



Chapter 9

Electronic Media Ministry

Radio Ministry

In 1971 there was discussion about how best to minister to shut-ins and others who were unable to make it to regular Sunday worship. The solution was in using the tape recorder to record Sunday services. Individual cassette tapes could be made for the shut-ins. This proved to be labor intensive and it was decided that a much greater audience could participate if services could be aired on local radio station KDUZ in Hutchinson. A reel-to-reel taping system was installed and young people detailed to run it on Sunday mornings. Rev. Chapman would make a ½ hour edited copy and deliver it to the radio station for play at 9AM the following Sunday. First Congregational was on the air every Sunday of the month except the last Sunday when First Lutheran of Glencoe was featured.

When Rev. Chapman retired in 1984, Lon Roach, who worked for KDUZ, took over assembly and delivery of the tapes. The system was changed over to cassette format in 1985 and this medium continues to be used as the radio ministry continues to this day. With a short interim in the early 90's when Rev. Cox decided to produce her own programs, Lon continues to assemble the program, which is now delivered to Hutchinson weekly by Linda Landon.

Video Ministry

With the prevalence of home video equipment and the introduction of cable television to Glencoe in the early 1980's, First Congregational hit the small screen. The cable company provided a community access channel for use by the public. Services were video taped by volunteers beginning in the early 1990's. These tapes were then played on the community access channel and at the Glencoe Regional Health Services Long Term Care. Equipment used was personal. A camera and tripod were donated by Grant Willmert.



Initial efforts found the volunteer camera person standing in the balcony, which made for bad sound, or crouching in a pew near the front. In July of 2000 a new organ was installed and the console moved to a new position. The former console space next to the choir on the west side of the church was converted to a video center using donations left over from the organ fund. A stationary camera was installed at the back of the church and a remotely controlled movable (bubble cam) camera halfway up the right arch pillar, two video monitors and video switch to

select which camera was active and two video recorders. The church sound system control board was also moved to this new location and house sound was fed directly to the video system. Operators use a graphics generator to add hymn titles, scripture, sermon titles and other useful information over the picture.

The center was constructed by Roger Landon, Jim Tieman and Lon Roach. Regular operators over the years have included Mary Sopkowiak, Pam Gould, Linda Landon and Chris Marsh. Eleanor Lindsey has faithfully delivered the tapes each week to the nursing home and then to the cable television office.

Audio Ministry

“The Word” is of little value if you can’t hear it. Donations in 1954 allowed for the installation of a sound system to serve the sanctuary and the parish hall. The Mayflower Club purchased the amplifier and microphones were separate donations. In addition to amplification in the sanctuary, the Gould family purchased a separate sound system for the bell tower with the intent that recordings of bells or chimes or music could be played for worshippers arriving or leaving church. This system was purchased in memory of William C. Gould. In 1962 a time clock was added to the tower chime system.

The minutes of the annual meetings record regular upgrades to the sound system over the years and in the early 1970’s new speakers were installed. At that time too, sound system improvements coincided with the need to record services. In 1973 a donation made possible the installation of earphones in select pews for those with difficulty hearing. A wireless microphone was added in the late 1980’s, giving the pastor the flexibility to move where ever needed.

In 1973 the tower speakers were repositioned and a tape recorder system was installed to run automatically by the clock system so that bell programs of selected hymns could be played at specific times of the day through the tower system. This system, in use through the Chapman years, fell into disrepair for over 20 years. In 2006 new speakers and wiring were donated and installed by Lon Roach and some of the old tape equipment rehabilitated to the degree that worshipers are once again greeted on Sunday mornings with bell music from the tower.

In 1991 a move was made to upgrade the sound system to give it modern capabilities. Professional sound reinforcement equipment included an equalized mixer/control board and multiple microphone inputs around the front of the sanctuary and hi-fidelity/high efficiency speakers. A separate system was installed in the fellowship hall making it easier to use, but interconnected to the sanctuary system so that workers in the kitchen during an event could hear what was going on upstairs. The upgrade allowed then choir director Randy Wilson to present larger musical productions requiring additional microphones for soloists and accompanied by prerecorded accompaniments. The new system also included a wireless earphone system so those needing it could sit where they desired and there was no limit to the number of units that could be used at once.

Plans are pending in 2007 to increase the capacity of the system with a larger mixer/control board and more microphone inputs.