

WALL BRETHREN CHURCH
75 Years of Service to the Lord

Compiled by

Larry and Jo Riemenschneider

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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

to

**The Future Generations
of the
Wall Brethren Church**

May you continue to grow in God's love

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The printing of this book is made possible by the
Mikeska family in memory of Virgil Mikeska.

PREFACE

History is fascinating and, as we have found, can be quite challenging. At times, it seems like we know everything there is to know about history, but this is not always the case. When we agreed to compile a history of the seventy-five years of the Wall Brethren Church, it seemed to be a very simple task. After starting to compile this information, it became evident that we did not know everything about the church. As we began our research, one source of information led to another until, finally, the pieces of the puzzle fit together into a final publication.

A very special thanks to the members of the Wall Congregation, the local community, members of the Unity, and others, who contributed information and photographs about the history of the congregation. Due to the overwhelming number of photographs and wealth of historical information submitted, it was impossible to use everything received. We apologize for any information that was not included in this publication.

Photos are the best way to preserve history. The Wall congregation was fortunate to have a local photography studio, Scherz of San Angelo, that was interested in the church and for many years provided photographs of special events. A special thanks to Scherz Studio for permitting the re-printing of many of the photographs in this publication.

This publication could not have become a reality without the help and support of the 75th Anniversary Committee. A special thanks to the members of this committee, Chairman Rick Weise, Dorothy Brenek, Charlene Dusek, Elizabeth Holik, Louis and Dorothy Kokes, Kay Krupala, Cindy Martin, Larry and Jo Riemenschneider, Wilford and Georgia Simcik and Nancy Weise for the many hours of service toward this project.

A very special thanks to Reverend Tommy Tallas who helped provide information, technical support and encouragement during the compiling of this book.

Compiling the seventy-five year history of the Wall Brethren Church has been a rewarding and challenging experience for us. We have enjoyed compiling this book and hope that you in return will enjoy reading about your heritage. Thanks to the Lord for His blessings and guidance and the opportunity to be a part of His earthly kingdom.

Larry and Jo Riemenschneider

INTRODUCTION

In the Gospel according to Matthew, Jesus tells us “*when two or more are gathered in His name, He is always present with us.*” (Matthew 18:20) The ever presence of the Lord in the seventy-five years of history of the Wall Brethren Church is evident since its organization in 1929. Seven families of Czech descent, who migrated to the Wall area in search of a better way of life, began gathering at homes to continue the traditional Christian worship of their forefathers. This small group of people became the founding members of a congregation that has grown through the years and become a vital part of the Wall Community.

Throughout the seventy-five year history of the church, the members of the Wall congregation were faced with many challenges. Through droughts, floods, and the many storms that life provides, the Wall Brethren Church has survived and flourished. Through its continuing faith in God and the many blessings that He has provided, the Church continues to grow.

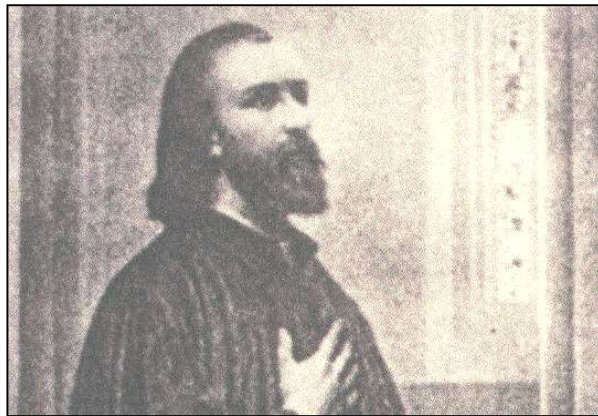
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THE UNITY OF THE BRETHREN

An Historical Sketch

The Unity of the Brethren traces its roots to the work of the reforming priest, John Hus, martyred in 1415. Hus was concerned with bringing the church back to its spiritual roots and removing distracting influences that tradition and custom had added over the years. Hus was concerned with providing the Scriptures in the language of the people, instead of the church Latin version which only the educated and clergy had the opportunity to learn. Hus also desired the church to surrender much of the secular power and material possessions it had accumulated so that its spiritual mission could proceed unhindered.



John Hus (1369-1415)

The reforms that Hus suggested met with tremendous opposition from church authorities, although they were popular with the common people. The execution of Hus by the church in 1415 incensed the people of the Czech lands and led to the development of an alternative church, the Unity of the Brethren in 1457.

The Unity of the Brethren grew in influence until it was the predominant religious force in the Czech lands. The later reformers Martin Luther and John Calvin had several contacts with the Brethren in the course of their ministries. While the Anabaptists were opposed by the Roman Catholics and other Protestants of the time, Brethren offered them sanctuary in their homeland.

The level of religious conflict in Europe grew until open warfare became inevitable. In 1620, early in the Thirty Years Wars, the Protestant forces in the Czech lands suffered a devastating defeat that led to the imposition of the Counter-Reformation by the Roman Catholic Church. During this time, Protestants were forced either to leave the country and become refugees or to practice their beliefs in secret.

Many of those Brethren who left their homeland joined the movement that later became the Moravian Church. Others who stayed behind practiced their beliefs in secret, sometimes with services led by pastors visiting from other countries in remote places for the fear of discovery by Catholic authorities. For 160 years, the Brethren tradition was passed along in families from parent to child. Religious books like Bibles, hymnals, prayer books, and books of sermons were hidden from the occasional searches of Catholic leaders who sought to confiscate and destroy them.

In 1781, the emperor Joseph II proclaimed toleration for the practice of Protestant belief where there were sufficient numbers of them to start congregations. However, only those who adhered to the Lutheran or Helvetic (Calvinist) confessions were permitted to practice their beliefs openly; Brethren were still prohibited the open practice of their faith. Many Brethren joined with the Lutherans and Calvinists.

In the 1850's, word circulated in the Czech lands that there was cheap land in Texas where persons could make a new start in farming. Immigration continued and grew until ending with the outbreak of World War I. Czech Protestants started congregations where they settled in Texas to provide for the practice of their faith and the teaching of their children. Pastors from the Czech lands came to Texas to become leaders in these congregations and to start new ones.

In 1903, representatives of several of these congregations gathered to create the Unity of the Brethren in Texas, in the effort to resurrect the Brethren Church, suppressed for all these years in their homeland. Within a few generations, the congregations of the Unity of the Brethren reflected the assimilation of their members into American society and culture. Most congregations began to transition from Czech language to English language worship services in the 1940's, although some congregations had occasional Czech language services into the 1970's.



Photo Courtesy John Krupala
Unity Ministers at the 100th Anniversary of the Unity of the Brethren in Texas
Taylor Brethren Church, Taylor, Texas, January 24, 2004

The Unity of the Brethren today is a denomination that honors its past and its traditions, while looking forward to new opportunities for mission and witness. The ethnic identity of the membership as Czech has faded to a degree, with many persons joining the Unity from other traditions and ethnic groups (<http://www.unityofthebrethren.org/history.htm>).

ROWENA YEARS

Early in 1909, the Reverend George W. Fender of Ballinger took some preliminary steps toward organizing a church among the Bohemian in the Rowena Community. During the summer, Francis Hornicek, a ministerial student, worked in the Rowena Community contacting Czech families about the possibility of the formation of a church. In October, the Reverend V. Losa came from Pittsburg to Rowena to formally organize a church. The “Rowena Moravian Bohemian Presbyterian Church” was chartered by the State of Texas on May 23, 1910, and shortly a small church building was erected.

For the next decade, the small congregation in Rowena went its quiet way, working and worshipping without attracting attention. In 1929 a survey of religious activities in Rowena noted that *“the Presbyterian Church, located in the northeastern part of Rowena, has a strong membership of active worshipers. The Rev. Henry E. Beseda, Sr. is pastor of the church. Elders in the Presbyterian Church are: Frank Psencik (later a member of the Wall Czech Moravian Brethren Church), Elmer Psencik, Eugene Barton, Adolph Urban, and Fred Machotka.*



Photo Courtesy Dorothy Brenek

Moravian Bohemian Presbyterian Church

The history of the Unity of the Brethren in Rowena is closely intertwined with that of the Czech Presbyterian group. The Rowena Community was not able to support two Protestant Czech Churches and neither one flourished. As denominational distinctions became less meaningful, these small groups soon became inactive, especially in the period after World War II.



The early Czechs who settled in Runnels County attracted the attention of Reverend Adolph Chlumsky. He purchased two city lots from P.J. Baron in 1899, and visited the Rowena Community twice in 1902. Late in 1903, Reverend Chlumsky was instrumental in organizing the Evangelical Unity of the Czech-Moravian Brethren in North America, in a convention at Granger in Williamson County. Frank Psencik attended the convention, and shortly a congregation was organized in Rowena. However,

Reverend Adolph Chlumsky

there were few clergy, and spiritual guidance was a scattered thing at best. In late July 1910, two young ministers, Reverend Joseph Hegar and Reverend Josef Barton, were ordained into the ministry of this small denomination. Thereafter, these two clergy visited Rowena, and later Wall, on a monthly basis, until the demise of the always small congregation in Rowena in late 1945. The small group was never able to afford a church building of its own, and led a shadowy half-existence in conjunction with the Czech Presbyterians and the German Evangelicals. Over the years, the Brethren variously used the facilities of these two groups. As the history of the Brethren in Texas noted, *“the (Rowena) congregation was discontinued in the 1940’s in favor of the Presbyterian congregation of that community, as Rowena was too small to have two denominations serving the Czech Protestant of the area.”* (Skinner 1973)

Ministers who traveled monthly to conduct worship services often traveled by train to Rowena. Members of the congregation would pick them up at the depot, take them to their homes, providing a place for them to stay and furnishing them meals. After the services, members would take the ministers back to the depot for their return trip to east Texas.

When the Rowena Brethren congregation was discontinued in the 1940’s, many of the members began making the monthly trip to Wall to participate in worship services there. Some of these members moved to the Wall area and eventually became members of the Brethren Church in Wall. (Riemenschneider, A. 2003).

BRETHREN AT WALL

1929-1980

As the Concho Valley farming community spread from Runnels County into Tom Green County, families of Czech heritage began to move into the Wall area. The following history by Rev. John Baletka appeared in the 1980 Brethren Journal.

In the summer of 1929, five Czech families with a Brethren background, moved from the Granger-Taylor area to the Wall area. They joined other Czech families that had moved to Wall from Rowena and families that were already settled in Wall. Due to the uncertainty of the times, a permanent place of worship was not pursued and worship services were held in the homes of families. Families participating included those of L.K Batla, Paul Krupala, Joe Simcik, Tom Machann, John Stasney, John Sefcik, Frank Psencik, and Miss Fannie Hurtik.

In the fall of 1929, an unused Methodist Church in Wall became the site of monthly worship and weekly Sunday School. At the October, 1929 worship, the sacrament of Holy Communion was observed for the first time. Nine men and ten women received the blessing of this sacrament. Sunday School records for the year 1930 reveal those who were active in the Sunday School and worship services.

Active Members in Sunday School and Worship in 1930

<u>Adults</u>	<u>Children and Youth</u>
Paul Krupala	Edwin Krupala
Marie Krupala	Clifton A. Simcik
Emil Krupala	Wilford J. Simcik
Joseph Simcik	Aleen Simcik
Agnes Simcik	Wilford C.L. Stasney
John F. Stasney	Johnny J. Stasney
Lillian Stasney (Sec'y)	R.V. Machann
Tom Machann	E.J. Machann
Vera Machann	Lad Batla, Jr.
Lad K. Batla, Sr.	Lorine Batla
Emilie Batla	Lee Roy Sefcik
John Sefcik	Wilma Sefcik
Tony Sefcik	Alvin Sefcik
Frank Psencik (teacher)	Teachers: Fannie Hurtik
Olga Psencik	Agnes Simcik

Fannie Hurtik

In 1933, they formally organized into a congregation. At the convention held in West, the Wall congregation was received into the Unity of the Brethren (then called Evangelical Unity of the Czech Moravian Brethren) as a member church.

