

HOUSE OF WORSHIP

The arrival of the new minister breathed a new spirit into the congregation resulting in a decision to build a house of worship. William Pfluger of Pflugerville gave the church two lots just across the road from the parsonage. A committee consisting of August Kreidel, Otto Eiben, William Henze Sr., Louis Foerster Sr., Fritz Wilgrube, William Goetz, William Schroeder, W. Rohlack and F. Nickel Jr. drew up the plans. At a meeting in the spring, the congregation adopted the plans and named a building committee: A. M. Pfluger, August Kreidel, and Wm. Henze. Joe Meier of Rose Hill was the general contractor, and the members of the church were lined up as a volunteer labor force.

Before the new building got started, Pastor Krebs invited all the ladies of the congregation to discuss the forming of a women's study and

service group. On May 11, 1905, eighteen women came to the parsonage to organize the FRAUENVEREIN. Ironically, Pastor Krebs was the first president of the ladies group and remained in that office all the years he served in Coupland. The FRAUENVEREIN became active immediately, and incidently, it has remained active ever since. Now being called the Ladies Aid.

An auspicious event took place in 1905 when the new church building was partially complete. During the worship service on October 8, the congregation followed Pastor Krebs as he marched in his flowing robe from the school house, through the parsonage yard, and across the road to the southwest corner of the site of the new building. With great ceremony they placed some current newspapers of the district and of the denomination in a fruit jar. The lid was sealed and it was placed in wet concrete in the foundation. It was covered with some more cement, and the corner stone was carefully placed on top.

Deutsche Coangelische Petri-Gemeinde

— 311 —

Coupland, Texas

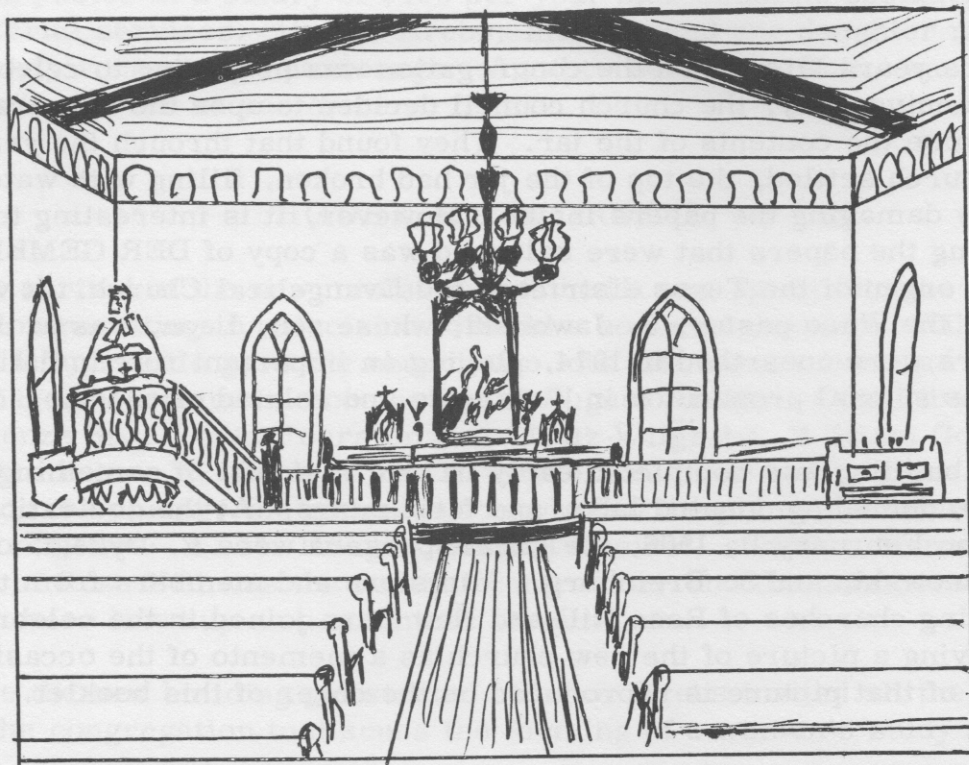
Sixty-nine years later when the congregation was preparing to celebrate its 80th anniversary, the church council decided to open the cornerstone and examine the contents of the jar. They found that through the years, as the church settled, the top of the jar had broken, filling with water and seriously damaging the papers inside. However, it is interesting to note that among the papers that were salvaged was a copy of DER GEMEINDEBOTE, the news organ of the Texas district of the Evangelical Church. It was edited by the Waco pastor, J. Jaworski, whose son, Leon, was at the time the papers were unearthed in 1974, playing an important role in national history as special prosecutor in Watergate and related offenses.

