

The memories of those peoples whose names are unlined were written for a booklet that was prepared for Salem's Homecoming Sunday, celebrated on August 3, 1997. Others were written during the summer of 2006.

### **Mildred Noth**

I remember when we had 10 Sunday School classes meeting in the church. They'd meet in different pews. When I first started going to Sunday School, Lily Pfuhl, (Mrs. Harvey Pfuhl) was my teacher. I still have the catechism and some of the materials we used in Sunday School.

At one time the only time we did anything with the Immanuel Church was on Children's Day (I think it was the second Sunday in June), and the Christmas programs, which we alternated first one church and then the other. The other time we were together was for Communion Sundays. Otherwise, we each had our own worship service and Sunday School and youth group. We each had our own church. We had a lot more people living around here then than we do now. That whole valley, from Dale Noth's down Highway T were from our church. Then what they call Spring Valley, that was the Vieths. They also belonged to Salem.

The practice for Christmas, no matter who the teacher was, was at school, and the teacher directed it. They didn't have big programs at school then, that was for our church. We even had a couple of Catholic ladies who helped. The Christmas program at church was the special event in our area for Christmas.

We didn't have dinners, as such, at our church. Except on New Year's Eve when we met at the schoolhouse, the Spring Valley School, which is the current home of Jim and Linda Berry. That was a big night. We had a program. And they let in the new year. The first or second year we were married, they cooked the soup at my house. We had only about a 12'x12' kitchen. It was 30 below. They cooked all day long. They made noodle soup, chicken noodle soup, and took it to the schoolhouse. And they cooked that soup in my wash boiler that I used only for plain water. After they cooked the soup, they put it in milk cans and took it down to the schoolhouse. Some people brought cakes, some others, ice cream.

Way back then we didn't have potlucks at church. I don't even think Norwalk did. That just wasn't part of it. I remember afterwards, joining the women's group at Immanuel and they gave dinners then.

When I was young, the pastors at that time wore frock coats. One had a long-tail coat, a Prince Albert.

We had kneeling benches that folded up, like at a Catholic Church. We knelt for prayers. In the wintertime we kept our feet up on the kneeling bench, to keep our feet off the cold floor, and thus warmer.

We had firm rules about behavior in church. You just never ran around in the church, ever, ever. You never went behind the pulpit; that was only for the pastor or the superintendent – only the ordained

minister, not even for people doing a reading. When we had a Youth Sunday, the children sat on chairs ahead of the pulpit. They didn't go behind the pulpit. I cleaned the church for several years and I had trouble even cleaning behind that pulpit. You just didn't do it.

The altar rail was very special. No one would dare to sit on it. During Children's Day we didn't buy flowers, and we went over to Mrs. Menn's, Jake Menn's grandmother, and she would go down to her cellar and get those old blue fruit jars. I remember being a little girl, probably 12 years old, and we'd go and carry those fruit jars and she would wash them up. Out in front of the church there was a marshy area, and we would pick blue flags and would decorate with those or flowers from our gardens.

You had to be confirmed before you joined the choir when I started out in the choir. My oldest sister played the piano and organ for many, many years. There were various organists, some with the old pump organ. Mrs. Klingenhofer, they were down in the Valley, near Salem. I was told she played for services, but that was before my time. I don't know exactly when we got the piano we have now, probably about 1929, before that we had a pump organ. That was up behind the altar, so everybody could see it.

I don't remember Vacation Bible School back then. That came later.

People came to church with the buggy or the wagon, even after they got the first cars. If it was rainy they would put the team in those buggy sheds, as many as could. They put blankets over them, the sheds faced the main road, on both sides of the church. They held maybe six, seven or eight. The area around the church was bigger than it is now. So those buggy sheds were way down there near the bottom. Or, they tied their team around posts that were along the edge of the lawn. I remember my one brother came to choir practice, we had moved to Wilton. He didn't tie the horse as well as he should have. When he got out, it was gone, and he had to walk home from the Valley, across the ridge.

