

Our Heritage of Faith

History of St. John Lutheran Church

Sherman Center, WI

Old Lutherans

In order to fully appreciate the reasons for the early immigration to our area and how our own congregation came into being, we need to go back to the days of the Congress of Vienna in 1815. At that Congress, a German Confederation of territories was formed that comprise what is now known as Germany. It included Prussia, Saxony, Pommerania, Bavaria, Hanover and Silesia. In 1817 King Friederich Wilhelm III of Prussia was unduly influenced by the rationalists of his day (many of whom were agnostics and even atheists). King Friederich merged the Lutheran and Reformed churches into one church that was run by the state. He thought it would bring about modernization and simplification, but instead it brought religious persecution upon the Lutheran pastors and congregations that refused to have their theology compromised. These congregations and pastors became known as “Old Lutherans” and remained outside of the “United Church”. In 1831 the King declared the practices of the “Old Lutherans” to be illegal and as a result, pastors were put in prison, true Lutheran services were forbidden, and anyone who continued to attend such services was punished and fined by the state.

The key theological issues were the proper understanding of communion and predestination. Both of these issues had remained as points of contention between Calvinists and Lutherans since the early days of the Reformation in the 1500's. Lutherans believed firmly in adherence to Holy Scripture and to the confessional documents that were derived from Scripture. They questioned the King's authority to dictate their religious beliefs. Because of the continued pressure from the state to comply with the Prussian union on religious matters some of the “Old Lutherans” began to make plans to emigrate from the homeland in order to form a new church in which the expression of their faith would not be hindered.

The Apostle Paul had warned the early Christians about attempts to change the Gospel and Martin Luther recognized how the Gospel had been changed gradually over the centuries. Luther was compelled to share the truth from Scripture that we are saved by faith in Christ and not by our works. It should never surprise us that efforts would be made to ask for theological compromises. After the Apostle Paul had shared the saving Gospel in Galatia, some men came from Jerusalem to say that they must still be circumcised and obey all the Jewish dietary laws. Here's how Paul warned the Galatians: “I'm surprised that you're so quickly deserting Christ, who called you in his kindness, to follow a different kind of good news. But what some people are calling good news is not really good news at all. They are confusing you. They want to distort the Good News about Christ.” (Galatians 1:6-7 God's Word) The character of our congregation and Lutheran Church Missouri Synod is founded upon Holy Scripture. Strong faith in Christ guided the first people who came from Germany to settle here in Wisconsin.

In an effort to flee the religious persecution in their homeland and to also pursue the dreams of economic opportunity, many families began to leave their homeland in Europe and immigrated to the United States. Those who survived the arduous trip across the Atlantic came through Ellis Island at New York. Since they spoke a language foreign to their new country they often immediately fell victim to conmen and swindlers who roamed the docks. They were taken

to cheap hotels and often compelled to leave for parts of the country that they knew nothing about. Many were determined to set off for this location in Wisconsin because relatives and friends had already arrived and had found the climate and soil similar to their homeland.

Buffalo Letter

One of the important names in the history of our congregation is Zuengler. An early immigrant from Germany, Jonathan Gottfried Zuengler had arrived in Buffalo, New York and had found the conditions in his new country to be vary favorable. He wrote a letter to family and friends back in the province of Silesia in Germany that was later shown to many others. His letter has been called the “Buffalo letter” and served to influence many more people to come to America. He later moved from Buffalo to Wisconsin and eventually came to our area. Current Zuengler families are sixth generation descendants of him. Here are some excerpts from that famous letter.

“We had not decided whether we would stay in Buffalo or go over Lake Erie to Michigan. We went to a German minister in Buffalo for information as to how far it would be. In Michigan there is a Lutheran congregation with a good pastor named Schmidt.”

“Buffalo is a big city where there are all kinds of ways to make a living. There is much building going on. The first days we worked on the railroad. We earned a dollar a day. A woodworker earns two dollars per day. Here we all eat white bread like the rolls you eat in Breslau. In Buffalo there is a mill which mills 200 bushels in twenty four hours. On Sundays there is dead silence. Everybody goes to church. The stores are closed.”

“Don’t let the long trip scare you off. It is not dangerous if you choose the right time. The worst is that on the ship you will find it a little cramped. We can not complain over the food. Meat, butter and bread were plentiful. Every morning we received a glass of brandy and also beer, as much as we wanted.”

“Don’t think that I would like you to come for my sake. It is more for your sake, for here you can serve the Lord in well known ways. Here the day laborer fares better than by you with the owner of a farm. Whoever comes to American soil is safe.”

“If those Lutherans who are financially able would want to invest partly in the move here and partly to buy land, they should keep the high interest in mind. May the Lord work whatever His will is. He has shown Himself to be very good to us.”

The trip from New York began by way of the Erie Canal to Buffalo and then went by a land or water route the rest of the way. The land route went below the Great Lakes by covered wagon and the water route used sailing ships that took them to Sheboygan or Port Washington. For example, official records show that 20,914 people disembarked at the port of Sheboygan alone during the year of 1854.

Early Settlement

Land was cheap if your back was strong enough to cut down trees, pull stumps, pick stones, and plow the virgin soil. Around 1840 or 1841 a man named Gregory built the first frame house in the township and ran a small trading post on an Indian trail that went from Random Lake to Batavia. This small settlement of homes and farms became known later as Sherman Center. It was there that people who had been neighbors and friends in Germany began to settle and to clear the land.

In the year 1848, Wisconsin became a state. Only one year before, twelve congregations joined together to form a Synod that 100 years later became known as the Missouri Synod. There were still Chippewa and Potawatomi Indians roaming the land, but they lived peaceably with the white settlers. The German immigrants came primarily from the northern provinces of Silesia, Pommerania, and Saxony. There were also settlers from England and Ireland. Some of the settlers in the area had originally settled further south near Freistadt. Due to disagreements with Pastor Krause at Freistadt, they were determined to start a congregation in our area.

Initially, the people gathered together on Sundays in one of their log hut homes and conducted Lutheran services. Several hymns were sung and a printed sermon was read along with prayers by one of the men. Records show that the families owned a small parcel of two acres deeded to St. John Lutheran Church in Sherman Center as of April 1854. In 1855, the Rev. Ottomar Fuerbringer of Freistadt who was also President of the Northwestern District of the Synod, came up to Sherman Center on weekdays to conduct services. The congregation was encouraged to build a log church with an attached parsonage so that they could call a Pastor.

First Church, First Pastor, First School

Before the first resident Pastor was called, a number of baptisms were done between March of 1846 and August of 1855. The following eight people were baptized: Eleonore Elizabeth Capelle, Eleonore Henriette Elizabeth Capelle, Amalie Capelle, Ida Groeling, Elizabeth Capelle, Marie Bork, Elizabeth Meier, and Karl Benitz. Some were baptized by parents, other adults or by a Pastor M. Guenther of Grafton who must have been visiting the area believers. The humble group of German Lutheran settlers finally finished a log structure and called Rev. W. Kolb to be their first pastor. August 5, 1855 was a red letter day for the new congregation. Pastor Kolb was installed, the log church was dedicated, Pastor Fuerbringer of Freistadt preached the sermon, and the first recorded communion took place. Though the congregation clearly existed before that date because Sheboygan County records showed that they owned at least two acres of property since April of 1854, the date of August 5 has always been celebrated as the anniversary.

Only eight people communed on August 5, 1855 but two weeks later, the records show that 41 people communed. The first marriage was performed by pastor Kolb on September 9, 1855 when he united Johann Gottlieb Schoede and Johanne Helen Wutke. Witnesses were Robert Scholz and Gottlieb Zuengler. On March 30, 1856, Pastor Kolb confirmed 9 young people and the first recorded funeral took place on December 31, 1856 when Pastor Kolb gave Christian burial to Mrs. Helene Graeser.

Pastor Kolb preached regularly on Sunday mornings, conducted catechetical instructions on Sunday afternoon (Christenlehre) and taught Christian Day School during the week. Our school shares the same anniversary as the church. School was conducted in the church proper.

The first recorded voters' meeting took place on November 29, 1855. In this meeting the prospective constitution was read and adopted. No mention is made as to how many members joined at this meeting. It is therefore impossible to determine who the charter members were. Pastor Kolb was the first to sign the constitution followed by Gottlob Scholz, Elder. There is no document on hand informing us as to who served the congregation as elders during the first years.

In 1857, St. John Lutheran Congregation joined the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other states as a voting member. There were 38 men listed as voting members with names still familiar to us today such as Stolper, Scholz, Zuengler, and Borkenhagen. The congregation resolved to erect a new frame church building, but difficulties arose and the resolution could not be carried out. On September 12, 1859, an election was held that made our congregation incorporated under the laws of the state of Wisconsin. After serving for over 5 years, Pastor Kolb left to accept another Call and the congregation was vacant as the Civil War broke out.

After Pastor Kolb left in 1861, the congregation was vacant for two years and was served faithfully by Pastor Multanovsky of Sheboygan Falls as Vacancy Pastor. Several Calls were issued but without result. During this time the Civil War broke out and continued throughout the next four years. Some members of the congregation served the nation at this time fighting for the North. Several died in battle, but were buried near the front lines.

Over the years many people have thought that our church was always called "St. John Sherman Center" or just "Sherman Center" for short. But it is important to note that the full original name of the congregation was "German Evangelical Lutheran St. John Church, Town 13, of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession". Later, this township was named "Abbott" after the Abbott family that was prominent in the early days. The town name was changed again to Sherman, in honor of Union Army General William T. Sherman, by an act of the state legislature in 1864.

The phrase "Unaltered Augsburg Confession" was typical of all Lutheran Churches at that time and made it clear that we did not agree with the way that Philip Melancthon had tampered with the Augsburg Confession in order to encourage John Calvin to sign it. To this day, the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod and Calvinists agree on many things, but certainly we continue to have differences including our understanding of the true presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper and as a result are not in altar and pulpit fellowship.

The Second Church Building

In 1863, Pastor A. Brose became the second resident pastor and the second church building was erected. It stood on the east side of the church property and was a frame building of 30 by 50 feet with a tower. The church was considered the nicest church building in the surrounding area. It was later converted to the school building and served in that capacity until

1948. After 2 ½ years Pastor Brose left and Pastor J. List was installed in 1866. The congregation was growing to the extent that the Pastor could no longer handle the double duty of pastoring and teaching. His brother assisted in the instruction of the children until teacher Johann Jakob Brater arrived from Frankenlust, Michigan as the first resident teacher. He and his family moved into the former log parsonage and Pastor List moved to a new parsonage on a three acre parcel of land that the congregation purchased 1/8 of a mile to the west. Teacher Brater was paid in a creative and yet practical way. Records show that he annually received \$200, two barrels of flour, 150 pounds of meat, ten bushels of potatoes and free fuel.

At this time a change was introduced in the Synod at large and also in our own confessional service. Originally this method was followed: on a weekday those who wished to commune assembled in the church. One after another they went into the vestry and spoke the words of private confession to the pastor. The pastor absolved each individual by speaking the words of absolution accompanied by the laying on of hands. This private confession is contained in Luther's Small Catechism and had been in use in the Lutheran Church for centuries. The words: "Thy sins are forgiven thee!" spoken to the individual gave great comfort. Luther esteemed private confession very highly and the people of St. John were not quick to change from it. After considering the matter in several meetings, the congregation asked Dr. Walther of the Seminary at St. Louis for his opinion in the matter and thereupon introduced general confession.

After the Civil War, the land in the area surrounding Sherman Center had been completely settled and the number of German Lutherans who had immigrated was substantial. In 1866 several members who lived in and around Cascade saw an opportunity to form their own congregation nearby and requested to be released. Since Cascade was seven miles away this request was honored and seen as a way to reach even more people with the saving Gospel. Our own Pastor List served them by conducting Sunday afternoon services.

When the Milwaukee Road extended a branch railroad line from Milwaukee to Green Bay in 1870 and 1871 it brought regular mail service to our people and linked us with the rest of the world. Two railroad stations were built in Town Sherman, one in Random Lake and one in Adell. Since locomotives burned wood at the time, area farmers supplemented their income by selling firewood to the railroad. Up to that time the principal farm crop was wheat.

