



"WE are the end-product of our history."

FLASHBACKS



Revealing glimpses of our creative past

Official newsletter of the
UNITED METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN

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"PERSONALITIES MAKE HISTORY," DR. RAYMOND VEH TELLS 1984 PILGRIMS

"Personalities make history," said Dr. Raymond Veh, who gave the keynote address at the 1984 annual pilgrimage at Pleasant Valley United Methodist Church on Oct. 5.

"It has been thus through all recorded generations," he went on. "Such was the case in the beginnings of the Methodist Church when John Wesley imprinted his personality on England as the founder of the movement which was to ultimately encircle the globe. His trusted co-worker, the pioneer bachelor bishop Francis Asbury, was to implant the Wesleyan movement on our continent.

In the Evangelical Association, Jacob Albright was the personality who stamped his name on the work which is now incorporated in the United Methodist Church, Veh told his listeners. Then came John Seybert, who became known in the manner similar to that of Francis Asbury as the St. Paul of the denomination, with his missionary zeal to take the Gospel to the peoples of the expanding nation in its push westward.

Veh first presented the historic personality of Jacob Albright. Born May 1, 1759 in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, he was carried to the Lutheran Church which his parents attended. Growing up on his father's farm as a boy of 16, he was infected with the spirit of rebellion flowing through the nation. He joined the army, serving his country as a drummer, later as a soldier.

In 1785, Albright married Catherine Cope, and with his young bride, moved westward to Reamstown, Pa. to farm and bake tile. Six children were born. With irreligion rampant, Methodist preachers and numerous farmer preachers, Methodistic in spirit, circulated through the community. In 1790, death took two of his children. Conviction came into his mind and heart and God possessed his soul. (continued on Page 2)

Pleasant Valley Presentation Made by Hazel Keays Northey

Hazel Keays Northey of the Pleasant Valley Church presented a vivid historical account of their beginning as Canadian Bible Christians in 1869, during the annual Pilgrimage, Oct. 5, following a delicious dinner served to the pilgrims at noon. She went on to describe the 1884 historic transfer to the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States, and activities to the present time.

After a fire destroyed the first chapel in 1910, the present church was quickly built by donations and volunteer labor. It was completed free of debt in June, 1912.

Through the years, the usual remodeling and painting were done and a new oil burner and electrical wiring installed. A new well was drilled in 1980; stained glass windows were covered in 1981-82; and a public address system installed as a memorial in 1983.

Plans for the future include the construction of a level walkway from the parking lot to the top church entrance for handicapped persons.

"Ours is a caring church," Hazel said. "The zeal of our founders is still a burning torch, one we desire to pass on to the future."

Jacob Albright Begins Simple Ministry Among His German Neighbors
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Not understanding English easily, he shared in Methodist class meetings and began a simple ministry among his German neighbors. In 1796, he was itinerating, not a preacher in the ordinary sense. Riding his horse, he was seen in the green valleys of his home state of Maryland and in Virginia. The strength to be solitary is always an index of greatness, Veh said. Overwhelmed by a conviction of the necessity of his mission, he worked on despite discouraging results.

Veh suggested that the Evangelical Association was born in the year 1797 when Jacob Albright called the leaders of his early converts together for a conference. They engaged in an all-night prayer meeting. In 1800, three "classes" were organized, one in Bucks, one in Berks and a third in Monroe County, all in Pennsylvania. They called themselves "The Evangelical Association," but were known as "Albright's People" for 16 years thereafter.

In 1803, two colleagues and 14 brethren assembled in John Dreisbach's house, Kleinfeltersville, Pa. and they declared Albright an Evangelical preacher, adopted the Old and New Testament as their article of faith and practice. At its first conference in 1807, in Lebanon County, Pa., Jacob Albright said, "This is the work of God and it is in His hands." He died in 1808. This personality made its contribution to God's work.

