



**Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church – Toledo, OH**  
*God's Grace in the Glass City*

CH 3031 Thesis Paper  
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The history of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in Toledo, Ohio begins with the St. Petri Congregation, which still exists today only a few miles from where the present day Zion church stands. Zion's first shepherd was Pastor Ludwig Wilhelm (Louis William) Graepp (1834-1910). Pastor Graepp was born in Brandenburg of Prussia and attended college at Griefswald, near the Baltic Sea. After a stint of teaching in the Prussian school system, he migrated to Canada in 1873. He served in the Canada Synod in Ontario until 1881. Upon moving to the United States, he became a member of the Wartburg Synod, serving in Springfield, IL and Wooster, OH. In 1884, he was installed at St. Petri Lutheran in Toledo. St. Petri was non-synodical during his tenure, but sent non-voting men to the Northern District of the Joint Synod.

Trouble at St. Petri began in 1885. None of my research uncovered the exact reason for the turmoil. Some rumors say that there could have been difficulty in integrating new families with the original German Protestants who formed St. Petri. As a result, thirty families left the congregation over the next few years. The turmoil at St. Petri finally led Pastor Graepp to resign from that congregation. He was to resign on June 1, 1890, but left in haste on February 28<sup>th</sup>, of that same year. It is this setting, a setting of disunity, that led to the birth of Zion, Toledo. Truly, we will see God's amazing grace at work in these humble beginnings!

There were a total of nine men and their families who joined Pastor Graepp in his departure from St. Petri's due to this controversy. This small group, which certainly faced bitter opposition from those at St. Petri's, soon began to add more and more to their ranks. By this time Toledo was already rather large, being a port city on Lake Erie. This being the case, many different denominations had already taken a hold of many of the citizens. Dwight Moody conducted services at the First Congregational Church on St. Clair Street and many other famous

speakers were influential in the city. Billy Sunday, “brought a militant Gospel to Toledo in great Tabernacle meetings where the Safety Building now stands, quoted as saying, ‘Many folks will go to hell sure if they don’t die during Lent!’”<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, “social gospel” was also beginning to take hold. However, the Lord knows his own, and his church will not pass away.

In the early months of 1890, Pastor Graepp and those who left with him chose a name for their assembly - Zion. Soon after, the group drew up a constitution and by-laws that were accepted by the congregation. The roots were beginning to sink in. Their first meetings were held at a hall on Belmont and Division Streets. On March 2, 1890, after becoming incorporated with the state of Ohio, the first legal meeting of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church of Toledo, Ohio was held. 3 trustees and a secretary were elected, with Pastor Graepp chosen to lead the group. A church was born! On June 4, 1890 the 34<sup>th</sup> Convention of the District Synod of Ohio has this on their record among congregations received into membership, “Zions (German), of Toledo, Rev. L.W. Graepp, pastor.”

The members of Zion immediately got to work to find land for the church. Three lots on Belmont and Hawley Streets were purchased (only three blocks from where St. Petri’s stood). A parsonage for Pastor Graepp was also purchased at that time. Now it was necessary to find ways to obtain their own church building.

The Congregational Church located on Washington and Dorr Streets was moving and looking for buyers to purchase their building. Zion jumped on the opportunity and purchased the building for \$500. After dividing the church into two parts, they moved it onto the property they had purchased on Belmont and Hawley. The members of Zion were responsible for much of that work. The altar and pulpit were constructed by carpenters in the group out of white pine lumber

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<sup>1</sup> Pearson; George W 'Memories of Great Churchmen of the Past Fifty Years - A Toledo Newspaper Man's Reaction to Different Brands of Theology' Northwest Ohio Quarterly (25.2) Spring 1953 p. 79-90

and others laid the brick that lined the walls. At the end of August 1890, the church was ready for occupancy and dedication! Old church records say, "They also had a heavy debt." On June 22, 1895, Zion's first mortgage was put into writing, which totaled \$2,000. (See the appendix for a photograph of "the old church").

The congregation grew rapidly, mainly because of heavy German immigration to the area. Zion's Ladies' Aid Society was founded with seventeen members on March 16, 1890. In 1891 a Young Peoples' Society was formed. God was blessing this young congregation!

In 1891, Pastor Graepp reported 175 baptized members and 130 confirmed members. In 1895 he reports 271 baptized, 161 confirmed. Not much more is said of his time in Toledo short of his resignation due to "illness." He served Zion until the last Sunday of September, 1896. Pastor Graepp then accepted a call to Mayville, MI and became a member of the Michigan Synod. He later served in Maryland and Delaware before serving out his tenure in California. He died of a stroke in 1910.

On September 27, 1896 Zion's voters conducted a meeting to call a new pastor. Rev. William Bodamer was called and accepted. Pastor Graepp installed him in November of that same year. Pastor Bodamer had attended Michigan Lutheran Seminary in Saginaw and graduated in 1892. Pastor Bodamer had been serving St John, of Saginaw, MI and teaching at MLS. He was the sixth president of the Michigan Synod, founded by F. Schmid and following in the footsteps of St. Klingmann, C.L. Eberhardt, C.A. Lederer and C.F. Bochner. Zion continued to grow under the leadership of Pastor Bodamer. In 1899, although Zion was not yet a member of the Michigan Synod, he reported 510 souls and 295 communicants on their Parochial Report.

In that same year, Zion added a 1500-pound bell for the old church tower; in 1900 a pipe organ was completed. It was also in the early 1900's when Zion is first on record as a member of "The Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan and Other States." The little group had grown considerably in just ten years!