Fire and Tragedy

In fall of 1871, the faith of our members was tested by tragic events. It had been a summer of drought which caused the wheat crop to fail. By the fall, the Wisconsin woodlands were tinder dry. When the virgin timber was felled, the lumbermen often left the stumps and bark trimmings where they were. Several large fires had been reported in September. Then, on October 7, 1871 a fire destroyed more than half of the buildings in Chicago to our south resulting in a property damage of \$200,000,000 and virtually annihilating the city's core. At the same time on that day, a great fire broke out to our north which caused the greatest loss of life in a natural disaster in our country. Over 1200 people died in northeastern Wisconsin. Although the Wisconsin fire ravaged 2,400 square miles and destroyed numerous settlements and isolated farms on both sides of Green Bay, it has gone down in history as the Peshtigo fire, because it was in this village and in the farming area immediately surrounding it that industry and population

were the most concentrated, that the fire reached its greatest virulence, and that the majority of the fatalities occurred.

Churches in our area were filled with people who came not only to pray for the victims, but who were also concerned that the end of the world was near. In our own congregation, fears of that type were allayed by our long held belief that we should always be ready for end times and that we should not depend upon the tragic events that happen around us to dictate our readiness.

During the winter of 1873, an epidemic of smallpox broke out. In quick succession seven children in our congregation fell victim to this dreadful disease. Among these were a son and daughter of Pastor List who died three days apart. At Easter time in 1873, Pastor List received a Call to Roseville, Michigan and left three weeks later. In September of 1873, teacher Brater accepted a Call to Pemberville, Ohio after serving here faithfully for over 7 years.

First Teacher Hired to Help

After being vacant for over six months, Pastor Philip Wambsganss came from the Mayville area to serve us on January 20, 1874. Besides pastoring our flock, he served as the pastor for Cascade while also teaching school at Sherman Center. Pastor Wambsganss' grandson made the family name famous later by executing an unassisted triple play in a World Series game (a feat that has never been duplicated.) In the fall of 1874, teacher A. Ehmann joined Pastor Wambsganss to take over the teaching in our school. Since the old teacherage was no longer serviceable, the congregation bought a tract of land of three acres for \$700 across the road to the south of the church property from a member, Mr. Kessel, who was a cobbler. Teacher Ehmann moved into the newly acquired house.

People came to church in those days in open wagons or carriages with sleighs in the winter. At the church, horses were hitched to posts and exposed to rain, snow, intense cold, and heat. In 1874, the first row of sheds were constructed and three more rows were built later. Each member paid for the material used in the shed and for decades these sheds served the animals well who transported our members. During the school week, some sheds were also used for horses that transported the children. During recess, the children invented many games as they played in the sheds and imagined them to be like separate houses that they owned.

The original log church had been retained as a school for 29 years, but it became inadequate for the increasing number of students. In 1884, the old church was torn down and on the very same spot a brick building of 22 feet by 30 feet was erected. Later an enclosed entrance was added. This building was retained for many years after the current church building was erected. Because of its continued use for teaching, the old building became known as the "Konfirmandenzimmer".

A second "daughter" congregation was formed in 1874 with several of our families who lived five miles to the west at Batavia. Since Cascade had recently called their own pastor, Pastor Wambsganss was available to serve the people in Batavia to help them get started while continuing to serve as our pastor. Both of these daughter churches as well as a later daughter church, Emmanuel in Adell, have memorialized their roots from Sherman Center. Each of the

churches has the stained glass windows of the Good Shepherd and of Jesus Standing at the Door just like we see in our own chancel.

New Parsonage and Teacher Peters

In 1888, the old parsonage was razed and a new stately parsonage was built west of the church property for \$1600. That house served the congregation for many years until it was sold in 1958. It is a private home today. In 1889, teacher Ehmann asked to be released because he could not instruct the pupils in the English language, but he continued to serve until 1890. Teacher Carl Peters came in September of 1890 as a candidate and then was called to serve permanently. Under his leadership, school enrollment increased to an all time high of 83 children in one room around 1900. Rev. Wambsganss resigned in October of 1895 because of old age. He had served us for 22 years.

By the turn of the century, many farmers in our area had abandoned their efforts to make a profit selling wheat and had begun to use the land for dairying. Early on, Wisconsin cows gained the reputation for being the best in the country for producing cheese.

Ministry of Rev. Dr. Huebner Begins

After Rev. Wambsganss retired in 1895, there was a vacancy for several months until Rev. Edmund Huebner arrived on January 16 of 1896 from Hancock, Michigan. He came with his wife and four children and was installed on January 19. Pastor Huebner was well respected by the members and was addressed in the traditional German way, "Herr Pastor". He arrived at a time of financial hardship because prices paid to farmers that year were very low. For example; oats were selling at 15 cents a bushel, potatoes for 10 cents a bushel, eggs were at 6 cents a dozen, dressed hogs brought only 5 cents a pound and milk was only 60 to 65 cents per hundred pounds. Though the financial depression caused many concerns, it did not stop the members from building a new teacherage. They tore down the old original log house and then erected a new frame building at a cost of \$1,175. In spite of hard times, half of the bill was paid immediately. The teacherage has been remodeled and modernized several times since then. Later, the congregation added a garage. The building is still in use today as a teacherage and is home to our current fifth and sixth grade teacher, Mr. Greg Kohler and his family.

New Church Building

In 1900, the congregation resolved to build a new church, since the old frame building was not adequate for the growing congregation. After bricks were ordered, a plan adopted, and a building site located, several members had changed their mind, suggesting that it would be better to build a church in Adell and organize a new congregation there. In October, 1901, 88 members met to discuss this matter and it was unanimously agreed to build the new church in Sherman Center. Sherman Center members are not always quick to make major decisions, but once the decision is made the members have always been eager to support the course of action. Faith in action was demonstrated as 52 members immediately pledged \$8,055 towards the new church building. The old frame church was moved west of its foundation and the new church was built in the exact location as the old one. The cornerstone of the new church cited Psalm 90:17 which embodied the attitude of service that Sherman Center members had back then. "May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands."

Over 200,000 bricks for the new church had been brought from Boltonville by teams of horses. It took an extra team to help the wagons get up one of the steep hills along the way. With the interior furnishings, the total cost came to \$13,000 and was paid for in two years because this congregation never liked the idea of carrying debt.

When the construction of the church was completed, Pastor Huebner wanted to know if the chimney drafted well. The contractor took him to the basement and opened a small door to the flu. When the contractor placed his straw hat in the chimney flu, the draft immediately sucked the hat out through the chimney and was found lying on the ground outside. Some of the boys in the school heard about this and later they were caught doing the same thing with their straw hats.

The new church was dedicated on November 3, 1902 with the former Pastor J. List preaching in the morning service, Pastor Philip Wambganss, Jr. in the afternoon and pastor L. Dorpat conducting an English service in the evening. The congregation numbered some 600 souls at the time and was well able to fill the church. There were 125 men listed as voting members.

Our stained glass windows are properly classified as icons. In the chancel, there are two main ones that feature two Bible passages: the Good Shepherd (John 10), and Jesus Standing at the Door (Revelation 3:20). The verse citations at the bottom of the windows are in German because German was the only language used in the church when it was built in 1902. Many of the windows have a repeated design called the "Fleur de lis". This design on many of our windows represents the Risen Christ. The "flower of life" is in the form of an Easter lily. Because Jesus rose from the dead, we also have the hope of a resurrected body.

We have a special window in the southwest corner of the church. The top design can best be seen from the choir loft. This window symbolizes a number of things about the namesake of our church, St. John the Apostle. The large cross reminds us that John was the only Apostle at the foot of the cross. To the left and right of the cross are two long scrolls symbolizing the Gospel of John and the Revelation of John. The snake represents a legend from the early church that enemies of John placed a poisonous snake in the chalice knowing that John would not hesitate to drink the blood of Christ even in the face of danger. John drank, but was not bitten by the snake.

There are many other symbols on the stained glass windows that serve to inspire us and help us to meditate upon all that the Lord has done for us. Other symbols include the Eternal Eye of God, Lamb of God, Alpha and Omega, Cross and Crown, Cross and Anchor, Dove of Peace, Ten Commandments, Shock of Wheat, Cluster of Grapes, and the Bible.

A few years later, a team of horses arrived with a cast iron bell from a foundry in Milwaukee. Using block and tackle, it took a half day to winch the 2500 pound bell into its resting place high in the 126 foot steeple. Pastor Huebner selected a verse to be inscribed on the bell in German. Translated into English it says: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests." (Luke 2:14) For several miles around Sherman Center, the bell

could be heard as it marked out times for the area farmers and wives and children to stop and pray. Our Order of Matins in the hymnal was the prescribed Morning Prayer. Whenever a member died, a tradition has existed even to this day, that the bell is tolled to commemorate their number of years on this earth.

The old church was moved across the road and served as the school building until 1949. In September of 1908 a large pipe organ was installed that still serves us today. Initially it required someone to hand pump it with a long handle. A story is told of a young man who was pumping the organ but then was also watching the people standing in line for a funeral too closely. The organ began to lose power and a stern stare from the organist brought him back to reality. The old handle is now serving as a stair hand rail in an area house.

Daughter Congregation in Adell

The former question of organizing a separate congregation in Adell came up again and a committee of fifteen members along with Pastor Huebner and teacher Peters considered this question at length and then offered the suggestion to release members in and near Adell peacefully in order that they may organize a congregation for themselves. Forty families were released and they erected a church and school in Adell and called Pastor Herbert Daib as their pastor. This third daughter congregation left St. John congregation in 1916. In 1924 a Mission Circle was organized and mission mindedness has been a part of the ministry of St. John to this day.

Our church buildings were adapted to changing technology as the church heat was changed from direct heat to steam heat in 1915. The lighting system was changed to electricity in the parsonage and teacherage in 1928 and in the church in 1929. Our church building nearly burned down on Christmas Eve in 1922 when an usher had lit the kerosene candelabra by spinning it around and then it fell crashing to the floor. A quick thinking member used the carpet runner to snuff out most of the fire. Thankfully, no one was hurt but some members who had already arrived stood in the cold for a time. There are still some burn marks on the floor and a few pews with burn marks near the bottom. This story was corroborated by the diary kept by Albert Schulz, one of our lifelong members. Albert maintained a daily diary from his youth until he was in his nineties. His diary chronicles many other events that happened here during the twentieth century.

Long Term Pastorate of Rev. Dr. Huebner

During those early years of Pastor Huebner's ministry there were many reasons to rejoice, but there were also difficult times. Our church cemetery is marked by dozens of headstones during this time and Pastor Huebner faithfully spoke of the hope of eternal life and the resurrection of the body. Especially poignant are the "lamb" headstones of children who died from things such as influenza and fever and other illnesses that our modern medicine can now easily cure. The nation went through a great war with Germany and talk began about changing the language spoken in Divine Service from German to English. Because of our German heritage, other American citizens questioned the patriotism of those who continued to practice German customs and speak the German language. The American flag began to be displayed in the sanctuary to give evidence of which nation we supported. Later, a Christian flag was also displayed so that no one would think that we placed the state before God. Monthly English

services were first offered in 1932 and Pastor Huebner was called on to preach his first English sermon at the age of 72.

During the later years of Rev. Huebner's ministry, a number of organizations were formed that helped the congregation continue to be the very center of the lives of the members. Friends and family gathered for worship at St. John and they also gathered for a wide variety of other activities held at church. A Men's Club was formed and those belonging to it affiliated themselves with the Lutheran Laymen's League. Bible classes were organized and conducted at various times during the years. A youth Bible class was organized by Rev. Huebner in 1935 and met regularly. Rev. Huebner used the class to help young people in developing proper relationships with each other. Sunday morning services always featured "Christenlehre" (catechetical instruction.)

In 1936, teacher Carl Peters resigned because of old age. All 46 years of his service as a Called worker were at Sherman Center. He had a prominent position during his years because all Voters Meetings were led by Rev. Huebner and teacher Peters served as Secretary. Many of our older members can recall that teachers were empowered by the parents to exact discipline upon unruly students whenever it was needed. The same thing also took place in the public schools at the time. Many years after the "strap" was retired from active use, it was summarily tossed into a fire by several former students at one of our church picnics. Great rejoicing was experienced as the strap was forever destroyed. After teacher Peters retired, candidate Elmer Mueller followed, serving in a teaching vicarage for one year and then he was called to be permanent. During his time, eighth grade instruction was added to the seven grades already being taught.

