



City of Phoenix

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

Staff Report: Z-76-25-8 July 29, 2025

**Central City Village Planning
Committee Meeting Date:**

August 11, 2025

**Historic Preservation Commission
Hearing Date:**

August 18, 2025

Planning Commission Hearing Date:

September 4, 2025

Request From:

[R-3 CCSIOD](#) (Multifamily Residence District, Central City South Interim Overlay District) (0.33 acres)
[C-3 CCSIOD](#) (General Commercial, Central City South Interim Overlay District) (0.65 acres)

Request To:

[R-3 CCSIOD HP](#) (Multifamily Residence District, Central City South Interim Overlay District, Historic Preservation) (0.33 acres)
[C-3 CCSIOD HP](#) (General Commercial, Central City South Interim Overlay District, Historic Preservation) (0.65 acres)

Proposal:

Historic Preservation Overlay for Emmanuel Church of God in Christ

Location:

Southeast corner of 16th Avenue and Buckeye Road

Owner:

Emmanuel Church of God in Christ, Inc.

Applicant:

City of Phoenix Historic Preservation Commission

Representative:

Maura Jackson, Planner III

Staff Recommendation:

Approval

Background

The subject property was not included in any of the historic property surveys completed by the City of Phoenix HP Office at the time of the request for designation. The most relevant survey is the 2004 *African American Historic Property Survey*. In 2004, this property would have been just under 50 years of age, which is typically the benchmark for inclusion in historic resource surveys. The surrounding neighborhoods were acknowledged within the survey, but not specifically detailed.

Designation was requested in 2024 by Steve Colter, a representative of the current property owner. After review and evaluation, the property was recommended individually eligible for listing on the Phoenix Historic Property Register (PHPR) under Criterion A for its association with African American ethnic heritage in Phoenix. Designation was initiated by the City of Phoenix HP Commission on February 10, 2025.

Property Overview

The construction of this building began in 1961 by the Church organization, largely led by Elder Felton King. Following a pause in construction, construction resumed and was completed in 1963 with no change to the plans. This initial portion of the church featured a rectangular plan for a sanctuary with a main entrance on the north side. Additional entrances from the parking lot are on the west side, and vertical windows line the east and west sides, pairs alternated by exterior pilasters. The interior of the building is oriented with the seated occupants facing the south side, where a choir loft, stage, and baptismal font are set. Beyond this area further to the south, there is storage and office space. A small annex building was added in 1982, then replaced by a more substantial addition between 1991-2001 which connects perpendicularly to the south side of the original portion. This addition encloses the parking lot. The overall building footprint has remained unchanged since then. Permits name a few contractors for plumbing and other items but do not indicate a specific architect or builder. Instead, the Church is listed as the owner to complete the work.

Architecturally, the church exhibits elements of Midcentury Modern design details, although pared down from high-style examples. There is geometric breeze block along the walkway near the church entrances, the roof overhang is deep and angled, and the stained-glass windows on the north side feature typical colors and pattern of this era. The building's design – with side doors, narrow windows, and siting on the parcel – shows a dependence on the automobile and interior lighting as well as air conditioning. The later addition ties into the detailing with a different geometric breeze block and shorter pilasters. This portion has even more understated stylistic elements which further differentiate it as an addition and subordinate to the original church.

The church was an important community space for African Americans in Phoenix serving the surrounding neighborhood comprising the area bounded by 7th to 15th Avenues and Buckeye Road to the Maricopa Freeway and the area bounded by 11th to 17th Avenues and Lincoln Street to Buckeye Road, also referred to as West Side I and West Side II in the 2004 *African American Historic Property Survey*. The neighborhood is described as including mixed architectural styles with a high number of vacant lots and small multi-family units as well as new infill houses as of 2004. Although these areas were not recommended eligible at the time of survey due to low integrity, a high level of significance was identified. The areas were noted as retaining much of the residential street patterns and showing the relationship between neighborhoods,

churches, and commercial properties on major perimeter streets. This church was also important beyond the immediately surrounding neighborhood; many church members also resided in the Matthew Henson Public Housing complex just northeast of the West Side developments.

