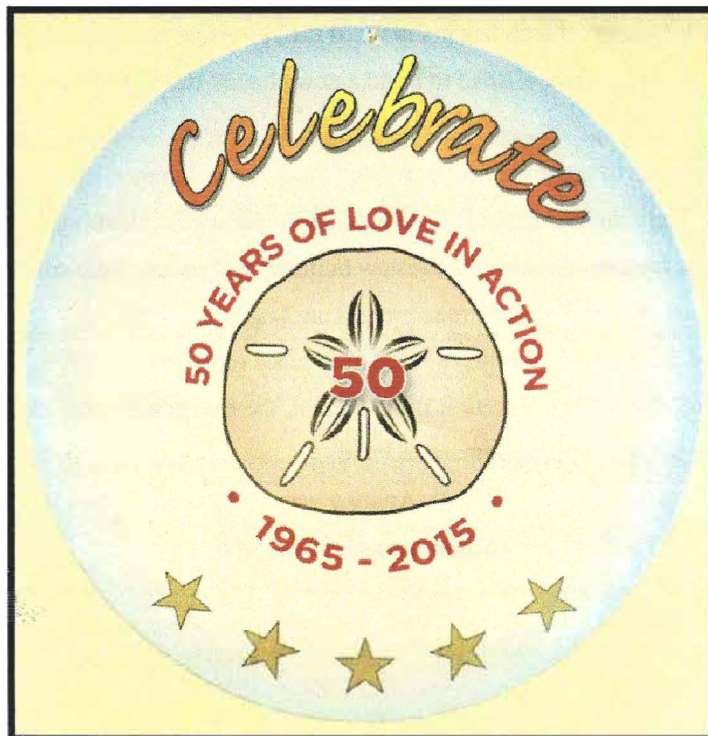


**St. Andrew  
United Church of Christ  
1965-2015**

**Friends in Faith for Fifty Years**

**6908 Beneva Road  
Sarasota, Florida**



# 1965-1975

## A New Church in Town

*The St. Andrew United Church of Christ is only a little church...but those who attend call it their church. People count here.*

Rev. James A. Stewart, 1966

In the spring of 1965, the Board of Homeland Missions of the United Church of Christ in Florida rented a small storefront at 6550 Gateway Avenue to bring a new church to what was then, and still is, a growing and vibrant area of Sarasota. The first service, held on July 25, 1965, welcomed 65 potential members, including children and teens. Soon afterwards, these new members selected the name *St. Andrew United Church of Christ* leaving no doubt that the church was faithful to its Christian background while not being tied to a specific geographical area. The new name appeared for the first time in the October 10, 1965, bulletin.

That same month, on October 3, Rev. James A. Stewart began service as Founding Pastor. With attendance at almost 100 each Sunday, church leaders realized the storefront was too small and signed a contract to purchase 4.77 acres on Beneva Road to build a new church, the site of what is today our Stewart Hall.

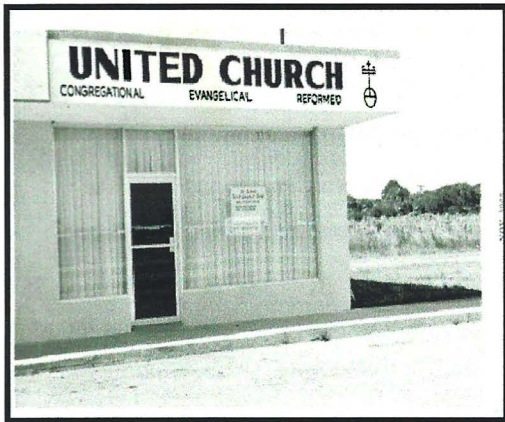
Membership continued to grow with support from other local churches, and in 1966 two strong organizations were formed: the Women's Fellowship and the Men's Brotherhood. During the years of 1966-68, church leaders formulated plans for the new building and awarded the contract for construction to Cosentino Construction Company who broke ground on August 25, 1968.

The official opening of St. Andrew on Beneva Road took place on March 23, 1969. That same year celebrated several firsts: a wedding, Vacation Bible School, the first community Thanksgiving hosted by St. Andrew, and the initiation of the Samaritan Fund.