Rev. Huebner's grandson, Rev. Robert Huebner, tells a humorous story about his grandfather that also shows his dedication to the Word of God. The elder Rev. Huebner was well known for his scholarly approach to the study of Scripture. He often went into the woods north of the church where he had a special spot to pray, meditate and prepare sermons. One day late in fall, he was at his special place in the woods and he hung his eyeglasses on a branch next to him. Rev. Huebner was so deeply in the Word that as he left, he forgot about the glasses. Later, when he arrived at home, he realized that they were missing, but he didn't remember taking them off in the woods. On the first warm day during the following spring, he went out to his spot in the woods and there were his glasses, still on the branch where he had left them!

In 1940, when Rev. Huebner was 80 years old, he asked to be peacefully released from his Call. The request was granted, but he continued to serve until 1941, when his youngest son, Gerhard, was installed. Rev. Gerhard Huebner had been a missionary in Argentina for 20 years. On August 31, Rev. Edmund Huebner preached his farewell sermon and installed his son Gerhard. Pastor Edmund Huebner had been active in the office of the Holy Ministry for 54 years, the last 45 years at Sherman Center. For 28 years of his time at Sherman Center he was "Visitor" of his circuit which is the equivalent of Circuit Counselor today. Due to his mastery of Biblical languages, an honor was given to him in September of 1944, by Concordia Seminary in Springfield, Illinois. He was awarded the honorary title of "Doctor of Ministry". Under the esteemed leadership of Rev. Huebner, St. John had opportunity to be the host congregation for the Mixed Pastoral Conference of Sheboygan and Manitowoc Counties, to the General Pastoral

Conference of the South Wisconsin District, and to the Eastern Pastoral Conference of the District. For the rest of Rev. Dr. Huebner's life, he continued to reside in the congregation and occasionally was called upon to preach and assist with communion services.

During World War II, many young men and women from our congregation answered the call to serve their country. While they were gone, families learned to make do with what they had and kept the young servicemen in their regular prayers. Of the more than twenty men who served, only one, Anthony Monday, was lost. The congregation has always remembered its service men and women in their prayers and for each time of war a display has been made in the church entrance so that everyone would remember to pray for those who were serving in harm's way.

School Board Brings Many Changes

In 1942, the congregation took a major step in getting our lay people more involved in the school by electing the first school board. The first officers were Richard Matter, Oscar Scholz and Albert Schulz. They began the careful study of evaluating the long term needs of our school. After serving St. John for over 7 years, teacher Mueller accepted a Call to Uniontown, Missouri and during the ensuing vacancy of five months, Pastor and Mrs. Gerhard Huebner taught school. Several calls were extended and returned. During the summer of 1944, Emmanuel in Adell also lost their teacher. In order to save its school because of the teacher shortage, the Adell congregation suggested to St. John congregation that the schools be consolidated. This move made sense to the leadership at Sherman Center so both congregations called teacher Edward Kurth of Sheboygan. He accepted the Call and was installed September 10, 1944. Mrs. Kurth assisted during the afternoon hours by teaching the lower grades. Adell congregation transported their 13 children by bus to Sherman Center.

The statistical report of the congregation in 1944 showed that there were 299 baptized members of which 243 were communicant. There were 23 of our own children in our school out of 32 who were eligible. There was a mixed choir with 20 members, a Mission Circle among the ladies with 39 members, and a Youth Bible class with 20 members.

The congregation conducted a major celebration for the 90th Anniversary in 1945 with former sons of the congregation as guest speakers. The festival was held on August 25, 1945 under the direction of Rev. Gerhard Huebner, Pastor, with Rev. Dr. Edmund Huebner assisting. The Rev. Alfred Nicolaus preached the English service in the morning and Rev. Carl Winter preached the German sermon. In the afternoon service, the Rev. Walter Huebner, another son of Dr. Huebner, was the guest speaker. Both of these services were embellished with the mixed choir of the church singing hymns of praise and thanks to God for all His benefits through the years. A detailed history of the congregation was printed at that time authored by Dr. Huebner in German and translated by Rev. Gerhard Huebner. In 1945, Rev. Gerhard Huebner accepted a Call to Portage and Rev. Gustav Meyr was called and he accepted.

During the summer of 1947, due to injuries, Mr. Kurth was granted a leave of absence from his teaching duties. At about the same time, the consolidation of Emmanuel Lutheran School, Adell and St. John Lutheran School, Sherman Center was discussed in several joint

meetings between the two congregations, and the consensus seemed to be to dissolve the consolidation. In September of 1947, this was done. Among other things, plans were initiated to build a new school. A building planning committee was elected and a building fund was started. In 1948, it was definitely decided to go ahead with the building of the school. Pledges made for the building of the new school by May of 1948 totaled \$21,000, which proved later to be more than half of the \$36,000 that was needed for construction.

New School Building

In order to make room for the new school, the members decided to raze the old church building that had been turned into a school in 1903. A new red brick school was erected at the same spot. The cornerstone was laid on Reformation Day, 1948 and the building was dedicated on October 2, 1949. The initial building consisted of two upstairs classrooms (the current 7th- and 8th grade room and the current kindergarten room), plus office, library, and two rest rooms. The lower level had a small auditorium (our current cafeteria) and a kitchen (the current art supply room).

Other issues of concern that were enacted upon at that time were the introduction of regular bulletins, ushering at worship services and continued blanket subscriptions for the Lutheran Witness and Der Lutheraner.

Rev. Meyr served until 1952 and Rev. R. Jagow from St. John in Fredonia served as the vacancy Pastor for several months. Two members of the congregation, Fred Winter and Elmer Machut donated land to the congregation. This allowed for an addition to the cemetery which was dedicated with Dr. Huebner and Rev. Jagow officiating. The Church steeple was painted and special services to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Church building were held on November 2, 1952. On December 7, 1952 Rev. Edmund Zapf came from North Dakota and was installed. During his time of shepherding the flock at Sherman Center, the church constitution was substantially revised and rewritten in the English language. The new constitution was adopted in 1953. An envelope system for financial accountability went into effect in 1953.

Under the direction of Rev. Zapf, a Sunday School was begun in 1953. Initially it was only for four and five year old children because it was feared that some families might be tempted to withdraw their children from the Day School if the Sunday School were offered to all ages. Rev. Zapf held regular meetings so the volunteer teachers would be well versed in the Bible truths and teaching techniques.

Centennial

In 1954, Dr. Huebner passed away at the age of 93 years and was given Christian burial in a prominent place in the church cemetery. In 1954, it was decided to remodel the chancel of the church in time for the Centennial (the 100th anniversary of the founding of the congregation), which would be in August, 1955. A communion rail was installed, the pulpit was lowered, the canopy over the pulpit was taken down, the altar was moved back, altar spires were remodeled and the steps and platform of the altar were changed. New carpeting was installed, with the entire project costing about \$3,200.00. The complete project was paid for during the Centennial year. The balance of the school debt was also paid off in this year. Carved into our communion railing are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, Alpha and Omega. God used these letters in

the last book of the Bible, Revelation, to describe His eternal quality. Originally, during communion services, the people received the Body of Christ on one side, then walked around the back of the altar to the other side where they received the Blood of Christ.

The Centennial Jubilee, 100 years of grace, was observed on August 14, 1955. Dr. J. W. Behnken, President of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, preached the festival sermon in the morning with Mr. Harold Albers of Cross Church, Milwaukee, as organist. In the afternoon service, Rev. Herbert Berner, Pastor of Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, Milwaukee was the guest preacher. At both services, St. John Children's Choir and St. John Male Chorus under the direction of Mr. Kurth and also the Mixed Chorus of Circuit F, under the direction of Rev. R. Jagow, enhanced the services. A Centennial Hymn Service with organist Karl Markworth of Trinity Lutheran Church, Milwaukee was held on August 17. On Sunday evening, August 21, the Ladies Guild of St. John Lutheran Church presented a pageant, "One Hundred Years of Grace". All who attended received a small leaflet with the program and a short history of the congregation.

Through the years since 1955, it was deemed necessary to have more than one teacher in the Day School. In the 1955-1956 school year, a part time teacher, Mrs. Otto Neumann, was hired to help out Mr. Kurth because of increasing enrollment. In 1956-1957, a full-time second teacher, Mr. William Osius, was engaged to teach the upper grades with Mr. Kurth teaching the lower grades.

Dual Parish Begins

Rev. E. Zapf accepted a Call to North Dakota in 1958 and it was suggested that Rev. Richard Bolin of Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Adell, be approached to serve as vacancy pastor. The Church Council and the Adell Church Council met jointly to determine if they could ask Rev. Bolin to serve both congregations. It was resolved to try, and Rev. Bolin began the dual parish duties. Since the parsonage at Sherman Center was not going to be used, it was sold. Rev. Bolin is remembered as an avid outdoorsman. He enjoyed occasional fishing trips with members and had a good sense of humor.

In 1958, regular German services were discontinued because of the difficulty of finding a pastor in the area to conduct them. Also under the direction of Pastor Bolin, three Advent services were held in December, beginning in 1958 and continuing every year.

During the 1950's a retaining wall of stone was built in front of the church property by Andrew Goetsch to control erosion. It not only controls the erosion, but is a beautiful work of masonry that enhances the beautiful church.

The congregation participated in a Lutheran Open House Week in October of 1960. It was part of Synod's PTR Mission, (Preaching, Teaching, Reaching). Rest room facilities were installed in the church basement at a cost of about \$3,000.00. More land was purchased, (about 1 2/3 acres to the east of the church property), from Elmer Machut for future development for a parking lot.

Mr. Osius served as teacher until 1959, when a Call was sent to a River Forest, Concordia College graduate, Miss Marlene Moyer of Elkhart, Indiana. She accepted the Call and taught the lower grades while Mr. Kurth taught the upper grades. Miss Moyer taught until 1969 when she left teaching for while to raise her family. An active Parent-Teacher Organization was formed during the teaching term of Mr. Kurth and it has continued until the present.

In 1961 Rev. Bolin accepted a Call to St. Paul Lutheran Church, Hamel, Illinois and Rev. Jagow was contacted to be the vacancy pastor. It was decided to again call a pastor jointly with the Adell congregation and Rev. Martin Lutz accepted the Call. He was installed in the summer of 1961. Rev. Lutz was also an accomplished author. He wrote a book entitled "Betrayal" that is a fictional account of letters between the Apostle Paul and the Apostle Peter. In it they speculated why Judas Iscariot had betrayed Christ.

One area of the church basement was remodeled into a Sunday School room for the kindergarten classes in 1965, at a cost of \$430.00. About the same time a two-car garage was added to the teacherage, at a cost of \$1,900.00, a new roof was put on the church and also the steeple was resingled (combined cost - \$3,310.00). In 1965 a loud speaker was installed in the church at a cost of approximately \$430.00.

Rev. Herbert Ries Arrives

Rev. Lutz received a call to return to India as a missionary and accepted it, so the dual parish was again without the services of a pastor. After several callings to various pastors, the Rev. Herbert Ries of Liberal, Kansas accepted the call and was installed in late 1965. An observance of the 110th anniversary of the congregation was held on December 12, 1965, with Rev. Herbert Baxmann, President of the South Wisconsin District, as speaker.

As early as 1967, a church remodeling and redecorating project was discussed, but no planning was done for several years. In 1967, it was decided to remove the old brick school building which was built in 1884, so that the area could be used as a parking lot. In 1967, Mr. Kurth was taken ill and passed away in October. He had served faithfully for 23 years. During his illness and for part of the 1967-1968 school year, several teachers were engaged to teach part-time. Mrs. Colleen Kohl and Mrs. MaryAnn Zuengler divided teaching duties of the upper room, grades 5 to 8, between them, with Miss Moyer teaching grades 1 to 4. In January, Thomas Weinz, a mid-year graduate of Concordia Teachers College, was hired to finish out the balance of the 1967-1968 school year. During the summer of 1968, Miss Moyer became Mrs. Clarence Broetzmann and continued to teach during the 1968-1969 school year. Anton Peatow, a graduate of Concordia Teachers College, Seward, Nebraska was assigned to our school for the 1968-1969 term.

