

*St. John's
United Church of Christ*



*95th Anniversary
Memory Book*



This booklet has been created from the memories of the members of St. John's United Church of Christ. Most of the people who submitted stories have been members of the church for over 50 years. The memory stories cover various activities in the church; in both the old and the new church buildings.

We hope you like the stories! Maybe they will bring back a memory or two that you may have forgotten.

Enjoy!!



Leona Geisick writes:

St. John's is like a big family and is always there when a prayer or comforting is needed. I will be forever grateful for all the friendships and fellowship that I have received from this church.

It seems many members would agree with what Leona writes. We are all one big church family!



A Dream, A Reality

On a typically cold blustery March Sunday in 1969, 100 or more people gathered on a lonely hill with a single cottonwood tree, to break ground for the new St. John's building. The ten acre plot of ground for the new St. John's building was purchased from Harvey Mathias for \$25,000. Our building chairmen, Charles Adkisson, Paul Brethauer and Henry Stencel, guided the walking plow while the congregation with Rev. Foos pulled the rope. There was a brief ground breaking ceremony while everyone shivered in the wind.



The dream of a new building began in 1964 when Rev. Schoenhaar retired and the new pastor, Samuel Foos, brought young enthusiasm to the church which resulted in increased church attendance and a large Sunday school. The congregation voted to build in 1968.

Now the Church Board had work to do. They chose a general contractor named Livingston and an architect, Schmedeke, who designed the building. Several committees were formed such as the music, worship, and furnishings. The building committee had been meeting for two years to give the architect an idea of what our needs were so he could design the type of building best suited for us. Also some members toured several churches in the area to get ideas for a new building that would serve our needs.

Now we needed a way to pay for this building. Heretofore, we had paid yearly dues—now we began pledging. There was a fund drive by a man from the Board of Homeland Ministries, Harris Heverly, to obtain pledges over a three-year period. Our members came through and surprised us by meeting our goal. So at a meeting in 1968, the congregation voted to build. To help with the large cost, we had to borrow \$100,000.00 from the Board of Homeland Ministries. In a brief service in 1984 that mortgage was burned.



In early spring of 1969, things really began to happen. First came the excavation for the foundation. My, that was a big hole. Next, the cement was poured and the uprights set. We'd never seen such big rough timbers. Now we were beginning to get excited because we'd been having services at West High School all summer and conditions were far from ideal, including inconvenient parking. But, we could look across the field and see our building take shape and we felt reassured. We had our services at the school in the auditorium with Rev. Foos preaching from the stage and Mrs. Foos playing the grand piano. The ushers had to collect the hymnals and store them in a box until the following Sunday and the Sunday school teachers had to pack their materials with them from week to week.

The First Congregational Church offered the use of their sanctuary to us for weddings and funerals and we were grateful to them as we did need it.

Our old church building held many memories for us especially our traditional Christmas Eve celebration with the children. The sanctuary was filled to capacity with chairs in the aisles and the little ones in reserved seats at the front, and the tall lighted tree reaching to the ceiling. After the program of poems and Christmas carols, the children received a bag of candy and then home to see if Santa had paid them a visit.

The crowded conditions of our Sunday school were one of the reasons we decided to build. The nursery class of nineteen 2½ and 3 years olds met in a crowded space of about 15' X 20' which was a fire hazard. The church basement which served as a large room to host wedding receptions and large dinners was bedlam. The crowded kitchen was very unhandy for the ladies doing the cooking and they were anxious to have a better place to do their work. We sold our little white church with the tall steeple at 11th St. and 4th Ave. to the Mennonite Congregation.

During the construction, members made frequent trips to check progress. Every Tuesday morning, the building chairman drove to Greeley to meet with the architect and contractor. Saturday evenings after the workmen went home, some of us with our families were the clean-up crew. We picked up cardboard, lumber and all kinds of trash. We walked gingerly for fear we might step on some little mice and hauled the trash away in our pickups.

By fall, we were ready to start painting. Members decided to do most of this work to save money. The ceiling panels in the sanctuary were stained before they were installed. We had several wonderful members who did much of the painting. Staining those rough timbers black was quite an art—that runny black stuff stained hands, clothes and anything it touched. We also had some talented people who installed tile and carpeting.

During the building program we were given the opportunity to make donations for church furnishings as well as drinking

fountains, floor tile, and paint. Friends who were not members also donated some of the furnishings.

Meanwhile, the Sunday school children were contributing their dimes towards bricks. They enjoyed seeing the walls go higher from week to week by watching the chart. Some actually felt their dimes were building the church. They too were excited about new Sunday school rooms with more space.

The women's fellowship was busy with food sales and bazaars raising money to furnish their new kitchen. They, too, were looking forward to better facilities with lots of space to do their work.

We had many farmers in our membership and the fall of 1969 was one they would like to forget. They just began harvesting beets when it snowed and it snowed more and more and got colder and colder until the beets froze in the ground. It took two tractors to pull the harvester and one to pull the trucks out of the snow and mud. And then Great Western Sugar gave farmers the short end on payments. This lower income affected some of the pledges.

The cornerstone laying ceremony was held outdoors on a very warm September afternoon. To accordion accompaniment, we sang the hymn, *We Would Be Building*, and a minister from Windsor spoke briefly.



It hardly seemed possible, but our long-awaited dream became a reality and in December, we moved into our beautiful new building. We had to use the overflow to accommodate all our guests, including Mayor Perchlik as well as Mr. & Mrs. Schmeideke, Mr. Livingston, and several ministers from the area. We received booklets describing symbols used in the church and the significance of various features of the building. During the building, we adopted the theme song, *Our Best*, and sang it frequently. Another favorite hymn, *I Will Sing of the Mercies of the Lord Forever*, was sung at the dedication. Following the service of dedication, we enjoyed refreshments and gave all who wanted a guided tour of the new facilities. We had many compliments and we felt very proud and thankful.

