

CHANCEL DEDICATION

ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS

September 29, 2019



ST. JAMES EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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ST. JAMES EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
Necedah, Wisconsin
Roger A. Erdman, Pastor

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CHANCEL RENOVATION AT ST. JAMES

At the June 26, 2018 Council meeting, the Council of St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church approved forming a committee known as the Chancel Committee. The following volunteered to serve as committee members: Debby Ennis, Gerry Ganther, Sandy Harry, Dick Jensen, Mary Alice Lasswell, Debbie Mews, Dan Peterson, Linda Randall, Loretta Saunders, Maribeth Stivers, and Pastor Erdman (ex-officio). On July 16, 2018 the committee held its first meeting. Dick Jensen and Mary Alice Lasswell were elected chairman and secretary respectively of the committee. Early on, as the committee met, it was decided to contact Cary Winch of Petenwell Industries, Necedah for designs and quotes on the major new furniture for the chancel (altar, pulpit, lectern, and communion rail).

At the February 3, 2019 Voters Assembly, the congregation voted to approve the project, commissioning Cary Winch of Petenwell Industries to construct and install the new furniture. Additionally:

- The baptismal font was refurbished by Timothy Salzwedel of Eagle Blasting & Repair, New Lisbon.
- A gradine (shelf) to hold the crucifix was made by Petenwell Industries.
- The hand of God was made by Petenwell industries.
- A new hymn board was made by Petenwell Industries.
- New stands (flower and communion basket) and credence tables were constructed.
- A new Fair Linen with five Greek crosses embroidered on it, was purchased for the altar.
- New carpet was laid in the chancel by McKinney's Home Decorating, Inc., Mauston.

The work was completed by late August. To make this all possible, *"Thank You"* to all who served on the committee and others who were involved in any way with the renovation. Furthermore, *"Thank You"* to all who helped fund the project with generous gifts. (See page 8 for the generous gifts that helped fund this project.)

May the newly renovated and dedicated chancel be used to the praise, honor, and glory of God; where He freely brings us His gifts for our salvation through the cross of His Son, Jesus Christ.

THE HOLY TRINITY

The Bible teaches that our God is triune. That is, the three persons of the Holy Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) are of the same substance/essence, in one Godhead (Deuteronomy 6:4). Facing the chancel (from right to left), the Holy Trinity is represented in a threefold manner as follows:

The first person of the Holy Trinity, God the Father, is represented by the hand of God (Latin: *Manus Dei*). It is placed on the wall above the pulpit. It was virtually the only symbol for God used during the first eight centuries of the Church. The hand symbolizes God the Father's ownership of and providence for all creation, and comes from references to the "*hand of God*" in the Bible (Ezra 8:21-23; Deuteronomy 3:23-24).

The second person of the Holy Trinity, God the Son, Jesus Christ, is represented by the crucifix (a cross with the body of the suffering Christ on it). The crucifix is the most important appointment in the chancel. It is centered on the liturgical east wall of the chancel, sitting on the gradine. Christ is also represented prominently on the altar. The altar occupies the central position in the chancel. The altar is the focal point of the services of the Church. The term comes from the Latin word *altare*, which means the place or structure where sacrifice is offered.

In Lutheran theology, this sacrifice is understood to be the great sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the salvation of the world. With that understanding, the altar has two important symbolic functions: sacramental and sacrificial. The sacramental function of the altar is that it is one of the places where God gives us the gifts that result from Christ's sacrifice, namely, the Lord's Supper. The sacrificial purpose of the altar is that the altar is the place where offer our prayer, praise, and thanksgiving to God for His gifts. On the front of the altar is one of the oldest Christograms for the name of Christ, the Chi-Rho. It consists of the superimposed Greek letters chi (X) and rho (P), which are the first two letters in Greek of *Christ*, (χριστός — *khris-tos*).

