

*The Ongoing History of
St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church (UCC)
Of the Richland Community*



*Founded - 1878
Travis County
17701 Cameron Road
Pflugerville, Texas 78660*

Introduction

“Let your work be manifest to your servants, and your glorious power to their children. Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and prosper the work of our hands – O prosper the work of our hands.” Psalm 91

The Church of Jesus Christ in the world is constituted of a people of faith with a history, individual and corporate in nature. As the church passes from one generation to the next, it is that history that helps define it and, as well, helps inspire its future. In this, history becomes an on going process of making and remaking the church, which in turn shapes the next generation of believers.

This is a history of St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church (UCC). It is compiled from Church records over the years and segments of it have appeared in other publications. It is our goal to present this history in such a fashion that it can be added to by future generations. Hence the format is somewhat different from what has been previously put forth, and yet, the information is preserved.

We acknowledge two definitive compilations that have been published prior to this record, as they appear only slightly altered here. The first was published in 1978 (June 4) in celebration of St. John Church's 100th Anniversary and contains the history of the Church in its first 100 years. The first account was compiled by the Historical Committee at that time, whose members were:

Frances Sassin, Chair Alice Engelmann Hildegarde Gebert Sophia Koch
Emma Vorwerk Ronnie Vorwerk

The second source, which we drew on for the years of 1978 through 1988, is the history book of the Richland Community, published in 1988 in celebration of the 110th anniversary of the Richland Community. Within the publication, there is a chapter focusing on the history of St. John Church, containing much the same information as the first publication plus an account of the additional ten years. This resource was compiled by Mel Steger and Fredericka Richter-Deberry.

Neither of these two written accounts is copyrighted. However, those who were involved with their production and are still living have given consent for their use in this compilation (May 2003). For this we are most grateful and appreciative.

Beyond the first 110 years, we trust that those who write additional pages will identify themselves. As we trust that God has more to bring about in and through the life of this people of faith at St. John Church, we are certain that there is much, much more to add in the days ahead. In the grace of Christ, may we rejoice to share it with all who read this work of love.

The Founding of a Faith Community: 1860 - 1899

EARLY RICHLAND¹

In the 1860's, among the wave of German immigrants to the United States, there was a Mr. Franz Schmidt who was lured to the rich, black farmlands of central Texas and the "Rich-land" community. Early in the 1870's, the Rev. E. Ernest, the Rev. Max Puhl and the Rev. J. G. Leib, all circuit riders, traveled through the Richland area about twice a month, holding worship services and marrying couples in homes. The Rev. Mr. Leib married Franz Schmidt and Marie Pfluger in 1861.



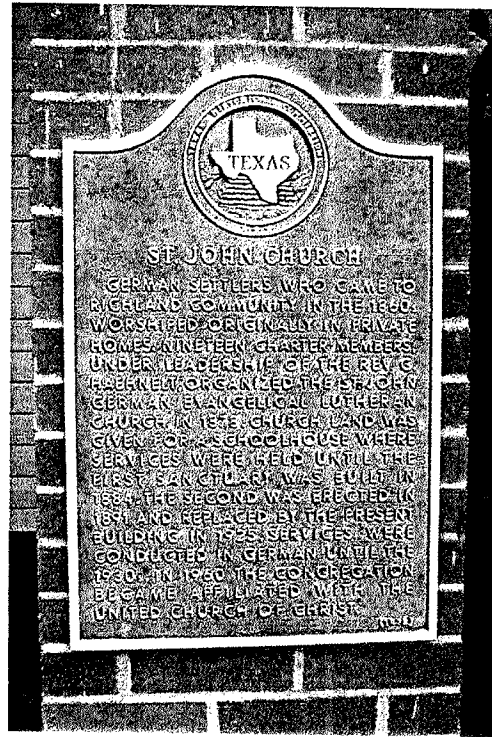
Plate marking the building of the church building

The community began to recognize the need for

education, and in 1877 Mr. Schmidt offered his own home as a place for a school. The place was known as "Brushy Knob." His place also became the central location for Sunday worship in the community.

THE BEGINNINGS OF ST. JOHN CHURCH

On Epiphany Day, January 6, 1878, under the leadership of the Rev. G. Haehnelt, the St. John German Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized. Later in 1878 construction of a schoolhouse began, and lumber was hauled from Austin for the project. The Richland community soon had its first "Schulgemeinde" (church school).



Historical Plaque on the front pillar of the Church

¹ This section is the printed narrative from the first published history, printed in celebration of the 100th Anniversary of St. John's Church (June 4, 1978).

Under Pastor Haehnelt's leadership, St. John Church "instructed in the belief of the Evangelical Lutheran Church," as expressed in the Lutheran Catechism and the Augsburg Confession.

He held services and preached on the fourth Sunday of each month, and on the second festive day of the church year. (In the old German tradition two days were held for each festive holy day such as Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, etc.) The pastor drew no salary, but received a free-will offering from the congregation each time he held services, which he recorded himself. During Pastor Haehnelt's leadership, a protokoll (record) book was begun and a constitution, written in German, was drawn up.

The nineteen charter members of St. John Church were:

Franz Schmidt (first president)	August Dossmann
Friedrich Hoherz	Friedrich Wenzel
Henry Pfluger	Ludwig Wenzel
P. Wm. Steger	August Hoherz
Christina Pfluger	John Hoherz
August Pfluger	Wilhelm Mahlow
Julius Kunkel	Julius Hoherz
Charles Brachewitz	Friedrich Gorlitz
Fritz Sakewitz	Michael Wenzel
Carl Prinz	

A TRANSLATION OF THE CHARTER²

“Teach me good judgement and knowledge, for I have believed Thy commandments.” Psalm 119: 6b

“He that keepeth the commandments, keepeth his own soul; but he that despiseth his ways, shall die.” Proverbs 19: 16

On this day, the undersigned, house and family fathers, stepped forth as settled persons of the settlement of Richland <and> came together to form a church congregation. They stand on their life's beliefs in the Evangelical Lutheran Church, which teaches the small Luther's Catechism and the Augsburg Confession, laid down and testified to; and they are waiting for a

² This translation of the original charter was drafted by Hildegard Gebert and is inserted in May 2003 into the narrative of the first history compilation.

Pastor, that he will preach the word of God according to these rules and regulations, enlighten, teach and preach, the Pastor G Haehnelt. He will have services on the 4th Sunday of the month and on the next 3 Christian holidays and also handle all other duties of his ministry as can be done by the Evangelical preacher.

The salary of the preacher and all other costs of the congregation will be given as free will offerings; this will be brought up.

The congregation voted their President to be the farmer W. Frank Schmidt and those who will join him as assistants, Mr. P.W. Steger and August Dassman. The functions of the latter will be decided in a later meeting.

All decisions of the public and orderly congregational meetings shall be kept in a minutes book and as long as everything is kept legally, until a new decision is made by the congregation in their joint liability or until it be decided to annul it.

ACQUISITION OF THE LAND FOR THE CHURCH

According to tradition, the twenty acres of land owned by St. John Church was given by Peter Steger, one of the charter members. Some also mention a letter written by the land agents to the church trustees, explaining that they had set aside approximately twenty acres in their plat for a church.

According to records on file in the Texas General Land Office,³ land agents Zimpelman and Bergen filed an application for an "Original Government Grant" for 275 acres of unappropriated public land, which they had surveyed and sketched, and for which they issued a \$137.50 check to the Land Office on August 23, 1880. Then, according to a deed on file at the Travis County Courthouse,⁴ 20 acres of this land was conveyed to the trustees of the St. John Church by Zimpelman & Bergen on November 17, 1881, for \$60.00.

It may be that the facts and the traditions are in conflict. Or it may be that no conflict exists between the facts and the traditions. Unfortunately, one

³ Travis Script #1260, Vol. 111, #367.

⁴ Filed for Record 11-17-1881, recorded 11-22-1881, Vol. 50, pg. 623 of Deed of Records, Travis County, Texas.

page of an early church record book, which might very well provide the evidence that someone gave the \$60 to the church for the purchase of the land, is missing. Also missing is any evidence of the said letter from land agents to the church. After literally hundreds of hours of investigation and some expense, details concerning the acquisition of land for the church are still in doubt.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A STATE FREE SCHOOL

Church members and others in the community decided it would be good to have a state-supported school in the area. So on January 13, 1883, the congregation passed a resolution donating one acre of church land to the state, on which a state schoolhouse was to be situated. Then on October 18th of the same year, the trustees of the church conveyed "one acre, more or less, of land for the purpose of establishing a public school." Since the original old schoolhouse could not be moved from Franz Schmidt's property to the church property, it was sold to an individual on September 9, 1882, for \$140. The money was applied to the construction of a new 20 foot by 30 foot building on the church land. This building was used as a place of worship beginning in 1882. During the same year a well was dug on the church property.

On June 2, 1906, the church took back the acre donated for the school and gave two other acres on the west corner of the property. Later the Richland School District consolidated with the Pflugerville School District and these two acres were deeded back from the officials of the Pflugerville School District to the church, December 21, 1959, for the consideration of \$10.00.

Several of the present members of St. John Church attended the Richland School, and their days there are a cherished part of their personal history and memory. The old foundation of the school was finally removed in 1975.

EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONGREGATION

The Rev. Max Puhl accepted a call to be pastor of the church on July 16, 1883. His salary was \$350 per year. However, in only three months Mr. Puhl decided he had made the wrong decision in coming to St. John Church and resigned. At that time there were 25 members of the congregation.

In 1884 the congregation built a small sanctuary from the wood of an old ranch house from the area. During the same year an underground wooden cistern was constructed.

Lack of roads in the area was a major problem, especially in bad weather. A comment in the protokoll book, dated June 1, 1884, notes that roads to the church were nothing but trails, many times impossible to travel, and that a decision to build roads needed to be made. Apparently there were many disagreements as to where roads should be built. Finally it was decided to build a straight road from Wilbarger Creek to the Richland School and to the pastor's house, which would then continue another six miles north.

This project failed. Old records indicate that largely as a result of the conflicts and ultimate failure of the road-building project, only ten members remained in the church. This reflects the seriousness of the conflict, because during the ministry of Pastor Pfennig (1884-85) church membership and participation had grown considerably.

