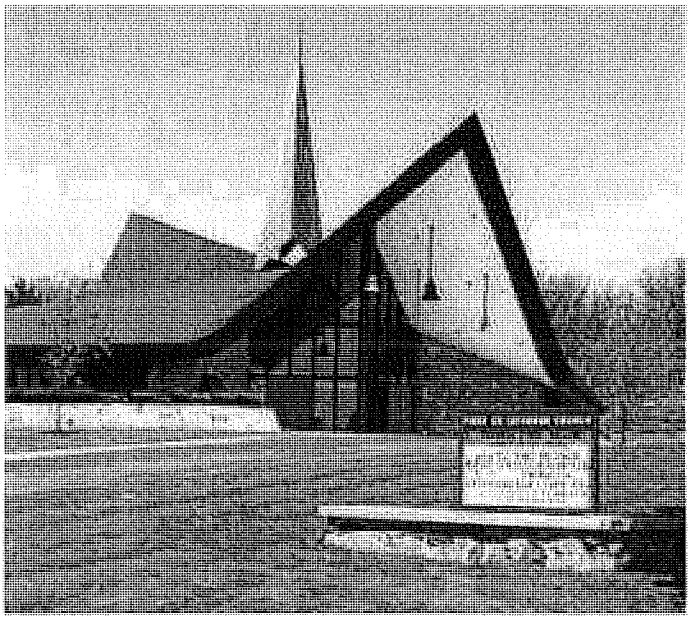
Theology and Art:

The Doctrine of the Universal Priesthood of All Believers in Brick and Stone



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Church History 331
Prof. James Korthals
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Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone," and, "A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for. But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

—I Peter 2:1-10

There are certain times in the course of history when something happens that is so unique a person is simply left stunned at the outcome. It is more than just an accomplishment; accomplishments take place every day, most of them mundane or ordinary. It involves something more than just beating the odds, as a winning underdog defies rational explanation. It is not a slave to a popular craze, nor does it establish a new trend. It is not predictable. It is something that is so thoroughly unique that to copy it would be an exercise in futility. Its significance transcends the simple occurrence of the event itself; it lends, gives, and creates a significance all its own. It is unprecedented and unmatched. It elicits emotions and makes the heart grow faint when it is pondered.

Few events, comparatively, fit the above description. Yet for a small number of people in a small community, belonging to a small church in a small synod, one unique event became a very big part of their lives. The members of First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, built a church. That may not sound like such a monumentous event. In fact it, too, might sound ordinary or mundane—many people build churches. But the church building they built is anything but ordinary.

Part of the appreciation of the church building stems from an understanding of how out of character it was for its members to build such a church. The history of the congregation in Lake Geneva dates back to the nineteenth century. The township of Geneva was formed in 1839, and soon afterwards it was incorporated into the village of Lake Geneva. About this same time the eventual founders of the Wisconsin Synod were being assigned missions in the new world. Among the famous names of the men who played a leading role in the establishment of the synod and its congregations was Carl Goldammer. Goldammer was not so much involved in organizing the synod itself,

but he was instrumental as a missionary starting many congregations in Wisconsin. Fredrich writes, "In those early outreach efforts, however, a few names stand out. At Manitowoc, Burlington, and Jefferson, Carl Goldammer, who joined the synod at its second convention and after Muehlhaeuser's death in 1867 became its senior pastor, was a missionary through and through."[1] Goldammer did not only serve the three places Fredrich mentions in his book. He began and served congregations up and down the coast of Lake Michigan. Among them were congregations in Green Bay, Sheboygan, Newton, Barington, and Wheatland Township, known today as Slades Corners. It was from the last of these congregations in Slades Corners that Goldammer's history is traced to the Lake Geneva congregation.

There were already congregations organized in Burlington and Slades Corners, but given Goldammer's gift for mission work, he was always looking for new areas to begin a congregation. The opportunity presented itself while he was serving Slades Corners. Goldammer gathered a group of believers in the Lake Geneva area, and they began worshipping in modest settings—someone's home. A First Lutheran historian recounts those early years,

> His mission work bore fruit and a handful of persons faithfully gathered in one of the homes. There were only a few families and single persons who participated in the Sunday service, and the service was only held every other Sunday afternoon. For three years the small group met in the homes of those involved.[2]

One of "those involved" was Bertha Wilhemena Carolyn Popp, a charter member of the congregation. She was born in Botenhagen, Pomerania, in 1864, but found her way to America. It was in her house that Goldammer's newly born congregation would meet for the first five years of its existence. Popp would live to see seventy-six years of First Lutheran history before the Lord called her home in 1960, three years before the existing church was dedicated.

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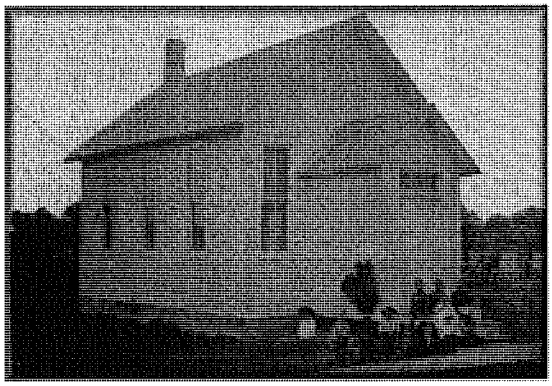
[1] E.C. Fredrich, *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans*, p. 14.

Before too long, the young gathering was faced with a dilemma. Because they were still a relatively small group, they could not support their own pastor. Goldammer was really called to Slades Corners and served Lake Geneva twice a month with services. At such a young age, they did not have an abundance of money. Yet the group was large enough to have a building larger than a home in which to worship, and the current church space they were renting was no longer available. It was time to make a decision. In the fall, 1883, the small group decided to build a church of their own.

> On February 7, 1884 the first steps toward building that church were taken when 2 lots (#3 & #4) on Walworth Street were purchased from Mr. Electa Adams for $270. There during the early months of 1884 the congregation undertook its first building project. They built a modest one room church, wood frame with white siding. This first home of the congregation was dedicated on May 4, 1884.[3]

In our modern age of building permits, handicap requirements, and code books we can hardly imagine an entire building project lasting less than a year. Yet from the time of conception, through the purchase of the property, until the time of dedication, only about seven months passed. It was little more than a large box, measuring 20' x 30', six hundred square feet. The building itself was nothing spectacular. But it was their home, and it was the first home of the believers in Lake Geneva. Interestingly, Pastor T. DeYoung of Elkhorn preached the dedication sermon in German in the morning service. The



A modest wood frame building was the first house of worship of First Evangelical Lutheran Church. It was dedicated under Pastor Carl Goldammer on May 4, 1884. It later served as a Sunday School building, and today is a nutrition center for the elderly.[4]

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[2] Information taken from the centennial pictorial directory of First Ev. Lutheran Church, which includes a modest section of history on the congregation. Quote taken from page 3.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

[4] Picture is scanned from the May 3, 1984 edition of *The Lake Geneva Regional News,* p. 10. Caption is also taken in part from the newspaper.

church records state, "Pastor Goldammer began services for the GERMAN LUTHERANS. All acts, etc. were in German."[5] The congregational fathers were serious about retaining the German language in their congregation. One paragraph in the inaugural constitution began, "The congregation is German and intends to stay that way..."[6] Still, these Germans were not so stodgy as to outlaw English altogether. In a parenthetical expression following right on the heels of what was just said above, the same historian writes, "(English was however used on special occasions—ded. Of church, 1884, afternoon ser.)"[7] Later that afternoon Pastor Bendler of Burlington preached a second dedication sermon, this time in English.

The importance of Goldammer's work runs far deeper than just gathering Christians. One is easily able to recognize that the man had a gift for mission work, and zeal to do it as well. In just a few short years, the congregation grew rapidly. His gift is what God used to gather the people of Lake Geneva. Goldammer's skills also ranged into organization and administration. Just because it was a different time and different settings, we cannot underestimate the ability required to build and organize a congregation from the ground floor. He even tried his hand at a building program, and with his guidance and the Lord's help he built the congregation's first house of worship. Goldammer was a multi-talented man. He possessed many abilities, and made plentiful use of them in his ministry. Late in 1884, Goldammer received a call to serve as the pastor at St. Stephan's in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin. On Christmas Day, 1884, he decided to accept the Lord's call to St. Stephan's. Although Goldammer served the Lake Geneva Christians on a part-time basis for six years, he really was the full time pastor of the church in Slades Corners. Still, Goldammer was the only pastor the people in Lake Geneva had ever known. Considering they were working with a part-time minister to begin

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[5] Information taken from a series of historical notes drawn up for the centennial commemoration. No author was available, and no page numbers are recorded. The notes are entitled, *Our History*.
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] *Ibid.*

with, that he was their first, and to this point only pastor, that he was now leaving for another congregation only seven months after helping them build their first church building, might we credit those first Lutherans in Lake Geneva for then gathering shortly after Goldammer had left, in the midst of a vacancy, and meeting in January 1885 to draw up a constitution and to incorporate? Perhaps Goldammer's greatest achievement in Lake Geneva was that he let them grow up. Under his pastorate, First Lutheran was born, crawled, stood up, and now was beginning to walk.

Even though this gathering of believers had been meeting together for over five years and had planned and built a new church building, they could not officially call themselves a congregation. Although Goldammer began serving them already in 1879, they had never officially organized into a congregation. At a meeting that has since been called the first meeting of the congregation on January 4, 1885, the constitution and by-laws were read. After the members had carefully checked over their first constitution, each one present signed it, a total of twenty-one signatures. It was resolved that they meet again in two weeks to discuss incorporation, and at a meeting on January 19, 1885 the body of believers in Lake Geneva was incorporated under Wisconsin law. The name of the new congregation did not come without some discussion,

> It had been originally decided to call the congregation FIRST GERMAN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, but when the articles of Incorporation were drawn up the word "German" was omitted. The congregation was however made up of German Lutherans and all minutes and records of the congregation were kept in the German language until the constitution was revised in 1919.[8]

Even with careful instruction, learning to walk takes practice. The next five years for this young congregation were spent more in a state of flux than in a state of stability. After Goldammer accepted the call to serve in Beaver Dam during Christmas, 1884, August Graebner accepted the call to the dual parish of Slades Corners and Lake Geneva. Graebner stayed only for a short time, and

[8] Centennial pictorial directory, p. 3-4.

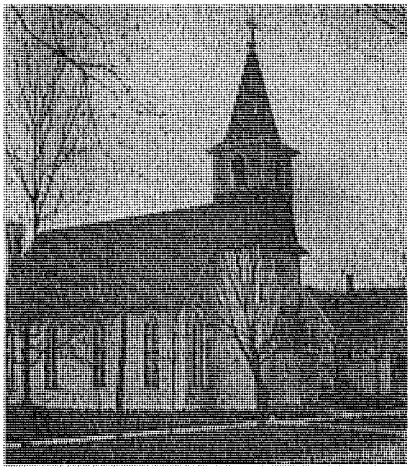
left again in winter, 1886-1887. During their second vacancy, the two congregations were not quite as successful in filling their pastorate as quickly as they had the first time. After spending about a year without a pastor, Heinrich Gieschen, Sr. accepted the call and came to Slades Corners and Lake Geneva. Despite every good intention, Gieschen's days in Lake Geneva were limited as well. He accepted a call to Flatville, Illinois, in April 1891 after serving these two southern Wisconsin congregations for about three years.

Pastor Henry Gieschen

These years under Graebner and Gieshen were blessed with great growth. Although the congregation technically did not have a pastor of its own, they certainly progressed as if they did. In the five years of service of these two men, 114 children were baptized, 21 children were confirmed, 7 couples were married and 24 members were called home and buried. The baptisms alone are astounding. Over five years, the number averages out to about one baptism every nineteen days! It soon became apparent that the house Goldammer built would soon be insufficient to meet the needs of the burgeoning congregation. Already in 1889, only five years after the original building project, the congregation met and decided the church was too small. The next few months were spent investigating the possibility of adding on to the existing building, but that idea was dropped in favor of building a whole new church building.

On February 1, 1891, the congregation officially resolved to enter into their second building project in seven years. This time they would not build too small. Floor plans called for the building to be 30' x 50'. That was two and a half times the size of the old building, with a basement and steeple. The nave would be able to seat 250 people, and there was a small narthex. Because the congregation had a history in the area and they still wanted to make use of their old building, they built

their new church in the empty lot next to their existing church. The old church was then converted into Sunday School classrooms.



Second church - 1892.

In the middle of summer, on the fifteenth Sunday in Trinity 1891, the congregation laid the cornerstone of its new building. Work progressed quickly, and by winter 1891-1892, First Lutheran had its second house of worship. The building was finished at a cost of $2395. The contractor agreed to dig the basement for an additional $27. Neither the furnishings nor the cost of landscaping were figured into the price of the building, so each member was assessed a $2 landscaping fee in 1893 to cover the cost of trees and shrubs. To finance the rest of the project, the church borrowed $1000 on two separate occasions, once at the outset and again at the end of the project to meet the final payment.

1892 was a significant year for this young congregation for another reason. Until this time, the congregation had no affiliation with any synod.

> In June of 1892, the congregation applied for membership in the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod. The congregation had been supporting the projects and missions of the Synod for years. On October 3, 1892, Pastor Schubarth was able to announce that First Lutheran had been accepted as a member of the Synod, and it has been a member ever since.[9]

The fourth pastor in seven years, Pastor E.F. Schubarth, came to the dual parish of Slades Corners and Lake Geneva in early summer, 1891, just in time to see the building project through. Plans for the second church building had begun under Gieschen, and Schubarth saw them come to fruition. During his stay, many important historical events took place. A major one, of course, was that the second church was built. Secondly, the congregation had become affiliated with a synod for

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

the first time in its history. Schubarth had very little to do with either of these events, though. He did, however, have a role to play in two other major episodes, one positive and one negative.

For almost nineteen years the congregation in Lake Geneva had shared a pastor with the congregation up the road in Slades Corners. There was never a feeling of animosity with the other congregation, but the people in Lake Geneva certainly awaited the day when they would have a pastor of their own. Even though they had always been served faithfully in the past, it always seemed as if it was by someone else's pastor. Any time a call was extended to a minister and he accepted, he always came to live in Slades corners. The congregation in Lake Geneva seemingly lived in the shadow of its sister congregation down the road. In 1898 a congregational meeting was held to discuss the possibility of the Lake Geneva congregation calling its own pastor. After much discussion, the body decided to have the president of the congregation personally visit the families of the congregation to see if contributions could be raised enough to support their own minister. Two months passed, and the visits were made. Now the meeting was held to determine the direction of the congregation.

> In the September 20th meeting of that same year, it was decided to form a separate parish. Pastor E. Schubarth was called to be the first resident pastor of First Ev. Lutheran Church of Lake Geneva, and he accepted the call. October 10, 1898, was the time Pastor Schubarth officially left Slades Corners and took up his full-time arrangement, which had lasted for about 19 years was thus dissolved.[10]

The new arrangements were not immediately satisfactory for the new pastor. "Since First Lutheran had no parsonage, Pastor Schubarth roomed with one of the members of the congregation."[11] Had it been Pastor Gieschen that the congregation called rather than Pastor Schubarth, there might have been a problem. Pastor Gieschen had ten children!

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[10] *Ibid.*
[11] *Ibid.*

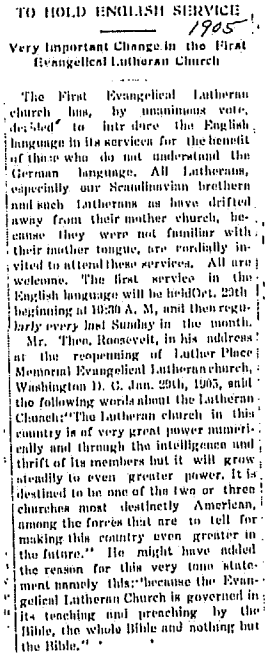
The second event that will forever be tied to Pastor Schubarth seems to be something of a scandal, although it is unclear from history what exactly transpired. Apparently there was a fallout between Pastor Schubarth and some of the members over the Pastor's policy and actions. What the policy was or what the actions were is a mystery. Unfortunately, the episode rocked the congregation. Several meetings were held to discuss matters, but none of them solved the problem. Finally, the members of the congregation asked the Synod to become involved. When this happened, Pastor Schubarth resigned his ministry at First Lutheran and started another rival congregation across town. Twelve families followed Pastor Schubarth to his new congregation. Church records indicate that the issue was not solved with Schubarth's resignation, nor was the Synod particularly helpful. Not until Schubarth wrote a letter of apology in 1905, which was accepted by the congregation, did the matter seem to die down. Because Pastor Schubarth apologized and from the nature of some of the records, historians have guessed that the scandal revolved around some wrong practices regarding the lodge. This is mere speculation based on the language of the minutes from the meetings in 1899.

First Lutheran called B. Albert Oehlert to follow Schubarth. He came to the congregation as a single man, but did not remain that way. He married Magdalene Pieper shortly after coming to the church. Oehlert suffered a heart attack a few years later and was forced to resign because of his health. During his stay the congregation built the parsonage for about 60% of the cost of the second church.

In 1904 Herman Fleischfresser was called to serve as First Lutheran's sixth pastor. As many people were doing at the time, Pastor Fleischfresser shortened his name to Fleischer[12]. He served the congregation faithfully for fifteen years. Under his pastorate he celebrated three anniversaries: the

[12] By way of historical sidelight, there is an inscription on one of the uprights of the well on the Seminary campus as you go down the hill to the Freistadt Road entrance. It reads, "Constructed in 1933/by Seminary student/Marcus A. Fleischer/1908-1944" This Marcus Fleisher who constructed the well that has come to be symbolic of our synod was the son of Lake Geneva's pastor Fleischer.

fifteenth anniversary of building the new church, the twenty-fifth anniversary of their beginning and building the first church, and the 25th anniversary of building their new church. The interesting thing about all these anniversaries is that for some reason the members had decided to use 1892 as their anniversary date rather than their true beginning in 1884.[13] Pastor Fleisher began to forge the way for English to be used in the regular worship of the congregation. English had been used in worship in the past, but only on special occasions such as installations, anniversaries, or dedications. In 1905 he introduced a regularly scheduled morning English service. "The local newspaper reported, 'the First Ev. Lutheran Church has by unanimous vote decided to introduce the English language in its services for the benefit of those who do not understand the German...All Lutherans... are invited to attend...[14]'" In a series of progressions, the English made its way into the regular worship of the congregation. First it was once a month, then it became regularly held on Sunday evenings. By 1918 English and German services were regularly held on alternate Sundays. It would not be long before English would be the standard language of the congregation. Pastor Fleisher was remembered fondly by the people of First Lutheran. Although he left in 1919 for Hustisford, Wisconsin, he had served the congregation longer than any man before him. The congregation remembered him later by nominating him for a professorship at Northwestern College in Watertown, Wisconsin.