With its new building and beautiful campus, St. Andrew was ready to strengthen its mission in the community and in the world. The first stewardship campaign was held

That same year St. Andrew was removed from "aided status" by the Board of Homeland Missions and in 1983 received clear title to all property.

The church continued to grow steadily over the next two years. In June 1974, the Memorial Garden was completed with its first interment (Dr. Frank Lincoln Edwards) held on November 25 of that year. By 1975, St. Andrew was ready to celebrate its first ten years in Gulf Gate.



6550 Gateway: 1965



6550 Gateway: 2015



Beneva Road 1969

# 1976-1990

*We see the hand of God working in all of this and commit ourselves to keep searching for His direction in all we do in the days ahead.*

Rev. Robert Kellerman, 1977

In 1977, after Rev. Stewart resigned to begin as pastor at a church in El Paso, Texas, St. Andrew began its search for a new pastor, one who could carry on the work already begun. Rev. Robert Kellerman served as interim from August 1, 1977, until June 1978, when Rev. Waldemar Haupt took over the permanent position. During Rev. Haupt's tenure, the Pastoral Relations Committee (today's Pastor Parish Relationship Board) began meeting as did a new Building Committee to look into the need for once again more space. Membership accepted the plans in 1981 for a new sanctuary with Charles Partin as architect.

Upon Rev. Haupt's resignation on October 31, 1981, Rev. Robert Kellerman returned as interim until Rev. Paul Binder began as permanent pastor in November 1982. Meanwhile, building plans continued with Cosentino once again as builder. In 1983 the capital campaign begun earlier exceeded its \$100,000 goal by \$33, 495. Groundbreaking took place on December 1 with Rev. Binder presiding. Construction began in January 1984, the cornerstone laid on October 21, and the first service held in the new sanctuary on November 4.

In June 1985, St. Andrew entered a covenant with Habitat for Humanity, pledging both financial support and labor. Millard Fuller, founder and director of Habitat, joined members for a luncheon and celebration to honor the new relationship.

Later that same year, St. Andrew celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, complete with catered outdoor luncheon under a tent and a performance by the Riverview Kilties. The "Church for All Ages" campaign began in order to increase membership, especially among children and youth. Programs such as Mothers Offering Support to Mothers (M.O.M.S.) and the Ages and Stages seminar appealed to members and friends of different generations.

As St. Andrew struggled under the burden of rising expenses, the members undertook another capital campaign in 1986 with a goal of \$177,000 to ease the mortgage burden. Once again the congregation came through, and the church continued to thrive. By 1989, St. Andrew anticipated another anniversary, this its 25<sup>th</sup>, a celebration marked with a performance of *Spoon River Anthology* directed by Peggy Hall and an art exhibition with member June Lyman, a well-known local artist.

By 1989, St. Andrew had grown in membership, had survived financial burdens and the transition of leadership both among pastors and layman. The use of lay liturgists begun in 1988 encouraged lay people to participate in worship. Also in 1989 Vi Zehr, parish nurse, established the Health Ministries to aid those in the congregation and of their caregivers. The small church, begun as a hope 25 years earlier, looked forward to the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with optimism. That first year brought several innovations.

In January Rev. Jake Jacobs started a campus ministry reaching out to students at New College and the school now known as Ringling College of Art and Design. He also taught an adult Sunday class whose members discussed a wide variety of topics.

In October that same year, members voted to construct an addition to the office, awarding the contract to Magnum Builders who completed the work in February 1991. Later that fall, in November, the church celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

*Surely the Holy Spirit is working abundantly in the people and the congregation of St. Andrew . . . Now we move toward a greater ministry in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Rev. Paul Binder, November 1990



Groundbreaking for new sanctuary  
Dec. 1983

# 1991-2000

## A Significant Force

*St. Andrew is ready to take another major step forward in being a still more significant force in Sarasota in obedience to Christ's mandate to His church.*

Rev. Paul Binder, October 1995

The first five years of the 1990's brought many changes to St. Andrew and added to its presence in Sarasota and the surrounding area. The church's ministry to the wider community increased in the early 1990's with the SHARE food program to feed the hungry in our area. Also LOGOS provided after-school recreation and crafts as well as Bible study for youth.