Building of New Parsonage

During the summer of 1968, the Voters' Assembly approved a plan to build a parsonage east of the church. This would be used at first as a teacherage. The cost of this parsonage was roughly \$33,000.00 and a portion of this debt was paid for with the money from the sale of the old parsonage in 1958. The house is a split level with three bedrooms, living and dining areas, kitchen, family room, an office area, plus an attached garage. Mrs. Kenneth Berth was hired as a teacher during the 1969-1970 school year and Miss Joy Kiekhaefer was engaged as teacher for

the lower grades in 1970. The school was able to partake of the hot lunch program as furnished by the Random Lake School District.

Under the leadership of Rev. Ries, a wide variety of changes took place both in the area of building projects and in the staff of our Lutheran School. His patience with sorting out the various plans and ideas helped to allow the congregation and school to grow. Part of the ongoing character of this congregation was that decisions were never made quickly, but when they were made the people rallied in support and God brought His blessings upon the ministry. New lights were installed in the church in 1971, as the first step in a remodeling project which was in the planning stage at this time.

Miss Kiekhaefer taught until December of 1972 when she married and moved away. David Haberbosch was called during the summer of 1972 and accepted. He started his teaching duties in September, so for several months the school was blessed with three teachers who were trying a new innovation, team teaching.

Church Narthex Addition

In 1972, the Voters approved a remodeling plan for the church at a cost of some \$86,000.00. It was a major remodeling project and the first major one in the history of the 70 year old church. It consisted of adding a new entrance annex at both the front and the rear of the church, eliminating all outside stairs, and making a more convenient entrance to the church proper and to the basement rest rooms and Sunday School area. Two stairways were constructed to the balcony area, which formerly had only one. The cornerstone laying service was held in the spring of 1973. The voters also decided to blacktop the parking lot at this time, and of course an extensive redecorating project was undertaken to finish off the remodeling job. The church ceiling interior was entirely canvassed and redecorated with modern stenciling replacing the beautiful stenciling which had been done in 1923. Many congregation members were reluctant to change the appearance of the interior of the church. On the west and east walls of the chancel stenciled lettering was painted that highlights the usual benediction that we receive at the end of our worship. It says: "The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." Numbers 6:24-26 (KJV) It is called the Aaronic blessing because God instructed Aaron, as high priest, to bless the people with those words. Pews and floor were refinished and new carpeting was installed as the last phase of the redecorating project in December 1973. The total cost of the complete project was approximately \$110,000.00. Rededication services for the newly remodeled and redecorated church took place on February 17, 1974, with Rev. Karl Barth, President of the South Wisconsin District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, as guest speaker.

Mr. Haberbosch was instrumental in encouraging the formation of a bell choir and during several years memorials were given in order to purchase a set of bells at a cost of several thousand dollars. Since then we have had both a Senoir Handbell Choir and at least one Children's Handbell Choir. The handbells have added so much to our services; not just at holidays, but throughout the year. Even members with no former music training found that it was easy to learn and be a part of giving glory to God through music.

Adult Information Classes were conducted by Rev. Ries at various times for those who desired to learn more about the teachings of the Lutheran Church. He was especially diligent in following up with spouses of members. As a result, many of them became members and were actively involved in the life of the congregation.

It became increasingly evident that two teachers would not be able to handle all the teaching duties effectively, so a part-time third teacher was engaged for the 1973-1974 school year. Also at that time it was decided to elect a Sunday School Superintendent. Albert Schulz was chosen to hold that office for the year 1973, followed by David Haberbosch for several years. In the Day School, Mrs. Cora Robinson, Batavia was hired to teach grades 1, 2 and 3. Anton Peatow accepted a call to teach in Ogden, Utah in 1974 and Frank Wegner was called to teach the upper grades and be the principal. He accepted and was installed during the summer of 1974. The congregation participated in a Lutheran Open House Week during the week of May 9-13, 1976.

After many years of talk about a Lutheran High School in the Sheboygan Area, a group of laymen and pastors was formed to actively pursue the idea. In the Book of Acts in the New Testament one of the Pharisees named Gamaliel commented upon the preaching of Peter and John, "I can guarantee that if the plan they put into action is of human origin, it will fail. However, if it's from God, you won't be able to stop them. You may even discover that you're fighting against God." (Acts 5:38b-39 GW). This passage helps to explain exactly how the efforts to establish a Lutheran High School were blessed by God even in spite of mistakes and challenges along the way. The congregation approved participation in the first phase of the Lutheran High School Association of the Greater Sheboygan Area.

St. John's elegant old organ was rebuilt, repaired and cleaned in 1976 and a new blower was added for a cost of somewhat over \$4,000.00. Also during this time it was decided to finish some more rooms in the church basement for meeting rooms, Sunday School classes, and confirmation classes. A large room, 52 by 20, was finished off with paneling, carpeting, heating, etc. with a divider door in between, so it can become two smaller rooms.

A school secretary, on a volunteer basis, to take care of much of the paperwork, was approved by the Voters. Due to the illness of David Haberbosch, Mrs. Broetzmann was hired as substitute teacher along with Marcia Weinhold, and a third full-time teacher was approved for the year 1978-1979 and forward. Mr. Haberbosch passed away in 1978 so Mrs. Broetzmann rejoined the teaching staff.

A committee was appointed to revise the constitution of the congregation and the new constitution was ratified in September 1978. Like their German ancestors, the members paid strict attention to doing everything by the rules and in good order. Every year when elections were held, it was common to have only one name for an office, yet the Congregation President would meticulously ask for any nominations from the floor so that no one could say that others were ignored from consideration.

A committee was appointed to study the educational and other church related facilities in December 1977. Even the school basement was used part-time as a classroom since three

teaching stations were needed. There was a need to look into possible ways of gaining more room. A third full-time teacher, Timothy Zastrow began teaching the first and second grades, Mrs. Broetzmann grades 3, 4 and 5, and Mr. Frank Wegner grades 6, 7 and 8.

125th Anniversary

Upon the occasion of the 125th Anniversary celebration in 1980, Rev. Ries shared a wonderful perspective of how this ministry had survived so long. Here is what he wrote in the anniversary book. “Through the years, much has been accomplished, both physically and financially, but the greatest accomplishment is that through God’ grace and blessings, conscientious and dedicated pastors and teachers, as well as laymen, have been working, to the end, that all may hear of the Good News of their Savior from sin. Through the various organizations and congregation itself, the love for neighbor was demonstrated. Many hours of volunteer work went willingly into the building and keeping up of the various churches, schools, parsonages, teacherages, church lawn and cemetery, as also willing hearts gave of their earthly possessions to make it possible for the greatest task on earth to be accomplished, to lead souls to heaven. With a feeling of deep gratitude to the God of our salvation, we conclude: “To God Alone All Honor And Glory!”

Many churches that have had Lutheran Schools for as long as Sherman Center, have a very difficult time maintaining support for continued growth. They are often unwilling to keep their facility updated and adapt their curriculum to modern challenges. But, by the grace of God we have seen lots of improvements and changes over the years and never stopped trusting in God’s direction for this ministry. The option of closing our school was never seriously considered no matter how difficult the economic times.

One of the challenges faced for over four decades had been the cooperation with Emmanuel Adell in the sharing of a Pastor. Each year there were several joint council meetings and somehow the schedule of worship services always came together. Emmanuel also showed wonderful support for our school by sending some of their children and paying the tuition.

The decade of the 1980’s saw many new programs started. An Altar Guild was formed that assisted the Elders in enhancing our worship services and giving glory to God. The ladies not only faithfully set up the altar paraments and washed them, and even used their sewing skills to custom design several items. One of the congregation’s special altar cloths that is still being used today was crocheted by Rev. Dr. Huebner’s wife, Anna, in the early 1900’s.

Lutheran High School Opens

As Sheboygan Area Lutheran High School took root, the people of St. John were involved in leadership, volunteerism, and financial support and showed their commitment by sending students to the fledgling institution. Sheboygan Area Lutheran High School rose from the dreams and prayers of many believers in Sheboygan County. As far back as the 1950’s there was a vision for a Lutheran High School. After much prayer and preparation, the first administrator was called in 1977. In the fall of 1978 the High School became a reality when it opened the doors of the Ebenezer Church Education building to 38 Freshmen and Sophomore students. The following year, Lutheran High moved to St. Paul Education Center in Sheboygan Falls. The Hoppert Farm was purchased as the future site of the school. Construction of the

Lutheran High School building became a reality in 1980, with students, faculty, and staff moving into the facility in the spring of 1981. The TAPROOT Club was formed at that time to build a firm foundation of support for the high school. That year also saw the first graduation class of eight students.

Today Lutheran High School is owned and run by an association of 18 area LCMS congregations. We are one of those congregations so it can be said that we are a part owner of the high school. Annually, we continue to contribute generously to the general budget of the school so that the tuition cost can be kept reasonable. We are represented in leadership at the High School through delegates and the Board of Directors. Our current delegates actually graduated from the school and are now able to give back to the next generation.

Because of the distance to the high school, a bus parents group was formed and many car pooling arrangements were made. Our parents have always been visible at the many extracurricular events and showed they were willing to sacrifice so that their sons and daughters could receive an excellent Lutheran education. Throughout the years, it was common to see the name of one of our own members honored as the Valedictorian or Salutatorian or starring as an athlete or in the fine arts. There have been many years when 80-100% of our graduating eighth grade class went on to Lutheran High. Each year the high school sent one of their choirs or drama groups to provide fine music and chancel dramas for our Divine Service during Lutheran Schools Week. In our community today, there are many young adults who have graduated from Sheboygan Area Lutheran High School. Their current mission statement reflects very well what has been happening through this educational ministry, "Preparing Christian Leaders – One Student At A Time".

In April of 1980, the Voters' Assembly established a building committee to do a feasibility study of remodeling our elementary school or building an entirely new school on the north side of the road. Arnold "Percy" Sveom, as congregation president, had a great aptitude in leading people and seeking answers to complex questions. In just five months, the committee came back with the study and congregational survey results that showed a strong support for building something to expand our school ministry. By a slim vote of 21 to 19 the Voters decided to build a new school if the cost was near \$500,000 and if there could be sufficient pledges to pay for it. After conducting a pledge campaign, the leaders had to accept that there was not sufficient financial support to go ahead with the dream plan of building a new school on the north side of the road and rescinded the resolution. They proceeded to make plans for an addition to the existing school.

The congregation celebrated the 400th Anniversary of the Book of Concord with a special service on October 12, 1980. Our pastors and leaders have always adhered to the true exposition of the Word that our forefathers signed during the Reformation. We even have our confessional beliefs as part of the congregation name "St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession." The German heritage is also still evident as was featured during a German Service for the 125th Anniversary.

There has always been an appreciation for the ministry which preceded our generation. However, one problem in following the history of the early years, was that all our church records

from the first 90 years were in German. Translating it into English was made even more complicated by the fact that the records were in handwriting. During the early 1980's, Willis Stolper and his mother, Mrs. Cora Stolper, were dedicated to getting it all translated into English. Kaetchen Wagner, who had spent the early part of her life in Germany also helped and the final draft of Book 1 and Book 2 of our church records were typed by Mrs. Leona Kane, the daughter of a former member. That project was completed and copies of our records were submitted to the District and to the Synod for their historical archives. With the increased interest that people have had in family genealogies, many have found great value in the translated official church records. We have had inquires from other states about family records that can now be answered with authority. Our church Voters' minutes from the days that business was conducted in German remain untranslated. Many of those minutes involve delicate issues such as church discipline and censuring members who persisted in living in public sin.

One aspect of volunteerism that became more prevalent in the 1980's was the role of the Aid Association for Lutherans Branch 1283. Members of our congregation who also were benefit members in the AAL Fraternal Insurance Company conducted many servant events and fundraisers that brought improvements to our buildings and helped to pay the bills. Even after the AAL merged twenty years later with the Lutheran Brotherhood to form "Thrivent Financial for Lutherans", the opportunities continued to obtain matching donor funds for our many special projects for both the school and the church. Periodically, the branch would spearhead a fundraiser to help a family or individual who was going through a major medical or financial crisis. This kind of activity fit exactly into the pattern of early New Testament believers who "kept meeting together, and they shared everything with each other. From time to time, they sold their property and other possessions and distributed the money to anyone who needed it." (Acts 2:44-45 GW.)

