

Advances of Electricity

One of the most important modernizations of the church was the steps it took to produce lighting, with the invention of electricity it certainly changed the way the use of the building and church services were conducted. But before we get to the days of modern invention of electricity there were other means along the way Zion took to get to where we are today in modernizing the lighting plant of the church.

There is no mention of any type lighting in Zion's first or second building on the current site and without light of sometime, would indicate that most of the services and use of the church building would have been limited to daylight hours. If there was lighting, oil lamps would have been used.

In December of 1860 records show that there was much discussion of what would be proper lighting for the Sanctuary... should it be gas or should it be kerosene. Council abandoned the plan for using gas and adopted kerosene lighting, which had been used since the church's opening a few months earlier. Both gas and kerosene had its advantages. Gas had better light but depended on gas pipes for distributing fuel to light the lamp. But kerosene was portable, simple to operate and the fuel was plentiful. The kerosene fed the wick; the wick could be raised or lowered to control the brightness of the light. (The picture, although grainy, is a close up of the kerosene lamps installed in the Sanctuary in 1860).



In June 1887, a street lamp was placed in the front of the church and lit during all nighttime services. In 1898, discussions arose as to what type of lighting should be installed in the newly renovated Sanctuary. This time it was gas or electric as the options. Council put the question to the congregation at a meeting and it was decided to light the church with gas and at that time a "Gas machine" was ordered. Once installed the Sanctuary could be used in the evening. The first occasion was November 24, 1899, two nights before the rededication of a newly remodeled Sanctuary at a well attended concert to show

Our new and modern Organ.

In 1915 the installation of electric lights was introduced to the Sunday school rooms on the first floor and no change at this time was made to the Sanctuary; it remained to be light up by gas.



The hope was eventually the Sanctuary would also contain electric lights. This hope was realized in March of 1918, at a cost of \$1,000 and in April 1925, while painting the Nave, additional lighting was added to the Sanctuary. In November 1967 fluorescent lights were placed in all rooms of the Sunday school classrooms and the Social Room. And as recently as Spring of 2015 the church council took the necessary steps to conserve energy by changing out every light bulb throughout the church to a more energy efficient one.

With the invention of electricity we think of only lighting as being the only major change in the way the church operates. Although the biggest, there were other important changes brought on by electricity. The organ installed in 1899 was run by a water pump and at the time it was considered to be most modern operating system. When electricity was brought into the church it was out with the old "modern" water pump and it was eventually replaced with a modern electric pump. This proved to be very beneficial in drought years. One of those years a Union service was planned for the community at the Reformed Church and the town asked Zion to host the event because our organ was electrical and not one that depended on water. Apparently those old water pumps used a lot of H₂O!

What would we do without electricity! It certainly has shaped our modern homes. But one more important thought... electricity it is often used as an analogy of how God's Spirit works... not seen, but by the evidence you know that it is there.

PRAISE GOD!