In 1905, Zion celebrated its fifteenth anniversary. Over \$1,000 was collected on that day by a generous group of God's people. In 1906 a motor was installed on the old pipe organ so as not to have to pump the organ by hand Sunday after Sunday. 1908 saw natural gas added to the church and parsonage for a cost of \$400. As with any church, minor improvements are necessary to keep up its comfort level and value.

The records indicate that during the first fifteen years of Zion's history, 430 children were baptized, 211 were confirmed, eighty two couples were married, 114 members passed away and 5009 people had attended the Lord's Supper. The actual membership at that time was eighty-three voting members, 245 communicants and 500 souls. What a testimony to God's grace!

August 22, 1915 brought about Zion's Silver Anniversary. Pastor George N. Luetke of Ann Arbor, Michigan, who would become Zion's next shepherd, was the preacher at the evening service (one of three held that day). The baptismal font, which still stands and is in use today was presented to the church at this service by the confirmation class of that year and the following few years (see appendix for a photograph). The confirmation classes of 1899 and 1900 presented the congregation with an altar cross and crucifix, which beautified the front of the church.

In 1915, German still was the language of choice for Zion's flock. German services were held at 10:00 a.m. with Sunday School at 9:00 a.m. English services were held the last Sunday

of the month in the evening. It was the slow but sure switch from German to English that was foreseen by all as the language of the future that eventually helped lead Pastor Bodamer to take a call out of Toledo.

In 1918, with the encouragement of Pastor Bodamer, Zion realized the need for Christian education of the youth in a day school. The members of Zion began to send their children to the school that Trinity Lutheran Church, (Missouri Synod) had already established (see appendix for a photograph). This occurred until the end of World War II, when Zion was able to begin its own institution.

In 1920, more changes took place in Zion's midst. Pastor Bodamer received a divine Call in that year to Salem Congregation of Scio Township in Michigan, just outside of Ann Arbor. Pastor Bodamer accepted that Call and was peacefully released from duty at Zion. A reason he gave for this move was, "Due to age and change in language and literature and liturgy."<sup>2</sup> Pastor Bodamer, seemingly quite the German, felt he would hinder rather than help the congregation in the direction they were going and felt a younger man would be much better for this moving congregation in Toledo. In May of 1920, Pastor Bodamer left Toledo for Scio.

Zion's next shepherd would, interestingly enough, be from the same area in which Pastor Bodamer was called. Pastor George N. Luetke, a 1910 graduate of the Wauwatosa Seminary, who learned at the feet of Dr. Hoenecke and names such as Schaller, Koehler and Pieper, was called from St. John's in Ann Arbor, MI. On May 23, 1920 he was installed as Zion's third pastor.

In mid summer of 1920, almost immediately after Pastor Luetke's arrival, the congregation saw a need for a new church building due to the inadequacy of the present building. An architect was brought in and displays were set up with the plans for the new church building.

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<sup>2</sup> Zion's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet, p. 8, 1940

The members of Zion began vigorously working to achieve this goal and money for the new church building began to roll in. In April of 1922, Zion accepted a bid from a construction agency to tear down the present structure and build a new one on the same property. On April 30, 1922 two farewell services for the 1890 church were held.

While construction took place, the members of Zion worshipped at Trinity School, where their children had been attending. Quickly throughout that summer, the hole in the ground that was Zion's place of worship for thirty-two years began to take on shape. On July 23, 1922 the members, visitors and friends of Zion gathered for a song service at the church grounds. I relate this interesting anecdote from the words of Pastor Luetke himself concerning the service that day, "The offering was lifted in wash baskets, because we had coin boxes distributed and all of them came back. They were filled and fell full and fast into the baskets and were lugged to a standing police car and hurried to the bank. We realized the neat sum of \$3,400.76. The largest offering ever lifted among us!"<sup>3</sup>

On November 6, 1922 the first service held at the new church was conducted in the church basement. Chairs and pews from the old church were used for seating. That winter, all the services were conducted in the basement. During this time many gifts were given to beautify the new church, but interestingly enough, nobody wanted their names on any of them, they were simply happy to have a church home.

On May 27, 1923 the day of dedication for the new church building finally rolled around (see appendix for pictures of the interior and exterior of the church). Again, Pastor Luetke gives a flavor of what the day was like:

Only one man was inside the building as we all stood outside waiting for the time of the service, when the key would unlock this our church for us and our children. That one man was Teacher John B. Gehm (who taught Zion's kids at Trinity from

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<sup>3</sup> *ibid.* p. 11

1918-1947) at the organ – he was seated one day at the organ never to be forgotten! As the key turned in the lock, he rolled that organ in tones that brought tears to our eyes – and we swarmed in until we stood all along the walls to the Altar and every seat was taken. Pastor George Luetke and clergy leading us and the men of the vestry carrying the sacred vessels, we slowly marched in. Among us was the Pastor William Bodamer. Then the mighty song arose, “Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty, Zion City of Our God.” This organ march then played has been repeated by our Teacher John Gehm each Anniversary Day.<sup>4</sup>

The total cost of the new church was \$75,553.16 of which \$33,000 was debt. By the time of Zion’s golden anniversary in 1940 that debt was down to \$8,000. Again and again in Zion’s early history we see proofs of God’s Spirit at work in their grace of giving to the Lord’s work!

The records indicate that in the first fifty years of Zion’s history there were 1386 baptisms, 1040 confirmations, 402 weddings, 580 funerals, 32,365 guests at the Lord’s Supper and their baptized membership at that time was 759 souls, with 226 of the children enrolled in Sunday School. The church continued to grow under God’s grace!

