

100 Events in History of Peoples Temple

This timeline was assembled by Fielding McGehee and Don Beck, based upon the extensive research of Don Beck. It is intended to provide the highlights of Peoples Temple’s 25-year history. Other timelines, including ones focusing on events Peoples Temple’s years in Indianapolis, Redwood Valley/Ukiah, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Jonestown, as well as a cumulative timeline, are forthcoming. Please credit the Jonestown Institute and/or this website (<http://jonestown.sdsu.edu/>) when citing.

Month/Day	Year	Event
May 13	1931	James Warren Jones is born to James Thurman and Lynetta Putnam Jones in Crete, Indiana
June 12	1949	Jim Jones and Marceline Baldwin marry at Trinity United Methodist Church in Indianapolis
June	1952	Jim Jones takes position as student pastor at Somerset Methodist Church in Indianapolis
	1954	Marceline and Jim Jones adopt Agnes Jones, the first of six children to be adopted
	1954	Jim Jones launches Community Unity church at Hoyt and Randolph Streets in Indianapolis
April	1955	Wings of Deliverance incorporated
February 5	1956	Jim Jones becomes ordained minister in the Assemblies of God
	1956	Wings of Deliverance church at 15th and North New Jersey opens as “Peoples Temple”
October	1958	Marceline and Jim Jones adopt two Korean children, name them Stephanie and Lew Jones
May 11	1959	Stephanie Jones and five other Temple members killed in car accident
June 1	1959	Stephan Gandhi Jones born, Jim and Marceline Jones’ only natural-born child
Summer	1959	Jim Jones Jr. adopted, first African-American baby adopted by white couple in Indiana
Summer	1959	Jim Jones visits Father Divine in Philadelphia
	1960	Peoples Temple accepted into Disciples of Christ denomination
January 6	1961	Jim Jones appointed to Indianapolis Human Rights Commission
October	1961	Jim Jones has vision of nuclear holocaust in Chicago and Indianapolis
January	1962	<i>Esquire Magazine</i> publishes “Nine Places in the World to Hide” from fallout of nuclear war, including northern California
February	1962	Jones family moves to Escola da Favela, Bello Horizonte, Brazil
	1962	Jim Jones visits British Guiana
December	1963	Jones family leaves Brazil, returns to Indianapolis
February	1964	Jim Jones receives certificate of ordination into Disciples of Christ

July	1965	Peoples Temple moves from Indiana to Ukiah, California; files as non-profit corporation
Summer	1966	Peoples Temple meets at the Church of the Golden Rule in Willits, eventually tries for takeover of membership
Summer	1967	Tim Stoen – Assistant DA of Mendocino County in Ukiah – joins Peoples Temple
Summer	1967	Larry Layton marries Carolyn Moore
	1967	Jim Jones appointed to Mendocino County Grand Jury
April 6	1969	Members of Peoples Temple vote to allow Jim Jones to use account funds “at his discretion”
	1969	Carolyn Moore Layton divorces Larry Layton, begins longstanding affair with Jim Jones
	1969	Construction on Peoples Temple facility in Redwood Valley completed
	1969	Peoples Temple holds services for first time in San Francisco at Benjamin Franklin Jr. High
March	1970	Peoples Temple secures guardianships of children, allows for transfer to Redwood Valley
January	1971	Peoples Temple initiates a membership card system for its members
February	1971	Peoples Temple holds services for first time in Los Angeles at Embassy Auditorium
June	1971	During cross-country tour, Jim Jones fails in attempt to take over Father Divine’s Peace Mission
January 25	1972	John Victor Stoen born to Grace Stoen
February 6	1972	Tim Stoen signs Temple document ascribing paternity of John Victor to Jim Jones
April	1972	Peoples Temple buys “Happy Acres” Ranch in Redwood Valley
May	1972	Shots fired inside Redwood Valley sanctuary, first of several alleged attacks over coming years
September 3-4	1972	Peoples Temple church at Alvarado and Hoover in Los Angeles is blessed and dedicated
September	1972	Lester Kinsolving eight-part series on Peoples Temple begins in <i>S.F. Examiner</i> , suspended after four articles
October	1972	Newsman Mike Prokes joins Peoples Temple, eventually becomes head of Temple public relations
December	1972	Peoples Temple buys property on 1859 Geary, San Francisco
	1972	Temple member Maxine Harpe dies in garage, death ruled a suicide
	1972	Planning Commission first organized
June	1973	Peoples Temple recognized in <i>Congressional Record</i>
August 18	1973	<i>Washington Post</i> commends Peoples Temple in editorial
August	1973	Fire damages Geary Street Temple
September	1973	“Gang of 8” defects

