A communion table, covered with pure white linen, had been placed over the ashes of the commitment fire. The taking of the Lord's Supper sealed the dedication of the night of silence.

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The same summer that youth became the benefactors of the total campground program, the children of Naperville also had the opportunity of attending a Laboratory School of Leadership Education. While this was a community venture, First Church gave a great deal of leadership to the project. Dr. Herdis Deabler, Dr. and Mrs. Milton Bischoff, Mrs. Oliver Kreimeier and Mrs. J. Ruskin Howe are a few of the names associated with the work across the years. Mr. Elmer Koerner (who has worked in First Church as orchestra leader, choir director and High School Department Superintendent), served for a number of years as coordinator of the Laboratory School, which uses a North Central College dormitory for housing its visitors. He has this to say about the school:

> The Lab School does an excellent job during the week that they are in our midst each summer. Youngsters receive a vital course in religious education. The School employs top-notch teachers who manage the children well and display their techniques to adults who wish to become teachers. The Lab School teaches teachers to teach!

Other adults were learning, too, during these years—learning facts about America. The relocation camps on the West Coast which followed the outbreak of the war had aroused both indignation and an awakened interest in our Japanese-American friends. At a meeting of Woman's Missionary Society in 1945, Mrs. Chee Yaginuma, who had come to Naperville to make her home, told of her experience in a relocation camp. The Yaginuma family have enriched the life of First Church to this very day. Mrs. Walter Klaas, who had worked in relocation centers, also gave many wonderful insights into this work.

Another missionary concern of this era was the education of medical missionaries. First Church, at the recommendation of Mr. Lee Augustine's committee, voted to pay $900 a year to the support of a theological student who would also complete a medical education. The revolving fund was set up under the direction of Dr. Wilber Harr, and Lowell Gess of Nerstrand, Minnesota, was chosen as the first recipient. This is one of the most genuinely joyful arrangements the church has ever made. The furlough visits of Dr. Lowell Gess, with his educational slides of medical work in Africa, are anticipated by the entire congregation.

Africa was very much in the thinking of First Church during the next few years. Dr. and Mrs. Ira McBride spent their furlough in Naperville then returned to Africa. Dr. and Mrs. Wilber Harr returned from Africa to serve on the faculty of Evangelical Theological Seminary. Mr. Chester Reinhart went out as a master builder to supervise the construction of much-needed hospital buildings. His letters to his family in Naperville were so vivid that continued support was given to the work by the Immanuel Class and others. The reaching

of Naperville into Africa was made very real as Mr. Reinhart told about his work and said, "I built the doctor a temporary place where he can perform operations inside screen, and built him an operating table similar to the one Dr. Rikli has in his office." (The Rikli family was prominent among First Church workers for many, many years.)

So many graduates of North Central College were going out as missionaries, doctors, nurses, and workers to Africa that our Mission station became known as *Little North Central in Africa.* For a number of years the students put on an annual service in First Church telling about Little North Central and the Church Council kindly allowed the students to receive an offering for this work in Africa. It was always a generous amount, for the church is not only mission-minded, but it is said that when First Church assembles for worship there are more North Central graduates worshipping together under one roof than at any other spot on the globe!

* * * *

A Sunday of great celebration and thanksgiving was held in First Church on September 2, 1945. The war had ended! Mr. Eder was assisted in this service of praise by Dr. Heininger and Professor E. N. Himmel.

This did not mean, however, the end of First Church's concern for world needs. It was but the beginning. Although the church had been sending items to suffering lands through outside agencies, now began the work under the guidance of Mr. Eder and a corps of dedicated workers which made First Church, Naperville, known in countless war-ravaged areas.

The first big project was the sending of blankets to Europe. On the Sunday morning of the Dedication Service, September 29, 1945, the altar was piled high with dozens and dozens of blankets (almost 200 of them). It was a gift from the church. Individual donors' names were not affixed, but each blanket bore the following inscription: "This goodwill gift sent by The First Evangelical Church, Naperville, Illinois, U.S.A."

A Woman's Sextette organized and directed by Mrs. Dewey Eder added much to the musical enjoyment of First Church. The women gave many concerts in churches in the surrounding area. The original group consisted of Helen Schmidt, Helen Welzel, Gladys Eder, Sadie Riebel, Erma Heininger, and Ethel Spreng, with Esther Stover as accompanist.

The following March "Seeds of Goodwill" were sent to France. One hundred sixty family packages were prepared. Each package contained: 1 ounce each of carrots, broccoli, lettuce, brussel sprouts, spinach, endive, cabbage, red tomatoes, red beets, and turnips; one pound each of green beans, red kidney beans, and peas. To make the

gift one which would truly express our love and goodwill, Mademoiselle Annette Sicre, dearly beloved Professor of French at North Central College, placed a greeting in French in each package which went back to her homeland.