Some who started with us in the building program chose to leave us and some were called from this life before they could enjoy the building with us. The project brought the rest of us closer together in our common interest and now as we look back we are glad we didn't give up. The pastor, too, had times of doubting, but here we are—still working and enjoying our labors.

*“A Church is not measured in greatness
By the beauty of its architecture,
Or its ability of its ministry;
But by the people who live truly,
And serve faithfully
The cause for which it stands.”*



—Submitted by Germaine Adkisson

Celebrating 80 Years Women's Fellowship History

The Women's Fellowship will be observing 80 years as an organization in 2011. The group was formed in 1931. They were called the Ladies Aid. The meetings were conducted in German and Rev. Schoenhaar presided and led the devotions. A new group combined and they were named the Women's Guild. The name changed to Women's Fellowship September, 1962.

Through the years many fund raising events have been held. These have included lunches at farm sales, noodles, cake, and bazaar sales. There have been project sales such as keepsake plates (with a picture of the 4th Ave. church on them), cookbooks, napkins and greeting cards. One thing these have had in common is the money is always used for church improvements and missions. The bazaar proceeds were always shared with the church treasury. Every year \$1,000.00 was given and many years the amount was \$2,000.00. Some of the missions that were supported are local like, A Woman's Place, Catholic Charities, Transitional House, Campus Ministries etc. Money was also sent to UCC missions.

The monthly meetings have always had a devotion time, business meeting, an interesting program, and very good refreshments. There has always been fellowship and visiting.

There have been four different cookbooks published using the delicious recipes from the excellent cooks at St. John's. The first was published in 1962, the second 1971, the third 1986 and the last one 2000.

The group started having a Mother-Daughter banquet every May, starting 1955. The women cooked the meal themselves and then the meal was catered for many years. The men of the church made the meal for many years. There was

a Mother-Daughter Tea on Sunday afternoon for some time.

Starting 1973 the ladies started hosting a Father-Son banquet. This continued until 1999. The men really enjoyed the good meals and programs that were provided. They also liked the fellowship and getting together with the guys.

The fellowship belonged to "Church Women United" for many years. This was a group that included several ladies groups from different churches in Greeley. There was a monthly meeting for the representatives to go to and several dates through the year where everyone was invited. Many of these included a lunch and St. Johns cooked many of them. Also through this organization the ladies were involved with the clothing bank. The group was assigned one month to run the clothing bank. This was done until GIA took over the clothing bank.

Starting in 1974 the fellowship sponsored a bus trip to places in Colorado you could see in a day. These were enjoyed by all who went. After going to all places close to Greeley and when everything was so expensive this was stopped.

The Fellowship hosted many lunches. Ladies groups from other churches were invited. There was always a delicious lunch, good program and lots of fellowship. The ladies were also invited to other churches for a good lunch, etc.

After moving to the new church in 1969, funds were tight. The fellowship hosted a smorgasbord for 5 years to raise money. The first 2 were at the church but more room was needed for all the people so they were moved to Greeley Central high school cafeteria. All members of the church helped with the food for this event. There wasn't much expense because all donated their contribution. Then there were the krautburger sales. Orders were taken and then people picked them up at the church.

St. John's was known as the church built with noodles. That is because the noodle sales were so big and so many noodles were made. It would be interesting to know how many pounds of noodles were sold at the sales.

It was decided to have craft tables at the bazaars so that meant we had to have lunch also. The noodle soup-sandwich lunch was started. The fellowship did this for several years, then asked the Sunday School dept. if they wanted to host the lunch. They did and helped their treasury. A raffle was also held with the big item being a quilt the fellowship members made and hand quilted. A group of 8 to 10 women met once a week for 6-8 weeks to do the quilting. All items for the raffle were donated with most of them being handmade. Many beautiful afghans, pillows, jewelry, wood items etc.

Several ladies decided to do more for the community so they started a sewing group in 1989. Many quilts, lap quilts and baby quilts have been made by the St J's Quilters. The number would be in the hundreds.

For many years, starting in the 70's, the fellowship delivered fruit baskets to the elderly and shut-in members of the church. The fellowship started giving a rose to all who were baptized starting in the 1940's. Now a wooden cradle cross is given by the group. Other things the fellowship had done are sending children to church camp, providing the "Upper Room" for all who want one, started the nursery care during worship and funded it for many years, purchased all appliances, dishes, glassware, silverware and pots and pans. The silverware was bought with everyone saving and donating Betty Crocker coupons for this project.





Wherever there was a need the Women's Fellowship was always there to help financially or otherwise to make the church a great place.

There are probably many more things the fellowship has done through the years. The most important thing has been the friendship and love that have been shared in Christ's love. The fellowship continues to be a vital part of the St. John's family. They are always willing to help with what has to be done including serving families after a funeral or serving a happy occasion reception.

All women of the church are invited to be a member of St. John's Women's Fellowship. With God's blessing, there will be a Women's Fellowship for another 80 years.



I Like Kids!

After my husband and I had our little family on its way I began teaching Sunday School at my home church. I did this for several years until I was told that I should be attending my husband's church, which was St. John's. This was a custom in those days. So our three sons started Sunday School at St. John's Church located on the east side of Greeley. It was a hard move for the boys to leave their friends at their church home and start at a new church where they knew no one. It was also a hard move for me. It wasn't long before we had new and wonderful friends at St. John's and I could call it "My Church".

