

## THE CHURCH HOUSE

A history of St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Cypress Mill, by Cynthia Joost

"Bishop, I had two young ladies visit me today and from the looks of things, they may populate the world someday, hopefully with Episcopalians!" The two bishops laughed and Bishop Hines continued, "They want to start a mission in Cypress Mill." Bishop Jones countered with, "That's wonderful!" "I agree it's wonderful, but there's a problem, they're not in my diocese but yours!" replied Bishop Hines, "Cypress Mill, Texas!" Where in the world is Cypress Mill?" Bishop Jones gasped. "We've been looking it up and it is right on the border of Blanco, Burnet and Travis counties, but in Blanco county."

Unknown to me this conversation had taken place and still glowing at the warm reception Bishop Hines had given Dot Young and me that morning in his quaint native stone office on University Street in Austin, I was surprised to answer the phone that afternoon and a masculine voice asked, "Mrs. Joost?" I replied that it was. "This is Bishop Jones of the Diocese of West Texas. I just received a phone call from my friend, Bishop Hines from the Diocese of Texas. He had talked with you concerning starting a mission in Cypress Mill. He was very happy about this prospect, but the only problem, Cypress is in Blanco County which is my Diocese of West Texas.

Instead of going blank I said, "Oh."

Bishop Jones laughed and took me out of my bewilderment by adding, "This sounds very interesting to me and I would like very much to meet with you and discuss this further." I immediately told him that I would be happy to come to San Antonio at his convenience. A meeting was arranged for the following Tuesday at Cathedral House for 2:30.

I excitedly called Dot Young, Elsie Youngblood, Norma Wenmohs and a few other neighbors. My mind wandered back to the discussion Emil and I had with Dot and Malcolm Young one evening. We discussed how hard it was for us to get our families to Burnet to the Episcopal Church on Sundays at 8:30 a.m., or even to Marble Falls to the Methodist Church for Sunday School and church. What we needed was a church of our own out here. We counted up the number of families that were Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, etc., in the community and decided we would approach the Episcopal Diocese and Bishop John Hines on the possibility of a rural community church under the direction of the Episcopal Church.

Following this idea, Dot and I went to the neighborhood families and asked if they would like to have a church in the community and would they be willing to give \$2.00 a year toward it. (I didn't make a typographical error and you did read it right.) Many of the families that we talked to were not attending any church at the time and had not since childhood. We were not being unrealistic, we just felt that it was a matter of importance that we have the support of the whole neighborhood and that meant bringing up commitments that no one knew whether they could meet or not in that year of the drought, 1954 (a seven year drought).

In a rural area at that time and with few exceptions, the entire income was derived from the ranches themselves. You cannot pledge something for a year when you have no way of telling what your income for that year will be. A rancher had to hoard every penny in order to combat the next loss and

cover what was owed at the bank. You can't pledge money you don't have and with no guarantee that you will have in the future. It is not like an annual salary or commission.

Emil and I went to talk to Bishop Jones at Cathedral House in San Antonio. We were welcomed as only the wonderful and illustrious Everett H. Jones could do and cause you to lose your shyness and encourage your aspirations.

We were on our way! Bishop Jones said that he would send a priest to see us and we could arrange a community meeting. We had already checked with the Methodist Board, who owned a small frame church in Round Mountain that was not in use, in exchange for our painting and repairing it.

Paint and repair we did. Norma and Victor Wenmohs, Jessie Hunter, Charles Addy, Herman and Ester Reiner, Dick and Elsie Youngblood, Clarice and Dwight Hooks, Benard and Johnny Fuchs, Emgarde and Willie Goebel, Franklin and Evelyn Croft, Charlie and Addie Wenmohs, Wayne Youngblood, Mark Fuchs, Jan, Pete, John Joost - we painted inside and out, made curtains for the windows, fixed an altar. Warren Berlett made the cross that is now enclosed in the cornerstone of the present church. Mary and Hilmuth Fuchs (although Mary was a member of a church in Johnson City) were very supportive and helped get the Round Mountain church in shape.

I came home one day from taking the children to school and old Maria told me there was a young preacher to see me but he had gone off with Emil to check the cattle. This was my first meeting with Wilson Rowland, perhaps one of the strongest associations I would ever have in my life. He was young, very devout and very devoted. I would later come to admire, and also sometimes to be astounded, by his stubbornness but never doubted his sincerity or his complete dedication to the Lord and his church. I would later find that Wilson Rowland was perhaps the most unselfish and most generous person I have ever known - unselfish with himself.

However, this day we, of course, asked him for lunch after we had found that he was sent here by the Bishop to help start a mission in Cypress Mill. We had liver for lunch and Wilson, outspoken as always, said that was the only thing he couldn't possibly eat. I fixed him a tuna sandwich. We spoke of the possibility of a church in Cypress Mill (maybe I shouldn't say "possibility" because I never doubted it with everybody in the community wanting it and willing to give \$2.00 a year to support it!)