The first confirmation class was received into the membership on October 6, 1935. This class was taught by Miss Frances Batla and Mrs. Joe (Agnes) Simcik and included seven children: Laddie Batla, Bertha Hejl, Edwin Krupala, Frank Motl, Joy Dean Motl, Violet Motl, and Clifton Simcik. Two children were baptized: Roy Lee Dusek and Emmett Laza.

When one realizes that Sunday School was held every Sunday, while worship services were held eight to twelve times a year, it becomes obvious that at Wall, just as in most other Brethren Churches, the Sunday School was a very significant factor in the survival and the development of the church.



Reverend Joseph Hegar

On November 24, 1936 the members decided to buy a ½ acre plot in Wall for a church building of their own if enough money could be raised to pay for the lot and money would be pledged toward the building. By December, they had collected \$117.50, paid for the lot with a total cost of \$116.75 and had seventy-five cents to put into the newly established building fund. In that same month, the congregation moved its place of worship from Wall to a church in Fairview. Minutes reveal that Reverend Hegar was re-elected for the coming year with a salary for twelve worship services set at \$80.00 up to \$100.00 if that much could be collected.

On March 18, 1937, the congregation decided to build a church building not to exceed a total cost of \$1,600.00 with measurements of 40 by 30 feet. With W.J. Bergmann as the hired supervising carpenter, and president of the church, Mr. L.K. Batla, keeping a daily watchful oversight, the members were kept busy for the next two and a half months with their building project. The total cost was amazingly close the their spending limit (\$1,611.65), including pews and the \$120.00 paid the carpenter.

Even though several families had joined the church since its organization, it was still a small congregation of about fourteen families. One might wonder how was it possible for the small membership to manage the cost of even their modest building, because the economic conditions had

not yet recovered from the great depression. From the membership, funds collected totaled a modest sum of \$485.32, but there were many others interested in their project.

Business firms and individuals from Wall and San Angelo gave \$171.00. Friends from Rowena, some who later became members at Wall, gave \$136.50. Interested people living in the communities of Eola, Mereta, Miles, Lowake, Ballinger, Veribest and Vancourt contributed a total of \$103.50. Many of these later were to also become members of the Wall Congregation. Then came help from various congregations of the Unity, where special appeals totaled \$359.44. These congregations were: Granger, Seaton, Ocker, Snook, Cooks Point, Nelsonville, Taylor, Holland, Buckholts, Smithville, Houston, Robstown, Wesley, West and individuals from other places.

With the offering at the Dedication Service of \$47.74, the congregation was able to even reduce the \$600.00 borrowed from the Mutual Aid Society(see P. 56) to \$320.00 by the end of the year. All this support was very encouraging to this congregation that was geographically so far away from the other churches of the Unity.



Photo courtesy Georgia Simcik

Wall Brethren Church, constructed 1937

The Dedication Service was held on June 13, 1937. The members gathered first with their pastor, Rev. Hegar at the church they had been using in Fairview. After a short worship in which Reverend Hegar recalled his seventeen years of work at Rowena and more recently at Wall, the members departed to Wall and their own building. Many other people had already assembled there, and they proceeded with the dedication.

Participating in that dedication were: Reverend Josef Barton, Sr., then president of the Unity of the Brethren, the pastor, Rev. Hegar, the elders and several other members of the church. After lunch on the grounds, an afternoon service was held with many special numbers. Dr. Ernest Press of

the Evangelical Church in San Angelo and the Reverend A. Romanowski of the Evangelical Church of Rowena were included in that afternoon service. Elders at that time included: L.K. Batla, Emil Krupala, Joe Simcik, Stanley Hejl and John Chlapek.

Reverend Hegar continued to serve as the pastor through 1943 at which time he asked that someone else be elected because of his failing voice. The congregation elected Reverend Josef A. Barton who was living at Nelsonville, and he served as pastor through 1953, traveling the 700 mile round trip each month. Because of some health problems that made long distance travel very difficult, Reverend Barton asked not to be elected after ten years serving as pastor. Reverend Gordon Hejl, a son of the congregation, was then elected pastor, and he served for the years 1954 through 1956.

By the early 1950's, the congregation had outgrown its small church and was in great need of larger facilities. But four years of very severe drought and poor crops prevented building more adequate facilities. Finally, the need could be ignored no longer and the congregation decided to build a new church in the fall of 1954, despite poor crop conditions even at that time. Groundbreaking was held on February 6, 1955. The new church was first used for worship on July 3, and was officially dedicated on August 7, 1955.



Photo courtesy Georgia Simcik

Wall Brethren Church, constructed 1955

This new building was possible because so many of the farmer-members devoted many days of volunteer labor (770 days) since there was not that much work to do in their drought-affected fields. The most severe west Texas sand and dust storm in memory hit as the interior of the church was being painted. Finally this new building, with the help of Mr. Franklin

Mikeska as supervisor of construction, was completed at a cost of \$23,540.00 plus the \$6,160 estimated value of the 770 days of volunteer labor. This building measured 72 by 34 feet with a 28 by 28 foot Sunday School section. The first church building was remodeled as a fellowship hall with a kitchen.

The types of programs developed by the congregation by this time can be seen in the number of people in responsible positions at the time of the dedication of that building:

Building Planning committee: Johnny Pokorny, Joe Simcik,
Mrs. John Chlapek, Adolph Riemenschneider,
Clifton Simcik and Raymond Hejl.

Board of Elders: John Chlapek, Frank Holik Jr.
Milton Labaj, Edwin Krupala, Clifton Simcik,
Adolph Riemenschneider, and Raymond Hejl.

Sunday School Officers: Ben Laza, Clifton Simcik,
Laddie Batla, Lydia Tomcik and Marvin Dusek.

Sunday School Teachers: Joe Simcik, Wilford Simcik,
Laddie Batla, Milton Labaj, Lydia Tomcik,
Glen Motl, Margie Motl, Ben Laza, Mrs. Leo
Hunka, Clarice Drgac, Mrs. Milton Labaj,
Mrs. Raymond Hejl, Dollye Sefcik, Virginia Porkony, and Mrs.
L.C. Motl.

Christian Sisters Officers: Mrs. John Chlapek, Mrs. L.C.
Motl, Lydia Tomcik, Evelyn Drgac, Mrs. Adolph
Chasak, Clarice Drgac, Mrs. Leo Hunka,
Mrs. Emil Krupala, Mrs. Raymond Hejl,
Mrs. Frank Tomcik

Mutual Aid Society Officers: Emil Krupala, Anton
Michalik, Clifton Simcik.

Young People's League Officers: Clarice Drgac,
Mrs. Milton Labaj, Lydia Tomcik, Sharon
Chlapek, Virginia Pokorny, Edward Laza,
J.D. Drgac, Evelyn Drgac.

Choir Director: J.D. Drgac Organist: Evelyn Drgac
Pianist: Sharon Chlapek

From 1957 until the fall of 1962 the pastors serving the congregation included: Reverend Jesse Skrivanek (three years), Reverend Frank Simcik (two years), and Reverend John Baletka (one year).

In September 1962, a retired minister from the Moravian Church, Reverend John R. Hoesman became the first resident pastor, and served

through the spring of 1964. He and his wife were a great blessing to all the membership and left a lasting impression on the life of the church.

After serving Wall from Granger for a year, the Reverend Glen Jurek became the second resident pastor. He served until the fall of 1968 when he resigned the pastorate to enter the field of farming in South Texas.

For the next two years, the congregation was again served by ministers living some distance away. Reverend Gordon Hejl and Reverend Jesse Skrivanek again came to serve until Reverend Thomas Tallas moved to San Angelo upon his ordination in the summer of 1970. He served as pastor for five fruitful years before accepting a call and moving to Rosenberg in the summer of 1975. Reverend John Baletka became the pastor in July 1975. He served in that capacity for two years traveling from Austin before moving to San Angelo in August of 1977.

In addition to the those already mentioned who may also have served as assistants, other pastors were: Reverend Albert Michalik, Reverend Johnny Bravenec, Reverend Daniel Marek, Reverend Henry Beseda, Jr. and Reverend Milton Maly. During the early 1930's, Reverend H.E. Beseda, Sr. served as pulpit supply while he served the Presbyterian Church in Rowena. In the early 1950's, Reverend Miksovsky also served in that capacity. During the 1960's and 1970's, local pastor Reverend Billy Hill served.

But a congregation's history should not be written only by listing the pastors who served a congregation. With the minimal guidance of a pastor because of the great distance of the Wall congregation from other Brethren Churches and the residences of their pastors, the real work of the church and its program was carried on with much success by the very capable lay leadership and all the members.

In addition to actually constructing their two church buildings with only supervisory help already mentioned, the members developed a full and well rounded church program as evidenced already by a listing of the church directory of 1955. In addition to a Board of Elders and a Sunday School program for all ages, there was a large Christian Sisters Society of 43 members in 1955, a very strong youth organization, a choir, a Junior Youth Fellowship, Vacation Bible School, annual picnics, Christmas programs, New Year's Eve socials, etc.

In 1962, an Education wing of four classroom was added to the existing church that was built in 1955. In January 1966, the first parsonage was dedicated and in November 1978, a new parsonage was purchased in San Angelo.

In spite of the distance from Wall to Central Texas and other congregations of the Unity, the Wall Church and its members have demonstrated a continuing interest and support of the work of the Unity. For more than forty years, the young people have traveled to participate in youth activities in central Texas. The congregation had sent many young people to Hus School even before the days of the Encampment near Caldwell. Almost yearly since 1957, Wall has had good representation in the conferences and Hus School programs.

Families of the Wall Congregation have contributed three ministers to the work of the Unity of the Brethren: Reverend Gordon Hejl, ordained in 1952, Reverend Albert Michalik, ordained in 1953 and Dr. Mark Labaj ordained in 1980. In addition, Reverend Robert Janek, also of the Wall Congregation, was ordained by the Unity to a special interest ministry.

With faith and confidence in the continued blessings of the Lord upon the work of the church at Wall and with capable and dedicated lay leadership in all phases of the church program, the future of the Wall Church continues to look promising and encouraging. A large number of the young people in the past and in the present remain active in the Wall Church because they have gone into farming in the area or have found employment in nearby San Angelo. For this reason the number of young adults in active and responsible positions in the church program is a very encouraging sign, not only for the present, but also the future (Baletka 1980).

1981-2004

During the first fifty years of growth the Wall Congregation went from horse and buggy days to the start of the computer age. Many new technical advances have taken place during the last two decades. Still, the need for spiritual guidance, growth and service to the Lord has been the primary goal of the Church. With this in mind, many new programs and building projects were undertaken.

The Reverend John Baletka continued to serve the congregation as pastor until July of 1985 when Reverend Thomas Tallas returned and continues to serve at the present time.

Building projects during this time provided much needed space for a growing congregation. In 1955 when the new church was built, the old church (built in 1937) was remodeled and used for a fellowship building to host the many social events of the congregation. As the membership grew, the old building (1200 square feet) was not large enough to house everybody. The congregation decided to build a new facility. The old fellowship building was sold to Bobby Eggemeyer and was moved to his property in 1981. It is presently part of a series of old, historical structures that have been moved to the Southern Cross Ranch. In 1982 a new fellowship building (3,750 square feet) was dedicated to the service of the Lord. At the time of this printing, the church membership has again outgrown the present facility, and plans have been submitted to build a new fellowship hall.

In the early 1990's, membership in the congregation had reached a point where the church that had been built in 1955 (4,400 square feet) did not provide adequate space for the growing congregation. Again, as in years past, the congregation, with the financial support of it's members, other congregations, people in the community and others embarked upon a building project that would fit the needs of the congregation. In 1994 a new Sanctuary and Educational Facility (9,000 square feet) was dedicated to the service of the Lord.



The church that was built in 1955 was moved from its original location to the property of Thomas Wilde where it was remodeled and at the present time is being used by the Wildes as their home. At the time of this printing, growth in the Sunday School and other organizations has dictated the need for a larger Educational Facility, and the congregation is again considering expansion.

