

Second Union Church Remembers

50th Jubilee Celebration



Rev. Robert Zoba Pastor from 2004 - present

By Dennis Gonzalez

Many people believe that there are no coincidences in life that all occurrences happen for a reason. The way that Amarilis and I arrived at Second Union Church makes a believer out of me.

For many years, I had been struggling to find an alternative to my Catholic Church. The lack of Biblical teaching and the scandals and cover-ups were taking me further and further from the Roman Catholic Church. I was searching for an alternative and spoke to many people who gave me their opinion of which church, temple or synagogue was right for me. One good friend told me to look for a church through the internet. This was a wild idea that I had not thought of and I tried it. The first church that showed up and was only a few minutes from our home was Second Union Church.

Amarilis and I went to see how it was and we found that the service was friendly, the sermon was stimulating and the coffee and snacks were a nice way to meet the other persons. We started going to the church regularly and one day after the service we spoke to Pastor Bob about our activities. We were surprised to know that Bob and Christie were tennis players like we were. We started playing mixed doubles with them and invited them to play on the teams we played for in the United States Tennis Association.

Bob and I have played together in men's doubles in the USTA National Championships in Indian Wells, California and in Tucson Arizona. We played one of the most memorable games together in our last game at Indian Wells. We were playing two undefeated players from Texas representing the southwest region. They were ranked significantly higher than Bob and I and we had slim hopes of beating these guys. All of the days matches had finished before us so there was a group of about 50-60 people in the stands watching our match. That day, Bob did his best Superman impression and by sheer willpower got to almost every ball the Texans slammed at us. By the end of the match, the Texans were trying so hard that they were hitting the balls into the net or hitting

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them out of bounds in frustration. Every time Bob and I reminisces about memorable matches our minds bring us back to that match.

An aspect of Bob that few know is his Men's Breakfast and Bible study. For more than eleven years Bob has held a weekly meeting where one of the participants (including Bob) alternates preparing the breakfast of the day. The session starts with a prayer. We go over a list of people who are in need of God's help and make a special prayer for them. Then Bob goes into his Jay Leno/Jimmy Fallon mode as he reads some of the best late night jokes to us. After this we discuss passages of the Bible or see a video of a Christian speaker/motivator or discuss a book that Pastor Bob had selected for weekly discussion. At the end of our one hour session Bob finishes the meeting with a prayer. These weekly meetings are one of the most interesting parts of our association with 2UC and those of us that go regularly try not to miss it for any reason.

A few years back we had the privilege of traveling with Bob and Christie on a trip to Israel and Petra. Edwin and Conchi Perez and John and Evelyn Alberts were also with us. We had a wonderful trip traveling all over Israel on a bus. Wherever we went our Israeli guide would show us the historical, archeological or Jewish significance and Bob would explain in great detail the biblical and Christian significance of these places. It was a trip of a lifetime made extraordinary by Pastor Bob's preaching.

Bob and Christie are known for their generosity and service to others. Once, two girls from the USA had an accident in Puerto Rico. One of the girls went to a local hospital and the other did not know anyone in Puerto Rico. The parents of the injured girl called Second Union Church to ask for some English speaking person to help their daughter. Bob went to the hospital to help the girl and took in the other girl to stay at their home until she could get back to the USA.

The first time I went to Maundy Thursday evening supper, I was sitting at a table to see the ceremony. Pastor Bob took a bowl of water and went to my table and proceeded to remove my shoes and socks. I was so surprised that I almost started to protest his actions. I was not worthy of Pastor Bob washing my feet. I felt like there were many people in the room worthier than me. But as Pastor Bob washed and dried my feet he taught me a valuable lesson in life about service and Grace. We will never be worthy of God's grace and we can never repay Jesus' sacrifice for us.....I will thank Pastor Bob for that lesson all my life.....

Pastor Bob is a person who is loved and respected by all of the people that know him for his humility, sincerity, his compassion for other human beings and his heartfelt desire to help all persons in any way he can. Those of us that have the privilege to know him can thank God for placing him in our lives.