

A century ago, the people of Granger started their own branch of the Unity of the Brethren Church, and it's still going strong. The church celebrates the unveiling of a historical marker on the church grounds, west of Granger on Broadway Street, at 2:30 p.m. Sunday.

Church celebrates 100th year

By Roger Croteau
Sun Staff Writer

It was 100 years ago when Reverend Adolf Chlumsky of Brenham, here to perform a wedding, encouraged the people of Granger to organize a congregation of the Jednoty Bratrska — Unity of the Brethren.

The local faithful took up the challenge, forming the Granger Brethren Church, and now the church is celebrating its 100th anniversary by unveiling its new Texas Historical Marker, detailing the important aspects of this church in Central Texas.

"A lot of the founders came from the Corn Hill area," said church member Kathryn Adamek. "We are very excited about the marker."

The Granger Brethren Church will be celebrating its centennial Sunday with a special program beginning at 2:30 p.m. The entire community is invited to celebrate with the congregation at the church, located west of Granger on Broadway Street.

There will be sandwiches, kol-

aches and other refreshments served after the program.

The Unity of the Brethren sprang out of the early reformation period in Bohemia around the 15th Century. The Bohemian priest John Hus was proclaimed a heretic for preaching in the vernacular in Prague's Bethlehem Chapel and for offering the Chalice to the laity.

Hus was burned at the stake in 1415.

His followers carried on his practices in secret and through grave persecutions for more than 400 years. The Chalice became their official symbol.

The oppressive conditions of the Austrian Empire and the glowing reports from friends in Texas who had left the homeland earlier were two of the main reasons for the emigration.

Czech Protestant immigrants settled into the Granger area in the 1880s. They had brought Czech Bibles, hymn books and prayer

books and worshipped in their homes for some time before the first service was held in the old Friendship School east of Granger. Then, on May 28, 1892, Chlumsky encouraged the people at the wedding to form their own congregation.

After the Granger congregation formed in 1901, Czech settlers from many parts of the state gathered in Granger two years later to officially organize the denomination known as the Unity of the Brethren in Texas.

Perhaps the most interesting detail in the Granger church's structure is its incorporation of both the symbols of Texas and the Unity of the Brethren Faith. The steeple still features a Chalice resting upon a Lone Star.



Winners of the October 23 Football Contest

1st Place

Harold Morrison

2nd Place

Carolyn Gardner

3rd Place

Linda Widmer

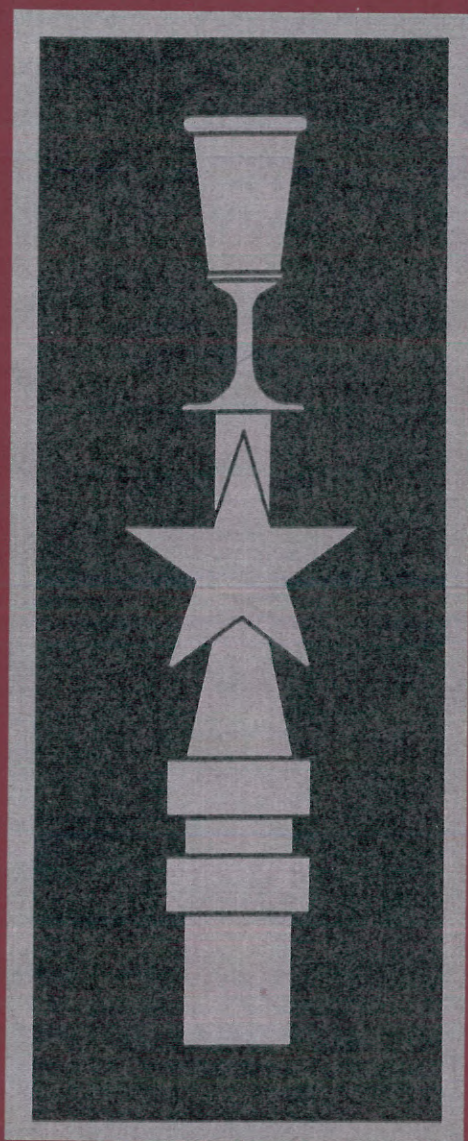


a place in the Sun

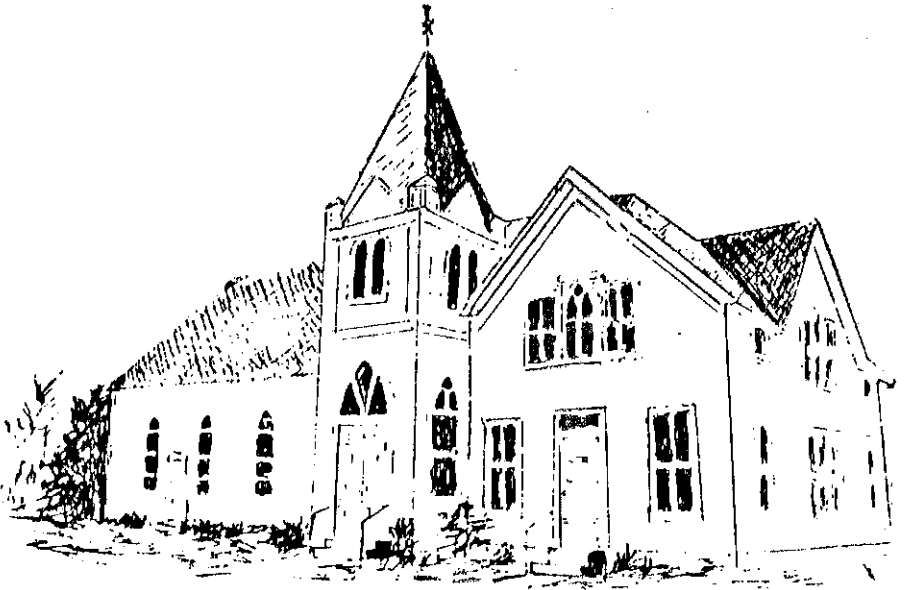
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1892

1992



GRANGER
BRETHREN CHURCH



GRANGER BRETHREN CHURCH

Centennial Celebration

November 8, 1992

2:30 p.m.