Eligibility Criteria

The eligibility criteria for HP overlay zoning and listing on the PHPR are set forth in Section 807.D of the City of Phoenix Zoning Ordinance. To qualify, a property must demonstrate significance in local, regional, state, or national history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture, according to one or more of the following criteria:

- A. The property is associated with the events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history;
- B. The property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- C. The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represents the work of a master, possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. The property has yielded or may likely yield information integral to the understanding of our prehistory or history.

In addition to the significance requirement, the property must also be at least 50 years old or have achieved significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance. The property must also possess sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to convey its significance.

Significance

Emmanuel Church of God in Christ is eligible for historic designation under Criterion A, for its association with African American ethnic heritage in Phoenix as an important neighborhood-serving church and center of civic organizing in the “New Homes” area of Phoenix.

History

The initial congregation was of the same denomination, The Church of God in Christ (COGIC), and the current denomination of the Buckeye Road church remains as such. The COGIC denomination itself grew out of the Pentecostal Holiness denomination as a result of the 1906 Azusa Street Revivals. The current congregation’s original church building, called Church #3, was built in affiliation with the COGIC denomination in 1934. This earlier building was located at 13th Avenue and Sherman, just a few blocks north of the current Buckeye Road location. The 1936 founding members of Emmanuel were also the first members of the church Trustee Board: Elder Felton King Sr. “President”

(later Bishop Felton King Sr.), Sister Blanche Wright "Secretary", Brother Paul Washington "Deacon", and Brother McKinley 'Pop' Brewer "Deacon." Although the Buckeye Road church building wasn't constructed until the 1960s, the same early congregation had been well established and had been associated with this neighborhood for decades prior. During this time of transition to a new location, the surrounding neighborhood experienced growth, particularly with residential development.

Community Impact

The integration of this church within the neighborhood reinforced its role as a community institution in addition to its religious function. The church's civic importance to the area included its advocacy in naming the Mary McLeod Bethune School (1310 South 15th Avenue) which opened in 1947, honoring the prominent African American educator and civil rights activist. This school was built to serve the nearby Matthew Henson housing community, which was home for many members of Emmanuel Church of God in Christ as well. Later the church community pushed for a park to serve the school and surrounding "New Homes" neighborhood, and Alkire Park (1602 West Pima Street) was established in 1953, followed by Randy Johnson Field in 2001. This was a huge effort for the neighborhood; since this area was predominantly made up of Blacks and Latinos, the community had previously been limited to use of only Grant Park and Harmon Park. The church was instrumental in amplifying a community voice for social and civic change.

Church efforts were equally important in promoting safety within the community. The church worked to curb gang violence particularly rampant in the early 1980s to the late 1990s. This church also served as a venue for many political events and civil rights movements. Specifically, it was a place where NAACP presidents and members, such as Lincoln Ragsdale, Cloves Campbell Sr., Calvin Goode, Judge Cody Williams and Charles Fanniel, met to strategize the next steps in African American progress for Phoenix.

This is an example of a church with a strong relationship to its neighborhood setting, and the Emmanuel Church continues to serve the Central Phoenix community. In the 2004 *African American Historic Property Survey*, a category of significant buildings identified included more modest churches with smaller congregations that were embedded within neighborhoods. Unlike other churches that were built mainly on prominent streets, these churches were integrated in the middle of neighborhoods or conveniently sited at the edge of the neighborhoods they served. This integration within the neighborhood reinforced the role of the church as a community institution in addition to its religious function.

Integrity

With the exception of the rear addition, the building has had minimal alterations since construction. Part of the interior has been recently renovated to provide updated restrooms, but the significant interior spaces remain intact. The sanctuary's interior features an original wood ceiling, unique patterned window glass, and original doors. Each aspect of integrity has been retained to convey significance for this property. The neighborhood patterns are still present, and its location at a prominent corner within the New Homes neighborhood conveys the significance of this church for the surrounding areas.

