

## Cross of Christ Chronicles

### *Lift High the Cross? — Part 3*

As promised back in November we will now turn our attention to the crosses inside both our churches over the years. Unfortunately, we cannot report on the initial decades of either church since the earliest known interior photographs were taken after 1900.

At the Stone Church we see the inside as it appeared sometime after the pipe organ was installed in 1906. There are no tangible representations of the cross on the altar or anywhere else and the only image of one appears to be a large, plain white or light-colored cross sewn onto the center of a black, or very dark, *altarduk* (altar cloth) which covers the front of the altar table all the way to the floor. Over this has been placed a very short, white cloth with a fancy crocheted edging. This aged altar cloth was the one brought out and used for Congregational and Stone Church anniversaries in 1980, and subsequent years. —See photo on page 27 of the 1980 Church History Book.

The very same arrangement, including a similar short white cloth with crocheted edging, can be seen on the altar table of the newly built Rushford Lutheran Church in 1909. (See p. 26 of their 1981 History Book.) This is not too surprising since our Rev. Jaastad served both churches, although whether he had any input into those matters is not known. Interestingly enough, this same design of a large, plain white cross on a dark background can also be seen on the retable (that part of the altarpiece above the altar table) of the Moland Church in Fyresdal, Telemark, in the local history book *Fyresdal* (1910) – p. 51. Although we can't state positively from the evidence of only three pictures, it leads us to believe that this could well have been a common motif in the Norwegian Lutheran churches both here and back in the Old Country at that time.

At St. Peter's, a fascinating postcard photo exists that was most likely taken in 1909. Again, no tangible self-standing crosses, although there are two images. No overhanging altar cloth here, but on the center front of the altar table there appears to be a dark Greek Cross (one having four equal arms) surrounded by a simple quatrefoil design against a white background. (The image is partially obscured by the balusters in the altar rail.) Similar to the Stone Church altar cloth, an unembellished white cross appears on the fringed dark cloth covering that overhangs the lectern on the pulpit.

In an interesting aside, the foremost feature of this photo is a large, fringed cloth banner attached to the arched opening between the sanctuary and recently constructed chancel. It is completely filled with large appliquéd capital letters that read VELKOMMEN (Welcome) and which served as a greeting to all of those who attended the *Kreds Møde* (District Meeting) held there in 1909. —See photo on page 44 of the 1980 Church History Book, and below.

Moving on to the next available photographs, a very important and valuable series was taken by M.O. Bue for use in our very first church history book put out in 1930 in celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Congregation. Both churches had been remodeled and modernized in 1924

and '25 so the interiors were completely different than those seen in the earlier photographs. However, the presence of crosses does not appear to have changed at all (with the exception of the newly installed stained-glass windows).

The altar, altarpiece, altar rail, and pulpit were painted white with gold accents at the Stone Church, but the paraments and the pulpit coverings and trim remained exactly the same. The chancel furnishings at St. Peter's (installed in 1901 in the neo-Gothic style) were already white with gold and continued to be outfitted as before. No new crosses anywhere in the chancel area, although this would soon change. (*Continued next month with crosses added after 1930.*)

— *Jim and Shelley, Cross of Christ Archives, February 2019*

### *St. Peter's finial and interior, circa 1909.*

I wrote in Part 2 that St. Peter's finial "does appear to have a short cross arm making it look like a very slender cross," but further examination of a better-quality photo has revealed it to be an arrow-shaped weather vane