Granger, Texas

Order of Service

ii.

<i>Prelude</i>	<i>Mrs. Helen Volney Accompanist</i>	<i>Special Dedication</i>	<i>Rev. Terry Loessin Former Pastor</i>
<i>Introit</i>	<i>Choir</i>	<i>Medley</i>	<i>Martha, Ron, Susan Stockton Ruthie, Don, Lauren, Marissa Hughes</i>
<i>Invocation</i>	<i>Rev. Gordon Hejl Church Pastor</i>	<i>Presentation</i>	<i>Mrs. Irene Varan Williamson County Chairperson Texas Historical Commission</i>
<i>Welcome</i>	<i>Mr. Edwin Adamek Board Chairperson</i>	<i>Unveiling</i>	<i>Centennial Planning Committee Mr. Edwin Adamek Mrs. Kathryn Adamek Mrs. Rubie Loessin Mr. Dan Martinets Mr. Alan Tomasek</i>
<i>Hymn</i>	<i>'Hear the Songs of Thanks We Raise' Congregation (pg. 4)</i>	<i>Reading of Marker</i>	<i>Mrs. Elsie Barton Church Historian</i>
<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Rev. Albert Michalik Former Pastor</i>	<i>Prayer</i>	<i>Rev. Frank Suncik Former Pastor</i>
<i>Pronouncement</i>	<i>Rev. Thomas Tallas Unity of the Brethren Synod, President</i>	<i>Hymn #689</i>	<i>'The Church's One Foundation' Congregation</i>
<i>Honorariums</i>	<i>Mrs. Rubie Loessin Chairperson, Christian Sisters</i>	<i>Benediction</i>	<i>Rev. Eugene Kotrla Former Pastor</i>
<i>Musical Memories</i>	<i>Choir Former Choir Members Invited</i>	<i>Closure #708 [1,4]</i>	<i>'Blest Be the Tie that Binds' Congregation</i>
<i>Reminiscing</i>	<i>Congregation</i>		
<i>Silent Tribute</i>	<i>Rev. Daniel J. Marek Former Pastor</i>		

The Choral Introit

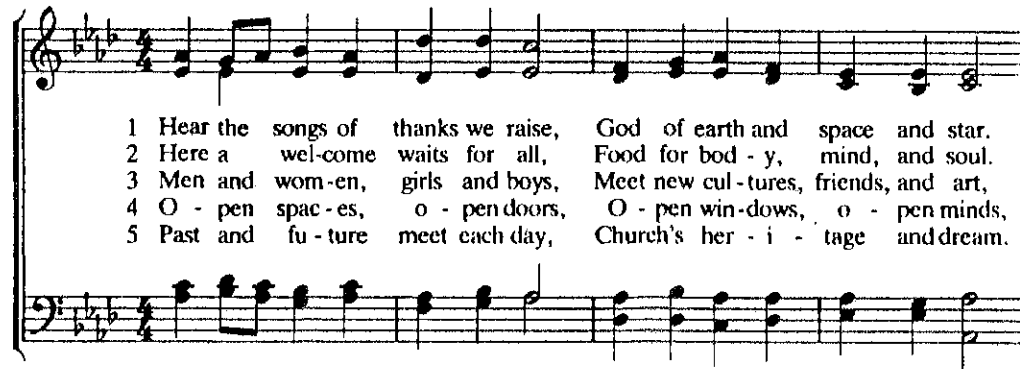
*Sing praise and hallelujah! To God who reigns supreme,
Creator of this planet and all we see or dream.
Today we raise our voices in thanks for all these years
God's love and truth have led us through all our joys
and tears.*

*Sing praise and hallelujah! For present friends and past,
For children's voices singing, for faith and hope that last,
For sacraments and sermons through which we've known God's Word,
For kindly thoughts and actions we, here, have seen and heard.*

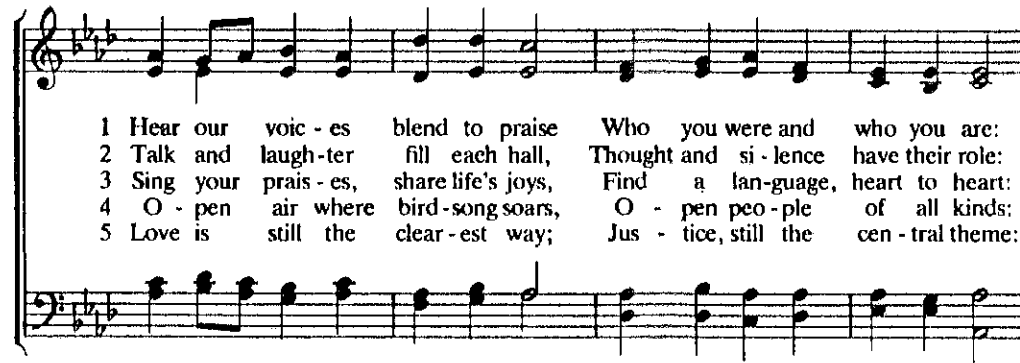
*Sing praise and hallelujah! Long may our witness thrive,
For God still calls to service and keeps our faith alive.
The future lies before us - what opportunities!
All ages join our chorus as we proclaim God's peace.*

Jane Parker Huber, 1986.