Boundary Justification

Section 807.E states that, when applying the evaluation criteria in Section 807.D, the boundaries of a historic district should be drawn as carefully as possible to ensure that:

1. The district contains documented historic, architectural, archaeological, or natural resources;
2. The district boundaries coincide with documented historic boundaries such as early roadways, canals, subdivision plats or property lines;
3. Other district boundaries coincide with logical physical or manmade features and reflect recognized neighborhood or area boundaries; and
4. Other non-historic resources or vacant land is included where necessary to create appropriate boundaries to assist in meeting the criteria in Section 807.D.

The proposed HP zoning boundary encompasses 0.98 gross acres. It has been drawn to include the subject parcel in its entirety as well as the adjacent portion of the right way, as is customary in rezoning cases. The proposed boundary contains the documented historic resources and follows parcel lines and street monument lines as much as possible. The proposed boundary will exclude the separate parcel to the south, also owned by the Church, because it contains no documented historic resources.

Findings

The rezoning request Z-76-25-8 to establish Historic Preservation (HP) overlay zoning for the subject property should be approved for the following reasons:

1. The property meets the significance, age, and integrity requirements for HP overlay zoning set forth in Section 807.D of the Zoning Ordinance; and
2. The proposed boundaries meet the eligibility criteria outlined in Section 807.E.

Stipulations

None

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Writer

Maura Jackson

July 29, 2025

Team Leader

Kevin Weight

Exhibits

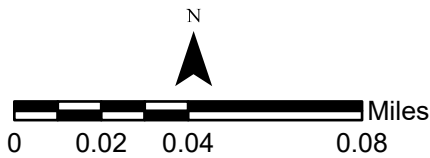
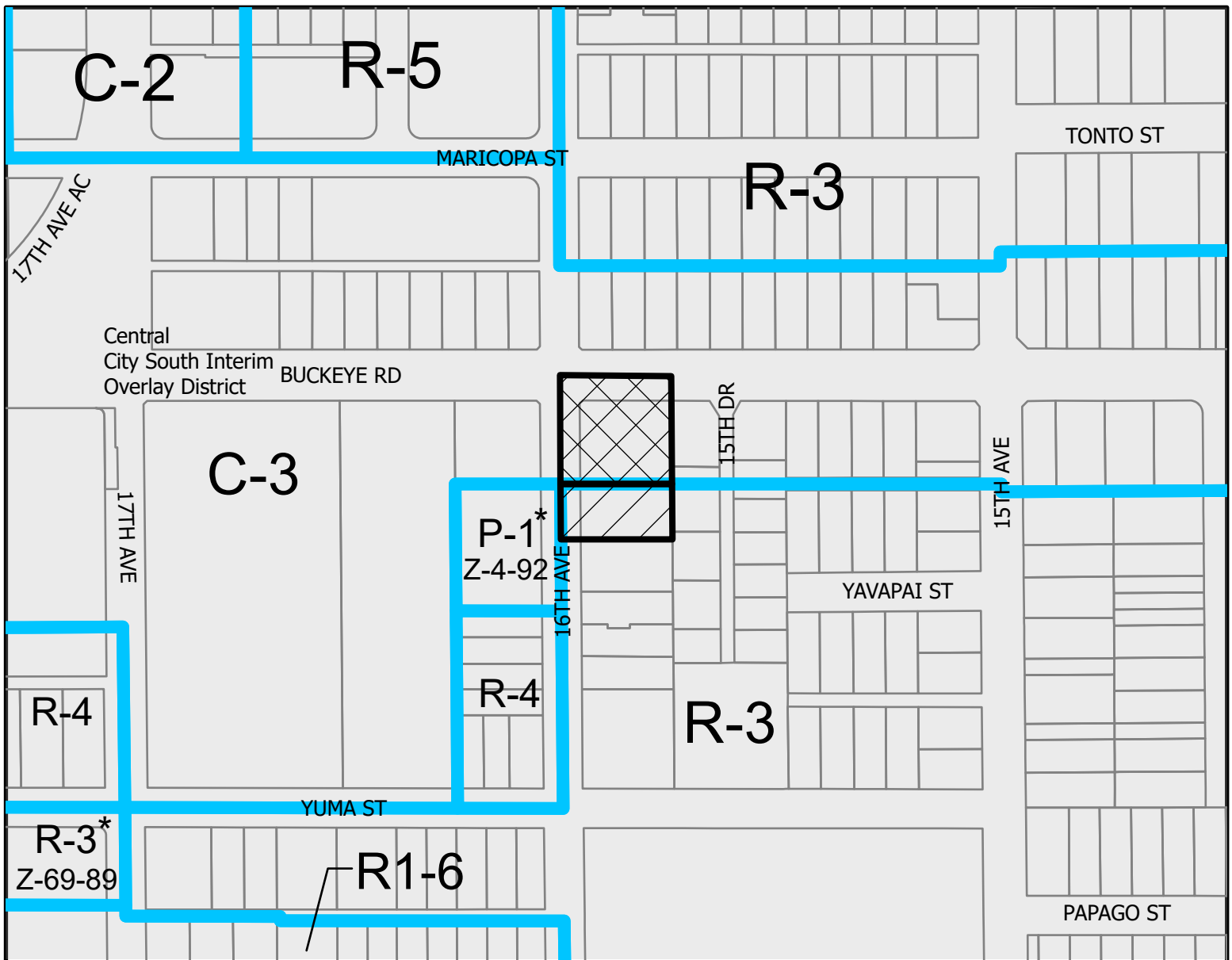
Sketch Maps (1 page)

