

TOGETHER AT THE ALTAR

MARCH 26, 2017

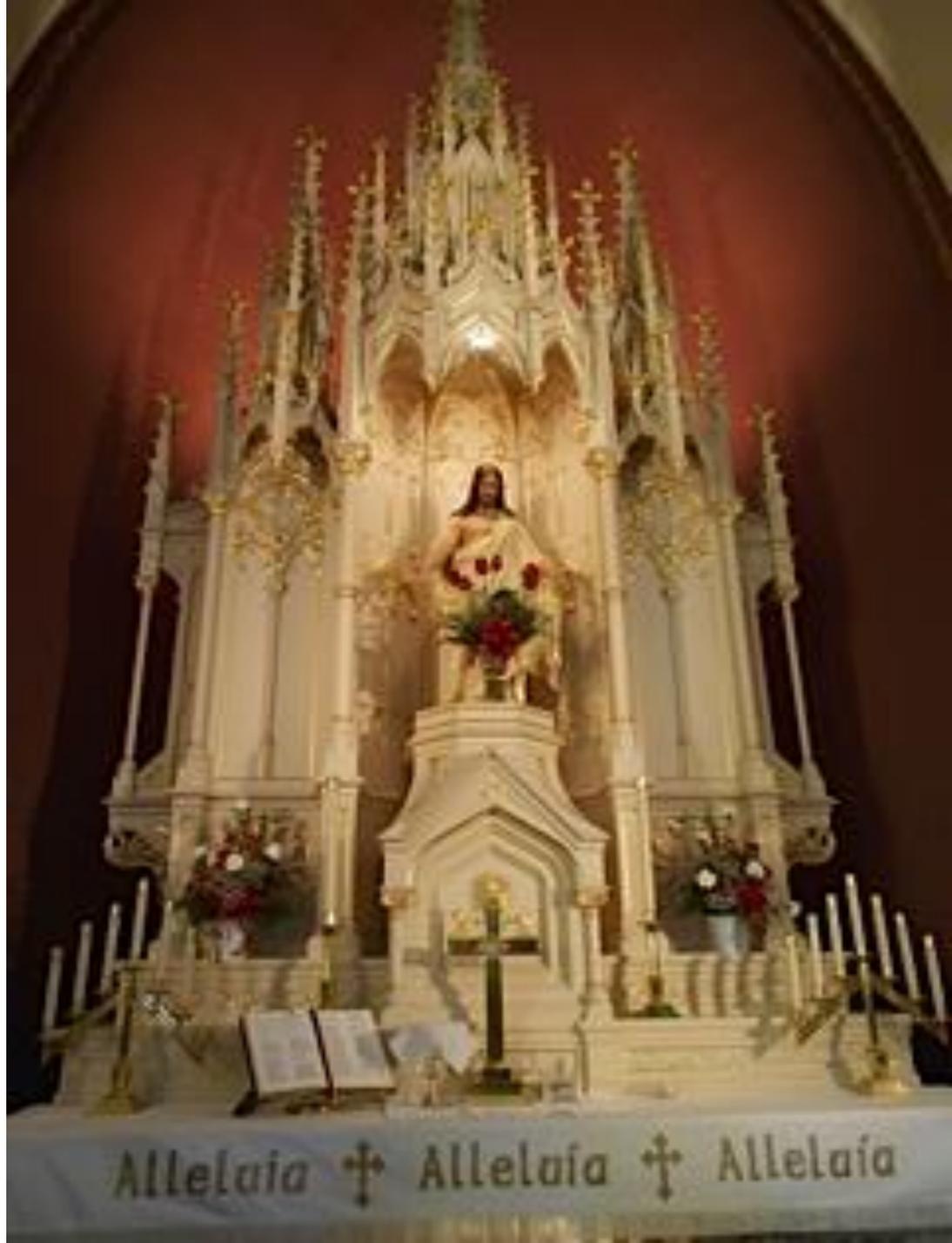


5TH ANNUAL
PENITENT
CENT
1927

Open The Door and I Will Come In
Matthew 12

“Do this in Remembrance of Me”

Each time we gather at this altar for communion, we do just what the Lord told his twelve disciples to do that night when He gathered them together in the upper room.



“Last Supper”



As we look upon the altar, we see the portrayal of the “Last Supper”, the last time our Lord gathered all twelve of His disciples together at one table.

During the 2017 Lenten services we got a small glimpse of those selected Twelve through the live portrayal by current Zion members. The first Wednesday we saw Bartholomew, James the Lesser, and Andrew. The next Lenten service was Judas the treasurer; Peter the outspoken leader; John, Jesus's closet friend.

Those on His Right



**Bartholomew, James the Less
Andrew**



Judas, Peter, John



We met Thomas the doubter who needed to touch Jesus' wounds; James the Greater and Philip who were both fishermen.; we also met Matthew, Thaddeus, and Simon.

Those on His Left



**Thomas, James the Great,
Philip**



Matthew, Thaddeus, Simon



Jesus

“My soul is deeply grieved,
to the point of death”

Matthew 26: 38

Jesus was portrayed during the last Wednesday. The emotions that can be seen on Jesus’s face and His words in Matthew remind us that He did not want to die at the hands of the soldiers and experienced anguish just as we do.



On Maundy Thursday the selected twelve disciples from Zion gathered together for a reenactment of that Last Supper.



Unleavened Bread

**“Take and eat,
this is my body
given for you.”**

The altar has become a symbol, a reminder of the table at which Jesus shared bread and wine with his disciples to celebrate the Jewish Feast of the Passover. This wheat art glass window in the fellowship room can also help us remember the unleavened bread that was made in haste for the Passover meal.



Common Cup

**“Father, if You are willing,
remove this cup from Me, yet
not My will, but Yours be
done”**

Luke 22: 42

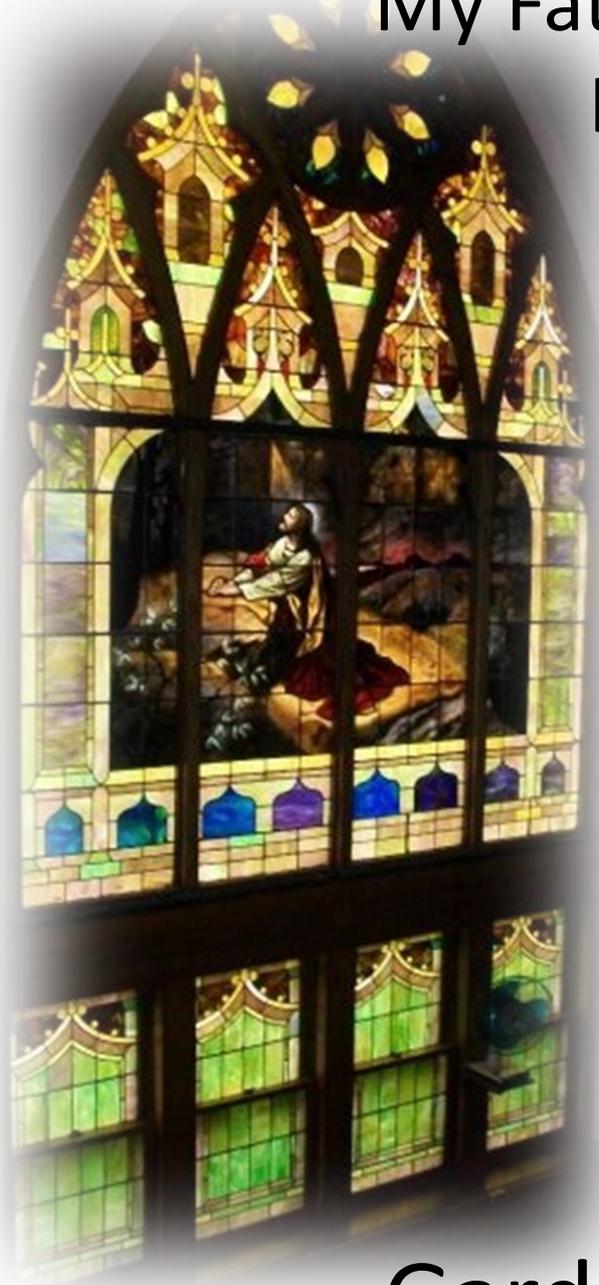
The small art glass window of the cup on the northeast side of the church serves as a reminder of the prayers that Jesus spoke at the Mount of Olive. Jesus was willing to follow his Father’s will no matter what the cost was to Him. Jesus said that people should share bread and wine **forever after** so that they would remember Him.