One Sunday I accompanied our youngest son to his class because he was a little apprehensive about going by himself. I am not sure exactly how things took place, perhaps I introduced some new songs, but after class Mary Ann Weber said to me "That's your job." This is how my job as a Sunday School teacher and song leader began.

Later I was joined by Shari Wiedeman and we started a childrens choir and at times had 12-15 children singing. With the help of Ruth Firestien at the piano we sang during Sunday Worship several times. Our songs were simple but meaningful.

When the church moved to our present location I was joined in teaching by Mae Knaub. At one time Richard Thill helped with our class. The children came to their class rooms and we started the hour by singing. Mae and I purchased our own little keyboard. With the help of Ruth Firestien we had music with our singing. We sang a lot of action songs like "Fishers of Men", "Deep and Wide", "I'm in the Lord's Army" and "Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes". This seemed to help the children get rid of their wiggles so they were ready to settle down for the Bible stories. The stories also had a picture about the lesson for the children to color and take

Before class was over we had a quiet time and a prayer asking God to bless each one, their families and to keep them safe.

These children are now grown and have families of their own, but when I see them around town or at church they have a smile to greet me and say, "I remember you, you were my Sunday School teacher". That is really a good feeling!

I hope in some way I have made a difference in their lives!

—That teacher was Roline Foos!



A note of congratulations on the 95th Anniversary of serving the Lord and his people was received from Freida Hergert Deines who lives in Kennewick, Washington. The family prays for God's peace, blessings and continued success for all at St. John's.

Sunday School at St. John's

Sunday school has always been an important part in the life of St. John's church. I started helping in Sunday School when my youngest started nursery class. Through the years I have been a helper, a teacher, and director of the school. All were very rewarding experiences.

My first job was a helper in the kindergarten class. This was in the basement of the white church on 4th Avenue. The nursery class was in the back where a curtain was drawn and made a room for the class. Another curtain made a room for the 1st and 2nd grade class. The basement was full. The 3rd and 4th grade was in the room behind the chancel area in the sanctuary. The other grades had spaces designated in the sanctuary and the balcony.

The morning started with everyone getting together in the sanctuary. There was singing, a bible story and offering was collected. Then the students went to their class.

There were classes year round. Attendance was taken and perfect attendance pins were awarded to many students. Two Sunday vacation days were given to each student. The attendance pins were given for the first year and bars that attached were given for years after. Many young people had up to eight bars.

The highlight of the year was the Christmas Eve program. Everyone in Sunday school participated on the big night. There was singing and recitation. Sometimes a skit was performed. The church was always full with family and friends attending to watch the children. After the program all young people received a sack of candy that included an orange.

A junior choir was an active part of the Sunday school. They wore white robes that their mothers made. They sang during church service often.

The first full week of June was always vacation bible school (VBS) week. The church was bursting at the seams with all the children that attended. Some years a tent was used in order to have room for everyone.

V.B.S. started with everyone getting together to learn new songs. Then it was class time, play time and refreshments and crafts. Everyone brought a dozen cookies on the first day and each class had their cookie and kool-aid time. The week went by very fast. Friday night was program night. The parents came and were entertained with the new songs that were learned. All the crafts that were made were on display for all to see. It was always a good week!

While the new church was being built, classes were held at Greeley West High School before church service. The teachers had to take all their teaching supplies home and bring them back the next Sunday. Attendance was very good.

Sunday school continued in the new building. Everyone met in the sanctuary for an opening and then went to class. VBS was held every summer. The Christmas program was changed to the Sunday before Christmas. This was done because a Christmas Eve candle light service was established. The tradition of candy and orange sacks continued.

Everyone has special memories of their time spent in Sunday School, whether old or young. All teachers, helpers and superintendents need to be thanked for all their dedication to the Sunday school program.



— Submitted by Mary Ann Weber

St. John's Youth Group

During the time that Sam Foos was pastor of St. John's there was a very active youth group. What I remember the most was the parties they had, because Chuck and I were involved in several of them at our farm.

We had an ice skating pond on our property near the river and it was a great place for a party and a bonfire. I will never forget one skating party we had when three people skated onto some thin ice, broke through and fell in.

I had gone home to get hot chocolate, but before I could get back to the party, Chuck came driving with three people sitting on the end gate of the Ford Falcon. They were Karen Betz (Berry), Roland Grieb, and Roger Firestien. They were wet and very muddy. The mud from the pond was especially stinky! They hosed themselves off outside and then came in and put their wet clothes in the washer. We found dry clothes for them to wear until their clothes were dry. When the rest of the skaters were cold they all came to the house to warm up. This has been a story that has been told many times of the night Karen, Roland and Roger fell in!

There were also Halloween parties and bike rides and hay rides that were loads of fun for the kids. I also remember retreats that we had in the mountains with Rev. and Mrs. Foos playing their guitar and accordion while we sang.

—Submitted by Ruth Firestien



“Remembering St. John’s”

I was baptized on October 30, 1921 at St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church by Rev. Christian Buckisch.

I remember going to Sunday school with my two sisters and a brother (1927-1935). It was all spoken in German. Each Sunday we each received a card, with a picture, and a bible verse on it to learn for the next Sunday. If we memorized it, we got to keep it, and get a new one for the next week. I have many. Our pastor at that time was Adam Woth (1922-1931).

Also in Sunday school when one had a birthday, we brought an extra penny for each year of your age. If your age was 10, it would be 10 cents.

I also remember my “Konfirmation” on March 21, 1937 at age 15 1/2. It was all in German and I had my first Sacrament of Holy Communion.

I remember all the anniversaries celebrated at the church—the 25th, the 50th, the 75th and the 90th anniversary. In 1951 we celebrated the 20th anniversary of our pastor, Rev. Max Schoenhaar.