In 1992, St. Andrew, as well as other groups, donated money for relief of victims of Hurricane Andrew that devastated much of south Florida. A new addition to campus in 1994 was a children's playground facing Beneva Road, later dismantled in 2000.

Financially St. Andrew stood solid throughout the early 1990's. At the Annual Meeting of March 27, 1994, the members approved establishment of the Endowment Fund and on February 26, 1995, celebrated relief from the mortgage burden it had carried since construction of the new sanctuary in 1983-84. To honor the occasion, the church held a Mortgage Burning Ceremony with President Jane Moran presiding on February 26, 1995.

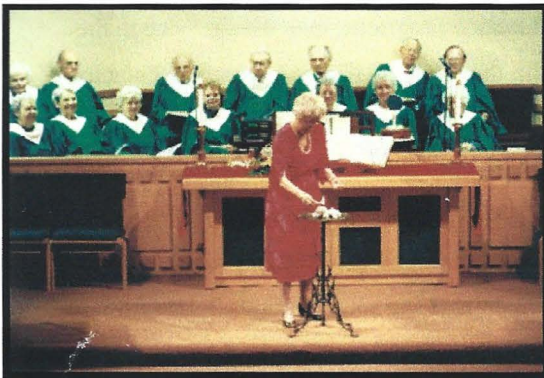
The Memorial Garden, first established in 1974, underwent an expansion in 1995 with a service of rededication taking place Sunday, May 28, 1995, during which names of those interred were read.



On January 21, 1996, Rev. Dr. Paul Binder resigned service, a sad occasion for the members of the now-thriving church. Dr. Dan Horn served as interim until Rev. Doreen McFarlane began as permanent pastor on Sunday, April 14, 1996.

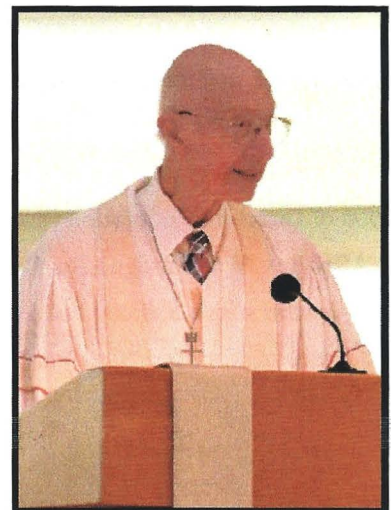
During Rev. McFarlane's tenure, St. Andrew began using the *New Century Hymnal* still in use today and enrolled in the Justice and Peace Task Force, a organization of local churches with a focus on fighting racism. In 1997, St. Andrew extended its community outreach with membership in S.U.R.E. (Sarasota United for Responsibility and Equity).

The 1990's decade ended with repair to the sanctuary roof in 1998, the closure of Lake Byrd Lodge in 1999, and the resignation of Rev. McFarlane on December 31, 1999.



President Jane Moran  
burns sanctuary mortgage  
Feb. 1995

Rev. Dr. Paul Binder



# 2000-2005

## God's Opportunities

*I particularly appreciate all the members of the congregation that "stayed the course" and didn't give up on St. Andrew . . . I know it will be a turning point for us.*

Council President Virginia Haug, 2004

Upon the resignation of Rev. McFarlane, Rev. Donald Henderson began his service as interim on January 16, 2000. During the early months of 2000, St. Andrew members took part in a workshop series entitled "God's Opportunities." Here they discussed several challenges the church wished to undertake: expansion of facilities, growth of education programs, increased service to the community, and increase in staff, a decision that resulted in the hiring of Nicky Ashcraft as Director of Family Life and later of Education.

During this time St. Andrew began research to qualify as an Open and Affirming church. In January 2001, Rev. Henderson organized discussion groups to provide information on the process.

Rev. Philip O. White took on the role as permanent pastor on June 15, 2001, a year St. Andrew once again faced decisions about aging buildings as well as celebrating several "firsts." Dawn Cady Swain, church secretary, launched the first website, in September Boy Scout Troop 50 began meeting in Fellowship Hall, and that same year the Scholarship Committee awarded the church's first scholarship.

During 2002, St. Andrew created a goal to increase Our Church's Wider Mission giving to 10% and to create a facility physically accessible to all. Sadly, the Youth Group membership declined so the position of Director of Education was eliminated.