The building was completed early in 1906 at a cost of something over \$4000.00, including donated labor and furnishings. At the dedication service on February 11, 1906, the guest speakers were P. Dyke, Sam Press, A. Romanowski, and S. Bremberg. Ministers and members from the neighboring churches of Rose Hill and New Bern joined in the celebration, all receiving a picture of the new church as a memento of the occasion. A sketch of that picture is reproduced on the cover of this booklet.

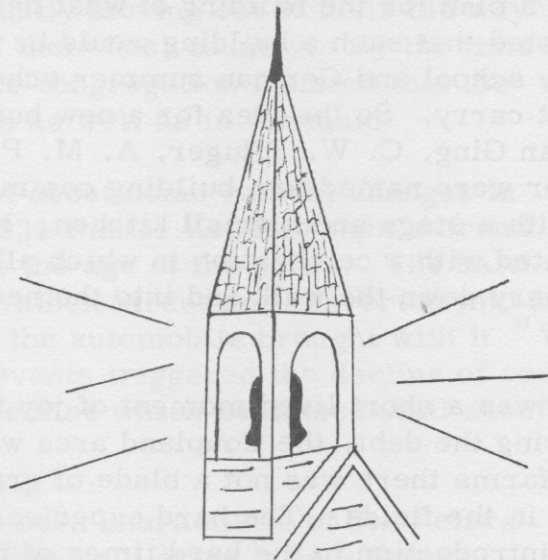
During the first year after construction a number of special items were added to complete the sanctuary. Luther's German translation of the Bible was given by the construction workers. The Ladies Aid gave the eight-oil-lamp chandelier which hangs from the center of the sanctuary. The newly organized JUGENBUND (Youth Fellowship) gave the painting of Peter and Jesus walking on the water which hangs over the altar. A watchmaker, Tendler, in Elgin gave the clock.

The windows originally installed in the sanctuary were simply colored glass in wood frames, but during the years that followed they were replaced by more expensive leaded art glass. In 1919 four such windows were added in memory of Mr. & Mrs. D. Goetz (the Bible and Supper) and Mr. and Mrs. Otto Eiben (the door and the Shepherd). In 1923 two windows were added for Mr. & Mrs. H. Wilgrube (the children and the empty tomb). After 1955 the window with the lamb symbol was added in memory of Heman Ging, the Gethsemane window for Theo Stern and the youth window for Folkert Eiben. The set of (come unto Me) windows on the south wall were added for Mr. & Mrs. A. M. Pfluger. In 1969 the Pastors Aid gave the rose window in the choir loft to celebrate the 75th anniversary. Finally in 1974 the Dove of Peace window in the vestibule was added in memory of Alvin Pfluger.

In 1978 the Holy Family window was installed in the Cry Room in memory of Julius and Myrtle Wittliff, and the two windows in the Choir Loft were added in memory of Mary Wernli and Richard and Kermit Kreidel.



The bell installed in the new church steeple and open to view has played an important role in the life of the community from the very beginning. In 1907 the congregation adopted the Swiss custom of ringing the bell on Saturday evening to alert the community to shine shoes, clean up the kids and in other ways prepare for the celebration of the Lord's day to follow. William Rohlack, Mrs. Hunsecker, Henry Heinski, Albert Speckels and Fritz Becker performed this bell ringing task through the years. When Becker died in 1967, the practice ceased. However, in 1974 it was resumed by Fritz Becker's nephew, Andrew, and Henry Heinski's grandson, Mancel.



In 1906 action was taken to ring the bell at the death of a church member. The age of the deceased was divided by three to include two pauses in the ringing. In the case of a child the age was divided by two providing for one pause. This practice has continued until the present day. Of course, the bell is also rung at the more customary occasions--the beginning of worship, special services, weddings, and the like.