message across. Ted had also served as President of the Church Council for many years. He was representative of the church power elite who made major decisions for the church. Men ran the church from the Church Council to the ushers.

There seemed to be little opportunity for newcomers to find a niche of interest and a role in church business. Around 1990, things began to change. Others began assuming roles previously done by men. My first responsibility was serving with a women on a hastily created Personnel Committee. We were to determine what to do about a rogue cook and removing her from employment.

Around 1993, I had a revelation. I felt I wanted to become more involved in Northbrae in whatever capacity that was needed. I chaired the Membership Committee and then the Stewardship Committee. We needed new members as well to lookout for our existing members. It was important to get members to understand that we all needed to support the church financially. Many had an underlying belief that rents, weddings and other activities was all that was necessary to support the financial health of the church. For the first time we began a formally organized stewardship campaign that has continued every year since 1995 or thereabouts

During Don Felt's interim period of 1998-2000, we began a review of our bylaws and amended many to reflect a new course for the church as it pondered its future. Our membership began to grow as we started attracting families with children . The Church Council began changing. I served 11 years on the Council, five as President.

During my tenure as President, the church embarked upon and completed a very successful Capital Improvement Campaign. Many significant building components were repaired, particularly, the stained glass windows, which were virtually falling apart. We had an offsite retreat to plan our future. One item of significance that came out of the retreat and has since become a reality is the Rights of Passage program to aid our teenager making the transition to a more adult status in the church.

Through the church's effort and an outside benefactor, we brought GQ Wang to this country on a guest visa (H1B) in which we hired him to sing tenor in the choir and provide members lessons in the Chinese language and culture. In recent years, as our membership has grown, particularly members with families, these younger members have begun taking over the various programs and Focus Group Committees. The contribution of our newer, younger members should provide us the assurance that the church will endure in to the future.

Currently, we are adding a memorial garden dedicated to Native American spirituality, which was not recognized in our stained glassed windows. The garden will include niches for our members and friends. It is the only legally recognized columbarium in the City of Berkeley.

So much has happened at Northbrae during our 30 plus years as members that it is difficult to come up with a total recall of all that has taken place. However, I can say that our decision to join Northbrae so may years ago was the right one for us. There is and will continue to be, particularly as we move beyond our Centennial in 2014, great opportunities to give back to this church and add to the legacy left to us by all those members and stewards of yesteryear.

But Davis

Northbrae Memories

After decades of being among the unchurched, in 2009 we decided to look around for a spiritual home. The second church we visited was Northbrae. I noticed the two sets of hymnals, Unitarian and Quaker, and thought to myself, we must be in the right place. We enjoyed Debbie Golata playing the organ and leading the choir in beautiful music, Carolyn West's story sermons for the children (several of which are now available on a CD titled Taking Flight - Northbrae's Favorite Stories from Around the World), Kathy Oldham's comments giving the historical background for the scripture of the week, and Rev. Sebring's sermons. We soon became regulars and then members.

Since then, we have also attended several of the First Wednesday Night speaker series, arranged by Diane DePisa; some of the speakers have been awesome. We greatly enjoy reading the books chosen by the Book Group and attending the group discussions (although we all miss the Dolters, who moved to Vacaville). And we never miss the life stories given by our fellow members a few times a year after coffee hour. We have always been made to feel welcome, and Northbrae has enriched our lives.

Barbara and Curtis Hill

Peter Shelton (grandson of Laurance Cross) Time Travel: Crosscuts of the Day

In a bit of serendipity across decades, a highschool friend of my brother's wrote recently to say she is now singing in the choir at a church in Berkeley, a church my grandfather founded, and did I have any memories, any souvenirs, to share.

My mother's father died in 1966, and, since we grew up in southern California, we didn't visit all that often. So, any memories are necessarily distant. Mainly I remember Easter - which seems to be the time we visited most - my sisters in rustling dresses, me in slippery, polished leather shoes and starched collars (stiff anyway) that pressed into my neck as we sat for what seemed an eternity in the wooden pews.