The warm bond of fellowship abounding in First Church was not for foreign consumption only. In his annual report, Mr. Eder expressed his profound gratitude to the church:

> This is a good time for the pastor to record his appreciation of the freedom of the pulpit. Whoever preaches in First Church need never feel that he is muzzled. The people are a good listening congregation, a constant inspiration and challenge to the mind and the heart of the preacher.

There was a spirit of good fellowship with the town, also. The following note of acknowledgement from the Board of Trustees was written in January of 1946:

> The Trustees gratefully acknowledge a Christmas gift of One Thousand Dollars from the Kroehler Manufacturing Company toward the work of First Church. This is the second year that a gift of this amount has been received from our local company. We assure Mr. Delmar Kroehler and his associates of our deep appreciation of their generosity.
>
> George L. Wicks, President
> Willard L. Muehl, Vice-President
> Anton J. Senty, Secretary

In June of 1946 First Church held a farewell party in honor of President and Mrs. E. E. Rall. Dr. Rall had retired after thirty years of distinguished service to North Central College. The church was honoring him for his contribution to the college founded in 1861 and nurtured by the Evangelical Church, but more than that, they were expressing appreciation for his faithful service as teacher, trustee, and worker on many committees at First Church. Gratitude was also expressed to Mrs. Rall for the years of great devotion she had given the Kindergarten Department as superintendent.

In September of that year the new President of the college, Dr. C. Harve Geiger, and Mrs. Geiger were introduced to the congregation and were asked to remain at the altar following the service so that the congregation might welcome them.

Dr. Geiger entered very soon into the work of the church by becoming one of the teachers of the Immanuel Class. A notice in a bulletin several years later told of Mrs. Geiger's success as a writer. The invitation read:

> The College Bookstore invites members and friends of First Church to an "Autograph Party" in honor of Mrs. Geiger on Tuesday afternoon, April 8th, from 2 to 5 o'clock when her new book, "The Lengthening Shadow", will be introduced.

The impact of this book of religious poetry depicting events in the life of Christ, is still felt in the congregation. In 1961, Mrs. Vera Walz

used selections from it for the worship portion of a Sheal Class guest-night dinner at the Student Union.

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On November 24, 1946 a panel appeared before the congregations of the two Evangelical Churches to tell about the great event in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, which made them no longer Evangelicals, but Evangelical United Brethren. The delegates from Naperville, Dr. I. L. Schweitzer, Dr. C. J. Attig, Dr. Paul Eller, Dr. H. R. Heininger, President C. Harve Geiger, and the Reverend Dewey Eder, spoke on the subject: "Making History at Johnstown." And an interesting history it is.

Entries in the journal of a United Brethren minister show that there were dreams of a union between his church and the Evangelical Association several years earlier than 1817, when representatives from the two denominations actually met to contemplate such a possibility. Even at this time they were conscious of the similarity in their backgrounds. Both were ministering in German to German-speaking people in America; therefore their churches were often side by side in the same community, and there was much friendly cooperation and association among the congregations of the two denominations.

Always in a contemplated union there are compromises which must be made on both sides. Sometimes the cost seems prohibitive to one party or the other. This time both hesitated. For one thing, the Evangelicals were too much concerned with the ecclesiastical and the organizational to suit the United Brethren. They, on the other hand, with many Mennonite descendants in their group, were more inclined to let each congregation formulate its own rules and regulations. A modern church historian says: "Be that as it may, each group thought so highly of its own ways that neither would compromise".

Strange as it may seem, nearly a century elapsed before there was any further formal attempt at a union. This definitely did not rule out all kinds of informal fraternizing at "grass-root" levels. Both denominations were much devoted to fighting sin and all kinds of evil by strong Evangelistic methods through "camp-meetings, protracted meetings, and revival meetings". Both were people by tradition and faith who were greatly concerned about human need and suffering everywhere, not only in this country but in other parts of the world. In fact the establishment of missionary societies came simultaneously in both denominations.

At the close of the century, an important delaying agent was the split among the Evangelicals. Even at this time, both parties to the schism kept in touch with the United Brethren Church. A bishop from the Evangelical Association spoke of his church and the United Brethren Church as the "conservators of Christian orthodoxy". A bishop from the United Evangelicals, addressing a general conference of United Brethren said: "I know of no doctrine of the United Evangelical Church that you do not believe and teach."