—Submitted by Alma Banghart

The Danish Gang

Yes, we have a gang in our church! During the time that Bill Royster was our pastor the Danish Gang was formed. This was a group of retired men of many walks of life—farmers, fireman, truck drivers, custodians, carpenters, meat cutter, etc. These men met one day a week to mow the lawn, change light bulbs, repair things, and do whatever needed to be done with regard to maintenance around the church. One summer they built a shed to house the mower and other tools that they needed to take care of things.

They would work a while and then take a break and have coffee and rolls. The BEST part of the break time was the fellowship that developed between them. Most of them had been in the United States military, Army, Navy, etc. and they all had a story to tell. The jokes they told were also a part of this break time. If you ever came to the church when they were having their break they would invite you to join them for a Danish and coffee.

The picture below is the original gang in 2000. They are Al Uhrig, Mannie Betz, Everett Foos, Chuck Firestien, Ben Moore, Al Schott, and Ray Drewer. Others joined them later, Bob Krause, Chuck Schneider, and Ron Felte.

The work these men have done and still do has saved the church many, many dollars.

Thanks, Guys!!!!



Women's Fellowship Bus Trips

The Women's Fellowship has always been an important part of our church family and they have worked hard to help our church---but they also did some fun things.

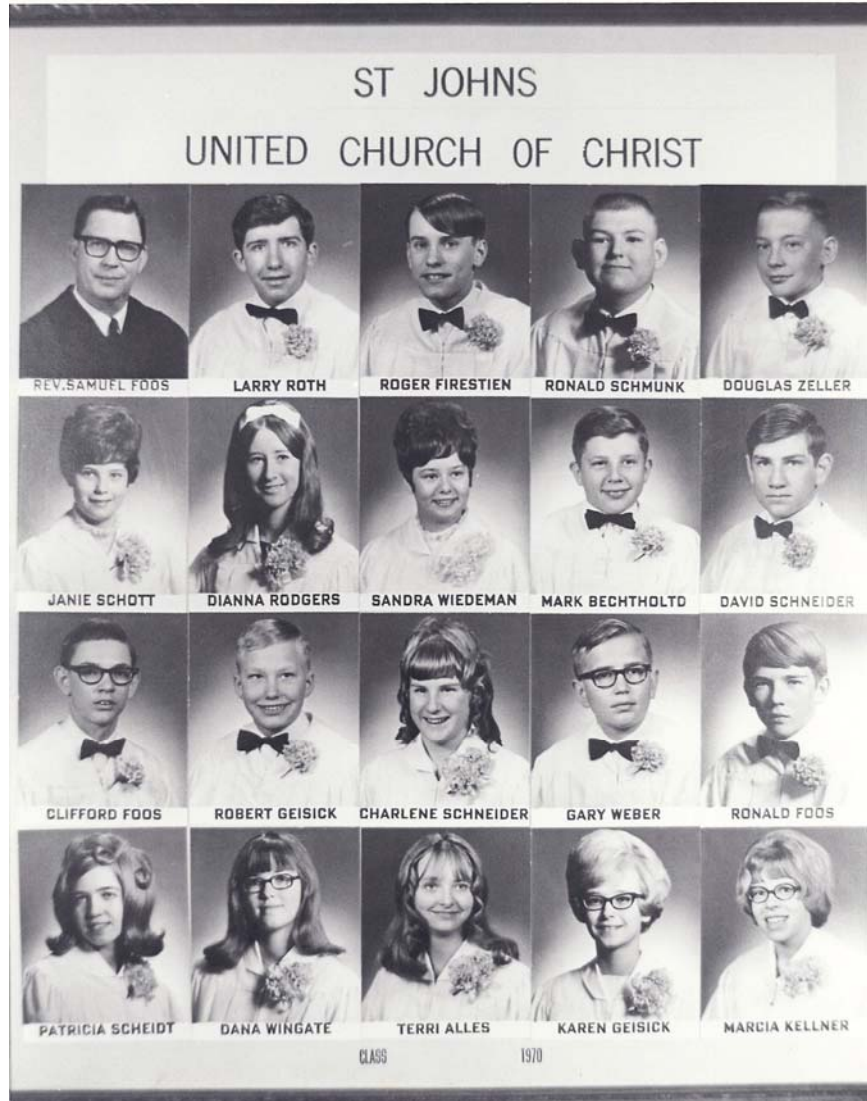
The bus trips that the Women's Fellowship took were something we all looked forward to every summer. Nancy Wiedeman was our "tour guide". She made all the arrangements: securing the bus, finding a good place to eat for our noon lunch, and best of all we had treats prepared by Nancy shortly after we got on the bus in the morning and again later on our way home.



All the places we visited would be too many to list, but a few were—Air Force Academy, a wood carver in Sterling, Georgetown Loop Railroad, Butterfly Pavilion, Coors Brewery, Air Force base in Cheyene, Quilt show at the State Capital, Mile High Frozen Food, (where we each got some hamburger buns to take home) to name a few.

A great time was had by all!!

First Confirmation Class in the New Church
1970



**OUR FAITHFUL PIONEERS OF THE PAST WHO
ORGANIZED AND BUILT ST. JOHNS CHURCH**

Acts 4:32a "Now the company of those who believed were of one heart
and soul".