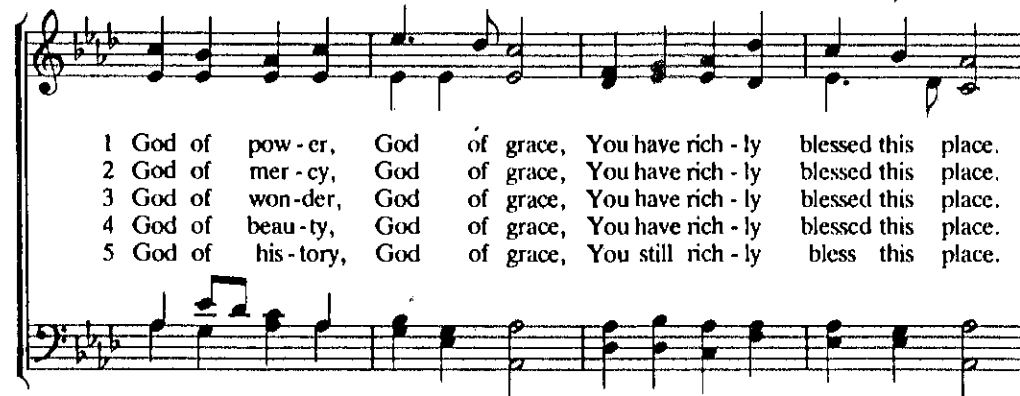
Hear the Songs of Thanks We Raise



1 Hear the songs of thanks we raise, God of earth and space and star.
2 Here a welcome waits for all, Food for body, mind, and soul.
3 Men and women, girls and boys, Meet new cultures, friends, and art,
4 Open spaces, open doors, Open windows, open minds,
5 Past and future meet each day, Church's heritage and dream.



1 Hear our voices blend to praise Who you were and who you are:
2 Talk and laughter fill each hall, Thought and silence have their role:
3 Sing your praises, share life's joys, Find a language, heart to heart:
4 Open air where bird-song soars, Open people of all kinds:
5 Love is still the clear-est way; Justice, still the central theme:



1 God of power, God of grace, You have richly blessed this place.
2 God of mercy, God of grace, You have richly blessed this place.
3 God of wonder, God of grace, You have richly blessed this place.
4 God of beauty, God of grace, You have richly blessed this place.
5 God of history, God of grace, You still richly bless this place.

DEDICATION OF NEW HYMNALS

L: *The Psalmist says, 'Sing praise to God;
sing praise to our king! God is king over
all the world; praise Him with songs!'*

[Ps. 47.7]

P: *We come now to dedicate these new hymnals
to the glory of God.*

L: *When Moses saw how the Lord had saved His
people from her enemies, Moses and all the
children of Israel sang a song to the Lord:
'We will sing to the Lord, because He has
won us our victory...He is our God who has
saved us and we will sing about His love.'*

[Ex. 15.1, 26]

P: *'O Lord, we will always sing of your constant
love; we will proclaim your faithfulness
forever.'*

[Ps. 89.1]

L: *Our Lord Jesus Christ and his disciples sang
hymns together the night of the last supper.
The apostle Paul encouraged the churches to
'Sing psalms, hymns, and sacred songs; sing
to God with thanksgiving in your hearts.'*

[Mat. 26.30]

[Col. 3.16b]

P: *We sing our songs because they speak for us
the words, the feelings, the emotions that we
long to make known to God, our Creator, our
Redeemer, and Sustainer of our lives.*

L: *'How good it is to sing praises to God, it is
pleasant and right to praise Him...Sing
hymns of joy to Him and play musical
instruments to God both day and night...'
'Sing to the Lord all the world...come before
Him with songs of joy.'*

[Ps. 147.1,7]

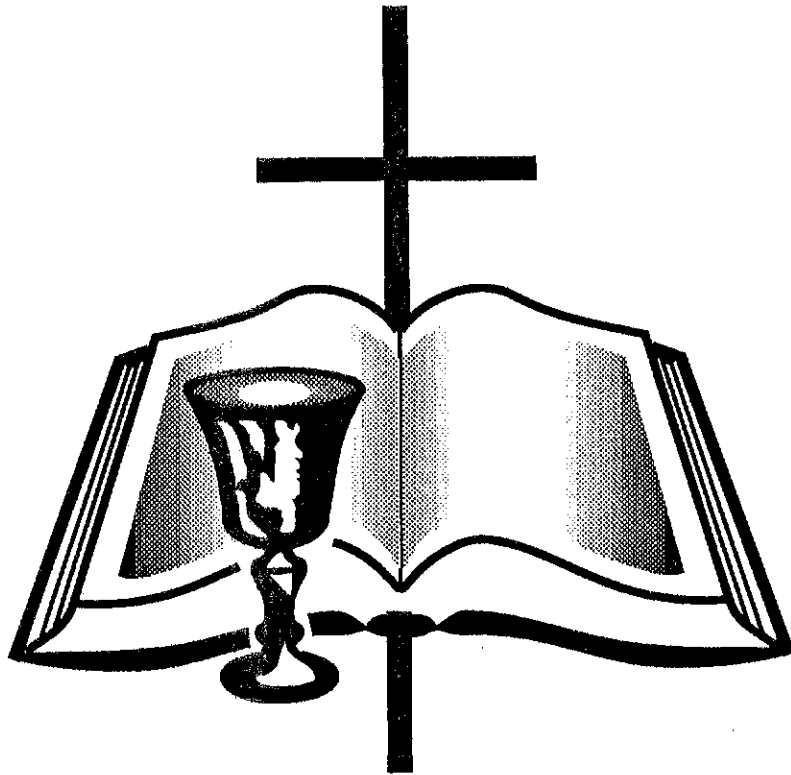
[Ps. 100.1,2]