We held our first community meeting at the Round Mountain church in December of 1953. We had the old kerosene stove red hot as it was 36 degrees outside. Ester Reiner backed up against it and burned her coat. When the young Wilson asked for questions, Elsie asked if you had to have birth certificates, Dick shuddered. The meeting went off well and we asked to become a mission of the Diocese of West Texas.

Then problems began. Wilson never checked his mail and the people out here were anxious to have him to dinner. I died over and over until I thought the grave might have grub worms. So I quit dying and started sending him telegrams.

Everyone loved him. He started services at 7:30 once a month, the little church was packed each meeting. Dot Young, Marcille Bradshaw, Elsie, Norma Wenmohs sprayed the carpet that held the narrow table that we made

into an altar. We bought two crystal vases and Warren Berlett carved a small wooden cross. Dot donated some sea blue brocade curtains we hung behind the altar. Grace made some curtains for the windows and we had Antoine Goebel from Waco tune the old piano on one of his visits here. We were in business.

Fielding Reiner, Mark Fuchs, Wayne Youngblood took acolyte instructions from Wilson, arriving at the church 30 minutes ahead of time for the classes. Norma Wenmohs, Marcille Bradshaw and Mrs. Harden from Round Mountain took turns playing the piano. Marcille and I usually picked out the songs from the Methodist hymnal. Wilson almost hid his face when we would sing them, but remember there were only four Episcopalians in the group and only one of them had been confirmed for more than four years. This community has always loved to sing and loved music. There was always a music teacher in the community. Miss Louisa Fuchs, "Tantalou", studied at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music and later in Europe. Herman Reiner remembers that each evening his mother would bring out the violin and hand it to him. There were concerts in the "hall" and plays and concerts that Cypress Mill talent took part in the old opera house in Marble Falls.

Wilson started confirmation classes in July of 1954. The first class was held at the Joost ranch with Elsie and Dick Youngblood, Marie Goeth, Grace Berlett, Wayne Youngblood, Fielding Reiner, Mark Fuchs, Dot and Malcolm Young, Cynthia and Emil Joost. The classes met three times a month at different homes, the last class held in the spacious yard of Elsie and Dick Youngblood under the old trees. There was excitement that night, Malcolm Young called from St. David's Hospital in Austin to say that Susan Carole Young had arrived.

1902 is the date that "oldtimers" will never forget, for that was known as the "year of the opera". "Uncle Bill" Fuchs bought extra lumber to enlarge the hall just for the presentation. It was an historic night, that night back 1902, a feat accomplished superbly the like of which had never before been attempted in this country in a small rural community. "The Bohemian Girl" was presented with all local cast with the exception of the four Schelper sisters who had studied with the same teacher as "Tanta-lou". Miss Fuchs played the gypsy queen and recalled some of the cast included Julius Fuchs as the count, the late H.E. Croft as the "Devil's Hoof", Gus Lechow the count's nephew. There were others and a whole gypsy chorus. Harry Hyatt was in the chorus, Mrs. Alfred Schnelle accompanied on the piano.

In 1903 Miss Louisa Fuchs returned to Cypress Mill and directed the whole community in a musical extravaganza "The Dream of Fairyland". Anna Schoeter, John and Morris Goebel, the Fuchs and Wenmohs girls all took part in the play. Norma Wenmohs sang fairyland songs in the play, she was just a little girl. Miss Louisa taught music, piano and voice, in Cypress Mill. She made a beautiful, picturesque figure riding horseback to the homes of her different pupils from the children of Otto and John Wenmohs all the way to the H.E. Crofts toward Johnson City.

Fritz Reiner wrote "The Shepherd's Waltz" while herding sheep on the Edward Ebling ranch.

We had no pledges. It was during the most bestial of droughts. None had money, much less the gall to say that he could pay anything in the future, but we all had a lot of faith and believed that if we wanted it

badly enough we would have a church here at Cypress Mill. Faith we had; money we didn't.

Wilson announced that Bishop Jones would make his first visitation to St. Luke's in the fall of '53. That was excitement, too! The women met at Mary Fuchs' and decided to have a supper on the creek at Franklin and Evelyn Crofts. The men hauled every barbecue pit in the community over there. Edgar Lechow and Warren Berlett were in charge of the barbecue and the decorating committee was Clarice Hook, -----, Elsie, Norma and myself. Esther was in charge of the tea and coffee. Everyone had a part in the food. We sent out invitations to all of the former residents of the community. Fielding, Mary and Wayne with Pete, John Joost, Mike and Pat Burleson tagging along, moved every picnic table in the community to the supper site. Mrs. B.B. Burleson and Grace were in charge of the church. Norma was to play the piano for the night and Wilson requested "Holy, holy" and "Faith of our Fathers". I don't think he trusted Marcille and me to pick from the Methodist hymnal.