TO HOLD ENGLISH SERVICE
1905

Very Important Change in the First Evangelical Lutheran Church

The First Evangelical Lutheran church has, by unanimous vote, decided to intr duce the English language in its services for the benefit of those who do not understand the German language. All Lutherans, especially our Scandinavian brethern and such Lutherans as have drifted away from their mother church, because they were not familiar with their mother tongue, are cordially invited to attend these services. All are welcome. The first service in the English language will be held Oct. 29th beginning at 10:30 A. M, and then regularly every 2nd Sunday in the month.

Mr. Theo. Roosevelt, in his address at the reopening of Luther Place Memorial Evangelical Lutheran church, Washington D. C. Jan. 29th, 1905, said the following words about the Lutheran Church: "The Lutheran church in this country is of very great power numerically and through the intelligence and thrift of its members but it will grow steadily to even greater power. It is destined to be one of the two or three churches most destinctly American, among the forces that are to tell for making this country even greater in the future." He might have added the reason for this very tone statement namely this: "because the Evangelical Lutheran Church is governed in its teaching and preaching by the Bible, the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible."

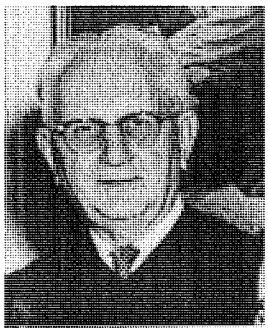
1905 newspaper article announcing English services. Note Roosevelt's comments.

Until this point in the history of First Lutheran, the pastors were somewhat of a disappointment. Mind you, this is not an indictment of their theological or pastoral ability. It more reflects the

[13] This may in part be due to the historical significance of the year 1892 to the congregation. That was the year they built their first worshipful church building, and it was also the year they joined the synod. For these reasons 1892 may have been used. It still seems strange for them to have abandoned the year they were incorporated as a congregation, 1885.

fact that few pastors had stayed for any extended period of time, save Pastor Fleischer. Goldammer had laid a solid foundation, a foundation that history has shown was indispensable in the years to come. The next two pastors stayed only 2 and 3 years respectively. Then Schubarth stayed eight years, but left under controversial circumstances. Ironically, it was not until Schubarth, their fourth pastor, when the congregation thought they had a pastor who was going to stay sometime. Calling him from Slades Corners as their own minister no doubt fueled their thinking. Sadly, their first full-time pastor was also the first they might have wanted to forget. Finally there was Oehlert, whose health failed him. He stayed about five years. Even though God accomplished many things through the work of these men during their years, much of what was accomplished seemed to be the result of dedicated and committed laymen. The congregation seemed to be reaping the benefits of Goldammer's foundation, and even he left at a somewhat critical time. Shortly after his departure, the congregation officially assembled itself. Much of the building projects took place while pastors were in transition. Oftentimes today a building program is a reason for a man *not* to take a call. These were different circumstances in a different time. The congregation seemed united to serve God with their talents from the start. It is hard to gauge the zeal of a newly started mission congregation. This one seemed to have a bond from the start that carried them through the first twenty five years of their history.

All of that changed when Pastor Henry John Diehl was called to First Lutheran to follow Pastor Fleisher in 1919. He accepted God's call and was installed as the seventh pastor of the congregation, a position from which only God removed him when he took him home to himself 39 years later. Pastor Diehl was an icon in the history of First Lutheran and in the history of Lake Ge-



Pastor Henry John Diehl

[14] Centennial pictorial directory, p. 7.

neva. Historians from the church and from the local newspapers have treated him kindly. Perhaps the best summary of his ministry was written by a church historian:

> The year of 1919 marked the beginning of a new era in the history of First Lutheran. On September 7th **PASTOR HENRY DIEHL** WHO HAD BEEN CALLED FROM Milwaukee was installed as pastor of First Lutheran. He was to shape the course of the congregation for some 39 years until 1958. During all these years Pastor Diehl would become near and dear to so many members of First Lutheran. He would see a couple of generations of members grow up. He would baptize, confirm and marry any number of individuals during those years. He would always be remembered as the pastor who served the congregation the longest. It is impossible to tell of all the things that happened during his 39 years of service, but during that time the congregation grew, made the change from German to English, celebrated a number of anniversaries, introduced new practices and started new organizations, made many repairs on the facilities, and made plans for building a new church.

To paint a picture of what Diehl accomplished with the help of God, here are some statistics just of his pastoral acts: in his time at First Lutheran, he performed 764 baptisms. That rate is just a bit quicker than one baptism every nineteen days. He confirmed 611 students, married 257 couples and buried 232 souls. Those were just the pastoral acts. Under Diehl, several anniversaries were celebrated. Among them were the congregation's 50th anniversary and the 75th anniversary of the Wisconsin Synod. Diehl introduced *The Lutheran Hymnal* to First Lutheran in 1941. Under his guidance, services, official records, and instruction officially switched to English. He introduced the offering envelope system to the church. Later he began a women's organization, the Ladies' Guild. The physical business of the congregation also flourished. Renovations were made to the parsonage, a 20' x 40' addition was built onto the school, the interior of the church was redecorated, a balcony was added to the church, and many other project were accomplished. These are only some of the major accomplishments credited to Pastor Diehl during his ministry in Lake Geneva. Yet they only go so far in explaining why it was he was so dearly loved.

On its most cursory level, one might explain the reason the love the people had for Pastor Diehl very simply: he stayed. He dedicated almost forty years of his life to serving the same congregation. That is a commitment people do not forget. In a newspaper article, Diehl explains his views on his popularity. "The dean of Geneva's clergymen explains it this way: 'Because I've tended to my own business, preached the Gospel and kept myself aloof from politics."[15] Over the course of his tenure, Diehl had many chances to go elsewhere. In all, he was called away seventeen times, but each time he returned the call. The same newspaper article recounts one such call Diehl had. "For instance, in 1938, when the congregation was asked to act when Rev. Diehl received a call to another parish, 75 persons attended the special meeting. The vote was 75-0 that he remain here."[16] Upon closer investigation, there is little mystery about why Diehl was so loved by his people. It is much the same reason why any pastor is loved by his people. He has a genuine care and concern for them, and he visited them often.

> To Rev. Diehl, who is 69, being a pastor is a 24-hour-a-day, seven-days-a-week job. Every morning, he's up at five o'clock and is at work in his office an hour later. After 2 ½ hours in his office, its time to start calling on parishioners, Monday through Friday. His parish area extends ten miles in every direction and isn't unusual for the pastor to travel as much as 80 miles a day.[17]

To know Pastor Diehl was to love him. He served the people faithfully for nearly forty years. Seven pastors served First Lutheran during the first seventy five years of their history. Of those seven, Pastor Goldammer and Pastor Diehl were the two pastors who shaped and molded the congregation the most.

It was about ten years into Diehl's ministry that the congregation began to see that they were beginning to outgrow their present facilities. The sanctuary housed 250 people—a large number for

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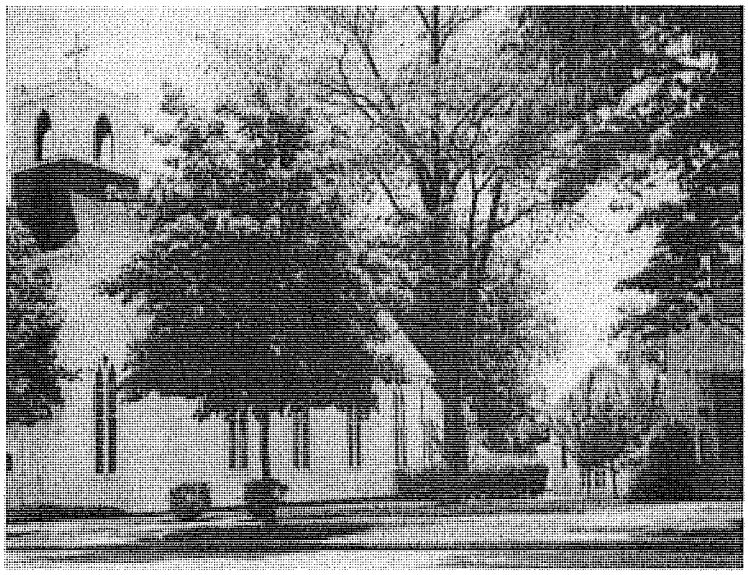
[15] Lake Geneva Regional News, *First Lutheran Served by Pastor Diehl 38 Years.* April 18, 1957, p. 1.
[16] *Ibid.*
[17] *Ibid.*

that time, but not large enough to meet the needs of the burgeoning congregation. Using multiple services on Sunday mornings alleviated the strain for space in the short term, but special services and festivals illustrated their need to have more room. The Sunday School building, which was the original church building of 1884, was too small. The congregation was beginning to feel pinched in their current situation. Early in the 1930's the Church Council investigated the matter and even went so far as to have plans made for adding on to the present facilities. Finally in 1938 a formal proposal was made to add a wing to the church. The proposal was rejected. A short term fix was employed, however, later that year. Rather than building the wing that was proposed or a whole new facility, they lowered the steeple and added a balcony inside the current church. The patch was functional for the next decade and more. Still, time kept telling them that they needed to build again.

By 1950 it was readily apparent that the old building was outliving its effectiveness. The pews stretched from the center aisle all the way to the outside walls so that the only way out of the pew was to the center of the church. People would pack the church and balcony, and then be forced to stand in the doorways to participate in the service. Although pastor's are usually more than happy to have an overcrowding problem, this was becoming a major nuisance.

By the early 1950's, it was time for the congregation to get serious about building a third house of worship. This time the project promised to be more of a challenge than any of the other building programs that had gone before. They faced challenges that were altogether different than any of the others they had faced in the past. The current building they were using seated 250 for worship, and that was not enough. Clearly the building was going to have to be large enough to seat a minimum of 300-350 people, with room for overflow during festival seasons and for other special services. The need was not so much the question, though. That they needed improved facilities was obvious. The question was where they were going to build. The land they were using on Walworth

Street was built up with existing buildings. Their three lots of property contained a church, a Sunday School building with a good-sized addition, and the parsonage with a garage. If they were intent on building a whole new church,[18] they could decide to tear down some of the current buildings in the interest of building on the same property, or they could decide to buy more land elsewhere. The location of the church was a major challenge to the congregation, and it was one this generation of Lake Geneva Lutherans had never faced.



The remodeled church with lowered steeple. The old church building and a small garage can be seen to the right.

Location was not the only concern the congregation was facing. If they truly were serious about building, whether it was an addition or it was a whole new church altogether, they were certainly going to have to pay for it. The problem was that they had no money saved or set aside for such a purpose. Money was a much more real and pressing problem than was the issue of the location, especially considering that if they did decide to relocate they were going to have to pay for the land. The need for establishing a fund was critical to the future of the project. In an interview with the chairman of the building committee, he put the situation into the following perspective: "Do you know what the average contribution was per communicant member?" he asked me. "Fifty cents," I guessed. He chuckled. "No, no, no. If we had *that* kind of money, we would have been in great

[18] This was not a foregone conclusion. Even though the proposal to add a sizable wing to the existing church had failed in 1938, there was no guarantee that the same proposal would have failed in the early fifties. It would seem unlikely given the fact that the congregation had continued to grow in the time between their "quick fix" in 1938 and the time they decided something better had to be done.

condition. How about ten cents." "Per week?" I asked. "That's right, per week."[19] Mr. Brellenthin was unsure of the exact year this was the average, but he said the envelope system was installed shortly afterwards. The envelope system was introduced to the congregation in 1951, which would put these figures into place somewhere in the 1950-1951 range. Ten cents per week multiplies out to $5.20 per year per communicant member. Clearly the congregation was operating only to satisfy its budget, and little more. Brellenthin added that the averaged jumped to between $.20 and $.25 soon after the envelope system was introduced.

They say, "timing is everything." In this case, it is more a fact that the Lord was watching out for his believers in Lake Geneva. In the same year that the envelopes became a part of First Lutheran, the Church Council established a Building and Memorial Fund to set aside money "to be used for either a major addition to the present church or for the building of a new church."[20] The establishment of the Building Fund was important for several reasons. First of all, it was a statement to the rest of the congregation that the time had come for them to begin to seriously think about addressing their overcrowding problems. Secondly, it began a reserve of money that later would be available for the purchase of new property. Finally, it was the first in a long line of decisions that eventually brought about the construction of their church.

Three years passed after the Building Fund had been established, and still nothing firm had been done to address the building program. If First Lutheran was typical of many congregations, the people began to wonder aloud, "Why all the talk and no action?" Or similarly, "What is happening with the money I am giving to the Building Fund?" Action was what the congregation got in a spe-

[19] Interview was conducted with Mr. Birdell Brellenthin of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, on April 15, 1998. Mr. Brellenthin was the chairman of the building committee at the time the congregation was considering to build for the third time.

[20] Centennial pictorial, p. 9-10.

cial voters meeting called on May 23, 1954, to discuss the future of the building program. There the congregation finally came to a decision: they resolved to build a new church.

Although history has shown that the decision itself decided very little in the grand scheme of things, it was still a monumental decision for First Lutheran. Cynics would argue that the only thing the meeting accomplished was that they now knew for certain they were going to build a new church rather than adding on to the existing one. That was simply the writing on the wall, and this meeting only acknowledged it. All these formalities coming from a congregation that has already been through two building programs is hardly reason to rejoice. Yet before we wield the historical finger of judgment, let us consider a couple of important facts. The last building program First Lutheran had lived through ended in 1892. This was 62 years later, time enough for at least one, and probably two generations to have passed through the church. The current membership probably had never gone through a church-building program. Sure, they had done many remodeling projects and even added an addition onto the Sunday School building. That, however, is not the same as building a place of worship. The stakes for building the church were considerably higher. The church was larger than ever before, and it would cost more than they had ever spent. They had little money stored away, and they had nowhere to build. When you put all of these factors into the same mixing bowl as the one that contains the congregation's nostalgia for the church building in which they were born and raised, it becomes much more understandable that they were perhaps a little hesitant. For all of these reasons, the resolution to build was a huge decision, even if it was only an acknowledgment of the obvious.

Two more years passed, and seemingly little more was done to further the building program. Again, one might wonder why planning did not progressing more quickly. Then, at a congregational meeting in 1956 the voters reaffirmed their desire to build new. It seems to be a strange decision to

make, and a strange reason to hold a meeting. The decision to build a new facility had already been resolved in 1954. Why was their another meeting to reaffirm what they had already decided to do? Could it be that after the decision had been made in 1954 there was congregational grumbling? Perhaps the decision to build new was unpopular. Was the second meeting held simply to reassure the Council's belief that this was the right thing to do—something of a confidence boost? It does not seem likely. First of all, if those were the reasons to hold a meeting and conduct a vote, they fly in the face of the purpose of parliamentary procedure. Churches do not conduct a vote simply to boost people's confidence, they vote to further the kingdom of God in some way. Secondly, we must remember that while the decision to build a new church had been made, there still was the burning question of where it was going to be built. Would they raze their own buildings, seek to buy new property in the area, or relocate altogether?

Birdell Brellenthin indicated to me that the location issue was a very touchy subject while the project was being contemplated. The church had had seventy years of history in the same location. Generation upon generation of Lake Geneva Lutherans had been born and raised in the same church in the same place. When the change of location was proposed, it was such a radical idea that the congregation simply felt uneasy about it. It was not that there was anything wrong with changing venues; it was just the idea of change that was frightening. The old church had become to the congregation like the old beat-up teddy bear that one falls asleep with every night. Nothing will tear it out of your arms. To make a decision purely on sentimentality, though, is poor decision-making. There were also practical reasons for the people to resist changing locations. Most of the congregation lived in what was called the Crawford district, or the Third Ward section of Lake Geneva. The Crawford district was also the location of the present church building. Lake Geneva was no different than most cities when it was settled; it was very segregated. All the Germans settled together, the

Norwegians settled together, and so on. It happened that the Germans who comprised the bulk of First Lutheran lived, for the most part, in this Crawford district. First Lutheran, then, was a neighborhood church to these people. Moving the church to a different part of town was not a decision that was taken lightly. It was a deep-seated issue that had both sentimental pull and practical value to the congregation. This meeting in 1956 answered the location question. "At this time it was also resolved to relocate the new building."[21] Now we have the answer to what was being done in the two years that separated the official decision to begin the building project and the meeting to reaffirm that decision. The congregation was deciding the issue of location.

Meanwhile, the congregational coffers were quietly being filled. Between fretting over the site and sweating over finances, this building project was proving to be quite a mountain for the congregation to climb. With each decision making the last more permanent, the congregation continued to sail into uncharted waters.

The next decision that would have to be made was choosing the property. A committee of five was assembled to investigate land acquisition. After much research and several possibilities, the committee finally decided to recommend to the church that they purchase the Nathan property on the northwest side of town. The site was near the bottom of a gently sloping hill, about six acres total. It was bordered on two sides by streets, to the north by a cemetery and to the west by woods. The cost the property was $10,200. The congregation purchased the property in 1957.

Lutherans Pick Site

At their annual meeting Friday night, members of the First Evangelical Lutheran church, Walworth street, voted to purchase a site for their new church.

The site is the Nathan property, located at Madison and Logan streets and Cemetery road. The property consists of about six acres and will provide ample space for parking and recreational activities of the church.

Under the chairmanship of Birdell Brellenthin, the building committee will obtain plans for a new church and present them to the congregation. Construction is not expected to begin before 1958. The present church will be sold after the new one is completed.

1957 news article explaining the congregation's plans.

Although the project may not have progressed as quickly as some might have liked, the leadership continued to make calculated, wise, educated decisions. It is

[21] Centennial Pictorial directory, p. 10.

when decisions are made in haste that they tend to blow up and make a mess. Beginning with the decision in 1951 to begin a Building Fund, through the resolution to build and relocate, finally ending with this decision to purchase property, the congregation had always weighed their options carefully and made good choices. Now they owned six acres of land which would leave them with plenty of room for their new church, parking, and expansion in future years. The building program seemed to be gaining momentum, both in action and popularity, and moving more briskly in a forward direction. All of that came to a screeching halt in 1958. The Lord in his wisdom called Pastor Diehl home to himself in heaven.

It is always sad when a person dies, regardless of whether or not he was known. But when a man dies who had worked himself into the families and into the hearts of as many people as Pastor Diehl did, it is unsettling. Rev. Henry Diehl served the congregation in Lake Geneva for 39 years. He left behind a long list of accomplishments.

