

Old Salem Shrine News

1874-1910

May 2015

Vol. 2 Issue 1



Upcoming Events at Old Salem Shrine

***Work Day, Saturday, June 6 at 11:00 a.m.
Founders Day, Sunday, June 7 at 3:00 p.m.
Open House, Sunday, September 13, 3-5 p.m.***

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

Seattle Wash. Apr. 24, 1935

Greetings to “Founders” Day Celebration

A short time ago I received a letter from my brother John C. Zehnder telling [me] that on Apr. 28th the Minneapolis and St. Paul churches will celebrate “Founders Day” at our little white church. None can imagine what memories that short sentence brought to me.

I remember well that first little log church with its two small windows, the six benches on each side of the center aisle, unpainted benches they were, a narrow strip for a back-lean, just high enough for me to lean my head against.

The mothers, small children and the big girls on one side, the men and big boys on the other, all solemnly entering, each kneeling in quiet prayer.



The pulpit was just as plain as the benches, room for a big bible – the song book and the discipline, a mourners bench covered with a long cloth, standing just between it and those wooden benches.

To the log walls were screwed a few bracket oil lamps, while the floor always spotlessly clean proved the thrift and devotion of the women worshippers.

The little log church stood surrounded by hazel-bush just across the road and a little south of the present one.

**Leah Zehnder & John Hielscher
circa 1896**

To my mind the building of the present "Little White Church" was a momentous affair as we children listened to the conversations between Rev. Bunse and our father concerning its building.

In the spring of 1875 before the completion of the church Rev. Bunse was transferred by the conference to East Prairie and Rev. E.J. Hielscher stationed at St. Paul who saw the work finished.

To me then just 7 years old that big white church with its three green painted blinds on each side, its tall steeple with the sign in big black letters painted in German by Rev. E.J. Hielscher was an inspiration, and with hushed and quiet demeanor all entered it.

My father Frederick Zehnder always sat on the first bench near the window, and how he would sing, his whole heart in the song. Fred Goldberg's seat was against the wall on the 2nd bench who always was the leader in singing.

Mr. Laschinger (we called him Daddy) sat on the 2nd bench at the aisle but did not take part in the singing as he was quite deaf.

Mr. Glassing always sat on the 3rd bench near the window, that was his place and no one ever took it.

Mr. Binder sat anywhere on the 4th bench. He was a quiet man, all others took seats wherever they found the room.

On the women's side none had any particular seat except Mr. Laschinger who sat at the aisle end of the 2nd bench on a cushion made by her daughter Louisa.



And now it is 61 years ago "only a short time looking back."

But where are those who used to gather there on a Sunday?

Many "most of them" to their final reward. Some of the younger ones scattered to the ends of the earth, now old and gray waiting for the last bugle call=Come Home.

With hearty well wishes to all and glad to say that we are with you in memory today.

Mr. & Mrs. J.F. Hielscher
Nee Leah Zehnder

Note: This letter by Mrs. J.F. Hielscher nee Leah Zehnder appears in the *Family Legacies Index (1857-2011) of the People & Annals of Salem EV Kirche 1857-2011*. A DVD of this book is available for sale. See page 4 for details.

Note: *First letter sent out in appeal for funds to keep up Historical Old Salem Evangelical Church.*

Custodians 1939 Appeal for Funds

July 18, 1939

Dear friends and friends of Old Salem
Evangelical Church, South St. Paul, Minnesota

We greet you in the Name of our common Lord!

The Minnesota Conference of the Evangelical Church has appointed the undersigned as Custodians of the Salem Evangelical Church and Cemetery. We made a very careful study of the whole property and find that the fence is nearly worthless, some of the graves have been neglected, and only a few families have shown much concern about the appearance of the whole place.

The Church where many warm prayers were offered and hot tears were shed by our Fathers for the future of the Kingdom is badly in need of repair. We are very anxious to improve both Church and Cemetery.

The ideal way would be to build up a Fund large enough that the interest would be sufficient to keep the lawn mowed and make the needed repairs. We would like to lead out in that direction. But for the time being, we must try and put the whole place in an attractive condition.

The fence must be replaced; we have a very generous offer already on that. Then we ought to spend about \$25.00 on the inside of the Church that we would not be ashamed to make it available as a Shrine for Weddings, Baptisms, and other special meetings for groups and families.

We would thus ask for a contribution with your best thought on how to make old "Salom" an attraction for Evangelicals and their families as the first Evangelical Church in Minnesota.

We are praying that the Lord will lay it in the heart of someone to give a bequest of several hundred dollars, which could be used as the beginning of a Fund, the interest of which would be used for the upkeep of this property of historic interest so dear to our hearts.

Most sincerely yours,
J.G. Holdinger, Chairman
B.C. Siowert, Vice-Ch.
Christ Zehnder, Secretary

Old Salem Still Needs Your Help!

On September 28, 2013, vandals broke into Old Salem Shrine and smashed wall lamps and damaged or stole 15 lanterns. The old pump organ was also damaged as was the vestibule when they attempted to gain access to the bell tower.

Vandalism repairs came to \$11,386.30. Insurance paid \$8,458.75 and the community and friends generously contributed \$4,072.

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
6775 Cahill
Inver Grove Heights, MN 55076
c/o Bart Zehnder, Treasurer

Thank you for your generous support!

Visit our website

www.oldsalemshrine.org

Volunteer by calling Jill Lewis

651-552-8586

Old Salem Shrine Board of Trustees

Rev. Gail Alexander, Judy Alich, Rev. Laurie Boche, Joe Brotzler, Steve Brotzler, Rev. David Brown, Neil Danner, Laurie Dinger, George and Rev. Margaret Fell, Jill Lewis, Barb Luken, Gerald Manthei, Derek Wasseli, Bartley Zehnder, and Holly Zschokke.

May 2015

Old Salem Shrine History on DVD

A DVD of Old Salem's history entitled **People & Annals of Salem EV Kirche 1857-2011** is available for \$25. It includes an extensive history, biographies, 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 the DVD contact Jill Lewis at 651-552-8586.

VOL. 2 ISSUE 1



www.oldsalemshrine.org