Rev. Laurance L. Cross came from a long line of Alabama preachers, a Presbyterian who found that denomination constricting. He left it soon after he started the Northbrae Community Church in 1924, where he was the minister until his death. He was also Berkeley's mayor from 1947 to 1955 and a candidate for the Democratic nomination for governor of California in 1954. He was strict with his six children, but never anything but warm with his grandchildren. I remember only smiles and rimless glasses and a cloud of white hair above his buttoned suit vest. And his soft Alabama lilt: "Toin this way, child."

He and Grandma lived in the parsonage on Los Angeles Avenue, in a leafy, hilly neighborhood a few blocks from the church. This is what I remember most vividly: Grandma sitting before the mirror in their bedroom brushing out her waist-length hair, Grandpa at the dining table dipping his tea bag a prescribed number of times (three? four?) into his china cup after dinner. Caffeine was a vice, if not a sin. He did not approve of either with, apparently, a personal exception now and then.

I remember looking out the sheer second-floor window that my Uncle Leland had used to escape the no-going-out-at-night rule. I remember the basement with its rows of birdcages and shelves full of bells. I'm not sure I remember hearing the mockingbirds in those cages, or if I was just told the story.

Outside the home, Laurance Cross was a progressive force. Throughout the 1930s he hosted a daily, hour-long live radio program on NBC called "Crosscuts of the Day." It was not a religious program. And, rare for those days, it featured black performers.

Six days a week Grandpa would ride an early-morning ferry to San Francisco, and precisely at 8 a.m. listeners would hear the ring of a crosscut saw slicing a real log in the studio. The saw was manned by two of the four black men (they were called colored boys back then) who sang a cappella and played the roles of workers on an imaginary plantation. Grandpa played the bemused, benevolent "Colonel." Live Alabama mockingbirds sang in the background.

My mother says now that some of the stories were so un-PC it makes her blanch to think about them. But, for the time, they represented a kind of radical tolerance.

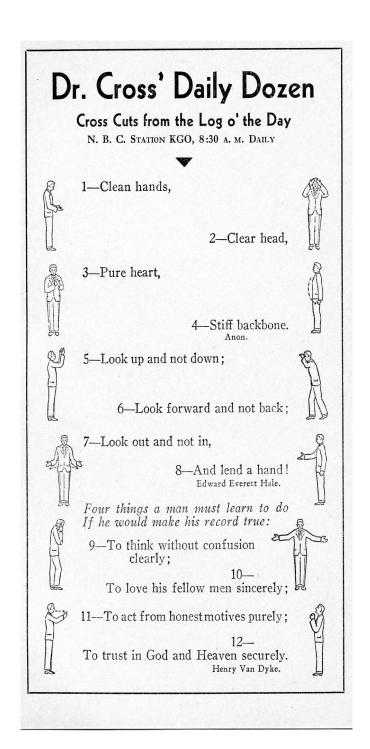
Occasionally, Grandpa would have one of his kids on the show. My mother once said on-air that she collected pretty rocks, and hundreds of agates came in the mail from around the world addressed to little Miriam. Her sister said that she liked bells. Same thing: bells of all shapes and descriptions poured in through the mails. Some of these survive in various family collections.

Soon after Grandpa was elected Berkeley's mayor he instigated a sister-city relationship with Osaka, in defeated, devastated Japan. I remember a photograph of Grandma and Grandpa getting off a plane in Japan. Or maybe they were coming back here, with a delegation of Japanese? I'm not sure. I do have a tangible piece of that early post-war diplomacy: A delicate samurai watercolor hangs now in Ellen's and my bathroom.

As for the church itself, and my memory assignment, I'm afraid I can't go much beyond the uncomfortable shoes. There was the wall of modernist stained glass behind Grandpa as he spoke. There was his black, floor-length robe and silk sash. Was it gold? I see on the church's website that a statue of Saint Francis my mother sculpted is still there in the garden.