The painted stain glass window on the south wall of Zion also reminds us of the prayers that Jesus spoke at Mount Olive. His second and third prayer, as recorded in Matthew, were the same. Jesus knew what lay ahead of Him and He knew the reason. Even so, his struggle was intense.

“My Father, if this cannot pass away unless
I drink it, Your Will be Done”

Matthew 26: 42

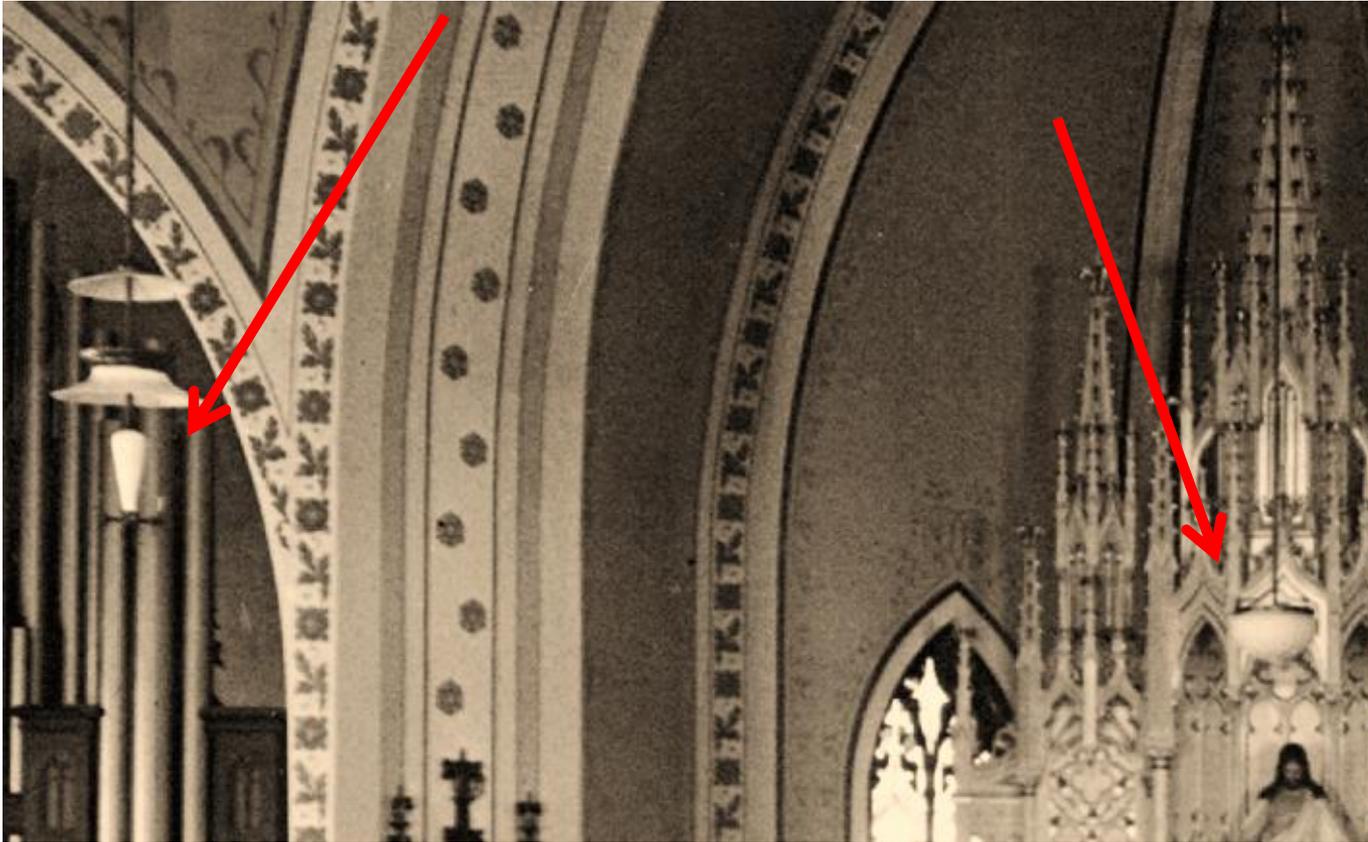


Garden of Gethsemane



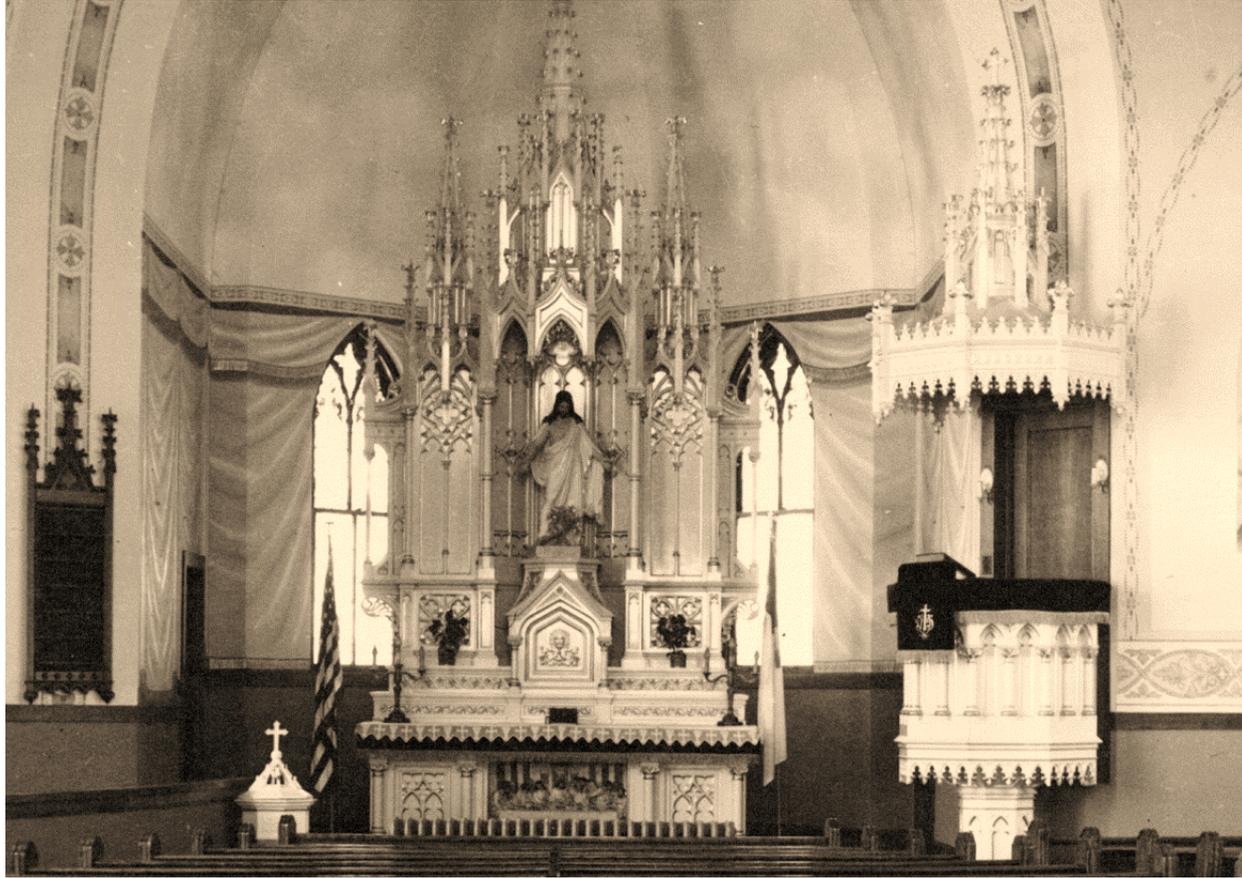
Altars in sanctuaries are a symbol to all of that ultimate sacrifice of the “Perfect Lamb”. The Zion altar and pulpit were purchased from Dubuque Altar Company in 1916 for \$757.13. Once the altar arrived, it was placed in the sanctuary area of the church. This is a picture taken by Rozell’s Photography of Beatrice in 1928 and is the earliest picture of the interior of the church that has been given to us. Electricity for the “new brick church” was voted down in May 1915.