In the late 1990's, the congregation became aware that there was a need for more direction and leadership for the youth of the congregation. A part-time Director of Youth Ministry was established in 2000 with the position being made full time in 2001. Kelly Kovar served in this capacity until 2003. The addition of this staff position has resulted in a significantly increased ministry and outreach to the youth of the church as well as the community.

The Wall church has provided and has become involved with many activities in the community during the past years. One of these activities, the Wall Community Thanksgiving Service, co-sponsored by the Wall Brethren church and St. Ambrose Catholic Church of Wall, has provided an opportunity for an ecumenical service to be held in the community. The Christian Sisters have held Kolache Bakes twice a year with proceeds going to various home and outreach ministries of the church. The youth ministry of the church continues to reach out in the community by holding activities such as, "See You at The Pole" and "Huddle Up".

As the church has reached the end of the 20th Century and now embarks on the 21st, many new exciting opportunities await. The future of the Wall Brethren Church looks bright and encouraging. With the faith and confidence of our forefathers and the continued blessing of the Lord, we pray that the next century of the Wall Brethren Church will continue to provide a place for worship in the Wall Community.

CZECH HERITAGE

The Moravian and Bohemian Protestant immigrants coming to America during the nineteenth century were members of either the Reformed or Lutheran traditions, with their spiritual roots in the Ancient Unity of the Brethren (Unitas Fratrum). As the immigrants made their way into central Texas, their faith and traditions of worship were a priority. There were Protestant churches in the area that conducted worship services in the English and German languages. The language barrier created a problem for the Czech-speaking settlers, and worship services in their native tongue became their goal.

At the turn of the century, some of these Czech settlers, mainly farmers, began a migration to west Texas in search of new lands. In Runnels County, they found their dream with virgin lands that were rich and fertile. The local Protestant churches again did not provide worship services that fulfilled the needs of the Czech-speaking Brethren. During this time, ministers traveled from the newly formed Evangelical Unity of the Czech-Moravian Brethren churches to provide Czech services to the settlers in Rowena area. In the late 1920's, when Czech families moved from Rowena, Taylor and Granger to the Wall area where other Czech families already resided, the Wall Czech Moravian Brethren Church was organized.

The tradition of Czech services continued with ministers traveling from other Unity Churches in central Texas. With the Wall community now a mixture of English, German and Czech-speaking people, it became evident to the Czech that they would need to learn the English language. Children were sent to school to learn English and parents at home learned English the hard way, from others in the community. As the Wall community grew and members of Czech-speaking families married English and German speaking families, the language barrier slowly was broken. English and German speaking spouses would attend worship services that were being held in Czech and not understand the messages. In the 1940's, ministers traveling to Wall saw the need for preaching in both English and Czech. There were several years of transition and, by the 1950's, English was solely used in the worship services.

In the 1950's a movement in the Unity to become more open to all members of the communities, not just Czech descendents, brought about many changes in the church. One of these was a name change in 1959 from The Evangelical Unity of the Czech Moravian Brethren Church in North America to the Unity of the Brethren in Texas.



Photo Courtesy Albina Plagens

Czech Choir sings on the Pat Attebery television program

At the present time, although the Wall Brethren Church has many descendants of the Czech background, they have been joined by many members of the community who are from other backgrounds. Today, the traditional Czech language that was spoken many years ago has become a thing of the past. It is to be heard only in an occasional greeting (“Jak se máš”) among older members of the church, or reading and singing in Czech during Christmas programs.

The Wall Brethren Church is blessed to have forefathers of the Czech descent who brought to America the traditional church doctrine. Through their perseverance and dedication to the Lord, the Wall Brethren Church exists today.

The Lord’s Prayer (in Czech)

Otče náš, jenž jsi na nebesích,
Posvět’ se jméno tvé,
Přijď královsti tvé,
Buď vůle tvá, jako v nebi tak i na zemi.
Chléb náš vezdejší dej nem dnes.
A odpust’ nám naše viny,
Jakož i my odpouštíme našim vinníkům,
I nevod’ nás v pokušení,
Ale zbav nás of zleho.
Nebo tvé jest království,
I moc, i sláva, na věky, věků, Amen.

MINISTERS

During the seventy-five year history of the Wall Brethren Church, a number of ministers have provided spiritual guidance to the church. In early years, services were provided by ministers eight to twelve times a year with lay people and the Sunday School providing the remainder of the services. Wall, being a great distance from the rest of the Unity churches to the east, created a travel problem for ministers, thus the limited number of services during the year. In later years the congregation was supplied weekly with ministers and assistants from the Unity. In 1962 the first resident minister was assigned to the congregation. Following is a list of ministers and assistants who have served the Wall Congregation.

Ministers 1929-2004

<u>Year</u>	<u>Minister/Assistant</u>
1929-1943	Rev. Joseph Hegar
1943-1948	Rev. Josef A. Barton
1949	Rev. Josef A. Barton
	Rev. Joseph Miksovsky, Ass't.
1950	Rev. Josef A. Barton
	Rev. Joseph Miksovsky, Ass't
	Albert Michalik, student
1951-1952	Rev. Josef A. Barton
	Rev. Joseph Miksovsky, Ass't.
	Albert Michalik, student
	Gordon Hejl, student
1953	Rev. Josef A. Barton
	Rev. Albert Michalik, Ass't.
1954	Rev. Gordon Hejl
	Daniel Marek, student
1955	Rev. Gordon Hejl
	Rev. Daniel Marek
1956	Rev. Gordon Hejl
	Johnny Bravenec, student
	Jesse Skrivanek, student
1957	Rev. Jesse Skrivanek
	Johnny Bravenec, student

Ministers (con't)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Minister/Assistant</u>
1958	Rev. Jesse Skrivanek Johnny Bravenec, student Frank Simcik, student
1959	Rev. Jesse Skrivanek Frank Simcik, student
1960	Rev. Frank Simcik Glen Jurek, student
1961	Rev. Frank Simcik
1962	Rev. John Baletka Rev. John Hoesman (Sept. 1962)
1963	Rev. John Hoesman Rev. John Baletka (summer ass't)
1964	Rev. John Hoesman Rev. Glen Jurek (July 1964)
1965-1967	Rev. Glen Jurek
1968	Rev. Glen Jurek (through Sept.) Rev. Gordon Hejl Milton Maly, student Rev. W.B. Hill
1969	Rev. Gordon Hejl Rev. Jesse Skrivanek Rev. W.B. Hill Tommy Tallas, student
1970	Rev. Gordon Hejl Rev. Jesse Skrivanek Rev. W.B. Hill Tommy Tallas, student (Jan.-June) Rev. Tommy Tallas (July-Dec.)
1970-1975	Rev. Tommy Tallas
1975-1985	Rev. John Baletka
1985-Present	Rev. Tommy Tallas

Ministers Serving the Wall Congregation



Rev. Joseph Hegar



Rev. Josef Barton



Rev. Gordon Hejl



Rev. Albert Michalik



Rev. Daniel Marek



Rev. Johnny Bravenec



Rev. Jesse Skrivanek

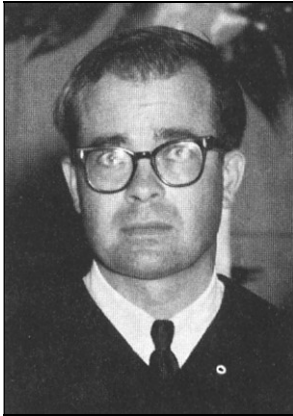


Rev. Frank Simcik



Rev. John Hoesman

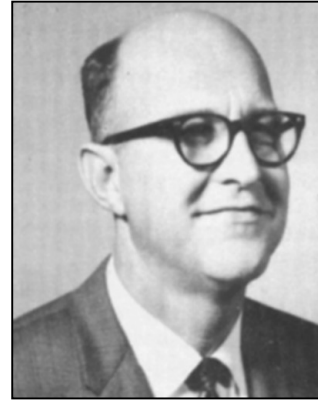
Ministers (continued)



Rev. Glen Jurek



Rev. Billy Hill



Rev. John Baletka



Rev. Tommy Tallas

ORDAINED MINISTERS from the WALL CONGREGATION

The Wall Congregation is blessed to have families who contributed ordained ministers to the service of the Lord.

Reverend Gordon Hejl

Rev. Gordon Hejl was born on February 21, 1918 on his family farm southeast of Taylor, Texas. He attended a one-room school, Colombia, for the first seven grades and graduated from Taylor High School in 1936. After completing his training at the Anderson Diesel School of Los Angeles in 1939, he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps on September 25, 1940. He served in training commands until July 1945 when he flew as crew chief of a B-29 bomber serving in the Southwest Pacific Area. His plane flew several missions over Japan prior to the atomic bombs being dropped which ended the war. He was discharged on December 1, 1945. His family moved to the



Reverend Gordon Hejl, 1962

Wall area in 1946.

After being out of school for ten years, he enrolled in the Moravian College where he played football. After Graduation, he entered the Moravian Theological seminary and graduated with a Master of Divinity degree in 1952. He was ordained into the ministry of Our Lord on June 17, 1952 at the Wall Brethren Church (Mckay 2003).

Reverend Albert Michalik

Rev. Albert Michalik was born in the Beyersville Community southeast of Taylor, Texas on March 2, 1925. He attended the Holland Public School as well as summer Czech School in the Hackberry Community, west of Holland. When he was thirteen, the family moved to San Angelo, Texas, and he made his public profession of faith in the Wall Brethren Church during Confirmation. He attended Mereta Public School for two years and graduated from San Angelo High School in 1942.

Rev. Michalik had intended to join the U.S. Air Force, but when an accident left his father's feet in serious condition, he decided to stay and farm since his brothers were already serving in the Armed Services. Rev. Josef A. Barton had often talked to him about the ministry, but with little success. One day, four and a half years after high school, he was plowing and felt a strong call to the ministry. He soon entered and graduated from the University of Texas at Austin in 1950, followed by enrollment and graduation from the Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary in 1953. His ordination took place at the Wall Brethren church on June 19, 1953 (Mckay 2003).

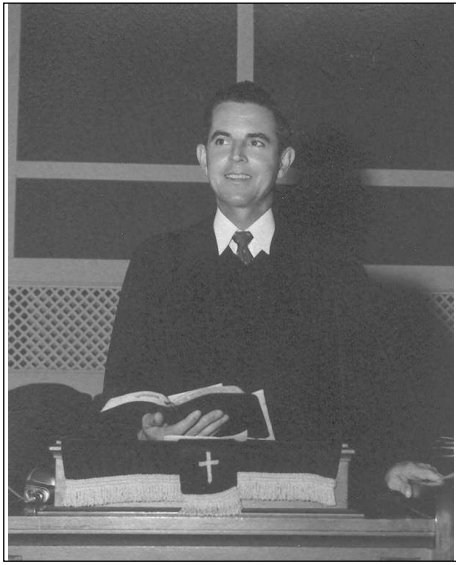


Photo Courtesy Georgia Simcik
Reverend Albert Michalik

Reverend Robert W. Janek

Rev. Robert Janek was born July 16, 1941 in Ft. Worth Texas. He graduated from Wall High School in Wall, Texas in 1959 and Texas Tech University in Lubbock with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1964. He received his Master of Divinity degree in 1977 and a Master of Arts in Religion in 1980 both from the Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colorado. Rev. Janek was ordained into the ministry our Lord by the Brethren Church in 1977 at Dallas, Texas and by the United Church of Christ in Denver, Colorado, also in 1977. He served in the U.S. Army from 1964-1968 and with the Defense Intelligence Agency from 1968-1973.

Rev. Janek sees his strength to be in the area of pastoral care: being with people “in the trenches” of life, when the going becomes rough. He states, "I am told that I am a person whom people can turn to in their time of loss and grief. I tend to be reflective, almost a habitual muse! And I have a sense of humor!" (McKay 2003).