The church had, however, acquired some debts as a result of the road project. The debts were not being paid, since so many members were dissatisfied. There was talk of dissolving the congregation and selling the property to pay the debts. This



Fritz Vorwerk Funeral, 1931

was in 1885. However, the decision to close the church was not made. The few remaining members continued to work at holding the church together.

On February 28, 1886, the congregation decided to lay out a church cemetery, with 20 foot by 30 foot lots. During the same time, membership grew to 38, and plans were made for the construction of a new church building. The old building, made from the wood of the ranch house, was then converted to a pastor's residence.

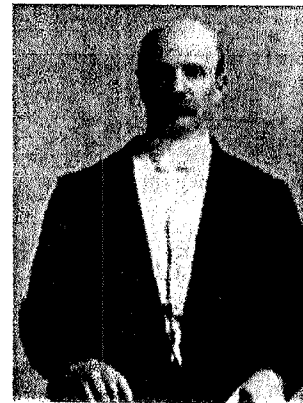
The Rev. E. Schroeder became pastor and served on alternate Sundays from 1885 through 1888. Pastor H. Rhode served from November 1889 to February 1892. The first real sanctuary was completed in 1891. It was a wooden structure, costing \$1,500.50, built by a Mr. Warring of Hutto, Texas. This sanctuary served the congregation for 34 years. In the early 1920's it was damaged by a severe storm, which caused it to be pushed off its blocks. Extensive repairs had to be made so that it could continue to be used.



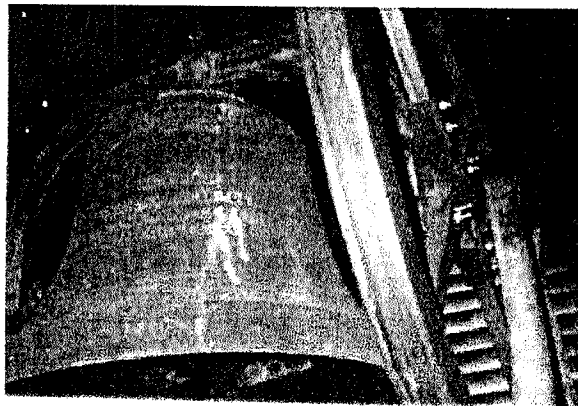
First Church
Sanctuary Building

Church of Ben Arnold, Texas.

The next pastor was the Rev. J. Horstmann, who organized the first Sunday School (1892). He was the first pastor of St. John Church to have graduated from an American theological seminary. All the previous pastors had acquired their seminary and other academic training in Germany.



Rev. J. Horstman



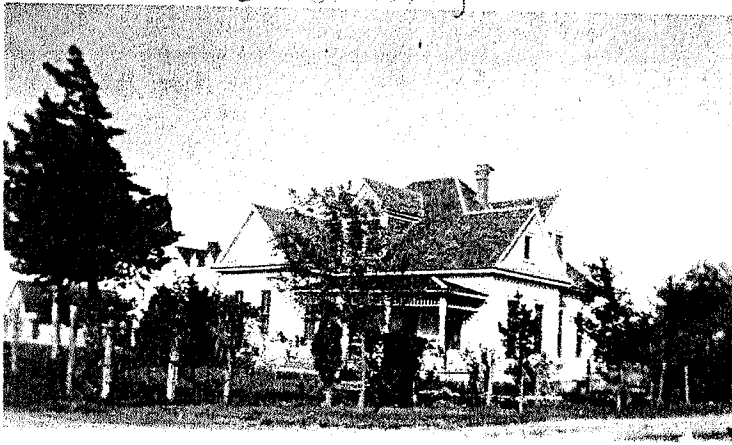
Current Bell, 2002

Beginning A New Century: 1900-1950

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

In 1900, when Rev. H. Mernitz was pastor, a mixed choir was organized, with practices being held in the homes of members who had either a piano or an organ.

Pastor A. Romanski served St. John Church from 1902 to 1906 and after his departure Pastor H. Barnofski arrived. In an official action taken on February 16, 1908, renters were given the right to vote at church meetings and be responsible for financial affairs of the church. Up to that time, only landowners could vote in official business matters. Also during his pastoral service, the "Jugend Verein" (Youth Fellowship) was organized (1908), and a resolution was passed to purchase a book in which the official records of the church should be set down and kept by each pastor. This record book is still in use today; all its titles and headings are in German.

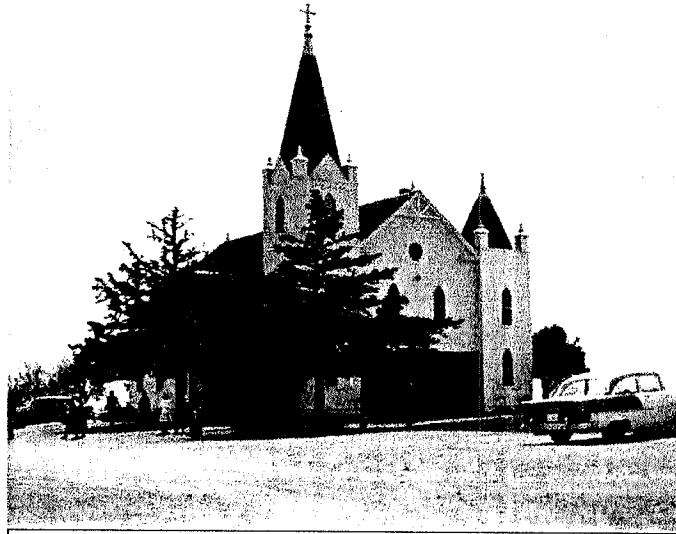


Old Parsonage

The congregation decided to build a new two-story parsonage in 1911. In 1914, the Youth Fellowship bought a clock for \$15. A year later Pastor Zucher organized the men's choir and directed the formation of the "Frauenverein" (1920), which was later called the "Ladies Aid" and became the

"Women's Guild" in 1954. On August 26, 1917 the Jugend Verein purchased the statue of Christ for \$33, which is still in use on the altar. The Jugend Verein also bought a piano for the parish hall at a cost of \$490.10.

On February 8, 1925, the congregation decided to build a new sanctuary, the same one which stands today as the focal point of worship for St. John members. The contractor chosen for the project was F. J. Sefcik of Taylor, Texas. Architect and planner was John Wuethrich of Taylor. Lumber was purchased from Spencer Lumber Company of Taylor. The old building was then moved next door and served as a Sunday School unit until 1939, when it was torn down and some of the lumber used to construct the present parish hall. The Frauenverein contributed most of the money for the new parish hall, and the men of the church provided the labor. Only two men were hired to help with the building, and they were not members.



Second (current) Church Sanctuary Building,
picture taken in the 1950's

A building committee was formed in 1925 to supervise the purchases for the interior of the new sanctuary. Pressed tin was selected for the interior walls. Other items included the altar, which cost \$350, and the pulpit for \$199. Construction of both was done by W. E. Schmidt of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The handcrafted wooden arch, which cost \$35, was made by a craftsman we have been unable to identify. The stained glass windows were purchased for \$269.43. The cross on top of the bell tower was purchased for \$30. The architect's original bid had been \$13,900. However, after several additional appointments, the completed sanctuary cost the congregation \$20,000. For the new building, the Frauenverein purchased 26 pews and 130 opera seats and contributed \$2,401.



Rev. Julius J.
Kasiske

The Rev. Julius Kasiske arrived as the new pastor on May 29, 1928. Almost immediately he set about organizing an orchestra. Membership in the orchestra totaled 36 at one time, and a wide variety of instruments was used. Frequent concerts were performed, with the first annual concert being in 1929.

A very successful open-air concert was performed in 1935. The orchestra performed church hymns, light classics, marches, and so on. Old records note performances of Wagner's "Under the Double Eagle" and "La Paloma, Spanish Serenade" by Yradier. Tradition has it that Pastor Kasiske was also a composer and wrote some of the music for the orchestra as well as for the mixed choir. He served as director and organist for the mixed choir.

Membership stipulation for orchestra and choir was introduced during his leadership. A person could become a choir or orchestra member after a month's trial, and an attendance record was kept. Performances included German and English hymns at regular worship services, playing for weddings and anniversaries, and at funerals. The choir also performed Easter cantatas and Christmas music and occasionally sang at surprise birthday parties for the elderly.

It was during Pastor Kasiske's leadership that the practice of receiving morning offerings at worship services was introduced. Up to this time, "dues" were assessed church members, based on an agreed-upon formula. The new practice caused quite a stir.

A church library was started on June 1, 1930, by the Youth Fellowship. They also purchased a "Hectograph" for copy work. In 1933 the Youth Fellowship dues were reduced from \$1.20 to 60 cents per year, because of the "Great Depression."

THE BEGINNING OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

On March 28, 1933, the congregation decided to begin having more worship services in the English language. On the second Sunday of each month services were held in a combination of German and English. Every fourth Sunday there was an evening service completely in English. In 1934 the mixed choir had its German constitution translated into English.

In 1934, there were 100 active members of St. John Church. However, in those days, only the head of the family, usually male, was officially a member of the church. Others were members through him or her. Thus 100 active members meant 100 active families.

On December 28, 1941, shortly after Pearl Harbor, the congregation resolved to alternate services in German and English. On April 2, 1950,

they decided that the first Sunday of each month would be a German worship service, and all other services of the church would be in English.

In 1950 a committee was appointed to work with the pastor to write a new church constitution in English. In the same year the Ladies' Aid paid for the construction of a tin cistern on a metal tower.



The Orchestra circa 1940's

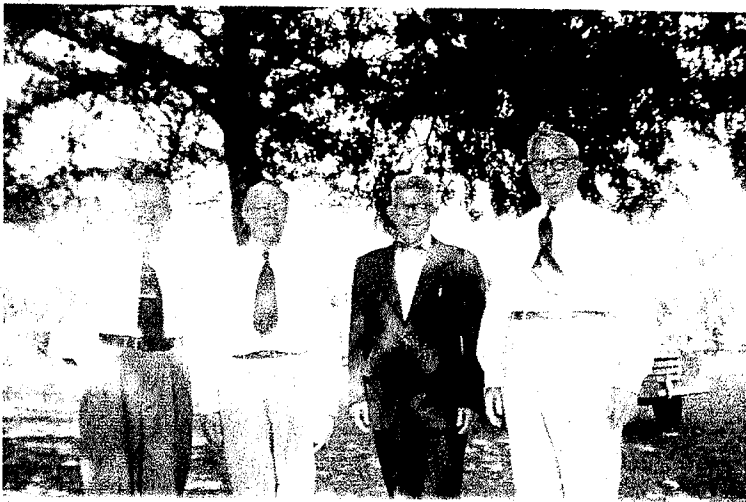
Closing Out a Millennium: 1951-1999

CHANGE AND RENEWAL

On March 1, 1952, "single membership" was introduced, meaning that people other than heads of households could become voting members. Thus anybody who had been confirmed and had reached a certain age could become an official member of the congregation, with all rights, privileges and obligations.

