

SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
PARKS DEPARTMENT
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA



ITEM
13.2
(ID # 3054)

MEETING DATE:

Tuesday, December 6, 2016

FROM : PARKS DEPARTMENT:

SUBJECT: PARKS DEPARTMENT: County Historic Landmark Designation: First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); District 5; [\$0]

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Approve and authorize the designation of First Christian Church as a Riverside County Historic Landmark.

ACTION: Policy

Scott Bangle, Director, General Manager / Park Director

11/22/2016

FINANCIAL DATA	Current Fiscal Year:	Next Fiscal Year:	Total Cost:	Ongoing Cost
COST	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
NET COUNTY COST	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
SOURCE OF FUNDS:			Budget Adjustment:	
			For Fiscal Year:	

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

On motion of Supervisor Ashley, seconded by Supervisor Tavaglione and duly carried, IT WAS ORDERED that the above matter is approved as recommended.

Ayes: Jeffries, Tavaglione Washington and Ashley
Nays: None
Absent: Benoit
Date: December 6, 2016
xc: Parks

Kecia Harper-Ihem
Clerk of the Board

By:
Deputy

13.2C

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS PARKS DEPARTMENT
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

BACKGROUND:

Summary

First Christian Church is located at 701 Egan Avenue in Beaumont, California. The building is owned by First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and currently utilized for congregational worship and outreach.

The site is the first church site in the city of Beaumont. Presbyterians organized and built here in 1886. A new Presbyterian Church was built in 1917 and was used by the congregation until 1934 when it was sold to the Christian Church Congregation. The church is a vernacular version of Renaissance Revival with an arcaded ground floor and stone quoins. It is still an active and thriving center for its members and the City of Beaumont.

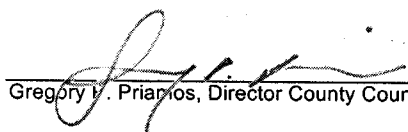
The Riverside County Historic Commission reviewed the Historic Landmark Nomination Form submitted by the representatives of the First Christian Church and recommend approval by this Board. The nomination form and supporting documents are attached as Exhibit A.

Impact on Citizens and Businesses

None

Attachments

Exhibit A - Historic Landmark Nomination Form



Gregory V. Priamos, Director County Counsel 11/21/2016



RIVERSIDE COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION FORM

08/18/16

Item: 9.3

For Historical Commission Use Only		
Date Reviewed: 8/18/16		
Commission Recommendation:		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recommend Approval	<input type="checkbox"/> Eligible but Not Listed	<input type="checkbox"/> Disapproved

This form must be used to nominate any pre-historic or historic site in Riverside County for designation as a County Historic Landmark. Information provided will serve as the basis for Historical Commission evaluation and recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. All nominations for this designation must be approved by the Board.

Please fill out and send to:

Riverside County Historical Commission
c/o County Historic Preservation Officer
Riverside County Parks District 4600 Crestmore
Road, Riverside, CA 92509-6858.

*Please type your answers. An e-mail version of this form is available upon request.
(951) 955-4310.*

1. SITE NAME: First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Historic: Same

Common: Same

2. LOCATION:

(a) 701 Egan Ave. Beaumont, Calif. 92223

(b) Vicinity of old downtown Beaumont, 6th St. and Calif. Ave.

3. LEGAL OWNER:

(a) Name: First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

(b) 701 Egan Ave. Beaumont, Calif. 92223 (c) 951-845-4211

(d) Letter of Consent Enclosed: ☒ Yes ☐ No

4. PRESENT USE: Congregational worship and outreach

5. ORIGINAL USE: Congregational worship and outreach

6. OTHER PAST USES: Congregational worship and outreach

(a) YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION: approx. 1915

(b) Builder: Congregation members per verbal history

(c) Architect: Unknown

8. CLASSIFICATION (Check appropriate spaces):

Category: ☒ Site (Historic) ☒ Site (Archaeological) ☐ Building(s)
☐ Structure(s) ☐ Object(s)
Ownership: Public ☒ Private ☐ Both ☐
Status: ☐ Occupied ☒ Unoccupied (church)
☒ Accessibility: Yes: Restricted ☐ Yes: Unrestricted
No ☐
Condition: ☐ Good ☒ Fair ☐ Deteriorated ☐ Unexposed
Demolished (just for site applications)

9. ARCHITECTURAL STYLE (for buildings & structures) Basilica

10. IF ALTERED, PLEASE DESCRIBE: Ramp added on the outside in approx 1950's
New outer ENTRANCE DOORS 2013, PLEXIGLAS PLACED ON THE OUTSIDE
OF THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS Approx 1970's

11. LEGAL PROPERTY DESCRIPTION:

Include approximate property size in feet:

(a) Frontage ___ (b) Depth ___ or Approximate Acreage 1/3 acres?