We picked every wildflower in sight, cut fall leaves and decorated the tables fit for a king or a bishop. The men started barbecuing at 10 Sunday morning, the bishop and party were to arrive at 6. At 5 the drought must have decided to break and thought to do it all at once! We grabbed table cloths, dishes, food, everything but the floors and dashed to Round Mountain to Sharp's Cafe, the men loading the barbecue. Sadie Sharp told us to cover the pool tables and put the food on them. We put a raincoat on Pete Joost and had him stand at the intersection to direct the bishop to Sharp's. That was the longest two hours I have known and I've known a few. But it worked. We all ate, met the Bishop, loved him and started a relationship that was one of the most inspirational and fulfilling that only being close to someone of greatness can be.

As we started up the newly poured cement steps at the little old church in Round Mountain, I heard Malcolm Young say to the bishop, "We poured new steps just for your visit, Bishop." The Bishop replied, "That's what bishops are for!"

It was an almost mystical feeling in the still little church that with only the by now soft rain promising a future in many wonderful ways.

Enthusiasm was rampant after Bishop Jones' visit and we began to believe that with Wilson's encouragement and adding a little push ever so often, we could build a church in our own community. Emil, Wilson and I went to see the bishop in San Antonio and he was enthusiastic. Then the fun began, we needed to raise money. We started out with a carnival to be held on Franklin Croft's creek. (Franklin was from a long line of Anglicans in England and he and Evelyn were always generous with their place and time.) The carnival was something. We advertised. We had a fortune telling booth in a hollow tree. We went to Fritz Wenmohs' ranch on the Colorado River and gathered pyrite then scattered it in the little stream that ran off to the side from the creek. We let the children "pan for gold" and paid them a penny per 5 ounces. We charged 25 cents to pan. We had pony rides, a turkey shoot, sold hamburgers and hot dogs. George Croft in Johnson City donated the hamburger meat and Ralph Moreland donated the sauce from his Holiday House. We made \$219.83 and, of course, it was all clear. We were on our way.

Then a sad thing happened. Dwight Hook died in Houston where he and Clarice had been forced to move to due to his health. Dwight had been very interested in the church and asked Wilson to come to Houston to baptize him. With a lot of foresight for his future family and with a lot of love for his community, he asked that in lieu of flowers donations be made to the church.

Actually that \$800 was the turning point. Wilson and I worked on plans after that and the whole community started raising money.

I was watching TV one night and all of a sudden an advertisement came on asking to buy scrap iron. I jumped up and told Emil, "That's it!" He laughed. I called Malcolm, he laughed. I called Elsie, she didn't laugh. I asked to use the pickup the next day and picked up Elsie and we scoured the neighborhood for scrap iron. There used to be lots of it out here until we started gathering it. Elsie said there was an old stove in their pasture. We drove to it but couldn't lift it. So we just backed up, ran over it and then we picked up the pieces. We went to everybody's house and cleaned their ranches until the truck was full. We parked the pickup at the store overnight and when Elsie and I met the next morning, Malcolm Young had placed an old commode on the very top. We couldn't get it down so away we went commode and all.

We stopped at a filling station in Austin on Lamar Blvd. and the men laughed but we told them what we were doing and it wasn't so funny, we didn't think. They came up with a bunch of old iron rims and we couldn't put them anywhere but on the front floor so Elsie had to ride the rest of the way with her feet on the dashboard. We got over to the scrap iron place and neither one of us had ever been before. I'll never forget the fellow hollering at us as we sort-of tippy-toed in. "Hey, what youse two want?" Very matter-of-factly we told him we had a truck load of scrap iron. We had seen his ad on TV and would like to sell ours. He weighed the truck with the load on it, then weighed it empty. It weighed out at \$39.60, plus \$6 extra for a radiator we had, it totaled \$45.60. We were ecstatic! Those men could laugh no more.

Emil had given me \$3 when I left and suggested we go to Lung's Chinese Restaurant on Red River Street. We were so happy with our great business deal we decided it was a great idea. But since we didn't want to park the old pickup in front of the place, we left it three blocks away and walked.

We were just having a glass of Rhine wine and an egg roll when who pokes his head around the door but Emil. He had gotten worried about sending us with all that junk by ourselves and had followed us.

We made two more trips with scrap iron with Malcolm and Emil's help, but we had to drive it in. I never have figured out what is so bad about driving thru Austin with an old pickup loaded with scrap iron.

Then we had the idea of an varmint hunt. The Holands had moved here by this time and she offered to make the stew with everybody bringing something to go in it and we'd all go to our creek, the women that is, and get the stew started and the men would split up some starting at Edgar Lechow's and the others starting at Thomas Young's. All would then meet at the creek where the stew would be. Chester Bintliff had bought the Foster place next to us, between us and Thomas Young. He and Pat Burleson rode horseback. I have a picture taken of the catch, or kill, whatever. Malcolm Young, Chester Gamon, Franklin Croft, Emil.

Wilson was absolutely astonished. Being a city boy all his life (except as a chaplain in World War II), I don't doubt he wondered what he'd gotten into. But he loved it, or else he was so in love at the time he would have loved whatever we did. For it was about this time that he and Joy Giles from Comfort announced their engagement.