The years following World War II were probably the most vigorous period in the Church's history for benevolence giving. Old records reflect a tremendous effort to render war relief, especially to Germany. Some of the activity was carried on through a German war relief organization and some through CARE. Apparently this effort generated a benevolence enthusiasm that lasted for some years to come. The congregation overpaid its apportionment during its first year as a member of the Evangelical & Reformed Church.

For several years there were annual "Mission Fest" Sundays, in which the whole day was



75th Anniversary portrait of four pastors (L to R): Rev. Zucker, Rev. E. Eiben, Rev. Robert Mohr and Rev. Carl Kluge. Each served at St. John during its first 75 years.

devoted to making members aware of mission activity and the need for benevolence giving. Frequently there were three worship services and an all-church dinner at these events. This benevolence enthusiasm seemed to die out, however, and such giving declined over the next several years.

Lifestyle changes came rapidly in the 1950's and 1960's. Young people left the area to go to cities where they could find work. The whole style of farming changed, with greater use of machines and less dependence on human labor. Roads were built by the county. Telephones came to the rural area. The first electronic organ, a Wurlitzer, was purchased as a memorial and given to the church for its 75th anniversary. On April 1, 1954, the congregation officially decided it would no longer require a pastor to be able to conduct services in German. Construction on the present parsonage began on November 8, 1954, and was completed in 1955. During this same year, the Rev. E. H. Wierth served as interim pastor.

FIRST DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION

The Evangelical Synod of North America had merged with the Reformed Church in the United States in 1934, thus forming the Evangelical & Reformed Church. This was while Rev. Kasiske was pastor of St. John Church. However, it was in 1951, under the leadership of Pastor Edwin Eiben, that St. John German Evangelical Lutheran Church of Richland officially voted to affiliate with the Evangelical & Reformed Church, thus connecting itself to a denominational body. In 1952, St. John Church was officially received into membership of the Texas Synod (a regional judicatory of the E & R Church) and became a voting member of the E & R Church. At this time the adult Sunday School class presented the church with a missal stand, and the Young Peoples' League erected the church's road sign. Acting on advice from an E & R denominational official, the president of the congregation secured an engineer for \$50 to draw up a map of the church property, which was to be filed along with other necessary papers, to apply for a charter to incorporate the church.

AFFILIATION WITH THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

During the tenure of Pastor Albert Petrich, the Evangelical & Reformed Church merged with the Congregational Christian Churches, forming the United Church of Christ. Official ceremonies for the merger took place at Cleveland, Ohio on June 25, 1957. The South Central Conference of the UCC replaced the old Texas Synod of the E & R Church in 1960. The Rev. Jewel Johnson served as interim pastor for a few months after Rev. Petrich's departure. Shortly thereafter, during the leadership of Pastor E. H.

Schwengel, St. John Church officially became a member of the United Church of Christ.



St. John Young People's League in 1952 gathered before their gift of the Church sign

CLOSING IN ON A CENTURY OF MINISTRY



Rev. E.H.
Schwengel

Pastor E. H. Schwengel was installed on December 7, 1958. Several programs and improvements were initiated during his sixteen-year tenure. The circulating heating systems were installed in the sanctuary and parish hall. Up to this time the minister or a designated layman was responsible for building fires in the stoves in the sanctuary and parish hall on cold Sunday mornings. Concrete slabs were poured in front of the sanctuary and parish hall, and a concrete walkway was laid between the parsonage and sanctuary. It was also discovered that in the church cemetery there were 74 unmarked grave sites. This situation resulted in the establishment of a Maintenance Fund for the cemetery. Altar paraments, using the four liturgical colors in season (white, green,

red, purple), were introduced during Pastor Schwengel's leadership. Also begun during Rev.

Schwengel's time of service was the Vacation Bible School program and the presentation of the Flower Cross at Easter.¹

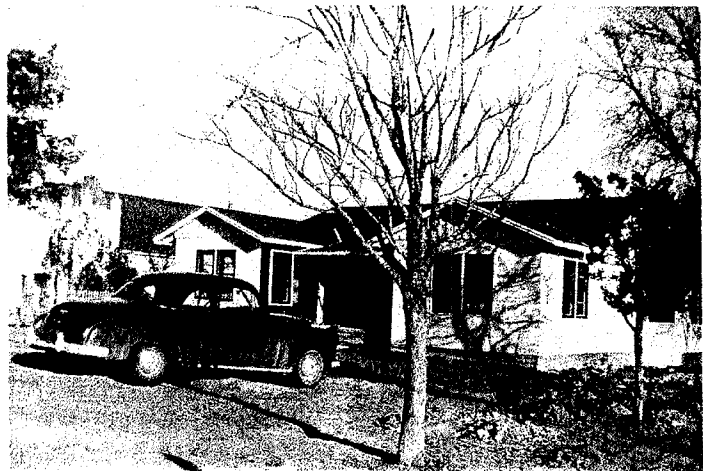
For a few months in late 1974 and early 1975, after Rev. Schwengel's retirement, the Rev. Edwin Kloppe served for the second time as interim pastor.

Some years prior to this, the church had decided to sign up as a future customer for a city water system, activated in the summer of 1975. Following its installation there was a virtual explosion of new housing in the Richland area. With this major factor, Richland had essentially ceased to be a rural area and was for all practical purposes now a suburb of greater Austin.

The Rev. Harold L. Rucker arrived at St. John Church as pastor on June 15, 1975. He reflected a strong interest in Christian education and in working with children. The church library was recreated and currently has over 700 volumes, plus magazines and periodicals. The Stewardship Council was organized, and benevolence giving was again on the increase. Lay people



Flower Cross, Easter, 1970



Parsonage, circa 1960

¹ This sentence is added to the narrative by Rev. Vaughan, based on the remembrance of several members of St. John. Actual dates of the beginning of the VBS program and the Flower Cross presentation could not be accounted for.

were used as liturgists and lay preachers in regular worship services. Special sermons for children, using lay people and youth as leaders, were begun as part of the regular worship services. Two filmstrips were produced as part of a program to help children develop part of their own educational curriculum. In the latter filmstrip, the children wrote their own script, did their own art work (which was copied onto slides), and narrated the recording of their script. Both filmstrips were shared with the congregation.

Some physical improvements to the parsonage were made prior to Pastor Rucker's arrival: wall to wall carpeting and a central heating and air conditioning system. A new garage was completed in early 1976, at a cost of \$4,000. The Dougherty Foundation had contributed \$3,500 earlier, which aided in these improvements. The old garage was torn down, and a small implement shed was built on the cemetery grounds with materials from the old garage. A new sound system was donated and installed in the sanctuary in late 1975. This is especially helpful to alleviate hearing difficulties.

The 100th anniversary of St. John's Church was celebrated on June 4, 1978. The day-long celebration was attended by many past members, friends, neighbors and neighboring communities and churches. During the morning service a Texas historical marker was unveiled on the front pillar of the church.



Releasing balloons at the 105th Anniversary

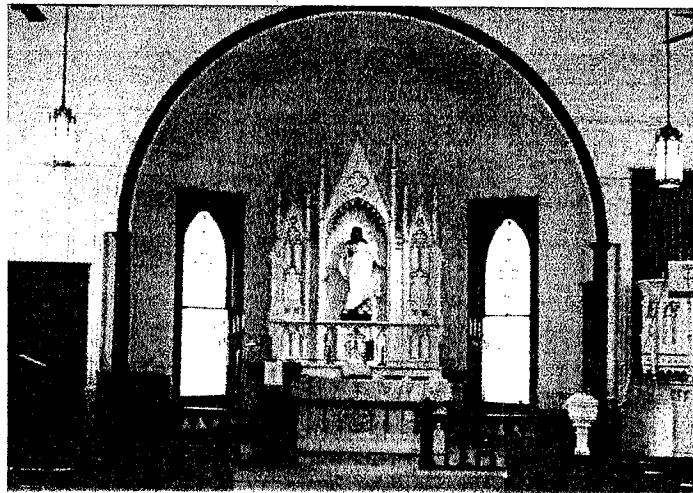
BEGINNING THE NEXT 100 YEARS²

During Rev. Rucker's service the Pfolk Pfest (Bazaar) was reintroduced, and a variety of fellowship activities were started on a regular basis--volleyball, dominos and the annual Halloween party. Minutes for Pastor Rucker's time in Richland are missing and events during his time at St. John's Church were difficult to reconstruct. Pastor Rucker left soon after the 100th anniversary to serve a church in Kansas. Rev. Jewel Johnson from Coupland agreed to serve as interim pastor to St. John for the second time. Services were held at 8: 30 a.m.

Rev. Byron Wells was called to serve as pastor beginning December 1, 1978. Pastor Wells was associate minister for a church in Missouri prior to coming to Richland. Pastor Wells and his wife Margaret were instrumental in reorganizing the church choir. Margaret had a music degree and served as choir director during their time in Richland. In the late 1970's the possibility of locating a new airport for the city of Austin in the Manor area was introduced. Pastor Wells spent a great deal of time researching the airport subject to see what recourse the congregation had. Austin voters defeated the airport referendum.

In 1980 the walls of the parsonage, the ceiling in the parish hall, and the church were insulated, and ceiling fans were installed in the parish hall and church. A fence was installed at the parsonage. In 1981 the Church started a Blood Bank under the name of St. John U.C.C., Richland Community.