12. PHYSICAL APPEARANCE OF SITE/STRUCTURE:

☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☒ Fair ☐ Deteriorated

13. PRIMARY STRUCTURAL MATERIALS:

☒ Stone ☐ Adobe ☐ Wood ☐ Stucco ☐ Brick ☐ Other:

14. RELATED FEATURES OR OUTBUILDINGS (list here, describe in No. 15):

15. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (please attach a 1-2 page statement):

Click [here](#) for assistance on "**How to Write a Statement of Significance**"

16. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION (for buildings and structures): Please attach your description on a separate page.

17. REFERENCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Please attach separate page.

18. THREATS TO THE SITE (if any; use separate page if needed):

19. PHOTOGRAGHS ENCLOSED: ☒ Yes ☐ NO

20. FORM PREPARED BY:

Name Debra Elliott

39623 Vineland St. Cherry Valley, Calif. 92223

Telephone(s) 951-845-8816

21. Organization: First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Signature of Authorizing Official (s):

Statement of Significance

Included in this application is a reprint of an article written in 1985 that has great historical information in regards to the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregation and its purchase of the Basilica styled church building which has been housing believers for over one hundred years. An addendum to the article is included with an update as to the current usage of the site.

The information included speaks loudly as to the importance to the community as a place of worship. The property is meaningful to Riverside County as a testament to the desires of its inhabitants to have a place of worship worthy of a lasting relationship of community and purpose. The bell still rings every Sunday morning, pulled by a rope and though we have no written proof, it is the only Basilica styled church west of the Mississippi that still pulls the rope rather than using an electronic device to do so. (This is an oral account from a past Chamber of Commerce manager from the 1980's).

Bibliography:

Record Gazette Newspaper (possibly, as the article photo-copied at the Beaumont Library cut off the name of the newspaper).

Thelma McLaughlin, member of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and member of Women's Club in Beaumont, Calif.

Debra Elliott, member of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), wife of the current Pastor; Rev. Terry L. Elliott.

Dan McLaughlin, member of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

George Valencia, Manager of the Beaumont Chamber of Commerce in the 80's, also President of the 20/30 Club in the 80.s.

Architectural Description

Basilica stone building with large stairs and ramp leading up to above ground sanctuary and baptismal. The building also contains a basement with kitchen, bathrooms, fellowship hall, pantry and clothing closet. Above the sanctuary is the third floor housing two classrooms, air-conditioning units and the entrance to the bell tower. The bell tower houses a one hundred year old bell that is rung by pulling the rope in the foyer. The entrance doors to the Sanctuary and the basement were replaced in 2013 as the old doors were no longer viable.

Also on the property is the parsonage built sometime in the '50s. They share the garden behind the buildings.

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)



701 Egan Ave. Beaumont, Calif. 92223

Mailing Address:

39623 Vineland St. Cherry Valley, Calif. 92223

(951) 845-4211

Re: Letter of Consent

To the Riverside County Historical Commission,

We, the congregation of the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Beaumont, California are the legal owners of the said church and are giving our consent for consideration for designation as a County Historic Landmark.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Lankford". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert Lankford; Moderator of the Board

Dated: 6-17-2016

Attached is a written history as recorded by Thelma McLaughlin in 1985 and an updated history of events written in December of 2015 by the wife of the current pastor; Debra Elliott.

Looking Back

The Birth of Bmt.'s First Christian Church

[Written on the event of the 75th Anniversary of this body of Christ in 1985]

(Editor's Note: The First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) at 701 Egan Avenue in Beaumont is in the midst of a month-long celebration of its 75th anniversary. The following is an opinionated history of events that recalls the church's beginnings.)

By Thelma McLaughlin

The sleepy little hamlet of Beaumont was just beginning to rouse in the year 1910. A deep slumber had been imposed upon the small community when the grandiose plans of the owner and developer, Dr. H.P. Sigler, failed. In 1893 he was bankrupt. The new owner of the unimproved area of Beaumont was the German Savings and Loan of San Francisco, who laid down the rule that the holding would be sold only in one unit. In other words, someone had to come along with enough money to buy the whole town.