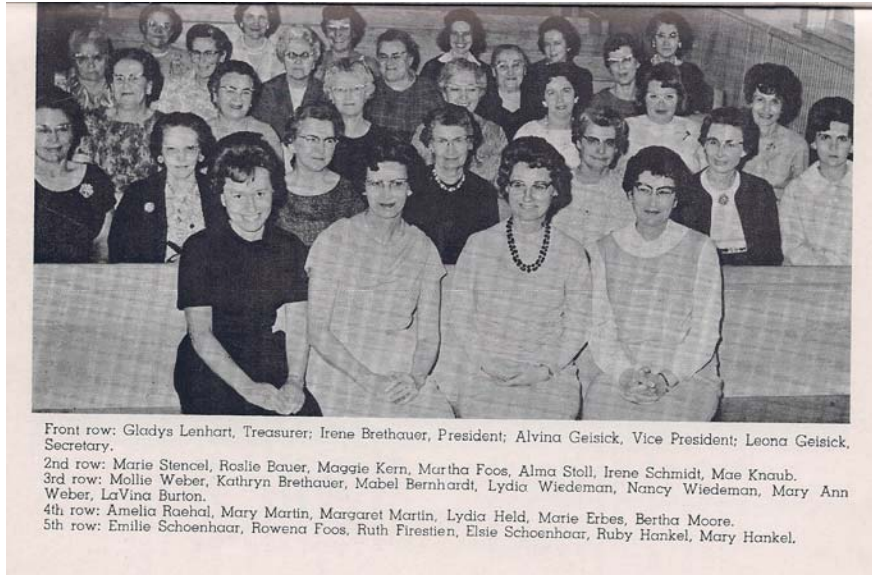
Henry Allergott	Henry Gies	John Sitzman
George Bauer	Fred Gettman	John Schneider
George Bernhardt	George Gettman	Peter Schnorr
Jake Bernhardt	Jacob Geisick	Henry Steinmark
John Bernhardt	Conrad Hartung	Henry Straushe m
Conrad Benzel	Conrad Herbst	George Stroh
Henry Bostron	George Herbst	Jake Stroh
John Brehon	Henry Herbst	John Thiel
George Brungard	George Hoff	George Thoutt
Conrad Ditter	Henry Hoff	Jake Troupe
John Ditter	George Kammerzell	Henry Uhrich
Conrad Eckhardt	Ed Kobobel	John Uhrich, Sr.
George Eckhardt	Henry Lapp	John Uhrich
Henry Eckhardt	Alex Mitchell	George Uhrich
Conrad Flot	Conrad Reiter	Conrad Walters
George Flot	John Reiter	Henry Walters
Henry Flot	Jake Rohn	Jacob Walters
Conrad Foes	Oscar Hohn	John Walters
John Foes	G. J. Rosenoff, Sr.	Alex Wilhelm
Jacob Frank	G. J. Rosenoff	George Wilhelm
Chris Gies	Pete Schlagel	Henry Wilhelm
Henry Gies	Conrad Sitzman	

Alice Mae Knaub's grandparents John and Marie Uhrich helped build St. John's German Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1916-1917.

John Sitzman was Judy Firestien's great grandfather. You may recognize other names on the list above.



Many members remember the balcony in the old church as shown above.



Women's Fellowship 1966

Photos taken from the 50th Anniversary book (1966).

In 1966, nearly all the church leaders were men.



CHURCH COUNCIL

Front row: Eric Schoenhaar, Secretary; Henry Bauer, President; Mrs. Ruth Firestien, Church School Superintendent; Paul Brehauer, Past President Advisor; Clarence Printz, elder.
Second row: Mike Wolf, Paul Schmidt, Elder; Fred Rexus, Treasurer; John Walters, Trustee and Alternate Delegate; Charles Adkisson, Vice President; Leroy Lenhart, Elder; Harold Specht, Financial Secretary.
Third row: Reuben Knaub, Trustee; Harold Krieger, Official Delegate; Richard Hankel, Trustee, Reverend Samuel Foss, Robert Reichert, and Joe Stencel, Elders.

St. John's Choir

I joined choir after I retired from teaching Sunday School, which is approximately 35 years ago. I remember Harold Krieger as director as well as Rev. Kallenbach. After Harold retired from directing the choir, we decided to hire a new director. Our first director was David King. Under his direction we did cantatas for Christmas and Easter. For our Easter cantata we were joined by the Family of Christ Presbyterian church (who was renting our church at that time) and we did two performances; one for St. John's and one for the Family of Christ church.

Some of our other directors were from the music department at UNC. They were young people and a lot of fun. One Christmas we had a party for one of our leaders, Mike Kroeger. He was using toilet paper for Kleenex, so at our party Mike got boxes of Kleenex all wrapped up pretty. Another director wore a cap to practice, so (you guessed it), he got a variety of caps for Christmas. It was good humor and they loved it!

We went on hayrides, courtesy of the Firestiens, had weenie roasts and sang around the campfire. We wore costumes sometimes at Halloween. One that I really remember was Nancy Wiedeman's cow costume. It even had all the "fixtures".

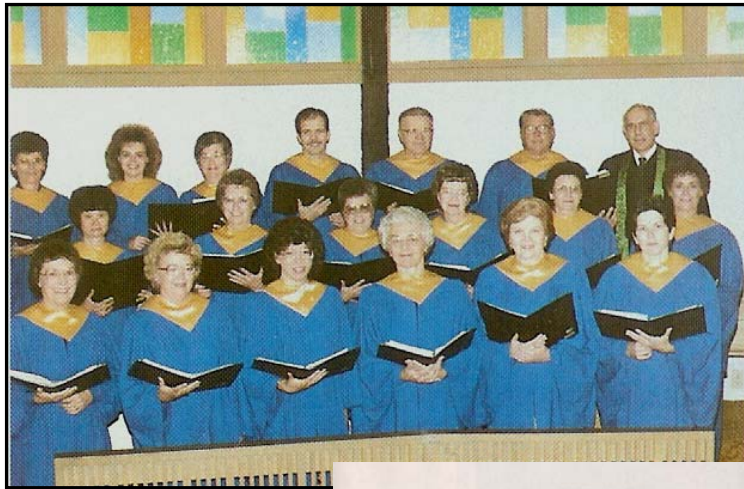
We had barbeques, potlucks. We went caroling to shut ins at Christmas time. We went caroling at the Greeley mall with Gus Ernst accompanying us on his accordion.