P: *In dedicating a new hymnal we know there
will be songs that are familiar and also
songs that are new and challenging. We
give thanks for these new words and medleys
and all challenges before us. May they
awaken in us a new spirit of praise and
refresh us with their newness.*

L: *'Sing to the Lord a NEW song!
Praise Him in the congregation of His
faithful people.'*

[Ps.149.1]

P: *O God, in the sounds of nature we hear your
genius. You alone are Lord of all beauty and art.
To you we dedicate these new hymnals, given by
generous hearts in memory of those whose lives
inspired us, whose voices even now echo within
these walls the songs we still love to sing. Accept
our offering, O God, that in singing these hymns
we might be drawn closer to you and that in lifting
our voices together we might continue to demonstrate
the unity which is your will for all humankind. Amen.*



JEDNOTA BRATRSKA

UNITAS FRATRUM

THE UNITY OF THE BRETHREN
ESTABLISHED 1903
GRANGER, TEXAS

As early as one hundred years ago an attempt had been made to unite the various Czech Brethren congregations in south central and central Texas. But the attempts always seemed to fail.

In 1902 the Rev. Adolph Chlumsky began publishing a monthly periodical called "Bratrské Listy" (now "Brethren Journal"). The publication helped promote common understanding among the dispersed Czech Protestant immigrants, not only in Texas, but also in neighboring Oklahoma Territory.

In 1903 elders from the Granger and Taylor congregations, meeting jointly, agreed to work together; they invited other congregations to meet with them. On December 29, 1903, twenty-two representatives of eleven congregations met in Granger. The delegates voted unanimously to organize a new, independent denomination. The ancient Unity emblem of lamb and banner was adopted as the official seal for the denomination.

Ninety years later there are twenty-seven congregations within the denomination in Texas. The new emblem of the denomination is seen on the opposite page.

(p. 30, Unity of the Brethren in Texas, 1855-1966)

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A HISTORY OF THE
GRANGER BRETHREN CHURCH
GRANGER, TEXAS

The first Czech Protestant immigrants began moving into the Granger area of Williamson County in the early 1880's, a time when the emigration of families from Moravia to Texas began to accelerate. The oppressive conditions in the Austrian Empire, of which Moravia was a part, and the glowing reports from friends in Texas who had left the homeland earlier were two of the main reasons for the emigration. Most of these early immigrants were from rural communities and settled on farmlands around the San Gabriel River in this mostly blackland region, working very hard to establish themselves in the new land.

The worship services these Czechs were able to hold at first were few and far between. The first service was held in the 1880's in the Friendship school East of Granger and was conducted by the Rev. Henry Juren of Fayetteville. The family names at that time were Pavel Machu, Martin Machu, John Wentrcek, John Simek, Josef Martinets, Josef Mikus, Josef Zajicek and Josef Halas. Family names from nearby Corn Hill were Josef Mikulencak, Tom Mrazek, and Charles Wentrcek. Later the Rev. Bohumil Lacjak of Wesley conducted a few services until his death in a tragic accident; after that, the services were discontinued

x

altogether for a time. Most of the families had brought Bibles, hymnbooks, and prayers from Europe and had worship in their homes.

On May 28, 1892, the Rev. Adolf Chlumsky of Brenham, who had immigrated to Texas in 1887, performed the wedding ceremony for Josef J. Mikulencak and Anna Zarsky. At this wedding Rev. Chlumsky encouraged the folks attending to organize a Brethren congregation. The result was that Josef Mikulencak, Sr., (father of the groom) and Pavel Machu made arrangements for the first service to be held on July 10th of that same year in the Moravia School. The school was located four miles Southeast of Granger, and had come into existence largely through the efforts of the same Pavel Machu. At that first service the congregation was formally organized and Rev. Chlumsky was elected pastor. The family names added to the ones given above were Josef Labaj, George Labaj, John Simecek, Tom Machan, Josef Masar, John Holy, Pavel Simcik, Steve Batla, Josef Barina, P. Balusek, Frank Balusek, Tom Mrazek, Martin Vitek, John Vitek, Josef Vitek, Frank Holubec, Josef Holubec, John P. Trlica, Phillip Huser, Josef Huser, J. F. Hruska, Josef, Vinc, Frank, and John Dusek, Frank Bobalik and John Zurek.

The congregation did well, eventhough services were held only six times a year at first and the pastor had to come by train from Brenham. The

members were eager to build a church. Their itinerant pastor, however, did not think it was a good idea right at that time and advised against it. What a shock he experienced the next time he came to Granger! Without his knowledge, the members had built a new church. It stood on the Western edge of town, located across the road from Granger's Catholic church. The members had selected a building committee, pledged \$500.00 immediately, and had gone to work doing all the labor themselves. The latter included hauling large boulders for the foundation from some of the distant hills. The building committee included J.F. Martinets, J.R. Machu, J.H. Wentrcek, Josef F. Wentrcek, John T. Machu, K. Martinets, and J.J. Mikulencak. At the dedication service held on September 22, 1901, the members and their pastor rejoiced that their house of worship was completely paid for and that they were able to sing at that special service to the accompaniment of a new organ.

