

## History Minute

presented by Bill Moore

**Easter Sunday, April 5, 2015**



### **The Cross on the Tower, Installed April 6, 1945**

Mr. Spannaus couldn't be here today, but he researched the church records, and I volunteered to present the History Minute, and I brought something for show-and-tell.

Today we have the story of our church steeple, from bottom to top.

My grandfather Grant Compher was born in 1891. He said that as a boy, he helped haul the foundation stones for the tower. His parents' farm was across the road from Mount Olivet church, where the Whipple family lives today. The name of the farm was "Stoney Lonesome." I don't know if all the foundation stones came from their farm, but since he helped haul them, it's a good chance they did.

The cornerstone of the tower was laid October 9, 1903. At the peak of the steeple is a slate with the date May 10, 1904—probably the completion date.

The tower cost \$1,300 and the bell \$275. The tower stands about 60 feet, and the bell weighs over 1,000 pounds.

Reverend Aaron Tobler and his wife Viola served New Jerusalem from 1927 to October 1945. Reverend Tobler is credited with the idea to install a cross on the steeple.

During the 1930s the tower was damaged in a storm. But the repair work was put off for lack of funds during the Depression. The bell was not rung from 1942 until Easter Sunday in 1944, because of World War II. Church bells were to be rung only for air raid and blackout warnings.

During the war because of rationing, it was impossible to get building materials. During the war years the tower received more storm damage. Finally on March 16, 1945, work began to repair the tower. Mrs. Tobler wrote: "On April 1, Mr. Tobler asked for a special offering to help pay for this work. A splendid response. About 185 communed that day."

On April 6, 1945, seventy years ago tomorrow, Glenden Demory placed the cross on the steeple at noon. The cross itself stands six feet, and is made of wood covered with copper.

In 1995 a spotlight was installed to illuminate the cross. I brought a bulb to show its size. I call it "a light to lighten the gentiles."

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**Sources:**

M.W. Kretsinger, *A People of God in Mission*, Vol. II (1990). p. 22; NJLC Council Minutes, 1942-45.