After Rev. White resigned on October 31, 2003, Rev. Armin Bizer began as interim, a time of financial distress with a \$30,000 budget shortfall and rising costs. As a result, Rev. Bizer organized a series of meetings entitled "Can We Talk?" to address these issues.

With Rev. Bizer's resignation in May 2004, Rev. Joe LaDu took over the task of seeing St. Andrew through difficult times with strong lay leadership, including that of Council President Virginia Haug and others. Using the program *Twelve Keys to An Effective Church*, members began meeting in small groups under the guidance of a Steering Committee chaired by Joan Jarrett to address problems of declining membership and financial stress.

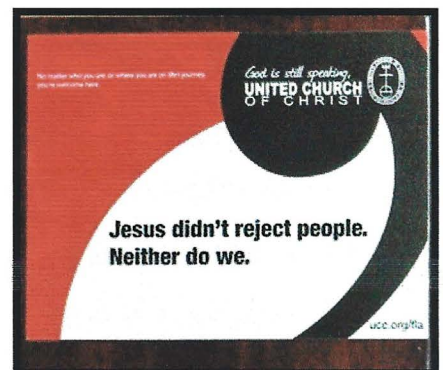
On April 3, 2005, the congregation approved plans to strengthen St. Andrew's finances and ministry by increasing accessibility, implementing more dynamic worship, and strengthening emphasis on local mission projects.

Other work came to fruition in 2005 when member Margaret Durham initiated the Teddy Bear project, a ministry that carries on today. That same year St. Andrew received its official designation as an Open and Affirming church, joining 515 others in the UCC nationwide.



Rev. Don Henderson

Rev. Phil White



# 2006-2010

## Soaring to New Heights

*Looking up to God as God looks down on us with you is a joy.*

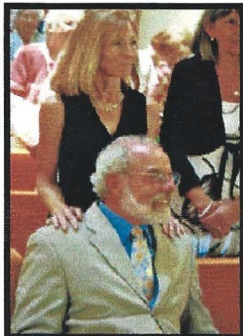
Rev. Phil Garrison, 2006

On July 2, 2006, Rev. Philip Garrison began service as permanent pastor at St. Andrew, stepping into a capital campaign entitled “Soaring to New Heights” already underway, a campaign that saw great success.

In 2007, St. Andrew named former pastors Rev. James A. Stewart and Rev. Dr. Paul Binder as Pastors Emeriti in recognition of their dedicated service to the church. In October of that year, members, friends, and Gulf Gate neighbors gathered on the campus for the first annual Blessing of the Animals.

In 2010 St. Andrew continued its outreach into the community as it hosted the “Stewards of Creation” workshops, returned to Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, Mississippi, and gathered with other area churches at Pass-A-Grill beach to mark concern over the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico earlier that year.

A major event at St. Andrew in 2010 came with the arrival of Mary, Mother of Jesus Inclusive Catholic Community as they began worship in our sanctuary on Saturday afternoons. This body of worshippers held its first ordination of women priests on February 6. Later that year, on June 27, St. Andrew honored Rev. Phil Garrison with a party in recognition of the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his ordination as minister.



Phil and Patricia  
June 27, 2010

# 2011-2015

## Love in Action

### *Friends in Faith for Fifty Years* 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Theme

Beginning in January 2011, a number of members and friends began attending an exercise class led Patricia McGee, wife of Rev. Garrison, a class that welcomed members of the public. In May Fellowship Hall was renamed Stewart Hall in honor of Founding Pastor James A. Stewart who died earlier that month. In honoring the new “Love in Action” plan adopted by the congregation, St. Andrew supported Immokalee workers as they traveled by bicycles to Publix Grocery headquarters in Lakeland.

In February 2012, the church sponsored an exciting Goods and Services Auction held in Stewart Hall with member Claudia Meyer as auctioneer. Attendees bid on items ranging from boat trips to hotel stays to handmade artistic works. In May members and friends began gathering at 6pm in the sanctuary to participate in a Wednesday Evening Contemplative service where they read liturgy from Iona community’s *Wee Worship Book*, shared prayers and a short reading and an agape meal. Joining St Andrew were members of the public also seeking moments of quiet in an ever-busier world.