Electricity added 1928



However 13 years later, in Nov 1928, 38 “voting members” at a congregational meeting decided that electric lights were to be put in the church. As you notice there are light fixtures in this picture although different than the current ones.

Two flags purchased 1941

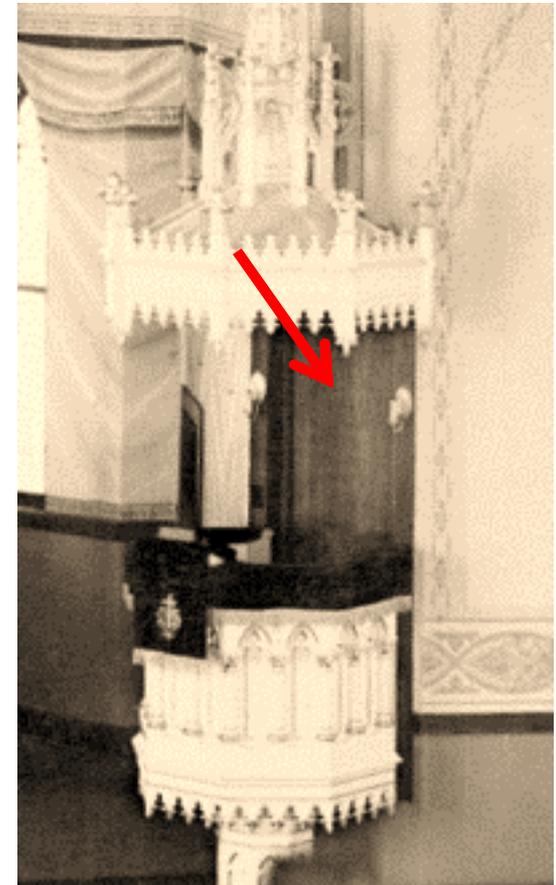


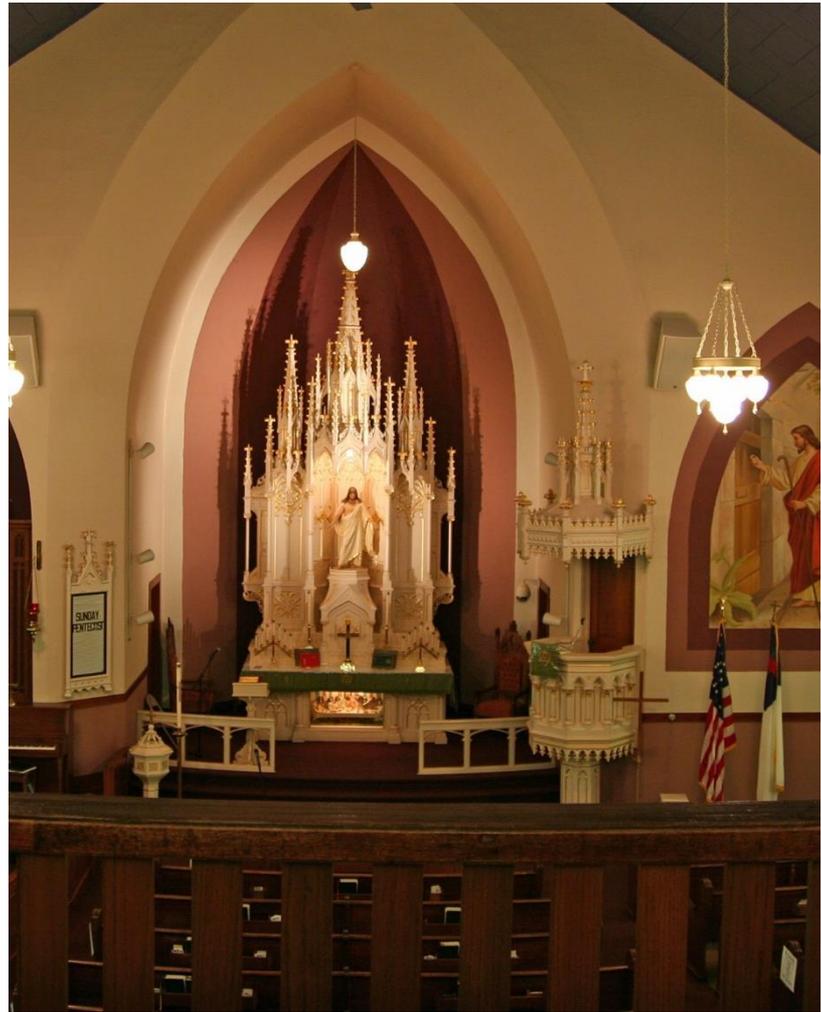
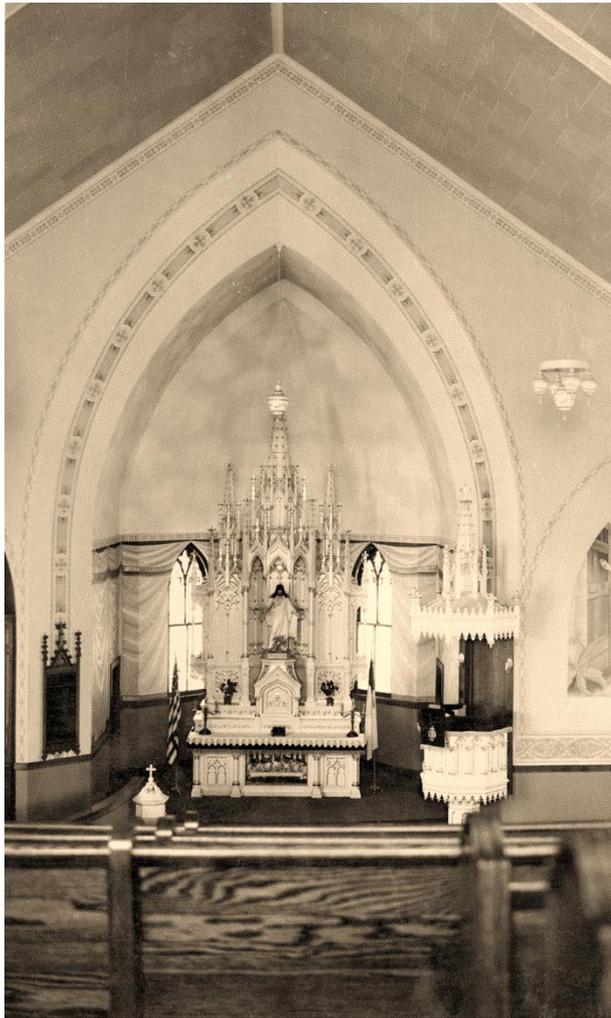
This is the 2nd oldest picture we have and was taken after 1941 sometime. In the congregational minutes on July 20, 1941, it was decided that two flags were to be purchased; an American flag and a Christian flag. This was during the WWII era. Since then, the flags have been moved out of the sanctuary area of the church. The windows behind the altar are still visible but the walls and stenciling are different.