Aerial Photo (1 page)

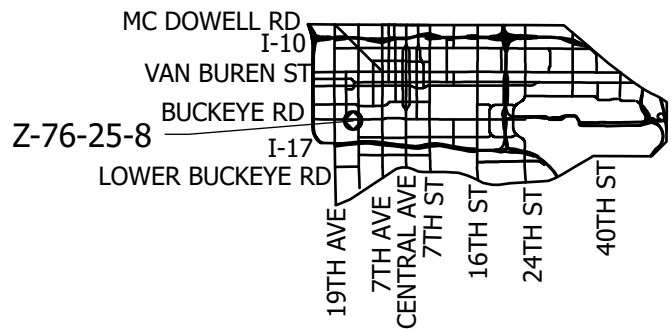
Article from the *Arizona Tribune*, "Church Groundbreaking Ceremony Held at Site,"
March 31, 1961, p. 6. (1 page)



Historic Building Permit Records (3 pages)

Current Photos of Property (4 pages)

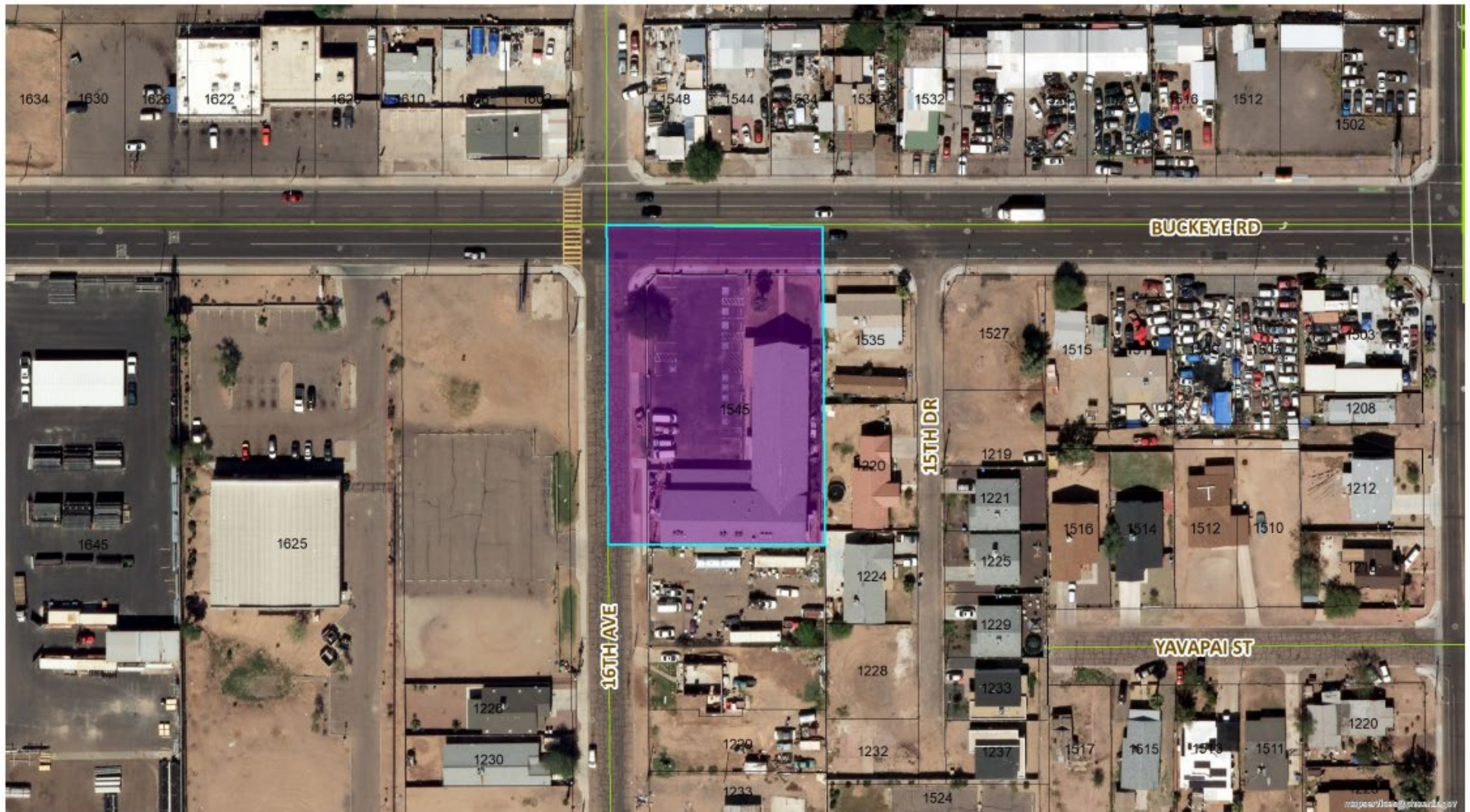


CENTRAL CITY VILLAGE
COUNCIL DISTRICT: 8



APPLICANT'S NAME: City of Phoenix Historic Preservation Commission		REQUESTED CHANGE:	
APPLICATION NO: Z-76-25-8	DATE: 5/30/2025 REVISION DATES:	FROM: C-3 CCSIOD (0.65 ac.) R-3 CCSIOD (0.33 ac.)	
GROSS AREA INCLUDING 1/2 STREET AND ALLEY DEDICATION IS APPROX. 0.98 Acres	AERIAL PHOTO & QUARTER SEC. NO. QS 8-25	ZONING MAP F-7	TO: C-3 HP CCSIOD (0.65 ac.)  R-3 HP CCSIOD (0.33 ac.) 
MULTIPLES PERMITTED C-3 CCSIOD, R-3 CCSIOD C-3 HP CCSIOD, R-3 HP CCSIOD	CONVENTIONAL OPTION 9, 5 9, 5		* UNITS P.R.D OPTION 11, 5 11, 5