The third person of the Holy Trinity, God the Holy Spirit, is represented by the symbol of the dove, along with the three baptismal shells. The dove symbolizes Jesus' baptism at the Jordan River by John the Baptizer with the Holy Spirit coming down on Him as a dove (Matthew 3:13-17). The three shells symbolize Jesus' institution of Baptism; whereby, our triune God places His name on us in Holy Baptism: "*Therefore, wherever you go, disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit*" (Matthew 28:19). This symbol, previously on the original altar, has been placed on the wall above the baptismal font.

NEW AND REFURBISHED LITURGICAL FURNITURE

The major liturgical furnishings in the church building are the altar, the baptismal font, and the pulpit. These are the most important furnishings because from them the sacred acts of liturgical action are done.

The *freestanding altar* (newly constructed) was discussed under The Holy Trinity, and as previously stated is the focal point of the services in the Church. The altar is covered with a parament (color of the season or Feast/Festival); and the Fair Linen. The Fair Linen symbolizes the shroud in which Jesus was wrapped for burial. It is characterized with five Greek crosses embroidered on it, symbolizing the five wounds of Jesus on the cross.

The second major piece of liturgical furniture in the church building is the *baptismal font* (refurbished). The word *font* is derived from the Latin *fons*, meaning "spring" or "fountain." Unlike the altar, the location of the font in the worship space has varied quite a bit over the history of the Church. At St. James, the baptismal font is located next to the lectern.

The third major piece of liturgical furniture is the newly constructed *pulpit*. The word *pulpit* comes from Latin *pulpitum*, which means "scaffold" or "stage." Although modern audio systems have made an elevated podium unnecessary to project the preacher's voice; nevertheless, the pulpit is still raised above the nave (and chancel) floor to signify the prominence of the proclamation of the Word of God.

In addition to the altar, the font, and the pulpit, the newly constructed *lectern* is located at the side of the chancel opposite the pulpit. Normally smaller than the pulpit, the lectern serves as the place from which the Scriptures are read. The lectern in line with the pulpit divides the chancel from the nave (area of pews and organ).

The newly constructed *communion rail* is multi-purpose. Historically, the communion rail served as a separation of the clergy from the laity. Practically, however, the rail provides a place for people to kneel to receive the Sacrament. Additionally, the rail is used to kneel for Absolution, Confirmation, and Holy Matrimony.

In addition to the items presently in the chancel, that is the Processional Cross and chairs for the pastor and any assistants he may have (such as the acolytes and a guest preacher), there are new flower stands and new credence tables, along with a new hymn board. These items from a practical standpoint, provide places for placement of flowers, the offering, and for displaying the hymn selections in a neat and orderly appearance.

BLESSING OF THE CRUCIFIX

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 28:19b

C Amen.

P Beloved in the Lord, St. Paul speaks of the importance of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, saying, "When I came to you, brothers, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified." By His death on the cross our Lord won salvation for us.

1 Corinthians 2:1-2

It is fitting that this crucifix be sanctified by the Word of God and prayer for our devotion and as a proclamation of His atoning work for us.

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C who made heaven and earth.

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Let us Pray.

Merciful and everlasting God, You did not spare Your only Son but delivered Him up for us all that He might bear our sins on the cross. Grant that our eyes may ever behold our Savior and His cross, that we may not fear the power of any adversaries but rather rejoice in His victory for us; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

P The Lord Almighty, the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless this cross.

C Amen.

Note: All rites of blessing have been taken from the *Lutheran Service Book Agenda*, modified accordingly. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO, 2006. Pgs. 270, 272-273, 304, and 307.

GENERAL RITE OF BLESSING

- P** Beloved in the Lord, Moses was commanded by the Lord to receive gifts from the people for the beautification of the sanctuary. Everyone whose heart stirred and whose spirit was moved brought a contribution to the Lord to be used in the Lord's house in all its services.

[Exodus 35:21]

Since the Lord has taught us in His holy Word that everything is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer, it is fitting that we bless and sanctify the items we name for use in God's holy house.

- P** Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C **who made heaven and earth.**

- P** The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

- P** Let us Pray.