It was only two years later, on December 29, 1903, that the Granger Brethren Church became the birthplace of the denomination when the Unity of the Brethren, first called the Evangelical Unity of the Czech-Moravian Brethren in North America, was organized there. Twenty-two delegates from eleven congregations and preaching stations of the Czech Brethren in Texas gathered to form a unified church body after having been inspired by the writings of Rev.

Chlumsky who was publishing the Bratrske Listy (Brethren Journal). It was he and the Granger members who provided much of the impetus for such a significant and challenging step.

After Rev. Chlumsky had given 18 years of dedicated service to the Granger Church and community (all this time commuting from his farm near Brenham) and at the same time serving and organizing a number of other Czech Brethren congregations throughout Texas, he resigned at 68 years of age.

The newly ordained Rev. Josef Barton, Sr., 24 years of age, became the congregation's first resident pastor in 1910, and served for over 35 years until his death on August 28, 1945. The young pastor was also an immigrant from Moravia who did his theological studies in the United States and was the first student of the denomination. A long line of pastors have followed him, some resident and some non-resident. They include Josef Hegar, Vaclav Vavrina, Gordon A. Hejl, Jesse Skrivanek, Frank Simcik, Glenn Jurek, Eugene Kotrla, Josef A. Barton (son of the elder Barton), Daniel J. Marek, and the present pastor, Gordon A. Hejl, who in 1983, began serving the congregation a second time around.

In that same year of 1910, when the new resident pastor, Rev. Josef Barton, Sr., began his long pastorate, the Granger Brethren bought a parsonage jointly with the neighboring Taylor

Brethren congregation (also served by the young minister for the same 35 years). Three years later, in 1913, this first parsonage was sold and replaced with a somewhat larger house. After this residence burned in 1950, a new parsonage was built in the same place in 1953.

The church itself has been enlarged and remodelled several times. In 1924, a Sunday School section was added. In 1938, a thorough remodelling was done on the building after a decision had been made by the members that, rather than build a new church, they preferred to remodel the old church, the historic place where the Unity of the Brethren in Texas, was established in 1903. John Marcon drew the plans, and the members donated 300 days of work, while also giving their financial support. The building committee included J.H. Huser, F.E. Martinets, Joe E. Mikulencak, Frank Labaj, Mrs. Henry Labaj, Ella Dusek, and August Holubec.

On June 11, 1950, the congregation dedicated a fellowship hall which originally was a center-cut of a hospital ward brought from Camp Swift Government Surplus at Bastrop, Texas. In the 1980's an annex was added to connect the fellowship hall with the church building itself, thereby making the whole plant more practical and comfortable.

Two cemeteries have served as the resting places of a majority of the members of the Granger Brethren Church,

the Machu Cemetery and the official church cemetery. The Machu Cemetery preceded the church cemetery by 33 years, having been established 9 years before the congregation was organized. Its beginning came as an act of generosity and good will of Pavel Machu, who was sometimes called the patriarch of the early Granger-area Czech Protestants. As Mr. Machu was returning to his farm from Granger on horseback one day in 1883, he met a woman and several children in a wagon. She was in great distress trying to find a burial place for her husband whose body she carried in the back of the wagon. She had been refused burial for him in two cemeteries and did not know what to do. Mr. Machu was shocked at her plight. Right then he decided to invite her to his farm where he would provide a burial site for her husband. He allotted a plot of three acres for a cemetery which came to be called the Machu Cemetery. In 1975, this cemetery had to be relocated by the U.S. Corps of Army Engineers to a new site near the church cemetery one mile East of Granger. At the time of the dedication of the new site, the cemetery had one unmarked grave and 135 marked graves.

On November 17, 1916, the Granger Brethren congregation purchased two acres of land from M. Schramm for the church cemetery. This site is located about a mile East of Granger and adjoins the Catholic Cemetery to the North and the city cemetery to the West. Early purchases of plots were made by the

Vitek, Labaj, Stefka, Mikulencak, and Holubec families. The first burial is believed to be that of Frantiska Janyska, who died June 11, 1917. Four ministers of the Unity of the Brethren are buried in the cemetery: Rev. Adolf Chlumsky who died in 1919, Rev. Josef Barton, Sr., 1945, Rev. Vaclav Vavrina, 1950, and Rev. Josef A. Barton, 1979.

Besides being the birthplace of the Unity of the Brethren in Texas, the Granger Brethren Church also played a vital role in the founding of the Hus School, a Christian training school for young people and a valued tradition and institution of the denomination. The first class of 18 young people, held in 1914, for eight weeks, was hosted by the congregation and directed and instructed by Rev. Josef Barton, Sr., the local pastor, and Rev. Josef Hegar. The congregation hosted a number of other classes after the first one.

The Granger Brethren Church has also contributed three native sons to the ministry of the Unity of the Brethren: Josef A. Barton, son of Rev. Josef Barton, Sr.; Thomas Tallas (now president of the Synodical Board of the denomination); and Terry Loessin, great-great-great grandson of Pavel Machu. The present pastor, Gordon A. Hejl, married a native daughter of the congregation who was the niece of Rev. Josef Barton, Sr. Another native son, Rev. Albert Dusek, served in another denomination.