The light fixtures are also different. You can see by 1941 that the lights had been changed to the ones we currently have. However it appears that at some point in time there were also small light fixtures on the door frame of the pulpit.



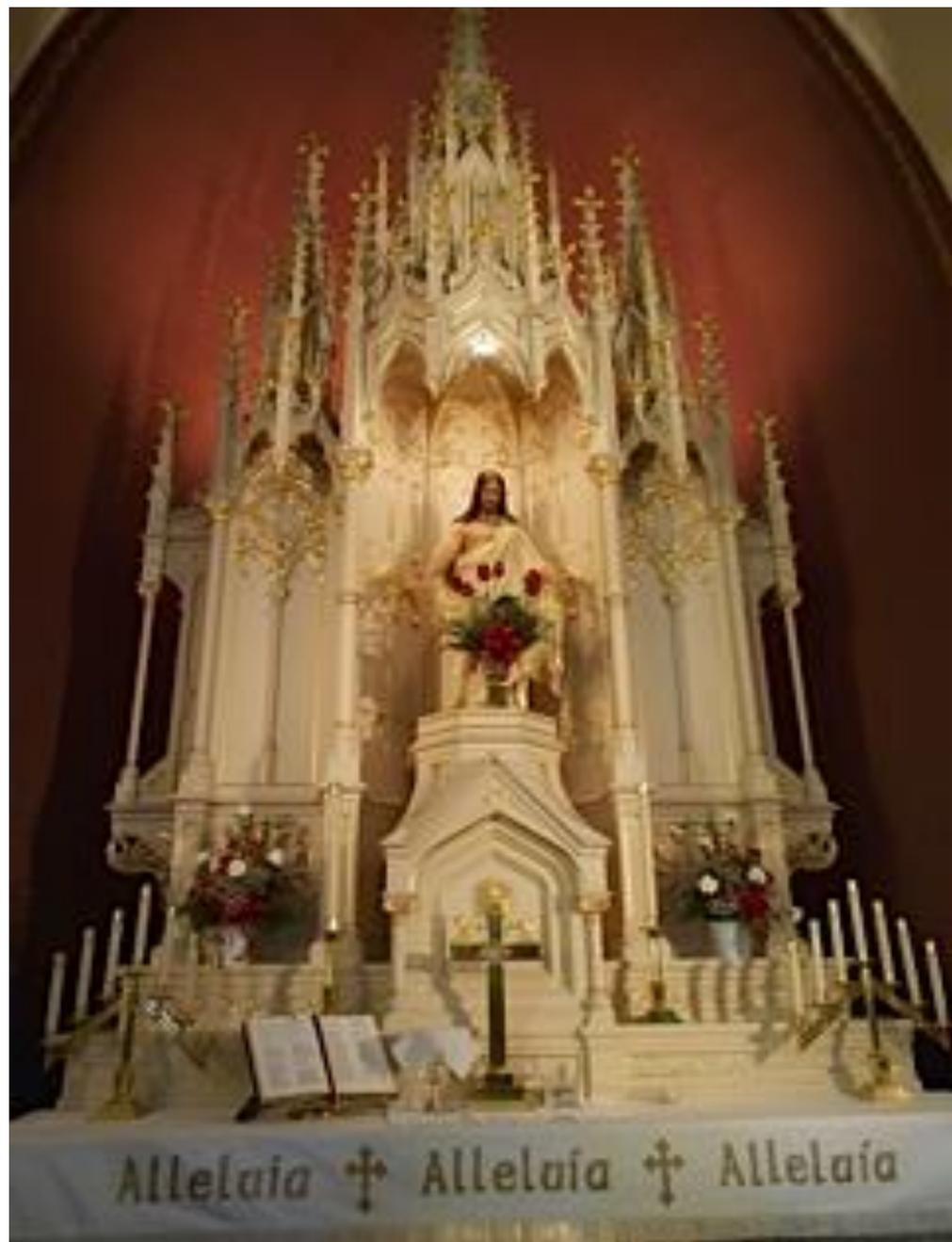
1941





This is the same picture taken from the back of the balcony. Notice how you can see the entire altar. This was the issue that delayed the raising of the balcony railing for so many year. The voting members voted down raising the balcony railing in 1959. The members did not want the view of the altar to be obstructed in anyway which included seeing a railing. In 1982 safety was the determining factor when the railing was finally raised.

The altar itself has changed very little in 100 years. On the next slide, the picture on the left is from 1928 and the one on the right is from All Saints Day of 2013. You'll notice there are flowers at Jesus' feet in both pictures. The flowers in the 1928 picture were plastic. Pastor Hieronymus who came in 1945 did not like the plastic flowers. He made it known that he did not want any artificial flowers on the altar although nothing official was voted on until February 1979 when Pastor Jurgens was at Zion. If live flowers were not available, nothing was placed on the altar.



Flowers on the Altar



**Hilka
Schuster**



But that did not happen very often, especially during the growing seasons. When something was in bloom, the ladies just brought flowers. Sometimes there were lots of bouquets and sometimes not many. But two Zion members, Hilka Schuster, seen here by some of her many flowers,



Lena Dorn



and Lena Dorn, worked together and made sure there were two matching bouquets on the altar each and every Sunday. Lena's daughter said that her mom would spend time arranging all the bouquets that came in from others before the Sunday morning service. These brass vases, along with the candelabras we use today, were given by the Dorn family in memory of Dietrick, son of Siebend and Lena, who drowned on an outing while attending seminary. We would like a member of both Hilka's and Lena's family to share these bouquets after today's service in the same way their grandmothers did so many years ago.

