

Suburban Life

Lorraine McClellan editor/477-5450



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Minister of church relations

Pastor moves into new, creative, experimental position



Randy Dorst/staff photographer

By Lorraine McClellan
staff writer

THE REV. LEE TYLER will deliver his last sermon to the congregation at Salem United Church of Christ Sunday, June 22.

It is a poignant time for Tyler who was baptized, confirmed and then ordained from the church, which was founded here in 1875. He served for a while as director of Christian education, and for the past five years as its pastor.

Tyler's adult career has been a varied one using his double degrees in the ministry and in social work. He directed a settlement home in Missouri and worked with Interfaith Centers for Racial Justice in Detroit before coming to Salem as pastor.

He leaves to take on "something new," he said, "something of a creative and experimental nature."

Tyler has been designated Minister of Church Relations for Deaconess Hospital in St. Louis. It is a new position, aimed at strengthening the relationship between the United Church of Christ churches and the 14 Deaconess Hospitals in the U.S.

The hospitals were patterned after the German Lutheran order after World War I, "and have lost their responsibility to the churches that got them started," Tyler said.

TYLER JOKES that he has never in his adult life made an application for a job.

"The jobs always come to me. This one came from an old classmate at Eden Seminary," he said, speaking of the Rev. Richard Ellerbrake, now president of Deaconess Hospital in St. Louis. "We always dreamed of doing something together and now is the time. We shared many ideas and dreams over the years. Ideas of how we could best serve the church, fill the needs, help alleviate and improve conditions for others."

With the growth of Medicare and Medicaid, insurance programs and HMO's, the hospital of necessity has been more responsive to those programs and regulations and less responsive to the churches and those ties which go back to 1889.

"My job will be to help clarify how the hospital can be helpful to churches and church members, and how churches can be helpful to the hospital," Tyler said.

A significant part of the move for Tyler is the United Church of Christ community in St. Louis. It is the cradle of the old evangelical arm of the United Church of Christ and has many examples of how that early church lived out its faith.

That community contains the Eden Theological Seminary, the Evangelical Children's Home, the Good Samaritan Home, the Emmaus Homes for Developmentally Disabled Adults, the United Church Neighborhood Houses and the first Deaconess Hospital.

"The beautiful sanctuary at the hospital is being used by fewer and fewer people," Tyler said. "The Deaconess order stopped accepting new members after WWII and now there are 21 deaconesses living in retirement at Deaconess Manor, the only members of the Deaconess United Church of Christ congregation. I want to revive that congregation, either through the hospital personnel or by reaching out into the community."

DURING TYLER'S tenure at Salem, the church was declared a Just Peace Church, with emphasis on

peace on earth, prayer vigils and prayer chains.

"At least 40 of our members are connected in the prayer chain, active through the telephone," he said.

Tyler was also instrumental in reactivating Farmington Area Clergy Association with Dr. Stan Nicol of North Farmington American Baptist Church.

Dr. Nicol is the only non-member of Salem who is on the invitation list for a dinner of gospod the congregation has planned for Tyler and his wife Jean before their leave to St. Louis.

The couple have four children. Dan Tyler will be married to Amanda Eachelbach this summer. Mark Tyler graduated from Ferris this spring. Sally Tyler is a hair stylist who will remain in the Farmington area. Carrie Tyler is working toward a degree in geography and geology at Western Michigan University.

Transforming power is topic of lecture

Urban graffiti can be a call of despair from those questioning whether life has meaning or purpose, according to visiting Christian Science lecturer Jack H. Thornton.

Thornton will talk at 8 p.m. Monday, June 16, in First Church of Christ, Scientist, 33825 Grand River. The lecture is free and open to the public.

This call, he feels, can be answered now, as in Jesus Christ's time, with the assurance that it's "never too late to turn to the outstretched arms of God, no matter what we may have done, or left undone, in our lives. For, as the Bible indicates, God alone gives meaning and purpose to existence."

It is clear, however, that the God Thornton refers to is not distant or unseeing, but a "loving presence and power unconditionally at hand for all whether or not we feel deserving," he said.

The speaker points out that throughout the Bible, God is characterized as Love itself. God, it is this sense of being loved by God which he claims enables individuals to love themselves and others more practically.

Thornton, in his lecture "Divine Love: The Meaning of Life," gives examples of threatening present-day situations that were transformed as individuals facing unjust accusations and financial reverses turned whole-



Jack Thornton

heartedly to the power of God.

For many years Thornton was associated with Christian Science Monitor as manager of circulation sales, before entering the ministry of Christian healing as a Christian Science practitioner and member of the denomination's board of lecturership.

He is author of a children's book, "Travis talks with God," and worked with children locally as a Sunday School superintendent, as well as in several other branch church capacities. He makes his home in Marblehead, Mass.

The Rev. Lee Tyler leaves the church where he was confirmed, ordained and served as pastor to serve in St. Louis, the cradle of the Evangelical arm of United Church of Christ.

Club winds up first year

Farmington Community Women celebrated their first anniversary with their new name, installed new officers and presented a host of awards in appreciation for efforts that netted \$6,000 that will be given to area agencies and charities.

Formerly an auxiliary to Farmington Area Jaycees, the nucleus of the group has been serving the community as a service organization for more than 26 years. Members now are their own entity with a non-profit status and recognition as well as

support from local businesses.

President Denise Albrecht handed her gavel to Dollah Tretnik who will carry on the group's multifaceted service and fund-raising projects for the 1988-89 season.

Tretnik's vice presidents are Barb Sobczak and Marianne Ellis. Albrecht assumes the position as chairman of the board.

Ellis chaired the group's spring fashion show and membership night which was recognized as the "Outstanding Internal Project of the

Year." Lunch with the Easter Bunny was named the "Outstanding Ways and Means Project," chaired by Sobczak. The Christmas party for Oakhill Nursing Home was awarded the "Outstanding Community Service Project."

"Lunch with the Great Pumpkin," chaired by Rena Swanson, was named the "Outstanding New Project of the Year." Kathy Oppenheimer got the "Outstanding Project of the Year" award for chairing the Millionaire Party, the group's biggest fund-raiser.

JOANN GEORGE took the Excellence Award for her work with BUSS (Buckle up Babies).

"She worked especially hard every week on this popular and important project, which raised more than \$1,200 which will be donated to a child-safety related cause," Albrecht said.

The Devotion Award went to Tretnik who acted as newsletter editor and secretary.

The "Outstanding New Member Award" went to Ellis and George got the "Key Woman" award.

Katrina Cheema was named "Woman of the Year." Certificates of appreciation and gifts were given to Tretnik, Ellis, Sobczak, Cheema, Swanson, Rossana Tisdale, Claudia Heinrich and Anita Rudolph.

"We look forward to another successful year and we invite women over the age of 18 to attend one of our meetings," Albrecht said.

The group meets at 7:30 p.m. the third Monday of every month in Farmington Community Center, on Farmington Road north of 10 Mile. For information, call Albrecht at 476-3218, or Tretnik at 474-9535.



Denise Brills

The Farmington Community Center is on Farmington Road, north of 10 Mile.



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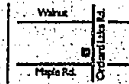
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