Review

LOCAL CHURCH HISTORY WITH A DIFFERENCE: MILWAUKEE ALBRIGHT CHURCH

by William Blake

An unusual history of a local congregation is From "Albright's People" to Albright Church, published by the Milwaukee parish of that name. It was written by James M. Johnston, for many years outstanding Religion Editor of the Milwaukee Sentinel. What sets it apart from most local histories is the way in which it relates the beginning, development, and present activities of the congregation to the origins and histories of the four denominations to which it has belonged in the course of history: Evangelical Association, Evangelical Church, Evangelical United Brethren Church, and the United Methodist Church.

John Wesley, Francis Asbury, Jacob Albright, Philip William Otterbein and Martin Boehm, all contributed to the spiritual heritage which infused and informed the people who came under their influence, beginning in 1844. In that year, a far-ranging circuit rider, Rev. J. G. Miller, preached to a gathering of about 100 people (in German, of course) in the Military Hall at Wells and Broadway in the growing city of Milwaukee. Zion Church (its first name) was formally organized in 1846.

The narrative traces the growth of the fellowship, its problems and corporate life through the changing times from that day to this. It deals with challenges which faced its members with the changing life of the city, the country, and the denominations. It depicts the recent efforts to relate to the changing denominational structures, the new conditions of city life, and the attempt to understand the gospel in the light of revolutionary changes which are emerging in the new technological age.

From "Albright's People" to Albright Church is a fascinating account of the heritage, development, and present life of a local church, an account which can help each of us in our own local fellowships to face the modern world with a warm, evangelical faith and deep trust in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Marshfield Zion United Methodist Church culminated its 2-month long Centennial Celebration on Oct. 13, 1985, with Bishop David Lawson as guest speaker at the morning worship service, which was followed by the Centennial Dinner.

Celebration activities for the church, whose roots are Evangelical, began Sept. 1 and continued each Sunday through the culminating weekend celebration on Oct. 12 and 13.

Chronicled for Flashbacks by Mrs. John W. Neumann, Centennial Chairman of the event, the following data represented "a year's work of spare time; it was worth it," she said.

The celebration began on Sept. 1, as the congregation honored the country church known as Richwood-Salem, 1924-1967, which was closed because of a shortage of pastors. Nearly all members became active in either the Marshfield Zion or the Pittsville churches.

The Sept. 8 observance honored the country church known as Bethel Evangelical of Staadt, Marathon County, in existence from 1912 to 1931, when the church was closed. The building and furniture was sold to the Community Bible Church in 1935 and moved to Stratford.

Music departments and sons of the Zion congregation who became ministers were honored on Sept. 15.

Among those honored were Jean Kueng Roehrborn who has served Zion Church as organist since the 1950's and Kathleen Budahn Parbel who has directed the choir since 1973.

Sons of the congregation who became ministers are E. E. Draeger, C. M. Schendel, Harold Fischer, and Jerome M. Lipka.

Three of Zion's 14 young men in the armed services in World War II planned to enter the ministry. One, Robert Birge, paid the supreme sacrifice. Vernon Henrichs served a church at Rice Lake before entering service. Eugene Fischer, who served in the Pacific, studied for missionary work at Westmar College.

Lipka wrote, "I have very fond memories of Zion Church. My faith grew through the leadership of both ministers and lay people. The faith of my parents influenced me deeply. In the church, I found love and encouragement. It was through the

nurturing of the church that I received my call to the ministry. My faith journey has carried me a long way, but I do not forget my roots in Marshfield Zion."

Zion United Methodist Women were honored at the Sept. 22 observance, celebrating their 75th anniversary, through many name changes.

Cited for their work beyond the Marshfield unit were Ruth Prior and Betty Dietz. Ruth held many offices in the local society before becoming North Central District secretary, then president in September, 1984.

Betty is presently serving as a home missionary at Red Bird Mission in Kentucky.

Pioneer Sunday was observed on Sept. 29, honoring direct descendants of church founders and those members who are more than 80 years of age.

Records of the Marshfield Klasse, written in German, contain the names of Fred and Mary Sommers as members in 1883; Henry and Caroline Icke, Christian and Louise Grover in 1884.

