

ST. PETERS CEMETERY

St. Peters cemetery was started in 1910 when the heirs of R. Aschen donated to the church their family burial plot located about a quarter of a mile northwest of the sanctuary. The area was expanded by the church in that same year by the purchase of two acres of adjoining land from Otto Speckels. Frank Polzin and Arnold Muery were appointed to serve as the first cemetery committee. At first bodies were taken to the church for a public service, but to avoid the possibility of spreading disease, the congregation voted in April 1906 "to no longer bring corpses into the church but to have the service in the home and at the cemetery." But by 1928 with improvement in embalming procedures the public funeral service with the body in the sanctuary was resumed.

SCHULLE HALLE

Soon after the sanctuary was built the congregation began to feel the need of even more space for purposes other than worship. In 1910 the

congregation bought from Wm. Pfluger lots ten and eleven east of the sanctuary making the church property on which the sanctuary was located a quarter of the block in area. In 1913 Pastor Krebs presented the congregation a plan for the building of what he called a SCHULE HALLE. He suggested that such a building would be useful for organizational meetings, Sunday school and German summer school. The vote on the plans, however, did not carry. So the idea for a new building laid dormant until 1924 when Herman Ging, C. W. Pfluger, A. M. Pfluger, J. A. Speckels and Alfred Pfluger were named to a building committee to construct a fellowship hall with a stage and a small kitchen. In April 1925 the new building was dedicated with a celebration in which all the children marched from the sanctuary down the walk and into the new building singing "VO IST MEIN HOUS?"

It was a short lived moment of joy for the congregation, for after incurring the debt, the Coupland area was hit by a severe drought. On many farms there was not a blade of grass in the pasture nor a stalk of cotton in the fields. The hard experience of drought in 1925 turned out to be an introduction to the hard times of the depression years that followed.

WORLD WAR I

In 1918 when the first world war was raging in Europe the Coupland community, like many other German settlements, suffered severe persecution. The fever of war had created an uneasy tension between the "Germans" and the other citizens of the area who were simply called "Americans." Monitors were assigned to the worship services at church to see that nothing subversive or unpatriotic was said.

The use of the German language particularly offended many persons and patriotic groups. At a congregational meeting on June 30, 1918, Pastor Krebs read a letter addressed to the congregation from the Williamson County Council for Defense. We do not have a copy of the letter but it seems to have had an intimidating effect upon the congregation. A resolution was passed abolishing the German summer school immediately in the hope that by so doing they would be allowed to continue the German worship services.

As an additional gesture of compliance the congregation voted to institute two additional evening services a month in the English language. It was quite a task for Pastor Krebs who could speak very little English. In recognition of this extra burden and the loss of German school tuition the Pastor was granted a \$50.00 increase in his salary.

These traumatic struggles with "patriotism" and the language during the war had one beneficial, historic influence upon the life of St. Peters church.

The extra English services that were begun under pressure during this period continued on a voluntary basis after the war. It was to be the first step in the necessary transition from the German language to English. The immigrants were gradually moving out of their old way of thinking into the life and culture of their host country. By the time a new minister was needed in 1925 the congregation insisted that the candidate be able to preach in English as well as in German.

The Industrial Revolution brought about some radical changes in the life style of the community. In 1921 Pastor Krebs bought a brand new Model T Ford bringing to a close the age of the horse. The barn was moved to the front of the lot on Wathen Street and converted into a car garage. In the wider community the automobile brought with it hard surfaced roads. This chain of events triggered the decline of commerce in the village of Coupland, a decline which continued until about 1970.

Concern for human suffering has been characteristic of St. Peters Church through the years. Probably the first extra mile effort in Church World Service was taken in the January meeting of 1921 when the group took up a collection of \$234 for milk cows for war-ravaged Germany. That idea has now become ingrained into the life of the Church so that each year on Reformation Sunday the Youth Fellowship canvasses the community for Christian Rural Overseas Program. In 1973, for example, the collection was more than \$300 as an extra effort of the community for Church World Service.