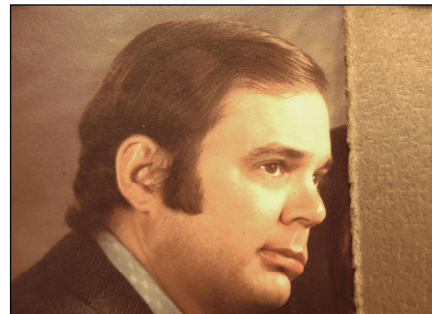
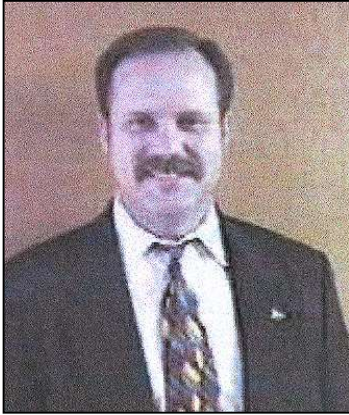


Photo Courtesy Rev. Robert Janek
Reverend Robert Janek

Dr. Mark L. Labaj

Dr. Mark Labaj was born on February 3, 1952, in San Angelo, Texas. As a youth, he was active in the Wall and Austin Brethren Churches. After graduation from Austin Reagan High School in 1969, he attended the



Dr. Mark L. Labaj

University of Texas and received a B.S. Degree in Aerospace Engineering in 1974. He served in the U.S. Air Force from 1975-1977. He then entered the Moravian theological Seminary in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania where he received the Master of Divinity Degree in 1980. He was awarded the Doctor of Ministry degree in May 1986 by the Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Dr. Labaj was ordained into the ministry of our Lord on May 25, 1980, at the Taylor Brethren Church (McKay 2003).

CONFIRMATION

“If anyone publicly acknowledges me as his friend, I will openly acknowledge him as my friend before my father in heaven.”

Matthew 10:32

Confirmation is a rite of the Church by which persons baptized as infants, after being instructed in Christian doctrine, agree to and renew the covenant and promise made for them. During the act of confirmation, an individual makes a public profession of faith in Christ and promises to be His follower and to serve Him all the days of their life. The confirmand receives the blessings of the Lord and is admitted to the communicant membership of the church (Catechism of the Unity of the Brethren).

Confirmations were held throughout the years dependent upon there being enough students to form a class. The customary confirmation in the early years included the instruction of the Bible, Catechism and Church history. The rite of confirmation and public profession of faith was conducted during the regular worship service with all members of the class participating.

Confirmations from 1935 to 1979



1935

Front Row: Frank Motl, Violet Motl, Joy Dean Motl, Bertha Hejl, Clifton Simcik
Back Row: Laddie Batla, Pastor-Rev. Joseph Hegar, Edwin Krupala

Photo Courtesy of Cindy Martin

The confirmation class of 1935 was the first class of the Wall Brethren Church. This class was confirmed in the Methodist Church in Wall where the congregation was meeting. The confirmation class of 1937 was the first class confirmed in the church that was built to hold services for the Wall Brethren Church.



1937

Front Row: Dorothy Drgac, Viola Drgac,
Wilford Simcik, Ella Machann, Lorene Batla
Back Row: Ruby Machann, Teacher-Mrs. Vera
Machann, Sadie Hejl, Lillie Machann

Pastor: Rev. Joseph Hegar

Photo Courtesy Dorothy Kokes

1939

Front Row: Teacher-Mrs. Vera Machann,
W.C. Drgac, Ruby Shiller, Dena Martinec,
Esther Michalik, Aleen Simcik, Ruby Hejl
Back Row: E.J. Lichnovski, Edwin Machann,
Georgia Michalik, Albert Michalik
Pastor: Rev. Joseph Hegar

Photo Courtesy Georgia Simcik



1942

Front Row: Teacher-Mrs. Vera Machann,
Pastor-Rev. Joseph Hegar, Earline Shiller,
Bernice Machann
Back Row: Vernon Shiller, Albert Drgac,
Angeline Michalik

Photo Courtesy Clarice Drgac





1944

Front Row: Teacher-Mrs. Vera Machann,
Bessie Shiller, Rev. Josef Barton, Dorothy
Hejl
Back Row: Stanley Hejl, Hubert Drgac,
Johnny Laza

Photo Courtesy Johnny Laza

1947

Front Row: Teacher-Mrs. Agnes Simcik, Mary
Hejl, Dorothy Dusek, Noemi Michalik, Dollye
Sefcik, Clarice Drgac, Organist-Evelyn Drgac
Back Row: Jimmie Machann, Roy Shiller, Rev.
Josef Barton, Jr., Daniel Michalik, Marvin
Dusek, Delmar Batla

Photo Courtesy Clarice Drgac



1950

Front Row: Pianist-Evelyn Drgac, Georgia
Pokorny, Mary Frances Tomcik, Glendolyn Motl,
Patsy Sefcik, Eugene Dusek, Franklin Shiller,
Erwin Hejl, J.D. Drgac, Teacher-Agnes Simcik
Back Row: Gwendolyn Motl, Margie Motl, Lydia
Tomcik, Dorothy Tomcik, Teacher-Gladys Labaj,
Roy Dusek, Daniel Chasak, Wilbert Pokorny

Photo Courtesy Dorothy Kokes





1953

Front Row: Ervin Machann, Virgil Mikeska, Rev. Albert Michalik, Neal Janek, Billy Ray Dusek

Back Row: Teachers-Ben Laza, and Mrs. L.C. Motl, Laverne Dusek, Sharon Chlapek, Virginia Pokorny, Organist-Evelyn Drgac

Photo Courtesy Sharon Hohmann

1955

Front Row: Carlene Dusek, Nancy Chasak, Donna Riemenschneider, Rev. Gordon Hejl, Helen Dusek, Dorothy Mikeska, Loretta Chasak
 Back Row: James Batla, David Holik, Wallie Dusek, Harold Mikeska, Gene Chasak, Teacher-Ben Laza, Robert Janek, Teacher-Mrs. Leo Hunka, Raymond Kotrla, Robert Krupala, Stanley Holik, Vickie Cuba

Photo Courtesy Nancy Weise



1961

Front Row: Linda Chasak, Diana Dusek, Darlene Kotrla, Allene Machann
 Back Row: Teacher-Dan Michalik, Robert Vidler, John Krupala, Rev. Frank Simcik, Clifton Kotrla, Gary Cuba, Teacher-Ban Laza

Photo Courtesy Marilyn Holik





1962

Front Row: Tommy Chasak, Franklin Holik, Beverly Holik, Larry Riemenschneider, Jean Hejl, David Dusek, Ruben Holik
 Back Row: Teacher-Mrs. Milton Labaj, Rev. Gordon Hejl

Photo Courtesy Larry Riemenschneider

1963

Front Row: Ruth Mikeska, Debbie Simcik, Diane Batla, Karen Vidler, Milton Plagens, Jr., Russell Hunka, John Hejl
 Second Row: Teachers-Mrs. Gladys Labaj, Clarice Drgac, Dan Michalik
 Back: Rev. John Hoesman

Photo Courtesy Georgia Simcik



1965

Front Row: Teacher-Dan Michalik, Rebecca Simcik, Albina Holik, Karen Dusek, Janet Simcik, Judy Macek
 Back Row: James Hejl, Ronald Michalik, Kenneth Michalik, Frank Holik, III., Rev. Glenn Jurek

Photo Courtesy Georgia Simcik





1967

Front Row: Judy Krupala, Cindy Simcik, Brenda Plagens, Geraldine Dusek
 Back Row: Eugene Kotrla, Henry Dusek, Jr., Lynn Brenek, Eddie Holik, Jr., Rev. Glenn Jurek

Photo Courtesy Judy Holik

1969

Left to Right: Gary Holik, Alan Laza, Larry Drgac, Teacher-Wilford Simcik, Shirley Michalik, Beth Simcik, Rev. Gordon Hejl, Darwin Dusek, Benny Holik, Leslie Plagens

Photo Courtesy Georgia Simcik



1971

Front Row: Judy Machann, Kathy Simcik, Linda Holik, Gary Drgac
 Back Row: Rev. Tommy Tallas, Teachers-Georgia Riemenschneider, Dan Michalik

Photo Courtesy Linda Miller





1973

Front Row: Teacher-Dorothy Laza, Adolph Holik, Peggy Simcik, Libby Holik, Teacher-Milton Plagens, Jr.
 Back Row: Albert Dusek, Kent Laza, Monte Allen, Stephen Laza
 Minister: Rev. Tommy Tallas

Photo Courtesy Ruth Dusek

1975

Front Row: Annette Brenek, Mary Dusek, Marilyn Gibson, John Holik, Glenda Laza, Sherry Machann
 Back Row: Teacher-Dorothy Laza, Rev. Tommy Tallas, Teacher-Milton Plagens, Jr.

Photo Courtesy Ruth Dusek



1978

Becky Holik, Paula Simcik, Alan Brenek, James Drgac, David Dusek, Wayne Dusek



Confirmations 1980-2003

The 1971 Unity Convention voted to undertake a re-evaluation of Confirmation procedures. Some young people were feeling pressured to be confirmed at a certain age regardless of whether or not they felt ready for such an important step in their lives. As a result of the study, in 1979 the convention voted to have the customary confirmation instruction of Bible, Catechism and Church history continue as it had been done previously; however, the completion of the instruction period would be appropriately recognized. Subsequent professions of faith would come as a result of each individual's request to the local pastor (Unity of the Brethren in Texas 1983). At this time the Wall Brethren Church adopted this confirmation procedure and no formal photos were taken of the classes. Following is a list of names of individuals in the confirmation classes from 1980 to 2003.

- 1980- Doyle Allen, Janet Brenek, Terry Mikeska, Dale Weise
- 1982- Mia Allen, Missy Townley, Mark Waggoner, Scott Phillips
Michael Dove, Ellen Goetz, Rebecca Mikeska, Edward Dusek,
Rodney Drgac
- 1983- Krista Riemenschneider, Ricky Weise, Laura Krupala, Stacy
Powell, Jimmy Riemenschneider, Don Goetz
- 1986- Travis Dusek, Christa Tallas, Jean Brenek, Charmine Vidler,
Jennifer Krupala, Audra Johnson
- 1988- Amy Holik, Laura Johnson, James Phillips, Thomas Tallas
- 1990- Angela Riemenschneider, Joe Thomas, Andrea Martin,
Melissa Moran, Danny Piland, Chance Ames
- 1993- Kevin Dusek, Erik Holik, Lindsay Tinkler, Courtney Vidler
- 1995- Jeremy Eubanks, Lacey Gannon, Jill Holik, Lindsey Holik,
Simon Holik, Wade Martin, Jill Miller, Krystle Noel
- 1998- Adam Holik, Jason Holik, Trey Holik, Casey Mund,
Susan Miller
- 1999- Heather Allen, Shauna Black, Brian Eubanks, Jayme Hejl,
Elizabeth Holik, Joshua Holik, Brandi Lee, Jessica Mead,
Brice Mund, Brian Raspberry, Abby Smith, April Vanadore
- 2002- Britney Allen, Gwen Berrie, Bryan Black, Erik Brown,
Brent Farmer, Cody Flanary, Matthew Hejl, Brian Holik,
Jake Luna, Jessyca Luna, Britni Tjaden, James Vanadore
- 2003- Conrad Flanary, Katie Hejl, Andrew Holik, Haley Holik,
Sarah Holik, Jamie Mead, Shelby Sides

BUILDINGS AND PROPERTIES

First Property

On November 24, 1936, the members of the Wall congregation decided to buy a one-half acre plot of land in Wall. This plot of land would soon be the location for the first church building and was the start of many building projects over the years.

The lot, which would cost \$116.75, would be purchased, if enough money could be raised. By December the congregation had raised \$117.50 and the lot was purchased. The remaining seventy-five cents was placed into a newly established building fund. This building fund has continued to the present day. Donations through the years into this building fund have been the source for many church building projects.