The year 1983 brought an extremely cold winter, causing damage to the interior wallpaint of the church. A different organ was purchased on December 4, 1983. The Women's Guild, Improvement



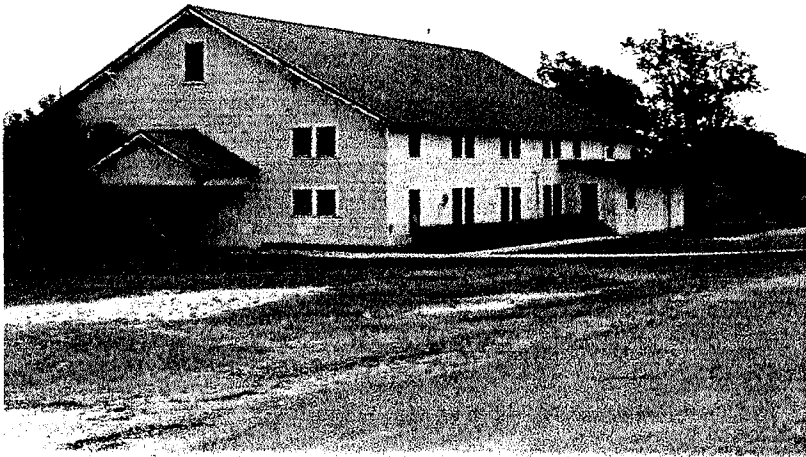
St. John's Altar, 1999

² This section is the narrative that appears in the Richland Community History Book published in 1988 in celebration of the 110th Anniversary of the Richland Community.

Fund, Memorial Fund and individual contributions helped pay for needed repairs and other items. Pastor Wells accepted a call to Round Grove United Church, Lewisville, Texas, and left St. John on March 31, 1984.

On April 15, 1984, Rev. Jewel Johnson gave a trial sermon and accepted the call to serve as pastor beginning August 1, 1984. He had left Coupland in 1981 and was serving in the sandhills of Nebraska. Howard Pitts served as interim pastor until June 30, 1984, and Rev. Frank Dietz served from July 1, 1984 through July 31, 1984.

Pastor Johnson began his ministry at St. John on August 1, 1984. The Undershepherd Program was established February 12, 1985. A new metal roof was put on the church and the towers were repaired. Mini blinds were put in the parish hall and parsonage. Memorial funds supported the purchase of a new copier and electric typewriter. In 1987 new wiring was put in the parish hall; a new metal roof was installed on August 2, 1987. The new



Parish Hall, 1995

cemetery fence was dedicated November 22, 1987 with the marker inscribed "Ev. Luth. St. John Friedhof 1886." Eighteen new choir robes were purchased. Earlier, when the horn speaker failed, a new system was installed in the sanctuary with a two-column speaker on each side. The old amplifier was moved

to the education building, where a two column speaker completed a new sound system.

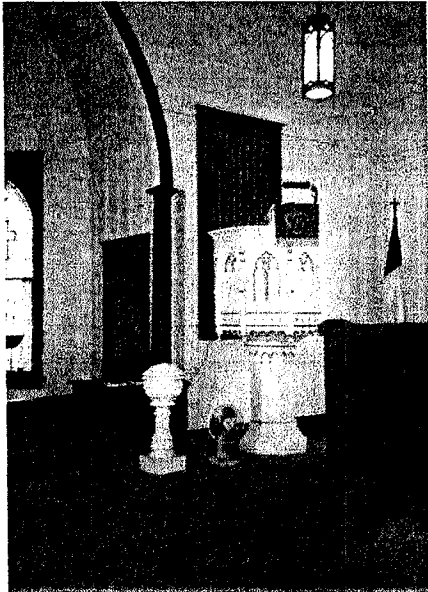
On November 3, 1987, Austin voters passed a referendum, which had been defeated years earlier, to move their airport east of Manor. The plan would have placed St. John Church about one mile from and in a direct line with a

runway. The airport and its accompanying industrial sprawl probably would have devastated the church at its present site.³

However, not long after this, Bergstrom Air Force Base (located along Highway 183 further south) was closed down due to military cutbacks. Austin reconsidered the location of their airport and decided to buy the old base instead, moving to that location. Once again, the Richland Community and St. John Church escaped the incursion of an airport into their community.

In 1989, upon the passing of Willie Randig, Jr., St. John Church received by bequeath a portion of his estate. Upon distribution, the Randig Estate Account (CD's at Comerica Bank) was opened with \$11,500.00. Also bequeathed were 7.1 acres of land near Cele.

Rev. Johnson accepted a call from St. Peter's UCC of Coupland in 1990 and St. John's congregation sought a new pastor, calling Rev. Michael Barlowe-Sparkman. Also during 1990, the Women's Guild carpeted the front porch of the sanctuary building.



St. John's Pulpit, 1999

In 1991, a fire hydrant was placed in front of the Church for fire protection of the Church buildings and property. With donations, trees were purchased to plant around the grounds. Donors were Raymond & Mary Hees, Bob Hendrickson, and Ethel Hodde and family. Ron Roithner installed a plaque for the cemetery on the cemetery fence. In March of 1991, the inner circles of the communion trays were reserved for grape juice for those who did not care to partake of the traditional wine.

During this time, the congregation struggled to accept Rev. Sparkman's unique pastoral style. The accounts of individuals and leaders for those

³ Here ends the narrative of the Richland Community History book. The narrative to follow is written by Rev. R. Michael Vaughan and is drafted from annual reports during his time of service at St. John and supplemented by memories of members of the congregation of events during the years 1990-94 before he came.

two years are marked by stories of turmoil. Financial woes fell upon the little congregation and a few members left the church. Rev. Sparkman resigned in 1992.

In 1992, the congregation set out to improve the appearance of the sanctuary building by purchasing new window glass. The old glass was removed and the current (2003) beveled glass panes were put in. The project was finished in May of 1993. The Parish Hall received the double doors on the west porch entry of the building in 1993.



Rev. John Prochaska

Three interim pastors served St. John Church from 1993-1994. Rev. Frank Horak, whose son Hank Horak was president of the council, filled in the early part of 1993. He was followed by Rev. Lev Reynolds (1993 to early '94) and then Rev. John Prochaska ('94). The Women's Guild began a Women's Bible Study on the last Thursday of each month in this time period. Ladies gathered in the homes of the members to study the books of the Bible. During this time, much healing took place. Many members affectionately credit Rev. Prochaska for bolstering their spirits and lifting their hopes for their church. During Rev. Prochaska's service, in the spring of 1994, the congregation purchased and installed central heating and air conditioning in the sanctuary, a major accomplishment that has made the beautiful worship space much more comfortable.

In 1994, Gibby Weiss donated the rear metal doors to the Sanctuary building and then, to top off the improvements, the exterior of the Church was painted.

PREPARING FOR A GROWING COMMUNITY

In June of 1994, St. John Church called the Rev. R. Michael Vaughan to be its pastor. Rev. Vaughan had served two previous churches--St. Paul UCC in Lockhart, Texas for six years and then Faith Church in Orange Grove, Texas for six and a half years. Upon arriving, Rev. Vaughan gathered the youth together, a sizable group of 15 kids, and began the senior



Rev. R. Michael
Vaughan

youth group (7th – 12th grades) who selected “The Saints of St. John” as their name. Soon to follow was the Junior Youth Group (8 years-6th grade), who chose the name “The Junior Saints.”

Several new committees were formed during this first year: the Property Committee to oversee the maintenance of the facilities and the grounds, the Evangelism Committee to design and conduct programs that would encourage folk to attend and join St. John, and the Pastoral Relations Committee to receive and interpret feedback from the congregation regarding church programs and pastoral services.

Rev. Vaughan was an experienced fire fighter and emergency medical technician (EMT-B). He joined the Pflugerville Volunteer Fire Department in the fall of 1994 to help provide emergency fire response and medical care to the Richland Community. He was quickly elected Chaplain of the Fire Department as well. Rev. Vaughan persuaded the Pflugerville Ministerial Alliance to hold what would become the Annual Pflugerville CROP Walk and sponsor a Youth Volleyball league.

A Senior Citizens’ group was formed to provide fellowship among the mature members of St. John Church. The last Tuesday of the month was set aside for them to meet. While they put together the newsletter of the Church for mailing, Rev. Vaughan would monitor blood pressures and an occasional bingo game would erupt. Rev. Vaughan also added altar communion to the Women’s Guild Candlelight service, which increased its spiritual impact on those attending.

In 1995, some of the men of St. John began to gather in the early morning hours of the third Sunday of each month for fellowship and breakfast. This group became the “Men’s Fellowship Breakfast.”



The Saints Combo, 2002

Also in 1995, the very active youth put together a combo made

up of piano, drums and guitars and began to perform "country gospel" music from time to time. The Saints held a worship service on a Sunday in October designated Youth Sunday and also began to hold the annual Sunrise service on Easter Sunday morning. To the Lenten service Rev. Vaughan added a Maundy Thursday altar communion, which imitated the Last Supper event during the first Holy Week long ago. This many have found a very moving spiritual experience.

Memorial funds supported the upgrade of the sound system in the Parish Hall with new microphones and a modern mic-mixer (6 channel). Sixty-nine new pew Bibles replaced the old worn ones with the New Revised Standard Version (translation). The Women's Guild covered the cost of the renovation of the Women's restroom in 1995, enlarging it and putting in handicap access. Also in 1995, the Sunday School adopted a family for Thanksgiving and Christmas, providing canned goods and gifts for both holidays.

In 1996, the Parish Hall interior was painted to improve its appearance. A major event in the life of St. John was the sending of five young people to the National Youth Event of the United Church of Christ. The event was in Columbia, South Carolina, a meaningful and memorable experience for all who went. The youth attending were J.W. Gebert, Shane Lindgren, Heather Hennig, Avery Morse, and Chance Lindgren. The Sunday School kids made Valentine's day cards for the shut-ins of St. John, beginning a yearly tradition. They began a program called "Sponsor a Child for VBS," which



West end of the Parish Hall during the 1999 renovations

helped offset the cost of the summer Vacation Bible School program.

Property concerns marked 1997. Storm windows were put on the Parish Hall and the Parsonage to achieve better insulation. A new central heat and air conditioning unit purchased with the help of the Women's Guild (Pfolkfest proceeds) was installed in the Parish

Hall to establish more efficient environmental conditions. Late in the year, an evaluation of the Parish Hall in relationship to growing attendance at church functions led to the development of a "three phase" plan for renovation of the building. Through gifts to the Memorial Fund, the hymnals, aged and worn, were replaced with a new version of the Evangelical & Reformed Hymnal and new carpeting (light blue) was installed in the Sanctuary, a gift of the Hennig family in memory of Mr. Dale Hennig. The Guild also purchased new indoor/outdoor carpet for the front porch and steps of the sanctuary building.

