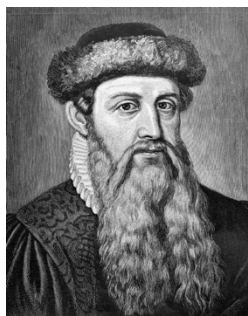
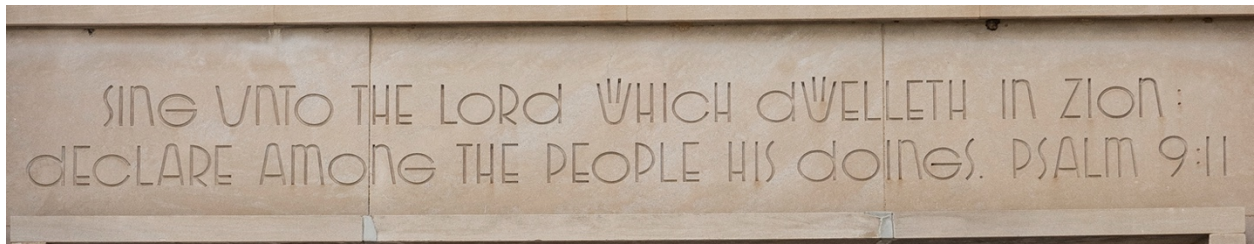




Ferguson Has a History Museum

Ferguson has a Historical Society and a History Museum. We encourage any people reading this article to join in the conversation or as a member. Contact information is at the bottom of this article.

In the last six issues, we have been presenting information about six of the earliest church buildings in Ferguson: First Presbyterian Church (1871), St. Stephens Episcopal Church (1872), Mt. Olive Baptist (1880), Sts John & James Catholic (Blessed Teresa) (1882), Ferguson Methodist Church (1886) and Immanuel UCC (1888). In this issue we will explore the youngest, Zion Lutheran Church in Ferguson (1908).



The story of the Lutheran Church actually begins around 1450 with this man, Joannes Gutenberg (left) – creator of moving type and the original printer of the Bible for distribution to the public. Prior to the publication of the Bible, the Word was passed on by clerics for the people to listen. Now the word could be read and interpreted by anyone who could read (mainly wealthy and well-placed people). By ca 1520, one of those

people was a professor of Bible at Wittenberg University, Martin Luther (right). Luther protested the Roman Catholic Church by attaching 95 theses to the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. By 1521, Luther was removed from the Roman Church and in 1525 conducted the first Lutheran service. Luther, along with John Calvin, King Henry VIII and other religious reformers, created the beginnings of the Protestant churches



The beginnings of Zion Lutheran Church in Ferguson begin much later – in 1908 a group of worshipers, many German speaking, met in the Bindbeutel Building at Church St. and Florissant Road to form a Lutheran Church. By

1909, they had bought a large frame house at the intersection of Carson Road and Clark St. (current location of Zion). The early services were often in German (as were those in last month's Immanuel UCC). As the congregation was growing, in 1910, a Christian Day School was started. The school lasted until 1917 when it ceased operation because of difficulties the church was experiencing. With the leadership of a vacancy pastor, the church began a period of revival and was soon able to hire full-time clergy.

By 1926, following a fire, Zion was growing enough that a new church and rectory needed to be built. That building continued in use until the size of the congregation required the building of a new and larger church in 1952. This old building continues to stand today on Carson Road and is currently leased out.

The new church stands at the corner of Clark Street and Carson Road. In the



photo you see the church building along with the parish hall and school building which was completed in 1957.

Zion Lutheran was a growing congregation in 1950's, so a grade school was started for grades K thru 3. Over the years the school

was extended to cover K thru 8th grade. In the years following, a day-care center was started. Both grade school and the day-care closed in 1992.

1988 brought a major change in Zion Lutheran. Zion was in fellowship with the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church. What we think of as a Lutheran Church could actually have belonged to a number of different Synods – all of whom had slightly different interpretations of the Bible and theology. A major realignment came about in 1988 – the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church of America) combined three Lutheran synods into a new synod. There was now a split between the older, more conservative Missouri Synod and the new, more modern ELCA. We won't go into the theology, here – nor will we take sides. Zion left the Missouri Synod and joined the ELCA.

It is interesting to note that both St. Stephens Episcopal and Zion Lutheran Churches were built in the same decade – and of similar, but very different, 1950’s modern design. Even the church windows, while designed by different artists,



Zion Lutheran



Zion Lutheran Chapel Window

came from the Emil Frei Studios in St. Louis. Both worship spaces feature this 1950’s modern style: the blond wood work, contemporary altars and baptismal fonts. The large center window is particularly impactful. It was designed by St. Louis artist Rodney M. Winfield. It was installed in 1957, just prior to the formal dedication of the church building on December 9, 1957. The window, through its 7 sections tells the history of “God’s People” from the time of Moses through the life of Jesus and into the life of today’s people. It links the two covenants, old and new: the promise of the Messiah. The window is dedicated as a memorial to Pastor Herbert C. and Mrs. Estelle Claus, who served Zion from 1923 until the pastor’s death in 1955.

Zion may be best remembered by the general Ferguson community for its Lenten fish fry. Like many of us, life changed in 2020 with the advent of Covid19. The fish fry was brought to an end as with so many other activities.

Today, Zion Lutheran Church ELCA, is a strong representative of the Christian

churches in the Ferguson area. Like the other six churches covered in these articles, Zion has a rich history which contributed a great deal to the vitality and history of Ferguson

This marks the end of the series on historic churches in Ferguson. There are many other churches in the Ferguson area, but the focus of these articles was to concentrate on the early churches around the turn of the 20th century.

Stories of churches in the Ferguson area come from documents in the Ferguson Historical Society archives. Much of this month’s material came from “Historical Highlights On Our

Sixtieth Anniversary” put together by members of the congregation along with input from Kristina Oswald and Dorothy Kaiser, members of Zion.

Membership in the Ferguson Historical Society is open to anyone – the price is \$20.00 a year. If you are interested in joining or have any suggestions, questions, or items to donate to the Ferguson Historical Society, please contact Jerry Benner at fjbenner@mindspring.com. You are also welcome to visit the History Museum at 1064 Smith (behind the Community Center) by e-mailing the above address. Note: we will need to schedule a date for you, so ask well in advance.

“The Ferguson Historical Society is dedicated to preserving and promoting the history of Ferguson Missouri. Membership is open to all sharing our interest.”