God continued to bless Zion under the leadership of Pastor Luetke. In 1945, he was suddenly taken to his Savior’s side eternally after suffering a heart attack. Zion was left without a shepherd, but they would not be without one for long.

After a brief vacancy in 1945, filled by Pastor Andrew Bloom, Pastor John Martin, a 1937 graduate of the Thiensville seminary, who was serving in Belleville, MI was called and accepted the Call to Zion. Not much remains on record at Zion of Pastor Martin’s service there. The most significant events that occurred during his tenure had to do with the realization that the group had grown out of the church on Belmont and Hawley and it no longer served their best interest. In 1946, a five-acre tract of land at the corner of Nebraska Ave. and Cuthbert Rd. was purchased as the first step in Zion’s expansion program. This corner of Toledo is the site where Zion’s church and school stands to this day.

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<sup>4</sup> *ibid.* p. 12



The yearbook for 1950 states that Pastor Martin served until April 9, 1950. A newspaper clipping from a Council Bluffs, IA newspaper concerning Pastor Martin indicates that it was because of heart disease that Pastor Martin accepted the call to Redeemer Lutheran in Council Bluffs, Iowa from Zion. He was peacefully released from duty and Zion was once again without a shepherd. Zion had a communicant membership of 400 and a total of 550 souls in the congregation at Pastor Martin's departure. The group was ready to begin the hard work of moving and building once again!

May 14, 1950 is on record as the day Pastor Roland W. Scheele was installed as Zion's fifth shepherd. Pastor Scheele was a 1935 graduate of the Thiensville seminary having served in Tecumseh and Manistee, MI and having also served as "missionary at large" for the Michigan District of the Ev. Luth. Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States. From what is in the records and according to this writer, it is during Pastor Scheele's tenure that the majority of "historical" events in the last fifty years of Zion's history took place. If the late Pastor looked down from heaven today on Zion, he would see things much like they were when he left.

The historical events I speak of above chiefly have to do with the building of the new church and school on the property at Nebraska and Cuthbert. The beginning of the project already occurred in 1946 with the purchase of the property, and now it was time for God's people at Zion to roll up their sleeves and begin the long building process!

Ever since Zion had began sending their kids to Trinity school in 1918, it was the prayer of the church to one day have their very own place to educate their children. I relate this quote from the dedication booklet handed out to those who attended Zion school's dedication in September 1952:

Depressions, necessary expansions in other directions, wars and other circumstances always seemed to prevent the establishment of Zion's own school.

But shortly after the end of World War II, the first concrete steps toward establishment of such a school were taken when the congregation approved a series of recommendations that land at Nebraska Ave. and Cuthbert Road be purchased as the site for a future school, parsonage and perhaps church.

The first item on the list to be built was a chapel, which later would be turned into the parsonage. March 11, 1951 was the day of dedication for this “extension chapel of Zion Lutheran Church” on 3340 Nebraska Ave. This chapel, along with the church on Belmont and Hawley would house worshipers for the next year and a half.

It soon became apparent that it was time to take the next step in the building project at the new property. From the July 9, 1951 voters’ meeting:

IT IS NECESSARY TO BUILD

1. We need **our own** Christian Day School.
2. We need adequate facilities for recreation to keep the young people with the church.
3. According to present indications our chapel building will soon be too small to accommodate all who wish to attend our Sunday School and services.
4. We need that which many other congregations of our size already have, namely, a school, an auditorium, recreation space, larger Sunday School facilities, and adequate office space.

On February 29, 1952, a contract was awarded for the construction of Zion’s new Christian day school. Nine days later, on March 9, groundbreaking ceremonies were held with a service in the chapel. The plans called for the building to be completed by August 20<sup>th</sup> of the same year, in time for the upcoming school year!

Less than a month later, on May 4<sup>th</sup> of the same year, the cornerstone of the school was laid and the rest of the construction went just as planned. Sunday, September 7, 1952 was the day of dedication for Zion’s very own Christian day school at 630 Cuthbert Road. Two services

were held that day, both in the chapel of the new school. Mr. Jerome Birkholz, a recent graduate of DMLC was the first principal of the new school teaching the upper grades and Miss Shirley Schroeder, who had taught Zion's children at Trinity was the lower grade teacher. The cost of registration and book rental for the first year was five dollars! There were a total of seventy-seven children enrolled in the first year of Zion's school. The cost of the building ended up being around \$75,000. (See appendix for photographs of the school).

Although the times must have been exciting for the members of Zion, there was still work left to be done with their building project. The facility on Belmont and Hawley was still insufficient for the churches' needs at the time. The former chapel on Nebraska Ave. was turned into the parsonage and the school's chapel was now being used along with the Belmont and Hawley church (three miles to the east) for worship services. The 9:30 Sunday service was held at the church and the 11:00 service was held at the school's chapel. It was time to come together and begin the process of building a new worship facility.

After a few years of planning and waiting for the right circumstances, Zion took the first steps toward the building of a new church facility on the Nebraska Ave. property. In 1955, the Belmont and Hawley church was sold to St. Paul's A.M.E. Zion Church for \$60,000. For sixty-five years, the Lord's saints at Zion had worshipped him on that street corner in west central Toledo. On November 20, 1955 Pastor Scheele conducted Zion's last worship service at the old stone church. I relate this quote from the bulletin that day:

We today bid official farewell to the building which for nearly 33 years served Zion congregation as a house of worship. Leaving this house of worship after so many years is saddening since it is associated with fond memories for many people and was the place for many sacred acts. Furthermore this structure has always been a beautiful building for it was excellently constructed and elaborately and beautifully adorned. However, we live in a world of changing physical circumstances which reach even into the sphere of the work of the church. Zion congregation for the past decade of more has been affected by changing

circumstances more than most churches. So much so, in fact, that the necessity of abandoning its Belmont and Hawley location had been thought of and spoken of among its members for quite a number of years. Finally a decision to sell the Belmont property was reached by a majority vote of the voting members of the church over a year ago, in October of 1954. This led to the acceptance of a purchase agreement with St. Paul's A.M.E. Zion Church in April, 1955. That agreement is being completed at the present time and hence we are gathered here on the last Sunday of the church year for the last service to be conducted here by Zion congregation.