The dawn of a new day had arrived in 1907, when the city was purchased by the Beaumont Land and Water Company for around \$100,000. The small town had a population of about 400 people and less than 100 houses were in existence. However, no time was lost getting the area on the market. The old Beaumont Hotel was cleaned up, given a new coat of paint and refurbished under a new name, Hotel Edinburgh. Prospective investors were offered railroad round trip tickets to Beaumont from Los Angeles for \$2.45, which would be refunded to anyone buying more than \$100 worth of land.

In addition, the prospective buyers were tantalized with promises of a free dinner at the Edinburgh, and a free carriage ride throughout the area. All this for listening to the enthusiastic assurance of "five acres and independence." It is not surprising that a large number of people took advantage of this offer, and that many of them bought property. Some of them even ventured to accept the promise of independence and moved their families lock, stock and barrel to Beaumont.

Among those who bought property in 1907 was Alexander Campbell Stower. He succeeded in bringing his family to the area three years later. Stower was an orchardist, and was responsible for planting the very first apple orchards in Cherry Valley. This effort was doomed to failure because generally the winters were too mild for growing good apples. However, he continued planting trees, and his descendant, Francis Dowling Jr., is still a successful orchardist in Beaumont, owning and operating Dowling Fruit Orchards.

It is not by chance that Stower's parents named him Alexander Campbell Stower. He was named for the great frontier leader of the early Disciples of Christ movement. With a name like that, could the desire for a church to go with it be far behind? At that time there was a thriving group of Presbyterians worshipping on the corner of Seventh Street and Egan Avenue in a small frame building. Their preaching, singing and praying were fine, but what about the weekly observance of the Lord's Supper and baptism by immersion, not to mention the autonomy of the congregation!

Plainly, there was a great need for a Christian Church in Beaumont. The first meetings were held in a tent located 5th Street and Euclid Avenue. There were twenty two charter members, among them was Iola May Stower who later married Francis M. Dowling. The charter members included Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Campbell Stower, Iola May Stower, Emma K. Stower, Mr. and Mrs. L.C. Gist, Thelma Gist, Mrs. Grady Sewell, Mr. and Mrs. E.A. Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. Sumner, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Stower, and Mr. Hayes, the editor of the local paper.

The tent meetings were presided over by Rev. Harvey H. Hazel who at that time was the minister of the (.....?) "When I was about seven or eight years old, we moved to Beaumont. It wasn't just a casual coincidence when we met more of our Christian Brothers and Sisters. They too were seeking. There was that "Tie that binds" in our hearts. Soon all were planning to meet on Sundays for worship—but where?

"Beaumont was a very small town. Families were situated not too close together. I do not remember any cars at that time. Horses and rigs were the means of transportation. Rigs could be anything from wagons to 'surreys with the fringe on top.' Roads were unimproved, with rough ruts, dusty or muddy. We lived four miles from town and at first traveled in a spring wagon pulled by a span of mules. The wagon had boards laid across for seats. From Cherry and High Street the road was dirt, but Section Line, now Beaumont Avenue, was paved with black oil. We girls would be wearing our white Sunday dresses, and the black oil would splatter up off the road onto our dresses. "Having found a minister who wished to preach for us, the men set up the tent for a shelter and incorporated a large, round galvanized tank for the baptismal service. The results of the meetings were considered a success and the day was set for the baptismal service. It could have been expected that I was one of those who had made the confession and was prepared for baptism. The church was one of my earliest memories. I had heard the teachings all my life, and I had always, in my childish thoughts, considered myself part of the church. To me, it was a growth. Lola May was also one who was baptized that day. (.....?) worship on the Lord's Day. Services were held intermittently, but finally were disbanded, to be resumed later at the Cherry Valley School at Beaumont Avenue and Cherry Valley Boulevard which is now the Grange Hall. A few new Disciples moved to Beaumont. Among these new people W. E. Lee, Mr. Bursey Lee, Mrs. Stan and the Jim Bently family.

In 1922 services were held in the Odd Fellows Hall, then called Gant's Hall, on south Fifth Street; and later in the Bob Adams building. It was at this time that Rev. J.W. Utter was sent to Beaumont by the Missionary Board to hold a meeting. During this time the Christian Church was built on California Ave, next to the library building. The church was dedicated the first Sunday of June 1922, by Rev. Hudson of the Missionary Board. On this day the first wedding in the church took place when Elberta Lee (daughter of W.E. Lee) was married to Mr. G. (?)eatley. Rev. Frank M. Dowling spoke at the evening service.