I remember several pastors' wives very well. Each pastor's wife was different. Right after we were married, in '29, the bottom dropped out. We didn't have much. We had just bought a farm. I worked for Mrs. Hillman; I helped her clean house. The steps of the parsonage went both ways, when you came to the landing, a few steps went down to the kitchen. There was a pantry where the bathroom is now. The pastor's study was where the far end of the living room is now. The ceiling in the dining room used to be really high. The ceilings of both the living and the dining room were metal. I don't know if they covered it up or took it out. It was a high old building. I don't know how well it was heated.

Our pastors only stayed seven years. During WWI, Rev. Jordan was considered quite "German", and they only let him stay about four years. Rev. Mehn was about as German as Rev. Jordan was. They more I think of it, now that I'm older, I wonder if that was the real reason for his leaving.

The pastors then, went down to different schoolhouses on Sunday morning – all the way to Breckenridge. I remember my sisters went down to Brush Creek, with the pastor, and they sang one sister played the piano or the organ.

Grandpa made the brick for the church. The Salem church is the only one with that kind of brick. There used to be another house made of the brick; it used to be where Randy Dreier lives. My mother told me that you go down the valley where Jake Menn has a farm, where the Hubbards lived, there aren't any Hubbards there now, either. There were woods all around. That's where the brick ovens were. When they take the church chimney down, I'm to get one or two bricks, because Grandpa made them.

I remember the influenza epidemic of 1918. There were no churches open at Christmas time. A cousin of mine died with the flu. She was going to have another baby. There was nothing they could do for her. We almost all had the scarlet fever.

My dad came from Switzerland. A lot of folks from around here came from Germany. My mother's folks came from Pennsylvania' some of them said that they were Pennsylvania Dutch. My mother's side ancestors were from England.

### **Ruth Vieregge**

Rev. H. Block was the first minister I remember. He read to me many Bible stories. I still have the book.

A one-room Sunday School for all ages. As you came into the church to your right the men sat and studied their Sunday School lesson. To the left the ladies had their Sunday School lessons. The young people all went into different age groups. Well, I remember the two groups up by the pulpit of little ones sitting by their little long table and with their small chairs.

Our Christmas programs for church were always practiced in school, as most all of the students were members of the church. We had single pieces, duets, and always a drill. A green curtain on a wire was hung across the stage, so we could get ready for our program. Santa Clause always came. I don't know why, but he always walked down the outside aisles by the windows, never down the center aisle. I have asked others about this and no has come up with an answer. The altar is a holy place where no Santa could go.

Children's Day was always a big day. Everyone gathered flowers, wild and tame. We always had a program with the children in charge and invited the Norwalk congregation down for our program.

I enjoyed the meetings in church. During Rev. Hillman's and Rev. Mehn's stay, we had a lot of revival meetings, all week long and three times on Sunday.

My husband and I were married in this church June 18, 1938. He was a member of the Norwalk Church.

### **Bonita Hoffman Weiland**

My family moved to the old parsonage next to the Salem Church when I was seven years old. We took part in many church activities. The church area was very quiet during the week unless there was a wedding or funeral.

In those days wedding in our valley included a chivaree. They would dicker for a sum of money from the bride and groom, then go to town for treats that everyone shared on the church lawn. That ice cream sure tasted good.

I was married in Salem Church. A most memorable day! Candles in the windows, no side entrances – we all walked in from the back. No wrinkles in our dresses as we all walked over from home, then back onto our lawn for a garden reception. The chivareers came. I would have been disappointed if they hadn't. We watched many weddings and funerals from our front windows.

Funerals were not such happy occasions. I particularly remember Grandpa Rudy Haldeman's funeral with so many flowers. The grandchildren carried in the flowers and sat in the front pews. Our family knew when there would be a funeral, as the bell would be tolled. One ring for each year of the persons life. Then it was tolled again as they went up the hill to the cemetery. For many years my family was involved in ringing the bell. I remember Grandma and Mother doing it. Later I was a bell ringer. One hour before church and when church started. I've seen my cousin Dale, doing it now.

There was a lot of excitement getting ready for programs on Children's Day and Christmas. How proud we were to show off our pieces, and at Christmas, we always had a cantata including the manger scene.

Our program included the choir. When you got into High School you could join the choir. That singing of hymns and special songs has added so much to my life.

