

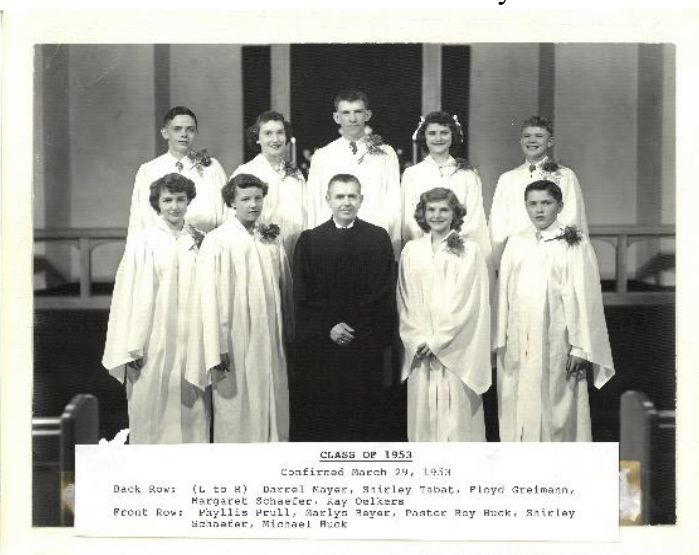
DECEMBER 2023 HISTORY INSERT

Remembering 1949, our Pastor was Herman Hein. This was right before St John Lutheran, east of Sheffield and Zion Lutheran, in town, merged to become Zion St John. In 1947 Zion decided to build a new church and men from the church worked together to tear down the old building. In 1948, ground was broken for the new building and church was held in the Memorial Hall or at St John's or in people's homes. The dedication service was held June 26, 1949, one day after my 10th birthday! The altar, lectern, pulpit, hymn boards, and communion rails were hand crafted from members of the church.

A favorite memory was at Sunday School, putting pennies in the little church for your birthday and everyone singing Happy Birthday to me! (Marlys, we still do this!!!)

Pastor Hein left in early 1951 and pastor Roy Huck took over. He came from Melvin, Iowa, with his wife, son, Michael and daughter, Signe. In June 1951, Fred Oelkers passed away and one month later his son Frederick and daughter Leoma Weber died in a fatal car accident, which also injured Frederick's son Ray, and Leoma's husband Elmer and children Keith and Judy. Ray turned 12 the day after his father's death. This left Katherine Oelkers very sad after losing her husband, son and daughter in a month's time. That same year, my older brother was confirmed. The pastor's son, Michael was part of my 7th grade confirmation class. Class was every Saturday and Emma Timmerman was our Sunday School teacher. We met in the "furnace" room (NW corner of the church).

During our confirmation years, the local shoe cobbler, August Schmallenber passed away. Since he had no family, Pastor Huck asked our class to sing "Abide with Me" and "Rock of Ages" at his funeral. On March 22, 1953, we had our public examination standing with our back to the congregation, while members asked us questions. Palm Sunday, March 29, nine of us, Daryl Mayer, Shirlee Tabat, Floyd Greimann, Ray Oelkers, Margaret Schaefer, Shirley Schaefer, Michael Huck, Phyllis Prull and Marlys Beyer (now Hartman) affirmed our baptism. My Bible verse was Matthew 5:16, "Let your light so shine before man that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which art in heaven."



After being confirmed, we were now able to take communion, sing in choir and become members of the HS Luther League. In those days, you had to declare your intention to communion by Saturday, the night before communion was offered. Dottie Kottman and Marvin Meyer were our SS teachers. We always met in the Bell tower. Dottie was a true treasure. My favorite member was when she took us to Mason City to see the "Greatest Story Ever Told" and "The Robe." She would also take us to the Christianson Convalescent Home at Christmas and to her house for hot chocolate parties. Both my teachers were great influences on my life and Marvin remained a dear friend until his death.

I also remember going to different churches for rallies, Rockwell, Thornton, Mason City, Britt, Titonka, and Lakota. It always seemed like we were going to the end of the earth! We also got to host one of these rallies at our church. One of the favorite songs we would sing was "Climbing Jacob's Ladder." We had a large group that met at our church and enjoyed, prayer time, ping pong, and always food! I can remember once that my mom made tree shaped cakes and ice cream for Christmas. There were also fun Halloween parties with brains (slimy noodles), eye balls (grapes), and liver. YUK! Another memory, Dave Kruckenberg found an old flannel nightgown, put it on and we all sang, "The Naughty Lady of Shady Lane!" There was another time that the boys decided to experiment with dry ice and bent some silverware----uh oh!

In 1955, we celebrated the 80th anniversary of our church. During 1956, Pastor Huck left to go to Wisconsin and Pastor Henry Dieter began his ministry here. We were HS seniors when he was installed in 1957.

He suggested that the church begin a sunrise Easter service and the youth take charge of the breakfast. We arranged for most of the food to be donated, including the ham that was ground by Matt Bechtel, the meat market manager. Our moms cooked and we served. The smell that Easter morning filled the church during the sunrise service. There was a lot of eggs and ham! The basement was full, even the stage area. And this tradition continues today!

In 1959, the church added the education wing at a cost of \$40,000. We now had room for 140 youth! Through my years at ZSJ, my SS teachers were, Sadie Gentry, Arlene Tabat, Hanna Bolk, Clara Kruckenberg, Marily Schulz Sheahan, Emma Bolk, Emma Timmerman, Lyle Day, Gretchen Niedringhaus, Louie Greimann, Marvin Meyer, Dottie Kottman, Nettie Day and Fred Wiele (who were superintendents). I still have very fond memories of our SS picnics at the country church. We always had ice cream and pop and lots of games, even gunny sack races. There was a very special day in August of 1960 when Pastor Dieter's son Allen was ordained at Zion St John.



Gladys and Chris Timmerman lived in one of the houses on the property and it was later moved to town. Jon and Barb Swanson now live there. (left)

The St John church building was sold to the Masonic Lodge in Sheffield and brought to town. It is now the site of the Apple Day Care on 7th street. (right)



I have so many happy and sad memories and mementos from my time growing up at Zion St John. I have one of my Great Grandmother Oelkers' dresses, the baptismal gown worn by my mother, my aunts and myself and my confirmation dress. I will forever hold these memories in my heart. I remember so many people and at one time many Oelkers descendants that worshipped in "our" church. Just like the words from the hymn, "*My church, my church, my dear old church, my father's (and my mother's) and my own!*"

Thank you for letting me share some of memories and many blessings as you prepare to celebrate 150 years of Being the Body of Christ!

Marlys Beyer Hartman

If you would like to submit remembrances or a devotion with a special Bible verse or song, like Marlys did, please go to <https://forms.gle/xQQnPjdDSc6KmcxAA>