We joined the choir at the Loveland Congregational Church for a Sunday morning service and they came here to St. John's to sing. We joined other church choirs to do a concert at the Methodist Church downtown. We sang at an Earth Day celebration at the gazebo in Lincoln Park downtown. We joined other choirs and did a concert at the UNC

Theater. There were 16-20 people in choir.

Many good memories and happy times were made. It was such a great feeling to know we were adding pleasure on Sunday morning. Our practices were every Thursday night at 7:00 p.m. It was hard work and commitment, but it was great fun!

—Submitted by Leona Geisick



Choir 1989
(above)



Choir 1966 (right)

Some of my remembrances of St John's years ago

Much of what I remember about the church on fourth street is the men sitting on one side of the sanctuary and the women on the other. Around the 50s, this must have changed, but I still remember some people still sat on their respective sides. I used to sit with my grandparents (on the women's side) and hear the sermon in German. I didn't understand a word of it but still remember a little of The Lord's Prayer. It sounded like "sign unse geist", but I believe "unsere Geist" was correct.

One of my earliest recollections was Rev. Schoenhaar giving the children's sermon, which he did at the start of Sunday School. He had an easel which had a felt board on it and he would put felt figures on it at the front of the church. This particular story was the good Samaritan. Just before Rev. Schoenhaar left I remember one of the last sermons that he gave. We had just had a very contentious meeting in the evening on the new building. It was on 'hic et nunc,' here and now. He mentioned one of the founding fathers of the protestants, and said that we must think and live our lives in the here and now.

One year I was to learn a part for the play, "The Littlest Angel" for the Christmas play the Sunday School gave every year. I had terrible stage fright and had not learned the part. If the play lasted more than ten minutes I would be surprised. Thankfully I wasn't scolded. I think that was close to the end of my acting career. After the play all of the children as they left the church were given a bag of candy by Rev. Schoenhaar.

I have many memories of the church. Since my dad was janitor I was there watering the lawn every other day during the Summer and used to inspect everything there. I loved to go up in the bell tower. One time I had to ring the bell twelve times then the one bell three times and then the first bell

twelve times. One of the men in the neighborhood came and asked who died.

I also tasted the communion wafers that were white disks with a picture of Christ on them. I may have gotten into trouble if they had found out, so this is the first time that I have told!

One of the last things I remember of all the beautiful things of that church was sitting during the sermon in the balcony during the service. During the Summer I used to wait outside for my dad in the car and one time I pretended that I drove it. When dad came out and tried to start the car I had flooded the engine and it wouldn't start.

—Submitted by Milt Krieger



My memories of St. John's started back when I was in Sunday school. Mrs. Schoenhaar was the teacher. During church services, I remember having to sit with Mom. The women sat on one side, the men on the other side. If I ever sat with my Dad, it was because I was in trouble.

As we got old enough for confirmation, we got to sometimes sit in the balcony with Rev. Schoenhaar's eyes upon us.

Four out of six children in my family were life-time members of St. John's. I am now the only active member left from my family, and I am enjoying every minute and am so blessed to have such a loving church family!

— Submitted by Helen (Hergert) Smith

Communion/The Lord's Supper Then and Now

Something I remember from the old church is how we took communion. This was a very solemn service. First there were prayers and then we knelt on the floor between the pews and prayed on our own, asking forgiveness for our sins. Then we got up and sat in the pews and waited for our turn to partake of the bread and the wine.

When it was our turn to go we walked to the railing around the chancel and knelt on the little ledge on the edge of the raised chancel area. The bread was presented first, but it was the wafer thin "stuff" that was like a piece of paper shaped in the round. This immediately went to the roof of your mouth!

Then came the wine—one chalice—one napkin—for several people. Yes, we all took the wine from one container. After each person drank, the pastor wiped the rim of the chalice with the napkin and went to the other person next to you. And so on all around the chancel area. Then we returned to our seats. Later on we began using the individual cups, but we still had to go to the front to take communion.

Another thing I remember about taking communion was that you had to register and pay a small amount of money the day before if you wanted to take communion. I don't remember how much, but maybe some of our older members remember that. In other words communion was not open to everyone. And children did not, I should say, were not allowed to take communion until after they were confirmed. This was a very special act when you were confirmed.

Things were different in the new church, with communion. First I remember us lining up around the chancel area and receiving the bread and the wine, and then returning to our seats while another group of people came up to get their "meal".

We did communion this way for a number of years until we realized that there were some people that had a hard time getting to the chancel so they just didn't take communion, or the ushers had to take it to them. This brought about the need for a change in how we were doing communion.

Now we remain in our seats while the ushers pass the bread and the wine. And we now have wine and grape juice and "home made" cubes of bread. Now everyone can take communion, even the children if they like, or if the parents allow it. Everyone is welcome.



Something that has become a tradition since we have been in the new building is the Easter cross that is formed with Easter lilies on the altar and chancel area. The stand for the lilies was made by Harold Kreiger after we moved into this building. It is the focal point of the worship service on Easter Sunday.



—Submitted by Ruth Firestien

Women's Fellowship Mother Daughter and Father Son Banquets

For more years than I can remember, I have worked with Frieda Dilka, Lorraine Printz and Dorothy Schmunk planning these banquets.