Fall of 2012 brought back the Small Family groups that had been a part of St. Andrew in its earlier history, known formerly as “Colonies.” Rev. Linn Possell met with those interested in forming these groups to determine their mission: “to strengthen our connection with one another by building compassionate relationships which allow us to better serve each other and our church.” As of this date, nine families are thriving and active.

The church welcomed Supply Minister Angela Wells to fill the pulpit as Rev. Garrison began a three-month sabbatical in August. He and Patricia traveled to Ireland in search of, in Rev. Garrison’s words, “spiritual wells of wellness leading to aging with vibrancy, beauty, and grace.” Enchanted with the idea of a labyrinth, upon his return the pastor, with the help of a volunteer, constructed a temporary labyrinth on Siesta Key Beach where many from the public stopped for a moment’s peace at sunset.

## COUNCIL PRESIDENTS/MODERATORS

1966	Robert Munsell
1967-68	David Burt
1969-70	Arthur Engle
1971-72	John Rodriguez
1973-74	Walter Volckmann
1975	John Rodriguez
1976	Henrietta Lince
1977-78	David Burrell
1979-80	Ruby Pickering
1981-83	Howell Fuller
1984-85	Richard Henry
1986-87	Carl Walker
1988-89	Austin Anderson
1990-91	John Lincoln
1992-93	Charles Boaz
1994-95	Jane Moran
1996-97	Fay Donaldson
1998-99	Harold Bell
2000-01	Tom Myers
2002-03	Jack Linehan
2004-05	Virginia Haug
2006-07	Virginia Winkleman
2008-09	Lois Lewis
2010-11	Mel Kestner
2012-14	Jeanne McCue
2014-16	Lucy Painter

## WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP/UCC WOMEN CHAIRS

1966	Edith Zarle	
1966-67	Margaret Geisz	
1967-69	Helen LoBello Orihood	
1969-71	Margaret E. Davis	
1971-73	Ruby Pickering	
1973-75	Betsy Biro	
1975-77	Carolyn Foote	
1978	Miriam Smith	
1979-80	Miriam Sperl	
1981	Betsy Biro	
1982-83	Muriel Budd	
1984	Arlene Lund	
1985-86	Helen Owen	
1987-88	Grace Hawk	
1989	Blanche Engel	
1990	Marion G. Wilson	
1991-92	Betty Kittredge	
1993-95	Joanne Moore	
1995-98	Virginia Haug	
1998-99	Joanne Moore	Jane Moran
	Fay Donaldson	Muriel Schultz
1999-2000	Sidney Bell	Marilyn Pankonien
	Virginia Haug	Shirley Brabeck
2000-01	Jan Linehan	Becky Morgan
	Evelyn Smith	Barbara Pulsford
2001-2002	Becky Morgan	
2003	Ellie Bowser	
2004	Virginia Haug	
2005-09	Jeanne McCue	
2010	Joanne CassandraIrene Webb	
2011-12	Lois Lewis	
2013	Joan Jarrett	
2014-16	Jeanne McCue	

St. Andrew United Church of Christ  
Charter Members  
1965-1966

Recorded in order of signing

Rev. Melvin Dollar  
Rev. and Mrs. James A. Stewart (June), Lisa  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Munsell (Florence), Robert II  
Mr. and Mrs. Forrest Rhines (Elsie), Bradley  
Mr. and Mrs. Walter Myers (Dorothy)  
Mr. and Mrs. William Horstman (Edna Lou)  
Mr. and Mrs. Dale Hosfeld (Gilda)  
Mr. and Mrs. David Wagner (Agnes)  
Mr. and Mrs. Vern Click (Wilma)  
Mr. and Mrs. William Auld (Dorothy)  
Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Nold (Julia Helen)  
Mr. and Mrs. David Harold Burt (Pearl)  
Mr. and Mrs. Ford Zarle (Edith)  
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Martin (Gloria)  
Mr. and Mrs. Al Hayek  
Mr. and Mrs. Albert McGuffin (Margaret)  
Mr. and Mrs. Sheldon Daniel (Maryanna)  
Mrs. Vern Wenke (Helen)  
Mrs. Helen LoBello  
Mrs. Marguerite Lilley  
Mrs. William Humphrey (Margaret C.)  
Mrs. Fred Schoebel  
Miss Rose Hornung  
Mrs. Robert Fieblekorn (Minnie)  
Mrs. Donald Buchanan (Janice), Barry  
Mrs. Jennie Plate  
Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Torrey (Mildred)  
Mrs. Mildred Koehler

As Associates:

Mr. and Mrs. Elmer R. Treadwell (Sarah L.)