Worship services were held at the school's chapel from the next Sunday until the new church was built. It was the prayer of the church to complete the new worship facility before the end of 1957. In order to reach that goal, it was necessary that God's grace abound among his people, especially the grace that motivates a heart to give of their income to a building project as such.

In order to encourage Zion's members in their giving, a \$150,000 bond drive was launched. The goal of this plan was to, "have a house of worship, school and parsonage on five acres of land in a growing suburban neighborhood with no debts other than obligations to bond holders."<sup>5</sup> The bonds were dated May 1, 1956 and reached maturity twelve years after that date at approximately four percent interest. At the end of the year in 1957, \$139,886.92 was received into the building treasury from the sale of these bonds! Another amazing testimony to God's grace!

Building finally got into motion in 1957. April 14<sup>th</sup> of that year was the day the Groundbreaking service was held at the property (see appendix). From the bulletin that day, "The total cost for the church will, no doubt exceed \$115,000. Of this amount about \$15,000 will have to be provided by our own free will offerings during the months of construction." May 26<sup>th</sup> was the day the cornerstone of the new church was laid. In the bulletin that day a list of what was placed in the cornerstone was included. Some items taken out of the old cornerstone

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<sup>5</sup> From "An Investment in the Lord's Kingdom: Facts and Information about the \$150,000 bond issue"

(picture in appendix) from the Belmont and Hawley church now included in the new church were a Wisconsin Synod and Missouri Synod German and Wisconsin English Hymnal, a Wisconsin Synod Synodical Report from 1921, a 1909 German-English Schwan Catechism, a Gousewitz Catechism from 1922 and a calling card autographed by Pastor George Luetke. This cornerstone is pictured at the end of this paper and still contains these items. The new 1957 cornerstone contains similar items from the 50's era at Zion.

December 15, 1957 was the day God's people at Zion, Toledo had been waiting for. At 10:00 a.m. the order of dedication service was held, beginning at the school and proceeding to the new church. Former Zion Pastor John Martin was the preacher for the morning service that day. At 4:00 p.m. a service focusing on Christian Education was held at the new church and at 7:30 p.m. that evening, a service of Consecration was held. On Tuesday evening, December 17<sup>th</sup>, a Children's Dedication Service occurred with the Day School and Sunday School kids singing. On Thursday of that week, a Dedication Song Service occurred. The church building that the members of Zion sit in and worship to this very day was dedicated to the Lord's work!

As the congregation in Toledo moved ahead, so also did Pastor Scheele. In 1960, Pastor Scheele accepted a call to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Flint, MI. He certainly was sorely missed by the congregation and to this day is talked about with smiles as members remember the time spent with him. At the time of Pastor Scheele's departure, the numbers in the yearbook were as follows: 535 souls and 333 communicant members with 108 children enrolled in the school.

On July 24, 1960, Rev. Herbert G. Walther was installed as Zion's sixth shepherd. Pastor Walther was a 1947 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and had previously served churches in Manistique, MI, Lena/Oconto Falls, WI and Sturgis, MI. Not much is found on the

records concerning his time spent at Zion. It seems as if things remained quite the status quo. If anything membership began to drop slightly. The following quote is from Pastor Walther's report in the 1963 yearbook, "The year 1963 was an eventful one in the annuals of Zion church. We had the normal trials and tribulations associated with any church in a metropolitan zone. Several families moved out of the area or terminated their membership, but these were replaced with other fine families who chose to make Zion their church home." At the end of 1963, Zion's membership had dropped to 485 souls with 382 communicants, although the grade school had its highest enrollment in its eleven-year history with 114 students!

At the end of 1963, Pastor Walther accepted a Call to Immanuel Lutheran Church in Van Wert, Ohio, closing out his three-year tenure at Zion. A Call for a replacement soon followed and Zion awaited who their next shepherd would be. Pastor Rolfe Westendorf served Zion faithfully as her vacancy pastor.

On April 12, 1964, Pastor Daniel E. Habeck was installed as the seventh pastor in Zion's history. Pastor Habeck was a 1957 graduate of the Seminary and had been serving Grace Lutheran Church in Muskegon Heights, MI. Another chapter in Zion's history was to begin.

From a history perspective, not many monumental things happened during the tenure of Pastor Habeck. 1965 brought about the diamond anniversary of the church. Special services were held throughout September and October with three Anniversary services on November 7 of that year. Certainly it was extra special for those at Zion that Pastor Martin again returned to conduct the morning service, Pastor Bloom, the vacancy pastor before Pastor Martin, conducted that afternoon service and Pastor Scheele returned to lead evening worship.

The records hold that as of the first seventy-five years of Zion's history were 1,860 baptisms, 1,483 confirmed, 700 weddings and 69,784 guests at the Lord's Supper. The membership at that time was 565 baptized and 401 communicants.

The 1966-1967 school year goes down to this day as the highest year of enrollment in Zion's history. 167 students attended school that year! Looking back today, it is quite sad to see how far the enrollment has fallen in just the past thirty years. Pastor Habeck definitely served Zion at its highest point of membership, although the Lord still is blessing the group to this day.