Wilson, Malcolm and Emil went before the Diocesan Executive Board and we sweated out their answer, but it came thru in the amount of \$2,200.

Dick Youngblood, Malcolm Young, Warren Berlett and Emil Joost went to Ernest Stubbs, who was president of the Johnson City bank, and signed a note for \$1,100. Ernest didn't charge them interest. We never asked for money, ever, in the church. Each year when the note would be due, we would just sent out postcards to everyone in the neighborhood "Note's due." Not once did a single one who received a postcard fail to give some money.

Meanwhile, back to the little church in Round Mountain. We had our christenings, Mary Ann Joost, born May 8, 1954 and Susan Carole Young, born September 1954 were baptized November 1954. Mary Ann's godparents were her 2nd cousin Mary Ann and Wilburn Hilton and Berl Mae Lechow. Susan's were Audrey and Joe Prause, second cousins. Susan became the first "Baby Jesus" in the new church's first nativity scene and Mary Ann became the church's first woman layreader in 1972.

Wilson's close friend was Vernon Helmke of San Antonio. He had just graduated from the school of architecture at the University of Texas and had specialized in church architecture. This was his first challenge.

Herman and Esther Reiner donated the land for the new church in memory of Louisa and William Fuchs, Dora and Frederick Reiner.

A bishop's committee was selected with: Emil Joost, senior warden; Richard Youngblood, Malcolm Young, H.W. Berlett, J.B. Bradshaw, Victor Wenmohs, Holton Burleson and Herman Reiner.

We were on the road and the community went after it with enthusiasm. The contract to build the church was awarded to Albert Weirich with Clarence and Irwin Goebel, Edgar Lechow from Cypress Mill were of the crew. At that time, after the slab was poured, you could see half the community if you went by the church to check on things. It was an exciting time.

Clean-up Day arrived in August of 1956. Everyone - men, women children helped clean windows and right in the middle of the drought. The ground was so dry we used hoes and rakes to smooth the rocks and dirt. Clarice Hook was putting the hoe to good use when Emil Joost came up on his tractor to haul some of the rocks away. He asked Clarice what all was happening and she said. "Nothing, just us hoers."

We held the first service in September of 1956 at 7:30 p.m. The church was full. Charles and Addy Wenmohs sat in front of me, Victor and Norma Wenmohs to my left, Hilmuth and Mary Fuchs, the Reiners, Lora and Edgar Lechow, Warren and Grace Berlett, Marie Goeth with Elsie and Dick Youngblood and Wayne, the Youngs, the Burlesons, Franklin and Evelyn Crofts, Willie and Emgarde Goebel, Marcille Hook, Clarice Hook, Benard and Johnnie Fuchs, the Joosts and more. The Rev. Wilson Rowland preached that night and the text was on the "continuance of life through Christ". He used the paradox of a mouse dying in the woods and in its decaying body a tiny worm will come

forth into the world and be life to be eaten to sustain life of another animal. He was bringing out that God has a plan for everything even the lowliest of creatures. We of higher intelligence must study and read the life and teachings of Christ in order to understand each other and also the miracle of the earth.

When we rounded the hill and curve after driving over the creek, we saw the church with the cross with the rose colored lighting outlining it for the first time. Chills went up my back. I was awed and inspired all at the same time.

We met once a month after that time. Then the bishop was coming. In the meantime Dot Young and I had babies, Mary Ann and Susan.

In the month of October Bishop Jones came and we had a barbecue at our house. In the meantime our water well went dry.

The thought of 60 people at our house for barbecue with no water - none to drink, none to cook with, none to wash with and none to whatever - gave Emil mild ulcers. I knew Emil would come up with something, his bark is always awesome, but the bite seldom comes. After all the barking, he had a plan. He went to Gib, (Gebhart Lechow born in Cypress Mill) the Gulf consignee in Marble Falls, and asked him about a tank truck that he had (it had not been used for gasoline or kerosene in case you're thinking what I think you're thinking). Gib was all for us using it, so they filled it up and hauled it to the ranch. We hitched it to our system, then began hauling drinking water in every conceivable container in the neighborhood. Again we were in business. Malcolm, Dick, Franklin Croft, Victor, Holton, Herman - all the men were to do the barbecue. Warren Berlett and Edgar were the true chefs and supervised as well as cooked. The Stieler boys killed and dressed the goats and different ones brought homemade sausage to put on the pits. The women made green salad, potato salad, beans, homemade bread and pies.

I had acquired a redwood stand that had been used at the Marble Falls school for savings for the kids to learn thrift. We set it up outside to serve off of. I traded Mariah two new chicken waterers for an old hollowed out cypress log that had been used perhaps 60 years in her chicken yard to quench the thirst of many a fattening chicken. We put foil in the bottom and filled it with green salad. Elsie came over to the stand, took one look, raised her head and said, "You are not going to serve the bishop out of an old chicken waterer!" We did.