For several years this committee also planned the entertainment for the Christmas potlucks. One December the Carlson families from the Eaton/Galeton area sang many beautiful Christmas Carols. Theirs was a big family with parents, children, and even grand and great grand kids singing.

For the men's banquets the women always cooked a delicious meal. We asked various businesses for door prizes. One year, with help from others and ag businesses there was a cap at each place setting. Some of the men's programs were given by: Mike Peters/Greeley Tribune, Joe Tenneson, Joe Glenn/UNC head football coach, a patrolman showed pictures and narrated on the Big Thompson flood and many others.

For the women's banquets some meals were a salad supper, some catered, later the men with Al Uhrig in charge cooked several fabulous meals. The men usually waited tables and washed dishes dressed in white shirts, black trousers and black bow ties. They gave us a bad time but had a ball and did a super good job, even though they requested tips at times!

We had some very interesting speakers such as two ladies who restored old dolls and the Dance Academy. Two different years the program was about hats. Other programs were Arthur Broglie who played the accordion and



yodeled and Charles Collins from UNC who researched history and travelled extensively taking pictures of “out houses”! Our most famous speaker was Ann B. Davis who played the maid “Alice” on the TV show “The Brady Bunch”. That was our biggest crowd of about 150 people.

We also had three different Bridal Fashion Shows. The first in the early 80s was a hilarious show. Featured dresses were a bridal dress with a train (a bride pulling a child’s toy train), an afternoon tea dress (dress covered in tea bags), a print dress (made of newspapers) and many others

In 1988 we had another bridal show with many of the women wearing their gowns or having their gowns worn by their daughters, grand or great-granddaughters. Molly Weber’s dress from 1924 was on display. It was so special to see this dress.

The last banquet that we organized was in 2003. It too was a Bridal Fashion Show. There were many beautiful gowns modeled and several were on display. The one on display in the picture is Ruth Firestien’s dress. At each bridal show there were wedding pictures, cake toppers or other memorabilia on display.

There were several more years of Mother’s Day Tea Parties after that year. There were always table favors for each person and home made center pieces that were used for door prizes. We have many precious memories of our times spent together working on and participating in these programs.



—Submitted by Dorothy Schmunk and Lorraine Lyman
with help from several others.

First Marriage in the New Church

On April 12, 1970 we were privileged to be married in the new church building at St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, now United Church of Christ.

It was fun to plan the first wedding to be held in the new facility. All the members of the Woman's Group were very helpful, as we were all excited to figure out how to do things for the first time in a new place!

We recollect the day with fondness as we think back on it except that it was very windy. And as with new construction, sometimes some issues can arise. There was a small place in the sanctuary ceiling where the wind, when blowing just right, came in!

We had two candelabra with 12" candles on either side of the altar. The candles on the left side (where the wind came in) were blown down to within an inch of the base by the time the ceremony was over. I think we even made a waxy mess on the carpet. Needless to say, this windy problem was quickly repaired.



We remember the day was filled with much happiness and joy and we're glad to be married in such a beautiful church and to give praises to our Lord Jesus for all His blessings.

—Submitted by Carl & Kathryn Heimbeck
and Rick and Barb Zimmerman

More Youth Group Fun

As the Youth Director, I thought it would be a grand idea to have the youth go to the corn maze together and have some fun. Little did I realize that it would be a time of great laughter.

In the not so distant past the youth braved a trip to the Corn Maze in 2007. The night was filled with cool weather, wrong turns, a race to get out, and much, much more. However, the most memorable part of the trip was at the end of Scream Acres. We were all walking close together when out of nowhere we heard the torturous sound of a chain saw! Any rhyme or reason of orderly fashion was forgotten as youth ran in every which direction. The sound and threat was so real that the hairs on the back of your neck prickled and reality of the maze faded away. Suddenly the ground beneath seemed to sink away with every ounce of reality. Stephanie crashed to the ground from the intense force of others fleeing. It was a domino effect when April tripped over Stephanie and the chain saw loomed in the not so distant distance. Kyle yelled in a deep voice, almost the perfect slow motion action, "Rrrrruuuuuuunnnnnnn!" However, Kesley was unable to heed the advice for fear had frozen her. As any good big brother, Kyle dashed back to drag her to safety. Stephanie tried to crawl on the ground away from the horror but it seemed to guess her every move because she was followed for the longest time.

Where was I, you ask? Well, I was guiding others to safety while I rolled with laughter so intense that it was rather difficult to breath. It was the perfect scene. To this day I am unable to recount the events of that night with out playing it in my minds eye....never failing to laugh hysterically. Who knew that the corn maze would be such an adventure?

—Submitted by Wendi Oster

Lorraine Blehm Lyman writes about the first people baptized in the new church building. They were her children: Kathy Blehm (Johnson), Randy Blehm, and Sandy Blehm. The Pastor at the time was Rev. Sam Foos.



Mary Anne Weber remembers the first social event held in the new church was a chili and vegetable soup supper sponsored by the Sunday School. Funds were needed to furnish all the rooms the school now had. The supper was very successful with a lot of people wanting to see the new building.



Betty joined St. John's in 1974 when there were about 400 members. She felt at home at St. John's because she knew some members through work and her bowling group. St. John's soon became her church family.

The Mother-Daughter banquets are some of her fondest memories because she could invite her Colorado family members to the banquets. She also has fond memories of noodle and butter ball making days and the bazaars that followed. It was hard work but wonderful fellowship.

A special memory is the day the church officers burned the mortgage. Her dream is for St. John's to again fill the pews and Sunday School rooms.