One of the memories shared refers to taking the Sunday altar bouquets to the cemetery on Mondays, bringing back the memories of the cemeteries that surrounded their home church in Strackholt, Germany. Many who have visited that church in Germany say those grave sites are amazing. There are many others who have used their gardening talents to adorn our altar and church with flowers and for that we are very thankful.





**“You shall overlay it
with pure gold,
inside and out you
shall overlay it, and
you shall make a
gold molding
around it.”**

Exodus 25: 11

Although no changes have occurred to the altar, there has been one enhancement that occurred around 1949. The altar was gold tipped. The painting of the entire church and the gold tips of the altar and pulpit was completed by Mr. Mickelsen who worked on the project for two months. Arden Dorn, who lived about a mile west of the church, stated that as a young boy he would walk up to church and just sit and watch “the man” paint. He remembers that it took a long time.

Gold Tipping



We are fortunate to have the current photography abilities to capture the beauty of the gold tipping, but better yet to be able to see it with our own eyes as we worship together before the altar. Mr. Mickelson used “real gold” so that shine will never fade.

This reminds us of the gold used for the tabernacle as is referred to in Exodus.

IHS

The first letters of the name Jesus in the Greek alphabet

“Do this in remembrance of me”. The gold emblem at the center of our altar reminds us of why we come to the altar. The sunrays around the wafer symbolizes the Jesus’ body and the goblet His blood. The Old Testament practice of animal sacrifices on an altar paved the way for Christ’s perfect sacrifice, the lamb without sin.



Sharon Oltman Schuster recalls: Hilka Schuster was my grandmother and at a very young age I was taught to respect the sanctuary, where the altar was located. My grandmother would not allow us to place the flowers on the altar, only she could do that. Other Zion members remember not being allowed to walk in front of the altar in those early years of Zion. They were taught this was a sign of disrespect for the sacraments. The practice of not crossing in front of the altar was the result of a catholic tradition when the sacraments were placed in a cabinet that was behind a hinged door approximately where the gold goblet is. The bread and wine were placed into that compartment from the back of the altar and only clergy could retrieve it from the front. No one was to approach the altar casually.

“There is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved”

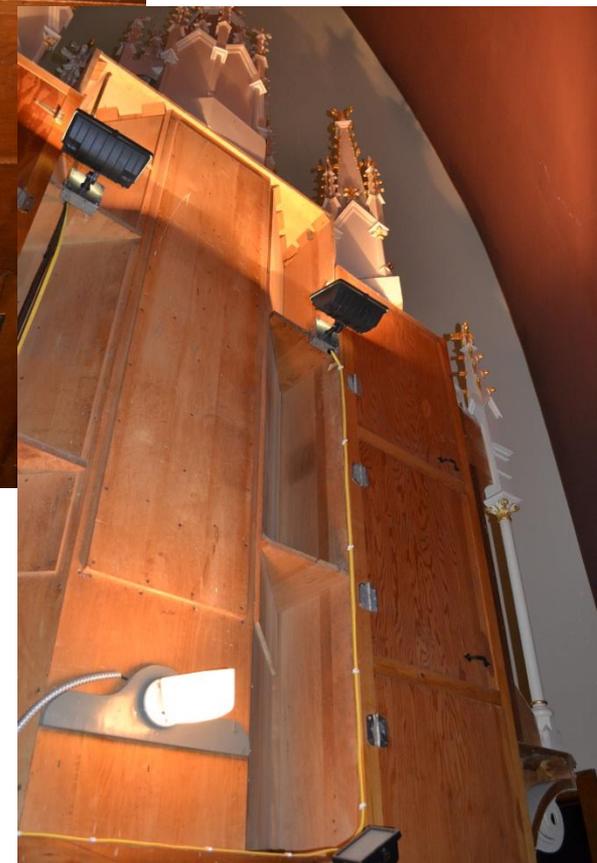
Acts 4: 12



So Zion members often walked around the back of the altar to go to the office. In most Anglican churches an altar is generally made from wood as can be seen on the backside.

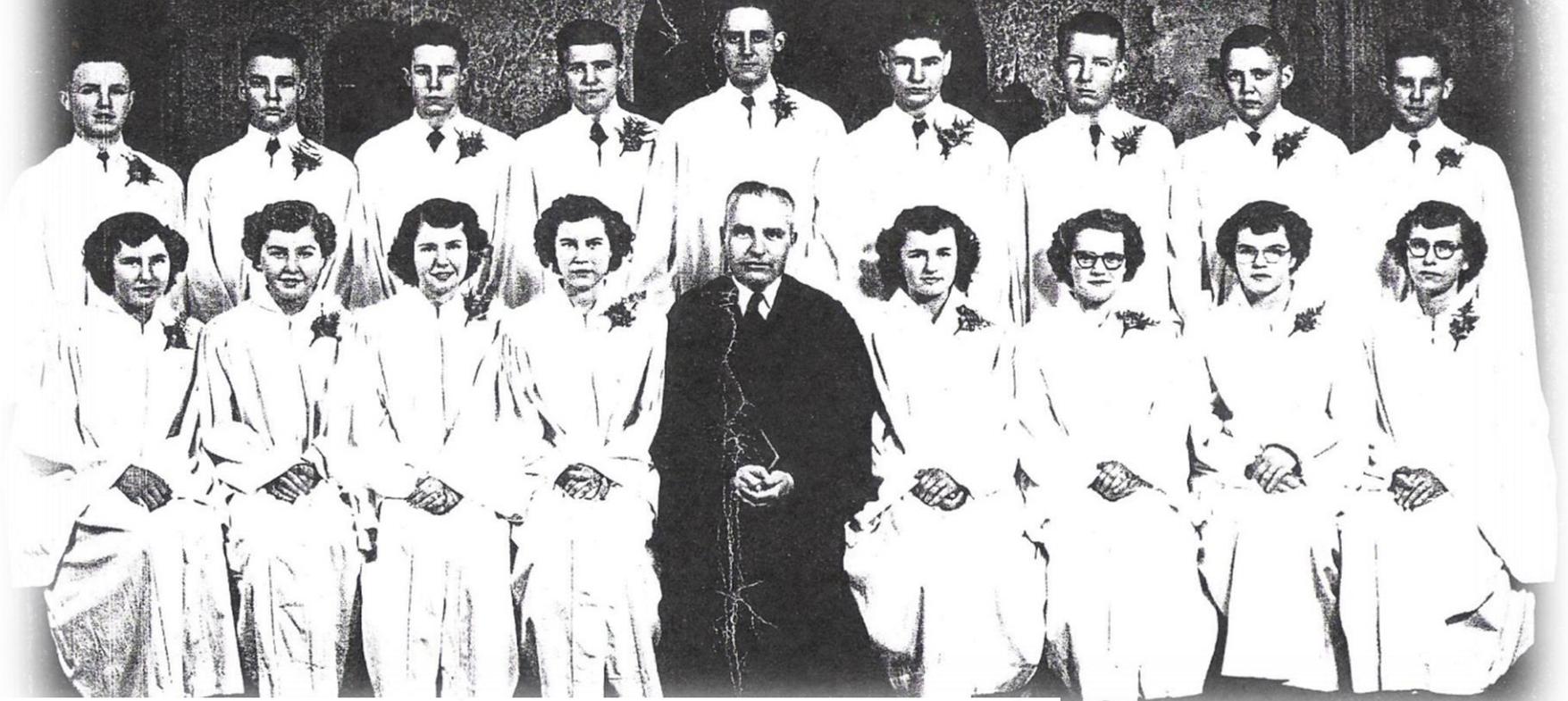
The backside of the altar is not near as beautiful as the front although it does have many compartments for housing communion supplies and other forgotten treasures.

