

Anne Gimenez Hands Rock Church Leadership to Daughter, Son-in-Law

The Rock Church in Virginia Beach, Va., installed two senior pastors Monday as part of a celebration of 45 years in ministry.

Robin and John Blanchard—daughter and son-in-law of the church's founders, Anne and the late John Gimenez—are the new co-pastors at the 4,000-member Pentecostal church.

Anne Gimenez, who will turn 81 next month, laid hands on the Blanchards as she passed the leadership to them at the church's large sanctuary Monday night.

Gimenez will continue serving as bishop of the Rock Ministerial Fellowship, a network of about 500 congregations around the world—a role she assumed in 2008 after her husband died of a stroke. She had served as senior pastor at the Rock Church since 1999.

"I'm so excited that God has allowed me to see this transition," Gimenez shouted, reports *The Virginian-Pilot*. "This is better than New Year's Eve. It's a new beginning for Rock Church!"

The Blanchards, both 43, have been preparing for the leadership role and have become increasingly more visible at the church. John Blanchard has served as one of the church's executive pastors and a former youth minister, and Robin Blanchard was the business manager and music director.

About 500 congregants were at the event, plus Christian Broadcasting Network founder Pat Robertson, a longtime friend of the Gimenez family, and the Rev. Billy Wilson, Oral Roberts

University president.

“What a great vision John had when this church began,” Robertson said. “And this, tonight, is the fulfillment of it.”