The friends made in choir, at young peoples, and in Sunday School class were special. During my high school years we had a large young people's group. We met in the town church basement. Most of our communion services were held in the town church and also summer Bible School. I taught Bible School one summer, but remember most the children's sermons and songs as a child.

The Sunday services—we seldom missed. Mother was the organist for many years; before she was married, after and when she had five children. The church has remained important to all of us.

The parsonage was a great place to grow up. Salem Church has great memories, a great family church. I'll always remember.

### **Diane Hubbard**

"Is that Dennis Hubbard in front of us?" That question and its answer were to shape the rest of my life. I asked that question the first time I worshipped at Salem.

In October 1965, I came to Norwalk with my college roommate, Betty Berendes. Since she was Catholic and I was Methodist, I rode to church with Betty's neighbor, Elmyra Short. The service would have been at the Immanuel church but its sanctuary walls and floor were being refurbished, so we worshiped at Salem. I couldn't help noticing a young man about my own age sitting in the pew ahead of us. Betty had told me about this young farmer, saying I just had to meet him, and told me he'd be at church.

Somehow I just knew it was he. I leaned over and asked Elmyra, who is Dennis's aunt, "Is that Dennis Hubbard in front of us?" (I later learned that he had heard me and he turned around to see who would be asking.) After church, Elmyra introduced us.

My visits to Norwalk became more frequent, as Dennis and I started corresponding and dating. While there, I always worshipped with the EUB congregations. (The EUB/Methodist merger was still in the works; how convenient for us that our churches "married" at about the same time we did!)

In the summer of '67, I visited Dennis' family for a few days and Dennis, Dean and Larry Hubbard were painting the steeple of the church. Suzanne Vieth, (now Mrs. Darrell Zietlow) was also there, climbing up into the steeple with them. I wasn't about to be left watching from the ground! That explains why my name is also painted in the belfry along with the others who ascended to the top of the structure.

How fitting it seems that God chose that site to bring the two of us together, for since that day almost 41 years ago, many of the most important times of our life have been marked at the Salem church.

After we were married at my home church in Trempealeau, we attended Sunday School each Sunday at Salem. I recall that Melvin Vieth was the superintendent for a period of time, and later Dennis took on that responsibility. We had a rather large young adult class that included Larry and Janet Young, Suzanne, Peggy, Marlene and Steve Vieth, Dean Hubbard; and Dennis and me. Later, Sandy Hubbard, Paul Hubbard and Jim Vieth also joined us. This group of friends enjoyed working together to plan canoeing the Kickapoo from Ontario to Rockton, tubing on the Apple River, and playing in a softball league that included churches from neighboring towns.

As our family expanded, Dave Dawn and Dan were all baptized and confirmed at Salem.

In May of 1991 Dennis's father, Edwin's funeral was held at Salem, with Dave delivering a eulogy and Dawn playing a special piano selection to honor her grandfather who had loved music.

On July 18, 1998, our daughter Dawn married Chad Powell in a crowded Salem Church, walking down the same aisle her grandparents and great grandparents had followed many years ago. Our grandchildren are at least the sixth generation of the Pfuhl/Hubbard/Powell family to be a part of this church.

Our family still enjoys worshipping together in the Salem Church the first Sunday of each summer month and on Easter morning and Christmas Eve. Dennis, Dave and Dawn, have all sung in the choir, which I have directed since the early '70's; Dawn is pianist, Dan, Dave, and Dennis usher. As lay leader, Dennis often takes part in the worship services. We have all helped in the mowing and upkeep of the cemetery. Little did I know on that crisp autumn day in 1965 how much this church would mean to me for the rest of my life.

I praise and thank God for the blessings that the Salem Church has brought to me and to our family for many generations. I am truly blessed to be a part of the continuing ministry of this church.