In other areas of life, Christian education has played a strong role in the Granger church. In the early days Ceske Skoly (Czech schools) were held in the summers; these were designed to teach the basics of the Czech language along with the Christian teaching. As early as 1902, Rev. Chlumsky reported in the Bratrske Listy (Brethren Journal) on preparations being made for a Czech school to be held that summer. Mr. W. Otta was to be the teacher and about 30 students were expected to attend. Later, Rev. Josef Barton, Sr., taught a Czech summer school in the church every summer, beginning in 1907, while he was still a seminary student. As the years passed these Czech summer schools evolved into confirmation training classes and Bible study classes, with less and less emphasis on the teaching of the Czech language. The most important factor in Christian education in the congregation, however, since the earliest years, has been the Sunday School--and continues to be that to this day.

The women's group, called the Christian Sisters, was organized in 1904, with 20 members and has functioned as a vital organization these 88 years. Music, singing, and choirs have played an essential part in the worship and also in the training of the children. The local unit of the Mutual Aid Society (a benevolent organization of the denomination), the young people's organizations, known by various names through the years and other organizations

have served to broaden the work and effectiveness of the Granger Brethren congregation as it has nurtured the faith of its own people and reached out to the community in a spirit of service. As inevitable changes have come, the congregation has made the effort to respond to the changing needs of individuals, families, the community, and wider Christian church, and the world.

Mrs. Elsie Barton

THEIR TREASURED MEMORIES
OF
GRANGER BRETHREN CHURCH

The following history of the Granger Brethren Church tells the documented story of the 100-year old congregation of God's people. There is also another kind of history of the congregation, one which is comprised of the reminiscences of persons living today. The following individuals who grew up in the congregation share some of their most treasured memories; their stories help to make what we can call an anecdotal history of the Granger Brethren Church.

Dr. Ben (Mikulencak) Merrick, in the history he wrote about the Mikulencak family, tells how his grandfather, Josef Mikulencak with his wife and children, made the trip to church services in the 1890's. The Mikulencaks lived at Corn Hill and the services were held at the Moravia School. He says it this way: "The long wagon trip from Corn Hill to Moravia School became a regular feature for the Mikulencaks. Grandfather had earlier made many trips to visit Czech Protestant families settled around the San Gabriel River, urging the formation of such a congregation.

"These wagon trips to Sunday services at Moravia Schoolhouse began at 4:a.m., the children being bedded down in the wagon on a thick layer of straw and covered with quilts. On arrival at the crossing of Willis Creek near Bigon's place, all crawled down from the wagon to wash up at the gravel bar, change to their 'Sunday best', and eat breakfast. After this

the journey continued the remaining two or three miles to join the people congregating at the school in Cervenka's pasture. Apparently, a goodly number of the men attended for other than purely spiritual reasons, as many sat and chatted beneath the school windows, leaving the sermon for wives and children to listen unto. At times the minister had to call out to the men to quiet down, for the clank of dominoes disturbed the services. With the services over, the family would make the return trip, the mule-drawn wagon churning up dust in places, bumping down rocky roads in others, and fording streams several times during the twelve-mile trek back to Corn Hill."

Dr. Merrick also writes how his father, Josef J. Mikulencak, and J. F. Martinets installed the bell into the belfry when the church was built in 1901. He writes: "Years later (1938) when the belfry was torn down to make room for a new belfry, the job of transferring the bell fell to Frank Martinets and my brother, Joe Mikulencak. Attached to the framework supporting the bell was an envelope containing a note signed by their parents, J. F. Martinets and Josef J. Mickulencak, stating that they had done the installation of the bell."

Lydia (Cervenka) Martinets, 97 years old and widow of the Frank Martinets referred to above, remembers cooking for conventions in the early days. Even though most of the foods had to be cooked at home, some had to be heated and coffee had to be cook -- and everything had to be done outdoors. She says she can still see Vlasta Trlica, Anna Mikulencak, Frances Dusek, Frances Vitek, Mrs. John Hruska, and others working away for hours and hours in order to serve the

convention delegates and guests the noon and evening meals.

Millie (Kotrla) Mikulencak, 88 years old and widow of Joe Mikulencak also referred to in the bell story, remembers an incident from the time she was attending Czech Bible School when she was 13 years old. She and Lillie (Hunka) Svrčina saw that there were lots of grapes hanging on the grapevines at the Catholic rectory, which was close to the Brethren Church. She and Lillie decided they wanted some of those luscious-looking grapes. Hoping that Father Pridal, the priest who lived at the rectory, would not see them, they started sampling them. But -- he did see them! He called at them, and instead of rebuking them, he gave them a nice bunch of the grapes and invited them to come again when they wanted some more. From then on they considered Father Pridal a good friend, and understood why Brother Barton, Sr., had such high regard for him.

Sybil (Machu) Stojanik expresses her recollections in these words: "My fondest memories of growing up in the Granger church are those of attending the outdoor evening revival services. They were held on the South side of the building. There were big lights put up, and the church pews were brought out. I don't remember if we even had any folding chairs at the time. Services were held for several nights. An outdoor service always makes me feel closer to God. I also remember the summer Czech school. My mother helped us get ready in the morning and Daddy would drive us kids to town from the farm every day of the week for several weeks. I am grateful to my parents for giving us the opportunity to learn to read and write in Czech.

I can still do both, and correspond frequently with my only living aunt. These Czech classes were taught by Rev. Joseph Barton, Sr., for years and years."

The summer schools seemed to have a great impact on the Granger youngsters who attended them. The following two members also give their testimonies as to how meaningful the classes were for them.

Dan Martinets says that when he reminisces about his early years in the church, his most impressionable memory is always about going to summer school. He liked the way Rev. Barton, Sr., told the Bible stories -- he told them in a continuous series day after day. He says he remembers the Bible that way much better than when he reads it for himself, because the way the pastor told the stories engraved itself so deeply on his mind he never forgot the details. This experience has meant more to him than any of the other experiences of growing up in the Granger congregation.