The church now is apparently just as progressive it was in Grandpa's time. He used to preach that true Christianity was less a church-based doctrine than "a way to a life abundant." They talk now on their website about walking a balance between "being Christ focused and universally inclusive." They want to offer, they say, a "spiritual comfort-zone free of judgment or pressure." Good old Berkeley.

The Saint Francis in the garden walks alone, arms folded at his waist, deep in thought. He seems no more certain about the mysteries than I was as a child, or Grandpa Cross was, or I am now.



Remembrances of Kathy Oldham

I don't remember when religion and church were not important to me. When I was really young I loved vacation Bible school. We lived across the street from two churches so I went to both of them. My mother however did not like what they taught at those churches so we started going to Northbrae. This started my confusion about religion. Why were the churches so different? Why was the stuff they believed not in the Bible? Why did my Catholic friends think I was going to hell even though I went to church? What if they were right?

I loved going to Northbrae as an elementary student but not always for religious reasons. I loved Wednesday night dinners where we had spaghetti, garlic French bread and jello. I loved singing in Shirley Kester's children's choir. I loved it when I was chosen to tell the story of the Good Samaritan to everyone in Vacation Bible School one year. I loved the new sanctuary when it was completed. I particularly loved the rainbow window as I do to this day. And I loved communion. There was a real religious experience for me.

We moved to Walnut Creek, to a bigger house when I was eleven. I bounced from church to church for years after that. There was always a church but somehow they never satisfied me. I was very active in the church when we lived in Northern California and I learned a lot there. But things changed when we moved to Berkeley in 1989. In 1990 we went with a church group to Israel, Rome and Venice and the Passion Play at

Oberammergau in Germany. There is nothing like seeing the places in the Bible to make it all very real. On our return I started taking classes at Cal, one a semester. The first was "The Origins of Christianity." I was hooked. I took every religious studies class offered, twelve in all. I took my transcript to San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo and my advisor told me if I took five more classes they would give me a Master's Degree. That was fine by me. The whole process took me ten years while my children were growing up.

We started coming to Northbrae shortly after my graduation, just before Ron and Connie came. There were no study groups at the time so I started the Tuesday Group that has been going ever since. Ron took me under his wing and got me up in the pulpit. He had me take a preaching course about eight or nine years ago. Until very recently I have been in the pulpit most Sundays giving an exegesis of the scripture. I will always be grateful to Ron for the time and effort he put into my religious education. When I started taking religious study classes I did not have any idea where they would take me. They have taken me far and now I am waiting for the next chapter of my religious life to present itself. I know that it is out there, I just have to find it.

Recollections of My Twenty Years at Northbrae

It was approximately 1992, when I attended a lovely wedding in the Sanctuary at Northbrae Community Church. My husband and I had been residents of Berkeley for five years and had attended a church near the campus off and on. Though I did not deny my Congregational childhood roots, the years had taught me that goodness did not necessarily always come with the word Christian and I was seeking a broader religious identity. Unitarianism somehow wasn't quite right either, seeming to be a broad jump into no man's land. But here in this beautiful chapel, surrounded by nature and inspiring windows, I felt a connection that I have since learned is also felt by others who come to Northbrae.

Attendance was low but I very much liked the people I did meet. I sensed that something had gone on—perhaps some rift—and that it was changing times in the life of this lovely church. David Sugarbaker, shortly thereafter, declared that he was in his last few years at Northbrae and the church should ready itself for a change. Sitting in a new members' discussion with him one Sunday, I inquired about the church's somewhat nebulous identity. I recall him suggesting that if I thought something could be done to help, I should consider staying and helping to affect a change. It is now 20 years later. I hope I took his advice.

Northbrae tried to find a new minister when Dave left in 1997, but it was the advice of one of the candidates himself that Northbrae's situation needed an interim minister. Thus Reverend Donald Felt came to the church for two years. Don brought wisdom and the skills of a lawyer as he helped with policies and transitioning. He was a warm person who was transitioning in his own life and we moved forward together, even during a health crisis that took him away for treatments for several months. He performed the wedding for our son in 1998. In the year 2000, Ron Sebring arrived.