Mrs. Jones came to me and, always charming, asked to see the new baby. I proudly showed her thru the house to the bedroom where old Mariah had Mary Ann laying on her ample bosom rocking her gently. Mariah's smile was as big as mine until Mrs. Jones turned to me and asked "What did we name her." I panicked. I knew it wasn't Susan because that's what the Youngs and McCoys named their babies and it wasn't Diane. Finally Mrs. Jones smiled, patted me on the shoulder and said, "That's all right, honey, you will think of it."

I did - later.

Emil had stationed Pete and John to help Wayne, Fielding and Mark with serving the tables. Just after Bishop Jones' blessing of the food, our pet

doe, Trudy, jumped the fence into the yard. Everyone was so thrilled she decided to chance coming to see what was going on - until - she discovered the bishop's collar! Pete and John had to hold her off, literally. Shooing did no good. Pat and Mike Burleson guarded the bishop but no amount of coaxing would drive her away. Just goes to prove that although the beloved bishop has many divine and almost mystical powers, he couldn't "divine" that doe away.

The butterflies I felt that night had nothing to do with eating salad from a "chicken waterer". I suppose I wanted everything to be perfect and I'm afraid my first prayers as we left for the church were not for the glory of God, but for St. Luke's opening to be glorious. As we rounded the curve on the slight rise of the hill leading to the old school house turned country store, the rose window with the cross made from cypress lumber milled on the Kellersburger Ranch (now owned by Victor and Norma Wenmohs) cast a mystical aura silhouetted against the dimming sunset. The bell tower standing high proudly exposed our faith for the world to see. The butterflies fluttered away and an intense gratitude replaced them.

That evening Malcolm and Dot Young, with Susan and toddler Susan, were sitting to my right on the pew just across and the aisle and down one row. As the church began to fill and I watched neighbors and loved friends, even a few strangers take their seats, Malcolm turned and looked at the crowds coming in two by two because the aisle would allow no more abreast. The expression on his face was one of wonder and more than just a little proud.

There were Ellie and Emgarde Goebel; Victor and Norma Wenmohs; Charles and Addie Wenmohs; Dr. and Mrs. B.B. Burleson, Mabel and Holton, Mike, Melinda and Pat; Pila Pickle; Clarice Hook, Marcille and J.B. Bradshaw, Jackie, John, Jennifer and Buddy; Dick and Elsie Youngblood; Marie Goeth; Edgar and Lora Lechow; Rosie and Margie; Franklin and Evelyn Croft and Sandy; Helmuth and Mary Fuchs; Herman and Esther Reiner; Lilagene and Bill Hobbs, Gary and Marsha; Elnora and Alton Kneese and her mother Mrs. Nueman; Gus Stieler and more from the area. From Llano came the high heeled boots priest-in-charge of Grace Church, Ed Haffner, with Walter and Frank Franklin; the Rev. Mr. Carlisle from Burnet, There was Sadie Sharp and Jessie Hunter from Round Mountain and many others for the records show 56 present that night.

The loveable bishop's eyes were shining that night almost as much as Wilson Rowland's. Wilson's, of course, was of unbelief - the bishop's was of belief and complete trust in us. I looked around at "us" and thought that is a true man of God. We had no piano but we sang "Holy, holy, holy" and "Faith of our Fathers" a cappella. I looked at Elsie and remembered the scrap iron. I looked at Clarice and remembered Dwight and the "hoers". I looked at Herman and Esther and remembered painting the church at Round Mountain and my marveling at their agility. I am their age at that time now and I know that at that age you are really just in the prime of life! I looked at Malcolm and Dot and thought of the long but wonderful road it had been and that the road had just turned a corner and would keep on going down the exciting, though sometimes a little dusty, way.

I began to get butterflies again. I wondered if these former Methodists, Baptists, Lutheran, et al, would understand our service of Holy Communion. One thing I am sure about, if I did not worry the Lord out with my prayers that night, that He was forever - eternity!



I remember the bishop's sermon that night. It started with the electric "There is not one of you here tonight that would not have been had not someone, somewhere, sometime, prayed." I thought of this neighborhood to which I had belonged only twelve years and was still a newcomer, of their great heritage and of the many ancestors that they took such pride in. Some of those had already gone - John Wenmohs, Max Goeth, Hilmuth Fuchs' father, others. I thought of Mrs. Young, the wife of Al Young, and mother of Malcolm and Thomas - yes, she probably prayed - the sons all went away to World War II and one didn't return. I thought of Wilson who had said he did not come from an especially religious family, but I was sure someone had prayed. Even myself with an illustrious number of Baptist and Methodist preachers in my family - my immediate family was not overly religious. I thought of a grandfather I had never seen who died the year I was born, but had established a Methodist Sunday School class, which room still bears his name. I felt a kinship with him I had never known that perhaps before I was born he prayed.

The service of Holy Communion began and in the solemn prayerful ritual of receiving, I heard a 2 1/2 year old's thunderous voice, "But, Daddy, I like beer, too!" just as the bishop touched her on the head and blessed her. Malcolm's cheek reddened but he was grinning as he walked back down the aisle.

