

DAILY AMERICAN REPUBLIC

Zion Lutheran celebrates 125 years

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Pastor Larry Feldt gives a sermon Sunday during the 125th anniversary celebration at Zion Lutheran Church, while Pastor Justin Sponagle and congregation members listen.

DAR/Albert Morrow

To celebrate 125 years of their presence in Poplar Bluff, the congregation of Zion Lutheran held a special anniversary service on Sunday, July 10. It began at 3 p.m. and was attended by 95 attendees, according to the church roll.

It began with Church President Ray Batton bearing the crucifix up the central aisle, followed by Chief Elder Mike Reed. Pastor Justin Sponagle led those gathered in prayers and readings and in a special anniversary hymn written in 1987 by former Zion Lutheran pastor Eugene Pennekamp.

The sermon was given by Pastor Larry Feldt, currently of St. John Lutheran Church of Denver, Iowa. Feldt was ordained and installed at Zion Lutheran on Aug. 9, 1998, and served the church until June 1, 2003, according to materials provided by the church.

“You’re all the same people,” he said to the congregation. “But you’re different, you’re older,” he added with a laugh.

He went on to say, “Times change, cultures change, everything changes but your desire to do God’s will doesn’t change. Zion Lutheran’s purpose has never changed.”

After the sermon, the hymn “O God, Our Help is Ages Past” was sung with breaks between the verses for church members Ron Kallenbach and Carol Dorr to read excerpts from the church’s history.

Guests and church members were invited to the basement to look at displays of the church’s past following the service. Church member Jeff Shackelford also had on hand a display of his historical book collection that includes hymnals and Bibles, some dating as far back as the 16th century.

The congregation met again in the Grand Ballroom of the Holiday Inn at 5:30 p.m. for a supper of roast beef and chicken and dumplings catered by Tasteful Creations.

Kallenbach hosted the supper, beginning by thanking the Anniversary Committee members and then introducing the Rev. Feldt to reminisce with the congregation about some of the times they shared together during his tenure as their pastor.

At the end of his speech, he thanked the congregation for his time with them.

Motioning to his wife Brenda, he added: “For us, it all began here. The pastor that I am is because of you. We are family.”

“God is not done with you,” Feldt said in closing.

Carol Dorr took the time after his speech to announce the meal leftovers were being sent to the Haven House of Poplar Bluff.

Sponaugle closed the celebration with a brief benediction.