In 1998 the Property Committee completed Phase I of the renovation of the Parish Hall, adding two new Sunday School rooms and two storage closets on the second floor. H.L. Weiss did the carpentry work with the help of the Property Committee chairperson, Ernst Engelmann, Jr. Phase II was yet on the planning board. In 1998, St. John's congregation elected to return to its original name: "St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church (UCC) of the Richland Community." The Constitution required some amending to accommodate the new name as well as streamline the election process.

The Sunday School, with the help of Hildegard Gebert, produced a Church Banner with the hand prints of the children on them. This is hung in the sanctuary for all to enjoy. The Memorial Committee purchased a set of white altar paraments to be used during Christmastide and Eastertide and designed the green, blue and purple to be purchased in 1999. St. John acquired a web page on the internet in 1998, built by Rev. Vaughan. Its web address was <http://members.aol.com/rmv102256/index.htm>. Also in that year, the Communion cabinet was built and donated to the Church by Helmut Kasiske.

Phase II of the parish hall renovations was completed in 1999. Once again, H. L. Weiss served as the carpenter and Ernst Engelmann Jr. helped in many ways. The kitchen was expanded and an island counter and large sink added, along with a new stove and oven. The church office was built out of an old Sunday School room and the stairway to the second floor on the west end was widened. The second floor balcony was built and the library moved upstairs. The iron railing was built by Ron Roithner. The overall cost of the renovations was \$20,000.00. The front patio and sidewalks were redone and a permanent handicap ramp was put in place during this year as well.

The Memorial Committee completed the design and purchase of two more sets of altar paraments, the blue for Advent (donated by the Hees family) and the purple for Lent. They also undertook a fund raiser to purchase the padded chairs for the Parish Hall. Fifty padded, interlocking chairs were purchased at \$65.00 per chair by members and friends of the congregation in memory of loved ones.

The renovation work was finally completed in preparation for the new millennium and the year 2000.

Into the New Millenium: 2000-

A CONGREGATION AT WORK TOGETHER

The new millenium began with pictures of fireworks around the world rolling across our televisions. Looking back, one might consider such a sign of things to come in the life of St. John's Church.

With the completion of the renovations of the Parish Hall, attention turned to the Church building. Old, deteriorating wood clung to its austere sides, marring its attractiveness. After a thorough investigation with the assistance of Ewalt Menn, who knew much about restoration of wooden structures, the congregation decided that it was simply not economically feasible to repair and keep up the exterior wood work. The congregation decided to put vinyl siding on the structure at a cost of \$37,841.00. The new look is attractive, requires no painting nor regular repair, and is guaranteed for the life of the building. The Property Committee also replaced a large portion of the wiring in the sanctuary, contracting KTS Electric to upgrade the wiring and switches.



Members of the championship volleyball team of 2000 proudly display their trophy

The usually busy Saints of St. John once again sent three young people to the national youth event of the United Church of Christ. Their volleyball team won the Pflugerville Volleyball league championship and brought home the rotating trophy.

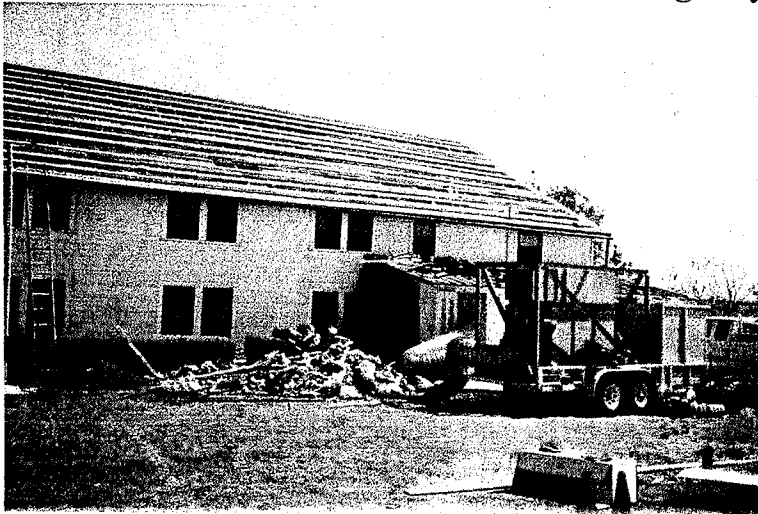
An electric piano was donated to the Church by Mr. & Mrs. Calvin Hamann in memory of Elizabeth Witte, bringing a more diverse sound to the Sunday School music and program. The Memorial Committee also completed the altar paraments with the design and purchase of the green cloth (Pentecost). A white tablecloth was donated by Bernice & Alvin Klotz for use during the Maundy

Thursday Communion services, at which altar communion is served from a table set at the front of the sanctuary, imitating the Lord's supper as it might have taken place in the upper room.

WHEN YOU WALK THROUGH A STORM

In the spring of the year 2000, the Pflugerville City Council began to explore the feasibility of erecting an aircraft and cargo airport east of its city boundaries and once again the Richland Community faced the incursion of an airport. TxDOT was to solicit government grants and many of the leaders of the Pflugerville city government appeared to be in favor of the idea. The preferred site was located between Weiss Lane and Cameron and between Jesse Bohls Road and Cele Road. Many longtime residents of the Richland Community faced losing their farms to condemnation and St. John Church found itself potentially sitting a quarter mile from the end of the runway, across the street from the "crash zone." Such a project was seen by most as a threat to the historic Richland community, including St. John Church.

Residents of the Richland Community rallied and banded together to oppose the proposal and St. John Church fast became the gathering point and strategic command center for their "No Airport" activities. Over a nine month period of time, these residents studied and worked diligently to convince their neighbors to



The bald Parish Hall is dried out by Blackmon Mooring after the storm of 2000

the west that an airport was not needed in Travis County nor helpful to Pflugerville.

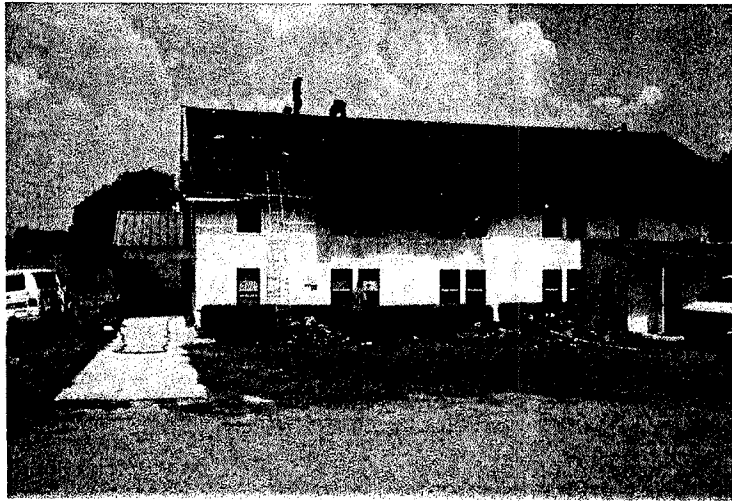
In April of 2000, the congregation put the finishing touches on the renovation of the Parish Hall by purchasing nine new folding tables and fifty metal chairs.

On Saturday, September 2, 2000, while Rev. Vaughan was in San Antonio pitching for an Austin baseball team in the annual Texas Cup

Tournament (Amateur Men's Baseball), a storm blew into the Richland Community. The winds picked up and soon whipped across the countryside as a

major front descended. The storm tore off the roof of the newly renovated parish hall, throwing parts of it up against the side of the sanctuary facility and over the Church into the back yard of the parsonage. The rains fell, quickly saturating the attic of the bald parish hall and dripping into the building itself, seriously damaging the interior. "It looked like it was raining inside the Parish Hall," Laura Vaughan said in description of the interior of the building.

After hurried calls from the President of the Congregation, Sam Jones, and the Pastor's wife, Laura Vaughan, some forty members and friends of St. John Church came out through the driving rains to salvage what they could. Electronic equipment was quickly taken to dry ground, chairs and other items that would be damaged by water moved to the cemetery storage building, and

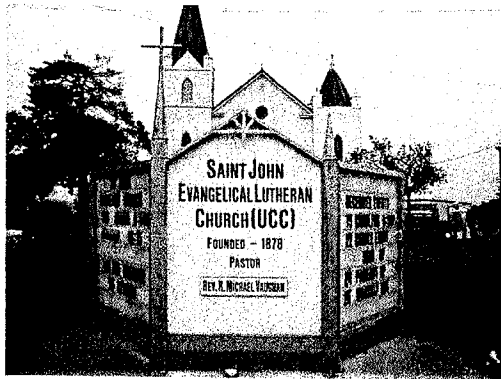


Workers put a temporary plastic covering on the Parish Hall on Sunday morning, September 3

assessment of the damage began. Hearts ached as they looked over the Parish Hall, all the work to renovate it showing water marks, warps and peeling paint.

A&B Sheet Metal of Coupland was called to put a temporary covering on the building. Mr. Preston Harvey was asked to take over the contracting of the repairs. Blackmon-Mooring was contracted to begin the drying process. The congregation gathered their senses and prepared for the long road of rebuilding and repairing. Having changed insurance carriers in 1997, gaining coverage through the UCC Denominational policy underwritten by Traveler's Insurance, the membership was relieved to discover that most of the cost of the repairs would be handled by the insurance. Such was fortunate, for the overall cost of restoring the Parish Hall came to \$132,143.88.

St. John's Church sighed a collective sigh of relief as the new year of 2001 began. The Parish Hall storm damage repair was well on its way and the facility looked as good as new. Unable to hold its annual Memorial Sunday in the customary month of November due to repair work on the Parish Hall, the Memorial Committee selected a Sunday in January for the event and afterwards,



Church sign built, donated and installed by Helmut Kasiske, 2001

determined to keep it in January. The committee began to look for a new Church sign. Helmut Kasiske presented a proposal for just such a thing and offered to build it. Delighted, the congregation accepted his offer. By the spring of 2001, a new Church sign was erected in front of the Sanctuary and great appreciation was expressed to Helmut for his skill and artisanship.

Also in the spring of 2001, good news landed in Richland. The Pflugerville City Council had lost its taste for airports. Having lost a half cent sales tax bid to Travis County Emergency Services District #2 when it was discovered that the tax could be used to help fund airport related projects, the City Council retreated from the study process and sent TxDOT looking elsewhere. The citizens of Pflugerville had responded to Richland's call for help, voting down the sales tax as if it were voting down the airport itself (many understood the issues as one and the same). Once again, the Richland community and St. John Church were set free from the fears of an airport that would forever change the community and the Church.



