

***Common Quest Book Shop***  
**Celebrating 50 Years of Service to the Church**

In 1959 avid readers and book-lovers, Barb and David Amberg, had an idea – open a book store at Fountain Street Church. “We just thought it would be fun,” Barb said. Today we celebrate the genesis of that “fun” idea that has been carried on now for 50 years – serving and stimulating inquiring minds, young and old alike.

Christened “*The Common Quest Book Shop*” (a name that came to Barb “out of the blue” just three days before its official opening), the book store was originally located in the Memorial Tower Room where it first operated one Sunday a month for years. During an extensive church house renovation that began in 1969, the book store moved across the street to what was then Grand Rapids Junior College before a permanent niche in the Library corner of the Social Hall was secured.

After the Amberg’s initial service, a succession of dedicated “book keepers” faithfully tended the store that began to operate every Sunday morning from 9:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. during the church year. In the late 1970s Adeline Kroodsma took over and was soon joined by Pat Huber. They were a steadfast duo for years. When Adeline retired, Jean Springer joined Pat behind the book store desk in 1989, and they have devotedly been a team ever since.

Then and now books are selected to satisfy Fountain Streeter’s diverse interests and thirst for reading and learning. Originally, stock came from Allens Books and Village Books; today all the books you’ll find on display come from Schuler’s, who allow Common Quest a 20% discount. Money earned from book sales is used in a variety of ways to enhance the church – from supporting FSC’s office to the purchase of computer equipment, and more.

Jean and Pat are busy selecting new books nearly every week and tracking the store’s financials. “We cover the waterfront,” said Pat, “from current best sellers to politics, children’s books to topics on religion, local authors to church DVD’s and CD’s, and more.” A lot more. The portable shelves, that were originally custom built during the Amberg years, are stocked full of great choices in reading, from “What Is God?” to “Mitt the Michigan Mouse,” “Everything Hinduism” to “The World’s Religions,” by Houston Smith, to current novels. “Books about politics seem to be the most popular,” said Jean. “And if there’s a special book someone wants ordered, we can do that, too.” Holiday selections are always popular especially now that the Christmas season is upon us. Need a book for a friend or family member or that favorite little one? Now you know where to come, browse and buy.

Congratulations for 50 dedicated years, and thank you Pat and Jean for your loyal service to Fountain Street Church! For avid readers, church members and friends, we’ll see you down at the book shop. It’s a “common quest!”

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