Not much more can be said of events at Zion during Pastor Habeck's time there. On August 22, 1971 he preached his farewell sermon after being led by the Holy Spirit to accept a Call to Grace Lutheran in Oshkosh, WI. Pastor Habeck is remembered to this day with nothing but the fondest of memories by the remaining members of Zion, Toledo.

Pastor Gerald Schroer was Zion's vacancy Pastor when on December 5, 1971, Pastor Norman Maas accepted the Call to serve Zion. Pastor Maas was a 1945 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and had been serving congregations in Alma, Michigan and St. Louis, Michigan.

Again, not much historically can be said concerning the time Pastor Maas spent at Zion other than minor improvements and refurbishments here and there of the church and school. Interestingly enough, for Zion's 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary service, Pastor Martin, who now was serving St. Andrew's in Milwaukee, WI, again returned to preach for Zion's anniversary.

Due much to the fact that the neighborhood in which Zion is located began to decline due to crime, etc., membership at Zion church and school also began to decline during Pastor Maas' years. To this day, Zion feels the effects of the neighborhood she is located in.

In 1986, Pastor Maas decided it was time to retire from full time service in the Lord's church. Thankfully, he was willing to continue serving the saints at Zion until his replacement was found. Later that year, Pastor Maas was succeeded by Pastor David Rosenau as the ninth shepherd in Zion's history. Pastor Maas remained a member of Zion until he was called to his Lord's side. "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

Pastor Rosenau is a 1983 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and had previously served Grace Lutheran Church in St. Joseph, Michigan. After correspondence with Pastor Rosenau via e-mail, he notes two items that stood out in his mind during his time at Zion:

One highlight of the privilege of serving Zion was to establish WELS - OWLS group number 36. I had the privilege of starting chapter 12 in St. Joseph. Moving to Toledo in 1987, it was time almost from day one to begin work on Zion's centennial in 1990. You should have access to the calendar that gave different emphasis on a monthly basis. Marcia Gentry won the contest to name the Centennial Celebration, quoting the final line of the book of Joel, "The LORD dwells in Zion!" President Mishke and his wife joined us all for a weekend of special worship and praise.

Unfortunately, during Pastor Rosenau's time at Zion, another historically significant happening at Zion was the continuation of the trend of declining membership. Many people have many different ideas as to why this occurred. Some I've taken note of are: location, lack of a gymnasium at the school and unfortunately, as is sometimes the case, disagreements between pastor and members over certain aspects of a congregation's life.

Be that as it may, Zion and Pastor Rosenau were still blessed during their union as the Gospel was preached in all its truth and purity. In 1998, Pastor Rosenau accepted a Call to serve in Arizona as an Apache missionary. The pastor's office was again empty as Zion anticipated their next leader.

During the vacancy, Pastors Mosher, Engdahl and Mittelstadt, all pastors in Toledo area churches served the Lord and God's people at Zion by carrying out different areas of ministry



there. In 1999, the prayers of God's people were answered as Pastor Patrick Bell accepted a Call to serve in Toledo.

Pastor Bell is a 1974 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and had previously served churches in Eau Claire, MI and Allegan, MI. He was welcomed with open arms as Zion's tenth shepherd. His experience and charisma brings to a struggling church a positive environment.

As far as where the church stands today, Pastor Bell had this to say in an e-mail correspondence, "Historically Zion remains steady and has become an inner city type of church. The school has thirty students and is experiencing a low student number. But we are diligently working at promoting the school and hopefully, with the help of God, increasing in size. At present Zion has 188 communicants and about 228 souls."

As for where Zion is headed in the future, only the Lord knows. If it pleases our God, the church and school will grow and succeed under his grace as it has for the past 114 years. However, no matter what happens with regards to numbers, membership, etc. it is certain that as long as the Gospel is preached the work of God will be done among the saints in Toledo.

Special thanks in writing this paper are due to Ray Heberling, a pillar of the congregation in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. whose plethora of primary sources were essential to its completion. Also to Carole Young, Ray's daughter, for keeping the old container full of these sources around to one day use. Pastor Bell and his wife Jan were also enormous helps with the information they were able to glean. Special thanks to Philip Luetke, son of Pastor George Luetke, whose books on the "Lenk's Hill" neighborhood of Toledo (Belmont and Hawley area) gave opportunity for some of the old pictures in the appendix. Also, thanks to Roland Schuster, a long time member of Zion for his stories and first hand information in our conversations.



Rev. Louis Graepp  
1890-1896

Rev. William Bodamer  
1896-1920

Rev. George Luetke  
1920-1945

Rev. John Martin  
1945-1950

Rev. Roland Scheele  
1950-1960



Rev. Herbert Walther  
1960-1963

Rev. Daniel Habeck  
1963-1972

Rev. Norman Maas  
1972-1986

Rev. David Rosenau  
1987-1998

Rev. Patrick Bell  
1999-

ZION  
EVANG LUTH CHURCH

JESUS CHRIST  
THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE  
EPHES 2.20