Rev. Dowling was the minister of the First Christian Church of Fullerton in the early 1900's. He and his eldest son, Francis M. Dowling are true horticulturists, loving citrus and deciduous fruit trees. They also bought property in Beaumont on Fourteenth Street and Palm Avenue. Francis spent his time between the Orange Ranch in (...?)centia and the Cherry Orchard in Beaumont, attending church in whichever place he happened to be. It was at the church in Beaumont that he met and fell in love with Lola May Stower. They were married and resided on the Cherry Orchard on 14th and Palm all of their married life.

For a number of years following the dedication of the church, W. E. Lee, an ultra-conservative, served as minister. Other pastors included Dan Trundle, S. K. White, Rev. Humphreys and Rev. Bond.

The small frame building which had housed the congregation was really very roughly built m and by the early 1930s it became apparent that a better place of worship was greatly needed. The Lord always makes a way, it seems. At this very time the two rival Presbyterian congregations in Beaumont agreed to unite. A new rock building was being erected by the United Presbyterians on Seventh Street and Euclid Avenue, and since the new building was more desirable than the 1915 vintage, the older one was put up for sale. A few years prior to this a church building owned by the Christian Church of Needles, California, which had disbanded, was sold by the State Society. Funds derived largely from this sale were used to purchase the Presbyterian church building in 1934. The State Society took title of the new property, and the Christian Missionary Board helped pay the pastor for a number of years, probably until the indebtedness was paid off. The Rev. Vharles Hood who was pastor from 1930 until 1938 deserves credit for accomplishing the purchase of the building and establishing a firmer (.....?) a church parsonage which was built on property adjoining the church. Other improvements were made to the church building, including the addition of the baptistery, church office and restrooms. Active youth groups were established which continued for many years. Lay leadership was cultivated with excellent success.

During the ministry of Rev. Frank E. Wodell in the late 1950's and early 60's, the first organ was purchased for the sanctuary, and a successful "Every Member Commitment" program helped put the church on a business-like financial foundation. It was under Rev. Wodell's leadership that the church celebrated its fiftieth anniversary.

The ministry of Rev. Chester Rice followed. At this time the property on Orange Street was purchased with the hope that eventually a new church building could be erected there. The chancel drapery and the hanging cross were also installed.

When Rev. O. D. Johnson became the next pastor, he expressed the hope that he could break the jinx of three year pastorates which had preceeded him for a number of terms. He remained for eleven years. During this time the ramp on the east side of the building was installed and the Orange Street property mortgage was burned. Naturally, many other activities occurred which are too numerous to mention.

When Rev. Charles Griffith came to the church, he suggested that the congregation pursue whether it was feasible to build on Orange Street or sell the property and completely refurbish the existing building. Eventually the lots were sold and the building underwent extensive redecorating, new pews were installed. An arsonist set fire to the parsonage, which also required major repair. Rev. Griffith also challenged the congregation to begin plans for the 75th anniversary celebration.

As this anniversary is celebrated in 1985, Rev. George Krieger is the pastor. During this period a new organ has been purchased from savings and memorial funds. The (....?) it has had an extensive witness in the Beaumont area, in District Five, and in the Regional activities. It has continually supported the outreach programs and other work of the national brother hood of the Disciples of Christ. At present there is an active Christian Men's Fellowship, Christian Women's Fellowship, Sunday school classes, choir and quilting group.

Many outstanding servants of God have labored in the congregation. It has not been the intent of this history to name them, but grateful acknowledgement is hereby made to all who have had a part in the ongoing work among the people here.

To paraphrase Phillipians 4:13 it can be said, "The First Christian Church of Beaumont has had the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives it." The prayer of the congregation is that we continue in Christ and in the love of the brethren, that we may progress and have joy in our faith. We give thanks for "God's Gift—Our 75th!"

Addendum to the above account, written on December 18, 2015 by Debra J. Elliott, pastor's wife.

For our Christmas Celebration our congregation is getting together with the Spanish congregation of Disciples (who meet on Sunday afternoon), the Upper Room (which is a Pentecostal congregation who rents space and time from us) and Gracious Women who are a ministry operated by a few members of our church and members from other local churches to minister to the community both spiritually and thru a food give-a-way program that takes place at our church location. Part of this celebration is a presentation of each minister about their respective flocks/ministries. We, Pastor Terry Elliott and I, are also giving a little run-down of our history here in Beaumont. Therefore, I re-typed the above article from photo-copies of a newspaper article which I found at the Beaumont Library several years ago. However, I did not write the name of the newspaper for which I am sorry...perhaps it is from our local paper 'The Record Gazette' published in Banning.