It is no wonder that with these words of encouragement from both sides, two bishops from the United Brethren should turn up in Chicago in 1911 at that important session of the sundered church. Politely and

firmly the bishops were told in effect: We Evangelicals have to get our own family a little better united before we start joining up with any of our neighbors, no matter how much we like them. Again at the time of the Union of the Evangelical Association and the United Evangelicals in 1922, practically the same request was made by the United Brethren, and the same refusal was given. It was not until 1933 that a bishop from the Evangelicals presented to a general conference of the United Brethren an offer of readiness for union. After eight years of careful and sagacious study on the part of a small committee consisting of three representatives from each denomination, they were able to present a Basis of Union very widely acceptable to both churches. And so, in line with the modern tendency for union among the protestant churches, the Evangelical United Brethren Church came into existence in Johnstown, Penn., on Nov. 16, 1946. Another occasion for joy and thankfulness! Too bad Miss Bucks couldn't have attended this union too, and bequeathed to us her glowing account of the heart-warming experience of singing "Lead On, O King Eternal" and "Blessed Be the Tie That Binds" with the hundreds of people crowding the doors and aisles of the spacious church that memorable day!

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It is amazing how closely tied are sermon topics and speakers' themes to the life of the age. About the time of the Union, the issues were: "The Battle After the War", "My Country and I", "Foxholeless Faith", "Human Relations in Industry", "Russia and the Atomic Age", "Mental Health", "What Does God Want Us to Do About Russia?"

It is a tradition of First Church to use a bulletin cover depicting the work of the YMCA at the time of the annual drive. Many men and women of the church are very active in the local YMCA as board members, campaign workers, and group leaders.

Always, always, First Church was aware of its world obligation. In 1948 an Easter offering of $1500 was asked, and with a sense of apology it was earmarked for "local use" for the first time in years. However, the congregation was assured that anything labeled "for relief" would be so used! To keep the personal and affectionate touch in our giving, the church sent to the pastor in Dresden, Germany, where the Evangelical Church was totally destroyed by bombs, the silver communion set and baptismal bowl which had been used in the Old Brick Church.

Before North Central College students left for vacations at home, they brought extra clothes and shoes to the church. Mrs. J. S. Gamertsfelder, Mrs. R. Kemmerer, Mrs. Ira Oertli, and others, headed the

dozens of women who were devoting many hours every week to mending and making completely wearable the clothes brought in. The bombed-out peoples in Europe did not even have needles, thread, buttons or scraps for doing their own mending. First Church expressed appreciation to the men who did the heavy work of preparing the boxes for shipping—Bradlee, Werner, John Eisele, and Fred Broeker.

Letters told that people in Germany were using hunks of clay for soap, and so "Grease for Peace" became a by-word, and every bit of waste cooking fat was saved and sent to be made into soap for shipment abroad.

The wells of compassion were not limited to adults. The Youth Council of Naperville collected 1500 pairs of wearable shoes. The State E.Y.F., headed by a Social Action Chairman from First Church, collected almost $1600 to use to buy goats for Japan. Letters from Germany to our youth, such as the one which follows, kept them eager to build the bridges of understanding over "all the unblessed contraries of nations."

> We wish to thank you heartly for your rich and beautiful gifts for Christmas. Surely you are enjoyed to know to whom they have come and which happiness they prepared. Our house belongs to Evangelic-Lutheran church to the Union for Inner Mission in Nuremberg. We are a sanatory for tuberculoses children and on the Christmas days we had 110 children in our sanatory. Children are here for a few months by inspection of a physician. Amongst them there is a great deal having lost their parents or their home during the war and we often don't know how to get clothes or stockings or linen for them, because the few things bringing with are so teared, that is it hardly possible to mend them. Opening the packets to distribute the gifts for the children on the Christmas-tables by growing-up persons, there was a great happiness and rejoicing about the pretty and useful things being visible choosed and packed up with great love and careness. It is a wonderful experience for us to feel how communications of faith is a real bridge over all the unblessed contraries of nations.
>
> We wish you might have been able to stay a little amongst us at the Holy Evening to experience how children when they had attentive listened the story of Christchild and had astonished the tree with the lights and the crib were standing rejoicing before their gift-tables how their eyes were lightning and how they often could not believe that this or that present should belong to them. Herefore we thank you once more very heartly particularly in the name of our little patients, send you our best wishes for the new-begun year and reach you in mind our hand about the ocean!
>
> Yours sincerely Hedwig Furst

Individual families of First Church still treasure letters written in German which came to them from some family they had chosen to help. One Junior High School boy became fast friends with a German lad his own age. After the American family had sent several packages of used clothing, and Helmut in Germany had written letters of appreciation for clothes which fit him exactly, the First Church lad insisted that when a new jacket or sport shirt was purchased for him, one also just like it be bought and sent in the next box to Helmut. The First Church family income was limited and this was explained. The boy simply answered: "Then I'll take less myself. I don't want to send only my *old* stuff to Helmut." A real bridge? Yes!