1890-1922

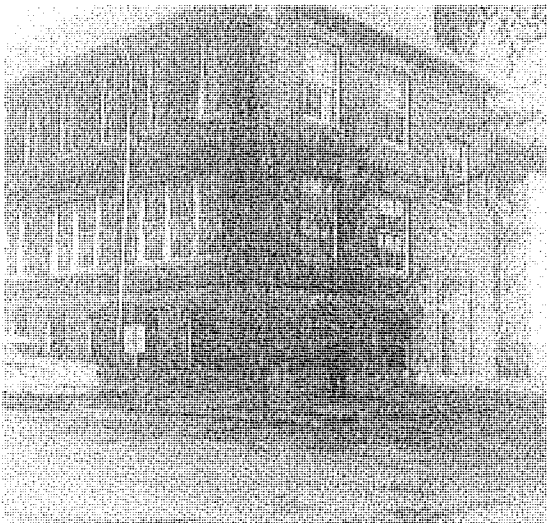
GEON. LUETKE PASTOR



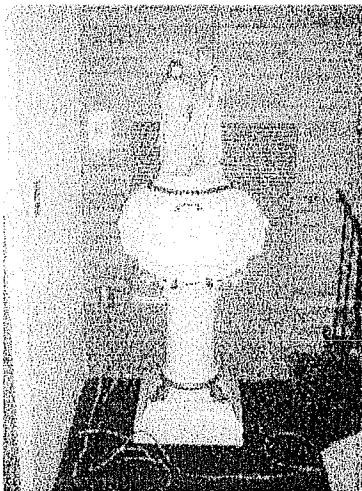
ZION'S SHEPHERDS AND HER ORIGINAL CORNERSTONE



Zion's first house of worship on Belmont and Hawley – 1890-1922



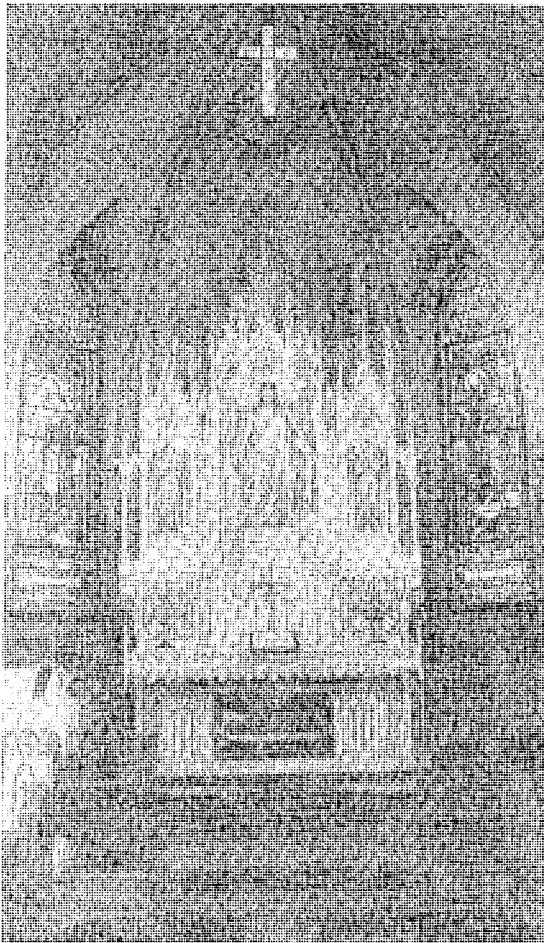
Old Trinity school, where Zion's kids could be found until 1952



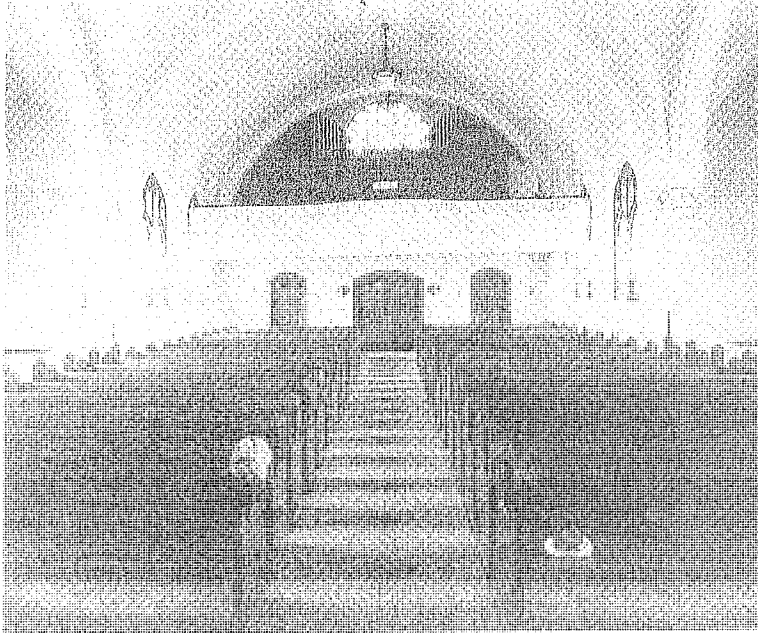
The baptismal font from the class of 1910 – still in use today!



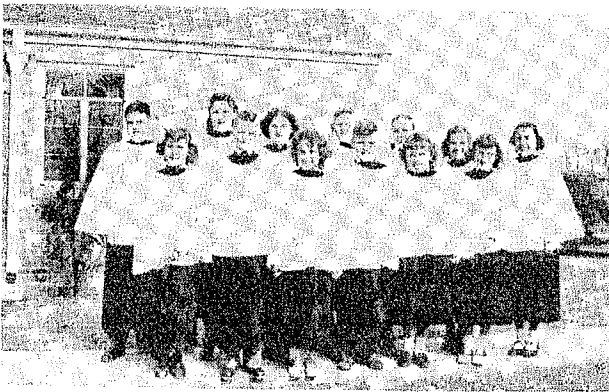
The church on Belmont and Hawley.  
Zion worshipped here from 1922 until  
1955.



Here's the interior of the church on  
Belmont and Hawley. Most of the items  
contained therein (altar, pulpit, lectern,  
etc.) were brought over to Nebraska and  
Cuthbert.