## Joyce Schreier

My family moved to the house that had been the original Salem Church parsonage when I was three months old. With the exception of some years after we were married, I have lived next to the church my entire life. I have many fond church-related memories:

- Sunday School classes on the platform with the large burlap dividers.
- Sunday School superintendents, Harry Vieth and Erwin Vieth.
- Placing coins to match your age in the special "Birthday Bank".
- Children's Day and Christmas programs and the new dress that Mother made for each event.
- Program practices the Saturdays before the event.
- The old grate for the furnace in front of the church.
- The long green curtain behind the altar that was used for the special programs.
- All the flowers that we gathered for Children's Day program.
- Being a flower girl for funerals and carrying the large-handled baskets of flowers into church.
- For funerals and special church services being told to be very quiet and not playing outside.
- Watching the cars leave after a funeral to go to the cemetery and also after weddings with the cans tied on behind.
- Playing ball in the front yard and always the threat, "Watch out for the church windows!"
- Glen and Wilma Hubbard's wedding. The ladies dressed at our house.
- The old wallpaper and when the new fiber board was installed.
- Going over and sitting quietly while the picture in front of the church was painted.
- Suzanne Vieth Zietlow painting the interior of the church. She would paint late in the evening and the lighted windows were so beautiful.
- Grandma Haldeman Magee and Mother building the fire in the old wood furnace.
- Mother playing for Sunday School and church services.
- When older, waiting with my Dad until the bell rang and then going over to church.
- Grandma tolling the bell when someone had died. She timed each toll with a watch with a second hand.
- The Hubbard crew painting the church steeple---it scared me half to death.
- Making mud pies on the cellar door.
- The outhouse blowing into my garden in a terrific wind storm.
- The old weather vane on top of the steeple
- Never being allowed to go into the church unless with an adult. Also, never walking behind the pulpit.
- Opening the gate to use the pasture in front of the house for large church services.
- Finding money under the steps when they were being replaced.
- The Sunday School leaflets with the large pictures on the front.
- The older boys leaning back against the back wall and leaving hair oil marks on the fiberboard.
- When I was young, Harve Pfuhl always sitting in the same spot and later Uncle Melvin Vieth doing the same.

- Verna Walz playing the piano.
- Mowing the church lawn.
- Singing in the choir.
- My dad building the stands for the curtains in front of the choir.
- Learning to ride bike by launching off the front steps of the church.
- Watching the kids play around the old bridge after church services.
- The Menn family walking to the cemetery after a family member's funeral.
- My sister Bonita's wedding in the church and the reception on our lawn.
- Watching the people come to church.

### **Margaret Vieth**

Erwin and I got married at Salem on September 28, 1943. There was a young people's choir. Erwin was superintendent of the Sunday School and we had a Christmas program with 43 children in it.

### **Roberta Young**

We moved into the house next to Glen and Wilma Hubbard in the late '60's. Glen invited me to church. Virginia Hubbard turned around and invited us to Sunday School. We found that Salem was very warm. Our first three children were baptized there, our last, at Immanuel. It was a wonderful community to live in.

### **Ivan Vieth**

I have many fond memories of growing up in Spring Valley and attending the Salem church. Our family was very active in the church. Dad (Harry) was Sunday School superintendent for many years. My sister, Myrtle, played the piano for church services and Sunday School. There were special programs to plan and practice for at Christmas and Children's Day, which was in June.

For the Christmas program, sacks were given to each child that participated. I remember helping fill these sacks on our kitchen table. Each sack contained an apple, orange, nuts and candy. They had to be counted out so that each sack was equal. I helped by making sure there were no extra pieces of candy.

I remember Bill Falke, my mother's uncle, used to walk to our house from his farm in the Devil's Hole. He'd spend the nights with us during the winter months. He'd tell me about his experiences when he was young. I wish I could remember them all now. But I do remember his telling about Salem Church being built and how the congregation marched and sang when they went from the old church to the new church when it was completed.

## **Rupert H. Pfuhl**

When I was about 5 years old I always stood between my mother and dad at church. We sat in the fifth pew on the left side as we walked down the aisle. One Sunday morning, Rev. Mehn was talking about a four fold text. When I heard him say that, I said right out loud, "a four fold text." Everyone looked at me, and Rev. Mehn said, "at least I know someone was listening to me." That made me feel much better.