First Church

After holding worship services in homes and other church buildings for several years, a decision was made by the congregation on March 18, 1937 to construct their own building. The building measurements would be 30 by 40 feet and the cost was not to exceed \$1600.00. W.J. Bergmann was hired as supervising carpenter with members of the congregation providing the labor force needed to construct the building. Mr. L.K. Batla, president of the church, kept a daily watch over the construction. The final cost of the building (\$1611.65) was amazingly close to the projected cost. This included

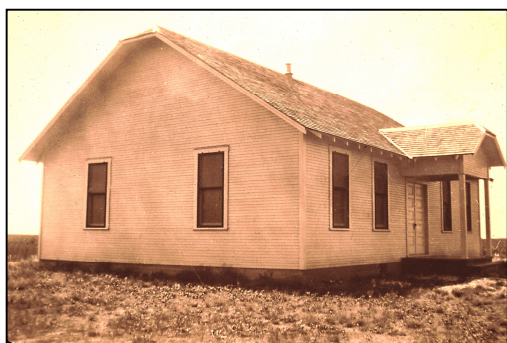


Photo courtesy Georgia Simcik

First Church Building, 1937

the pews and the supervising carpenter's salary of \$120.00 (Baletka 1980).

With the construction of the church being completed in June 1937, members began holding services in the new building; however, many modern day conveniences that we enjoy today were absent.

When the building was completed, no electric service was available to provide electricity for lights. Table and wall kerosene lamps provided light. A disadvantage of being one of the first members to arrive at church on Sunday morning was the job of preparing the lamps for the service. This included trimming the wicks, cleaning soot from the lamp chimneys and filling the lamps with kerosene. In 1942, electric service was provided for

the building and the first electric bill for the month was \$1.50. The electric bill remained the same for several years.

The building did not have plumbing, thus no water and restroom facilities. The restroom facilities, two small outdoor toilets, were located behind the church. In early years there was no water available at the church and members would bring their own water in jars, cans and jugs. They would use this water for drinking and watering the shrubs that were planted around the church. In 1944 the first water was piped to the church from the Wall School. One faucet was placed in the southeast corner of the church at a cost of \$1.55.

The first cooling system for the building included hand fans donated by various business places in San Angelo. In later years when electricity was available, an evaporative cooler was installed. The first heating system was a wood/coal-burning heater. Coal was the fuel of choice as it burned longer than wood. The heater was installed in the center of the church and people who sat in this area reaped the benefits. Again the members arriving early on Sunday mornings had to clean out the ashes and start the fire for the services. In November 1949 the elders of the church had butane heaters installed in the building (Simcik 2003).



Photo Courtesy Brenda Thomas
Kitchen of remodeled first church

After the second church was built in 1955, the old church built in 1937 was remodeled and used for a fellowship hall. The wall and folding doors to the two classrooms in the western part of the building were removed. In this area a serving bar, kitchen sink with running water, hot water heater, and storage shelves were added. The pews and privacy rail were removed from the sanctuary providing space for tables and chairs. Although this building was small for church fellowship functions, it served its purpose by providing space for many activities.

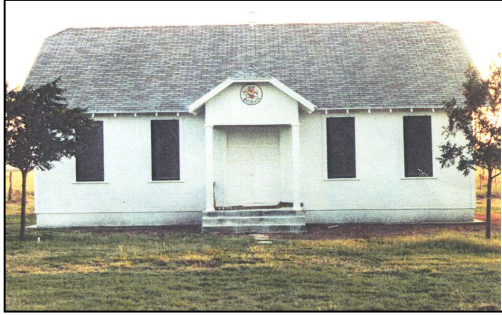


Photo Courtesy Cindy Martin
First Church at Southern Cross Ranch

A new fellowship building replaced this building in 1982. The old building, once the first church of the Wall congregation, was sold and moved to the Southern Cross Ranch. It now rests among other historic buildings moved to the property.

Second Church

As the congregation at Wall grew, a need for a larger church building was recognized. In the early 1950's a severe drought had gripped the Lipan Flats, but this did not hinder a building project. The ground breaking for a new church and education facility was in 1955.



Photo Courtesy Ida Chlapek
Groundbreaking , 1955



Photo Courtesy Georgia Simcik
Construction of second church

Following are excerpts from an article published in *The Brethren Journal* about the building and dedication of the church.

The air-conditioned comfort of the new Wall Church on the hot plains southeast of San Angelo beckoned worshipers on the first Sunday of August. A dedication toward the worship of God was consummated at 6:45 p.m., under the direction of the local pastor, the Reverend Gordon Hejl.

A beautiful asbestos siding structure, 72 feet long by 34 feet wide, with a 28 by 28 foot addition, the building cost \$29,701.10. This includes 770 days of donated labor, valued at \$6160.00.

The congregation entered the new edifice singing "The Church's One Foundation" after the doors had been unlocked and opened by the president of the Board of Elder, John Chlapek. Miss Evelyn Dragac, organist, played the accompaniment for incidental music for the service.



Photo courtesy Ida Chlapek
Pier and beam foundation

The Rev. John Baletka opened the service in the church with a Call to Worship and led in the Invocational prayer. The Rev. Albert Michalik, former assistant pastor, led in scripture readings. A sermon "To God's Glory" was delivered by the former pastor, the Rev. Josef A. Barton.

Special music was rendered by both the Junior and Senior choirs (robed). Miss Loretta Chasek sang "The Lord's Prayer" and Royce Dixon "Bless This House".

Rev. Gordon Hejl led in the Act of Dedication and the service was concluded with a prayer and benediction by the assistant pastor, the Rev. Daniel Marek.

The Building Committee chairman was Johnny Porkorny with Joe Simcik, Adolph Riemenschneider, Benny Laza, Mrs. John Chlapek, and Mrs. Milton Labaj as members. C.H. Lancaster of Taylor and Austin was the architect, with Frank Mikeska of Eden the building construction supervisor, and R.A. Urban of Miles the plumbing and electrical contractor. (Brethren Journal 1955)



Photo Courtesy Ida Chlapek
Second church under construction

During the years after the building was constructed, many additions and changes took place in the church made possible by contributions through memorials.

One such memorial was donated to the glory of God in 1961. A stained glass window depicting "Jesus, the Good Shepherd" was placed on the front wall of the sanctuary. This window has inspired many people who visited the church over the years. There is probably not a photo of a special event in the lives of church members that does have the "Good Shepherd" window in the background. This inspiring work of art was moved and placed in the sanctuary of the new church built in 1994 and continues to adorn the present church.



Photo Courtesy Rev. Tommy Tallas
Good Shepherd Window

An education wing, which included four classrooms, was added to the southern part of the church building in 1962. This provided much needed classroom space and was built from funds donated through a memorial.

The members of the second church enjoyed many comforts that were not available in the first church. Plumbing of the building provided restroom facilities to be located within the church. The first air conditioning was provided by swamp coolers, but in the late 1970's refrigerated air was added to the building. During the early years carpeting was added to the sanctuary and finally padding was added to the pews. A well was drilled on the church property and provided a new source of water; however, it supplied a limited amount of water and later when the Millersview-Doole



Photo Courtesy Ruth Dusek
Setting the pump for the first water well

Water System came through Wall, a decision was made to use this water supply as a main source. It proved to be a more stable supply of water for the church. At present, another well is being used to water the landscape; however, the drought which plagued the area in the late 1990's has caused the supply of water to again be limited.

The building included an area, adjoining the back of the sanctuary, to be used as a classroom and overflow for the sanctuary. Large sliding doors could be opened allowing this area to provide overflow space if the

sanctuary became crowded. In the early 1990's, the opening of the doors into the overflow became a regular event as the membership in the church grew and the sanctuary overflowed. The educational facilities no longer provided adequate space for expanding classes, and again the church saw the need for a larger facility.

In anticipation of building a new church, the Methodist property to the west was purchased. Following this purchase, the Wall School District offered to exchange their land south of the church for land to the west to be used as a right-of-way to their property. With the newly acquired property, the congregation could now pursue plans to build a larger facility.



Photo Courtesy Larry Riemenschneider

Congregation at worship service in second church

On September 4, 1994, the last worship service was held in the “old” church. Following is an article printed on the Pastor’s Page of the church newsletter. *Our present sanctuary was dedicated to the Lord on August 7,*



Second Church being moved

served us so faithfully (Tallas 1994). On September 11, 1994, the congregation began holding services in the fellowship building until the new church was completed.

With any new building project comes the disposal of the old. A motion was passed at the Spring Congregational meeting in 1994 that the old church building be sold. The south wing was dismantled and the remainder of the building was purchased by Thomas Wilde, of the Wall community, who moved it to his farm where it is used as a home for him and his family.

Third Church

On November 28, 1993, at a congregational meeting, the dreams of a new church and educational facilities took one step closer to becoming a reality. Members voted in favor of a motion that the congregation accept the building plans recommended by the Building Committee and the Board of Elders. The building plans were those submitted by Robert Heinze Construction of San Angelo. These plans satisfied the requirements of the motion passed in the Spring Congregational Meeting held March 7, 1993, that the building not exceed the cost of \$500,000.00 and that certain other criteria be met. In December of 1993 with a vote of 150 (yes) to 4 (no) the membership of the congregation voted to build a new church and education facilities.



Groundbreaking, January 1994

full of dirt was turned, the members of the church together responded: *That a church may meet here where God is worshipped in prayer and praise, where the word of God shall be so read and preached that it shall become the living Word, and the Sacraments so celebrated, that all of life shall become sacramental.*

By March of 1994, the congregation had collected over half of the \$500,000.00

On Sunday January 23, 1994, the congregation was doubly blessed by a ground breaking service to officially start the building project, and by a good soaking rain and snow. It was odd to see spades of usually dry west Texas soil turn to spades full of mud; however, the moisture at the time was badly needed and the congregation thanked the Lord for providing it. As the first spade



Pouring the foundation

needed to complete the building. During the next several months, the members watched as the foundation was poured, the walls were erected, the roof was raised and the bell tower was completed.



Photo Courtesy Nancy Weise

Bricking the walls of new church

An article entitled “A New Place of Worship” was published in the San Angelo Standard Times, and the following are excerpts taken from this article.

With its current sanctuary in need of repair and more room needed for its congregation, members began making plans to build a new church in 1985, said Tallas, who first served the church from 1970-75 and returned in 1985.



Photo Courtesy Martha Urban

Bell being lowered from Rowena Church

A 78-year old cast-iron bell that once called people to worship in the Rowena community, will now begin a new service of bringing parishioners together in Wall. The 30 inch bell, cast in 1915, hung in the Rowena Moravian Bohemian Presbyterian church until 1938, when the congregation erected a new church and the bell was relocated. In April of 1994 the Assembly of God Church donated the bell to the Wall Brethren Church.

The bell and its new 32-foot tower will stand in the courtyard next to the 10,050-square-foot Wall Brethren Church.

The new church will provide seating for up to 300 and offers 12 Sunday school rooms, an improved and expanded nursery and a larger choir facility.

Nine faceted glass windows have been installed inside the new sanctuary. The windows reflect the theology of the Brethren Church. One window shows maize and cotton with a rain cloud hovering above. Another shows the importance of music with an ancient harp and trumpet. An olive branch and a dove symbolize peace in another window. Easter and Christ's resurrection and an angel carrying the book of life are portrayed in two others. The centerpiece window is located in the church entryway. An open Bible, a Chalice and a cross symbolize the things the church's original founder, the Czech martyr Jan Hus, stood for (Jeschke 1994).



Photo Courtesy Rev. Tommy Tallas
Bells ringing in tower

On Sunday October 2, 1994, after many prayers had been answered and dreams had become a reality, the Wall Congregation held its first worship services in its new sanctuary. During this service, the symbols of faith were removed from the old church during the de-consecration service were placed back to the service of the Lord for use in the new building.

The church building and educational facilities were dedicated on October 30, 1994. Following are excerpts from an article published in the Brethren Journal about the dedication.