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*Official newsletter of the United Methodist
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Mrs. Ferne E. Hoeft, *editor*
P. O. Box 162

504 Northeast First Street
Marion, Wisconsin 54950

Material of historical interest, such as church anniversaries, recollections, activities of local church historical committees, and historians should be sent to her at the above address.

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

Rev. Robert W. Kuhn, *president*
Rev. William M. Jannusch *vice president*
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Linn C. Emerick, *treasurer (ex officio)*
Mrs. Ferne E. Hoeft, *editor of Flashbacks*
Rev. Richard A. O'Neil, *membership secretary*, 415 Doty St., Mineral Point, Wis. 53565

Membership applications and dues should be sent to the membership secretary at the above address.

Zion members honored were direct descendants Edna Sommers Loiselle, and Leose Loiselle Koenig; also Lila Goehring Sperbeck, Phil Smith, Mary Matthes, Emma Dethloff Swenson, Anna Hillman Roehrborn, Alma Fischer, Esther Huber Davis, Lila Ehrike, Iola Merrill, Lawrence Vandenberg, Bert Becker and Jack Mellenthin.

Rev. Dwight Busacca, former pastor, now Field Representative for Mission Development for the General Board of Global Ministries, was the speaker on Youth Sunday, Oct. 6, which recognized the work of the Sunday School and Youth Fellowships.

An open house marked the Oct. 12 observance for former and current

members and friends. Visiting former pastors were asked to speak, remembering events in their ministries at the church which spanned 100 years and many mergers up to the merger in 1968 which changed its name from Zion Evangelical United Brethren to Zion United Methodist.

District Superintendent William Carlson was the evening speaker.

Bishop David Lawson preached at the final Centennial Worship Service on Sunday morning, Oct. 13, followed by the Centennial Dinner.

Marshfield Zion's second century of work continues under the ministry of Pastor Ray Steger.

Centennial Excerpts from Marshfield Zion's History

Lila Goehring Sperbeck writes, "On the second Sunday in January, 1915, our father hitched our slow team to the sleigh and drove us to the Three Oaks school. A Union Sunday School was organized there that afternoon. Mrs. J. Ross Porter was the Superintendent, and my father, the assistant...."

"My father had always had the desire that one day there would be an Evangelical Church in the Richwood community. With that hope in mind, he went with the Gottlieb Lehnherr family to attend the quarterly conference at Zion Church. The Rev. F. A. Trautman was pastor at Zion, and he agreed to preach for us on a week night, once in two weeks...."

In 1922, a Richwood congregation was organized; a church building was ready to be used in March of 1924.

"We began having worship every Sunday during Rev. Jordan's pastorate. He convinced us that every Christian should tithe. Rev. Dwight Busacca persuaded us to believe we did not need bake or craft sales or church-sponsored social events to finance the church. We found that our tithes, faithfully given, would take care of the finances. Rev. Stanley Hayes helped an unusual number of teenagers to become a choir, and to form a thriving Youth Fellowship. Rev. Lester Meyer and Rev. Lynn Kollath helped us with once-a-month Bible Study."

* * * * *

Lawrence Nipko's memories of the Staadt church include some of the meetings held in the large front room of the Bargabos's home. Rev. Hillman came from Marshfield with horse and buggy; when the roads became impassable in the spring, he walked on the railroad tracks.

Alice Law Ziegler remembers Rev. Schuelke coming from Marshfield by horse and cutter, putting his horse in their barn, then walking the last half mile to the church. Mr. Law taught Sunday School.

As the family of John Zepplin grew, Mrs. Zepplin probably ran the first "bus service" in the Staadt community, seeing that not only her children but those along the way got to Sunday School in her Model T.

A neighborhood sewing club, known as the Thimble Club, organized by Mrs. Zepplin to improve the community, featured hymns, the Lord's Prayer, the distribution of fruit to those who were ill, and donations of money to support the Staadt Church. In 1930, it became the Ladies Aid Society of the Bethel Church of the Evangelical Association.