One Sunday morning, Erwin Vieth was taking up the offering. When he came to where we were sitting, I said out loud, "that guy was over to our house last night!" He just smiled and it did not bother him at all. He later married my older sister, Margaret, in the Salem church on September 28, 1943.

When the bridge and water was out in front, every child threw stones in the pond. I remember doing it and watching my children and many others do it in my lifetime.

I remember being in Christmas programs and getting up in front to speak my piece. I remember walking down the aisle singing "We Three Kings". After the program ended the youngsters would get a brown bag with an apple, and orange in it on Christmas Eve. It was very important to each of us to get one!

I remember singing in the choir and many of those people are now gone to their eternal home.

## **Allman Vieth**

This is my earliest recollection of my mother and father talking about the church. In 1927, my father, Florenz, cut his arm on a circle saw while sharpening it, and blood poisoning set in. For about a week or two he was near death with it. The first Sunday that he went back to church, after the services, cranking a Model T Ford, when the motor backfired, he broke his arm. My Aunt Charlotte told me that some people said, "How much bad luck can he have?" and she said, "It's not back luck, because he had begun farming again, instead of resting and this made him rest and recover from this illness.

## **Virginia Hubbard**

Salem has been my church all my life. Edwin and I were married there. Our children were all baptized and confirmed there. My grandmother who lived where I live now and my parents were also members.

Edwin was Sunday School superintendent and sang in the choir. He was church treasurer, and after him, I took over. I would miss Salem if it were not here.

I remember Norb Vieregge, Mae Krueger, Alan Walz, and Audrey Summerfield stood up for us. Rupert was the ring bearer and Edwin's niece was flower girl.

If I didn't go to church on Sunday, I would just miss it; that's where we should be.

## **Lucille Dreier**

I was born in 1913, Lucile Vieth, daughter of Adolph and Lena Vieth, so I have early memories of Salem.



All the families were young when I was a child, and Spring Valley residents were almost all members of Salem. People drove horses to church. There was a shed on the west side of the church toward the creek where the horses were kept. In early years it was a German community, so one Sunday a month the service was in German. I was the only one of my age and they didn't know where to put me, so as I got older I was too old for the little ones and too young for the older ones, so I was put in a class of teenage girls taught by Hattie Haldeman. My dad asked her how I was getting along and she said, "Well, she reads well!"

I remember the pump organ that stood near where the choir sings today, and in about 1927 my dad was on the board and took Gladys Noth along to pick out a used piano. It's the piano used here today, so now for almost 80 years.

We didn't have electricity, and I remember the hanging kerosene lanterns. At Christmas, the Christmas trees had candles on it that had to be lit. I remember the church being wallpapered, and while I was still going there, the paneling was put on. The old log church was taken apart and the logs used to build the Gottlieb Stecker home. The pastor during this building period was Rev. Christ Mueller.

Everyone dressed up in "Sunday clothes" on Sunday. Men all wore suits and ties, and women – their best dresses and always a hat. The men sat on the right side of the church and the women on the left, families did not sit together.

The District Superintendent always came to the quarterly conference and always preached a powerful sermon and served communion. We had wonderful programs on Christmas and a special Sunday in June called Children's Day. On Children's Day, we had flowers all along the altar. They used Mason Jars for vases and they were filled with wild flowers, mostly daisies from Julius Vieth's pasture and wild roses from along the roadside. There were a lot of children, so many in the Christmas and Children's Day programs.

After service on Communion Sundays and Children's Day, people stood around outside and asked, "Have you got someplace to go for dinner?" Mother always prepared many pies and cakes, never knowing who was coming. We often had as many as 10 people at the table. Immanuel was with us these Sundays which was the reason for all the invitations being extended.

For several years we had a New Year's Eve party at the Spring Valley School. The room was always filled with people. We always had a program with special music, readings and dialogs – people really spent time preparing for this and everyone had a jolly time. The ladies met in homes before the party to make homemade noodles. We had homemade chicken noodle soup for lunch and always homemade ice cream. We stayed until midnight and watched the New Year come in.

I was married to Ed Dreier at Salem church in 1936, and after that I became a member of Immanuel with him as that's where he was a member.