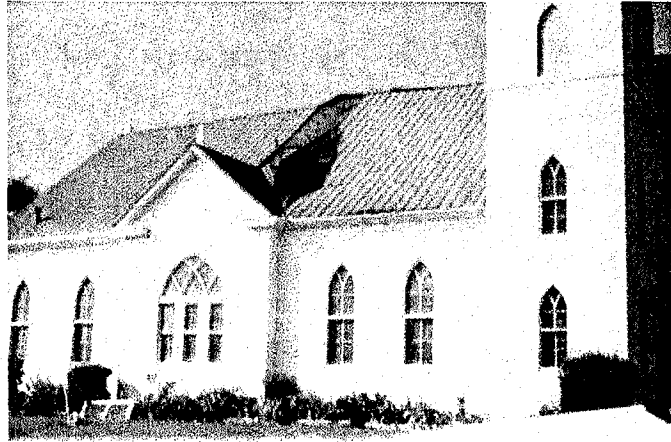
Parish Hall roof damage from the 2001 storm

In a strange twist of deja-vu, an old nemesis returned to the Richland Community. On May 20, 2001, storms blew through the rural countryside once again, wreaking havoc on the residences and the Church. High winds removed one quarter of the new Parish Hall roof, tore away or loosened half of the Church building's roof and damaged the parsonage roof. Once again members of the congregation

were called out to salvage what they could as water from the rains poured into two of the three buildings. The overall damage to the buildings was assessed at \$72,600.36 and included the loss of five aged trees around the campus.

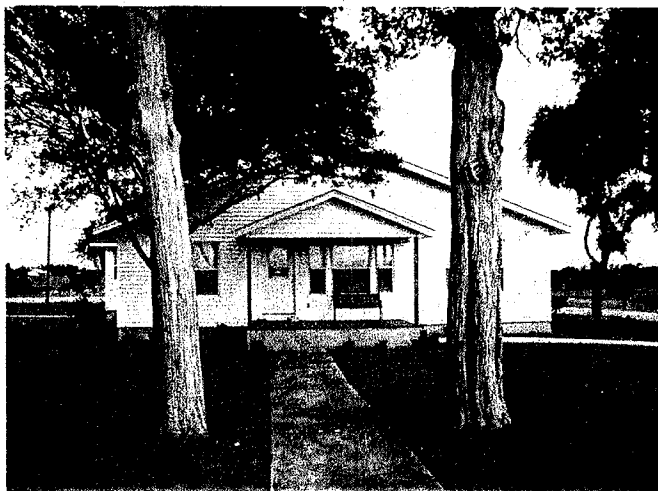
Many of the residents of the Richland Community found similar damage done to their homes. The congregation of St. John rallied to their aid with contributions and the UCC relief fund supplied dollars to help as well.

Once again, St. John Church set about to repair and rebuild. The insurance came in handy, covering the bulk of the cost. At the same time, the congregation decided to renovate the parsonage. By the end of 2001, work had begun to extend the front end of the parsonage, creating a larger living room and a master bedroom; to remove a wall in the kitchen, replacing it with a counter; and to expand the guest bathroom to include a shower; and



Church roof damage from the 2001 storm

to rearrange the master bathroom to make more space. Adding closets, re-shingling the roof, and adding vinyl siding to match the church were included in the renovation. To accomplish this, a loan of \$17,000.00 was necessary through Comerica Bank in Pflugerville and Robert Weiss was hired as the carpenter and contractor. While the construction was under way, Rev. Vaughan and his family moved into a small two bedroom home graciously provided by Kelley and Gene Gorham. They would spend six months there while the parsonage gained its face lift. The overall cost of the renovations was \$74,925.60.



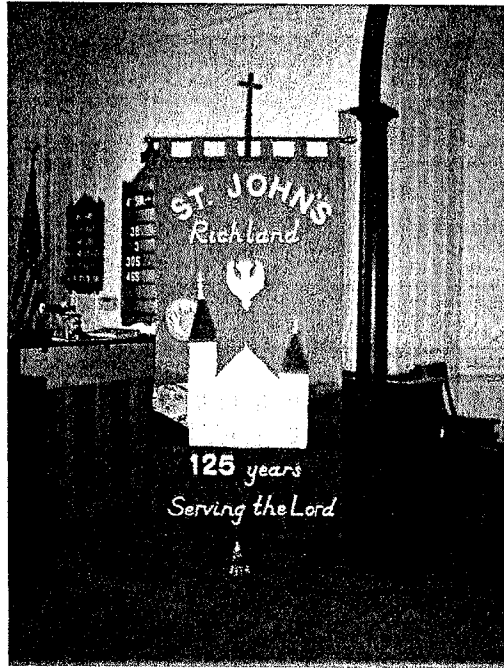
The new look of the Parsonage, 2003

Over the summer of 2001, St. John undertook a new ministry, chartering and sponsoring a Scout Troop, Cub Scout Pack 685. Soon after, the Boy Scout Troop was added, Troop 685. The Scouts have made many contributions to the life of St. John including flags to be flown at the cemetery flag pole and remembering our Veterans on Memorial Day and Veterans Day by placing miniature flags on their graves.

The Pfolkfest conducted by the

Women's Guild drew one of the highest incomes in its history as people in the community turned out to help offset construction costs. The ladies worked hard, as all the congregation did, and a big chunk of the loan was paid off quickly.

CELEBRATING 125 YEARS



125th Anniversary Banner

The Spring of 2002 found Rev. Vaughan and his family moving back into the parsonage. It is to be noted that all roofs stayed on in 2002. With the Parish Hall, Church and Parsonage repairs completed, the Property Committee returned to the electricity in the Sanctuary. The rest of the wiring of the Church building was replaced and upgraded to meet current code.

The Memorial Committee purchased twenty new choir music performance folders, a new fireproof filing cabinet, and three new nativity animals. The nativity animals were donated by members of the congregation: the camel by Mary & Raymond Hees in memory of Elva Magness and Gerald Miller and an ox and a donkey by Kermit and Lydia Hees in honor of

their grandchildren. Over Christmas, a fire broke out in the hay of the Nativity scene and sadly many of the figures were ruined or destroyed, including several of the new ones.

Over the summer, the congregation began to plan for its 125th Anniversary. The Memorial Committee funded the making of a 125th anniversary banner, which was presented at the first celebration held on January 6, 2003. To raise funds to cover the cost of the anniversary celebration, Christmas ornaments and cards were designed and sold. Under contract, a Hutto artist, Jason Mistic, drew a picture of the Church which appears on the cover of this history book as it is printed in 2003.

Also in 2002, the main driveway of the Church was paved and the cemetery cement drive was laid down to allow easier access to the premises and the cemetery. Helmut Kasiske again shared his skills in construction, presenting St.

John Church with glass display cabinets for purposes of displaying Church historical items and documents.

St. John began its 125th year with a rousing celebration of the anniversary of the signing of the Charter on January 6, 2003. A pictorial directory containing the photos of many of the members of the congregation was printed and distributed. A throw blanket was designed to help raise funds for the Anniversary celebration, an item expected to become a memorable keepsake.

The Property Committee, with the leadership and hard work of Terrell Hamann, extended the Church drive around the east of the sanctuary and parsonage to link up with the parsonage driveway and laid a caliche parking area between.

On April 6, St. John Church celebrated 125 years of Christian education with 152 worshipers present. The Rev. Byron Wells delivered the message, the Sunday School provided music and skits, the Combo played two of its favorite Gospel songs and a potluck dinner was shared and enjoyed by all.

Also on this day, the congregation buried a time capsule directly behind the Church sign in the front yard of the Church. The capsule lies about a foot to a foot and a half underground and about a foot and a half to the east of the flower bed at the sign. It is to be dug up and opened at the 150th Anniversary of the Church.

In May of 2003, memorial funds provided seventeen new trees, which were planted on the campus to replace storm damaged or lost ones. Memorial funds also supported the purchase of a new amplifier and speakers for the Parish Hall sound system.



Rev. Vaughan dedicates the time capsule while President of the Congregation Kenneth Hees looks on.



A view of St. John Church through the trees, 2000

The main celebration of the 125th Anniversary is scheduled for June 15, 2003 and will include a day-long program, with guest ministers, a catered dinner and an afternoon program. Among the guests to be present are Dr. Mark H. Miller, South Central Conference Minister; Rev. Ernest Dean, Brazos Association Minister; Rev. John Towery; and many friends of the Church. The day will be topped off with an ice-cream social in the evening with the Combo playing on the front steps of the Church (weather permitting).

A NOTE FROM REV. R. MICHAEL VAUGHAN (May 2003)

I take the liberty to insert a little note in the midst of this on-going history of St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church (UCC). I have found it hard in these pages to include everything that has happened at St. John over its 125 years. I have endeavored, however, to include highlights that marked significant achievements for this faith community. I do feel it necessary, however, to acknowledge individual members of the congregation who have worked diligently over these past ten years, provided outstanding leadership and encouragement as St. John grew and at times endured difficulty together. The following individuals stand out as important leaders in the congregation that have assisted in navigating this past decade successfully. Their faith and determination and gifts of talent are greatly appreciated.

Ernst Engelmann, Jr. served as property committee chairperson during the renovations of the Parish Hall and spent many hours working with H.L. Weiss and on his own to create the

lovely improvements that we enjoy today. His leadership was instrumental in both the storm repair events and the remodeling of the Parsonage.

Terrell Hamann, as property committee chairperson during the storm events, shouldered the load of overseeing many of the repairs and also the renovation of the Parsonage. His skills and knowledge were invaluable as we endeavored to put things back together and improve on some things as well.

Ewalt Menn, having joined the church in 1998, provided the wisdom of years of experience in working with wood in construction as we wrestled with how to restore the exterior appearance of the Church.

Sam Jones, President of the congregation during the years of airport and storms, exemplified what I would call the epitomy of faithful leadership. Steady on the keel, his calm and wise guidance helped bring this congregation through three very tough years.

The Council of 2000-2001 must be acknowledged for the extraordinary dedication they gave to this congregation. They were: Sam Jones – President, Wayne Lindgren – Vice President, Ron Roithner – Treasurer, Janette Horak – Secretary, and members Raymond Hees, Scott Engelmann, Kermit Hees, Darryl Hodde and Maurice Hamann. These individuals worked above and beyond the call of duty to help St. John rebuild after the storms of 2000 and 2001.