—Submitted by Betty Eirich



For many years the dues system was used to acquire funds for the operation of the church. Every member was required to pay a set fee to be a member. When Rev. Sam Foos became our pastor that system was discontinued and now we use the pledge system. Every member is expected to make a pledge for the year to help cover the annual budget.

When my grandson, Greg, was about five or six years old, he was sitting in the back of the church with his parents, playing with a little matchbox car. He dropped it and it went from the back of the church (unobstructed) clear to the front. When Rev. Kallenbach left St. John's, Greg wrote him a note and put it and the car into an envelope and gave it to him. When we all went on vacation to South Dakota, we stopped in Lusk, Wyoming to visit the Kallenbachs. They took us on a tour of their church. When we got to his office, there on a shelf sat the little matchbox car. I will cherish this memory always!

—Submitted by Leona Geisick



SARDINES! One word can evoke such joy and energy in the youth group. At every event we are asked "Can we play Sardines?"

I know what you are thinking, this sounds ridiculous. NO, we do not have a sardine eating contest; however, we compete against each other to be the first person to find the solo person hiding. The object is to quietly, without attracting the attention of others, sneak into the same hiding place until everyone is so crammed into it that there is hardly space to breathe. April still to this day holds the longest hiding record and Phillip holds the record for the most misleading text messaged hints as to his whereabouts. "It is really hot in here, but should be cold." This is a long-standing tradition of youth gatherings.



—Submitted by
Wendi Oster

Alice Mae Knaub has very fond memories of growing up in the church and her life here at St. John's UCC.

When Mae was a young child, her mother, Alice Krieger, was a member of the Ladies Aid. Her mother didn't have the option of daycare, so Mae had to attend all of the meetings, dinners and farm sales. The Ladies Aid group was responsible for hosting dinners for the brotherhood. Who/what was the Brotherhood? This was a group of men and women who were very straight laced. The men never wore neckties and the women dressed very plain and in dark colors. They met in the room behind the sanctuary every Sunday afternoon and prayed and studied, possibly like a bible study. This was in German. They were the "Sisters and Brothers". The Ladies Aid also cooked meals for everyone on the days that we had "Mission Festival". This was a day that was spent in the church service in the morning, another in the afternoon and another in the evening. We had speakers that talked about missions and the ladies cooked.

The room that was used by the Brotherhood was also used for confirmation classes and for church council (consistory) meetings.

After Mae married and had children, she became a Sunday school teacher. At this time, the congregation started a "Church Fund" where members could purchase bricks to help build a new facility that would allow for expansion. The children in Sunday school were encouraged to bring money to buy bricks also. We had a graph that showed how we were doing. The Sunday school also had a bank that was used for their mission project. Children were encouraged to bring money (pennies) to put in the bank when they had a birthday. The bank had a little man on it and when the money was dropped into the bank he would nod his head, as if to say, "thank you".

Alice Mae was coordinator of the Easter Breakfast for 25 years. This was an extremely popular event. She could not have done this without the help of Gerry Scheidt, Ethel Drewer and a host of other individuals—too many to mention.

—Submitted by Mae Knaub



There are three pianos in the building; one in the fellowship hall, one in the overflow, and one in the sanctuary. The piano in the overflow was brought from the “old” church. This is the one that was in the room where the choir practiced for many years. The one in the fellowship hall was donated to us from the Presbyterian church in Milliken. The piano in the sanctuary was purchased after we had been in the new building a while. The Allen organ was purchased in the 70s and was paid for by special donations from the congregation.



In the beginning the men “ruled” the church. Women were not allowed to have an office. Everything was decided by the men.

In the late 50’s, early 60’s women were allowed to hold an office. The first woman Sunday School Superintendent was Ruth Firestien. Later on more and more women became president of consistory and were elders. The women that have been church president in order are: Ruth Firestien, Elaine Uhrig, Karen (Betz) Berry, Linette Stenberg, Judy Firestien and Linda Meintzer. At this point in time we have 10 women and 2 men on consistory. My how things have changed.

Bringing Home the Bell

It was a bright sunny morning when several men had the opportunity to help move the church bell from the east side church location of St. John's to the present bell tower. Construction of the bell tower was almost complete, but it had no bell.

When the new church was built on 20th Street, and we moved from the building on 4th Avenue & 11th Street, we wanted to bring the bell—sometime—to our present location. When the church building was sold to the Mennonite congregation the agreement was made that we would take one bell (the large one) when we were able to build a bell tower to house the bell.

The Mennonite congregation was very patient with us because we moved into the new building in December 1969 and it was 24 years later on September 1, 1993 when we came back for the bell. During those 24 years, money was collected and the tower was constructed and made ready for the bell.

Green Leaf Tree Service was hired to remove the bell from the old building. The bell was put onto Al Uhrig's pickup and hauled to the church location. One step accomplished.





The next step, when the bell was delivered to the church, was for Glenn Bechtoldt to use his small loader to remove it from the pickup and move it into the church. It rested on a pallet in the narthex of the church until it could be installed in the bell tower.

The people that helped remove and transport the bell were—In the bell tower—Manny Betz, Chuck Firestien, Ben Moore, and Al Schott. On the ground were—Al Uhrig, Gus Ernst, Glenn Bechtoldt, Manuel Geisick, and Clarence Printz. The women present were—Mary Schott, her daughter Jane and Ruth Firestien. Jane took the video of the event and Mary and Ruth took some snapshots.





The painting that hangs in the overflow and the chair, altar and communion service that sits under the painting are all items that were brought from the “old” church building.

The painting was done by Rev. Max Schoenhaar and hung above the altar table in the church. The altar and a lectern were built by church member Harold Specht. He also built the pulpit that was left at the old church. There were two chairs, one on either side of the altar, one of which sits in the overflow area today.