I recall that we began with a new church focus group structure. Six focus groups and a Chairperson of Church Life. There was Fellowship and Community, the perfect place for Karen Queen to bring her talents; there was Education, where Dianne McNenny and Susan Brahan had been working so hard for years. At this time Jean Dolter also assumed leadership; there was Networking and Growth, also a place for Karen and a new member, Carol Coon, there was Worship and Spirituality headed by Suzanne Stroh, who quickly reversed the words and put the emphasis on Spirituality. I recall Peggy Newgarten was involved in that as well. Local Concerns was headed by Vi Feinauer and James Schinnerer was briefly the head of Global Concerns until they merged as one group.

The Gulf War was beginning and several of us went over to Trinity Episcopal Church for a joint religious peace service. It was at that time that we saw an arrangement of Peace Banners being carried down the aisle. I made a duplicate one for Northbrae and it was carried by Megan. Shortly after that we took the banners off and

Earl Conley hung them individually along the torchbearer wall. They are still there. Earl mistakenly but intentionally separated the two banners with the phrase from Lakota culture—Mitakuye Oyasin. Ron Sebring had begun to introduce his interest in this culture into his teachings at Northbrae.

In September of 2001, The World Trade
Towers in NYC fell in what we now call "9/11."
In December of that year, I was diagnosed
with breast cancer and the Northbrae ladies
became my family in a very real way. Connie
Sebring arranged a wonderful hat party for me
which was attended by many ladies and we all
wore upside down paper plates tied with
varying colors of net under our chins. I
received some wonderful hats for
chemotherapy needs.

Marion Martin, well into her 9th decade of life, became a mother mentor, calling me to her lovely little home every afternoon for a cup of tea. It got me up and out, and living a bit during that scary time. I believe it was in the summer of 2002, that she came by herself to visit us at our summer place in New Hampshire. The attendants delivered her to me off of the plane in a wheel chair, which she didn't need, but enjoyed every minute of the ride. They did not believe me that she was close to 99 years old. The following year she came again with Ceil Briar and Jean Donald. What a time we had viewing the gorgeous foliage together that year. Marion turned 100 years old in December 2003. She had a wonderful party at the church. She lived to be almost 104 years old, and she enriched the lives of everyone who knew her.

Early in the Sebring years, the hymnbooks were clearly an issue. We had baked potato suppers at my home to consider the words of hymns. During those baked potato suppers, the germ of a Northbrae website was discussed. James Schinnerer had secured an Internet provider and our web address but did not have time to develop the website. Carol Coon took charge and our first website went up in March 2005.

The need to use our money wisely has been the highest priority on my mind ever since we had to stretch dollars during the Capital Improvements Campaign. Our administrator works hard to manage rentals and we need more membership to keep pledges coming in. I hope that some modest funds from the Sacred Hoop Garden may also help in the maintenance of these lovely facilities. This is a beautiful church, a lovely facility, but it takes funds to keep it so.

I recall one congregant's frustration at the need to do more in the charitable giving area. She spoke of the good that is done in buildings where the stairs are crumbling. While that may be true, it is our job as stewards of this property to try to do it all, without crumbling stairs, if possible. It takes sensitivity, forethought and planning. I hope we have been reasonably wise. There is always room for improvement. I hope Rev. Mike will lead the church in that direction.

Ruth Brayton

Thoughts on the Future of Northbrae

I sense that all of this past dwells in us, and propels us forward. Michael Burch

As Northbrae Community Church reflects upon its hundred year history it has an almost countless number of angles and perspectives from which to gauge the meaning of these past one hundred years. How can we but humbly acknowledge that our best efforts to preserve the past in a sense fall short. So many people have come in and out of the doors of Northbrae that it is impossible to measure or comprehend. This is the great problem we face in such a celebration as this..."How do we do it? What about all the moments which have been forgotten or left in the dust of the past?"