> The Rev. Mr. Diehl served on the local school board from 1933 until retiring in 1957. Active in the Wisconsin synod of the Lutheran Church, he was secretary of the mission board of the Southeast District for six years, was vice president of the district for 17 years and from 1929-31 was secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin. He had also served on the Lutheran Seminary board at Theinsville for 10 years.[22]

An example of the impact Rev. Diehl made in people's lives is demonstrated by the source of the newspaper article. In Janesville, Wisconsin, his death was front page news. Rev. Diehl was mourned by his congregation, his brothers, and his Synod. First Lutheran was now 74 years old. Pastor Henry J. Diehl had served the congregation for over half of its existence.

Upon the death of such an icon in First Lutheran history, one might think that the affairs of the church would come to a grinding halt. That they did not is a credit to Diehl's ministry. Insofar as his death related to the building project, one might think it would have been the knock-out blow.

That did not happen either. The building project never seemed to be a priority in Diehl's ministry. The congregation had been considering building a new church ever since 1930. Twenty-eight years later, they still did not have a church. A pastor is called to a congregation to lead them in spiritual matters, to preach the Word of God and to administer the sacraments. He certainly is not called to be a businessman who is looking to build a personal little empire, as some modern day evangelists do. Yet as the spiritual head of the congregation, the members also look to the pastor for guidance in business matters. That *is* included in leadership. Perhaps it was in this area that Rev. Diehl was wanting. Although he led the congregation through many smaller projects, many of them were either necessary maintenance or stop-gap items. In all the years that the congregation recognized a need for a new facility, he never was able to successfully lead them to that end. I asked Mr. Brellenthin why that was. "You have to understand the personality of Pastor Diehl. He was a tough old German. And, because he had been at the congregation for so many years, he was respected, and no one questioned his word." Perhaps Diehl's own words, quoted earlier, may give us additional insight as to why he never led First Lutheran into a new church. When he was asked about his popularity he replied, "Because I've tended to my own business, preached the Gospel and kept myself aloof from politics."[23] Diehl had no taste at all for politics. Considering the political quagmire of the 1920's and beyond in which the synod found itself bogged down, Diehl's words are understandable. If Diehl had a choice between visiting his people and attending a Church Council meeting, he would no doubt choose the personal visitation. Diehl simply loved his people, and sought to minister to them. Because he did not have too much of a taste for politics, he probably was not so wrapped up in the business aspects of the ministry, either. In his list of accomplishments there are very many noble deeds. Yet there was one thing conspicuous by its absence: a new church.

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[22]Janesville Daily Gazette, *Rev. H. J. Diehl, 71, Dies at Geveva; Pastor 49 Years,* December 6, 1958, p. 1.
[23]Lake Geneva Regional News, *First Lutheran Served by Pastor Diehl 38 Years.* April 18, 1957, p. 1.

History has shown over and over again that God has a plan for his people, and he always uses people and events for the good of his believers. If there was ever a situation that exemplified Romans 8:28, the history of First Evangelical Lutheran Church did so almost eerily. God called Pastor Diehl heavenward when he did because he had a plan for his believers in Lake Geneva. Four months after Diehl's death, the Lord sent them their next servant, Pastor Donald W. Meier. When I asked Mr. Brellenthin what effect Pastor Diehl's death and Pastor Meier's coming had on the building program, he put it this way, "It totally shifted the scope of the whole project."[24]

Pastor Meier came to First Lutheran at a critical juncture in its history. After the departure of any of its servants, the congregational ship naturally wavers. It gasps nervously, certain of what went before, not knowing what would come in the future, and timid to continue to sail into uncharted waters without an earthly helmsman. This congregational sentiment was only amplified when Diehl departed partly because he did not leave for another congregation. The suddenness with which God called him home certainly carried with it additional shock. He had been their minister for almost four decades—many in the congregation had not even known any other minister. Now, upon the entrance of the new minister, he would certainly be put under the microscope. One can just hear the sentiment, "That isn't how Diehl did it." Pastor Meier surely had big shoes to fill, especially in the eyes of the congregation.

Pastor Meier

The stereotypical profile of a member of a WELS congregation has long been something similar to conservative, German, and hates to change. As is the case with many stereotypes, though,

[24] Interview with Mr. Brellenthin, April 15, 1998.

the WELS stereotype probably has elements of truth in it. We cannot deny our heritage; we are Lutheran. We are conservative as well, especially by the world's standards. That we resist change can be proven one way or the other, depending upon example. Until 1958, what is asserted as typical for the whole is certainly true of the part in the case of First Lutheran. They were Germans, they were conservative, and they could not be accused of possessing a pioneering spirit. Every pastor who had served them in their 74 year history was German, the last of whom, Pastor Diehl, was exemplar of the German way of life. If it is true that a congregation tends to assume the personality of its pastor, then First Lutheran would also be conservative, Lutheran, and opposed to change.

This was the setting into which Pastor Meier came. The congregation was conservative and German, to be sure. They still worshipped with men sitting on one side, women on the other. When the Lord's Supper was served, all the men went first, and the women followed. They were apprehensive, fearing the future, suspicious of the unknown—including a new pastor. After forty years with the same minister, they were intimately familiar with "the way Pastor Diehl did it," and were very comfortable with that way. They also were bursting at the seams, in need of a new building. For all of these reasons, the congregation was crying out for leadership and change.

When Pastor Meier arrived in Lake Geneva, he was 34 years old. He, too, was a German by heritage, but came with a history somewhat different than some of his predecessors. Before he became a minister, he spent three years in the Navy Air Corp, even fighting in World War II as a radioman gunner. When asked how his years in the service helped to prepare him for ministry, Pastor Meier responded, "The service helps a man in dealing with people. It helps a lot."[25] Prior to accepting the call to First Lutheran, he served as Development Director at Bethesda Lutheran Home in Watertown, Wisconsin. Each experience helped shape the course of Meier's ministry, and were

[25] Interviews with Pastor Donald Meier were conducted several times over the course of two weeks, April 10-24. All interviews were conducted over the telephone. Pastor Meier currently resides in Leesburg, Florida.

particularly useful in his history at First Lutheran. As it would turn out, the Lord made ample use of Pastor Meier's life experiences when he arrived on the scene in 1959.

Donald W. Meier was installed as the eighth pastor of First Lutheran on April 5, 1959. As if the state of the congregation and the state of the building project were not enough for the new pastor to work on, there were other factors that were even more pressing. Upon his arrival, he quickly began to plan for the congregations' 75th anniversary. About five months later on September 20, 1959, the congregation heard Pastor Gieschen's son preach the sermon for their anniversary. This was also the same time in history that the WELS and LCMS battle lines were being drawn. It would not be long before the WELS would officially sever fellowship ties with the Missouri Synod. Reading over several of the church newsletters from this era, one finds hidden amongst all the talk of the building project back page articles calling the people to attendance at voters meetings to decide the history of the church in another area, synodical membership. After much discussion, First Lutheran remained a member of the WELS.

Little is recorded about the general feeling of the congregation toward the building program in the transition year between Diehl and Meier, but it is evident that a few were not in favor of the project. Some of the conflicting attitudes were based simply on emotion, some were genuinely concerned about the financial state of the congregation. Others were operating with a general ignorance of what kingdom work involved and a willingness to continue with status quo. Questions such as "Why is this project necessary? It seems to me we are doing all right." and "How much is it going to cost?"[26] were only a couple of the questions that veiled the underlying sentiment of some. The negative sentiment posed a problem. Those who were opposed to the building program needed to be brought on board somehow, or the congregation risked division. Note the explicitly careful language

[26] Questions taken from the stewardship pamphlet published by the congregation entitled, *Questions that are being asked and Answers about our Stewardship Development Program.*

in the following letter written to the members of the congregation by the secretary of the building committee following that vote.

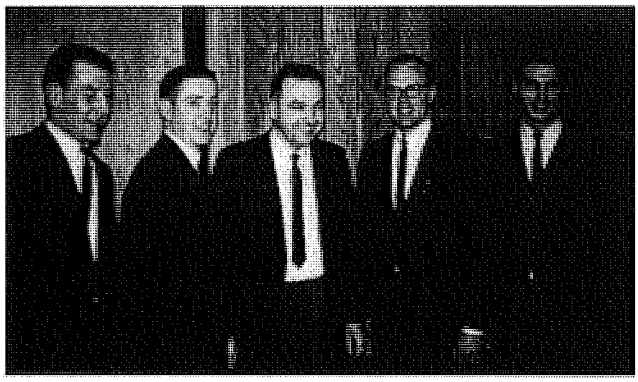
> For many years our congregation has wanted and needed new facilities. We all realize the if we are to continue the work asked of us by our God here in Lake Geneva, we must expand one more. Our fathers found it necessary to do that very thing years ago. Shortly after they had built their first church they found it necessary to build a larger one. And may we never forget their faith and love for they had to borrow over 4/5ths of the cost of the structure. It was necessary through the years to expand and remodel both the present church and school so that the work of the Lord could be done more effectively. We all realize that once more God is asking us to expand and move forward. We today are being asked to prove our love and devotion to our Savior as did our father and the founder of our congregation. We have been handicapped by lack of funds, but now according to good advice, we are in position to finally move ahead. The congregation, through its voters, has authorized a building program. But note well, all they have authorized thus far is to plan such a program and if plans materialize, to relocate our facilities on the property purchased by the congregation in 1957. To aid in this planning the voters have elected a building committee. May we repeat, this is all that has been decided by the congregation at this time.[27]

There are several fascinating bits of information from Mr. Anders' letter. Secretary Anders probably wrote the letter late in February, 1960. It is interesting to note how careful he is to trace the history of the congregation, and then tie it in with their present day needs. He reasons that when the congregation had been faced with challenges in the past, they responded. He slowly builds up to what must have been the most controversial piece of information in the letter, that the congregation had authorized a building program, and immediately spends several sentences softening the blow. Clearly the building program was not met with unanimous support.

Amidst all of these distractions, Pastor Meier resolutely proceeded to plan for the new church. After he put the planning for the anniversary behind, full-scale planning for the building program now went forward. Shortly into 1960, a new and larger building committee was elected

complete with officers. On February 26th, the committee met and decided to divide itself into subcommittees. The Planning Committee, the Appraisal Committee, the Preliminary Study Committee, and the Finance Committee were formed with the current officers of the building committee serving as chairmen. A brief discussion followed over the general vision of the project. "After due discussion it was decided to interview no less than three architects. Three styles of architecture were discussed; namely Gothic, Contemporary and Modern. No support was given the Gothic style and no opinion was expressed as to the other two."[28] According to official church records, this was the first meeting of the newly elected building committee. It was the first time the committee discussed anything about architects or architecture.

Before the February meeting was adjourned, the men of the building committee decided to give themselves two weeks to study the issues of interest to each subcommittee. When they met again March 4th, the subcommittees reported their findings. The Planning Committee gave a detailed statistical report about church attendance, Sunday School growth and attendance, and financial data of various kinds from the previous ten years. They looked for patterns and trends that would be helpful when the time came to design the new facilities. The Appraisal Committee had the job of valuing their current buildings and property. Even though their financial picture was by no means rosy, they were not is as bad a position as they originally thought. The committee reported that the asking price for the current church property with all its building be set at $43,500. They



Members of an early building committee. Pastor Meier is in the middle

[27] Taken from a letter written by the chairman of the building committee, R. Anders, to the congregation. The letter is undated, but judging from the verbiage of the letter, it can safely be dated sometime in the first quarter of 1960.
[28] Taken from the minutes of the building committee meeting on February 26th, 1960.

also determined that

> If the property must be sold to other than a church body, the asking prices should be as follows:
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | Church building | $5,600.00 |
> | School " | 3,000.00 |
> | Parsonage | 14,500.00 |
> | Land | 3,400.00 |
>
> After due discussion on methods and procedures of informing the membership of the congregation as to the progress of the building committee, and any other facts pertinent to the building program; it was moved, seconded and carried that a letter be mailed to all members of the congregation.[29]

One certainly finds it interesting that the value of the parsonage was more than the church, school, and land combined, and worth almost three times as much as the church itself.

In the few weeks that followed, the building committee worked diligently interviewing as many architects as possible before the quarterly voters meeting. Steffen & Kemp of Milwaukee and Waterman & Fuge of Fort Atkinson were among the first firms interviewed. A very famous architect from Sheboygan, Stuebenrauch, was also interviewed by the congregation. None of them would get the contract. What is particularly noteworthy is that the building committee had gone ahead interviewing architects while the congregation was seemingly undecided about the direction they were going to take with the building project. It was now 1960, and nothing official had been said, or re-said to the congregation about building all new facilities since the time Meier came onto the scene. Yet the building committee was already interviewing architects. Was the building committee premature in their interviewing process? Although nothing was found in the church records to indicate that they had gotten permission, a letter to the congregation from the secretary of the building committee, Robert Anders, explains the situation.

[29] Taken from the minutes of the building committee meeting on March 4th, 1960.

> Your building committee has been busy and active carrying out the wishes of the congregation in planning a building program. We have sought the advice of others. We have read and studied books and reports. We have and are still trying to determine our needs and long range needs. Your committee feels that we have reached the point where architects should be interviewed. And this we plan to do now. (The congregation has authorized this and has asked for a report at the April Quarterly meeting.)[30]

The April voters meeting was approaching quickly, and the building committee knew that they were going to have to get all their facts straight in order to sell the project to the congregation. It was going to be necessary to promote the project in a positive light, even though there were still dissenters and potential pitfalls. Fortunately, promotion was one thing Pastor Meier and the building committee did very well. Not everyone in the congregation was completely sold on the idea of relocating. Not everyone in the congregation was thrilled with the idea of building new, expensive buildings and taking the congregation into debt. Over the course of time, the positive reinforcement through steady promotion would prove to be invaluable. Meier and the building committee worked hard at making sure the congregation would not become divided over this issue. Every time there was an important decision to be made, the congregation knew about it and was encouraged to take part in the decision-making process. They were encouraged to come and voice their opposition, if that was their position. The project was always presented as *their* project, and the new church as *their* church. That was the way it was constantly, and correctly portrayed. In a letter written shortly before the April voters meeting, the secretary of the building committee, Robert Anders, skillfully sketches the role of the building committee and the role of the congregation.

> While we have given much thought to the building program, nothing has been decided by the committee. In fact we can not decided anything. We can only recommend. At this writing we could not even make a recommendation regarding size, cost, style of architecture or even when this building program should begin. True, we have ideas,

[30] Taken from an undated letter written by Secretary Robert Anders of the building committee. The letter is believed to have been written sometime during the first quarter of 1960, probably sometime in late February.

> we have goals, but they are still in the planning stage. As soon as we are ready to make recommendations, the congregation will be notified. After all, you, have to make the final decisions. We will bring our reports either to the regular voter's meetings or we will ask the Church Council to call special voter's meetings. If, in the meantime, there is something we feel you should know, we will either send you a special letter as this one, or we will ask Pastor Meier to include it in the PARISH VISITOR. We want to keep you informed.[31]

Anders writes with a careful mix of calm and promotion, always positively emphasizing the congregation's role. Pastor Meier does the same in the April, 1960 issue of *Parish Visitor,*

> May we call your attention to the regular Quarterly meeting of the congregation to be held on April 4th at 8:00 P.M. This will be a very important meeting. Not only will the Church Council have several important items for you to consider, but especially the report of the building committee will be of interest to everyone. Our congregation has talked and thought about building a new church for many years. The building committee in their report is bringing this entire matter to a head now. The basic question - Are we now going to build or aren't we? will be answered at this meeting. We know and realize that there is not full agreement on this important subject. But as Christians we also know that the time to discuss this matter is at the meetings and NOT after the matter has been decided. Let us all conscientiously take this matter to our God in prayer and ask Him to bless our deliberations so that the final answer is not the will of one or just a few but the will of the congregation and above all, the will of God.[32]

It was through positive promotion like this that the members of First Lutheran gradually gravitated toward the building project.

The building committee met one last time before the voters meeting to put the finishing touches on their proposal. What follows are the minutes from that meeting with the committee's official proposal.

> March 24, 1960.
>
> The meeting opened with a prayer by the pastor. The main topic of discussion concerned presenting the facts and findings of the building

[31] Excerpt from a letter written by the secretary of the Building Committee, Robert Anders. The letter is believed to have been written about February, 1960.
[32] *Parish Visitor,* April, 1960.

committee to the quarterly congregational meeting of April 4th. The report follows:

1. The Building Committee having discussed and examined the present and future need of the congregation finds:
   a) We need more room for our church services.
   b) We desperately need more Sunday School room and facilities.
   c) We need larger fellowship facilities.
   d) We need additional meeting room facilities.
   e) We need more and adequate facilities for the youth of our congregation who are the future congregation.
2. The Building Committee, having sought the advice of others competent to give an honest answer, and having reviewed our own financial position, feels that our congregation is able to afford new facilities.
   a) Others have done what we need to do with far less to start with.
   b) We now have over $35,000 in cash, our new land paid for, and our present property for equity.
   c) We believe our members are all Christians and will generously respond to the need of the Lord and the congregation
   d) We have to wonderful example the founders of our congregation to follow.
3. The Building Committee feels the time to go ahead with the planning and building of the new facilities is now:
   a) It takes a minimum of two years from the time of the hiring of the architect to dedication.
   b) The cost of new and adequate facilities is not out of our reach financially.
   c) To wait means lost time.
   d) To wait longer means added cost because of higher prices.
   e) To wait longer means the loss of opportunities and even souls who may be won for Christ.
4. THE BUILDING COMMITTEE THEREFORE RECOMMENDS:
   a) That the congregation's resolution of May 23, 1954 to build a new church, again be reaffirmed and that the resolution of 1956 to relocate the new buildings also be reaffirmed.
   b) That for clarities sake, it should be understood by all, that all future facilities, including a new parsonage, are to be built on our new property just off Madison Street.
   c) That the Building Committee should continue their work and proceed as a Building Committee as they are ready, whether it takes two years or ten years. (In other words they are hot to rush headlong into this thing simply to get new bldgs.)
   d) That the Building Committee is to get permission from the congregation in regular or special Voter's meetings before any major steps are taken, such as: hiring of an architect, adopting plans, letting of contractors, ground breaking etc.
   e) That the Building Committee is to continually keep the congregation informed of its progress and report in regular or special Voter's meetings and also through the Parish Visitor or Sunday

bulletin. They shall also request the Stewardship Committee to inform each family of the congregation individually of the Building program and its progress.

f) That a sum of $1,000 from the Building Fund be set aside for the use of the Building Committee for necessary expenses in the planning and building of the new facilities. These monies are to be accounted for in every Building Committee Chairman's report to the congregation.
g) That the Building Committee request the Church Council to call a special meeting of the congregation to hire an architect as soon as they are ready with their recommendation.
h) That the Building Committee be authorized to sell the present Walworth Street property and facilities at a price they deem fair and advisable.