The congregation celebrated a special occasion in May of 1981 as Dale Sveom, son of the congregation, was ordained into the Holy Ministry. He was honored by the gift from the congregation of his first set of stoles. He is currently serving as Pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Grandview, Missouri.

New Classrooms Added and Mr. Wegner Replaces Mr. Wegner

Also in May of 1981, a building program was adopted to add classrooms and offices to the south side of the school. Work began soon, but the congregation also received the news that Principal Frank Wegner had accepted a call to St. Paul Lutheran Church and School in Bonduel, Wisconsin. By the end of July, the congregation was successful in their calling for a replacement and had a new principal and teacher in the person of Mr. Richard Wegner who came from Austin, Minnesota. He had roots in Sheboygan where he had spent his early childhood. Both his father and grandfather had served there as pastors. The congregation liked the simplicity that they could continue to call their principal Mr. Wegner. He and his family made their home in the parsonage to the east of the church where he and his wife Carol still reside to this day. Mr. Wegner's work as our school administrator and teacher of upper grades has been blessed in many ways as he has been used by God in our midst. He has great attention for details and is always planning ways for our school to improve. Some of the children from his early years at the school are now parents who are sending the next generation to the care of our gifted and dedicated teachers.

With the building program and teaching vacancy, the Voters had to meet six times in three months during the summer of 1981. Voters' meetings lasted long since it has been the character of the congregation to thoroughly discuss something new before they go ahead. Even though some meetings involved lively discussions, the end result was always that God had a plan for this ministry and He would send His Holy Spirit to bring people together. The new addition was dedicated on August 29, 1982. That space now houses our 3-4th grade classroom, the 5-6th grade classroom, the school office, several bathrooms, and the current preschool classroom. Oscar Scholz retired as the school janitor, and Mr. Wegner's wife Carol took on the job. A work crew removed trees from behind the school to make room for a future playground area.

Because of increasing enrollment in the school, it became necessary to add a fourth teacher so that each one would handle only two grades. In late 1982, Barb Schallock was called to teach 5th and 6th grade. She taught in our school for 17 years until she decided to work in the preschool and childcare at Emmanuel in Adell. She has now come back to our staff in 2005 as the new Pre-School Director.

In December of 1982, Pastor Ries continued to suffer with failing health and announced his intentions to retire in the near future. In February of 1983, this news caused the congregation to review its vision for pastoral care and a vote was taken regarding the continuation of sharing the pastor with Emmanuel. Pastor Ries made a case for the substantial work that could be done if each parish had its own pastor. In fact, Sherman Center was bigger than two thirds of the congregations in the synod that had their own pastor. Yet there was a great concern for the financial impact of paying for a pastor on our own and the current parsonage was already being used by our principal. By a close vote of 20-19 the congregation elected to remain in the dual parish. Rev. Ries retired on April 30, 1983, yet remained in the area so he occasionally was called upon to preach.

During the vacancy which lasted 13 months, several pastors were extended a Call but each turned it down. The congregation found ways to continue the ministry and not get discouraged. We were blessed with the help of Rev. Marvin Nicolaus who had purchased a nearby home for his retirement. He had been serving at Elkhart Lake and Glenbeulah and had many friends in the area. He served faithfully as the vacancy Pastor and his wife Ruth brought blessings to the congregation through her congenial personality. Both of them had grown up in our area and were glad to spend their final years among friends.

In an effort to maintain a better transition from baptism through the time a child is ready for Sunday School, a "Cradle Roll" was established and has been maintained for many years by Mrs. Eileen Jentsch. A banner hangs in the narthex to remind each child that they are a precious lamb of God.

During the pastoral vacancy, discussion began regarding the possibility of granting women the right to vote at meetings of the Voters' Assembly. Women had always been involved in many activities but needed to speak their opinions on matters of church policy through the voice of their husbands and fathers and brothers. The Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Synod had been addressing this complex issue for a long time at the request of

the Synod in Convention. Though the Synod had given approval for women's suffrage to be granted, we were hesitant to change.

The 500th Birthday of Martin Luther was celebrated on November 13, 1983 while we were still in vacancy. Pastor Nicolaus called attention to our lack of handicap access, especially since his own daughter was in a wheelchair. This issue took over twenty years to find its solution. In May of 1984, the school entered the technology age with the purchase of its first computer. Little did our congregation and Board of Education know how the computer would change communication and education. They have been committed ever since then to be at the forefront of the available technology. To prepare for a new pastor, the old bathrooms were made into storerooms and the old school office was made into a pastor's study.

Ministry of Rev. Robert Lindau Begins

After thirteenth months of pastoral vacancy, Rev. Robert Lindau, was installed as the twelfth Pastor of St. John on June 3, 1984. His name had come up many times as the congregation had considered calling other pastors, but there was a certain degree of reluctance because he was serving at St. John, New Fane, which was in our own Circuit #9 of the South Wisconsin District. Many were concerned that there might be hard feelings on the part of the New Fane congregation.

Rev. Lindau brought his own special talents to Sherman Center that were immediately appreciated. Before his seminary studies, he had been a music minister and was proficient at the organ as well as vocals. The congregation has always loved to sing and Rev. Lindau led the singing with great boldness. He often sang solos and directly helped Mrs. Broetzmann with special choir cantatas. He had an outgoing personality and related well to the children in the school. During his time at Sherman Center he was also instrumental in recruiting many students to attend Lutheran High School in Sheboygan. His own children went there and were very involved in youth activities in the parish. Mrs. Christine Lindau was also a relative of the Huebner family that had served during the first half of the century in our congregation. The Lindau family lived in the parsonage at Adell as other pastors before then in the dual parish, but their faithful presence at Sherman Center helped to strengthen the family feel of the ministry. Rev. Lindau enjoyed traveling all over the world and even led several trips that some of our members enjoyed with him. His family served as host for foreign exchange students and one of them, Danny, spent his entire high school years with them while attending Lutheran High.

In October of 1984, Rev. Lindau informed the congregation that Emmanuel Adell had approved women's suffrage, but Sherman Center still decided to leave the subject off the table even though they realized that future joint council meetings would involve women from Emmanuel. Later that fall, the long talked about stained glass window restoration and protection project was approved. This assured that generations to come would be able to appreciate the rich heritage of religious symbolism and beauty in our windows. Gary Jentsch took a lead role on this project and demonstrated his careful attention to detail as he did on many other church improvement projects over the years. In May of 1985, the congregation contracted to print its first picture directory of members and ministry. Every five years after that we have printed a new directory so that all members can get to know one another better.

After several years of on again and off again debate, the issue of women's suffrage was brought forward so that the matter could be decided. By a vote of 29-14 it was approved that women over 18 could take part in our Voters' Assembly, but there were restrictions placed so that no women could serve as congregation President, Vice President, Elder or Board of Education Chair. The very first women voters were: Jerilyn Norum, Debra Goedde, Kathy Goedde, Mardell Schulz, Doris Stolper, and Marcella Bauer.

Following up on his own father's generosity from many years before, Walter Winter donated an additional acre of land for use as future cemetery plots as needed. The land he donated was used for many years as the "beer garden" for the annual picnic. Because Walter's cows grazed through the underbrush, the land had a park-like quality. His donation assured that there will be sufficient room well into the twenty-first century.

The year 1986 had many highlights that showed real vision on the part of our congregation leadership. The Long Range Planning Committee reported that specific plans needed to be developed for a multi-purpose gymnasium facility. The Board of Education realized the increasing need for more administrative time for Mr. Wegner and for increased team teaching challenges, so Mrs. Christine Lindau was added to the staff as a part time teacher. An Evangelism Committee was formed that began calling on inactive members and following up on visitors to our worship services. Because of increased Sunday School attendance, the rest of the church basement remodeling was also completed. The project helped to create needed space for the many children of the congregation. A formal program of scheduled "Greeters" was initiated that continues to the present time. No one ever thought that the job of greeting people should be delegated since we have always shown a great willingness to speak with visitors. This new program helped to ensure that every person who came to our worship services received a greeting that represented the love Christ has for His church.

There was a desire on the part of many members to pray for those who were in need of healing and help, so in January of 1987 a Prayer Chain was formed. By calling the Prayer Chain chairperson, within minutes team captains are called, and soon dozens of people are interceding on behalf of the afflicted individual. This vital ministry continues today, being led faithfully by Mrs. Janis Liepert. So many of our support ministries in the congregation come from clear directives in Holy Scripture; "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints." (Eph. 6:18 NIV)

Throughout 1987, our Evangelism Committee conducted canvassing of the Belgium area which was experiencing a lot of growth. Those efforts resulted in St. John Lutheran Church in Port Washington deciding to start a mission congregation there. David and Debra Goedde were very involved in that canvassing and later decided to transfer to the new St. Mark Belgium congregation to help lead in its formation.

In the late 1980's Joan Vorpahl wanted to start a church library so she could lend some of the family's Christian books to more people and have a good way to keep track of them. In November of 1987, a Church Library was started. Since then, our members have had the opportunity to read theological books, Christian novels, and family-issue books without having

to purchase them personally. The initial gift of \$500 from AAL served to inspire other donations and the library became a reality. Our budget annually enables us to add books and many people have stepped forward with personal donations. During this past year, Jeanne Reseburg and Doris Stolper reorganized the books after the library was moved to our new Friendship Room. Some members visited the library every Sunday to check out a book for the week.

Clarence Vorpahl and many of our church leaders had brought up the subject of a congregation endowment fund from time to time. Because of the need to provide ongoing funding for special projects and concerns, an endowment fund was finally begun and a contract was entered into with the LCMS Foundation to manage the funds. A substantial initial funding took place through the bequest of \$36,000 from the Anna Stolper estate. Since the start of this fund, it has now grown to well over \$100,000 and every year the interest is used to primarily give scholarship aid to those members who pursue studies in church work at one of the Concordias. Thousands of dollars of aid have been generated through this well thought-out plan for the future. Rev. Lindau encouraged many of our older members to include the congregation and the endowment fund in their wills. The fruit of his efforts continue to be shown as those members have been called to glory one at a time. Because of the endowment fund and its primary purpose, a Church Worker Recruitment Committee was formed that actively encouraged our youth to pray about answering God's call into the teaching or pastoral ministry.

One day during April of 1988, a new playground took shape. With donated used telephone poles and numerous hours of cutting and milling and planing at the Schulz Saw Mill, a large crew of men and women put up a jungle gym of timbers and tires behind the school. It served for many years to provide a creative play area for our school children. In 1988, when Carol Wegner resigned as janitor, Harriet Jentsch took over and along with her husband continued the job as a labor of love. Even if we could not have the very newest in buildings and equipment, we could always say that our school was a clean and safe environment for our children to learn. Our various church custodians over the years tried to make the church home as clean as their personal homes. Occasionally, a work crew of volunteers would be recruited to help with major cleaning projects.

As the Long Range Planning Committee continued their work on a master plan for a new multi-purpose room and addition, Richard and Marian Eschrich donated land on the east side of the school so that all options could be considered. Because the school enrollment was increasing, we were looking for a way to also include a new kitchen facility in the plan.

Church leaders raised the question of incorporation so that liability issues could be handled properly. After a thorough search of church and government records, it was discovered that we had been incorporated for over 130 years, ever since 1859. All we needed to do was update our name on the records since our church name had been in German originally.

At our annual Mission Festival in 1989 we were privileged to hear from Rev. Robert Huebner as speaker. His father and grandfather had served us well and Rev. Huebner had a variety of experiences having grown up in the mission field of Argentina. Because of the mission experience of Rev. Gerhard Huebner in Argentina and the experience of Rev. Martin Lutz in India, St. John people have had a special interest in supporting the work of missionaries.

Each year we tithed from our budget for mission support. We also saw opportunities to support mission efforts at home and demonstrated that interest by giving monthly offerings to a new mission start called St. Andrew Lutheran Church, West Bend.

Rev. Lindau began to introduce to our congregation the new hymnal that had been developed by the Synod and Concordia Publishing House back in 1982. After trying some of the new liturgical settings and new hymns, a decision was made to purchase the new hymnal in September of 1989. There was still a substantial desire to continue the use of the old hymnal occasionally until the books wear out. Portable hymnal racks were built to accommodate the old books. Because of the simple and familiar melodies and harmonies of the old hymnal, the congregation has not lost its love for its use to this day.

