

Homework for Lesson 10: The Local Church

Over the last few weeks we've discussed the growth and development of the church as a worldwide institution, but today we're going to focus on *this* church in particular and how it came to be part of that larger story.

Before we get into the story of how this church began and how it's changed over the years, let's talk about your personal story as part of this church.

What is your first memory of this church?

Were you raised in this church?

Have you attended other churches?

How is this one different?

How is it similar?

What do you know about the history of our church from before you attended?

Read the attached supplement on the history of Wheatland Salem Church and then answer this question:

What one thing did you learn from this history that you didn't know before?

Matthew 18:20, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I'm there with them."

CHURCH HISTORY

Our current two campus church had its beginnings in two different congregations, the Copenhagen Church and Oswego Prairie Church.

Jacob Albright was an American religious leader. He was converted about 1790 to Wesleyan Methodism. He felt called to take the message of Methodism to the German-speaking people. Albright's Methodist followers formed their own German-speaking church, the Evangelical Association and he was ordained a minister in 1803.

As settlers moved west, Albright Methodism (Evangelical Association) came to our area with circuit-riding frontier ministers in 1834. Circuit rider is a term referring to ministers in the early years of the United States who traveled around a territory to minister to settlers and organize congregations. Because of the distance between churches, these preachers would ride on horseback. They were popularly called circuit riders or saddlebag preachers.

The 1840s saw a large influx of German farming families to eastern Oswego and western Wheatland townships, where, between 1844 and 1860, they established three congregations.

The Oswego Prairie Church on modern Wolf's Crossing Road was established in 1844, followed by the Copenhagen Church in 1852, and the Wheatland Church at 248th and 111th streets in 1860.

All three were served by a single Evangelical Association pastor who rode the circuit weekly.

THE WHEATLAND SALEM STORY

Wheatland Salem Church began when pioneer families began holding church services in the Copenhagen school house and the David Brown home. In 1860 they built Copenhagen Church at Route 59 and 83rd Street.

Also in 1860, another church - the Wheatland Church was organized and they put up a building in 1870. Worship continued at the Wheatland Church until 1895 when the congregation passed out of existence. In April of 1907, the Copenhagen Society sent a petition to the Illinois Conference Session requesting the Evangelical Association grant the Society the privilege of using the two old churches, Wheatland and Copenhagen, in building a new structure, one and one-half miles south of Copenhagen Church, at the intersection of two gravel roads, Rt. 59 and 95th Street, thus uniting the two societies into one, named Wheatland Salem Church.

In 1861, as the congregation grew, the donated land was used to build a school that also hosted the little congregation on Sunday Mornings. In 1907, they built a new wooden church, but in 1927 it burned down. The next year, 1928, a new brick church was built there.

In the days of the old brick church, Route 59 was a lonely country road. As a beacon of hope, the stained glass windows were kept lighted at night to help weary travelers find a safe haven from a storm. The church door was always left open, and it became known as "The Church with the Lighted Window."

OSWEGO CAMPUS

The Oswego Prairie Church was the mother church for both the Oswego Federated Church and the Oswego Prairie congregations. In 1947, the Oswego Prairie, Federated Church and Wheatland Salem congregations

became Evangelical United Brethren Churches following the merger of the Evangelical Church with the United Brethren in Christ.

In 1957, the Federated Church officially changed its name to the Church of the Good Shepherd, EUB. The Church of the Good Shepherd, their one-time mother church, Oswego Prairie and Wheatland Salem Church became United Methodist churches following the merger of the Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren churches in 1968.

In 1997, the population of Naperville was booming, and Route 59 was no longer a quiet country road. Plans to widen the road meant that the old 1928 brick church building would be torn down. In 1997, a new church was built on the farm of Earl Kemmerer at the corner of 95th street and Book Road.

That's where the Naperville campus is today, and the address, 1852 95th Street, Naperville, was granted by the Naperville City Council to pay homage to the year the early church settlers began congregating in their living rooms.

In June 2010 the Oswego Prairie Church was closed. Wheatland Salem opened the new Wheatland Salem Oswego campus in the Oswego Prairie building so that we could continue to accomplish our mission of reaching more people for Christ.



Copenhagen Church at 83rd Street and Rt. 59.
Shown circa 1860.



Wheatland Salem at 95th St. and Rt. 59, built in
1907 and burned in 1927. Shown circa 1915.