If we scoop up grains of sand from the earth with bare hands, we may find our analogy. Each grain being symbolic of an act, a word, or a life lived. As many grains spill between our fingers and out of our hands, we continue to try to scoop up the past more feverishly to examine it - to know it and better understand ourselves. Each time we open our hand to see what we are a part of more grains fall to the earth. Perhaps this analogy is too pessimistic about the preservation of the past, but the truth be told, the past is elusive. We have photos, letters, personal artifacts, and memories all aiding us in our constant effort to reconstruct what it was like back then, and why it matters now. Always we are flawed in this endeavor, relying more than we would like to admit on imperfect nostalgia.

Yet, I have begun to wonder if the past isn't carried around in larger receptacles than hands or eyes can capture. Northbrae's past, lies within the souls and bodies that are here today.

It is a true spiritual inheritance. We carry the past in us whether we know it or not. It has been bestowed upon us. We carry about the "divine inertia" if you will – a migration of human energy that has passed from one soul to another shaping us in undetectable ways, beyond our comprehension. In this sense, I do believe we are connected not only with each other in the present, but also with those who walked before us and who now live through us. So no, it is not possible to hold in our hands or retain with a gaze all the wonderful, redemptive moments that have happened between these walls the past 365,000 days. They slip like countless grains of sand between our fingers.

Nevertheless, we are rightly compelled to celebrate a century of love and labor that has been diffused throughout every passing generation through a divine inertia. Yes, this is how we know the past most deeply. We feel it. I sense that all of this past dwells in us, and propels us forward. The Northbrae past may be difficult to retain in a single volume or celebration, but it does not lack in its ability to shape us and our surrounding community every day. Perhaps this is the real meaning of "the Spirit?" Here we set on the other end of 365,000 days ago, carrying the past in our very souls and bodies, filled with the Spirit, fully charged for life in the 21st century, fully aware of what we are obliged to share. Cheers to Northbrae - and thank you!

Rev. Michael Burch

"Reflections on Northbrae"--Final Sermon of David A. Sugarbaker

Preached on Sunday, September 28, 1997

On my last Sunday with you—as minister, at least—I want to invite you to see Northbrae with me through my eyes. I have had a unique perspective on our life and work together. Few others have spent the same number of hours per week involved in the diverse dimensions of who we are and have been as a church. So today is my last chance to invite you to look over my shoulder and look at who we are from the perspective of your long-term minister. As a congregation we are organizational, spiritual, social and political, because we are human beings. I invite you to look with me at a number of dimensions of who we are.

I have a tremendous respect for the way
Northbrae defines what it means to be a
community church. We didn't just put the name
on the door as a marketing strategy, hoping not
to exclude anyone by wearing a denominational
label. We mean it. The community is invited in.
We share our space with other groups whose
work we feel is in the best interests of
community health and growth, even when we are
a little inconvenienced by sharing. Do you
realize how significant it was that we were
willing to share our chapel with Netivot Shalom
Congregation when the High Holy days fell on
Sunday last year?

I encourage you to see Northbrae for all it is. Too narrow a definition will be excluding and suffocating. You have a constituency made up of many layers. Of course there are members, but even within the membership there are degrees of involvement. (The "80/20 Rule" applies to us as it applies to many organizations: eighty percent of the organizational work and financial support comes from 20 percent of the members. Of course we try to enlarge that core even as we try to enlarge our overall membership, but it seems the "80/20 Rule rules!)

Beyond our membership we have the constituency of our "alumni": those who have been part of Northbrae's past, but not its present, due either to changing circumstances of geography. Another constituency is our Wednesday Night Dinner crowd. Another large, unseen group sees Northbrae as their home because their recovery group meets here. And beyond these is an even larger group of families whose landmark events are celebrated here. This is their church too: the grandparents' memorial services were held here; grandchildren were married here; the great-grandchildren baptized here; troubled family members came here seeking personal or spiritual guidance. Although we can't see them, this is their community church, and they help support the church at the points where they ask for our involvement or help.