The Wall Brethren Church was privileged to celebrate the dedication of its new church and educational facilities on October 30, 1994. It was a wonderful day! The morning Worship and the evening dedication service allowed us the chance to celebrate the realization of a long-time dream. It was a special day.

We were humbled by the support we received throughout the community and Unity, not only during the planning and building of the facilities, but in the actual Dedication Service as well. A total of approximately 700 people attended the services. Former pastors, favorite sons, and denominational leaders were present. Attending, too, were many members of Unity churches and the Wall community. A highlight of the service was the special music presented by Good Shepherd Moravian Church of Port Arthur. Rev. Gonzales and three members of that congregation traveled the distance to rejoice with us. Their songs, sung in the Miskito language, reminded us of our heritage, and of the dedication of our Czech fathers and forefathers who immigrated to Texas and worshipped together, just as the Miskito people have done in modern day. It was evident on that day that we have many brothers and sisters in Christ who have prayed for us and supported us throughout the process. We were, on that

Dedication Sunday, truly, a “unity of the brethren” (Brethren Journal 1995).

The building committees, during the years of planning and construction of these facilities, included the following Chairmen David Miller, Ben Laza, Wilford Simcik, Mark Tuinstra, and Nancy Weise. Members who served on these committees were Dorothy Brenek, Bob Cason, Charlene Dusek, David Dusek, Don Goetz, Marvin Goetz, Adolph Holik, Judy Holik, Ruben Holik, Stanley Holik, Jr., John Krupala, Kay Krupala, David Lane, Libby Lane, Ken Michalik, Robert Mikeska, Tim Piland, Milton Plagens, Jr., Kenneth Powell, Shirley Powell, Jeff Russell, Kay Tinkler, Nona Townley and Martha Urban.

Fellowship Building

On November 21, 1982 a new fellowship Building was dedicated to the service of the Lord. The building was constructed by Pfluger Construction Company of San Angelo for a cost of approximately \$85,000 and contained 3750 square feet in both the kitchen and auditorium. The members of the building committee for the fellowship building were; Chairman- Ruben Holik, Vice Chairman- Darwin Dusek, Rev. John Baletka, Ruth Dusek, Stanley Holik, Jr., John Krupala, A.C. Riemenschneider,



Photo Courtesy Rev. Tommy Tallas
Newly constructed Fellowship Building, 1982

Georgia Riemenschneider, Angeline Simcik, Martha Urban and Dale Weise. Following is an excerpt from the dedication bulletin acknowledging support for the project: *“With deep appreciation we acknowledge all the conscientious efforts, work, and contributions by all who had some responsibility in the construction of this building. The financial support by*

members and friends has been good, giving proof that members want this hope of a new building to become reality. The Christian Sisters furnished the equipment in the kitchen, plus 100 new chairs and 12 new folding tables.” The purposes and uses of the fellowship building are summarized in the Dedication and Consecration Service. “For the sharing of our food and the breaking of bread together. For opportunities for fellowship with one another which will enable us to work together and share life with one another. For the enjoyment and celebration of joyful and good times. For opportunities of expressing our sympathy and concern in time of sorrow and loss. To provide a place where the children and youth of this church and community may experience wholesome recreation, fellowship, and the continuing nurture in the Christian faith. To provide facilities for the teaching of the Gospel, for the development of Christian character and for presenting the challenge to live in loyal obedience to Christ.”

First Parsonage

During the tenure of the first resident ministers, the Wall Congregation did not own a parsonage. After several years, it became apparent that a full time minister would continue to serve Wall and there was a need to provide permanent housing. Following are excerpts from a Brethren Journal article on the building and dedication of the first parsonage.



First Parsonage at 113 Norwood in San Angelo

The dedication of a new parsonage for the Wall Brethren Church was held on Sunday, January, 9, 1966. Dedication events began with a worship service at 10:30 a.m. Ben Laza, president of the Wall Board of Elders gave the welcome. Raymond Hejl, treasurer, gave a report on the financing of the parsonage. Emil Krupala read “Na prahu noveho chramu” a poem composed by the late Rev. Josef Hegar for the dedication of the Wall Brethren Church on June 13, 1937. The Wall choir presented an anthem,

“Wonderful Grace of Jesus,” and Miss Deborah Simcik sang “He came to Me One Day.” Rev. Glenn Jurek, pastor, preached the dedication sermon, taking as text I Kings 8:22-30.

Following the service the Wall Christian Sisters served a bountiful meal in the fellowship hall to all members and guests. A free-will offering for the parsonage fund was received amounting to over \$400.00 dollars.

In the afternoon open house was held at the parsonage, which is located at 113 Norwood Drive in the new Metcalf Addition of San Angelo. The Addition is just off Highway 87, which leads to the Wall Brethren Church.

The Wall congregation voted to build a parsonage on August 12, 1965. Plans were approved by the Board of Elders on August 21, 1965. Contractor and builder was A.G. Reville, an active layman in the Baptist church. Mr. Reville sold the parsonage to the congregation at the builder’s cost of \$14,400 rather than the actual appraised value of \$17,000.

The parsonage is of red “used brick” and white siding. There are a living room and den, pastor’s office, three bedrooms, two baths, and dining area. It is the first parsonage the Wall Brethren Church has had.

The financing was arranged with the Mutual Aid Society of the Unity of the Brethren. Approximately \$1200 was in a parsonage building fund, and more than \$5,000 has been added to that sum by donations since.

Members of the parsonage Building Committee were Mrs. Adolph Chasak, Bill Ray Dusek, Ramond Hejl, Mrs. Adolph Riemenschneider, Mrs. Wilford Simcik, and Dewyan Weise. (Brethren Journal 1966)

This parsonage was used by ministers until 1977 when it was decided there was a need for a larger home. The parsonage was then sold and a new one was purchased.

Second Parsonage

In 1977, the congregation purchased a new parsonage located on 3829 Sandstone Road in San Angelo. It was dedicated during a worship service on November 20, 1977. In the afternoon following the dedication, an open house was held at the parsonage and members enjoyed touring the home. At the present time this parsonage still serves as a home to our resident minister.

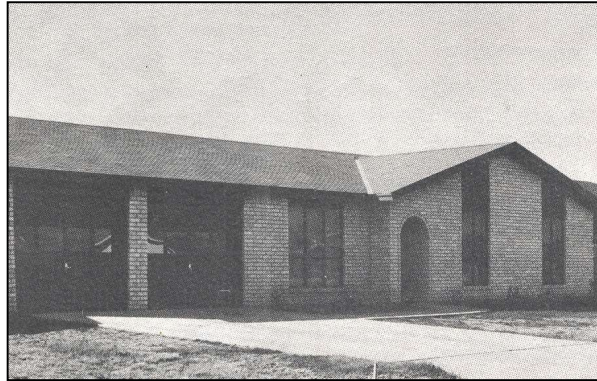


Photo Courtesy Nancy Weise

Second Parsonage at 3829 Sandstone in San Angelo, 1977

The parsonage committee during acquisition of the parsonage consisted of Marvin Dusek, Ida Chlapek, Martha Urban, Dewyan Weise, Clifton and Angeline Simcik, and Stanley and Judy Holik.



Photo Courtesy Joyce Baletka

Reception at the dedication of second parsonage

ORGANIZATIONS

Sunday School

When the first Czech Protestants came to Texas in 1850 and later, Texas was a frontier state. It was one large mission field and its churches could do little mission work among the many new citizens. The Czech people were left to themselves, without schools and without church connections.

The religiously inclined Texas pioneers at first had only their own family worship. They read from their Bibles, sang hymns and read printed prayers. Some were fortunate enough to possess the book of prepared sermons (Postila). This family worship held the faith of many, but something more was needed. When the early Czech-Moravian Brethren ministers arrived from Europe, they pointed out the great need for building the Christian faith in the church as well as in the home. They organized some independent Czech congregations, but the church program at this time was limited.

During these early years, pastors Adolph Chlumsky, Henry Juren and Bohumil O. Kubricht saw the need for more spiritual fellowship. They encouraged and assisted Sunday schools in organizing, but in the beginning progress was very slow.

The laymen did not feel qualified to teach or lead the Sunday Schools. Soon after 1889, Rev. Chlumsky took action to help solve this problem. He and his family opened their home near Brenham to capable and promising young ladies, and his talented wife and daughters instructed them in music and voice while he gave Bible instruction and some practical pointers on Sunday school teaching. After three to six months of this instruction, the young ladies went home to put their new knowledge to work.

The first Sunday School convention was held July 5, 1909, in Taylor. This was the beginning of the Sunday School Union as we know it today. The purpose of the Sunday School as stated in the Sunday School Union Constitution and By-laws is *“that of uniting individual Sunday Schools toward common and more effective work for the Lord as individual Sunday school members are led into the best possible knowledge of the Word of God through study of the Bible, Christian songs, and prayer.”* (Unity of the Brethren in Texas 1970)

The following is from an original document entitled “The Beginning of Sunday School” by Mrs. Agnes Simcik.

“The First Sunday School at Wall, Tx. was organized on the second Sunday in March, nineteen hundred and twenty eight (1928). There were only seven (7) present; our family, Louis Simcik and the late Miss Fannie Hurtik of West. The lesson was about Jesus when he arose from the grave. (This must have been around Easter time). We had the Sunday School at our house.

The following Sunday we gained four new members, the John Stasney family, and we conducted our Sunday School in their home.

With our eleven members, we kept meeting every Sunday until Fall when two new families moved here from Rowena, Tx. And joined us. Since then, we kept increasing until now we have seventy eight members.

First meeting place: Joe and Agnes Simcik home

When: 1928-March-Second Sunday

First Teacher: Miss Fannie Hurtik (from West, Tx. and lived with the Simcik family for a while.

First Members: 1st Sunday Miss Fannie Hurtik, Joe Simcik, Agnes Simcik, Clifton Simcik, Wilford Simcik, Aleen Simcik Byers, and Louis Simcik.

2nd Sunday Joined by John Stasney, Lillian Stasney, Johnnie Stasney, Wilford C (Bill) Stasney.



Photo Courtesy Ida Chlapek

Sunday School Picnic, 1943

Currently the Sunday School is very active and has grown from two classes in the original Sunday School program to eleven classes today. The Sunday School today has an enrollment of 110 members and supports and sponsors many outreach ministries. Some of these include Vacation Bible School, the Hus School Encampment, Romanian Children’s Home, House of Faith, Meals for the Elderly and a Christmas program in which the offering

is given to a needy cause. Today, the Sunday School feels that Christian Education is the backbone of a strong Body of Christ, and their prayer is that they share the gospel, remain in God's will, and serve Jesus Christ as they continue to gather for their weekly fellowship (Martin C., 2004).



Photo Courtesy Georgia Simcik
Senior Adult Sunday School Class, 1992



Photo Courtesy Georgia Simcik
Nursery Class, 1992

Christian Sisters

The pioneer women of the Unity of the Brethren Church in Texas lived under the strain of becoming adjusted to a new world and faced hardships in setting up housekeeping, yet they did not lose their concern for God's work.

Whenever a community was settled by a few families of the Unity of the Brethren heritage, a congregation was organized and the women began plans to enlarge the spiritual work of the community to the best of their knowledge and abilities. The women readily assumed the responsibilities of keeping the church buildings clean and comfortable for all occasions, assisting with the Christian education of the children, and helping each other in times of special need.

For the first several years, the women worked as unorganized groups. Then, to be able to perform their tasks better, and to meet the various problems that were arising in their work, several of the groups organized themselves into local units or societies.

In the past experiences of everyday life these women had learned that in unity there is strength. Therefore, it was only natural that they felt it would be beneficial to keep in touch with each other to exchange ideas and also strengthen the hopes of progress and the bonds of unity between all Brethren Churches in Texas.

The goal of uniting the local societies into a Union was realized with the assistance of Pastors Frank H. Horak, Sr., Joseph Barton, and Joseph

Hegar on November 1, 1926, when delegates met for the first convention at Caldwell, Texas (Unity of the Brethren in Texas 1970).