Behind the Altar





One of the treasures found in these compartments is a picture of Pastor Reents. It is on display in the Fellowship Hall today, alongside an original painting from Pastor Jer which is being used as a fundraiser for the Endowment Committee at Zion.



Back Row

Walter Trauernicht
Harold Schuster
Dallen Buss
Virgil Remmers
Heye Rademacher
Henry Lenner
LeRoy Remmers
Eldon Wallman
Donald Riensche

Front Row

Irene (Folkerts) Busboom
Darlene (DeBuhr) Evers
Annita (Waltke) Dancer
Eunice (Huls) Wiese
Pastor John Hieronymus
Bernice (Dorn) Siefkes
Dorothy (Schuster) Parde
Marlene (DeBuhr) Busboom
Vivian (Trauernicht) Schuster

**ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONFIRMATION CLASS OF 1951
March 18, 1951**

The altar ALMOST had a major change in early March of 1951. That was when the confirmation class (on the previous slide) was sitting in the first three pews in the church. They were nervously awaiting their questioning by Pastor Hieronymus that evening Lenten service. An answering of questions relating to the Lutheran doctrines in front of the entire congregation was required before getting confirmed.

Their shaking knees, it turned out, were not going to be caused by Pastor Hieronymus's questioning but by a loud boom that happened just as he was saying a prayer in front of the altar. What a frightening moment for those sitting in the church that evening. That loud "boom" was followed by this altar rocking back and forth.



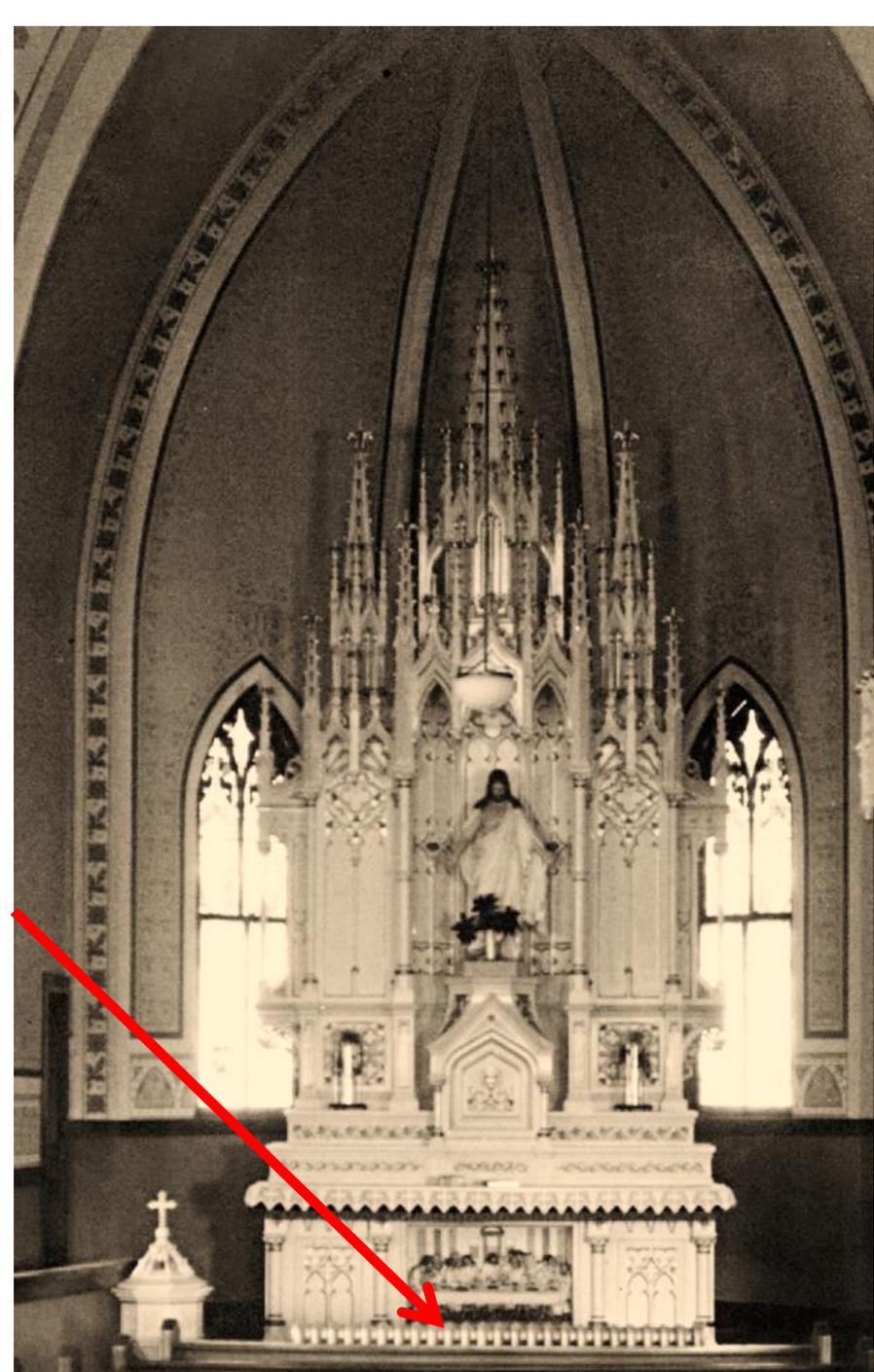
Those confirmands almost met Jesus face to face that Wednesday evening.

Marlene Busboom, a member of that class, said the class didn't move, they just sat there staring at the altar. Just as it seemed that the altar was going to topple over, it righted itself. Maybe the hands of God were active at work during that Lenten service. It probably was also an answer to the confirmands' prayers since they never did have to finish their questioning. Pastor Hieronymus calmly had everyone leave the church building not knowing at the time where the explosion came from.

This 1951 class is the only confirmation group to NOT get confirmed in front of this altar as church was held in the parish hall until it was deemed safe to use the church again.



It was discovered later that the explosion came from the boiler housed in the cellar below the sanctuary. The following pictures of the sanctuary show a radiator directly in front of the front pew. The first boilers used coal for heat, necessitating the need for appointing “volunteer” coal haulers each congregational meeting. Coal dust from below would seep into the church making covering the altar with plastic a must after each service. Apparently those coal haulers had to both haul in the coal with horse and buggy but also haul out the remains of the coal after burning. Today’s monthly VOLUNTEERING for snow brigade and table troop seems a bit easier. Although this radiator has been removed, Zion continues to be heated by a boiler and radiator system, just as it has for 100 years!



August 1971

“All the hands had to be worked on and seven had to be replaced. I sculpted the hands, attached them and painted them. There were many places needing repair and paint.”

The newspaper article on the right explains the damage that was the result of that explosion in 1951.



NU Sculptor Renovates Altar Piece

Pickrell—The tall spires can be seen for miles. The lovely red brick church has a baptised membership of 720 persons.

It is not in the location one would expect it, however, for Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church is out in the country—nearly 10 miles from here.