Angeline (Stiba) Vitek expresses gratitude that her foster father took her to the church every Sunday and also taught her to pray. She then gives a fervent testimony to the summer schools and the teachers. She says: "Rev. and Mrs. Joseph Barton, Sr., taught summer school every summer in the church annex. The annex was full of children, all ages through the confirmation class. The summer school was held from 8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. five days a week for a total of 6 weeks. This summer school was really the most inspirational and deep foundation of my Christian life. Rev. Barton, Sr., was our teacher who divided us into classes according to

age. Mrs. Barton played the piano and we learned religious songs. Every child bought a reading book in Czech called 'Citanka' which was my pride and joy. The pastor taught us from the Bible in the Czech language. Della Holubec, a public school teacher, also taught the summer school along with the Bartons. We always brought sack lunches, except for those who lived closed to the church -- they would make a hop and a skip for their lunch at home.

We learned to read the Bible and the Czech reader, memorized poems and special songs, and enjoyed being shown many large pictures of places in Czechoslovakia, which we considered a special treat. We would plead for more! We were also taught strict discipline. We held up a hand in order to speak; we did not get up without permission. Rev. Barton had one eye that focused in an opposite direction; therefore, I never knew if he was looking at me or someone else. But I lived to love every minute of the instruction, and to really love the minister as did all the other children. I remember so well all the Bible stories from the Old Testament and the New Testament, especially the great stories about Jesus. My husband Henry also remembers the times of going to summer school with his brothers and sisters."

Milton Labaj recounts very vividly another aspect of congregational life which has imprinted itself on this memory, that of hosting the conventions. This is the way he says it: "Preparing for a convention to be held for two days in the Granger congregation was a lot of work and planning. On the farms we had no running water or electricity and mostly wood stoves. Food was prepared fresh on a daily

basis. The fixing of fried chicken (and plenty of it), mashed potatoes, canned goods, vegetables, and fruit which was to be the meal at the convention was a lot of work at our house as well as others. It meant getting up at 4:00 a.m. each day to start preparing the fryers and other foods. Removing the pin feathers at that early hour was not my type of chore, nor was peeling potatoes so early in the morning. Since conventions were so well attended in those days, I always wondered who would be the strangers (delegates and visitors) spending the two nights in our home, as Granger had no motel accommodations.

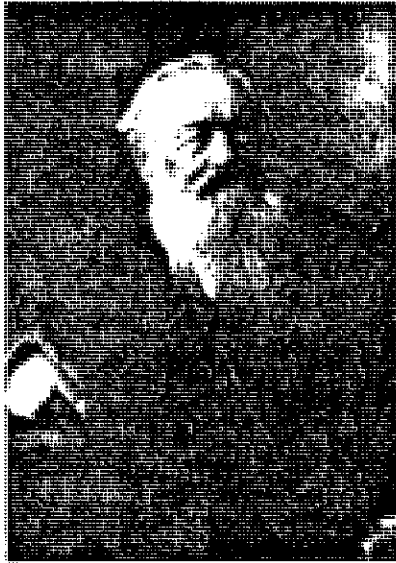
There was no fellowship hall, so cotton tarps for wagons were borrowed from farmers. The overhead awning provided the necessary shade for the tables on which the food was placed for the noon and evening meals. The nails which held the tarps in place definitely made holes in them. Memories of the convention would come back time and again when rains fell on covered wagons of cotton!

Sometimes during the meals gusts of wind helped make eating more interesting as plates became air-borne. But, the closeness and common courtesies of the people were at their best. Yes, the church was the center for activities of the community, for news of all kinds, conversation, rumors, and also a sharing and learning experience for many about Christian living and a look to the future for a better life in the tomorrows. We had no money -- we were poor as compared to today's standards, but we didn't know it. We cared for one another."

Perhaps a good way to conclude this

anecdotal history of the congregation is to look at what a stranger has to say about the Brethren Church in a recent pictorial book about the late John P. Trlica and his photography career. Trlica was one of the Granger congregation's early members and the unofficial photographer of the denomination, as well as the Granger Community. The book, published in 1992, was researched and written by Barbara McCandless and is entitled EQUAL BEFORE THE LENS. In her diligent research of Trlica's life, McCandless learned how the Brethren Church attempted to keep the Czech traditions and language alive in Texas, but at the same time how the church also fully supported the ideals of a good education -- there was always a necessary tension in carrying this out.

This same kind of tension has to be recognized today as the church embraces the rich heritage from the past and also meets the needs and challenges of the present. Only God Himself can provide the guidance and power of His Spirit for the Granger Brethren Church to march on in trust and faith into the next 100 years!



Rev. Adolph Chlumsky
(1866-1919)

Former Pastors

- Rev. Adolph Chlumsky*
- Rev. Henry Juren*
- Rev. Josef Barton, Sr.*
- Rev. Joseph Hegar*
- Rev. Vaclav Vavrina*
- Rev. Josef A. Barton*
- Rev. Jesse Skrivanek*
- Rev. Gordon Hejl*
- Rev. Albert Michalik*
- Rev. Frank Simcik*
- Rev. Glenn Jurek*
- Rev. Eugene Kotrla*
- Rev. Dan Marek*
- Rev. Henry Beseda*
- Rev. Terry Loessin*

HISTORICAL EXHIBIT

We are grateful to all those who contributed photos and other memorabilia seen in today's exhibit located in the rear of the fellowship hall. A special thank you to Mr. Dan Martinets for procuring, safeguarding, tagging and identifying all these wonderful items.