December 13	1973	Jim Jones is arrested in a movie theater in Los Angeles for homosexual activity; charges soon dropped and record sealed
February	1974	Peoples Temple submits lease applications for property to be known as Jonestown in Guyana
June	1974	First group of “pioneers” goes to interior, living at Mathews Ridge, as construction work begins in Jonestown
December 30	1974	Jim Jones holds only church service – a healing service – in Georgetown, Guyana
October 16	1975	Elmer and Deanne Mertle defect, change names to Al and Jeanne Mills
October 19	1975	Temple member John Head commits suicide in Los Angeles
December	1975	George Moscone wins runoff election, becomes mayor of San Francisco with support of Peoples Temple
	1975	Al and Jeanne Mills open Human Freedom Center to assist defecting Temple members
January	1976	Peoples Temple moves headquarters from Redwood Valley to San Francisco
January	1976	Members of Planning Commission drink a glass of wine, told it’s “poison,” in loyalty test
Winter	1976	Peoples Temple fights extradition of Native American activist Dennis Banks to South Dakota
February	1976	Guyana Government, Peoples Temple sign land lease for 3852 acres in Northwest Region
July	1976	Peter Wotherspoon severely beaten in Planning Commission meeting
Summer	1976	Neva Sly, Grace Stoen, Joyce Shaw, Liz Forman separately defect, some as result of Wotherspoon beating
Fall	1976	Rosalynn Carter meets with Jim Jones during presidential campaign
October 5	1976	Bob Houston dies in train yard in incident considered murder by Temple apostates
October 18	1976	Mayor Moscone appoints Jim Jones to San Francisco Housing Authority Commission
November	1976	Jim Jones makes public declaration for socialism at Glide Methodist Church, San Francisco
November 7	1976	Mississippi mayor Unita Wright Blackwell speaks at Peoples Temple, allegedly spied upon
Spring	1977	Concerned Relatives oppositional group forms
July	1977	Tim Stoen leaves Peoples Temple
July 17	1977	“Inside Peoples Temple” article published in August 1 edition of <i>New West Magazine</i> with allegations of abuse
July	1977	Mass exodus of Temple members to Guyana begins
July	1977	Jim Jones leaves US for last time, goes to Jonestown to stay
September	1977	California court rules that John Stoen must be returned to parents; Stoen lawyer attempts to enforce order in Guyana
September	1977	Six-Day siege in Jonestown
September 26	1977	Steven Katsaris visits Guyana to see his daughter, Maria, but does not see her

September	1977	Joe Mazor spies on Jonestown on behalf of Concerned Relatives
December 9	1977	Lynetta Jones dies in Jonestown of natural causes
April 11	1978	Concerned Relatives issues Accusation of Human Rights Violations by Jim Jones
May 12	1978	Debbie Layton, Temple financial secretary, defects from Jonestown to US Embassy in Georgetown
May 13	1978	White Night includes discussion of suicide
May 15	1978	John and Barbara Moore – parents of Carolyn Layton and Ann Moore – visit Jonestown
May	1978	Tim Stoen files numerous lawsuits against Peoples Temple on behalf of Concerned Relatives
June 14	1978	Debbie Layton files affidavit “The Threat and Possibility of Mass Suicide by Members of the Peoples Temple”
June 25	1978	“Suspicious” aircraft flies over Jonestown
August	1978	Don Freed and Mark Lane visit Jonestown, pledge assistance
Fall	1978	Carolyn Layton writes memo outlining options for Jonestown’s future, including mass suicide
October	1978	Longtime Temple supporter and physician Carlton Goodlett visits Jonestown, recommends medical treatment for Jim Jones
October 2	1978	Feodor Timofeyev, Consular of Soviet Union embassy in Guyana, visits Jonestown, as Temple leaders ponder move to USSR
October 27	1978	Temple leader Terri Buford defects from Georgetown
November	1978	Lisa Layton – mother of Debbie and Larry Layton – dies of natural causes in Jonestown
November 1	1978	Rep. Leo Ryan announces intention to visit Jonestown
November 7	1978	US Embassy officials visit Jonestown, note Jim Jones’ deterioration
November 9	1978	600 Jonestown residents sign “resolution of community” opposing Ryan visit; document later used against Larry Layton
November 15	1978	Ryan party – with members of press and Concerned Relatives – arrives in Guyana
November 18	1978	Leo Ryan among five assassinated at Port Kaituma airstrip; 12 others wounded; Larry Layton taken into custody
November 18	1978	909 people die in Jonestown in murder/suicide; four Temple members die in Georgetown
November 27	1978	San Francisco Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk assassinated amidst rumors of Temple hit squads
Nov/Dec	1978	Surviving Temple members in Guyana return to US, face interrogation by FBI
Nov/Dec	1978	Bodies of Jonestown dead airlifted to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware for identification
December 15	1978	Peoples Temple Corporation files petition for dissolution in California Superior Court
December 28	1978	Robert Fabian appointed receiver by court to amass and liquidate Temple assets
March 13	1979	Mike Prokes commits suicide in Modesto

May 17	1979	House Committee of Foreign Affairs issues report on Ryan assassination
May	1979	Unclaimed and unidentified bodies buried at Evergreen Cemetery, Oakland, California
February 26	1980	Al and Jeannie Mills fatally shot in Berkeley home; no suspects ever identified
December 1	1986	Larry Layton convicted in US court after second trial on charges arising out of Ryan assassination
April	2002	Larry Layton released from prison
May 29	2011	Jonestown memorial dedicated at Evergreen Cemetery