Under the leadership of Pam Smith, and with the help of her husband, Mike, the Youth Group was very involved in Sunday Bible Study, servant projects, and leadership development. In 1990 they hosted what became an annual event, the Spaghetti Dinner. Every year in February, the smell of garlic and spaghetti sauce emanates from the school and mounds of fresh pasta are consumed as fellowship is enjoyed by all. The youth also led an annual worship service that involved a lot of planning and preparation. They appreciated what their pastor went through each week. Also every February, all of our upper-grade Sunday School youth would depart for a Sunday School experience for one day at Lutheran High School. They received a taste of being in the same classrooms where older brothers and sisters would sit during the week and began to look forward to when they would be in high school.

Not everyone is physically able to attend church on Sunday, so in April of 1990, an audio tape ministry began. Each Sunday service since then has been taped and shared with shut-in members and area nursing homes. For many years, Dick Zuengler has faithfully sat in the ushers' room with head phones on during services and then has spent extra time after others have gone home to make the copies needed for this vital ministry. He and Gus Jentsch, the "sound man", have teamed up to make sure that what the Apostle Paul said to the church at Rome could take place with the people in our area, "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?" (Romans 10:14 NIV)

Late in 1990, Sherman Center gained some new visibility by way of two new highway signs located on Highway 57 for northbound and southbound traffic. These signs advertise our presence and our worship times. This holds great value especially now that the highway is four lanes all the way to the interstate and a lot of cars go by each day. However, signs and advertising can never replace the personal invitation to join us in worship that our members have been always willing to extend.

New Multi-Purpose Gymnasium

After years of planning and study, the approval was given to build a new multi-purpose gymnasium to the east of the school. The addition would take place in several phases as some rooms would be built but not finished until later. There was less than unanimous approval because the capital fund appeal for the project received commitments of only one-third of the project estimate. Even though some members were opposed to this bold of a project, those same

members rolled up their sleeves and got involved in the work to be done. The cornerstone was laid on October 13, 1991. The new gymnasium quickly became the envy of the other Lutheran schools in the county and they looked forward to playing at our facility. Congregation Chairman Percy Sveom had provided excellent leadership during this time of major decisions and his business experience was appreciated by many. Now his own grandchildren have the privilege of shooting baskets in the gymnasium that had been a big dream of his along with many other leaders.

Our South Wisconsin District asked our congregation to be involved in a pilot project entitled, "Extending the Circle, Funding the Mission" beginning in 1991. This project was a natural fit for us since they wanted to see the effect of designated mission offerings upon a congregation instead of just giving a lump sum to the District and Synod. Rev. Lindau became more involved in this project later as he reported back on how well it was received.

Rev. Lindau frequently made the Elders aware of the challenge to get all the work done in the dual parish. He searched for answers to help the pastor. Rev. Lindau added a Monday evening service during summer which was offered at Emmanuel in order to maintain worship attendance during the summer months. Some discussion had been entertained about getting a Vicar or a Director of Christian Education to help him. The Rev. Ed Keiper was contracted by the dual parish for six months to help by calling on inactive members. He was well received by all those visited and was contracted to continue this ministry, but later in 1991 he and his wife moved to Texas.

Lutheran Schools Week takes place every year during the first full week of March. Under the direction of Principal Wegner, that week has always been filled with a wide variety of activities that go well beyond the typical week. The children look forward to the experiences, field trips, special theme days, etc. The highlight of the week was a special service on Sunday when the children would sing. On the following Sunday, the Lutheran High School youth would come with a choir and testimonies. Pastor Don Johnson, their theology teacher, would usually preach and parents from other congregations would be present as visitors.

In 1991 our school children gave a musical presentation called "Kids Praise". With the help of former students, Brad Jentsch and Jim Wegner, and all of the teaching staff, this production was also done at the special 75th Anniversary Service of the South Wisconsin District and at the Sheboygan Lutheran High School. It brought favorable recognition to the school and to our congregation by demonstrating the value of Christian education and training that God has given to children in a small rural school.

During any given year there are numerous repairs and small projects that have taken place that were done completely by members at minimal cost. A small group of retired men made this a special way for them to give back what God has already given to them. It is almost as if they rejoiced when something needed to be fixed. Some of our living retirees such as Everett Arndt, Walt Friedemann, Amos Winter, Walter Winter, Ralph Zimmer, Gerhard Jentsch, Willis Liepert and Clarence Broetzmann have donated thousands of hours of their time. Each of these men saw how men from generations before them did the same and surely now they hope that others will take up the challenge to serve.

The financing of the new addition to the school was a large burden for the congregation. No one liked the idea of long term indebtedness. One part of the financing package was obtaining private loans from members. These loans were typically at interest rates below what the bank was charging. Often, the holder of the private loan note would forgive the interest due and others wrote stipulations in their will that the loan notes to the church would be forgiven at death.

As the construction of the addition neared completion, there were a variety of efforts made to furnish and equip the new facility and find money to pay for it. No stone was left unturned in seeking donations of money or equipment. For example, bleachers were donated by Appleton West High School and plumbing fixtures by the Kohler Company, and a sound system by Random Lake Electronics. The new space enabled the school to have things it could only dream about in the past. Excitement grew with each passing week.

With the beginning of the year 1992, a new congregation chairman took office who would serve for the next thirteen years. Mr. Don Pfeifer, husband of life-long member, Karen Goedde Pfeifer, led meetings with a friendly smile and knew how to use humor to break the tension. He dedicated thousands of hours to behind the scenes projects and issues. Don served by leading and by doing. Sometimes he would be on the phone recruiting volunteers, sometimes he could be seen teaching Sunday School, and other times he and his wife were the last ones left to sweep the floor and turn off the lights. All of this prepared him well for his current position as a Thrivent for Lutherans financial representative.

On October 4, 1992, the congregation celebrated the 50th Anniversary of Ordination for Rev. Herbert Ries, our former pastor who still lived in the area. His son, Rev. Thomas Ries, was the guest preacher. The congregation voted to honor him with the title, "Pastor Emeritus".

Each year, the process of establishing the budget for the next year has been a challenging task. Once the salaries were set in proportion to recommended District guidelines, each other item was reviewed line by line first at the Board level, then by the Church Council and finally at the Voters' Meeting. Treasurer Walt Friedemann was always a most valuable player in the budget process. Paying our bills has been challenging but somehow they would get paid! Everyone remembers as another benchmark would be approved such as when the budget exceeded a quarter million dollars or when it exceeded one thousand dollars per day. Yet it was always hard to say that any aspect of our ministry was no longer important.

With the opportunity to designate mission offerings, the congregation began with its 1993 budget, annual support for the mission work of Rev. Dale and Alvina Federwitz, with Lutheran Bible Translators in Africa. Dale is the brother of Barb Schallock, one of our teachers. After Dale graduated from seminary in 1973 he and Alvina visited LCMS churches and schools developing their prayer and financial partnerships. Among their partners was St. John school and later St. John church.

They arrived in Liberia; West Africa on Feb 14th, 1974 with their two small children, Jonathan and Rebecca. They were assigned to work with an entirely Islamic group of people

called Mandingo and later with the Kuwaa. They learned their language, developed a writing system for them and translated Old Testament Scripture portions into their language.

Several times while on home assignment, Dale came to Sherman Center to share his experiences in the mission field and also to challenge our support for taking the Gospel to all nations. After Dale was called home to heaven in July 2002, Alvina has continued to serve as Literacy and Scripture Use Advisor in Liberia and Ghana. She recently took on the responsibility of working with the Liberian Ministry of Education to implement the use of Liberian Languages in the formal education system of Liberia. Their three children, Jonathan, Rebecca and David are all in the mission field and are receiving financial and prayer support from our congregation annually.

At Rev. Lindau's urging, the entire faculty attended the Great Commission Convocation which was held in Minneapolis during October of 1993. They returned filled with ideas on how to reach the lost souls for Christ in our community. The faculty has had special opportunities to witness each year because the Holy Spirit seems to always move upon the hearts of at least one unchurched family each year to enroll their children in our school. As the teachers tell the children in the classroom about the love of Jesus, they are subsequently able to also witness to their parents.

Many times our congregation has grieved over the loss of leaders and faithful members who are taken home to heaven. Part of the lament is always wondering how we will replace that person's efforts in our ministry. Sometimes it happens within a family such as when the job of treasurer passed from Arno Stolper to his son-in-law Walt Friedemann. Sometimes a young man is trained in the shadow of his father such as when Alan Winter died suddenly in 1993 and his son, Norm, immediately filled his position on the Board of Stewardship or as Clarence Vorpahl demonstrated leadership by example to his sons, Ron, Dick, and Jim and then they all served well in leadership after their father's time was fulfilled. Whether from the same family or not, we can understand that God desires the work of preaching repentance and rendering forgiveness to continue on at St. John Sherman Center!

After a congregational survey, the Elders determined that a significant number of members would prefer to receive communion in individual cups as is the practice in many other LCMS congregations. The Dorcas Quilters group donated the cost of the new communion ware. Their efforts in making and selling beautiful quilts has enabled them to help in different ways. Every Thursday morning they gather in the "Quilters Room" in the church basement. Experienced fingers carefully stitch remnant cloth into things of real beauty. Over the years they have donated hundreds and hundreds of patchwork quilts for mission locations and inner city ministries. At the 2004 Mission Festival, the congregation was able to see a colorful display of mission quilts draped over the pews in church. Every year, one of the talented quilters, Jeanne Reseburg, makes the eighth grade graduates' banner that features their class motto. These works of art are on display in the gym lobby.

In fall of 1993, the Board of Education along with Principal Wegner began the process of getting our school nationally accredited. We had been accredited through our District for a long time, but this process is designed to show our school as having excellence in all aspects of

education that very few schools of our size can attain. The process involved dozens of people in the congregation and input from everyone. It took over two years to finally receive the coveted letter of accreditation. Our school has also worked closely with the other Lutheran Schools in our county. By being a member of the Sheboygan Area Lutheran School Association (SALSA), the students in our school have regular opportunities to compete against the students of the other five Lutheran grade schools in Sheboygan County. This competition includes events such as volleyball, basketball, Scholastic Olympics, spelling bee, track and field, and forensics. By cooperating with the other schools, we have been able to also have extracurricular band and instrument lessons and have an annual 7th Grade Outdoor Education Camp at Camp Rokilio on Cedar Lake. Our school has been the host for many SALSA events and in-service teacher days as well as several District Small School Conferences.

In 1994, the Board of Elders began to review the future staff needs of the congregation and school. Rev. Lindau reiterated the need for more help in pastoral care. A congregation survey was done to receive input. The Elders also brought forth a mission statement for the congregation which was approved by the Voters: “We exist to empower our membership through Word and Sacrament to proclaim the Lordship of Christ to each other and the world.” The Board of Education also adopted a mission statement: “St. John Lutheran School serves as a mission of our church to teach children the Word of God, instill discipleship, develop God given talents, prepare for Christian citizenship, and proclaim the Gospel message.” These two mission statements were regularly featured in our newsletters and ministry handouts.

A major component of the gymnasium addition finally took place in 1994-95 as the new elevator was installed. The location enabled the entire school to be accessible to the handicapped. This feature also opened the door for all members to enjoy the numerous church fellowship gatherings in the new multi-purpose gymnasium. What a sight it is to see the large room filled with members and the smell of home cooking and baking!

Another sight to behold each year is the way the church decorating committee prepares the sanctuary and chancel areas for Christmas. Each year’s committee seems to come up with new ideas that help us to celebrate the birthday of our Lord and Savior. One year the tree that was donated was so large that some limbs were removed from the back so the tree could be located closer to the wall. The real surprise came however, when the off-balanced tree came crashing down. No injuries were reported except to the pride of that year’s committee.

One Christmas tradition that has been carried on as far back as anyone can remember is the presentation of a bag of treats to each of the children on the night of their Christmas service. Older members can recall when an orange was placed in the bag and that was the only orange a child was likely to see all year! In recent years, the Board of Education along with the Youth Group has diligently prepared the bags.