The above recommendations will be offered to the voters on April 4th for either their approval or rejection or modification.[33]

When the quarterly voters meeting finally arrived about two weeks later, the program was outlined and the proposal was made. The building committee was now in an enviable position. They had thoroughly researched every avenue of the project They were ready with the current financial condition, the projected needs, and the projected cost of the new program. They were prepared to present a glowing picture of the project. Most of all, they had already anticipated the congregations consenting vote and had begun to interview architects. If the congregation voted the program down, the worst that would happen would be that they would have to call the architects and tell them the project was over. On the other hand, if the congregation approved of the building program, the building committee would already be two or three steps down the road. The leadership had carefully positioned themselves for this day. Their careful preparation proved worthy. The congregation overwhelmingly voted to move forward with the building program according to the committee's recommendations.

I asked Pastor Meier why a vote was requested for the congregation to reaffirm the decisions of 1954 and 1956. "There was some confusion when I got there. There was some question as to did

we say this or did we say that. I insisted on another vote to unite the congregation again. I wanted to get it nailed down once and for all and make it unanimous. We had a good vote on that."[34] Even though the building program had been ratified at least twice under Pastor Diehl, his death had no doubt unnerved the confidence of the members. In addition, the building committee had now presented a comprehensive study of the project, something that had not been done before. The vote was an attempt to connect the decisions that had been made six and four years earlier with the decisions that were being made in the present. Although it essentially reaffirmed the 1954 decision for a second time, it was no less a vote on the building project as it was a vote of confidence for the pastor, the building committee, and the congregation. Meier was slowly building the momentum that was lost in 1958. He carefully tackled one obstacle at a time, and as soon as one was finished, he began to deal with the next obstacle.

In the weeks following the voters meeting, the building committee met with more architects. The building committee next interviewed Stade & Associates and were very impressed. Redman & Domann of Milwaukee came in later, but were dismissed in part because their fee was too much. When the building committee met on April 8, only four days after the voters meeting, the general feeling was that Stade & Associates and Steffen & Kemp offered the congregation the most. The committee resolved to spend about a month looking into both architects past achievements and visiting other congregations and schools they had built. On May 9, 1960, only 35 days after the congregation had accepted the building committee's proposal, the building committee carried a motion to hire Stade & Associates as their architect. I asked Pastor Meier what separated Mr. Stade from the other architects.

> We had a real easy time at first. Some of the architects came in and it was clear that we weren't going to hire them for various reasons—

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[33] Taken from the minutes of the March 25th building committee meeting.
[34] *Ibid.*

> they're fees were too high and so forth. All of the architects came in and gave us sketches of what they thought our new building would look like, and some of them were good. But Stade refused to give us drawings. He said he couldn't design our church until he sat down with us and asked us questions about what we wanted. He was the only one who did that, and they really impressed us.[35]

Mr. Stade immediately went to work. At his request, the building committee reorganized itself into the following committee's: Worship, Education, Fellowship, Choir & Music, Publicity, Finance, Financing, Grounds, and the Parsonage Committee. He gave the Pastor Meier and the building committee about a month to populate the various sub-committees. Every member of First Lutheran would belong to one of the nine committee's. When all the committees had been staffed, Mr. Stade gave each of the committees a form to fill out asking key questions about their area of interest.[36] The results of these questionnaires would form the basis for many of the decisions Stade would make when designing the building.

Most of the summer months in 1960 were devoted to gathering precise information from the congregation in all areas of ministry. Now all the questions were asked about what the congregation wanted, and needed. Each committee took a turn during the summer to report the results of its findings. Now was the time to gather all of the congregations' needs. Now was the time to voice opinions, to ask questions, because after Mr. Stade drew up the plans, there would be no looking back. The committees responded in kind. Every detail was examined, from determining if having shuffle board courts on the fellowship hall floor was advisable to which direction the sound of the organ should come from in the church. Every committee reported their itemized findings in a report given to Mr. Stade in September.

As the summer progressed, Pastor Meier and the building committee were becoming increasingly aware of the need for a stewardship program. While all of the committees were making

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[35] Interview with Pastor Meier.

their lists, they realized that if they wanted to accommodate their lists even in part, they had better begin a fund drive before their eyes became bigger than their pocketbooks. The congregation had finally decided they wanted to build; now the next step was to determine how they were going to pay for their project. Before Meier came in 1959, a building fund had been established. The problem he encountered when he arrived was that there was very little money in it. The money that had accumulated from the time of its establishment was used to buy the land. In the years 1958-1960, the building fund gathered $2838.80, $3314.39, and $3512.72 per year respectively. Numbers like that would not go very far toward the down payment of a new building, or even furnishings for that matter. If they were to build, something innovative had to be done, because they were starting with limited resources.

Pastor Meier realized that if First Lutheran was going to be able to build anything close to the facility that the congregation needed, they were going to have to raise a lot of money in a hurry. The congregation could not withstand another miss on the building project. They had already experienced several of those and the refrain was all too familiar. If a church was going to be built, it had to happen now, and the congregation had to demonstrate an ability to pay for it. The Lord had special plans for First Lutheran in this area. Meier brought a significant amount of talent to First Lutheran in the place they needed it most. His previous ministry at Bethesda would now prove to be invaluable training for the task that lied ahead. Because he was Development Director, he was heavily involved in fund raising. It was there that he learned a technique that he would now employ in his congregation.

When Meier was at Bethesda, he had become accustomed to working with outside help to raise money. He suggested to the building committee that they look into using the same procedure. At that time, a technique like this was questionable, to say the least. If it was going to happen at

[36] Two of these forms are found in Appendix B and Appendix C.

First Lutheran, it would happen with much discussion. From personal notes of Pastor Meier, it was clear that he argued vigorously in favor of using professional help. In fact, his notes indicate that he may have made the argument that the congregation would not be able to raise a sufficient amount of money without professional help. This is not to say he distrusted the power of the Holy Spirit working through the gospel. It was more a realization that the financial level of expertise among the members of the congregation was low. What was reflected in his notes is more a recognition of a deficiency, and a desire to go out and get help to fill the gap. The minutes of the building committee meetings reveal how the issue unfolded:

> There were opinions, pro and con, on professional fund raising.[37]
>
> Rev. Meier gave a report on his finding after consulting with a man in Milwaukee with regard to the merits of seeking professional guidance in respect to fund raising. It was decided to ask Mr. Ed Trindle to attend one of our meetings to give us an insight on professional fund raising. The pastor was directed to contact another man in regards to fund raising, so as to have two different backgrounds on the subject.[38]
>
> Mr. Ed Trindle, who gives guidance in professional fund raising, gave a very enlightening talk on the workings an possibilities that can be expected with professional help in fund raising. Many facts and figures were analyzed to gain a perspective on what we, as a congregation, could expect in regard to reaching our goals.[39]
>
> Mr. Hatfield, a representative of H. DeMand & Co. spoke to the committee on professional fund raising. The committee was not too favorably impressed with the methods and the approach that were used by this company. Two choices of help would be offered, either with a director on the job for five or six weeks, or through correspondence from their Evanston office.[40]
>
> The building committee met in the afternoon at the parish hall with Mr. Grunsebach of Beaver & Associates; a firm that gives professional guidance in fund raising. The committee was given a detailed explanation on how the firm operates and what we, as a congregation,

[37] Taken from the minutes of the August 10, 1960, building committee meeting.
[38] Taken from the minutes of the September 22, 1960, building committee meeting.
[39] Taken from the minutes of the October 20, 1960, building committee meeting.
[40] Taken from the minutes of the October 27, 1960, building committee meeting.

> could expect to raise with the guidance of Beaver & Associates. The committee felt that this man had a very realistic approach to the subject.[41]
>
> At the annual congregational meeting it was voted upon and carried that Beaver & Associates be hired to conduct our fund raising campaign. Their work will begin right after Easter.[42]

After conferring both with the Church Council and the building committee, Meier brought in two professional fund raisers to assess the circumstances of the congregation and the building project, and to suggest a structured, organized program which the congregation could employ to raise money. Clearly Meier was stepping out on a limb. Using an outside source to raise money was not only taboo in WELS circles, it was unheard of! Pastor Meier faced a challenge just in proving that it was possible to use professional help to raise money and still be able to do it by upholding the scriptural principles of stewardship. In a pamphlet of questions and answers about the stewardship program, some of the rationale was provided.

> (Q) I understand you have brought some people in from out of town to raise this money. Why don't we do it ourselves and save the cost? (A) This is a highly specialized field. Just as we go to a doctor when we are sick, or to a lawyer when we need legal advice, we feel it is just as important to consult with a reputable firm in this most highly important matter. They do not actually raise the money. They are here to direct our efforts in this matter of stewardship. Our Pastor, members of our Church Council and the building committee have studied this matter carefully with other churches such as ours. After prayerful and thoughtful consideration the voters agreed this was a wise choice.[43]

Meier may never have convinced his contemporaries, but many of the techniques he introduced in the early sixties are ones that our synod uses today to receive gifts.

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[41] Taken from the minutes of the November 1, 1960, building committee meeting.

[42] Taken from the minutes of the building committee. The exact date of the annual meeting is unknown.

[43] *Questions that are being asked and the Answers about Stewardship Development Program.* Publishing date unknown, but it is my guess it was in summer, 1961.

While the debate about fundraising went on, Stade began to work with the volumes of information the congregation was gathering. Some of what he collected could be overlooked for the short term; after all, there were two financial committees, a grounds committee, a publicity committee and a parsonage committee. None of these committees would play an architectural part in the design of the church. For now, he could concentrate his efforts on digesting the information of the four primary committees: worship, education, fellowship, and choir & music. He would begin to formulate his design concepts based upon the information these committees had assembled.

The education committee's primary concern was for the Sunday School. In 1958, Sunday School attendance at First Lutheran was 160 per Sunday. For years the current facilities were badly outdated and overcrowded. Their report centered largely around a request for more space. As long as there were provisions to accommodate the ever-growing Sunday School, most of the rest of their requests were of small concern to Stade. Space was also the chief concern of the fellowship committee. They wanted the ability to meet the needs of the different organizations in the church: the choir, the Lutheran Youth Organization, the Ladies Guild, athletics, and the like. When the choir and music committee made their request, Stade began to get his first glimpse into the structure of the building. What space they requested was small in comparison to the rest. They asked for a balcony to seat as large as a fifty member choir. A second request was made for the organ music to flow evenly to all areas of the sanctuary, preferably from the rear.

All this time Stade was delivering on the promise he made that earned him the bid in the first place. Pastor Meier said that it was his willingness to sit down with the congregation and look at its individual needs that made them hire him. From the very start, Stade had been investigating every last wish, want and desire of First Lutheran, and not until he got every detail was he going to put pencil to paper in design. It was August 10 when the worship committee met with Stade to discuss

their studies and recommendations. The minutes of the meeting describe several discussions about the worship facility and the congregations personal preferences. They preferred multiple services, the common cup, a communion rail, a pulpit *and* a lectern, pews rather than individual seats, and a center aisle. Then, in a very brief and otherwise isolated blurb, the minutes read, "Some discussion was held on what a church symbolizes. The doctrine of the Royal Priesthood was discussed and it was felt that our physical structure should be built on that doctrine."[44] Living on the long side of history, we may never know more about that discussion than what was recorded for us by the committee secretary. Little did he or any of the members in attendance know of the historical importance of that meeting.

The building committee minutes are silent on the remainder of the design of the building. The reason for that is simple. After the August 10 meeting, Pastor Meier personally sat down in meetings with Mr. Stade and discussed the doctrine of the universal priesthood of all believers. They were in somewhat of a pinch for time—all of the other aspects of the building project were progressing so nicely that the design of the building was holding back more planning. Of course the architect was at a scriptural disadvantage, so he was naturally inquisitive of Meier. Pastor Meier comments on the nature of the meetings, "I must have met twice or three times a week with him for the better part of two months, and I systematically went through my dogmatics notes with him. Boy, I had those things marked up! I would make a statement, and he would say, 'How would you express that in brick and stone.'"[45] Through the whole design process, Stade would continue to ask the questions, "What do you want to express with your church building? What do you want to say or teach with it?" Out of these discussions came the desire to express a truth of the Bible that was rediscovered at the time of the Reformation, the truth that all members of a Christian congregation are

[44] Taken from the minutes of the August 10, 1960, building committee meeting.
[45] Quotation from a phone conversation with Pastor Meier.

kings and priests before God. We call it the "Doctrine of the Universal Priesthood of All Believers." It was during the fall months of 1960 that Pastor Meier and Mr. Stade would sit and design a church based squarely upon this doctrine, a church that would later be "reputed to be among the 10 most beautiful churches in the country."[46]

The general floor plan was presented to the building committee in fall of 1960.[47] When Mr. Stade presented the preliminary drawings to the building committee, they were immediately received with excitement. Even though the design was radically different than anything First Lutheran had ever done before, even radically different than any type of Lutheran church, there was little question as to whether or not Stade's design would stick. The building committee was convinced that Stade's drawings would survive. The only questions or modifications that were made from the original floor plan were items of little concern—does the storage closet go in this corner or in that corner. After a couple of months of sketching and re-sketching, Stade and the building committee were ready to present the final drawings to the congregation for their approval.

In the meantime, the congregation continued to plan its finances. Working closely with the professionals at Beaver & Associates, the First Lutheran stewardship committee developed a plan to raise money that would serve as the down payment on the building. As the minutes from one of the committee meetings indicate, the congregation was going to employ businesslike techniques in the program.

> Willard Simmons explained the Stewardship program that he and his committee intends to install in the near future. This program will be inaugurated with the aid of the new stewardship counselor Mr. Brown from Beaver and Assoc. Mr. Brown requested that Mr. Simmons choose a steering committee consisting of six "influential" men from the congregation.[48]

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[46] Lake Geneva Regional News, *Church Design Reflects Symbolic Meaning*, February 21, 1963.
[47] See Appendix A for the floor plan for First Lutheran's new church.
[48] Taken from the minutes of the March 23, 1961 building committee meeting.

Certainly the secretary's use of quotation marks around the word influential give us some idea of the discussion that must have gone on that night. Was this an attempt of a man from the outside trying to use political influence within the congregation to work results? Before we are quick to make judgments, we ought to investigate the plan that he proposed.

The program itself was very intricate, and at its full implementation it would involve months of training and almost eighty men. A fund raising committee was formed, complete with a chairman and a two co-chairman. According to Mr. Brown's specifications, a steering committee was built with "influential" men in addition to the chairman and co-chairmen. This steering committee was comprised of five men, plus Chairman Simmons and Pastor Meier. The rest of the members of the fund raising committee were divided into teams, with each team having a captain. The criteria for team divisions was made along financial lines. For example, a team was formed for the financial range of $5,000-$10,000 annual income. Another team was formed for the financial range of $10,000-$15,000, and so on. Typically, you were a member of the team in which your own annual income fell. For example, if a person earned $12,500 per year, he would be a member of the $10,000-$15,000 team. Over the course of several months, the core members of the committee and the pastor sat down with a list of the congregation members. They made a list of all those who earned an income, and to the best of their knowledge they also put on paper how much income each of the members was earning. In a town as small as Lake Geneva, it was not difficult to gather accurate information. When all the numbers were totaled, the members of the congregation were divided into earning groups. All kinds of different factors were entered into their equations. Two dairy farmers who made the same amount of money may not have been placed into the same earning group since one farmer only had one child and the other had four. When all the information was complete, a team members would visit another member and make the stewardship presentation. At

the conclusion of the presentation, the team member would say something to the effect, "I make such and such amount of money, and I believe that I am able to give 7% of my income to the building program over the next three years. I hope that you will be able to do the same."

Becoming a member of the fund committee was something that was taken seriously. You could not participate on the committee unless you first had committed to the building fund and pledged a portion of your income. All the commitments that were made were spread over the course of a three year period. Therefore if you pledged $5,000, it was $5,000 over the next three years. As soon as a person committed to the program, he was welcomed aboard. That, however, was not a free license to go out and ask other members for their money. A comprehensive stewardship training program was installed for all members of the fund raising committee. Each of the members took nearly six months of stewardship training before they were able to conduct the in-home visit. It was this training in connection with their own pledge that allowed them to speak to each member they visited on a very knowledgeable, personal level. In all, 75 men comprised the fund raising committee as team members. "The basic concept was that we would have half of the congregation calling on the other half."[49]

The team members were given every advantage. They had in-depth training, and God's Word always works. They had committed to the project themselves, and therefore could speak of the merits of the program truthfully, unlike the salesman who confesses he does not use the product he is promoting. Thirdly, each home visitor was a member of the same income group as the person they were visiting. It is always easier for a person to commit when they know that someone else in the same circumstances is doing the same thing. Finally, all the visits were conducted in the members homes. The fund raising program was designed in order to give the team member every advantage in his visit.

Despite the fact that First Lutheran stepped out on a limb to make use of a professional outside fund raiser, they proved through and through that their program was founded upon the Word of God and upon Scriptural principles. The thorough training of each stewardship caller is evidence of that, as is the evidence of their promotional articles.

> We all know and realize that now we all are challenged by the ambitious program that we have adopted to relocate our facilities and to expand. This program is going to cost us money, it is going to cost us time, and it is going to demand the talents of more of our members than ever before in our church's program. We all know and realize that we cannot do it of and by ourselves. We need FAITH to build; only the Lord can give it. We need LOVE to build; only the Lord can increase it. We need MONEY to build; only the Lord can supply it. We need WILLINGNESS to build; only the Lord can create it. We need PRAYER to build; only the Lord can answer it.[50]

The Lord richly blessed the efforts of the stewardship program. The fund raising committee, in conjunction with the building committee, had set their goal at raising $125,000 in pledges for the next three years, beginning in 1961. The program was so successful in raising money that they exceeded their aggressive expectations. In all, over $130,000 was pledged to the building program. The cover of the June, 1961 edition of the *Parish Visitor* tells the story. It is a picture of a thermometer with the mercury bursting through the top. The building project had turned the corner. In addition to all the pledges, the congregation was filled with a united spirit. Over ninety percent of the membership made three year pledges to the building project, and every age group was involved.

