

Cross of Christ Chronicles

Kvindeforening or Ladies Aid – Part 1

Before delving into discussions on the contents of the new display case, I believe it's best to have a bit of background to start with. Since there is fairly good coverage of our Ladies Aids readily available in the 1980 Church History Book, I won't be repeating those articles verbatim, however I will refer to them from time to time.

Our women's groups were not yet established during the first few decades of the existence of our congregations, but that did not mean that the **Ladies** did not provide **Aid** to their churches. While it was the fathers who read from the *Hus-Postil* (book of sermons for the home) on those frequent Sundays when they were without a pastor, the mothers took the lead when it came to seeing that their children completed their lessons and learned their "memory work."

In the previous article we learned the meaning of "*Du må spandere*" (you must serve) and it would seem that was all those pioneer mothers did. Providing and preparing food, clothing, and as *koselig* (cozy and comfortable) a shelter as was possible for their ever-burgeoning families was a full-time job *every day*, not to mention helping with the chores and also the fieldwork. And who do we think fed the men and kept things going on the home-front while they were down working on the Stone Church for three summers in a row? *Uff-da!*

I must confess I just now realized that when I was busy with writing about the impressive feat of building our exceptional church for its sesquicentennial last summer, and so consumed with how incredibly grueling it was for all who worked on it, I didn't once think about all the extra work it made for those who were back home on the farm. Just another prime example of the unsung nature of many of the contributions of the women of our congregations over the years! "*Skam på meg, igjen!*" (That's for you, Inez.)

Throughout much of history the accomplishments of most women have been given very short shrift. This is most unfortunate. Growing up in an extended family of farmers and having been educated mostly by female teachers in church and in school, I have never for a moment doubted the capabilities of women. **To be continued next month...**