

I Remember When Righting Wrongs in Madrona

By Madrona Presbyterian Church

To heal a fifty-year-old injustice, two Presbyterian churches, the predominantly African-American Madrona and the mainly European-American Mercer Island held a service of reconciliation on October 5 in Madrona Presbyterian Church, at 32nd Ave. & Marion.

The diverse churches share an important history. In 1953, the Seattle Presbytery merged two racially segregated Seattle churches—Grace, which was African-American, and Madrona, then European-American. The congregations had only two weeks' notice and no training or preparation for the change. The combined congregation, which was much smaller than either of the original churches', received promises of development from proceeds of the sale of Grace Church. However, over time, the Presbytery became dominated by European-American interests, and when the Grace Church building was finally sold, the proceeds went to purchase land and erect Mercer Island Presbyterian Church, rather than to the Madrona congregation, as promised.

Madrona Presbyterian hung on, serving as a focal point for neighborhood unity in the 1970s. Over the years the church survived divisiveness from the pulpit and the possibility of closure as its congregation and income dwindled. As the Mercer Island church was raised toward the heavens, Madrona's large building received only the barest maintenance.

Recently, the executive presbyter of the Seattle Presbytery, Boyd Stockdale, determined to open dialogue between the churches to remedy this decades-old injustice. The result: Madrona will receive reparations in the amount of the misappropriated funds, plus interest, for a total of \$70,000! But the gift is much greater than just money to make badly needed repairs. Three Mercer Island men are organizing construction professionals to donate their time to do all the necessary work. Repairs have already started, but the major effort will be

October ??, when the entire construction team will converge on the church to set history straight, and prepare Madrona Presbyterian for an even more glorious future.