> We would like to publicly comment the members of this year's confirmation class for their pledges. Yes these 12 children whose income no where compares to ours, also made a pledge to God. Their pledges were only nickels, dimes and quarters weekly, but they too want to give to the Lord as He blesses them. The total amount of their pledges was $355.80. God will certainly bless them if they continue that kind of stewardship throughout their lives.[51]

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[49] Quotation from a phone interview with Pastor Meier.
[50] *Parish Visitor,* May, 1961.
[51] *Parish Visitor,* June 1961.

The fund raising program transformed the congregations' perception of the building program from dream to reality. Up until this time, detailed planning had gone on behind the scenes. As is the case in almost every similar setting, the general populace is skeptical up until the last minute. Everyone at First Lutheran now wanted to build—they were more worried about the question, "Can we do it?" When they saw the plans for the new church and the finances come together, the people began to believe that a building program was finally going to take place in Lake Geneva. Under the theme, *The Challenge of Our Faith*, the fund drive prospered with the Lord's guidance. The members of First Lutheran responded to the challenge with generous pledges. With over $130,00 pledged, First Lutheran could plan on building the same year.

When the drawings were presented to the congregation for their approval in March 1961, there were many questions. None of them, however, had to do with the design of the building. The congregation, like the building committee, fell in love with the design. The obstacles and hurdles were falling one by one. From this point on, the realization of the project would only be a matter of time. At the same meeting that the plans were presented, the architects estimated that the total cost of the building would be in the range of $331,000.00. The complete cost, including furnishings and landscaping would total near $385,000.00.

First Lutheran spent the summer months of 1961 securing financing and bringing their plans to completion. Much work had been done in the previous year laying the groundwork for the financing to go through. Trips had been made to Milwaukee to meet with executives, and others were invited to Lake Geneva to size up the project first hand. From all indications that they received, financing the project was not going to be a major problem. The committee was only waiting to see how well the fund drive went before the congregation signed on with anyone. Now, with the equity the congregation could put up, the cash reserve in the building fund which had been quietly growing,

the value of their current property and all the pledges, the new building was able to be financed without a hitch. B.C. Ziegler and Co. issued $225,000 in bonds to finance the remainder of the project.

In a congregational meeting on October 2, 1961, First Lutheran gave their final approval to the architect's plans. They called for the church itself to be 100' x 100', with a 100' x 50' fellowship hall, a total of 15,000 square feet. A motion carried to send the plans out for bid, and after taking about a month to review several bids, First Lutheran had a general contractor, Scherrer Construction Company. As it turned out, Scherrer's bid, along with the subcontractor's bids, was almost exactly that of what the architect had projected. A newspaper article from early December indicates Scherrer bid $269,850.00 to build the building. The congregation signed on Steinke Hardware of Waterford for the heating and plumbing at $35, 831.00, and gave the electrical contract to a member, Bogart Electric Company. Bogart bid $17,954.00. In addition to these expenses, the chairman of the fund raising committee, W.K. Simmons, offered to build the cabinets and shelving for $5,510. The total bid for the church and fellowship hall came in at $329,145.00. The contractor estimated that the whole project would take fifty weeks, and groundbreaking was set for early December. First Lutheran was scheduled to have their new church by the end of the year 1962.

As soon as Scherrer construction was signed to a contract, things started happening quickly. The ink was hardly dry on the contract when Scherrer asked to begin to move dirt. Even though it was the dead of winter, they insisted they would rather start preparing the foundation. No one in the church had even begun to think about planning for a groundbreaking service, but they gave Scherrer permission to begin anyway. The service was planned, and a special edition of the *Parish Visitor* was issued calling people's attention to the groundbreaking ceremonies on December 10, 1961.

> "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." Yes, we can all indeed rejoice and praise God for another great blessing bestowed upon us.

> Bids for our new church were slightly below the architects estimate. This means construction can begin immediately! Therefore, the voter's decided Monday evening to hold a brief ground breaking ceremony this Sunday, December 10th. Regular services and Sunday School will be dropped. We will have 1 service Sunday, beginning at 9:30 after which we will all proceed in our cars (those who have no car will ride with others who do) to the new church site for a brief ground breaking ceremony and the close of the service.[52]

Despite bitterly cold weather and a dusting of snow, First Lutheran finally broke ground on their new building on December 10, 1961. As planned, the congregation worshipped in a 9:30 service at the old church and then moved to the new location to finish the service. A good crowd looked on as Pastor Meier turned over the first spade of dirt in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. After years and years of hoping and trusting in God, the congregation collectively breathed a sigh of relief. The building program was officially a reality.

Pastor Meier turns the first shovel of dirt in the name of the Triune God.

Work on the church was slow during the cold winter months, but when spring came, progress was made quickly. The goal was to dedicate the church in time for Christmas, and because the construction company had begun so soon, everything now looked like it was fitting into the proper time frame. Even with the complicated design and unusual construction, the job was on schedule.

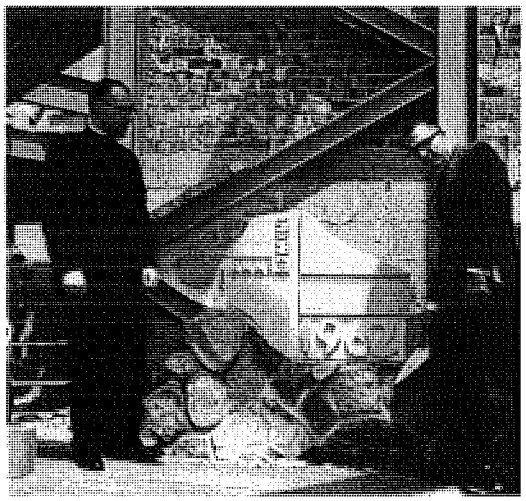
It would have been improper for Charles Stade to design such a magnificent building only to have forgotten the design of the cornerstone. As spring turned into summer, work on the building was moving along nicely, so nicely that soon the time would come for the builders to begin the fieldstone walls. As soon as Scherrer began to construct the outer walls, the congregation was planning

[52] *Parish Visitor,* Special Issue. The issue was undated, although it likely was published in late November or early

its cornerstone laying ceremony. Even the cornerstone of the new building was unique. "The architect has designed a special cornerstone for the church which blends in with the stone exterior. It is being made now. As soon as it is done we would like to display it in the narthex (or entrance) to our church so that you may all see and examine it."[53]

On July 1, 1962, First Lutheran held its cornerstone laying ceremony. Sunday School and church services were canceled so that all could attend the special service. Pastor David Tetzlaff came down from Whitewater to preach for the occasion, while Meier officiated. During the ceremony, some of the usual items of interest were placed into the building along with the cornerstone for posterity. "Normally a congregation will preserve several things in the cornerstone, for example, a copy of its constitution, Catechism, list of members, current money and newspapers etc. These things will be gathered in the coming weeks and at the ceremony be placed into our new cornerstone."[54] There is no record of what the congregation actually placed into the cornerstone.

After the cornerstone had been placed, the congregation anxiously awaited the day when the building would be finished. The contractor had ordered the main arches from a vendor in Washington state, and had been promised that they would arrive in March. These arches were so large[55] that they had to be shipped by train in order to get to Lake Geneva. There was a delay in the shipment of the arches, though, and therefore a delay in the overall construction of the building. As Pastor Meier describes it, "The way I remember it



Meier (right) and Tetzlaff (left) on July 1, 1962.

December.

[53] Excerpt taken from a congregational note entitled "Cornerstone Ceremony." The note was undated.

[54] *Ibid.*

[55] See Appendix D for pictures on the size of the arches.

was we called out to this place to order the arches, and they said, 'Sure, fine.' We got a call back later once they realized the dimensions, I guess, and they said, 'You want to order what!?' That set us back a bit."[56]

Despite the delay, the contractor said he would push as hard as he could to get everything done by Christmas. A blurb appeared in the newsletter, "While we cannot go up and pound nails etc. we can all pray that God would grant us this blessing [that the building would be done by Christmas]."[57] All the other work related to the building went smoothly. The masonry on the fieldstone walls, the plumbing, heating and electrical contractors never experienced any problems through the whole project. "It was one of the smoothest run projects I've ever been a part of. With the exception of those beams, we never experienced a delay. Today you have to wait weeks just to get inspectors to look at your work. We had none of that."[58] Even with the contractor promising his best efforts, though, it soon became evident that the congregation would not be in its new building by Christmas. The delay of the arches set too many other projects back in time.

As the project neared completion, word of the project was spreading. Newspaper articles from all over the area, even the large papers in Milwaukee, were covering the construction. All the coverage only built the spirits of the congregation and made them more eager to move into their new church. People were helping in any way they could to further the cause of the new church if it meant they would be in it sooner. In November, Meier called the first and only work party of the congregation. What was to be done did not even have anything to do with the building itself. Someone had donated all the gravel for the parking lot, but asked that the congregation members spread it themselves. People showed up with pickup trucks, tractors, and shovels to spread gravel on a Saturday

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[56] Phone interview conducted with Pastor Meier.
[57] Quotation taken from a *Parish Visitor*. Unfortunately, the article was clipped out like a newspaper article, so the publication date is unknown.
[58] *Ibid.*

afternoon and then they helped put in the lighting system in the parking lot and to spread gravel. Amazingly, this was the only sweat equity the congregation ever used.

The congregation's celebration of Christmas was somewhat bittersweet in 1962. They were naturally overjoyed and celebrated the birth of Jesus, but for many there was disappointment that they could not have done it in their new church. Whatever feelings of disappointment were still lingering in January were chased away when Pastor Meier and the building committee were assured by the general contractor that they could move into their new church on February 24, 1963. The congregation may not have been able to celebrate Christmas in their new church, but they would celebrate Lent and Easter there.

Last Sunday at old church.

February 24 was set in stone as the day of dedication, and the Church Council immediately went to work planning for the day. As they sat down with pen and paper, they found themselves planning almost a full week of celebration services. On Dedication Sunday, they planned a short valedictory service at the old church after which the congregation would proceed to the new church, much like they did for groundbreaking. The main service of dedication was scheduled at the new church at 10:30am, with a brief "door opening" ceremony. The congregation invited the President of the Wisconsin Synod, Pastor O.J. Naumann to speak at the main dedication service, and he accepted. Later that afternoon, the congregation would again celebrate the dedication of their new building in a festival service. The congregation asked the President of the Southeastern Wisconsin District, Pastor Adolph Buenger of Kenosha, to preach for the afternoon festival service, which he obliged. Sunday afternoon was by no means the end of the

rejoicing, however. On Monday evening, First Lutheran would conduct another service with an emphasis on Christian Education. Pastor John Jeske of Milwaukee preached for the Education service, while Pastor H. Wiedmann of Burlington served as the liturgist. The Sunday School edified the service with several anthems. Another service was planned for Tuesday evening, this time emphasizing Christian Fellowship. All of the various organizations of the congregations were asked to sit in their groups: the Ladies Guild, the Pioneers, the Choir, and so on. Pastor Lau from Elkhorn preached and Pastor Barenz of Slades Corners performed the liturgy. On Wednesday, February 27, the Church Council scheduled the first communion service in the new church. All members were specially notified and encouraged to attend the Wednesday service. Of special note, Pastor Diehl's son, Walter Diehl from Tempe, Arizona, came all the way to Lake Geneva to be a part of the special service. To broadcast the joyous celebration of their dedication, First Lutheran placed several advertisements in the local newspaper. The Wednesday evening service was the only one that was not advertised. To conclude the celebration week, Thursday was an open house at the church. The general public was invited to come and take a tour of the new building, and in the evening the congregation held a service focusing on Christian Missions. Pastor Diehl was the guest preacher again on Thursday.

The congregation's blessings continued throughout the dedication week. Late February weather can be miserable, but it was almost perfect all week long. The attendance at the Sunday dedication services totaled almost 1,000, and held for most of the services during the week. The cooperation of the congregation was phenomenal, considering all the planning that went into the building, financing, subcommittee work, and now the entire dedication week. Although they must have been emotionally exhausted from all the work, it was evident the congregation was buzzing with excitement.

On the first Sunday in the new church, Pastor Meier preached a sermon based upon I Peter 2:1-10, the *sedes doctrinae* for the Universal Priesthood of All Believers. In it he reviewed the doctrine for the congregation, and explained the symbolism of the building. Meier explained that already in the Old Testament there is basis for the doctrine in Exodus 19:6, "...you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites." Since men from the tribe of Levi were the only ones who could be priests, this passage must be speaking of a broader priesthood. It intimates that there was a priesthood that existed beyond the divinely instituted Levitical priesthood. That Old Testament priesthood has been abolished, though. The Levitical priesthood of the Old Testament existed solely to prefigure the perfect priesthood of Jesus, who would sacrifice himself once for all. Christ's perfect priesthood is the real basis for the New Testament doctrine of the Universal Priesthood of All Believers. Specifically to Meier's text, Peter calls Jesus the "living stone" and "the chief cornerstone." Just as the cornerstone is the one stone in the building that all the other stones are built around, so also in the Holy Christian Church Christ is the cornerstone around which we are built. As a result, Peter tells us we are now "living stones," "a holy priesthood," "a chosen people," "a royal priesthood," "a holy nation," "a people belonging to God." Because every member of the Church is a priest, he can perform the function of a priest. He can approach God without the aid of a human mediator—something the Old Testament "Christian" could not do. We can boldly go to God in prayer, praise and thanks at any time. To him has been given the Ministry of the Keys, the power to forgive or not to forgive. This doctrine was the basis for the architecture of First Lutheran's third house of worship. How did the architect expressed the doctrine? Permit me to quote Pastor Meier's sermon:

> First of all [it is stated] in the CROSS which will stand high on the roof[59] when the tower is finally placed. It tells all of Christ who died

[59] See Appendix G.

on the cross. He is the central figure, or as Peter put it here, the cornerstone of faith.

The huge roof over the entrance symbolized the gospel call to all. We believe that Christ died for ALL and therefore invite all to become a priest before God. The bells hanging in the entrance sound this call to everyone. Bells have traditionally for centuries sounded the call to worship.[60]

Right at the entrance of the church stands the baptismal font, symbolizing how one normally become a member of the church, through Holy Baptism. Once you are baptized, whether as a child or as an adult, you are a member of the church, you become one of the lively stones which make up the true church of Christ. The choice of field stone is deliberate, for they should always remind us of the makeup of the church.[61] Now as a member of the church you can then worship, pray, and praise the triune God, which as a unbeliever you can not do, for the unbeliever does not know the true God. That is why the sweeping roof starts after the baptismal font. Roof is always symbolic of prayer and worship.

The roof sweeps up and through the building symbolizing the fact that God is not confined to any earthly dwelling but lives and reigns throughout the universe. The trusses sweeping up and outward[62] as they do should remind us of God's protecting hand over us. He hovers above His church not only ruling it, but also protecting it against all its adversaries within and without.

The arrangement of the pews was also dictated by the theme. As a king and a priest before God you and each of you have direct access to God. All have the same rights and privileges. Had you built a rectangular church seating 500, the poor people in the rear could not see or hear. This way, by spreading out, all gathered together are close, all can see and hear.[63]

The chancel is open, again signifying the direct access to God. There is no alcove, there is no bar or railing signifying your having to go through a mediator to approach God. Remember, we are all priests before God.[64]

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[60] See Appendix G and H.
[61] See Appendix F, G, L, and O.
[62] See Appendix F.
[63] For the theater seating, see Appendix K and L.
[64] See Appendix I and J.

> Even the unique altar reminds us of this fact. It is the ancient symbol of the ship of the church. All are members of the church, we are all in the same boat together, so to speak. The mast of the ship is the cross on which our Savior died. It is off center to call attention to it The candles should also remind us of Christ. There light reminds us that Christ called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. The seven on your right symbolize the 7 last words of Christ, and the two on the left the 2 natures of Christ. He has a human nature and a divine nature, He is the GOD-MAN.[65]
>
> The symbols on the altar are the three persons of the Holy Trinity. IHS—iota—eta—sigma—chi-rho, bread & fishes, FATHER—Hebrew—YAHWEH name of God in the O.T. originating with Moses at the burning bush. I AM THAT I AM. ADONAI. The Jews never pronounced the name of God because they thought it was so sacred. SPIRITUS SANCTUS means the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit.[66]
>
> The pulpit[67] and lectern are also made of stone and rest on the main floor reminding us again that all are kings and priests before god who have the duty and responsibility to also read and study and spread the glorious gospel message of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Our new church is certainly symbolic of one of the cardinal doctrines of our faith. Every time we assemble in it, may it remind us of our priestly prerogatives that are ours because God had made us kings and priests before Him.

There are so many other significant aspects of the church to list. The spire atop the church towers some thirty-seven feet over the top of the building. It is centered over the baptismal font just inside the church entrance. The eight foot bronze cross matches the cross inside the church which serves as the mast on the altar-ship. From its low point over the baptistery, the roofline ascends sharply to its peak over the chancel. The main supporting beam that bisects the sides of the nave weighs almost twelve tons and contains enough lumber to construct a house. The slender roofline is meant to look like a pair of folded hands, symbolic of prayer and worship. Another interesting aspect to the building are the open staircases to the balcony. A speaker system was built into the field-

[65] See Appendix E.
[66] See Appendix E.
[67] See Appendix O.

stone walls. The lighting system was rather unique. The architect must have planned on making good use of natural light through both sides of the building. As I stood in the nave one day, it was apparent that there were several dark spots throughout the seating area. The narthex area is plenty large to accommodate overflow, and can seat up to 200 additional people to give the church a seating capacity of 700. Flower planters are placed throughout the narthex to beautify the inside.

The baptismal font is another completely unique aspect to First Lutheran. Immediately upon entering the narthex, there is an enormous font in between the two doors. The bases is, of course, fieldstone, and the font is a sturdy bronze. On top of the cover is a sculpted dove, symbolic of the Holy Spirit and his work. Next to the font stands a three candle candelabra, recalling for us the words of the Great Commission, "...baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit..." (Matthew 28:19). The symbolism that Meier described above is very rich in meaning. Today the congregation has another font inside the nave itself. This is the font the church uses for all of its baptisms today. The one in the narthex in now only symbolic.

In addition to church building itself, the new facility was also included a small chapel[68] and a fellowship hall.[69] The rationale for having a chapel in addition to the regular sanctuary revolved around meeting the needs of smaller groups. The chapel served well for small weddings and private baptisms, and would double as a nice meeting room. To increase its functionality, the chapel was equipped with speakers so that it could be used as a cry room during the Sunday services. Today it is used for confirmation class. The chapel was named after Pastor Diehl, and furnished with the altar, pulpit baptismal font and cornerstone from the old church. The construction and design of the fellowship hall was the same as that of the sanctuary. It had the same fieldstone walls and laminated beam construction. When First Lutheran built the church, the fellowship hall was multi-functional.

[68] See Appendix M.
[69] See Appendix N.