The Time Capsule

By 1990 construction was completed on the new hallway or breezway as it is often called. The project was long overdue and served two purposes. It connected the church and fellowship hall without making any alterations to the historic church sanctuary itself and it provided inner restroom facilities for the first time. No longer would one have to brave rain or cold northerly winds to reach the fellowship hall or journey to the two remote bathrooms. The former men's room had been located behind the parsonage garage. The ladies' room had been located in the north-east corner of the current kitchen accessible only from the outside.

However, it wasn't until a few weeks ago, as memorabilia began to be gathered for this event, that it was realized something very important had been buried beneath this new addition. Beneath a large cement block which served as the step into the fellowship hall's old entrance was sealed a time capsule of sorts. Many may still recall the inscription on the right end of this large stone which simply stated that historical information had been sealed within. What exactly lies within the stone no one can seem to recall. Perhaps in time for the sesquicentennial celebration, 50 years from today, the stone will be rolled away - so to speak!

Did you know?

Granger Brethren Church has contributed four native sons to the ministry:

Josef A. Barton; son of the Rev. Josef Barton, Sr.

Albert Dusek; who served in another denomination.

Thomas Tallas; current president of the denomination's Synod.

Terry Loessin; great-great-great-grandson of Pavel Machu,
often referred to as the patriarch of the early
Czech Protestant settlers in Granger.

And what about minister's wives?

Marie (Mikulencak) Hegar

Albina (Mikulencak) Barton

Elsie (Pokorny) Barton

Lillian (Barton) Hejl

Donna (Huser) Tallas

Did you know?

It was here, in Granger, that on the first Monday of January, 1914, in this sanctuary, a group of young people tried to find a warm and comfortable place around a rather inefficient stove and began the first eight-week session of the Hus Memorial School. Today young people from this congregation still attend Hus School. The encampment in Caldwell hosts annual camps and retreats but the Hus School sessions are now a mere four weeks long. H-n-m how times have changed!

*Church Officers*Board of Elders

Edwin Adamek; President

Dan Martinets; Vice-president

Johnny Volcik; Secretary

August Vitek; Treasurer

Albert Kotrla; Financial Sec.

Alan Tomasek; Synod. Rep.

Alfred Vitek

Ed Wentrcek

Antone Pavel

Josh Bartosh

Cemetery Committee

Henry Vitek

Ed Wentrcek

Hattie Volek

Mutual Aid Representative

Hattie Kollaja

Christian Sisters

Rubie Loessin; President

Hattie Kollaja; Vice-president

Dorothy Kotrla; Secretary

Hattie Volek; Treasurer

Sunday School

Alan Tomasek; Superintendent

Hattie Volek; Asst. Superintendent

Helen Volney; Secretary/Treasurer

B.Y.F.

Kelly Loessin; President

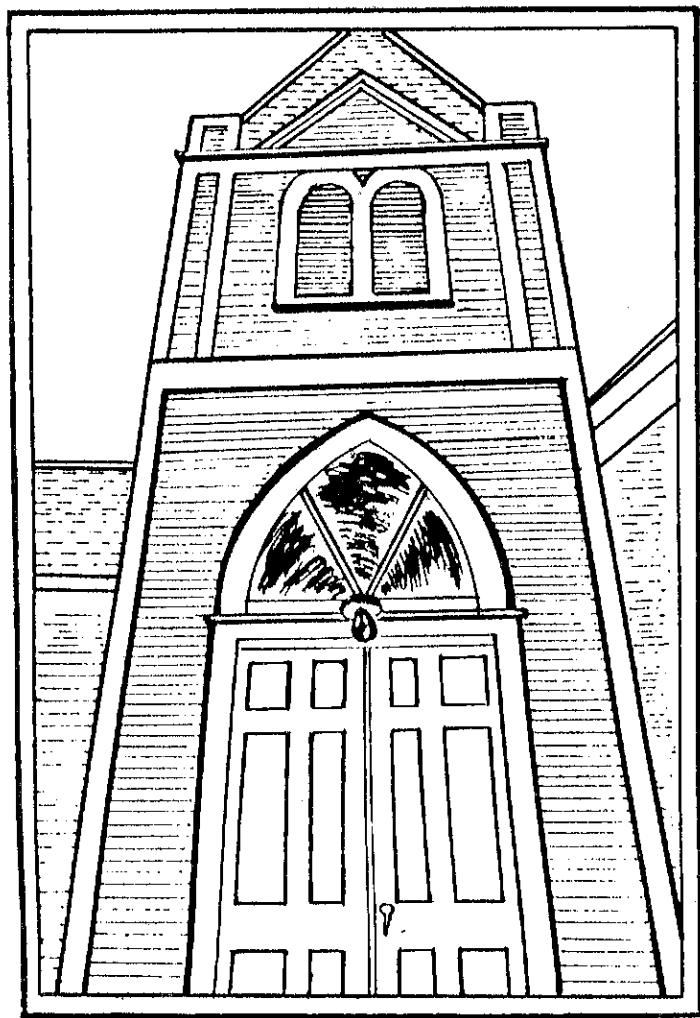
Melinda Tomasek; Secretary/Treasurer

Edwina Jezisek, Cindy Tomasek; Sponsors

Organist

Helen Volney

"Já a dům můj sloužiti budeme hospodinu."



"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

- Joshua 24.15

- inscription above rear sanctuary doors, painted by Jerry Martinets on behalf of his confirmation class, 1935.