## A note from the Historian

I began my research into the past 50 years of St. Andrew history during the summer of 2012 and immediately encountered several obstacles:

- no specific place for old records to be kept. They were literally “all over the place.”
- old hand-written records, often illegible
- many old photographs undated and unidentified
- missing records

I realize that in writing this history how valuable it is to collect from those still with us the stories of our past. I was saddened by my inability to talk with many of the key people who have brought St. Andrew from a small storefront to the magnificent presence it is on Beneva Road today.

I thank those who have provided photographs, mementos, and memories. I take full responsibility for any errors in date or elsewhere.

We are truly the St. Andrew family. It is my hope that this brief history captures the strength and resilience of one small but mighty church.

*Lucy Painter*  
*September 2015*

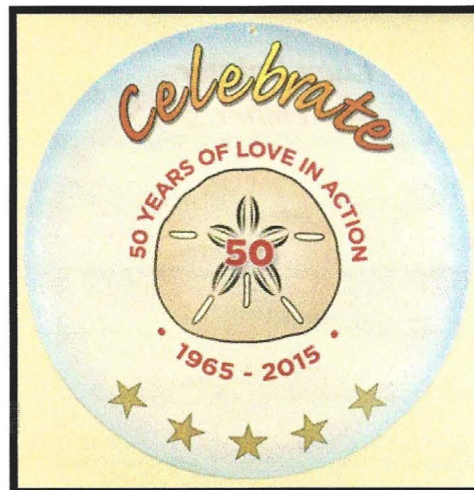
St. Andrew's website returned in November when a committee chaired by Ed Hooper revived the St. Andrew website: [www.uccstandrew.org](http://www.uccstandrew.org). From here recordings of services and news of events reaches into the world community and tells of the church's continued vibrancy.

The year 2012 ended with a celebration of the Gulf Gate community and St. Andrew's place in it with a festival held on campus with food and items for sale from local vendors and games for children. This festival was repeated in December 2013, again drawing many to our campus.

As St. Andrew drew closer to its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015, programs continued to grow with the Thursday Morning Book Group active, Small Families flourishing, and a visit to the church by noted theologian Matthew Fox in both 2014 and 2015. Mission work continued with support of Resurrection House, Mothers Helping Mothers, the annual CROP Walk, the Backpack Program of All Faith's Food Bank to feed hungry children in Sarasota, and others both local and worldwide.

The anniversary year, 2015, kicked off with a catered luncheon on January 6 with guests including Pastor Emeritus Rev. Dr. Paul Binder and friends no longer living in Sarasota who came to celebrate with St. Andrew this special year.

In August 2015, Rev. Garrison left St. Andrew to accept a call to Trinity UCC in Northport, Michigan, and St. Andrew began its search for a permanent pastor. With the help of Interim Rev. Greg Russell, the church looks forward to another 50 years and more of ministry in Sarasota, remembering its beginning as a small storefront while looking forward to the its future as a members of Christ's body in the world.



## ST. ANDREW PASTORS AND INTERIMS

Rev. James A. Stewart	Oct. 1966-July 1977
Rev. Robert Kellerman (interim)	Aug. 1977-Feb. 1978
Rev. Waldemar Haupt	Feb. 1978-Oct. 1981
Rev. Robert Kellerman (interim)	Jan.-Nov 1982
Rev. Dr. Paul Binder	Nov. 1982-Jan. 1996
Rev. Dan Horn (interim)	Jan.-Feb. 1996
Rev. Doreen McFarlane	April 1996-Dec. 1999
Rev. Don Henderson (interim)	Jan. 2000-June 2001
Rev. Phil White	June 2001-Oct. 2003
Rev. Armin Bizer (interim)	Nov. 2003-May 2004
Rev. Joe LaDu (interim)	July 2004-June 2006
Rev. Phil Garrison	July 2006-Aug. 2015