The church bought partitions to use on Sunday morning for Sunday School. When there was a major night of fellowship such as a pot-luck, the partitions were taken down and the hall opened up to its full 3,500 square feet.

As is the case in many building projects, money ran somewhat thin near the end. There are always different odds, ends, and oversights for which a congregation must pay. Before the building was dedicated, Pastor Meier and the building committee drew up a list of items that could be bought as a memorial by members of the congregation. Since funds were running short, the congregation was not going to be able to pay for many of the "luxury" items up front. Rather than simply put them off indefinitely, members were given this opportunity to remember a loved one, to honor a loved one, and to give a thank-offering to God by purchasing an item off the list. The list included just about anything a person could think of, and some things one might never consider. There were the standard items, tables and chairs for the fellowship hall, bulletin boards, clocks, partitions, carpet, drapes and office furniture. Some of the more interesting things on the list include the chancel stained glass window, the pulpit and lectern, communion rail, baptismal font and a piscina. The piscina is perhaps the most interesting item on the list. In the list of memorials, the author is quoted,

> It is very improper to pour the consecrated wine that remains after the Lord's Supper down a sewer. That water that has been connected with God's Word in Holy Baptism should not be poured down a sewer either. The PISCINA is a special drain which leads to its own gravel bed where the elements which have been used in a Sacrament are poured.[70]

The piscina was added to the building. It was located in the sacristy, which was directly underneath the chancel. In order to get to the sacristy, a person would descend a flight of stairs near the pulpit, behind the altar, and running down along the outside wall of the building—a very unique design.

[70] Excerpt taken from the published list of memorials, signed "Your Building Committee."

The piscina was built into one of the walls of the sacristy. A door opened to reveal what looks a lot like a laundry chute, only there is only one small hole which leads directly into the ground.

The congregation responded very favorable to the list of memorial published by the building committee. Many of the items were purchased in memory of a loved one and place in a memorial book. Interestingly, the memorial book was one of the items on the list of memorials. Of all the special items that were purchased by members of the congregation, there were no plaques or other attention grabbing displays hoisted on any wall in the entire building, and it has remained so until this day. The congregation operated with a firm belief that something that was purchased for the building was done so in loving honor and memory of a loved one, and as a thank-offering to God. All of the memorials, for that reason, are written in the book of memorials and displayed in the hall-way that leads to the fellowship hall in a custom-made display case along with other historical items, such as the shovel used at groundbreaking.

The First Lutheran archives are full of newspaper clippings from all over the area praising the church's fantastic architecture. The Lake Geneva paper use words like "modernistic," "starkly simple," breathtakingly beautiful," and futuristic" to describe it. One headline reads, "Bold Architecture Design Make New Lutheran Church a Standout." Three days before dedication, another headline in the Lake Geneva Regional News read, "Church Design Reflects Symbolic Meaning." In the April 28, 1963 edition of the Milwaukee Journal, the headline reads, "Church ties Earth to Sky." First Lutheran's new church building was certainly something spectacular to see. It was acclaimed across the country as one of the most beautiful churches in America. In fact, Pastor Meier recalls,

> At one point I was supposed to go to New York and receive a trophy of some sort for it being one of the ten most beautiful churches in the country. For some reason something came up and I wasn't able to go. I never did see the trophy—I don't know if there every was one. I suppose if there was one, Stade must have gotten it.[71]

[71] Quotation taken from a phone interview with Pastor Meier.

If Stade did have the trophy, it was certainly deserved. While Meier provided the theological background, Stade was the man who translated our Lutheran theology into art. Before the building was finished, Stade wrote a wonderful article about his vision for the First Lutheran project. It would serve well to quote the entire article, despite its length.

> The Christian Church has from antiquity to the present day preserved a point of view that has made her houses of worship unique among the world's temples. While other religions have risen and died, Christianity, in both its Old and new Testament attitudes, has recognized her reflection in constantly changing architectural forms.
>
> She identifies herself with a single, established, corporate, theological ideal, but expresses her religion differently in every age.
>
> She does this reluctantly and even belligerently, often creating as many martyrs as saints, but a sweeping glance of history reveals significant undulations of thought and expression that witness to her ultimate concerns.
>
> Whereas other religions struggle to survive in dark, archaic temples, Christianity has stumbled into the light and almost unknowingly challenged modern thought with its ageless truth. It is, in fact, on the battleground of our own time that she must prove the agelessness and universality of her truth. It is this attitude of changing changelessness and future past, which has now fallen to the lot of the contemporary architect to express to our time, and for our time.
>
> The design of a Christian Church does not, however, originate in the mind of the architect. He, more than anything else, is the medium through which the community of the faithful express themselves in stone, steel, and glass. He must understand the faith building on the past, which absorbing the present and boldly reaching into the future. He must ask the question—"What is a Church," and more, "What is THE CHURCH?"
>
> The Christian Church has perpetuated certain basic architectural concepts that serve as building blocks of the past from which our modern expression is developed. Her major concern is where she differs markedly from all other religions. The emphasis of Christianity as a religious system is on the flock, i.e., people. This is not a horizontal relationship, for then it would be little more than a philosophy or—at best—a social organization, it is in an emphatic perpendicular union

of man to God. It is in its crux that the reality of the church is manifested in the God-Man Jesus Christ. It is perhaps no accident that the instrument of this redemption, the cross, contains both a horizontal and vertical member. The cross is, in fact, the perfect graph from which the contour of the church may be delineated.

The church building traditionally emphasizes three elements of architectural space which reflects this perpendicular attitude. First, the invitation. The portal is the call to enter into the holy gates. Traditionally, churches have emphasized the entrance with colonnades, porches, sculptural detail, large doors, and the like. In the design for First Lutheran Church of Lake Geneva, the roof itself outlines the great portal and the carillon suspended from its eaves sound the divine invitation. The glass entrance wall completely exposes the narthex in a manner that suggests the original meaning of the word, a giant funnel Exposed also is the baptismal font. It is the font that symbolized the invitation of grace through the blessed sacrament of Baptism. Baptism in itself is a portal for it is the entrance to the Kingdom of God and the door to the fellowship of believers.

The second special unit concerns itself with the fellowship. The roof over the great portal funnels down while expanding to its widest point at over the axis of the nave. It is in this portion of the building that the horizontal emphasis of the religion is manifested structurally. The roof hovers over the company of worshipping saints like the wings of a mother hen. The trusses, however, swing up as well as out with their vertical direction becoming increasingly important as they progress forward.

It is in this third major element of the architectural space, the chancel, that the building reaches its visual climax. The chancel wall is glass identifying the space with color while the roof soars past the wall and into exterior space with an exaggerated, diagonal thrust. It is in this element of the building that the confrontation of man by God is symbolized. Man offers his prayers and God offers Himself through Jesus Christ. This union of humanity and divinity is not static but, just as the space suggests, a real and yet obscure depth, moving with the energy of mystery.

The furnishings illustrate the more concrete aspects of the religion. The pulpit and lectern are of field stone and rest heavily on the floor. The reality of the revealed word is thus symbolized. The altar, although lighted in nature, is still a positive form silhouetted against the glass wall of the chancel. Its shape is definite and identifiable, just as the element in the Blessed Sacrament are of common experience. The Holy Communion lifts the common place into the realm of di-

> vinity, so the table on which it is celebrated is given special consideration. It has been given a unique form—that of the ship.
>
> The ship is an ancient symbol of the church for it is only the church that can administer this means of grace. It is surrounded by candles which shine brightly against their reflecting shields. They symbolize the light of the world which comes to us in the Sacrament. They are in groups of seven and two, reminding us of the seven last words of Christ and His tow natures; divine and human. They are grouped around a cross with a bronze panel symbolizing the three persons of the Holy Trinity, for the Christ manifested on the altar is also God, the Creator, and the Comforter.
>
> The exterior expression of the building attempts to relate earth to space creatively and symbolically. The use of field stone in low walls and planters tie the structure into the earth; to become part of God's creation.
>
> The flowing lines of the roof break free of the anchor creating a dynamic outline against the sky. The building is the work of man's hands for it is he who dedicates this house to God—it is man who creates a symbol in search of the Creator.[72]

Perhaps Stade reveals his true colors in his last statement. At the very least we must admit that he took architecture very seriously and thought through all that he was doing and had reasons for why he was doing it. Although I was not able to confirm it, Stade is believed to have committed suicide later in life.

Meier and his flock in Lake Geneva did not set any trends with their new building. It was far too unique for that to happen. They did raise they eyebrows of more than a few in the area. Meier was accused of building a Methodist church with his theater seating and modern design. Others told him his new church looked like a spaceship, not a church. As Stade said in his article, the church was designed to have a look as if a hen were gathering her chicks under her wings, similar to the words Jesus spoke in Matthew 23:37. I asked Pastor Meier why he thought there was so much animosity toward him and his congregation at the time.

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[72] Lake Geneva Regional News, Thursday, February 21, 1963. *Architect's Concept for First Lutheran Church.*

> Well, I think it is a combination of a lot of things. Granted, we didn't do things they way everyone was used to doing them. In the WELS that always raises people's dander. I'm talking especially about the fund raising, but other things, too. And, I think people were jealous. We were able to accomplish a lot in a short amount of time.[73]

The most unfortunate thing about those people's dissenting comments was not just that they were ugly, but they also reflected that the authors were still ignorant of the symbolism of the architecture, and because of stubbornness were seemingly unwilling to change their views. Just because the church in Lake Geneva looked differently than every other church in our synod does not automatically make the Pastor a heretic and place the congregation outside the fellowship of the Synod. In fact, the church that Meier built is in every way superior to the standard rectangle that we are so accustomed to building. The members can worship as a community! None are farther than 37 feet from the altar! About the only reason we have for building the churches the way we traditionally do is that our father's did it that way in the Motherland. That kind of reasoning is what has earned us our reputation as close minded, stubborn old Krauts. Meier sought to change that. The church in Lake Geneva has more theological significance in its architecture *before* a person ever enters the building than most of our churches have in their whole facility. First Lutheran in Lake Geneva is more rooted in doctrine and closer to the heart and core of Lutheran theology than any of our long, narrow-naved churches will ever be. A writer for the Lake Geneva Regional news summed it up best when he wrote, "Symbolism is an important part of any church, but too often it is confined to only the furnishing. In this church, however, the actual design—its lines and angles—convey many symbolic meanings."[74] If this church reflects the richness of Lutheranism and communicates doctrine in its symbolism, should we not be asking ourselves the question, "Why aren't more churches building with these principles?"

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[73] Taken from phone conversation with Pastor Meier.

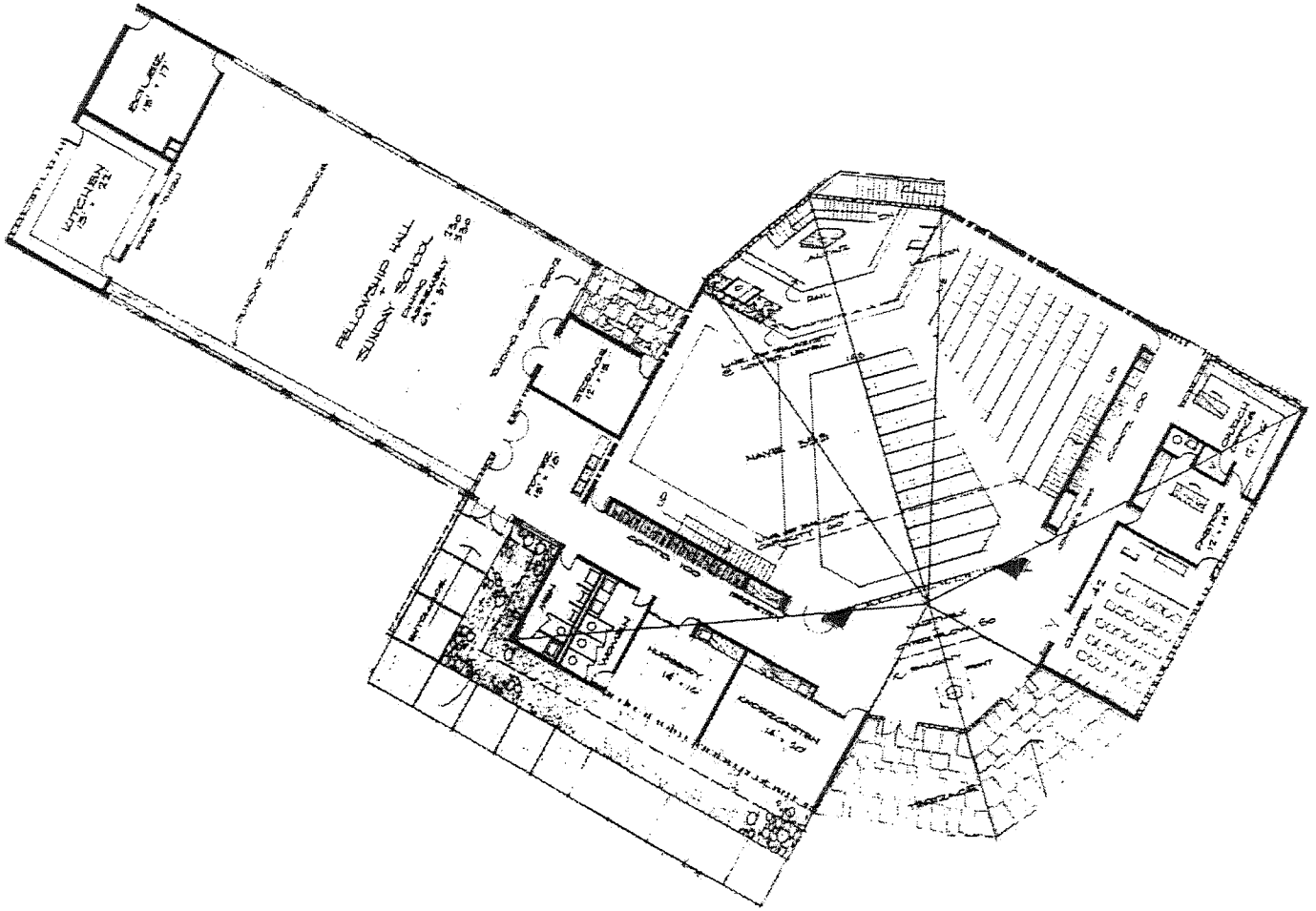
[74] Lake Geneva Regional News, Thursday, February 21, 1963. *Church Design Reflects Symbolic Meaning.*

What makes First Lutheran's church so unique finally is not even the architecture alone. It is the story of how a congregation that was so thoroughly German and fit every last stereotype stepped out of its well-worn element to come together in a stitch in history to offer themselves to God.

Appendix A

Proposed Floor Plan, 1961

OUR PROPOSED PLAN



Seating capacity

In the Nave	500
Additional	200
Sunday School	250 (est.

Appendix B

Building Committee questionnaire that formed basis for building

BUILDING COMMITTEE

What is the desired capacity for the Nave?_____

Is provision for overflow likely to be necessary?_____

Will there be a vestry off chancel for pastor?_____Working sacristy_____

Center aisle and side aisles?

Where are hymnals to be stored?_____Chancel supplies?_____

Who controls lighting in Nave?_____Chancel?_____Are dimmers req._____

Shall hearing aids be provided?_____How many?_____

Shall there be a Cry room or Mother's room?_____

Where shall coat storage be located?_____How much storage req.?_____

Should there be a lounge in relation to the sanctuary?_____

Toilet and lavatory space?_____How much?_____Where located?_____

Is a fireplace desirable in lounge or hall?

What provision should be made for coatrooms and toilet facilities_____
How large_____Where located_____

Appendix C

Fellowship Committee questionnaire that formed basis for building

FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

What are the activities that require space other than worship and education?

What type of space is required for each of these activities?

Should we provide club rooms for scouts, etc.?
1) **How big an area?**
2) **What kind of activities?**
3) **Storage space?**

How often will there be church dinners?_____How large a group will be served?_____

How will serving be done?

Shall there be a stage?
1) **permanent or portable?**
2) **Dressing rooms?**
3) **Lighting equipment?**

Kitchen
1) **What size kitchen is needed?**
2) **Should there be direct access to the outside from the kitchen?**

How many tables and chairs will be required?_____Where will they be stored?

Consider the desirability of a church parlor or lounge.

Should a kitchenette be included?

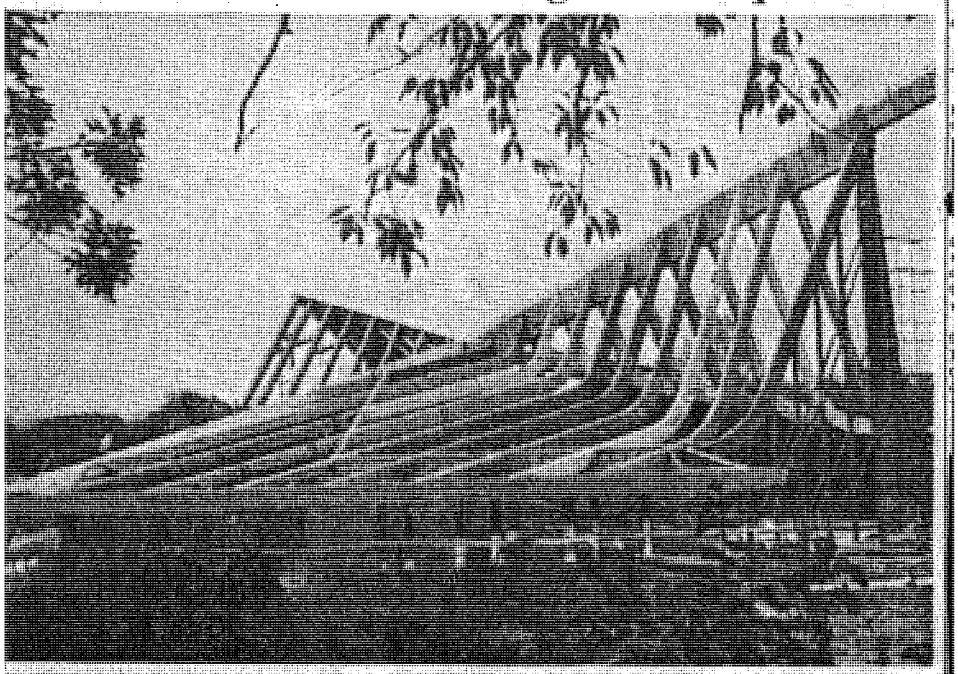
Will there be any kind of athletics carried on as part of the program?_____
Locker rooms?_____Shower rooms?_____

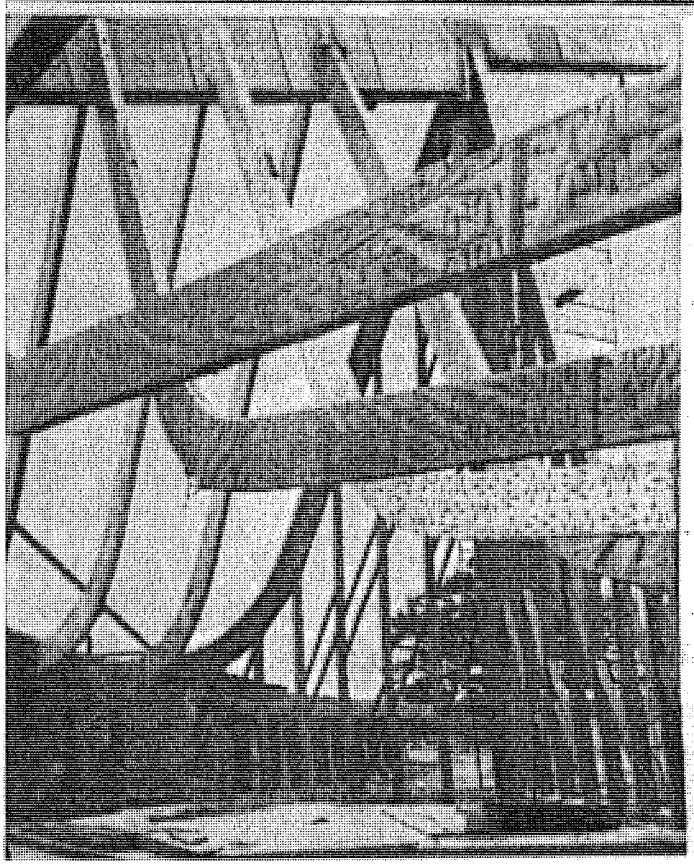
Consider the use of alternate facilities for athletics or large dinners or other large gatherings.