We immediately started a women's group - Bible study. We had been meeting in homes - the Goeths, mine - Mary Fuchs was usually the leader. But the first meeting in the church, Grace Berlett who was altar chairman for life - anything you accepted in the beginning was for life until someone could be talked into taking your place. Marie Goeth began feeling unwell toward the end of the meeting and I took her and Elsie home, as Dick was working in Austin and had the car. At 3:00 in the morning, Elsie called me to come quick. I did. The fog was so thick I had to get out of the car and feel the cattleguard at Wenmohs. It took awhile and I arrived just as Dr. Ivan Sheppard from Marble Falls, who had been slowed by the fog also. He went in to examine Mrs. Goeths and came back into the room and told us she was dead. I had little experience with death and called on the "tired" Lord again. He revived me enough that I called Dick in Austin and Emil to come quick!

I then called Norma Wenmohs and Addie and Charlie. It was hard for me to grasp that Marie Goeth was gone. We had just celebrated Elsie and Dick's anniversary the weekend before and I'd gotten pictures back and I had not taken any of her. I chastised myself for not doing it.

I called Wilson and he came right over. The funeral was to be in the church. We had sawed off one foot from the pews that had been donated from Grace Church, Llano, just to fit a coffin coming down the aisle. Built by a fellow in his 80's, there were handmade nails in them also a date scratched on the back of one dating 1889. Marie Goeths was the first person to be buried from the church. After the service the procession drove to the Goeth cemetery adjoining the land that Dick and Elsie's house stood.

"In sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, we commit her body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. We commend to Almighty God our sister, Marie. The Lord bless her and keep her and make his face to shine upon her and be

gracious to her, the Lord lift up his countenance upon her and give her peace. Amen."

Marie Goeth was custodian of the Memorial Book. She had completed 7 pages prior to her death Feb. 6, 1957. I sadly filled the next page:

"Mary Alice Von Rosenberg Goeth was born May 8, 1885 in Austin, Texas and passed away February 6, 1957. Tante Marie, as she was affectionately called, had spent the morning baking bread, which she took to some of her neighbors and had spent the afternoon with friends and neighbors at the Women's Auxiliary meeting at St. Luke's Church. This day was typical of many that made up her life - thinking always of her friends. Her interest and loyalty in this church inspired the whole community to further efforts for its completion.

Marie Goeth's memories included many honors. Her picture still hangs in the Elizabeth Ney Museum in Austin. She also unveiled one of the monuments in the State Capitol. On Nov. 27, 1907 she was married to Max Goeth and they moved to Cypress Mill that year. (Max Goeths was related to the Kellerburgers who started the mill at Cypress Mill and at one time owned land from Shovel Mountain to the Colorado River). Her graciousness and friendliness truly blessed this community for 50 years! The old stone home still stands and received a medallion in 19...

Among the mourners was Mrs. Sparks from Marble Falls, better known as "Funeral Fanny". She never misses a funeral - hitch hikes a ride or walks as far as Lampasas, Burnet, Johnson City, Blanco. She always carries a cloth bag with cold biscuits and a jar of water. I have never seen inside the bag but a good source told me so. People in the area try to discourage her from attending funerals so, try as she may, she can seldom ever get an unwary soul that doesn't know her and won't give her a ride home. Wilson, of course, had never seen nor heard of her before and was indignant when she came to him asking for a ride back to Marble Falls. Not understanding why no one she asked agreed to take her, he sought me out and told me to find her a ride. From the look on his face, I knew he meant it. I did ask the preacher from Marble Falls, Brother Manley, if he would take her, but like the others he shook his head. Joy Rowland, John, their 15 month old son, returned to our house with Emil and me and Pete, who had acolyted at the service returned with Wilson. When they arrived I saw Funeral Fanny in the back seat of Wilson's car. Wilson got out and came over to the swing in the back yard where Joy and I were taking turns swinging John. Wilson said to me, "Your son has more sense and compassion than you do. He thinks we should take her back to town. We'll be back after we take her." Later that night when I was alone, Pete came to me and said, "Mother, I sure did think we should take her back because I would have never gone to sleep if I thought she was still out here and could come look in my window. I would have dropped dead and you could have had another funeral tomorrow."

At the next women's meeting we enthusiastically began making plans for our first Christmas in the church. I decided that we would paint tuna fish cans black and put hurricane lamps in them with candles. We were going to line the windows with cedar and place the hurricane candles there. Emgarde Goebel offered to make a cedar wreath for the door. Elsie and Dick Youngblood were to gather cedar and red berries. Pila Pickle and I were going to get the tree. We were going to have the children portray a live

nativity scene. We selected Herman Reiner to be Santa Claus to arrive after the service and during the coffee, hot chocolate, cookie social time.