Then there are Northbrae's "friends." One of our friends received the *Penny Post* for many years and made yearly memorial gifts at Christmas and Easter in memory of her family. She moved to a retirement home in Oakland and soon thereafter gave me a call. "What would be the best way to give a gift to Northbrae?" she asked. I suggested that the Endowment Fund was the kind of gift that kept on giving. She continued to send her

Christmas and Easter memorial gifts, now designated for the Endowment Fund. She was on our mailing list to get the weekly sermons. Upon her death, Northbrae received the largest gift to the Endowment Fund since its inception! I encourage you to see all the facets of Northbrae's constituency as you make your decisions about your future as a church!

Transitions involve endings, and closure is important. My own experience tells me that as a group Northbrae has not been very good at moving through the stages of grief to full acceptance. We have tended to get stuck in either bargaining or anger. I have tried to help as much as I can with the transition before us now: my retirement. You and I have had two year's warning of this day. In the spirit of finding truth and life in dichotomy, I remind us all that transitions are like resurrection: There is loss, and there is new life You can't have one without the other. Transitions may scare us and give us sleepless nights, but change also brings new beginnings and new possibilities! This is an exciting time for Northbrae, full of new energy and alternative futures. "More light shall yet dawn."

It will be impossible to be inclusive of everyone and everything. Not everyone will be willing or able to subscribe to Northbrae's Statement of Purpose. In fact, the majority of church-going people may not be comfortable with our way of being a church. Northbrae may be a "minority report." A preponderance of church people may prefer getting together with others who think as they do and believe as they do. There may be more security in the enforced uniformity of being theological "birds of a feather," as opposed to Northbrae's more eclectic approach.

Try to make our circle wide enough to include all conscientious seekers, but draw a circle that excludes things such as incivility and rigid fundamentalism, whether it comes wrapped in liberal or conservative nomenclature. Agree to love alike, even when we don't believe or think alike. It is extremely important that we find ways to do what I have called "loving disagreement." Disagreement can't shift to personal attack and loss of respect. If it does, you will not survive.

Finally, in the midst of our ministerial transition, I invite you to preserve your uniqueness as a church. There will be voices that urge you to join the main line of American Protestantism. The church received a letter in response to the "ministerial position available" ad in the Christian Century that closed with the hope that a minister would be found who would lead us out of the error of our ways and back into the fold of mainstream, doctrinaire correctness.

I urge you to resist easy steps into conformity. Berkeley has enough traditional mainline protestant churches. In fact, I believe our unique, non-denominational, multi-religious openness will become the style of the successful non-fundamentalist church of the future. Continue to include and incorporate those who are able to be open while holding their unique belief system, and resist becoming the property of a single, dogmatic point of view, no matter how avant-garde it seems to be.

There are difficult questions ahead, which will ask for your best thought and your

participation. One of our Torchbearers, Pastor Robinson, affirms the good news for seekers: "More light shall yet dawn!" At Northbrae, spiritual seekers are open to more information and understanding to enrich their spiritual life. We hold our beliefs in loving tentatively, understanding that by the nature of life and the God whose Spirit we seek to follow, more light shall yet dawn.

Northbrae offers a spiritual context in which each of us can learn from others who may see things differently. We do not all think alike any more that we all look alike. We can see this, however, not as a crisis, but as an opportunity. Within the context of love and mutual burden-sharing, can we affirm differing right ways? It's our strength as a community. I urge you to protect your heritage of openness and uniqueness, and struggle with what it all means for our future.

I invite you to participate in creating both Northbrae's history and its future by what we do now; and I would remind you—one last time—of Dag Hammarskjold's prayer: "For all that has been, Thanks; for all that will be, YES!"



We join ourselves together as a church in the interest of morality and religion as interpreted by the growing thought and purest lives of humanity, hoping thereby to bear one another's burdens and promote truth, righteousness, and love in the world.

(Northbrae's Statement of Purpose)