With admiration and appreciation, I acknowledge the significant leadership skills, ability and faith of Maurice Hamann. A son of the Church, Maurice took on the president's position the year after I arrived at St. John. His energy and leadership underlies much of what we have been able to accomplish over this decade as the congregation grew and improved its ministry and facilities. Most certainly, his leadership during the airport crisis was invaluable and I believe contributed most keenly to the success of the effort to dissuade Pflugerville from pursuing the project. This congregation in generations to come have reason to be thankful for his faithful support and guidance during its life.

To the list of gratitude for leadership during the days of worry over the airport, we must add Lois and Loyd Shrout and Larry and Christine Mills, who have only recently joined St. John Church. Their dedication and hard work to confront airport supporters in Pflugerville with the needs and interests of Richland and of their own citizens was instrumental in the process of halting the project.

We would acknowledge also our current organist Louise Dunklin, who has played for St. John for many years. Week after week, she sets our worship to music and leads us in song with her command of the organ.

I would include finally, four behind-the-scenes workers whose dedication--rarely noticed--was consistent over not only my term as Pastor, but, I am sure, goes deeper into St. John's history and will continue for some time to come yet. Kenneth Hees for many years kept the Building and Improvement Fund accurately, which during the years of renovation and storm repair became quite a challenge. Marvin Hamann for many, many years has served as Financial Secretary, insuring that the weekly offering was collected, counted and deposited Sunday after Sunday. His unswerving dedication has been a treasured gift to this congregation. And Hildegard Gebert and Alvina Hamann have diligently kept up Church records and preserved and organized historical items, information and memories over the years. Their careful, thorough care for the history of St. John is not only evident in the compilation of this account, but has preserved the memories dear to us for future generations to witness and learn from. To these too, we give our gratitude.

I wish that I could acknowledge everyone in some way in this section. I thought perhaps I ought to just insert a copy of the Church Roster with a big "Thank you" printed at the top. But such would be a little silly for a historical account. But to the future generations of the Church, I point out that your ancestors have given you a great gift. As you have read this, you have borne witness to its giving. It falls to you to cherish and preserve it. The gift is the Church of Jesus Christ in this community and the faith that sits at the foundation of your life. Quite a challenge indeed. But as they did it, so will you, as you follow the Christ.

-Rev. R. Michael Vaughan

A Most Temporary Epilogue

I am certain that this epilogue will go the route of two previous epilogues to the history of St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church (UCC), that is, it will be deleted by the next hand that adds new chapters of history of St. John Church. So it should be, for history does not stop for final summaries and conclusions. To that end, I make this short.

The congregation of St. John Church changes, grows, strengthens and blooms in the hearts of those who dedicate themselves to Christ in and through the ministry it provides. Many things have changed over the life of this congregation. But the one thing that doesn't seem to be altered is the faith of its people. Whether it is expressed and celebrated in German or in English, with the accompaniment of an orchestra or a teenage combo, in the work of Sunday School teachers or carpenters putting roofs back in place, it continues to present the Gospel of our Lord in meaningful and vital ways.

As this history in one sense testifies to such, it also invites such in the future. Add more pages to this document! Certainly, Christ will see to that.

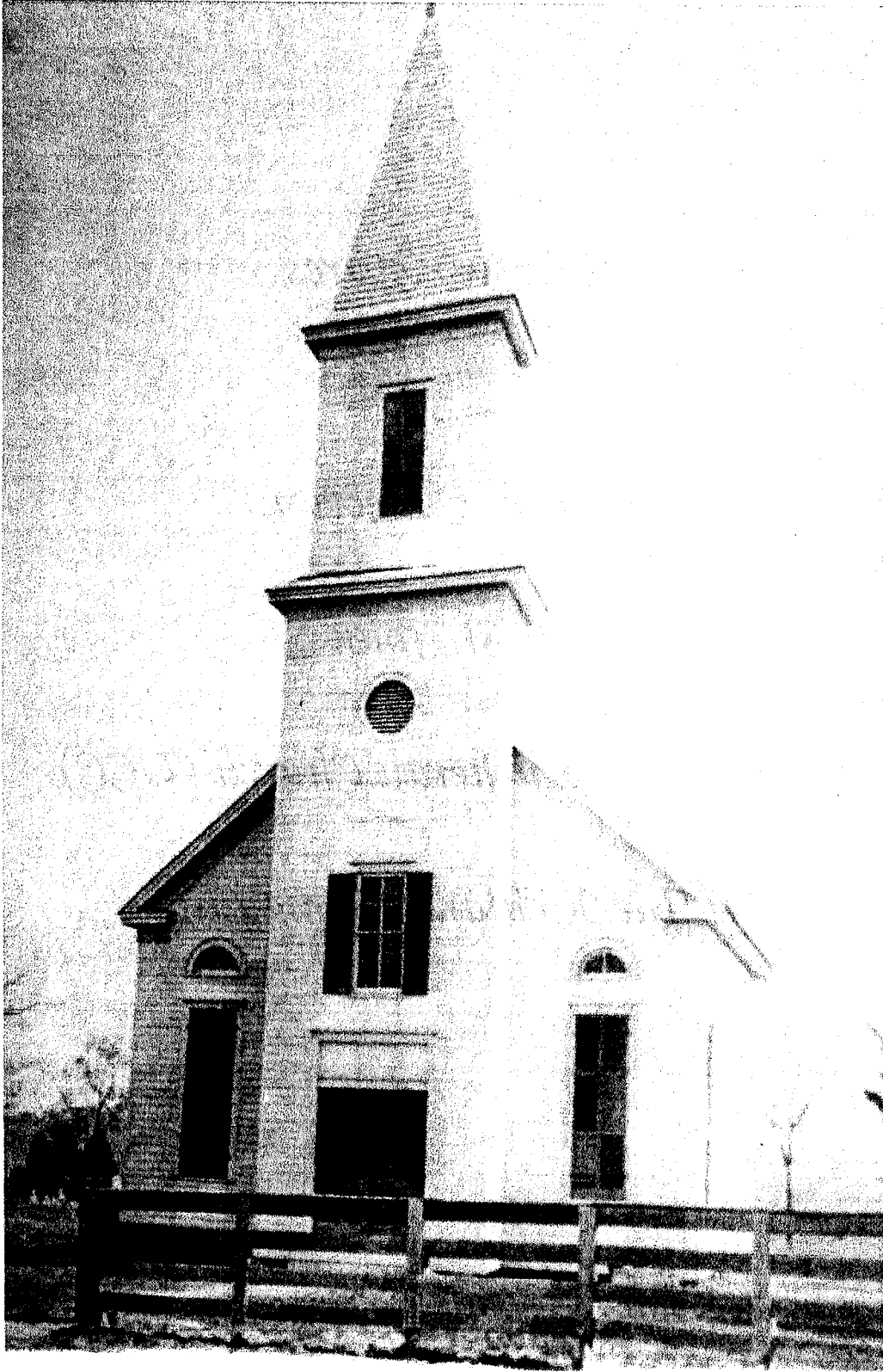
Pastor's Who Have Served St. John

Rev. E. Ernest:	1861	Rev. E. Eiben:	1950-53
Rev. J. G. Leib:	1861	Rev. E. Kloppe:	1954
Rev. G. Haehnelt:	1878	Rev. E. Wierth:	1955
Rev. F. Frankenstein:	1879	Rev. A Petrich:	1955-58
Rev. F. Schroeder:	1880-82	Rev. J. Johnson:	1958
Rev. M. Puhl:	1883	Rev. E.H. Schwengel:	1958-74
Rev. W. Pfenning	1884	Rev. E. Kloppe:	1974-75
Rev. E. Schroeder:	1885-88	Rev. H.L. Rucker:	1975-78
Rev. H. Buttermann:	1888-89	Rev. J. Johnson:	1978
Rev. H. Rhode:	1889-92	Rev. B. Wells:	1978-84
Rev. J. Horstmann:	1892-95	Rev. H. Pitts:	1984
Rev. C. Nuehaus:	1895-1900	Rev. F. Dietz:	1984
Rev. R. Mernitz:	1900-02	Rev. J. Johnson:	1984-90
Rev. A. Romanski:	1902-06	Rev. M. Sparkman:	1990-92
Rev. H. Barnofski:	1906-11	Rev. F. Horak:	1993
Rev. J. Endter:	1911-14	Rev. L.E. Reynolds:	1993-94
Rev. G. Zucher:	1914-28	Rev. J. Prochaska:	1994
Rev. J.J. Kasiske:	1928-49	Rev. R. M. Vaughan:	1994-

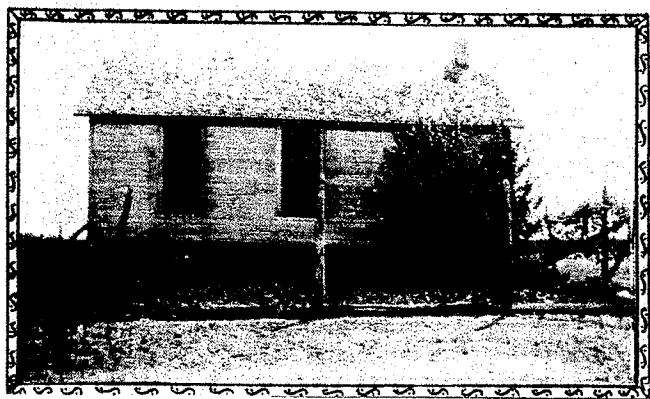
List of Members Who Served In U.S. Armed Forces:

Bernard Vorwerk	Michael Gebert	Ralph Engelmann
Ernst Vorwerk	Gaylon Smith(11/4/72)	Danny Steger
Heinrich Dietrich	Alfred Kerlin (11/4/18)	Darwin Steger
George Gonzenbach	Willie Melber	Bill Gorham
Ernst Grimm	Paul Sakewitz	Gene Gorham
Carl Wiruschewsky	Fritz Wendland	Russel Gebert
Fred Rust	Grover Kuempel	Ronald McDavid
Georg Harms	Walter Gonzenbach	Les Overstreet
Alvin Gebert	Robert Meyer	Wanda Bruce
Richard Gebert	Erich Hebbe	Mike Reynolds
Walter Prinz	Karl Hees	Pat Moore
Adolph Hohertz	John Melber	Manuel Heine
Roydell Rust	Willie Rolff	
Gilbert Weiss	Melburn Sakewitz	
Alfred Mueller	Vernon Kuehner	
Clarence A. Jaecks	Clarence Kuehner	
Oswald Wiruskeske	Raymond Hees	
Raymond A. Hamann	Alfred Hees	
Raymond Schmidt	Herbert L. Kerlin	
Adlai Schmidt	Clarence Melber	
Fred Steger, Jr.	Fritz Melber	
Ernest Steger	Henry B. Vorwerk	
Alfred Steger	Harry Lee Hamann	
Edlin Doskey	Arthur Grosskoph	
Reuben Jaecks	Erwin Seigmund	
Eibert Kasiske	Waylon Gebert	
Helmuth Kasiske	Vernon Rust	
Leonard Kasiske	Kermit Weiss	
Glenworth Vorwerk	Marvin Wieruscheske	
Herbert Hebbe	Albert Klotz, Jr.	
Erwin C. Hodde	Reuben Vorwerk	
Arnold Mueller	Kermit Hamann	
Jimmy Gamble	Reuben Schmidt	
Edgar Vorwerk	Florenz Steger	
Edmund Vorwerk	Anton Werchan	
12/6/51	George Davis	
Larry Vorwerk	David Gebert	
Leon Koch	Raymond Koch	
Eric Hebbe, Jr.	Melvin Zwernemann	
LaVan Mahlow	Allen Vorwerk	
Willburn Rust	Vernon Hodde	
Billy H. Hees	Kenneth Schmidt	
Lester Koch	Calvin Hodde	

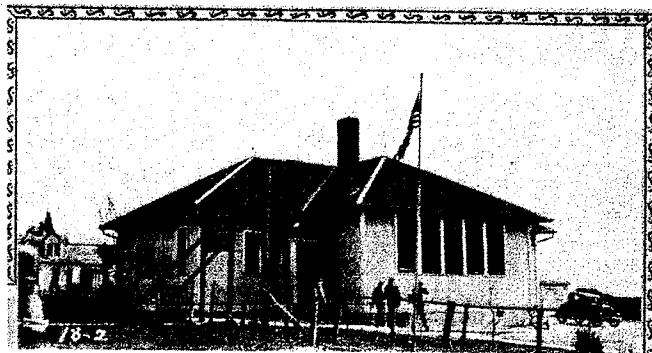
A Few Pictures
From The
History Collection
Of St. John
Evangelical Lutheran Church (UCC)
Of The Richland Community



The first Church building erected in 1884. This picture was framed and hangs in the back of the current sanctuary



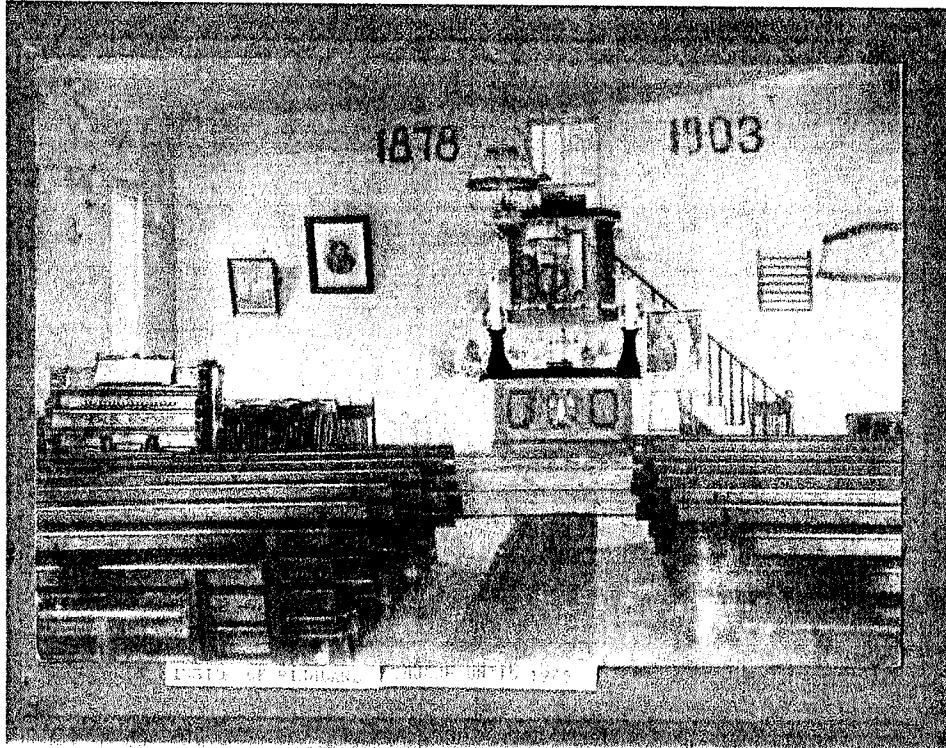
The Richland School, circa 1885



The Richland School, 1936



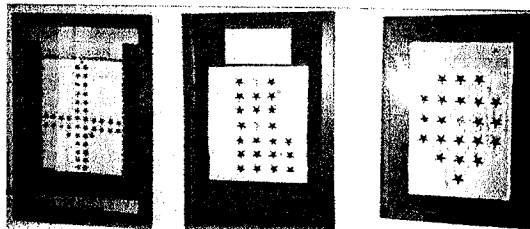
The Richland School children in 1911 with their teacher/pastor (center)
Rev. J. Endter



The Inside of the old building, its altar, pews, pulpit and old pump organ. The pump organ currently sits at the front of the sanctuary and is played on special occasions (Christmas). The old altar is used in the Parish Hall as an altar for opening worship in Sunday School.



Left, the old mission box still hangs inside the front door of the current structure



Above, Veterans are remembered in framed stars on a field of white, each star representing a Veteran. The gold stars represent those who have fallen on the battle field.



The Confirmation Class of 1916: Pastor G. Zucker (center); seated from left – Anna Grimm, Sophie Prinz, Sophie Sackewitz, Sophie Janke, Wilhelmine Zwernamann, Emma Engelmann; standing from left - Herbert Hamann, Ernst Hees, Willie Mahlow, Herman Steger, Henry Steger



Rev. Carl Emil Schroeder



Catherine Margaretha Schlittler

Rev. Carl Schroeder and Wife Catherine. Rev. Schroeder served St. John Church 1885 – 1888.



Confirmation Class of 1934: standing from left- Waylon Gebert, Leroy Roeglin, Willie Rickrim, Rev. Kasiske, Albert Klotz Jr., Harry Lee Hamann, Roydell Rust. Sitting from left – Irene Nauert, Elvira Jaecks, Della Mae Vorwerk, Ella Richrim

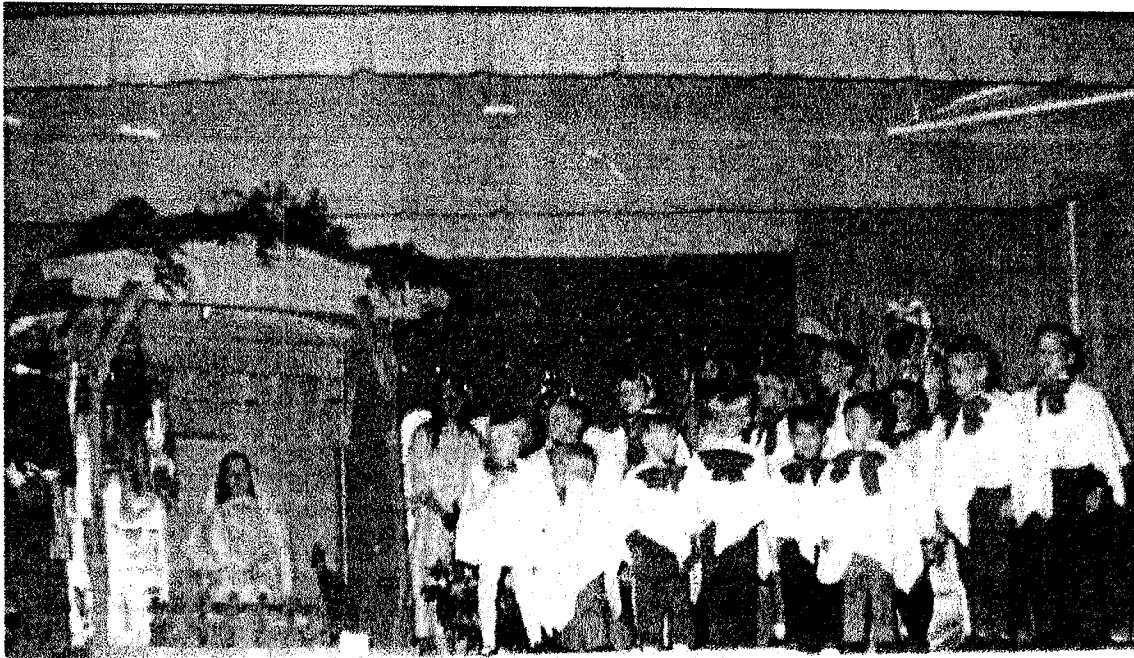


Rev. A. Petrich and family. Rev. Petrich served St. John Church 1955-1958.



CONFIRMATION CLASS OF 1970
 GLENN GONZENBACH, KATHY SCHMIDT,
 DOUG RIEDEL, CONNIE GEBERT, DENNIS
 KERLIN, REV. E. A. SCHWENDEL,
 DENNIS STEGER, LOUISE HAMANN,
 JAMES HAMANN, & MARGARET HEES

Confirmation class of 1970: Glenn Gonzenbach, Kathy Schmidt, Doug Riedel, Connie Gebert, Dennis Kerlin, Rev. Schwengel, Dennis Steger, Louise Hamann, James Hamann, and Margaret Hees



Christmas Pageant, 1972



Thekla Hamann at the Organ



Organist Sophie Koch is acknowledged in 1970 for her dedication with a plaque presented by Elmo Wittenburg



Couples celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary, 1963



Rev. Byron Wells and family. Rev. Wells served St. John Church 1978-1984.



Luther League, 1920



Front of St. John Church, 2002

St. John Church keeps a display of pictures and historical items in the Parish Hall for visitors and researchers. To view them, call the Church Office at 251-4314.