Pila and I went to Sutton and Crofts to get the tree. I thought that Pila, having lived on a ranch all her life and running one by herself would be the best of all choices to know her way around in the woods. We drove in through the gate and then through the cedar and decided to walk through the woods to find the perfect tree. After about an hour we found it. We took turns with the axe and finally got it down. It was a pretty good size, so we went after the pick-up. The pick-up had "moved" so we spent an hour at least trying to retrace our steps. We did find it and drove back to the tree, but couldn't find it even though I had tied a rag on one of the branches. It began to get dusk when we finally sat down on a log and just started laughing. Pila stayed with the pick-up so she could honk if I found the tree and couldn't find the pick-up again. We got back to the church, pick-up, tree and both of us all together just after dark.

We held the Christmas service on the Sunday next to the 25th. We had 48 people and the church was lovely in candlelight. The children in the nativity scene led the carols and stood perfectly still all during the service (well, practically still, after all Susan Young, Pat Burleson and Mary Ann Joost were in it along with the older ones, Mike Young, Mike and Melinda Burleson, Sherry Young, Cathy Young, John, Pete and Jan Joost.) Mike Young and Sherry were Mary and Joseph. When Susan saw that Mike and Sherry were the "stars", she called out, "But I want to wear the Mary suit." Herman came in ringing a bell in his Santa suit. Mary Ann looked up at him spellbound and he picked her up. He has told me many times that he had not wanted to play Santa Claus but when he picked her up and saw the look in her eyes, it was all worth it! Pat Burleson dashed out of the church. Someone grabbed him and he said, "I'm going to see if I can catch his reindeer."

On December 27, 1956 we had a balance of \$45.30. We just counted it after the Christmas service. We wrote checks for such items as: St. David's Book Store, Rev. Rowland's Christmas gift, \$19.95; "Child in Alaska Fund" \$5.00; R. Geissler, Inc. \$18.00 for the silver bread box; Roy Photo \$21.00 for Christmas cards (we sold them for \$52.40); Lutheran House \$9.31 for candle lighter; Wallace Engraving for the plaque on the back wall: "To the Glory of God and in Memory of Dwight Hook, whose foresight \_\_\_\_\_". Esther Reiner was treasurer of the Auxiliary.

In 1957 our account at Citizen State Bank in Johnson City at the end of March was \$47.35. We paid LCRA \$6.12; diocesan expense \$1.66 a month; diocesan missions \$3.66 monthly and Wilson Rowland \$25.00 a month for one night service and gasoline expenses.

We started a Sunday school in January of 1957 with a perfect attendance for the entire first year. On the rolls were Loretta Kneese, Jan, Pete and John Joost, Sherry Young, Mike, Melinda and Pat Burleson. The Goebel granddaughters belonging to the Clarence Goebels and the Irwin Goebels of Johnson City came when they were at grandparents Willie and Emgarde's. Mary Ann Joost and Susan Young were taught by me and Dot Young taught the others. We had a bill from the Church Book Store for \$26.32 for materials.

Our first Easter service was held at night and the little church was full to overflowing. We had lilies on the altar in memory of Warren Berlett's mother. The children flowered the cross and that is another story. Dot and

I went to Warren Berlett, who had a tin shop in Johnson City and was a very active member of the church, to make a cross out of a holy screen (the screen was not holy, it had holes in it some quite large). Emil went after feed at Croft's, Johnson City and picked up the cross from Warren. It wasn't on a stand. We thought and thought how to get it to stand up. We ended up by having Pete stand in front and hold it. The children put their flowers in as we sang "Holy, holy, holy" a cappella.

Our Sunday School attendance increased considerably in the summer with all the visitors at the Burlesons, Goebels and Joosts. Dot and I switched classes for the summer and my class made a replica of the first tabernacle.

With fall approaching Mrs. B.B. Burleson suggested that we combine the church anniversary celebration and the community Octoberfest and have it on the church grounds. Actually we had done this, more or less, the year before when we dedicated the church in October. The men brought their barbecue pits to the church and we had beef, goat and sausage. Warren Berlette and Edgar Lechow cooked the goat with Malcolm, Emil, Holton, Franklin Crofts, Victor Wenmohs, Herman Reiner all got in on the cooking. We had a full house and three priests - the Rev. Carlisle from Burnet, the Rev. Ed Haffner from Llano (Ed was known as the cowboy priest because he always wore boots) and Wilson Rowland.

Octoberfest had been held since 1888 when a rifle club was organized. They met every year on the Sunday closest to the full moon in October so that those traveling by wagon could see to travel at night.

Sunday School was still batting 100% and the children were so responsive that Dot and I decided to have them do a play for the Christmas service. We had ordered some plays earlier and chose "Silent Night" by Ernest K. Emurian. The plays were a set of 12 we had seen advertised in the "Progressive Farmer". The lead was Franz Xavier Gruber. We read the script in Sunday School to the children and no takers for that part although all were enthusiastic but for a lesser one. We finally decided on Sherry Young playing the part of a boy. Sherry was short haired, smart and 12 years old. She really relished the part. Franz was an organist-composer and should strum a guitar. Pete Joost played Joseph Mohr, a parish priest; Margie Lechow, housekeeper; Cathy Young, a peasant woman; small children Susan Young, Pat Burleson, Debbie Goehman and Mary Ann Joost; Sandy Crofts was the King and Loretta Kneese was the Queen. Jan Joost was the narrator. Mike Burleson and John Joost were the narrators for Scene 11. Right girl was Melinda Burleson; right boy, Johnny Bintliff; left girl, Zoe Goemann; left boy, John Joost.