* Maximum Units Allowed with P.R.D. Bonus



Emmanuel Church of God in Christ
1537 West Buckeye Road (a.k.a. 1545 West Buckeye Road)

Proposed Historic Preservation (HP) Zoning Overlay boundary shaded in purple

DOZEN LIVE BUNNIES AID EL RANCHO MARKETS WITH EASTER EGG HUNTS



Children and eggs will be the two main features at the 12 El Rancho Markets located over the Valley, Saturday morning, April 1. Beginning at 8:30 a.m. El Rancho will host its annual Easter egg hunts. Children up to eight years are invited. Over 2,000 candy eggs will be hidden in each market plus many "secret" eggs which entitle finders to claim special prizes.

Pictured above are twelve of the largest rabbits ever captured. These rabbits will supervise egg hunts at these El Rancho Markets.

Parents are asked to accompany children to the stores in order to prevent traffic accidents or straying children.

SOUTH HILITES

BY GERTIE OLIVER

Hello chums, beginning this week, I will bring you news of the South Mountain High School students. Drop me a note at 5042 South 22 St., or phone me at BR 6-3646, if you have any bits to be printed.

Loraine Newman, sophomore, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Newman, 4209 S. Twelfth Street, was successful in the pom pom girls tryouts.

Sophomore Howard Kirk, 1902 E. Atlanta, won first place in the Rotary Club citywide speech finals contest.

One way to break a kid of bitin' his nails is to knock his teeth out.

TANNER CHAPEL AME CHURCH
EIGHTH ST. AND JEFFERSON-REV. C.N. AUSTIN



EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE
APRIL 2--SUNDAY 6 A. M.

"THE SEVEN LAST WORDS OF CHRIST"

PRESENTED BY THE SENIOR CHOIR
MR. ROBERT FRAZIER--DIRECTOR
MRS. RACHEL WARD--ORGANIST
MRS. CORA MC-CLINE PIANIST

BREAKFAST SERVED FOLLOWING PROGRAM



FIRST INSTITUTIONAL BAPTIST CHURCH, 1141 E. Jefferson, Rev. A. G. Kendrick, pastor.

The Choralliers will present an Easter cantata, "The Gospel According to St. John", Easter Sunday at sunrise services beginning at six o'clock. Mrs. Charlesetta Banks is organist, Miss Barbara Kendrick, pianist and Mr. Carver Barnes, is director.

TANNER CHAPEL AME CHURCH, Eighth St. and Jefferson, Rev. C. N. Austin, pastor.

Everyone is invited to attend the special sunrise services begin at 6 a.m. Easter Sunday, April 2. The senior choir under the direction of Mrs. Robert Frazier will present "The Seven Last Words of Christ". Mesdames Rachel Ward will be the organist and Cora McCline will be the pianist. Breakfast will be served after the musical program.

SCOUTING AROUND



Kingpins of the men's division of the Metro basketball league are the Darrow Lotfield Hawks.

Team spirit and playing ability enabled them to defeat Quien Sabe in the tourney playoff. Hawks' starters include Frank Mass, T.C. Dean, Manuel Varella, Bob Deines, and Richard Thompson. Relievers were Tommy Wright, Ervin McWilliams, Junior Lawrence, Joe Hartley, George Bearden, and Elmer Green.

Successful cheerleader candidates at Phoenix Union tryouts include Earline Whitfield, freshman, on junior varsity squad; sophomores Barbara Kendrick, Charles Echoles, and Elroy Taylor, on the varsity squad.

Gloria Frazier has become the bride of Virgil Lane, well known musician, now serving in the U. S. Army. Both were former ASU students. Virgil is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Virgil Lane, Sr., 1905 E. Adams.

Vernon Russell, now stationed in Germany, completed an excellent basketball season, averaging 22 points per game. He also won all-division honorable mention, and he played only in the last six games.

Leo Gantt is visiting his family and friend after a tour of duty with the U.S. Navy in Japan. He is at home with his mother, Mrs. Hazel Link. Welcomeback, Leo!