Taking the place of Rev. George Krieger was Rev. David Herrick in approximately 1998 along with his wife, Rev. Donna Herrick. Together they ministered to this congregation for 10 years. During that time, Rev. David Herrick performed some much needed repair to the building and to the grounds around it as

he was by trade in construction. Rev. Donna Herrick became the worship leader and as there was no one who knew or who would play the organ or piano the worship team sang along with recordings of music.

Much of the congregation was made up of people who had been members for many, many years, including Thelma McLaughlin who wrote the above article. She and her husband, Don, were faithful members. Don rang the bell every Sunday before service for 50 years. When he was no longer able to do so their son, Dan, who also was the treasurer of the church, took over the ringing of the bell. Dan told us that the day his father rang the bell for the last time (as he took ill and soon went home to the LORD), the rope had shredded and broke requiring replacement. It seemed to be a physical event with spiritual meaning, a changing of the guard per se.

Other members included Francis Dowling, mentioned in the above article, who still owned and worked Dowling Fruit Orchard. He would come in every Sunday, sit in the back row and promptly fall asleep. He is loved by all! He has not been able to attend services for many years now. He is in the care of his oldest son, John Dowling, since he broke his neck in a fall at the orchard. There are many more people, let me see if I can recall them; Ralph and Lorraine Towers, Bob and Linda Lankford, Gary Lankford, Gaylord and Diana Ailshie, June Yearwood and her son Alan, Ruth Jennings (I have found some pictures from the 70's with her and Dan McLaughlin in them!), Eulala Shea, Quita Evans, Elsa Johnson, Dan McLaughlin, Melinda Ward, Richard and Becky Stevens, Bobby and Andrea Erzinger and 3 children, Octavio and Edana Martinez and 5 children, Joaquin and Laurie Elert, Udo Uka Udo, Achie and Ruth Nwinye, Nilda Smith, Lupita Aguirre, Ricky and Brenda Aguirre and 2 children, Patty Mendoza, Dianna Giles, Roy and Vicky Gonzales and 5 children, Brandi Fields, Gordon and Nancy Kazlowski, Arnold and Norma Mazon. Some of these people and many others have passed onto be with the Lord. I know I can't get all of them in here but just wanted you to get a picture of our brethren.

In 2008 the Herricks felt called to move to Tennessee which began the search for a new pastor. In 2009, Rev. Terry L. Elliott became the intermittent pastor, then became the intentional intermittent pastor. He was voted in as the pastor at the congregational meeting in 2009.

In 2011 the Presbyterian church, as mentioned in the previous article, desired to open their time capsule for their 125th anniversary. We had a big event surrounding the opening of the cornerstone of the church to remove the time capsule. They removed a tin box with letters and a Bible, all well worn indeed!

At that time, our congregation placed our own items into the space for others to view, God willing, in another 100 years. You will find it at the south east corner of the building at the top of the stairs where there is a plaque dated 2011 that the Presbyterians so graciously gave us after removing that corner of the building. Here is a hint though, next time it is opened you can get to it from the INSIDE of the building! We never needed to remove that outer cornerstone after all.

We have had three 'Old Fashioned Church Picnics' at the little park across the street which has been a big success and allows all of us to get to know our community. We have worked ecumenically with other local churches in outreach situations. We now have a praise and worship band made up of a drummer, two conga players, guitarist and two singers...of course we all sing so we have quite a chorus! We use microphones and such and now we have a T.V. screen to broadcast the words to our songs so all may sing along. This has been a hard transition for the older crowd but a much needed one to keep up with the changing society we live in. I am currently the worship leader, though I don't feel worthy of the calling but enjoy it thoroughly!

We have re-carpeted the sanctuary, re-upholstered the pews, taken down the drapes in chancellery and they fell apart when we did that. I painted the mural behind the baptistery and near the end of painting it I had a friend help finish it. Her name is Doris Czerep. We are looking into getting the stained-glass windows repaired/restored but it is a costly proposition. Still, it must be done soon. We also would like to have the outside of the church repaired, many cracks etc. Last year we had to have

the old septic tank un-attached from our kitchen drain and re-route the sink to the sewer line. It was a huge job. Then we had new sprinklers and some Crape Meryll Trees planted and cleaned up the garden.

Our congregation is renting out the parsonage to help bring money into the coffers and we own the house next to us at 707 Egan which is being rented to Pastor Marcos Macias of the Spanish congregation. There is so much more that could be told but I cannot think of it now. Someday, we will add to this account and try to keep up with our history. God Bless All!