**Dawn Hubbard Powell**

For 30 years I have lived in Spring Valley. The Salem Church has always had a special place in my heart. As I journey to and from various destinations, I pass the church and remember how far my spiritual journey has come also. Participating in the church's activities (playing piano, mowing cemetery, participating in Christmas and Easter programs, singing in the choir) has taught me many lessons that I continue to draw on. In 2003, I was born again, and have come to find new joy in the church. I realize how truly blessed we are to live in an area where faith still plays such an important role.

One of the highlights of worshipping there as a child was to hurry out of church after the service to throw rocks and pebbles in the pond. Quite often we would use one of the bulletins as a target that we wanted to sink.

I have mowed the church cemetery from 1989-present. When my brother Dave and I started mowing, the pay was \$60. Currently I make \$100 per mowing.

On July 18, 1998, Chad and I were married at the Salem church. This was an extra special day because we shared our anniversary with Clarence and Mildred Noth.

### **Stan Walz**

The Irl & Vera Walz family joined the Salem Evangelical Church in 1934 when we moved to the Rudy Haldeman farm. Before that date we had been members of the Immanuel Evangelical Church in Norwalk in that we had lived in Ridgeville Township. Philip, son number 5 was born at home and was the first of the family to be baptized at Salem; the 4 older brothers were baptized at Immanuel. Sister Karen was also baptized at Salem.

I remember our Sunday school classes being spread out around in the building into our little groups where we couldn't help but overhear what other classes were talking about. It was not at all like it was at Immanuel with its many little classrooms. The adults sat in the back. Some men had big booming voices, like my father, which made it hard for us to concentrate on our own lessons. The boys sat on the north side near the piano. The girls sat up front – on the south side opposite us. Abner Verken was our teacher.

I remember when Harvey Pfuhl once came to our farm and said to my dad: "Irl, why weren't you and your family in church on Sunday?" This is the kind of caring and concern that we experience with the Salem church.

There were the revival meetings that were held at Salem while Rev. C.D. Olson was the pastor. It was during one of those meetings that I gave myself to my Lord to serve Him where He wanted me. I left the farm to attend North Central College to study for the ministry. But after much soul searching, it was best for me to serve my Lord as a teacher. I enjoyed being in the classroom for 33 years until I retired.

Our Youth Fellowship programs were held jointly with the young people from Immanuel Church. We worshiped and fellowshiped together; we enjoyed being with our church friends. We went to district youth conferences where we learned to expand our horizons into a bigger world.

Brother George Alan remembers the Children's Day programs that we had. He also remembers our quartet with Edwin Hubbard, Norbert Vieregge, George Alan Walz and myself. Bonita Hoffman and I sang some duets in church.

### **Harvey Menn**

Growing up and living next to Salem Church has always been a special part of living where I live. Our home wouldn't be complete without the church. I always use the church as reference point when giving directions to our farm. I tell them, "We live right across the road from a church" making it unmistakably apparent when they arrive at our farm. The historical relationship of our farm and family to the church make is especially meaningful to look across the road to see this place of worship.

There are two very special things about living by the church. The first, only we can enjoy. Every morning when I get up, I look out our front door at our barn and across the road at the church. Especially during the summer mornings the church is silhouetted in the early morning light. Many days there is a haze in the air making the sight so picturesque I wish to keep ahold of the sight forever. Other days later in the year I can see that church from our barn windows as it appears out of the darkness as the sun rises. This is the part of living by the church I really enjoy and truly cherish. Fortunately, we are situated west of the church making the morning light from the East a true treasure. This pleasure is enjoyed by few.

The other special part of living by our historical church is hearing the church bell ring. There is something about hearing the bell that brings joy to the ear. Today the bell doesn't ring every Sunday as it did in my childhood, but at least it can be heard once a month during the summer. The tradition of ringing the bell one hour before the service and again when the service begins has continued. The sound can be heard very clearly anyplace in our home. I hope it will always be heard up and down our valley.

Years ago Sunday morning services meant more than gathering to observe the Lord's Day. The church was the social gathering place for our valley's residents. Today, the church stands empty most Sundays, but whenever the church bell rings, the valley flocks to its open doors to hear God's Word which serves as a reminder of days gone by.