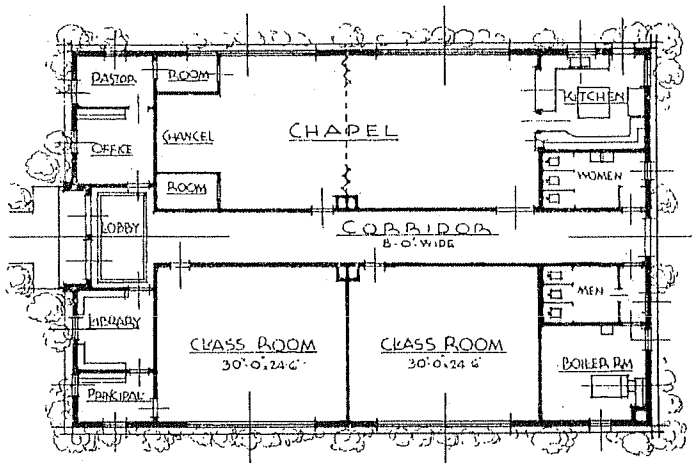


Here's what Pastors Luetke, Martin and Scheele would've seen while looking out from the altar at the people of Zion.



Zion's junior choir in 1952. The building they're standing in front of is the parsonage/chapel on Nebraska Ave.

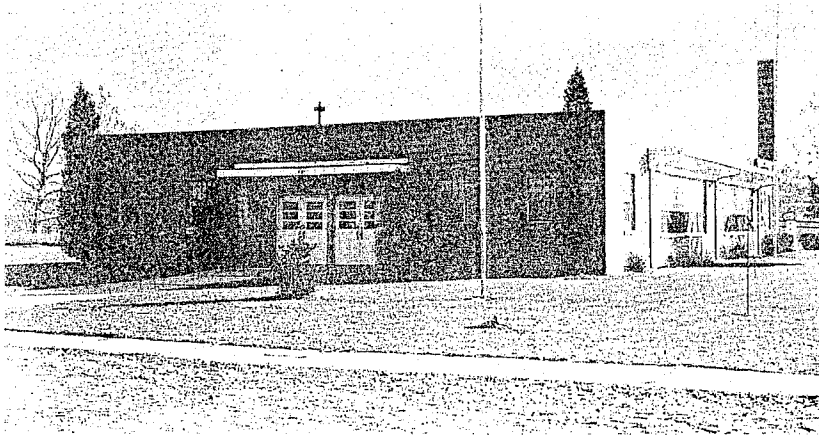
### Floor Plan of New School



This is the floor plan of the interior of the new school in 1952. Today, the chapel has been converted into two classrooms and the library is located where you see "office" and "pastor."



This is taken at the groundbreaking for the school in 1952. Pastor Scheele is the second man on the right. Ray Heberling is on the far right.

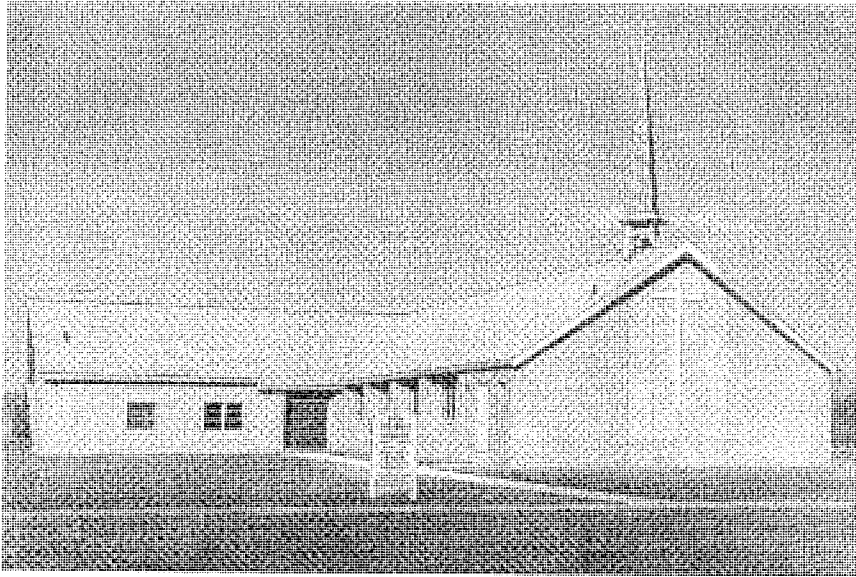


Zion Lutheran School as seen in 1952 and today.

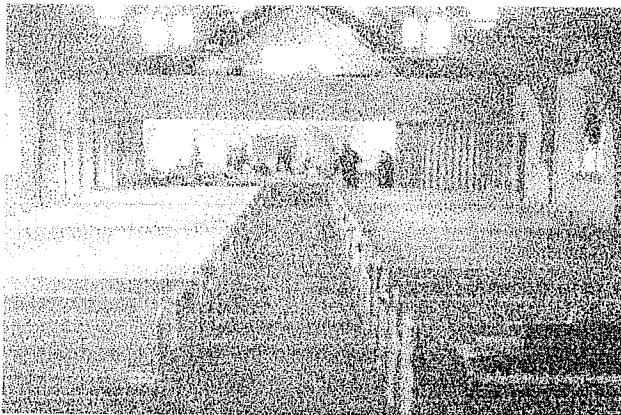


This is from April, 1957 – the groundbreaking for the church. Pastor Scheele is on the far left. Notice the school in the background.