The present church was built in 1916, but the congregation is preparing to celebrate the centennial of the organization of the church, according to Pastor Ordean Grant. That celebration will be in 1974.

In the meantime redecoration of the present church is one of the first projects. And the first priority has been the restoration of the altar piece, “The Last Supper.”

According to David Seyler, professor of art at the University of Nebraska, the piece had been damaged by some sort of explosion which cracked it. The delicate hands of the men had been broken, the paint had been marred.

Mr. and Mrs. Ed Schuster of Pickrell asked help in getting the piece repaired. Professor Seyler decided to do the work himself.

“All of the hands had to be worked on and seven had to be replaced. I sculpted the hands, attached them and painted them. There were many places needing repair and paint. In fact, I spent two weeks

“In fact, I spent two weeks working down here to complete the restoration.”



Ed R. Schuster of Pickrell, president of the council in 1971, spearheaded the repair work of the Last Supper which had been damaged 20 years earlier. According to Ed's son, Norman Schuster, his dad went up to the University of NE seeking help for the repair. He was put in contact with David Seyler, an art professor, who very much wanted to do the work himself.



Damage to Altar

The renovation work took Professor Seyler two weeks and he did it for free. A gift of love!!! Schuster wanted the sculpture to be repaired before the 100th anniversary of Zion which would be in three years so he knew there was time. Unfortunately there was not time. The newspaper article about the renovation was dated August 29, 1971. Two months later on October 21, 1971, Edward R. Schuster, died unexpected at the age of 58. It was one last gift of love that Ed would give his church family.

Damage can still be seen in a couple of places such as the crack under the goblet.



Damage to the Lord's Supper



...and the wall behind the disciples of the sculpture. The anniversary and endowment committees, like Mr. Schuster, are currently working towards building up a fund to ensure that repairs can be made as they arise on this beautiful church for years to come. You can find endowment pamphlets in the pews.

Altar Guild



Original Candelabras

An altar guild was appointed to take care of the altar which in the beginning was the councilmen's wives. When Pastor Paul arrived in 2000, it was changed to volunteer groups knowing how busy council stays.

Communion Candles



Current Candelabras

Acolytes



In 1962 a motion was passed at a congregational annual meeting that boys from the previous confirmation class become acolytes. Eventually girls were included in this honor.





Memories of groomsmen fainting from overheating or candles bending during wedding ceremonies because of the heat are easy to find. During the minutes of January 1953, Siebend Dorn made the motion that drapes be added behind the altar. The reason for the drapes seems to have been that too much light came into the two windows, making it difficult to take pictures at weddings.

First marriage in front on this altar

The first couple to get married in front of the altar in Zion was Mr. Ehme Jobman and Miss Make Parde in December of 1917. Weddings in the beginning took place during the Sunday morning church service. Ceremonies later were moved to Sunday afternoons, then evenings with Saturday evenings becoming popular in later years. Weddings usually were planned in the cooler months of the year because of the heat buildup inside the church during the warm months.



Many of our members still remember sitting in Zion during services when it was VERY hot. The heat was especially oppressive in the balcony. Handheld fans were a must. Ceiling fans were put in during June of 1988 which helped with air movement. Air conditioning was often discussed but usually tabled because of the price tag that came with it.

Air Conditioning added 2011



Finally in 2011, 95 years after being built, an affordable option for cooling the church was voted on and passed. Air conditioning and supplemental heating units were installed at various locations throughout the sanctuary and are hardly noticeable. I think we will be eternally grateful to Chris Mason for all his work on this project. No wonder he was voted onto council the next year!

Communion Banners



During the early years at Zion, those wanting to commune on a Sunday had to “announce” their intention by going to the church office and giving their card to Pastor Reents prior to the day of the service



Ernest Zimmerman and Ervin Meints said you never knew how long your Saturday evening visit would take. Sometimes it was just “How was your week?”. But if Pastor Reents had something on his mind, you might be there awhile!

The Bread and the Wine



Communion Vessels

Communion however was only celebrated 5 times per year in the early 1900s. Notice the “IHS”, the name of Jesus, which appears in the center of plate for the unleavened bread.



Crew Meints , a 5th Grader, interviewed his great-grandfather Lawrence Meints in 2016 about his confirmation.

You can be certain that Lawrence shared the importance of knowing his confirmation verse when he was interviewed by his great grandson. Psalm 86: 11, Lawrence's confirmation verse, states what we want for all of the confirmands, **“Teach me Thy way Lord, that I may walk in Thy truth; unite my heart to fear thy name.”** I bet Lawrence recited that by heart to Crew.

There have been changes that have occurred in the “giving and receiving of the body and blood” over the years.