Perfect spellers in the 1961 Noma spelling contest held at Phoenix Union High School included Sharon Brooks, Dorothy Echoles, Mary Nell Hall, Brenda Hightower, Janice Miller and JoElla Russell.

See you next week,
Your Girl Friday,
Shirley Smith

CHURCH GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY HELD AT SITE



Groundbreaking began at the proposed site of a new building of the Emmanuel Church of God in Christ, 1537 W. Buckeye Rd.

Elder Felton King, minister, has worked diligently to increase the congregation and through his efforts and the help of many members, friends and businessmen, concrete footings were poured last Friday.

Approximate cost is \$35,000. The building will include an auditorium, a mothers' chapel, a balcony, choir dressing rooms, baptistry, pastor's study, office and a multiple purpose memorial hall.

Pictured above are Elder Felton King, Elder U. S. Hollins, Bros. Milton Colter, R. Jackson, L.D. Grant, Willie Colter, Lavern Washington, and an unidentified truck driver from Fisher Concrete Co.

VALLEY LIFE BEGINS NEW STRUCTURE

Lincoln J. Ragsdale, president of Valley Life Insurance Co., announces a building expansion, which includes erection of a two story brick veneer office space at 1138-40 E. Washington St.

The new section will be built west, adjacent to the present structure. It will cover about 7,000 square feet. Construction has begun and it is scheduled for completion on July 1. Project is financed by the Southwest Savings and Loan Assn.

A medical and dental suite, executive and accounting offices, reception room, fireproof record room of Valley Life will be housed on the ground floor.

The Adrienne Beauty Salon, Vasco Land Company and International Investment Company offices and a public meeting room is planned on the second floor.

BOXERS SIGNED

PITTSBURGH-- A National Boxing Association official said last night that NBA light heavyweight champion Harold Johnson has agreed to defend his title against Von Clay on April 24 in Philadelphia.

★ **CALDERON BALLROOM** ★

YOUR FAVORITE DRINKS NOW AVAILABLE

IN PERSON

DANCING NINE - ONE

JAMES BROWN

AND THE FABULOUS, FAMOUS FLAMES
HEAR THESE GREAT, ALL TIME HITS

'POWER OF LOVE', 'THINKING', 'TRY ME,
'THIS OLD HEART' AND MANY OTHERS

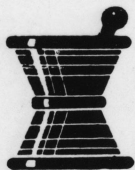
THURSDAY APR. 6

ADVANCE TICKETS ON SALE AT CALDERON BAR,
FREDDIE'S DRIVE IN - REDDY'S CORNER

OPENSHAW'S PHARMACY

1605 So. 16th Street

FREE
DELIVERY
EFFICIENT
TOO



FAST AND
COURTEOUS
SERVICE

PRESCRIPTIONS CAREFULLY COMPOUNDED

NOTIONS - FILM & CAMERA SUPPLIES

PACKAGED LIQUORS, TOO

AL 2-4009 • AL 2-4000

CITY OF PHOENIX, ARIZONA
DIVISION OF BUILDING INSPECTIONS

PHONES: CITY HALL, Rm. 8-7213 EXT. 587
NORTH CENTRAL W/ 2-2477

Building Permit Application + Permit
1545 W. Buckeye Rd.

Permit No.

4046
A 15961

CT - 92

51.50

Fee \$

Request is hereby made to construct at

on Lot Number

W $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ exc S 74' & EX A 33'

Line

C-3 &

Block

Addition

R-3

owned by

Emanuel Church of

the following described building or appurtenances:

God in Christ

Type of Construction

III b

Occupancy

(A-3) Masonry church building

Construction to be done by

Owner

Cost:

28,000

It is understood and agreed that permission to occupy any street, sidewalk, alley or public right-of-way must be obtained from the Division of Engineering. If such permission is granted I or WE hereby agree to promptly carry out all laws governing same, and to hold the City harmless from any costs, damages, or claims, whatsoever, arising out of, or as a result of said occupancy.