After the building and dedication of the first church at Wall in 1937, Rev. Joseph Hegar called a meeting of all the ladies of the church asking them to organize a local Christian Sisters society. A year later in 1938, at the Christian Sisters Convention, Rev. Hegar reported that Wall was organizing a local group. The Wall Christian Sisters officially organized November 8, 1939 with twenty-five charter members.

Charter members

Mrs. Joe Simcik	President	Miss Frances Batla
Mrs. John Lichovsky	Vice-President	Mrs. L.K. Batla
Mrs. Leo Hunka	Secretary	Mrs. Emil Chasak
Mrs. John Stasney	Financial Sec.	Mrs. Joe Chasak
Mrs. John Chlapek	Treasurer	Miss Evelyn Drgac
Mrs. Miloslav Dusek		Mrs. Stanley Hejl
Miss Mary Kohutek		Mrs. Theresa Kohutek
Mrs. Oscar Kotrla		Mrs. Emil Krupala
Mrs. Paul Krupala		Mrs. John Laza
Mrs. Tom Machann		Mrs. Ed Martinec
Mrs. Anton Michalik		Mrs. Ladis Motl
Mrs. Louis Sefcik		Mrs. Ed Shiller
Mrs. Vinc Tomcik		

Most of the ladies of the church joined the Christian Sisters. The dues were ten cents per month. The first fund raiser was a raffle on a quilt in the spring of 1940. The income from the raffle was \$20.45. This was the beginning of over 64 years of the ladies of the church working together to benefit the church and its membership (Chlapek I.,2003).

Over the past several years the Christian Sisters have been very active and have supported many projects. One of the major projects since 1990 has been the kolache bake sales. This project was organized through the Christian Sisters to support the church building fund. One or two bake sales are held annually with as many as 1000 dozens kolaches being baked over a



Photo Courtesy Georgia Simcik
Kolache Bake, 1994

three day period. A portion of the sales is given to a family in need or a special project (Hus School operational funds, Wall Volunteer Fire Department, House of Faith Children's ministry, Del Rio Flood victims, Hus School food fund, Jaws of Life for Wall Volunteer Fire Department, Concho Valley Home for Girls). In the Fall of 1996, all the proceeds from the kolache bake went to the church organ fund.



*Photo Courtesy Georgia Simcik
Kolache Bake, 1994*

Following is a list of some of the other projects that the Christian Sisters have supported:

1. Organize and serve refreshments for Vacation Bible School.
2. Provide drinks and serve refreshments after the Christmas program.
3. Organize and serve funeral meals and other meals at the church.
4. Provided snack bar for BYF Volleyball Tournament
5. Provide flowers and alter cloths in the sanctuary.
6. Make and repair Chrismons for church Christmas Tree.
7. Decorate church Christmas Tree.
8. Give Christmas gifts to senior citizens.
9. Sponsor yearly cleaning of church and fellowship building.
10. Help purchase kitchen appliances and kitchenwares.
11. Support Meals for the Elderly with food donations and Christmas gifts. Help provide drivers for the new delivery program in the Wall area.
12. Help with children's summer camp fees.
13. Bought t-shirts for several activities
14. Help support House of Faith Children's Ministry.
15. In 1991, made 30 quilts to be given to babies with AIDS.



*Photo Courtesy Linda Plagens
Reach for Recovery Cancer Pillows, 1994*

16. In 1992, started making small pillows and cases for the American Cancer Society's Reach for Recovery to be given to breast cancer

patients. Approximately seventy pillows and cases are made each sewing session..

17. Made cookies for local soup kitchen at Wesley United Methodist Church.
18. Made cookies annually for a tea head to support the Concho Valley Girls Home and Children's Emergency Shelter.
19. Hosted Christian Sisters Convention in 1996
20. Help with parsonage furnishings.
21. Send care packages to missionaries.
22. Furnished and decorated an efficiency apartment at the ministers' retreat in Kerrville.
23. Provided Bibles to Wall High School students and prisoners in the local jails.
24. Pay for fabric and supplies needed by Wall Gingham Czech Quilters for quilt made for festival auction.
25. Help pay for funeral flowers and memorials.
26. Baked and sold kolaches at the Ballinger Ethnic Festival for several years.
27. Gave funds for the "Jesus" videos that were mailed out to the community.
28. Give 50th and 60th anniversary gifts to church members.
29. Make agape gifts for children attending summer camps.
30. Compiled and sold two church cookbooks.
31. Church harvest festival: serve drinks and desserts; organize the county store; make tea rings and candy; make table decorations; fund the children's carnival (Krupala K., Dusek R., Plagens L., Weise N., Powell S., 2004).

Mutual Aid Society

The early Christian church in apostolic times soon realized that, according to the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, Christians as brothers must help each other in physical needs as well as spiritual. They cared diligently for their needy members by means of a common treasury. The common treasury method, however, proved impractical in an imperfect world and was soon abandoned.

The idea of mutual help continued in the early church. The early Apostle Paul reminded the Galatia Christians, "*Bear ye one another's*

burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ, and let us do good to all men, especially to those of the household of faith.”(Galations 6:2, 10)

Those admonitions were forgotten by the church of the Middle Ages. Its main concern was with rituals and ceremonies which would help man get to heaven after death; it had little concern for his life here on earth.

As a result of the church’s unconcern, benevolent organizations began to spring up everywhere. These tried to perform some of the deeds of love which the church neglected, yet were organized wholly apart from it.

This spirit of bearing one another’s burden was felt early in the Unity of the Brethren. On September 14, 1905, a plan was submitted to the third Unity convention to organize the Mutual Aid Society and it was unanimously accepted (Unity of the Brethren, 1970).

The Wall Local #25 of the Mutual Aid society was organized on November 11, 1936 at the Wall Brethren Church. There are no minutes on record from 1936 to 1947. Rev. Josef Hegar collected the assessment dues and turned them over to the General Secretary who kept the record book. The first officers elected in 1938 were President Emil Krupala, Vice President John J. Chlapek, and Secretary Treasurer Anton Michalik. The charter members were Francis Batla, Laddie K Batla Sr., Emilie Batla, Laddie F. Batla Jr., John J. Chlapek, Marie (Kokes) Chasak, W.J. Drgac, Hermina Dusek, William Dusek Jr., Frantiska Marie Dusek, Stanislav (Jim) Hejl, Paul Krupala, Marie Krupala, Emil Krupala, Emily Krupala, Edwin Krupala, John Stasney, Ludmila Stasney, John Laza, Emil Machann, Hattie Machann, Tosa Machann, and Vera Machann. In 1957 Louis Kokes was elected as Secretary-Treasurer of the Wall Society and served in that capacity for forty-three years. The present membership of the local society is 113 members (Kokes, L. 2004).



Photo Courtesy Louis Kokes

Louis Kokes, 43 years service in Mutual Aid

Brethren Youth Fellowship

The history of the Brethren Youth Fellowship is relatively brief because the organization has been in existence for only a few years. Prior to its organization in 1956, youth work in the churches of the Unity of the Brethren existed only on a congregational basis.

During the 1930's and 1940's, several congregations had active youth organizations which were often called "Young People's Circles." Also, during this period, the Sunday School Conventions encouraged these groups by often inviting them to present short devotional programs at the conventions and then awarding a rotating trophy to the group presenting the program judged best.



Photo Courtesy Georgia Simcik
Wall Young People's Circle, 1942

The plan for organization of the youth groups on the denominational or state level was put into motion by the 1955 Sunday School Convention. The convention elected a six member committee for the purpose of organizing a state-wide youth organization. The first youth convention of the Unity was held on June 1, 1956 at Dime Box Brethren Church. The convention chose "Brethren Youth Fellowship" as its name and recognized itself to be under the general oversight of the Sunday School Union and the Unity. The purposes of the Brethren Youth Fellowship as listed in the constitution were as follows:

1. To coordinate the activities of the young people of the Church.
2. To work as a body for Christ.
3. To assist the tasks of the Church in Christian service.
4. To aid in organizing new groups.
5. To encourage district activities of the Church and participation in interdenominational youth work. (The Unity of the Brethren 2003).

In the early years of the Wall congregation there was a group of young people (known as "the Young People's Circle") who met regularly enjoying Christian fellowship. In 1956 the young people of the Wall Brethren Church formally organized into the Brethren Youth Fellowship (BYF) and



Photo Courtesy Nancy Weise
Wall BYF at State Volleyball Tournament

became part of the Unity Brethren Youth Fellowship. Through the years the Wall BYF has been very active in participating in many local, district and state activities. Some of the service projects and activities sponsored by BYF over the years include:

1. Participation in a Sunday Youth Service
2. Sponsoring a family at Christmas
3. Contribute flowers for Mother's Day service
4. Host Easter egg hunt for children of the church
5. Participation in decorating Christmas tree for the Church
6. Host banquet in honor of high school and college seniors
7. Host Hallelujah Hoedown
8. Participation in Harvest Festival
9. Participation in Hot Hearts Student Conference
10. Participation in Vacation Bible School
11. Participation in annual Christmas Program
12. Host Senior Appreciation Luncheon
13. Singing at nursing homes
14. Participation in Christmas caroling
15. Participation in See You at the Pole
16. Participation in Random Acts of Kindness.
17. Youth night at the rodeo
18. Participation in many local, district and state activities (Weise N., Berrie J., Holik T., 2004).



Photo Courtesy Nancy Weise

BYF hosting Halloween Party, 1987

Young Adult Fellowship

The Young Adult Fellowship was organized in 1977 by young adults who had been very active in the Brethren Youth Fellowship during their teen years and who wanted to continue the bonds of friendship and service they had experienced during those years. This was basically a state organization without any binding ties to local congregational groups. The core group of

the YAF consisted of ex-students of several Hus School classes in the seventies.

The purpose of the YAF was similar to those of the BYF: worship, study, service, and fellowship. At the 1996 Convention, a motion was passed to disband the YAF and it was agreed that the YAF was no longer a viable organization. An attempt was made to form a new group called Fellowship of Contemporary Christians with membership open to all ages of interested persons throughout the denomination. The idea met with little success, and after a couple of years it was abandoned. At the present neither the YAF nor the FCC organization exists (Baletka, 2003).

The Wall YAF organized in the early 1980's with the purpose of young adults meeting together for fellowship and activities. During these years, several activities were held by the group. These included fellowship parties, hosting volleyball tournaments, and providing fellowship dinners for the congregation. As time progressed, the local organization disbanded due to lack of membership. The money raised from different activities was used to purchase playground equipment for the youth of the church (Holik M., 2003).



Photo Courtesy Marilyn Holik
YAF serving a Sausage Soup Dinner, 1986

Adult Christian Fellowship

In August of 1984, the Christian Sisters sponsored a social for the adult members of the congregation. About thirty-eight members attended. After a very enjoyable evening, members attending decided to hold an organizational meeting September 23, and the Adult Christian Fellowship became a reality. The group decided to not limit the membership to Wall Brethren Church members, but open it to others in the community. This idea was warmly welcomed in the community (several letters from community members, were sent to the church, thanking for the



Adult Christian Fellowship domino game

opportunity to meet with the group). The group met once a month. One of the field trips enjoyed by the group was a trip to the Barrow Museum in Eola. In recent years, membership in the Adult Christian Fellowship declined, and they no longer meet regularly as a group (Baletka J., 2004).

Wall Gingham Czech Quilters

In 1990, the Wall Gingham Czech Quilters organized in order to support the church building fund. In the original years of existence, as many as thirteen members quilted quilts for the public (proceeds from which were donated to the church). One quilt per year was made for each member. During later years, as membership declined, a quilt was made and donated to the Harvest Festival each year, as well as continuing to make a quilt for each member. Quilts donated to the Wall Brethren Church Harvest Festival auction have brought from \$550.00 to \$3700.00. Several quilts have been made for the church to donate to the St. Ambrose Catholic Church's festivals. The Gingham Czech Quilters, even though small in number, are still quilting (Krupala K., 2003).

Music Program

The music program of the Wall Brethren Church, not formally called an organization, has been a testimony to the church from its beginning.