Lay Minister Added to Staff

In April of 1995, the Board of Education and the Board of Elders presented a solution to some of the long term staff needs by proposing that the congregation call a lay minister with specific job duties of youth, assimilation of new members, visiting inactive members, teaching adult Bible Study and teaching Confirmation instruction to the seventh grade. Dr. Albert Garcia,

Director of the Lay Ministry program for the LCMS, gave substantial input as to how a Lay Minister could help our congregation. Approval was given to call a candidate from a list of nine prospective individuals. At a special Voters' meeting in July of 1995, Mr. Gregory Laska was called to be the Lay Minister. He and his family were members at Trinity Lutheran in Sheboygan where Mrs. Roberta Laska had been a Bible Study leader and Church Librarian and Mr. Laska had served as Chairman of the Voters' Assembly, Bible Study leader, Sunday School teacher and worked with the Bosnian Refugee resettlement program. He had recently completed the certification program for Lay Ministry through Concordia University in Mequon.

During the summer of 1995, two special anniversaries were observed. The 140th Anniversary of the congregation was celebrated in August with special attention given to the listing of all the baptized members of the congregation. Many of the long time members saw names of ancestors on the list. The congregation also threw a surprise celebration for Principal Richard Wegner's 25th Anniversary in the teaching ministry. Those who were students in his classroom have many memories of elaborate stories; his outspoken love for our Lord and Savior; sentence diagramming; maps and more maps; rock collections; rearranging the room; fun on class trips; and his famous line "to make a long story short".

Also during the summer of 1995, a new classroom was finished to become home to the first and second grade. It was located in a room that had been part of the gymnasium addition. Mr. Zastrow and his class rejoiced at having a bright room with a wonderful view over the playground. A mural of the Good Shepherd and the sheep was hung in the room to remind the boys and girls of their loving relationship with Jesus.

Near that new classroom was another empty and unfinished room that began to take shape in the fall. Mrs. Roberta Laska, wife of the new Lay Minister, Greg Laska, brought her experience to bear as she diligently put together a new school library. Books that had been kept in the classrooms could now be brought together and organized. Many new books were purchased and donated, and over the next four years the library became a reality. The west wall of the room became a complete library of books, reference materials and videos. A regular schedule was followed for each class to visit the library and have books read to them as well as to check out reading materials for the week. Many students from Mr. Wegner's classroom assisted in the library. The east wall took shape as a computer learning area. Later many more computers were added so that the room is called the "Media Center". Before it was filled with books and computers, the room was also used by Mrs. Laska for a weekly women's Bible Study and for various boards and church council meetings.

One of the duties of Lay Minister Laska was youth ministry and it didn't take him long to find a spot for the youth to meet. Two storage rooms behind the gym were organized into one and with some paint, a donated rug and donated used furniture, the youth now had their own "Youth Room". Several years later, the youth moved their meeting place to the basement of the church. The youth gathered for Sunday Bible Study and had several events each year that became a tradition. The fall lock-in was an overnight retreat in which a Youth Ministry team from Concordia University came to minister and have an entire night of activities. Some of the lock-ins involved youth from other congregations in our circuit which brought back memories of the old Walther League. It was a deeply spiritual event to have a candle light worship in the

church at 3:00 A.M.! Raising funds was an ongoing challenge. Sub sandwiches were served each year for Super Bowl Sunday and in February the Spaghetti Dinner gave everyone a chance to stay for food and fellowship in the gym after a Sunday service. In May the annual plant sale would bring over a hundred hanging plants to our members just in time for Mother's Day. During the summer, the youth have enjoyed going white water rafting on the upper Wolf River and overnight campouts at the Roesler farm south of Fredonia where they played flashlight hunt into the wee hours of the morning.

Because there were so many Lutherans in Sheboygan County, there was always excellent support to hold an area Reformation Rally on the Sunday nearest to October 31st. Sheboygan County has the second highest ratio of LCMS members to the general population out of all counties in the nation! It was not unusual for several thousand people to attend the Rally. The speaker was usually someone prominent in the Synod. Many of the rallies took place at the old Sheboygan Armory and later at the renovated Stephanie Weill Center in downtown Sheboygan. The service included choirs from the various churches joining together, a hymn sing, and a Pastor Choir.

The Lay Minister was called upon occasionally to preach whenever Rev. Lindau was gone, but a new feature took place in our regular services. Every time there was a non-communion Sunday, Mr. Laska would call the children up for a "children's message". They would hop and skip to the front where they always tried to figure out what the object lesson would be.

Mr. Laska began calling on people who had not been active in attending worship. Some people remained inactive but others responded to the effort. He also began a regular Sunday morning Adult Bible Study. Because of the dual parish, the Pastor could never conduct a Bible study on Sunday, so this was a welcome addition.

When Jerry and Janice Voelske joined the congregation, she brought with her a vision for starting a ministry for developmentally disabled adults because of her experience in the Milwaukee area. She found the doors opened wide to that vision at the Sheboygan County Comprehensive Health Center east of Waldo. A monthly Bible study led by Mrs. Voelske and assisted by several faithful members has continued to this day for those residents. They eventually moved to a newer facility at Rocky Knoll, north of Plymouth and Mrs. Voelske and her volunteers followed them in ministry.

Kindergarten Added

At the end of the 1995-96 school year, Marlene Broetzmann announced her retirement as a teacher. She had served St. John Lutheran School for her entire career, which included taking a break to get married to Clarence and have her children. Marlene has always been a willing servant, including during her retirement. The congregation had great concerns as to how she might be replaced. God had His hand in that replacement and it began many years before when Marlene first came to Sherman Center from her native state of Indiana. She lived with the Mr. and Mrs. Victor Goedde family and they loved her so much that they named their youngest daughter after her. Marlene Goedde went on to learn to play the organ and teach just like her godmother. After attending Concordia College, she gained experience by teaching at several

other Lutheran schools. With Mrs. Broetzmann retiring, Mr. Wegner and the Board of Education thought it was the perfect time to add kindergarten to our school and the person they recommended to be the first kindergarten teacher was someone who could also teach music and be our Church Music Director – Marlene Goedde who was now Mrs. Marlene Forshee! Marlene and her husband Rich moved to our area with their two children and eventually had a new home built for them in Adell.

The new kindergarten room was located in the lower level of the school in a room that had been part of the expansion during the early 1980's. Soon it was fully equipped for children and it featured a large climbing platform built by our own retired men. Even though Mrs. Broetzmann had retired, she continued to help with handbells and has been the #1 substitute teacher. Mrs. Christine Lindau became our new 3rd and 4th grade teacher.

In June of 1996, the first Vacation Bible School took place at our congregation. Five classrooms were redecorated with special themes. Over 40 children responded to the invitation to attend. They played games, heard Bible stories, had snacks that were connected with the theme for the day, and sang new songs. By the end of the week the children were eager to have their parents attend the VBS closing service so everyone could understand what was learned in the prior week. Our older youth served as helpers, craft assistants and some of those same youth have gone on to pursue teaching careers. Each annual Vacation Bible School since then has served to open our doors to new children and families who get to hear about the love that Jesus has for them.

In 1996, a carillon was donated to the church by the Horn family as a memorial in the name of Howard and Don Horn. It is set to play seasonal Christian hymns on the hour from 8:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. and can often be heard as members come to worship and as they depart.

Every year the Board of Stewardship tries to find new ways to encourage our members to increase their annual giving. In November of 1996, they conducted an appeal called "As For Me And My House" based upon Joshua 24:15. The Old Testament leader, Joshua had challenged heads of families to show leadership in being faithful to the Lord. To commemorate their faithfulness, he set a large rock under an oak. Joshua told all the people, "This stone will stand as a witness for us. It has heard all the words which the LORD spoke to us. It will stand as a witness for you. You cannot deceive your God." (Joshua 24:27 GW) At the end of our stewardship appeal that year and every year since then, on the first Sunday in December, heads of families come forward during the worship service with their annual pledge. The sealed envelopes are placed in two boxes that flank the altar and stand to remind us throughout the year of what we have said we were going to do. Only God knows what is written inside the envelope and only God knows the true condition of our heart.

Just before Christmas in 1996, Rev. Lindau received a Call to be the Senior Pastor at Trinity Freistadt. He accepted the Call and reflected upon the fact that Freistadt had helped get our congregation started back in 1855. At his last service with us, the congregation sang the hymn, "Here I Am Lord", and there was not a dry eye in the building.

While the congregation was vacant in January of 1997, the District went through a reorganization of Circuits and a proposal was submitted that would have placed us in a new Circuit. This would have potentially severed long ties with congregations that have supported our school ministry. After several long discussions with the District Office, Lay Minister Laska was able to keep us with the same Circuit although our Circuit number was changed from 9 to 10. St. Paul in Cascade and St. Mark, Belgium had been part of our Circuit but were moved to other Circuits during the realignment.

When the Lindau family left to go to Trinity, Freistadt, a new graduate from Concordia at Mequon, Ms. Carrie Guenther finished out the school year for Mrs. Lindau but at the end of the year she decided to move closer to her parent's home. Two retired pastors in our area, Rev. Ed Bek former pastor at St. Paul, in Sheboygan, and Rev. George Mumm, former pastor at St. John, in West Bend, served during the vacancy. They took turns preaching while our Lay Minister took care of confirmation instruction and the day to day ministry including visitation of the sick. After discussion about whether this was a good time to dissolve the dual parish arrangement, the decision was made to continue it and see if we could get a young pastor who would be willing to handle the work load of the dual parish especially since it was our plan to also continue having a lay minister.

Ministry of Rev. Bryan Osladil Begins

God's blessings came as Rev. Bryan Osladil accepted our first Call in May of 1997 and moved from Haven, north of Sheboygan, to become our 13th Pastor. He was readily accepted because of his leadership role at Sheboygan Area Lutheran High School. Our only big challenge with him was that since he grew up in Minnesota, he was a life long Viking fan and he refused to become a "Packer backer". That made for a considerable amount of kidding and teasing especially each year as the Vikings and Packers played one another. Pastor Osladil brought with him his two children, and his wife Julie, who had lots of good ideas and immediately started a "Diners Club". Each month a large group of people from both congregations would go out to eat together and then head to someone's house for dessert afterward. This helped to promote good relations between the two churches.

Pastor Osladil was a well organized man and he faithfully attended all meetings at both churches. He did a lot of listening and observing during his first year and began to encourage the leadership to look at ways to work together with Emmanuel more closely. He was well known for his end of service announcements, communion distribution change, introducing new hymns, his effort to restart the Preschool at Adell with teacher Ellen Anger, and the purchase of Wilk Building in Adell that was used as an office and Bible Study facility. Rev. Osladil also began the practice of communing some of our elderly or handicapped members in the pews where they sat so they would not feel separated from their family sitting in front.

Our copies of The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) had become worn and many pages had fallen out due to wear and tear. Because the congregation desired to continue using this hymnal, one family donated the funds so that a new set could be purchased for our portable hymnal rack.

In May of 1997, another long term teacher announced a move. Mr. Tim Zastrow had accepted a position in a new school being started at St. John Lutheran in Port Washington. Like

Mrs. Broetzmann, Tim had met someone locally after coming here to teach and then married. His wife, Linda, was the daughter of Lester and Marion Heidemann. Tim had served well over the years and both he and his wife had been Superintendent of the Sunday School at different times. Mr. Zastrow treasured his opportunities to assist in distribution of communion and had also served on the Board of Elders as well as being a Youth Counselor.

When the Zastrow family moved out, the Board of Trustees decided it was time to make some long needed repairs to the old teacherage. That house was built in 1896 and was solid structurally, but needed a lot of updating. During that summer the house received many improvements which included new kitchen cabinets, an extra upstairs bathroom, new fixtures in the downstairs bath, new wiring, new heating system, new plumbing lines, new painted interior and new carpet. More than twenty individuals led by Trustee Chairman, Ken Guidinger, helped in the remodeling. Money was withdrawn from the Endowment Fund to pay for the materials and many things such as plumbing fixtures were donated. When the project was finished, it was estimated that the value of the house was increased by over \$80,000 because of the changes. A new teacher, Daniel Hueller, moved in with his wife Jenny and family in the fall. They had come from Joplin, Missouri, and both were natives of Sheboygan and graduates of Sheboygan Area Lutheran High School. Mr. Hueller taught 5th and 6th grade and also became the Athletic Director. He is remembered for his great sense of humor and his excellent singing voice. Mrs. Schallock then taught 3rd and 4th grade instead of the 5th and 6th where she had been for a long time. She enjoyed the change and continued helping with coaching volleyball.