The play took place after Evening Prayer and a brief sermon and a Christmas message by the Rev. Wilson Rowland. The church was full, candles in all the windows with all nights out except for two dim spots illuminating the stage. The play began. The children were just simply perfect and Sherry was absolutely sensational at the boy, Franz! No mistakes, no catastrophes - just perfect. And then the King said, "May the spirit of this lovely song be the spirit within us at this Christmas season. I ask the children to lead us and let us all join in singing the song from Heaven, the King and Queen and the four small children, then the rest at their side singing "Silent Night". The song has always touched me, but never quite like it did that night in the candlelight, surrounded by friends and neighbors and so extremely proud of the children!

I had worked on the books with Malcolm several days before and we were 34 cents in the red but when we added up the plate that night we were back in the black!

The Goeth family had asked that the memorials given for Mrs. Goeth be placed in an organ fund. The Austin American carried an ad for an antique organ for sale, an old pump type that had been electrified. Elsie, Dot, Mrs. Burleson, Norma Wenmohs and Mary Fuchs went over to see it. They wanted \$70 for it. We liked it; Norma played it and we decided to take it. Malcolm and Emil went after it in the pick-up. Now we needed an organist.

Marcille Bradshaw and Norma had played the piano at the church in Round Mountain, but Marcille had moved to Houston and Norma was a little skeptical of playing the old organ. She said if we would sing familiar hymns she would agree to play for us. Well, we didn't have anything to sing by but Methodist hymnals out of the church in Round Mountain, so "Rock of Ages", "Faith of our Fathers", "O Lord our help in ages past" boomed off the rock walls in sweet though imperfect harmony.

Dr. Gray Blandy held the Christmas Eve service in 1957. Again we had a candlelight service, but this year Emgarde had made 3 wreaths from our native cedar. They were lovely and we hung one on the rock wall outside at the entrance to the church and two on either side of the Altar. Dean Blandy was from the Episcopal seminary in Austin.

In January of 1958 we began services twice a month. They were still at night and Wilson was still priest-in-charge, but we had visiting ministers or seminarians the other Sundays. The Rev. H.B. Morris came several times on the Sundays that were not Wilson's turn; also the Rev. Paul Hyami, seminarian John D. Allen, layreader Jim Price from Austin. We always had the visiting ministers or layreaders and their families to eat supper with us. Our children especially enjoyed the Price's because their son, Jim Jr. and Jan were about the same age and little Paul and Mary Ann were both 4.

Bishop Dicus and Mrs. D. came for the first time to St. Luke's on January 19, 1958. We had rain for 5 straight days. The creek would rise and it was uncrossable, then it would go down for a few hours, then up again. Due to the time of the year, we could not serve lunch in the church. Bishop Dicus was to be in Blanco at 9:00 a.m. and then to Cypress Mill for an 11:00 service. We couldn't decide what to do, whether we should call him not to come or just trust in the Lord and wait until the last minute to make a decision. We decided on the latter.

The next morning I drove to the creek, it was still raining and the creek was not passable. I came home. Ralph Moreland, C.B. Smith and Jack Wilson had spent the weekend out here to attend the service on Sunday. They were drinking coffee and shaking their heads when the phone rang. It was Cathedral House in San Antonio saying Bishop and Mrs. Dicus had spent the night in Blanco and called to find out if they had heard from us to know whether the Bishop should try to come on. It was a little lighter outside, so I took a deep breath and told them to tell him to come on! The men stared at me and Emil asked if I had lost my mind. I called Mabel, Margie, Dot, everybody and told them to get their vegetables ready and come in pickup, I already had the roast cooking in the oven. Since we were going to have lunch in the church and so little space, we decided to have a huge roast, green beans with potatoes, fruit salad, homemade bread and homemade butter with three cakes for dessert. We were going to put all the beans and

potatoes in one large bowl and the fruit salad in a punch bowl. We had moved the pews as close to the front as possible and I put three card tables in my pickup with table cloths, etc. and picked up Angeline Gutierrez. We got to the raging creek to see Col. Agnew, "Buddy", in his pickup on the other side watching the creek. He hollered across that he had had a phone call, his mother was in the hospital and he was trying to get across. It had gone down a little since I was there earlier, so I asked Angeline if she was game and she nodded. We plunged in and made it! We cut the lights on at the church, put the tables up, cut pyracantha berry branches, placed them on the altar and went back home. Angelina prepared the roast on a big silver platter. The men all got their pickups and when we got to the creek the Bradshaws and Clarice Hook had already arrived from Austin. Next came Bishop and Mrs. Dicus, then all the neighborhood and visitors began to arrive. We hauled everybody across in pickups returning for more. All in all 42 people received communion and many children were there also. By the time the service was over many helped their plates and were able to eat outside.