

Old Salem Shrine News

1857-1910

June 2014

VOL. 1 ISSUE 1



***Open House
Old Salem Shrine
Sunday, July 13
2-4 p.m.***

***Upper 55th Street (Salem Church Road)
Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota***

Old Salem Shrine History

The church building, cemetery, and grounds capture the local color of a rural atmosphere, a sense of heritage of pioneer courage, and steadfast faith in God.

In 1855 several German immigrant families left St. Jacobs, Ontario, Canada for Minnesota. These families were members of the Evangelical Church in Canada and shortly after settling in Minnesota they requested that the Evangelical Church in Canada send a pastor to Minnesota. In November, 1856, Andrew Tarnutzer, the first Evangelical minister in Minnesota, arrived in Winona, Minnesota and by February, 1857, he arrived in St. Paul.



On March 2, 1857, Rev. Tarnutzer organized the first Evangelical class of members of the Evangelical Association in America, which became known as the Salem Evangelical Church.

From 1857 - 1874, a small building across the road from its present site was the place of worship. In 1874, H. E. Bunse became pastor to both Emanuel Evangelical Church at Pine and 11th St. in St. Paul and Salem Evangelical Church.

Current Church

Rev. Bunse began construction of the current building on farm land donated by the one of the original families from Germany. The church measures 20 feet six inches by 32 feet six inches, has a hall or tower entrance of five feet by seven feet, and measures fourteen feet from the stone foundation to the eaves with a tower of approximately 30 feet. Farmers and people in the neighborhood helped in the construction. Before the present building was completed, Rev. Bunse was elected presiding elder of Emanuel Evangelical Church. Rev. Ernest Hielscher was assigned to Salem Evangelical Church.

The first camp meeting was held on a neighboring farm July 1st 1857. It was reported that there were seven tents erected, two covered wagons, and that there were nine conversions.

The second camp meeting was held in 1858 and there were thirteen conversions. These 22 conversions, along with the original families, comprised the charter members. Among the first members of the Salem Kirche, were: Michael Gackstetter, Adam Laschinger, Jacob Binder, Jacob Bosshardt, George Glassing, Frederick Goldberg, Frederick Wm. Goldberg, C. F. Kachel, John Kochendorfer, Heinrich Schafer, Gottfried Schmidt, John Simon, and Frederick Zehnder.



Old Salem circa 1936

Salem Evangelical Church held continuous worship services until 1910, when most of its families migrated to the Winifred Street Church (now Faith United Methodist Church in West St. Paul, Minnesota) with some of the families moving to the West Side Community Church (now a part of St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Mendota Heights) and the Zion Methodist Episcopal Church down the road (now Salem United Methodist Church).

Since 1955 the committee has held an Annual Founder's Day service on the first Sunday in June, and in 1998 began an Epiphany Service on the first Sunday in January. The potbelly wood-burning stove is used to heat the building for winter events. The original pump organ is still in the church and is used at these worship services.



Old Salem Shrine Vandalized



After its closing, ownership was continued as a historical site by the Evangelical church formed in 1922, by the Evangelical United Brethren church formed in 1946, and lastly by the United Methodist church formed in 1968. Until the late 1960's when Dakota County renamed streets, this road was known as Salem Church Road. It remains the only street in Dakota County to have two historic churches, both named Salem on the same road. Salem Church Road still exists within the boundaries of the City of Sunfish Lake.

After 1910, the church building and cemetery fell into disrepair. In the 1930's a local group organized a committee to provide for the care and upkeep of the building and cemetery grounds.



Arthur Schlukebier was elected president and Christian J. Zehnder became secretary-treasurer. In 1976, Old Salem Shrine, as it has become known, became an Historic Site of the United Methodist Church. An ongoing committee continues today comprised of 16 members, primarily descendants of the original founders.

On September 28, 2013, vandals broke into Old Salem Shrine and smashed ceiling and wall lanterns and damaged or stole 15 lanterns. The old pump organ was also damaged. The vestibule was damaged when they attempted to gain access to the bell tower. Thanks to the generous support of the community, a new front door has been installed, the ceiling and wall lamps replaced, and the organ has been repaired.

Each year weddings, family reunions, tours, and other special occasions are held at the church. For more information regarding event scheduling at the church contact:

Jill Lewis at 651-552-8586

Donations to Old Salem Shrine

Contributions to Old Salem Shrine are welcome! Your gift will help maintain this beautiful and historic treasure.

Make checks payable to Old Salem Shrine.

Mail to: Old Salem Shrine
c/o Bartley Zehnder, Treas.
6775 Cahill
Inver Grove Heights, MN 55076

Thank you!

Old Salem Shrine Board of Trustees

Kathy Spence-Johnson, Rev. Penny Zettler, Rev. David Brown, Rev. Deb Marzahn, Rev. Gail Alexander, Laurie Dinger, Jill Lewis (Pres), Larry Glassing, Holly Zschokke (Vice-Pres.), Gerald Manthei, Barb Luken, Joe Brotzler, Bartley Zehnder (Treas.), Neil Danner, Rev. Laurie Boche, George Fell, Palmer Goppelt, Rev. Richard Harper, Judy Alich (Sec.), and Steve Brotzler.

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DVD of Old Salem Church History



A DVD of Old Salem's history is available for sale. It includes a more extensive history, biographical information, photos and obituaries of the church's founders and early ministers, notes and letters penned by church members, and photos of both early weddings and those held more recently in the church. To order a \$25 DVD contact George Fell at 651-341-6001.

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www.oldsalemshrine.org