It is further understood and agreed that the issuance of this permit shall not be considered as an adoption by the Building Inspector of the manifested technical construction contained in the plans and specifications, if thereafter it can be shown that any portion of the work is in conflict with any portion of the ordinances. It is agreed that this work will be done in conformity with the laws of the City of Phoenix and the State of Arizona.

It is also understood and agreed that sanitary facilities must be furnished for jobs in excess of \$10,000 in value in accordance with the requirements of Ordinance G-202 of the City of Phoenix.

It is understood that the following permits are also required:



Electrical



Plumbing



Mechanical

Emanuel Church of God in Christ

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT — OWNER, ARCHITECT, CONTRACTOR

Permission is hereby granted to construct at the above address the building or appurtenances described above

D-to Plan. Received

2/24/61

Plans Checked By

FM

Permit No.

A 15961

DIVISION OF BUILDING INSPECTIONS

By

Merry

Note: This Permit is not valid unless fees are paid and the form properly validated in the upper right hand corner.

CITY OF PHOENIX, ARIZONA
DIVISION OF BUILDING INSPECTIONS
3rd Floor Municipal Building

251 W. Washington

262-6497

APR 18 63 PAID 034497 *****27.75

VOID UNLESS VALIDATOR ABOVE

Permit No.

ck-at BUILDING PERMIT

A 44763

Construction Street Address

1545 W. Buckeye Rd.

Date Issued

4-17-63

Lot

Block

Subdivision

W $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{2}$ EXC

Owned By Emanuel Church of

Census Tract

Zone

No. of Dwelling Units

Class Structure

Occupancy

God in Christ

92

C3 & R3

0

10

A3

Construction to be done by

Type of Construction

Probable Completion Date

Cost of Construction

Fee

Owner

III b

1/64

14,000

27.75

DESCRIPTION OF BUILDING APPURTENANCES:

Mas. church bldg. (Resume construction. no changes)

Refer to A 15961

I/we understand the following:

1. Permission to occupy any street, sidewalk, alley or public right-of-way must be obtained from the Division of Engineering. If such permission is granted, I/we agree to promptly carry out all laws governing same, and to hold the City harmless from any costs, damages, or claims whatsoever, arising out of, or as a result of said occupancy.

2. The issuance of this permit shall not be considered as an adoption by the Building Inspector of the plans and specifications, if thereafter it can be shown that any part of the work is in conflict with any portion of the City ordinances.

3. The work must be done in conformity with the laws of the City of Phoenix, and the State of Arizona

4. The following permits are also required:

☐ Electrical

☒ Plumbing

☒ Mechanical

Emanuel Church of God in Christ
Fletcher Jones

Signature of Applicant-Owner, Architect, Contractor

DISTRIBUTION:

White -- Issuance Numeric

Green -- Bldg. Insp.

Yellow -- Permittee

Phoenix Co. Assessor

Blue -- Auditor

Orange -- Post on Premises

SUPERINTENDENT OF BUILDING INSPECTIONS

By

Herndon

RECORD OF INSPECTIONS

01ER

Attachment: Current Photos of Property



Figure 1. Exterior north and west façades, looking towards southeast from parking lot, 2025.



Figure 2. Exterior breezeblock at west façade, 2025.

Attachment: Current Photos of Property



Figure 3. Church cornerstone, installed on lower right corner of the north façade, 2025.



Figure 4. Interior view of stained glass window on north façade, taken from upper balcony facing north, 2025.

Attachment: Current Photos of Property



Figure 5. Interior view of original wooden ceiling and supports, taken from upper balcony, facing southwest, 2025.



Figure 6. Original interior door heading from narthex into sanctuary, 2025.

Attachment: Current Photos of Property



Figure 7. Interior view towards front of sanctuary, 2025.



Figure 8. Interior window pattern detail, 2025.