During the summer of 1948 Reverend Eder, Reverend Andrew Kurth (former Administrative Dean of North Central College and active member of First Church), and Reverend Wilmert Wolf (pastor of Grace Church) joined a group going to Europe. The church had given Mr. Eder a Bon Voyage gift which was to be used to enrich his travels. In keeping with the empathy he had for the stricken people of Europe, he used part of it for purchases of Care packages and for other benevolent negotiations at such places as Stuttgart, Frankfurt and Hamburg. Upon their return, the pastors of the two Naperville churches gave a Sunday evening series to their combined congregations on the theme: "Reflections on a Continental Journey."

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A steeple-eye view of the church in the changing years of the late forties and beginning fifties would include:

Frequent visits to the church by Julian Gromer, well-known photographer of far-off lands and America, making use of the new, large movie screen which could be set up in the sanctuary. Also, educational hours for many groups with the Reverend Howard Orions of Wisconsin, who had become a nationally known ornithologist; and an acquaintance with Rosa Page Welch, noted singer and lecturer who presented the negro's role in our land with great insight—

A "Thank-you" to Mr. Will Frederickson and Ed Miller, ushers in the balcony, which was filled each Sunday with North Central College students, for "putting so much congeniality into their duties as ushers"—

When the Federal Supreme Court decided that released time for Religious Education Classes could no longer be available in public schools, Mrs. Violet Bischoff met the sixth and seventh grade young people of First Church for classes in Christian Education immediately after school every Tuesday—

A tribute paid to Mrs. L. H. Seager, who had come "to the end of a highly useful earthly pilgrimage. Her presence in turn graced the parsonage, the College President's home, and the Bishop's residence. With equal grace she lived victoriously in the years of retirement"—

A Fellowship Class was formed by a group of couples who had previously belonged to other classes where the men and women met separately. The husbands and wives of this group, whose children were leaving home for college, marriage, and jobs, decided they want-

ed to be together for Sunday morning Bible study of a serious nature, as well as for social evenings adapted to the "bifocal club." The class lasted only a few years, but memories of those hours with like-minded couples are very dear to many whose lives are now set in different molds—

Miss Leona Kietzman and Mrs. Gideon Broberg, leaders of a group of First Church ladies, made drapes for the church parlors and the Pastor's study from material bought by the Ladies' Auxiliary—

A glassed-in broadcasting booth set up in the balcony above the Junior Choir where Professor Guy Eugene Oliver and his students broadcast the services of First Church over the North Central College Radio Station, WNCC, to the shut-ins of Naperville. Those confined to their homes were linked to the church in worship—

An altar in the parlor chapel, made by Arnold Wolf, and dedicated in honor of Mrs. S. J. Gamertsfelder, teacher-emeritus of the Work-to-Win Class—

The Immanuel and Sheal Classes decided to join forces for the study of the lesson each Sunday morning. However, the Sheal Class has kept its identity and has regular social meetings on the first Tuesday of each month. (An interesting item: the Sheal Class has met for its June picnic at the farm home of Mrs. Myrtle Boebel every June for more than thirty years. With tables set on the lawn or in her home, according to the weather, Mrs. Boebel has always had a generous supply of fried chicken for the whole group!)—

The joy of Mrs. Vernon Farnham and the children shared by the congregation as Dr. Farnham, after many months of detention in Red China, sailed from Hongkong, homeward bound—

Students in C.Y.F. discussing such topics as "Should my negro brother become my brother-in-law?"—

North Central students, Gudrun Frese of Germany and Toshio Ota of Japan, reading the Scripture one Sunday—first in English, then in their native tongues.

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To see First Church pass in panoramic procession is to witness the tremendous changes made in a short period of time. Some changes are of local origin. Others are brought about by legislative measures passed at General Conference. This was true in the establishment of the Women's Society of World Service. The 1951 Discipline of the Evangelical United Brethren Church gave the regulations for forming this organization, which would unite all the women's work of the church into one fellowship.

When First Church decided to have this unified program, the Ladies' Auxiliary, which had been such a powerful force in the church since 1908, ceased to exist. Mrs. Geggenheimer was chairman when the auxiliary was organized, and Mrs. Paul Zimmermann was the last chairman before the new era began. In between these two women the names of the following appear as chairmen: Mrs. John Manshardt (9 years), Mrs. W. W. Spiegler (8 years), and varying lengths of service for Mesdames Rickert, Coultrap, Schaefer, Koehler, Muehl, Nolte, Reinhart, Eggestein and Hooten. First Church is grateful to