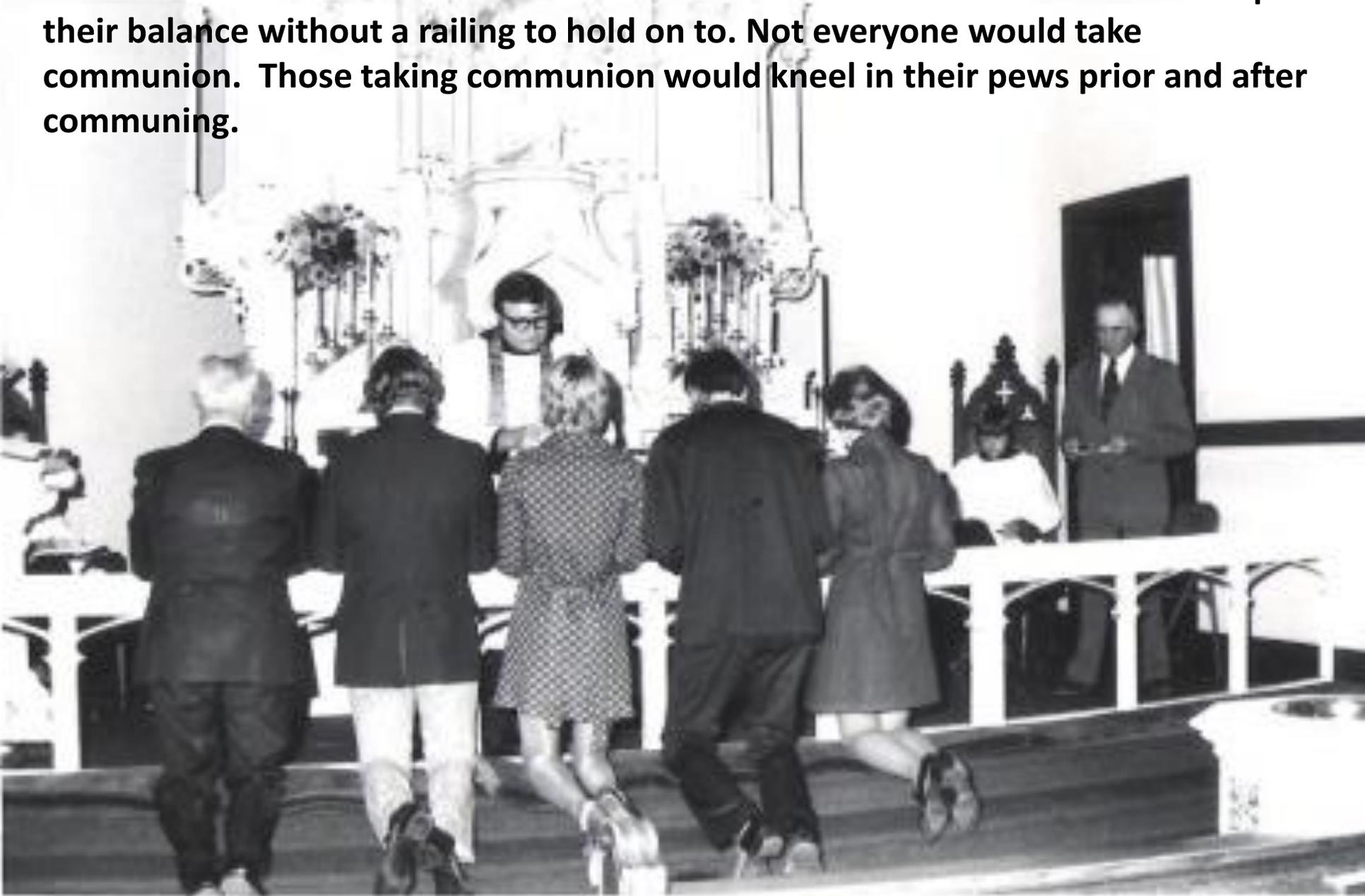


Altar Railing

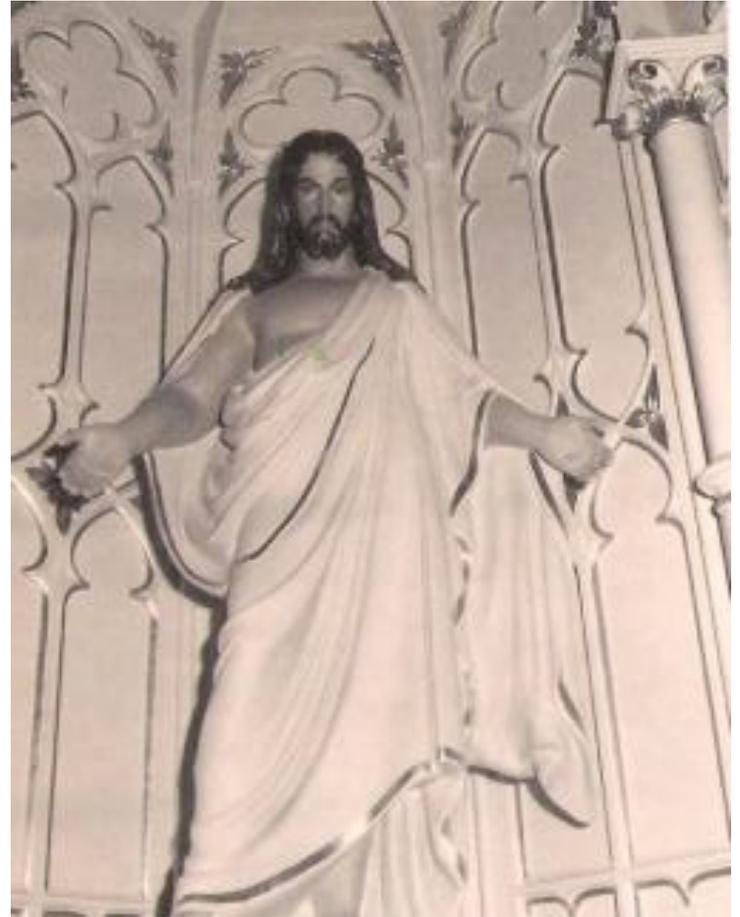
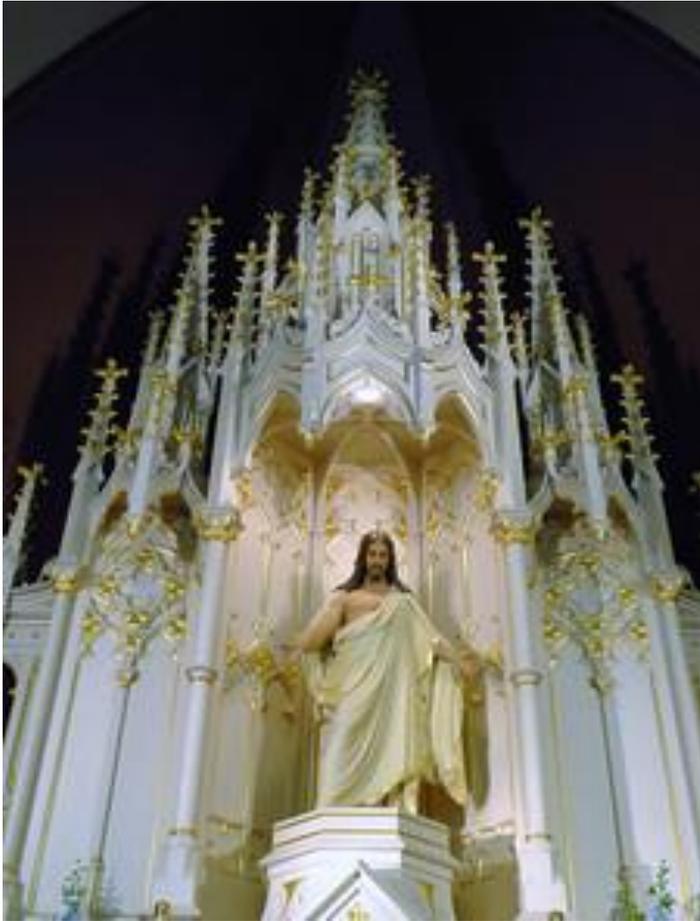


One of the visual changes made during the 100 years to the sanctuary was the adding of an altar railing in 1960. The railing was given in memory of Fred Reinsche with Alvin Juliff of Beatrice doing the work.

Before having a railing, members stood on the steps when receiving the bread and wine. Clarence Zimmerman said it was difficult for older members to keep their balance without a railing to hold on to. Not everyone would take communion. Those taking communion would kneel in their pews prior and after communing.



Statue of Jesus



In the church minutes in January of 1972, it states that the motion for changing the altar statue failed. It does not state what change was wanted. There is a story that surfaces quite often however that Jesus's arms were originally held upward as in a blessing. But one night they just lowered into the position we see today. There are no pictures to confirm or deny that story however.

In the early years, the altar sat alone in the sanctuary area. Ministers held their heavy Bibles when facing the congregation. Pastor Hieronymus changed that practice at Zion by building two lecterns; one is in the sanctuary....



Lecterns and Chairs



Sanctuary



Sanctuary

...and the other for the Parish Hall (which is now in the Fellowship Hall). Also joining the lectern were two chairs for the minister or acolytes to use during the service.



Fellowship Room

Please join us to “Make a Joyful Noise” on
Sunday, May 7, 2017

Now we come to a close of another remembrance Sunday. Please note the change of date for our April remembrance Sunday. “Make a Joyful Noise to the Lord” Sunday will be May 7th, the first Sunday in May, rather than April 30th as printed on the schedule.

We will be recognizing our organ and choirs that have blessed this church for 100 years.



A special thank you to Pastor Sievers for delivering our message today. And thank you to Carol for helping with the readings.



“Truly this was the Son of God!”

Matthew 27: 54



Thank you to Donny Schuster for his display in the Fellowship Hall- it is a reminder of who God chose to suffer for our sake, His only Son. And for that we need to give PRAISE.

“IT IS FINISHED”

John 19: 30