Appendix D

Rafter Construction

Geneva Church Design Is Unique



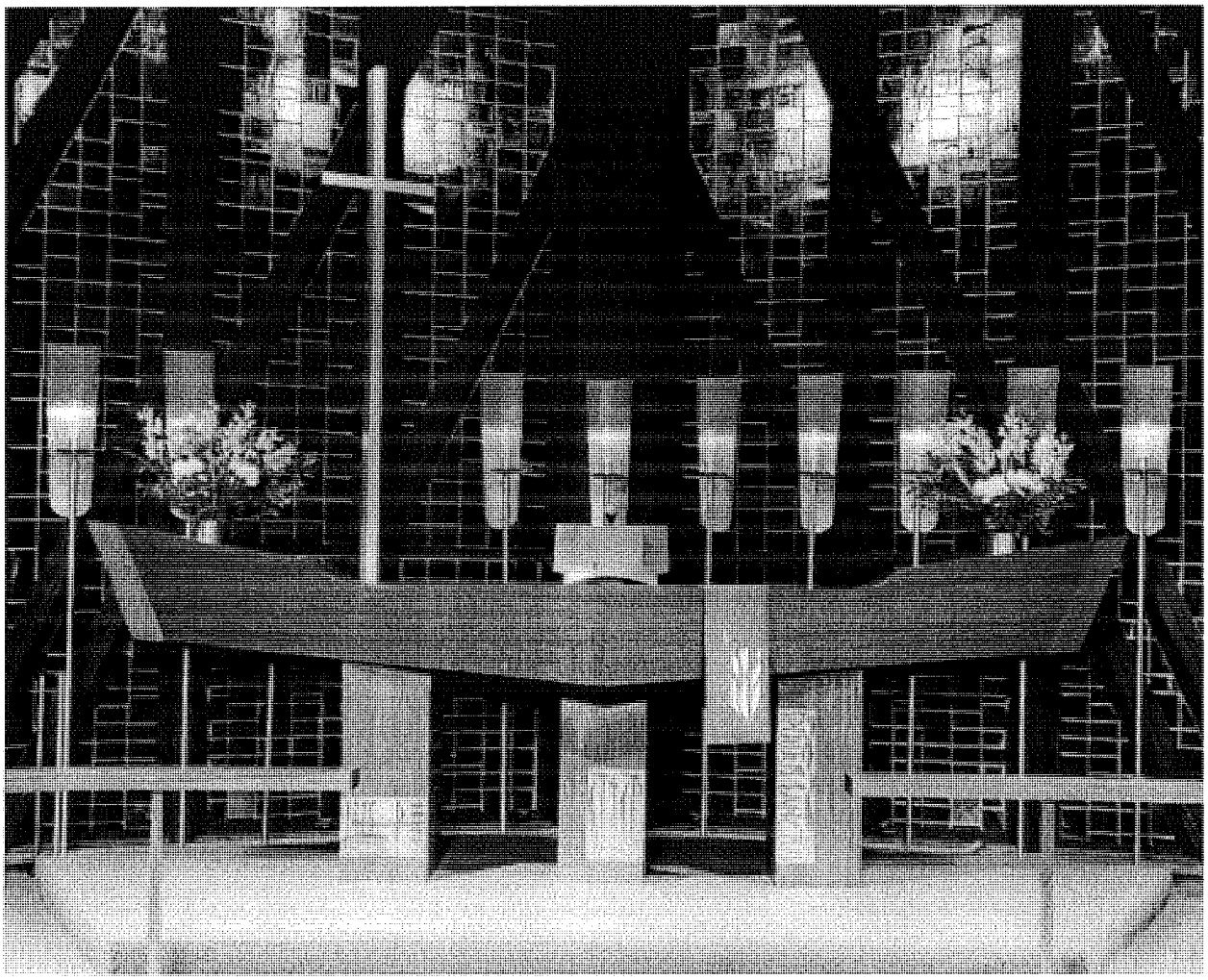


Unique design highlighted by a roof that sweeps skyward to points at front and rear, makes a new church under construction at Lake Geneva one of the area's most unusual examples of modern architecture. Its character dominated by the shape of its roof sections, the $300,000 First Evangelical Lutheran church on the city's northwest side is slated to be ready for use in January or February, according to the pastor, the Rev. Donald Meier. While roofing is applied to the gracefully soaring laminated wood rafters, the work goes on in the church itself and a one story multipurpose area for social activities and Sunday school. Walls of the structure are of Wisconsin split fieldstone. The laminated arches were shipped from Portland, Ore. The 90 foot long ridge beam over the sanctuary of the church weighs 11 tons and contains about 11,500 board feet of lumber—enough for a sizeable house. The new church will replace a 70 year old edifice on Wisconsin street. Above is an over-all photo of the structure; the lower view is from beneath the huge rafters.

(Daily News photos by Bill Behling)