Photo Courtesy Georgia Simcik
Sanctuary Choir singing at Albert Michalik's ordination, 1953

Czech adult choirs, adult sanctuary choirs, children choirs, and many other musical presentations have provided many inspiring and enjoyable moments throughout the years.



Photo Courtesy Georgia Simcik
 Primary Choir, Easter, 1992



Photo Courtesy Georgia Simcik
 Junior Choir, Easter, 1992



Adult Sanctuary Choir at Groundbreaking Service, 1994

Hus School

Another vital part of the Wall Brethren Church not considered a formal organization is the Hus School. Many young members of the church over the years have attended Hus School and youth conferences at the Hus School encampment in Caldwell, Texas. The Wall Church, Christian Sisters, and Sunday School feel this a very important time in the lives of its young

people and enables them to attend by providing the cost of the fees for Hus School and conferences.

Even before the Unity of the Brethren was organized, the need to train lay workers such as Sunday School teachers, confirmation class teachers,



Photo Courtesy Dorothy Brenek
 Hus School Class, 1939

organists and choir leaders was recognized by the Czech pioneers in Texas.

The Rev. Adolf Chlumsky, soon after 1889, made the first attempts to meet the need by taking capable and promising young ladies into his humble farm home near Brenham for several months each year. Reverend Chlumsky gave the girls Biblical instruction and practical hints on Sunday School teaching while his wife and daughters instructed them in music and voice. After three to six months of such instruction, the young ladies returned to their homes and provided invaluable assistance in their local congregations. This farmhouse school was the forerunner to the Hus Memorial School (Unity of the Brethren in Texas, 1970).



Photo Courtesy Nancy Weise
Hus School Class, 1986

Board of Elders

The Board of Elders is the governing body of the Wall Brethren Church. It consists of twelve elected members that are charged with the spiritual care and oversight of the church and its program. Throughout the years, many capable men and women have served in this position. The Elders have initiated many events that continue today.

The Elders Easter breakfast, established in 1977, has become a traditional part of the Easter sunrise worship service. They provide a breakfast after the worship that allows members and friends of the congregation to gather in fellowship.

In the 1940's and 1950's, an annual event called "The Bazaar" was held by the church. This event was held in the fall of the year after the harvest of the crops. The Bazaar was an opportunity for members to gather and celebrate the many blessings that had been given them during the year and give a portion of these blessings to the church. In the late 1950's, this event was discontinued. In 1978, the Elders decided to re-establish this event to provide funding for building projects. The "Harvest Festival" held during the fall of the year involves all the members of the church, providing a meal, country store, children's games and an auction.

OUTREACH

Missions

Throughout the years the Wall Brethren Church and its organizations have made it a priority to support missions. The entire membership of the church has taken an active part in many projects. Some of these include the Unity of the Brethren Missions, Moravian Missions, Romanian Children's Home, Mexico-Mixtec Missions and Honduras Missions. These and many other mission projects throughout the years have contributed financial support as well as individual participation to local and foreign missions.



Photo Courtesy Milton Plagens, Jr.
Milton Plagens, Jr. with young Jamaican worker

In the 1980's, the Unity of the Brethren started sending work crews to the mission fields in South America. These crews helped build new facilities as well as rebuild facilities that had been damaged. The Wall congregation has had several members help during some of these mission trips.

In 1989, Milton Plagens Jr. was one of the first members of the Wall congregation to participate as a crew member on a mission trip to Jamaica. The purpose of the trip was to replace the roof on a concrete sanctuary of the Beersheba Congregation (Plagens 2004).

In recent years, David Miller has made yearly mission trips to the help Unity work crews with many projects. In 1999 he was a member of the crew that went to St. Kitts, Virgin Islands to repair church property damaged by Hurricane George. In 2000 David and Tim Piland participated in a project to work on the new Moravian Church Provincial Office in Honduras. In 2001, David traveled to Puerto Lempira, Honduras with a work crew to help construct a Bible Institute. In 2002, David, along with his wife Linda, was joined by Rev. Tommy Tallas and his wife Donna,



Photo Courtesy David Miller
David Miller, 2nd from left, with work crew in St. Kitts

as crew members on a mission trip to Bethel Alaska to help construct and repair living quarters and churches in that area(Miller 2004).

Following in David's footsteps is his daughter Jill Miller who is helping Rob and Ann Thiessen with missionary work in Ometepec, Mexico.



Photo Courtesy Jill Miller

Jill Miller with a family in Mexico, 2002

In 2001 and 2002, Jill made trips to Mexico. She stayed in the homes of the people, learning the language and building relations, and sharing with them the message of Jesus (Miller 2004). She also works with the House of Faith, a San Angelo organization which works with disadvantaged children .

Community Thanksgiving Service

The first Community Thanksgiving Service co-sponsored by the Wall Brethren Church and the Wall Saint Ambrose Catholic Church was held in 1989. The purpose was to have an ecumenical service uniting the community in giving thanks to the Lord for the many blessing during the year. The tradition of this annual service continues today. An offering collected at the service provides a scholarship for a Wall High School graduate. Highlights of the service include the community adult choir, community children's choir, Wall High School Band, color guard and clergy from various churches.



Photo Courtesy Nancy Weise

Wall Girl Scouts present the colors at Community Service

Youth

The Wall Brethren Youth Ministry exists to expose youth to God, encouraging them to pursue a relationship with Christ, offering themselves through service while enjoying and growing with other believers. During the past years, the Youth of the Church have been very active in participating and supporting outreach in the community. Among the outreach projects in which the youth participated in and helped support are:



BYF members participate in “See You at the Pole”

Hot Hearts Student Conference (to encourage teens to start a relationship with Christ), Huddle-Up (providing a place of Christian atmosphere for students after football games), See/Saw You at the Pole (gathering of young Christian in a school atmosphere) (Berrie 2004).

Vacation Bible School

The first Vacation Bible School was held on June 1, 1951 with ministerial student Gordon Hejl as director. Since its beginning, Vacation Bible School has been a very important part of the lives of the children of the church. As our children invite their friends and family to join them for a week of fun, the Wall Brethren Church through its Vacation Bible School program has been able to touch the lives of children who do not regularly attend a church or Sunday School. The week is a blessing to all, to the adults involved in the programming and to the children who come for the fun and experience the love God has for each of them (Holik K., 2004).



Photo Courtesy Ruth Dusek
Vacation Bible School, 1974

CONVENTIONS

Sunday School

The 36th annual convention of the Sunday School was held on July 29-30, 1947 at the Wall Brethren Church. A highlight of this convention was, for the first time, the Sunday School Union Executive Committee officers mimeographed their convention reports in order to save time. The small church building provided limited space for convention members. With the absence of a fellowship building or shade trees, a large tent was erected to provide shade for the participants.



Photo Courtesy Georgia Simcik

Tent erected for shade at the 1947 Sunday School Convention

Christian Sisters

The following is from the convention minutes, published in the Brethren Journal, of the Christian Sisters' 38th Convention held at the Wall Brethren Church. *The Christian Sister' Union of the Unity of the Brethren*



Photo Courtesy Sharon Hohmann

Rev. Tallas installing officers at Christian Sisters' Convention

met April, 27, 1996 in Wall, Texas for its 38th biennial convention. The 39 members of the convention, representing 700 members of the Christian Sister' Union were joined by 7 pastors and 70 visitors to the Wall Brethren Church in its first convention since the mid 1940's.

Mrs. Catherine Holubec of Taylor, president of the Union, presided over the convention, and a morning worship service was led by host pastor Rev. Tommy Tallas, assisted by Rev. John Baletka. Theme of the convention was "Thy will be done."

A candlelight memorial service honoring the 47 members who have died since the last convention opened the afternoon session (Kocian 1996).



*Photo Courtesy Sharon Hohmann
Candlelight Memorial Service*

Unity of the Brethren

The following is from a convention report, published in the Brethren Journal, of the 57th Biennial Convention of the Unity of the Brethren held at the Wall Brethren Church. *The 1997 Convention of the Unity was, for the first time ever, held at the Wall Brethren Church near San Angelo. The gathering began with a 9:00 AM worship led by the executive officers of the Synodical Committee. Dr. Mark Labaj, president, brought the convention message, and Rev. Thomas Tallas officiated in the observance of Holy Communion. One of the special guests recognized at the convention was Mrs. Eda Janek, the oldest member present.*

A special spiritual emphasis was felt throughout the convention. It was noted various times that the prayer vigil, in which a high percentage of Brethren participated prior to the even, had a definite effect on the gathering and all the proceedings. The event was further enhanced spiritually by all the opportunities for worship-those at the beginning of each day and the praise event on Tuesday evening. God blessed this occasion throughout, through the messages that were brought and the music that was presented.

All who contributed to the spirituality of the 1997 Unity Convention-the ones who organized and participated in the prayer vigil, the speakers, the singing groups, and the members of the Wall Brethren Church who so graciously and efficiently hosted the event- should be commended for their efforts (The Brethren Journal 1997).

CHURCH TIMELINE

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
1415	John Hus, martyred
1457	Development of alternative Church (Unity of the Brethren)
1620	Protestants were forced to leave Europe or practice their beliefs in secret.
1771	Joseph II proclaimed toleration for the practice of the Protestant belief.
1850's	Czechs began migrating to America to make a new start in farming.
1903	Organization of the Evangelical Unity of the Czech-Moravian Brethren in North America
1903	Rowena congregation organized.
1910	First ministers ordained in the Unity (Rev. Joseph Hegar and Rev. Josef Barton) traveled to Rowena and Wall for services.
1928	Sunday School organized in Wall Congregation.
1929	Wall Congregation began holding worship services in homes.
1929	First Holy Communion of Wall Congregation.
1933	Wall Congregation was officially organized and was known as the Wall Evangelical Czech-Moravian Brethren Church.
1934	First Confirmation Class of Wall Congregation.
1936	Wall Mutual Aid Society organized.
1937	Dedication of first church building of Wall Congregation.
1939	Wall Christian Sisters organized.
1940	First revival service of Wall Church lead by Rev. H.E. Beseda Sr.
1940	Most congregations began to transition from Czech language to English language in worship services.

CHURCH TIMELINE (con't)

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
1951	Wall Vacation Bible School established.
1952	Ordination of Gordon Hejl (minister who grew up in Wall Brethren Church).
1953	Ordination of Albert Michalik (minister who grew up in Wall Brethren Church).
1955	Dedication of second church building of Wall Congregation.
1956	Wall Brethren Youth Fellowship organized.
1959	Unity name change from The Evangelical Unity of the Czech Moravian Brethren in North America to Unity of the Brethren in Texas. The Wall Church became known as the Wall Brethren Church.
1962	First resident pastor of Wall Congregation (Rev. John R. Hoseman)
1962	Dedication of education wing added to Wall Brethren Church.
1966	Dedication of first parsonage of Wall congregation.
1977	Organization of the Wall Young Adult Fellowship.
1977	First Easter breakfast by Elders.
1977	Ordination of Robert Janek (minister who grew up in Wall Brethren Church).
1977	Dedication of the second parsonage of the Wall Brethren congregation.
1978	Harvest Festival established.
1980	Ordination of Mark Labaj (minister who grew up in Wall Brethren Church).
1981	Wall Brethren Church built in 1937 moved to Southern Cross Ranch near Wall.
1982	Dedication of first fellowship building of Wall Congregation.
1983	Organization of the Wall Adult Fellowship.

CHURCH TIMELINE (con't)

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
1992	Time capsule buried.
1994	Wall Brethren Church built in 1955 moved to property of Thomas Wilde of Wall.
1994	Dedication of third church building of Wall Congregation.
1996	Unity Christian Sisters Convention held at Wall Brethren Church.
1997	Unity Church Convention held at Wall Brethren Church.
2000	Addition of Director of Youth Ministries to Wall Congregation.
2004	Celebration of the 100 th anniversary of the Unity of the Brethren in Texas
2004	Celebration of the 75 th anniversary of the Wall Brethren Church.

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