

War and Our 200th Anniversary

During the late 1930s and very early 1940s the church seems to be about its normal business; that is hiring a new choir director, modernizing the pipe organ, planning Rally Day, Father Son Banquet, planning for 200th Anniversary, and other normal church business.

On Friday December 12th, 1941 the local newspaper announced that due to the nation now being at war with Japan there would be no community Christmas decoration of homes and streets this year, but the two community trees, one on the Lutheran Parsonage lawn and the other on West Main Street would be lighted. This large pine tree on the parsonage lawn which had been planted some years previous by the Women's Club was to be used as the Community Christmas tree and in 1942 it was cut down because of being diseased. It was also raising the concrete walk leading from the street.

In the earliest days of the war panic gripped the nation. If the Japanese could attack Hawaii they feared a similar attack on the mainland. Families were issued ration stamps for buying their allotment from meat, sugar, fat, butter vegetables and fruits to gas, tires, clothing and fuel oil. Radio was the primary source of news and families listened to frontline reports.

The Frederick News reported: September, 1942 there were 22 men serving in the US Armed Forces from Zion and a Service Flag was dedicated. By 1943 there were 36 young men of the congregation serving in the armed forces and that a Service Flag had been dedicated to them and in 1945 the service flag had 78, 73 blue and five gold. Yes, 78 men from Zion had served their country during these war years, five who never returned home. Those five men are Sgt. Paul K. Dean, died from wounds; Richard B. House, killed in action; Staff Sgt. Ernest Floyd Wiles, shot down over Austria; Pvt. Edward L. Fulmer died in France, one of the first men of Middletown to lose his life in the fight in Europe; Pvt. Leo H. Ward, buried in France. The first four men's remains were eventually returned to the states in 1948. Pvt. Ward still remains in France.



Our 200th Anniversary Celebration

During the week of September 29th through October 6th, 1940, the church was bustling with excitement as Pastor Donald F. Brake, our 32nd pastor, and the congregation prepared to celebrate two hundred years. The celebration included inspirational and social programs which drew members and their friends in the community and former parishioners to this old historic building that with its broad columns and white steeple has long been a landmark in Middletown Valley.

Sunday, September 29th Rev. Dr. Harvey Hoover of Lutheran Seminary at Gettysburg gave the address that launched the celebratory week and Mrs. Guy Main sang a solo, "Because I walk With thee."

Tuesday evening was a community night where greetings from other churches in Middletown, other Lutheran churches in the area and the President of the Maryland Synod were received and Pastor Brake gave a response of thanks on behalf of the congregation. Special music provided by the Christ Evangelical and Reformed Church of Middletown.

The young people had one night in which they celebrated with the return of Pastor Tabor who had served Zion until 1937 and was the founder of Luther League here at Zion. They gathered at a fellowship supper with a service to follow with past pastors, Rev. Tabor and Rev. Teufel giving remarks. There was a religious play that night called "Wake Up Dad" presented by the Luther league.

Thursday night they had a big birthday party in which Geo. Carlton Rhoderick Jr. gave the history of the congregation. Returning pastors, Rev. Cooper, Rev. Day and sons of the congregation Rev. Minnick, Rev. Mumford also joined with the congregation to celebrate.

The culmination was a communion service of praise and thanksgiving on October 6. The anthem that Sunday was "Rock of Ages" and Pastor Brake's sermon topic was "I will serve Him," themes which still fit us today! Pictured L to R: Mumford, Minnick, Ahalt, Cooper, Day.



