

Malibu Presbyterian rebuilds

By **RACHEL MILLER**
COPY EDITOR

The date of Oct. 21, 2007, is one that will live in the minds of Malibu Presbyterian Church members forever as the day the Malibu wildfires engulfed their place of worship.

"There's a part of me that feels like it was just yesterday," Pastor Greg Hughes said. "I can still taste the ashes in my mouth. But there's also a part that seems like it was a lifetime ago. A lot has happened since then."

Though there was once a time to mourn, that time has ended. Now the church looks toward the hope for new memories as Nov. 13 marked the day of the groundbreaking for the rebuilding of a new church facility.

"Today is a very special, very momentous time in our church history," Hughes said with a smile.

Despite the lack of a building, the church continued to participate in outreach ministries. Just a week after the fires, a trip to Mexico was coordinated in which members of the congregation

built a house with the nails of their old church.

Since the fires, the church has continued to persevere and even grow in connection with the local community — something that Tim Jones, director of mission outreach and communication, believes may not have occurred if the fires had not taken place.

The church's preschool met in the local Jewish Center, and temporary offices were built for staff members. The congregation also continued to hold services at the Malibu Performing Arts Center and then Webster Elementary for the duration. The church even held its annual father-daughter dance at Malibu Inn.

The church's current meeting place is a large tent, known by the construction company as a "Sprung Structure,"

which has been built on-site for temporary use until the necessary funds were raised to build their permanent facility.

Walking into the Malibu Presbyterian Church is like walking into a family living room. It seems like everyone has been a member forever; many have. Some have attended since 1965, like couple Hayden and Marty Gallagher, who still remember their daughter's wedding in the old church sanctuary.

During the service, Jill and Luke Love, former Pepperdine students, even told the congregation the story of how they met at Malibu Pres and were later married at the church.

Pastor Hughes highlighted some of the heartwarming memories that the church has provided.

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—**Greg Hughes**
Pastor, Malibu Presbyterian

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