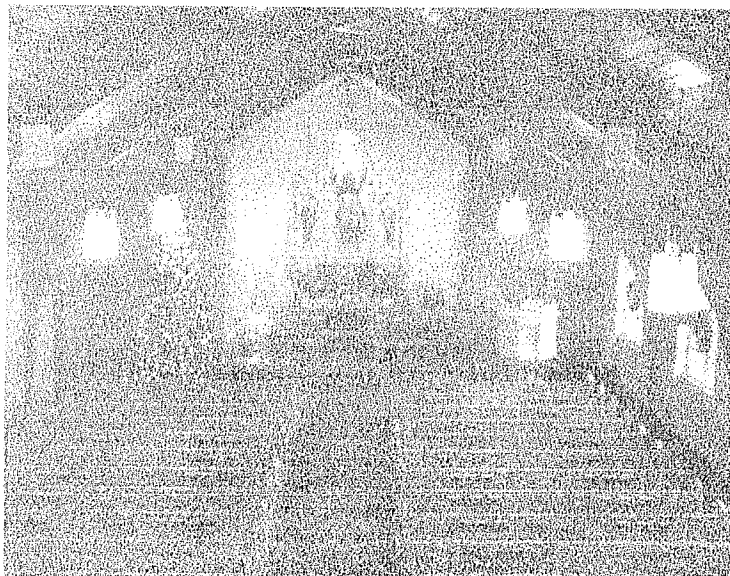




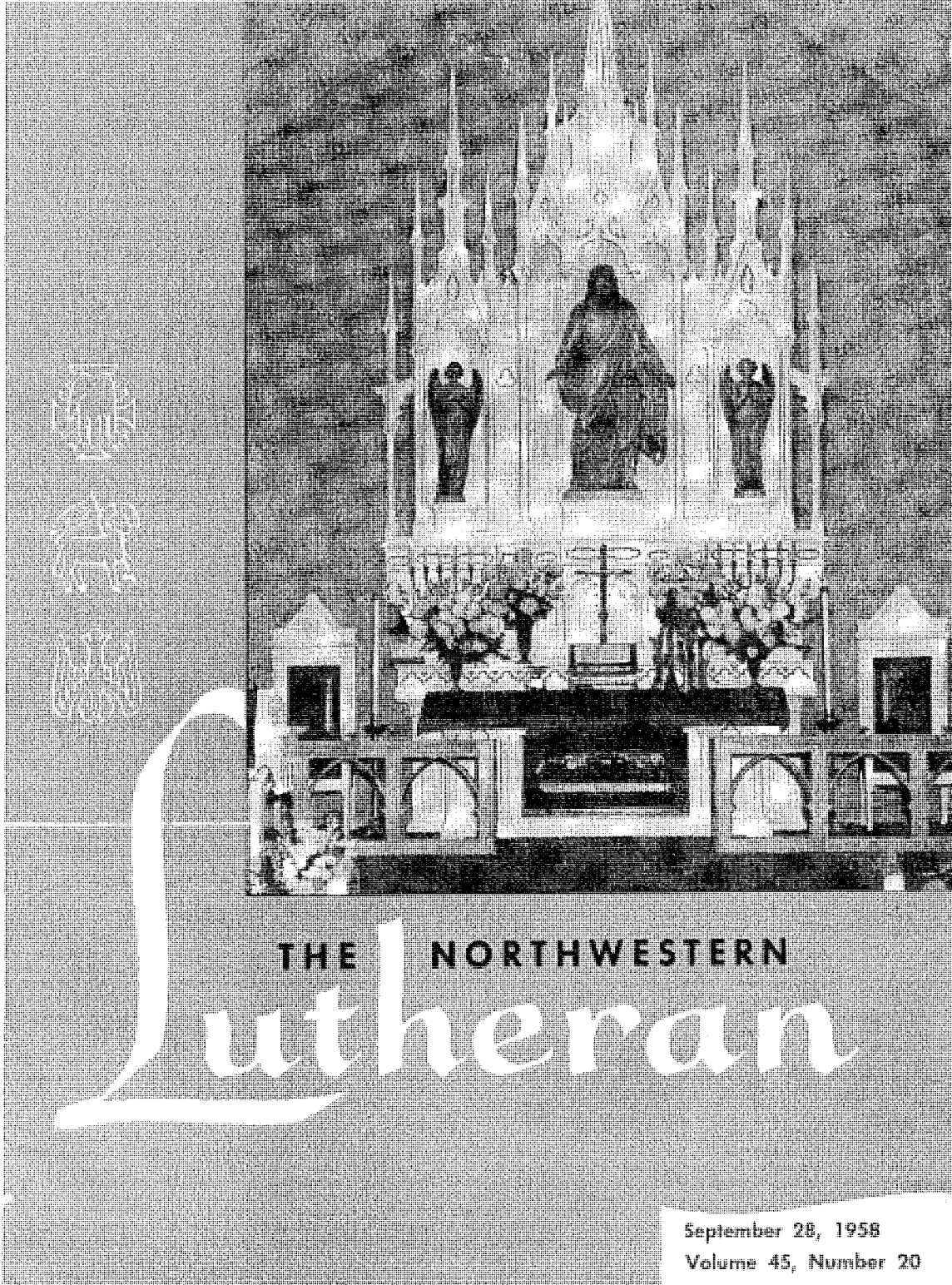
Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church at its dedication on December 15, 1957. This is taken from across the street on Nebraska Ave.



A look from the altar of the Nebraska and Cuthbert church. That's the fellowship hall in the back.



A view from the balcony of Zion. What a beautiful sight during Christmas 2003!



Zion's own piece of Synod history. The new church made headlines!