

History of the First United Methodist Church of Kennett

1997–1998

The years 1997 and 1998 continued to show many of our church members active in civic organizations. The same held true for the youth of the church, who remained involved and committed in many ways.

A tragic event occurred on July 29, 1997, when the Sumach Church, located just a few miles outside of Kennett, burned to the ground. While this did not directly affect our congregation, it was a sorrowful loss for the broader faith community.

On November 17, 1997, a remarkable and likely once-in-a-lifetime event took place at our Sunday worship service, when six babies were baptized in one day. They were: Brianna and Robert Looney (twins), Mary Ann Wright, Corey Wilkinson, Josh Wilcoxon, and Janice Burton.

Also in 1997, the church played an instrumental role in helping Boris Kozlovsky and his wife, along with their three children, relocate from Slovakia to Missouri. Since that time, the family has thrived, and their children, now grown, have gone on to earn college degrees.

The annual Rally Day balloon release continued to be a cherished tradition. On August 17, 1998, the church released balloons into the sky. Just twelve days later, on August 29, the Dunklin Democrat received a touching letter: one of the Kennett church balloons had been found south of Memphis by a family whose five-year-old daughter had recently lost two beloved dogs. She had been sending balloons to her dogs every day, and when she found the balloon from Kennett, she believed it had been sent back by her dogs.

The youth choir remained strong during these two years, continuing to be an important and vibrant part of the church's ministry.

Outside the church, a notable event in the community occurred when James Kahn Department Store closed its doors on January 24, 1998—a significant change in the local business landscape.

At this time, the pastor of the First United Methodist Church was Richard Combs.