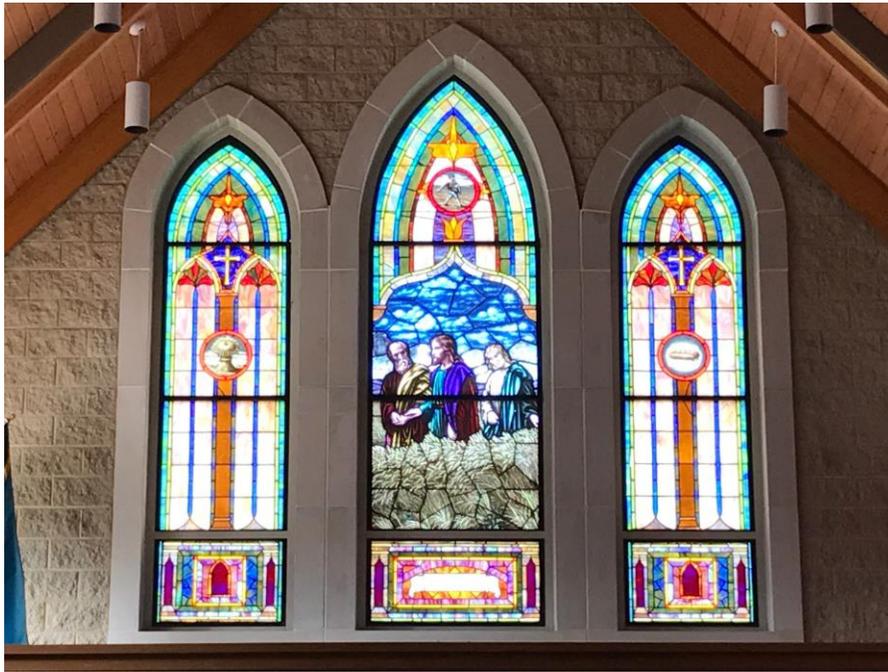


Wheatland Salem at 95th St. and Rt. 59, built in
1928. Shown circa 1970.



Wheatland Salem at 1852 95th St. at Book Rd.
Shown as it appeared in 2001.

HISTORY of the STAINED GLASS WINDOWS Wheatland Salem Church



Have you ever looked closely at the stained glass windows in our Sanctuary and wondered what story they are trying to tell?

In 1852, the beginnings of our church started in the cozy living rooms of German settlers, like David Brown, Sr. As the humble congregation grew, Mr. Brown donated land in 1861 for a school that also hosted the little congregation on Sunday Mornings. Many years later in 1907, they built a big wooden church, but sadly in 1927 it burned down. The next year in 1928, a new brick church was built on Route 59, and Mr. Brown's granddaughter Susie and her husband Reuben Kemmerer, commissioned the stained glass windows, which were dedicated in 1936.

The paintings in the windows each tell part of a Jesus' story. The Kemmerer Family is a farming family, and the windows represent the complete cycle of farming in a Biblical way.

- In the central window, Jesus is walking through a field of wheat with His disciples as in the account of "The Question about the Sabbath." (Mark 2:23-28; Matthew 12:1-8)
- If you look closely, you can see thistle weeds growing among the wheat. This reminds us of Jesus' "The Parable of Weeds". (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43)
- In the red medallion above, seeds are being scattered as in "The Parable of the Sower" (Mark 4:1-9, 13-20; Matthew 13:1-9, 18; Luke 8:4-8, 11-15), "The Parable of the Growing Seed" (Mark 4:26-29), and "The Parable of the Mustard Seed" (Mark 4:30-34; Matthew 13:31-32, Luke 13:18-19)
- In the left medallion, the sheaf bundle of grain stalks represents the gathering of the wheat and burning of the chaff or husks. (Luke 3:17; Matthew 3:12)
- In the right medallion, the windows depict the "Bread of Life", which Jesus called himself. (John 6:35, 48)



The Kemmerer Memorial Window
(Adapted from service of dedication, July 19, 1936)

The Kemmerer Memorial Window is the work of the artist, Mr. F. C. Brady who painted the original, "Christ in the Wheat Field." It was made in the studio of Flanagan and Biedenweg, Chicago.

It was based on the account of Mark 2:23 which tells of Christ and His disciples in the wheat field. Could any picture be more appropriate for our church located in the center of "Wheatland" than "Christ in the Wheat Field"? May this window help each of us as His disciples who worship here, to always walk with Christ in Wheatland!

The center medallion is reproduced from Millet's, "The Sower" and is from the parable of Jesus found in Mark 4. The sheaf in the left medallion represents Luke 3:17 while the loaf in the right medallion is symbolic of the "Bread of Life" which Jesus called himself in John 6:35. The sower, the grain, and the food represent the complete cycle of farming. But in the Spiritual world we too are sowers and we have our harvests! But more than that –

"Back of the loaf is the snowy flour,
And back of the flour is the mill,
And back of the mill is the wheat,
And the shower, and the sun
And the Father's will."

We gratefully acknowledge the gift of this window from Mr. and Mrs. Reuben Kemmerer of Naperville, Illinois, who were residents of this community and members of this church for many years. It is given in honor of their seven children and grandchildren. All of their children, Earl, Florence, Ralph, Harold, Mrs. John Rickert, Mrs. Oliver Elliott, and Mrs. Alvin Unz, have been members of this church