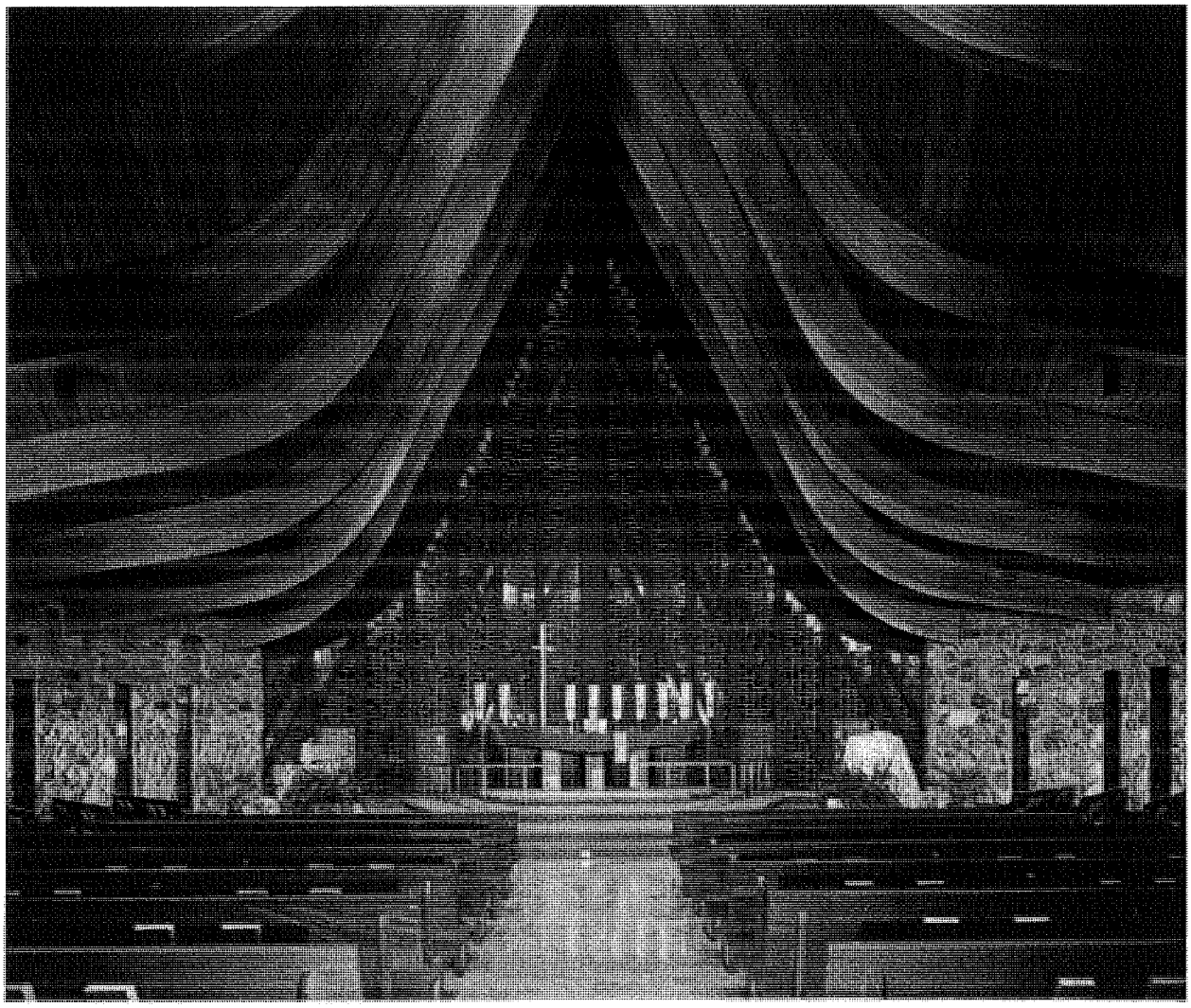
Appendix E

Altar



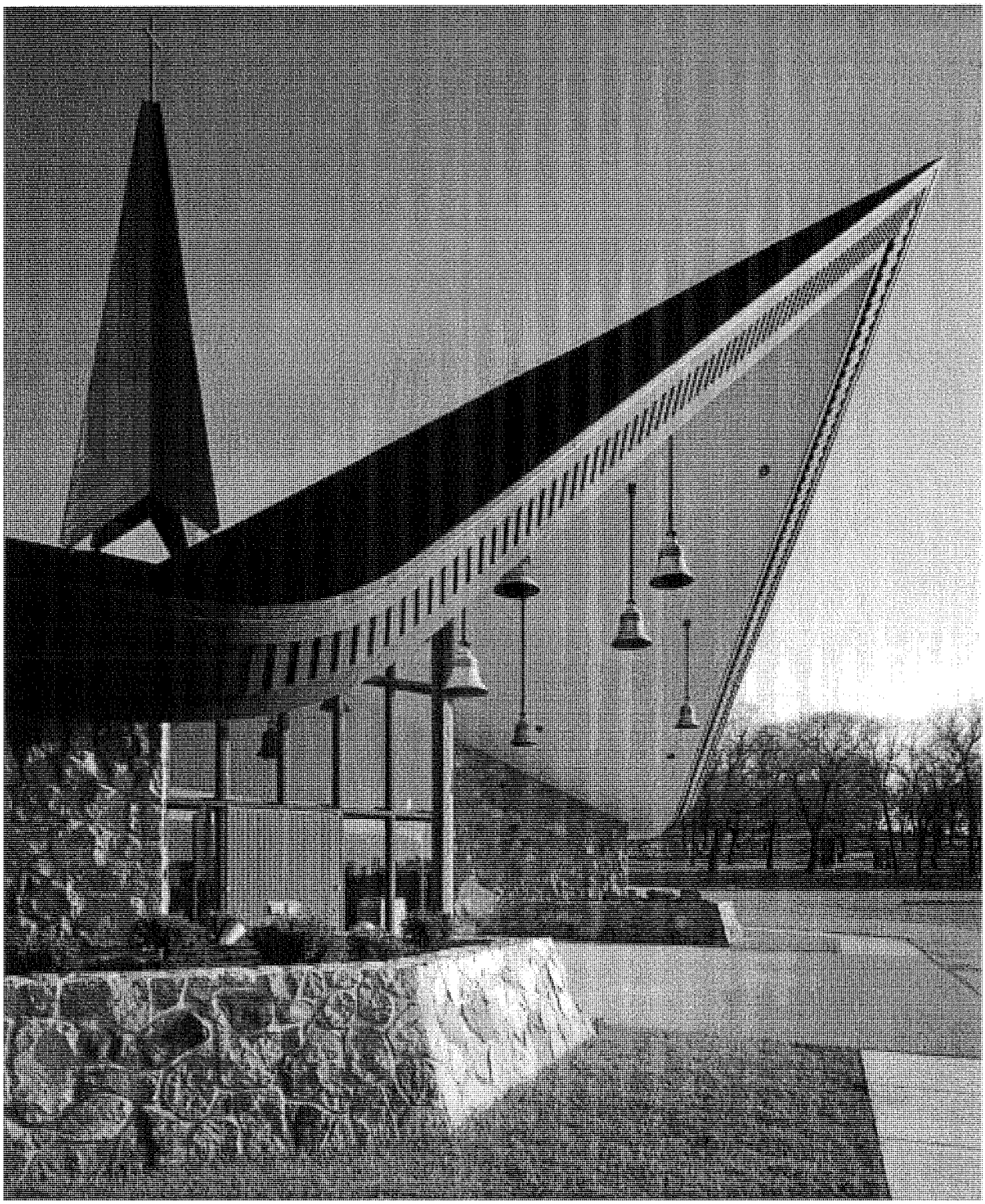
Appendix F

Arches



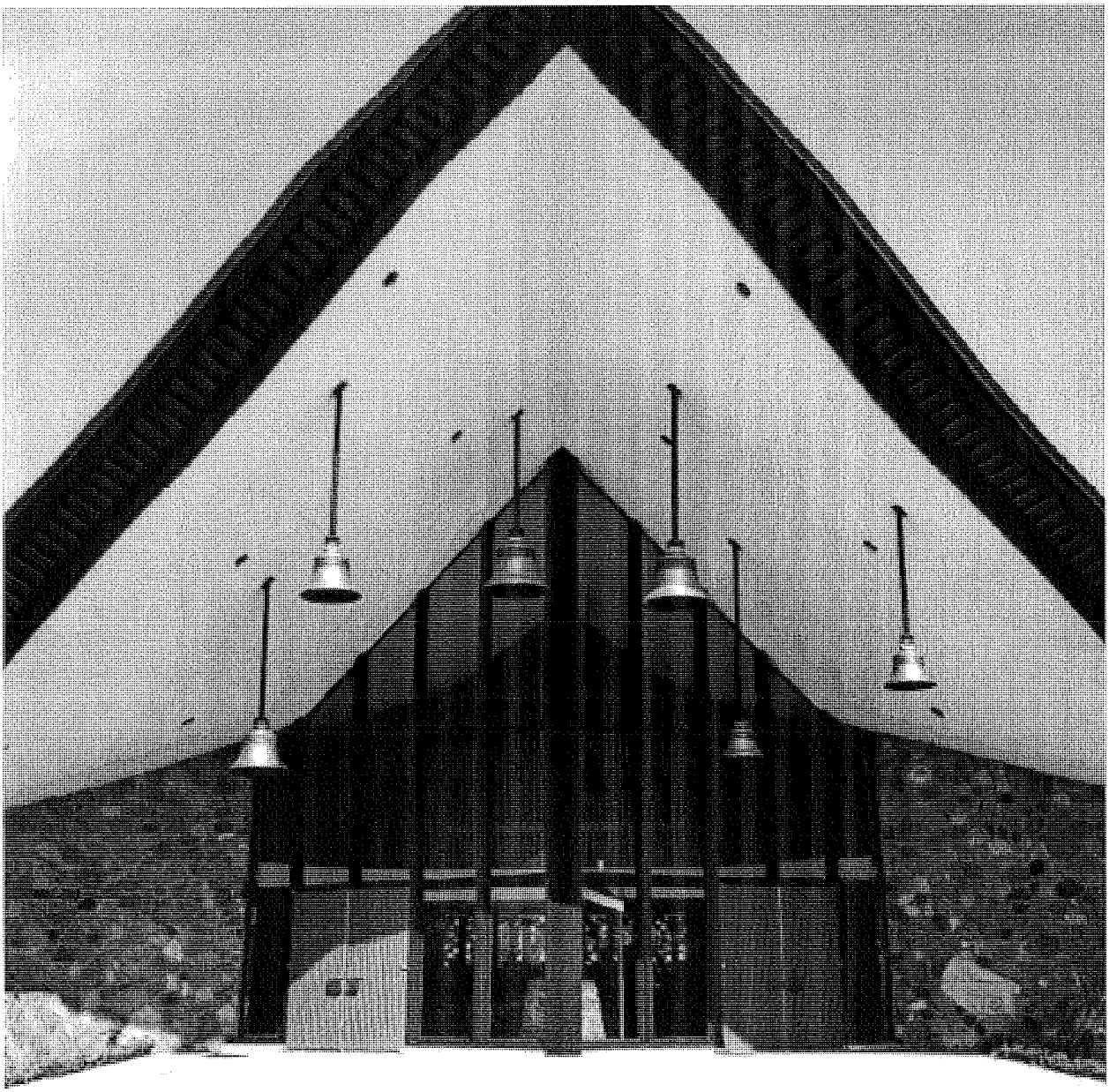
Appendix G

Bells & Steeple



Appendix H

Bells

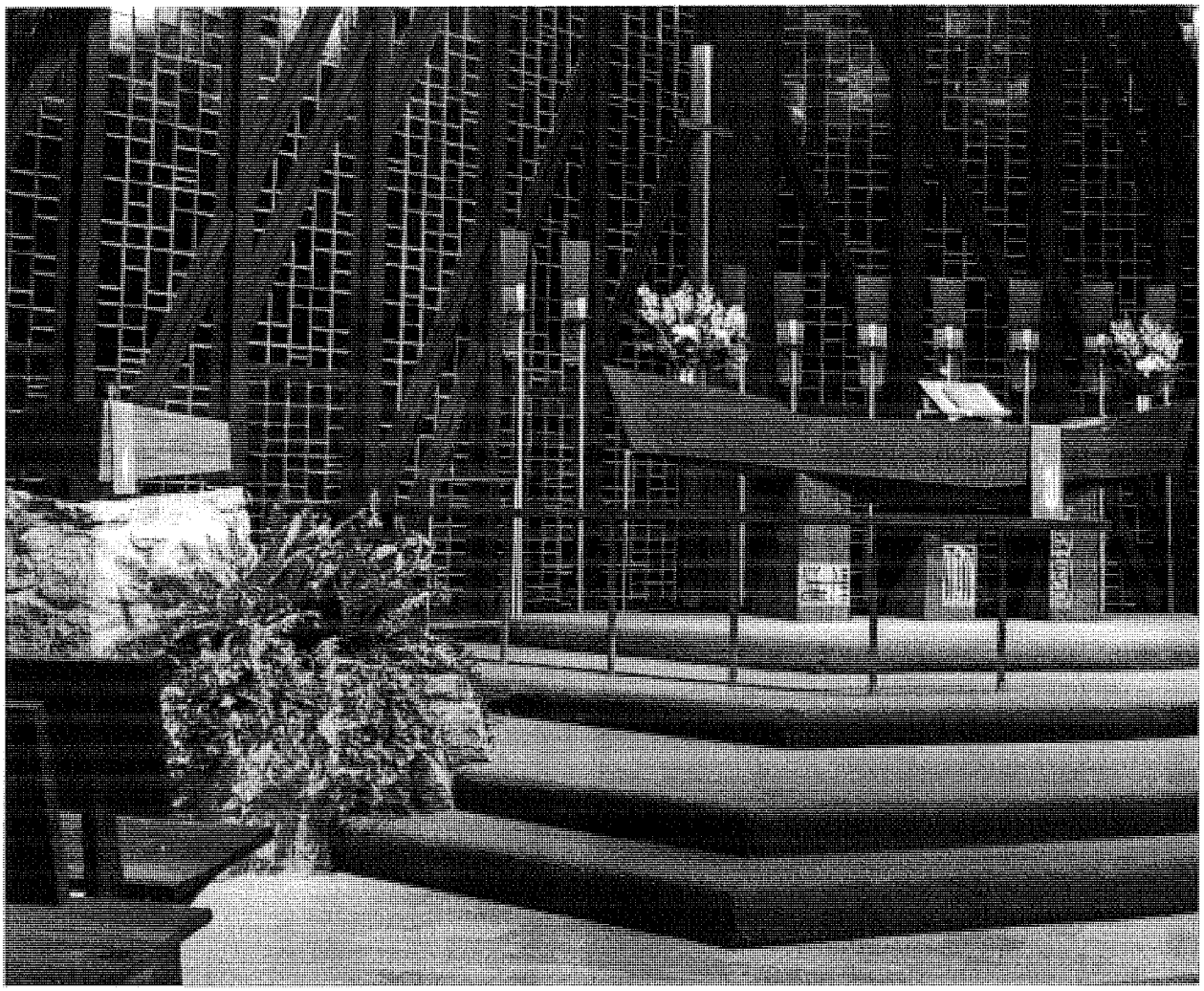


Appendix I

Chancel Front

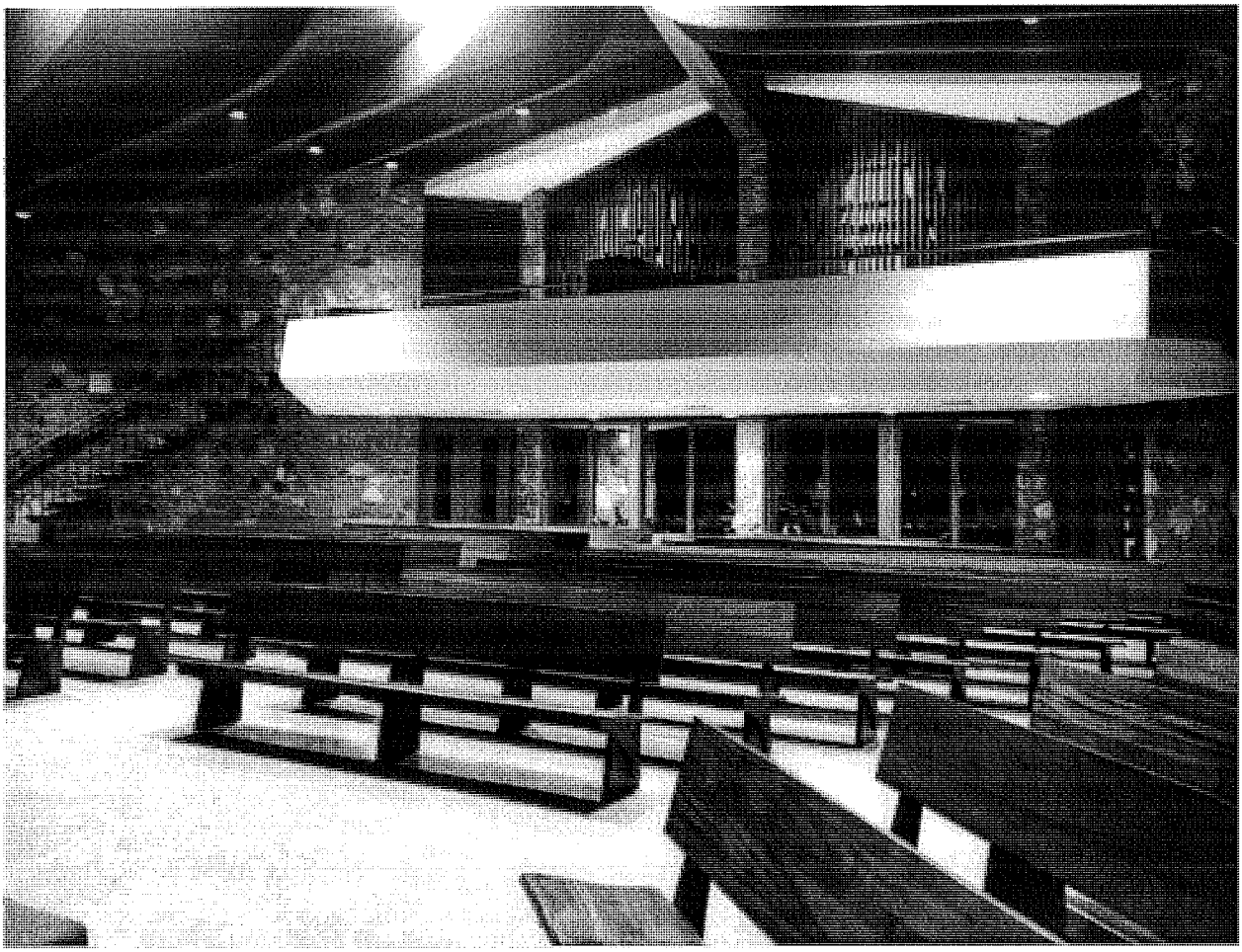
Appendix J

Chancel Side



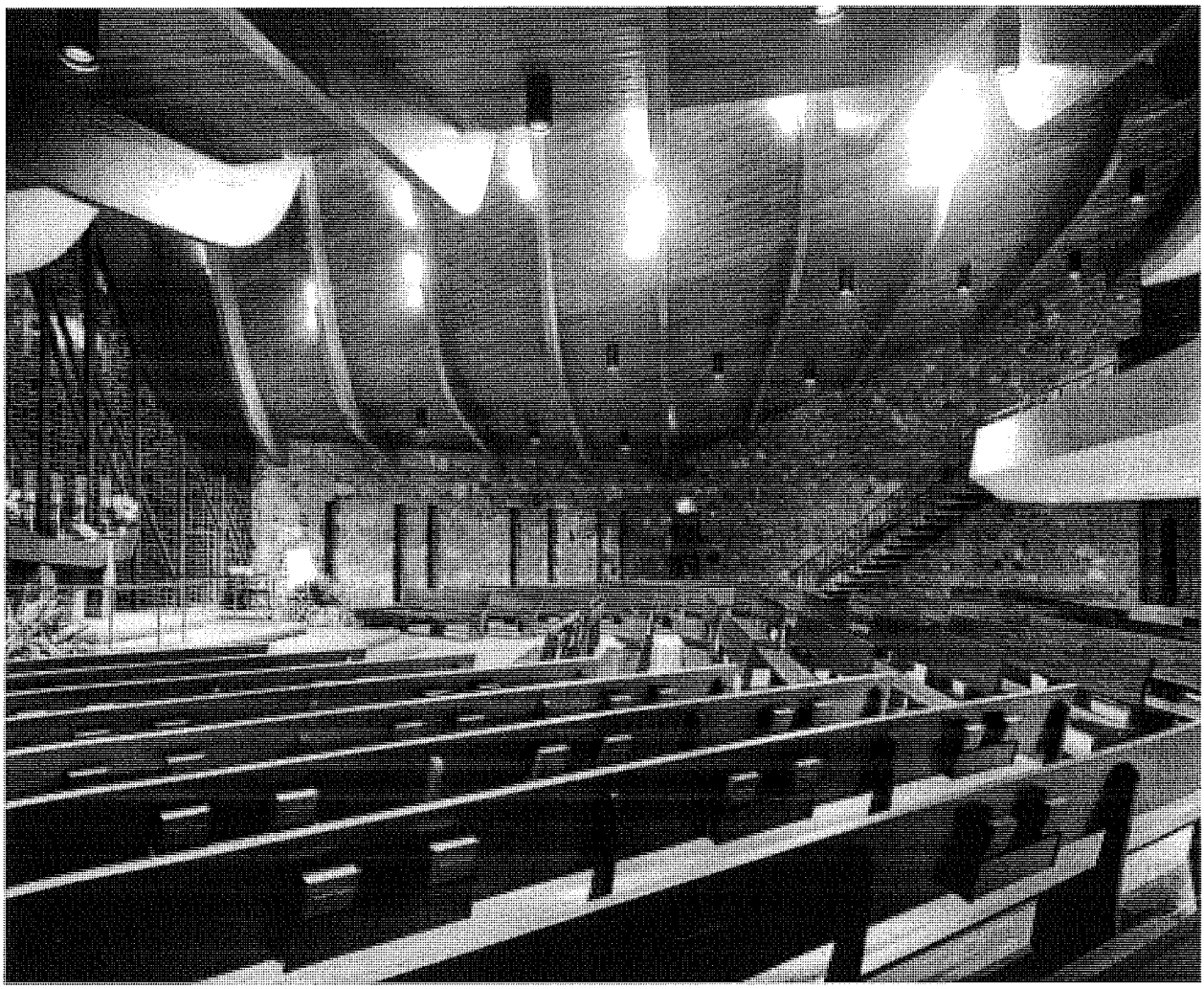
Appendix K

View of Nave from Front



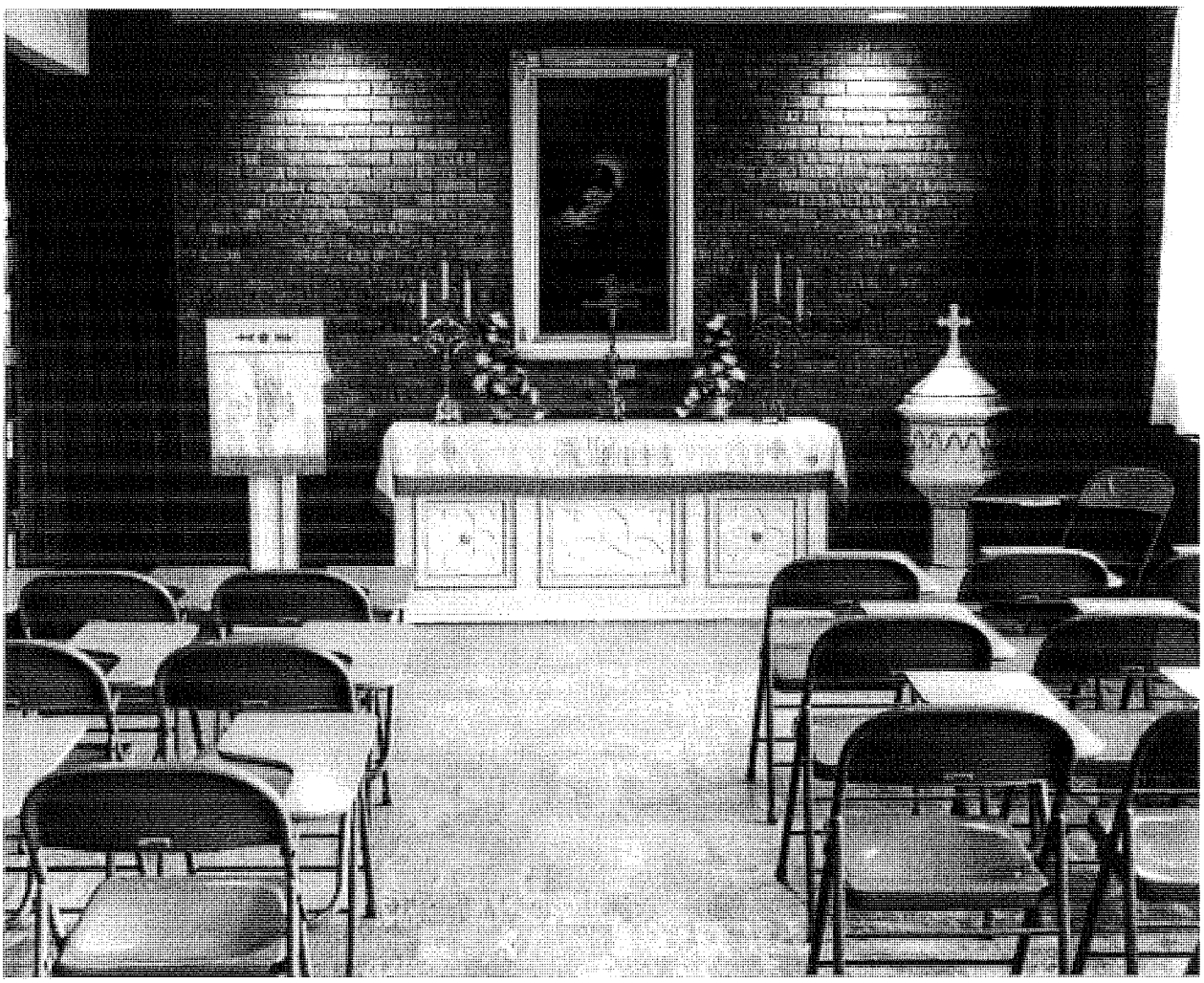
Appendix L

View of Nave from Side



Appendix M

Chapel with Furnishings from Old Church

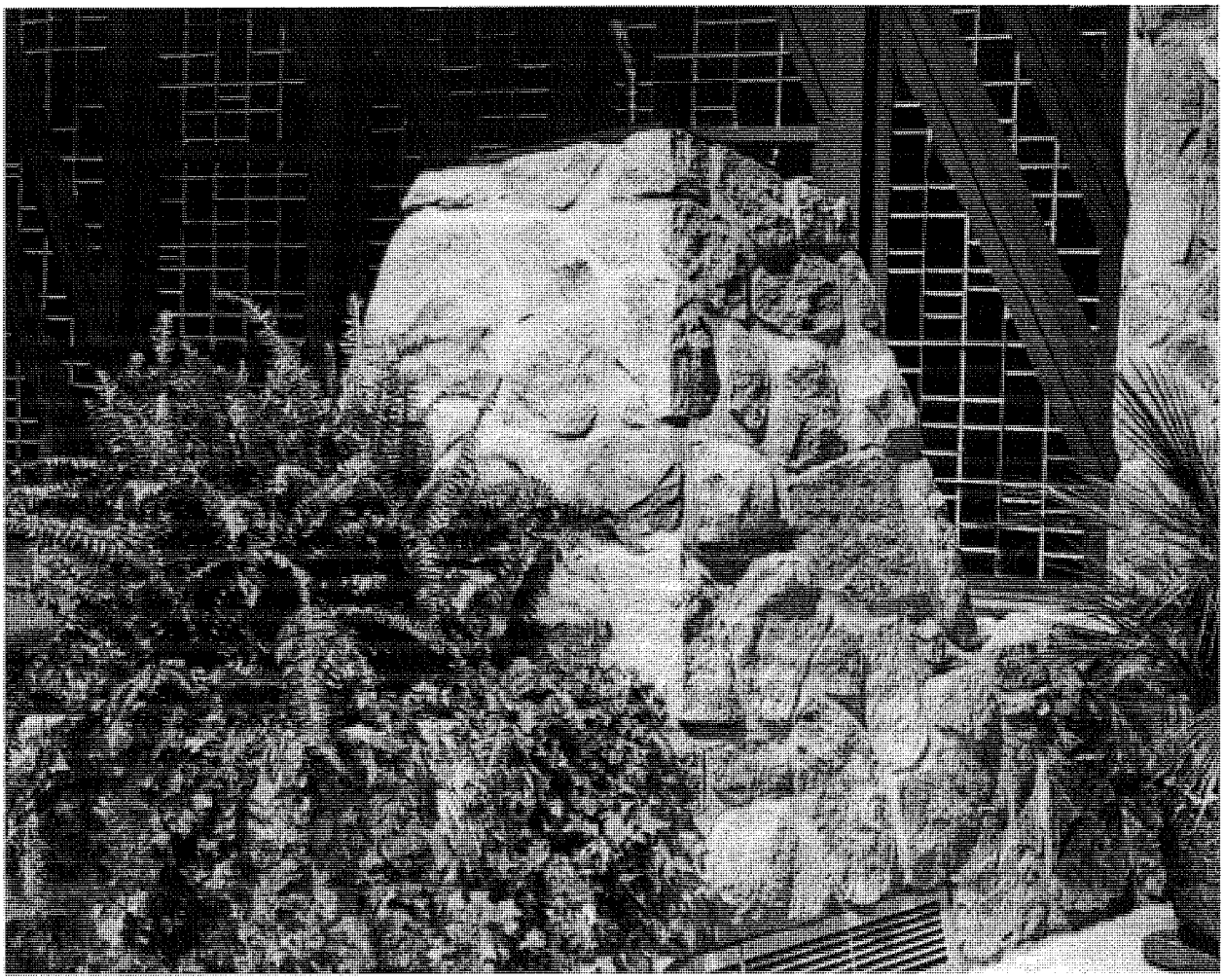


Appendix N

Fellowship Hall

Appendix O

Pulpit



Appendix P

Arial View