O God, You have directed us to bring offerings for Your glory. We implore You to bless this Fair Linen, Hand of God, Baptismal Symbol, communion rail, hymn board, credence tables, and flower and communion basket stands. Grant that they may reflect our love for You, benefit Your Church, and bring joy to those who use them; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

- P** The Lord Almighty, the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless these furnishings and those who use them.

C **Amen.**

BLESSING OF THE LECTERN

- P** In the reading of the Holy Scriptures we hear God speaking His Word of salvation to us. This Word is "a lamp to [our] feet and a light to [our] path."
Psalm 119:105

- P** Let us Pray.

Almighty God, Your own dear Son went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read Your Word. Purify the lips of those who read the Scriptures here, and bless this lectern, that from it we may hear Your gracious Word of life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

- P** The Lord Almighty, the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless this lectern.

C **Amen.**

BLESSING OF THE PULPIT

P Our Lord Jesus Christ preached and taught repentance and the forgiveness of sins, and after His resurrection sent His disciples out, saying: "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation."
Mark 16:15 alt.

P Let us Pray.

O Lord God, Your Son stepped into Simon Peter's boat and from it taught the crowds, thus making it a pulpit. Bless this pulpit that from it Your saving and merciful Word may be proclaimed and many may be brought to eternal salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

P The Lord Almighty, the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless this pulpit.

C Amen.

BLESSING OF THE ALTAR

P At the altar we receive the sacrifice Christ offered once for all on the altar of the cross and offer to God our sacrifice of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving as the Lord spoke through the prophet Isaiah, saying, "Everyone who loves the name of the LORD and holds fast my covenant, their sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples."
Isaiah 56:6-7 alt.

P Let us Pray.

O God, You delighted in the praises of Your faithful servants Abel, Noah, and Abraham and accepted the sacrifices offered on their altars. Look upon us and graciously accept the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving we offer at this altar. Grant that the body and blood of Christ Jesus, once offered on the altar of the cross as the full and only atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world and given us on this altar to eat and to drink, will nourish and strengthen us until at last we gather at the heavenly banquet to feast with the Lamb and all His saints; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

P The merciful Lord be present at this altar to ✠ pardon, ✠ strengthen, ✠ bless, ✠ feed, and ✠ hear His people.

C Amen.

P The Lord Almighty, the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless this altar.

C Amen.

GIFTS MADE TOWARD THE CHANCEL RENOVATION

- Altar, Pulpit, Lectern, and Communion Rail: From the estate of Howard Ganther in memory of Howard and Charlotte Ganther.
- Hand of God: From a member of St. James.
- Fair Linen: From a Thrivent Action Grant; from Don and Debby Ennis.
- Crucifix Gradine (shelf): From Randy and Linda Randall.
- Crucifix Refinishing: From a Thrivent Action Grant; from Elmer Hornburg; from Richard and Carol Braund.
- Hymn Board: From Dick and Edna Jensen.
- Stands (flower and communion basket) and Credence Tables: From Gerry and Karin Ganther.

Not only do we give thanks to God for these generous contributions to the chancel renovation; additionally, throughout the Chancel Committee's deliberations, the committee believed it would be right and proper to acknowledge those who had made contributions in constructing the previous chancel furniture. This was done by taking certain pieces from the old and applying them to the new or moving them to an appropriate place in the sanctuary or fellowship hall. This was done with the following:

- Pulpit and Lectern: The original pulpit and lectern were constructed by member Wallace Frydenlund. The stands from these pieces of chancel furniture were used for the new pulpit and lectern respectively to once again have the Bible and sermons placed on them accordingly.
- Communion Rail: The original communion rail was constructed by member George Gregar. The gates have been retained and modified to fit in with the new communion rail.
- Altar and Baptismal Symbol: The original altar was constructed by Pastor Gary Schultz (who served St. James and St. Paul's from 1987-1992) and his dad at the time the new church building was built. The Baptismal symbol that was previously on the front of the original altar has now been placed on the wall above the baptismal font.
- Chancel Cross: The original chancel cross was made by George Gregar. It is now located on the wall near the fellowship hall entrance nearest the kitchen.

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