We still needed to find a teacher to replace Mr. Zastrow in 1st and 2nd grade. Later in the summer, our prayers were answered when Concordia at Mequon called Rev. Dr. Wayne Braun to be their Campus Pastor. His wife, Linda, was looking for a teaching position and Dr. Cary Stelmachowicz, one of our members who was on staff at Concordia, spoke up just in time for us to get Mrs. Braun as our new teacher. Their family moved to Fredonia and their children were all in our school. They were a sports-minded family and everything they did was with great enthusiasm. Rev. Braun was able to occasionally preach in our services during the four years that they were here and when he wasn't preaching, everyone could always tell that he was in church because of his robust singing voice. He helped to link the Concordia Youth Ministry team to our Youth Group and he arranged for members of their team to lead our Sunday Youth Bible Studies.

In September of 1997, a new tradition began with our 8th grade class. Led by Lay Minister Laska and assisted by Rev. Osladil, the class traveled north to Camp Sinawa on the shores of beautiful Pigeon Lake in Manitowoc County. Every September since then they have spent three days on retreat getting to know each other better and taking time to reflect upon their spiritual walk with the Lord. It has become one of the highlights of the year and their time at St. John Lutheran School. The fond memories of swimming, canoeing, campfire songs and stories, games in the woods, Bible study, making meals, exploring the island, and late night conversations will stay with them forever. The official record for most 4 inch pancakes consumed at breakfast by one person now stands at 17! The annual "wild yell" of Rev Osladil in the dark of the night had a predictable response every year. In 2003 Rev. Laska woke up one morning at camp and discovered someone had painted his toenails pink during the night! It was all in good fun.

Another highlight for students in Mr. Wegner's class is the 7th and 8th grade trip. For a number of years it involved a two day canoe trip and camp out to the Crystal River, but in recent years it is the "Chicago Trip". The class travels to Chicago on a comfortable bus and has a jam packed two days of fun and sightseeing. It includes museums, a skyscraper view of the city, shopping, swimming in a motel pool, and sometimes a ball game. Mr. Wegner has the time scheduled so well that no one ever came back saying that they had been bored.

In 1997, Rev. Tom Fleischmann and his family moved to the area so that he could serve as the Chaplain for the County Nursing Facilities. He has been fondly appreciated by the residents of the homes and their immediate families for his down to earth conversation style and his sense of humor. He seems to always have a new joke to tell! Our Board of Stewardship and Missions has continued to place his ministry high on our priority list. Pastor Fleischmann and his wife, Karen, now volunteer as Youth Directors for St. John. Through Rev. Fleischmann, our school has made a strong contact with the residents who were at the Comprehensive Health Center and are now at Rocky Knoll. The children send greeting cards, sing for special chapel services and help with the annual Vacation Bible School.

During the fall term in 1997, the students and some of the teachers were very excited as they followed the exploits of the Green Bay Packers football team. It was easy to get Mrs. Schallock, Mr. Wegner and Mr. Laska talking by bringing up the Packers. Everyone celebrated when they won the Super Bowl in January of 1998. Packer banners and pictures hung everywhere.

In 1997, the LCMS celebrated its 150th Anniversary. There were events in St. Louis as well as throughout the Synod. St. John hosted a Fall Circuit Convocation that included a dinner and worship service. Choir members from different congregations took part and our Confirmation class put on a skit. Each of the churches in our Circuit brought along a picture display. For the next seven years, a banner hung outside our gymnasium to commemorate the anniversary.

Strategic Planning Leads to Changes

In early 1998, with the help of District Executive Rev. Jeff Schubert and later with Rev. Robert Hoehner, St. John and Emmanuel began an ongoing process of "strategic planning". Rev. Osladil wanted the leadership to begin to focus upon various aspects of ministry that could be improved. Out of the first session, our congregation adopted a new mission statement, "We exist to strengthen our faith through Word and Sacrament and to proclaim Christ to each other and the world."

When the Synod began a new program called Distance Education Leading to Ordination (DELTO), Lay Minister Laska enrolled in the very first class through Concordia Seminary St. Louis. At that point we began to call him "Deacon Laska" since he had become a licensed deacon in the LCMS. Rev. Osladil became his mentor for all local field work. Rev. Osladil liked to say he was the "tor-mentor"! Deacon Laska traveled to Concordia Mequon for classes and later to St. Louis. The congregation helped with his tuition and began to reap the rewards of his training.

Deacon Laska took on another challenge shortly after that when Emmanuel asked if they could share in the services of the Deacon. An arrangement was made that Deacon Laska would still spend 70% of his time with St. John congregation. He also spent part of his time with our Youth Group. It seemed like they were always working to raise money to go to another National Gathering. These gatherings take place every three years and are held in large cities that can accommodate the size of the group which has grown to over 35,000. Our youth conduct numerous fund raisers to accumulate the necessary money for travel, housing, and conference expense. Some of the recent cities have included San Antonio (1995), Atlanta (1998), New Orleans (2001), and Orlando (2004). The youth make friends with people from all over the world, get to hear inspirational speakers, and are part of a massive Communion service.

For many years, the pastors in our Circuit conducted a pulpit exchange during the Lenten season. There would be a common theme and each pastor was responsible for a single sermon which he would deliver at each of the other congregations. As a result, each congregation would hear from a number of guest pastors throughout Lent. The Circuit pastors have always gathered once per month for a meeting which they call a “winkel”. Loosely translated it means a conversation in the corner. It dates back to when the various Circuits would huddle in a corner at District Conventions to decide how they wanted to vote on key issues or who should be elected to office. The “winkel” meeting is hosted by a different pastor each month and it gives the pastors time to talk about items of concern and to participate in joint study of Scripture. They also have lunch together. Before there were so many restaurants as we have today, the ladies of the host congregation would provide a sumptuous feast for the pastors that became a primary reason for faithful attendance at the “winkel”. The Circuit counselor serves as an elected official of the Synod and immediately comes to the aid of a congregation in the Circuit that is vacant or experiencing problems with their pastor. Our current Circuit #9 consists of St. John, Sherman Center; Emmanuel, Adell; St. John, New Fane; Pilgrim, West Bend; St. John, Fredonia; Immanuel, Town of Scott; St. Stephen, Batavia; and St. Andrew, West Bend.

After serving as a teacher with us for just one year, Mr. Hueller and his family moved back to Joplin, Missouri, where they still kept in contact with many friends. Again we needed to find a capable teacher and God continued to be faithful by guiding the congregation to call Mr. Greg Kohler. He and his wife, Sharon, arrived in summer of 1998. They had lived in Chicago where he taught in another Lutheran School. They were eager to move back to Wisconsin to reunite with their extended families. Mr. Kohler graduated from St. John Lutheran School in West Bend where his mother serves as a teacher. The Kohlers have made excellent use of the teacherage that is part of his teacher compensation. The house is now boisterous with activity from the three children that have been born to them since they came. Mr. Kohler loves to “talk sports” and is a golfing enthusiast. He has organized the annual golf outing each year. Some of his students successfully encouraged him to become a NASCAR fan.

The home that Mr. Wegner and his family have lived in is always called the “parsonage” even though it has only been occupied by principals since it was built. He and his family have taken good care of it. In 1998, the Trustees determined that it needed new siding and a new roof. The plan was to tear off the old siding and old roof on Labor Day weekend and see how much could get done. At one point there were 25 volunteers working at the same time. Even though

some complications came up when it was discovered that many of the roof boards also needed to be replaced, the project was finished quickly without any rain getting into the house.

There are two annual basketball tournaments that our school hosts each year, an “A” team girls tournament and a “B” team boys tournament. On those two weekends, hundreds of people fill our gymnasium and the Parent-Teacher League (PTL) keeps the crowd content with concession sales. Parents volunteer for scorekeeping and hall monitoring. These tournaments raise a lot of money for special projects in our school, which has helped to ease the burden upon our church budget to pay for those items.

The PTL has always been very active as they hold monthly meetings and many special family events throughout the school year such as fall bonfire, roller skating, Christmas caroling, Kid’s Christmas Shop, Chili Dinner, Craft Sale, and Recognition Night. The PTL has also hosted the annual picnic every year for a long time. The congregation has always appreciated the very active role played by parents who are paying full tuition as non-members. These parents have often been officers of the PTL.

The congregation has maintained a special connection with the outreach to Hispanics in Wisconsin especially with Primera Iglesia in Racine. This mission congregation of our South Wisconsin District has grown under the leadership of Pastor Pedro Lopez. After Pastor Lopez preached at our Mission Festival in 1999, we conducted a food drive and purchased Christmas gifts for the people in his ministry. Each year since then, we have had a “Tree of Love” in our narthex hung with ornaments labeled with names of people being reached by the ministry at Primera Iglesia. Our members then purchase gifts that Pastor Lopez can distribute in his ministry. Now that Louis Beltran has been contracted by our District in May of 2005 to minister to Hispanics in our own county, it is likely that our response and outreach to Hispanics will increase.

Piece by piece the new kitchen began to take shape once the new tile floor was installed. Nancy Schmitz, our secretary, worked with a group of congregation women who prioritized equipment that would be needed. They began to hold a series of small fundraisers to buy the equipment. The finished kitchen that we are blessed to have was a labor of love for over five years. It has become a terrific asset for our church dinners and for our school hot lunch program. Each morning the Random Lake Public School system delivers our school lunch in steam pans and trays so that food can be served fresh and hot. The children like being able to get seconds. Once the new kitchen was functioning, the old kitchen was converted into an art supply room for the school.

In September of 2000, Deacon Laska began a Men’s Bible Breakfast at the Midway Restaurant on Highway 57. Gus Jentsch was the only one who showed up for the first study. He and Deacon Laska prayed that God would bless the study. The following week another man showed up so they figured God had answered their prayers by doubling the attendance. Eventually a group of 8-12 regulars gave the Bible Study real stability. For the first four years they would study the life of a different man in the Bible each week. Now they have been going through entire books of the Bible a chapter at a time. The men arrive before 6:30 every

Thursday and meet in the back room for breakfast, good fellowship and lively conversation. The same waitress, Lynn, has been serving them for the whole time and joins in their friendly banter.

After Mrs. Laska left her volunteer position in our school library to work at Lutheran High, she also had to eventually give up teaching her Thursday Women's Bible Study. Deacon Laska picked up where she left off in 2000 by starting a class for men and women of both congregations at the same weekly time. The class studies the upcoming scripture readings for the Sunday Divine Service. Even though the dual parish no longer exists, the class continues today and Rev. Laska and Rev. Frese take turns teaching it.

The library volunteer position was filled in two ways. Mrs. Lori Rief, whose son Noah is in the school, took over the day to day checking in of returned books and meeting with each class once per week. Rich Forshee, husband of our kindergarten teacher, took over the purchasing of new books and he and Mrs. Braun set up the computer-aided system called "Accelerated Reader". This system encouraged our students to read more books and to take a computer-based test to earn points. The children responded to it very well.

One of the advantages of a country school is that there is lots of room for outdoor activities. A favorite game at recess is kickball where the boys and girls play together and class rivalry reigns supreme. The field north of the church has hosted football matches with Mr. Wegner occasionally playing quarterback. In winter the snow piles off the parking lots provide endless games. The snow that falls on our parking areas does not stay there very long. Sidewalks and asphalt are quickly cleaned by Jim Schulz, Clem Broetzmann, and Vorpahl farms, Inc. Snow sculptures and forts are often noticed by the end of recess. The paved lots are great for shooting basketball and preparing for the annual SALSA track meet. One of the prized possessions of our track team is a portable high jump pit. Upper grade students take turns serving as safety patrol so that children are not harmed by passing cars.

For the first hundred years, most of our members worked on their own family farm. Now our membership has a wide range of careers. Many commute to the greater Milwaukee area. The largest employer in our area, Times Printing, is the workplace for many of our members. Times has been generous also by providing numerous printing projects at little or no cost. The congregation has also benefited from the excellent news coverage given by the weekly Random Lake newspaper, The Sounder. Many of our events were well covered by stories and pictures. The Sounder makes it impossible to live in the area without knowing about St. John Lutheran Church and School.

LIFT Campaign

God has moved upon many people to include the congregation and the school in their estate planning. Those gifts have helped to fund special projects, make important purchases, retire debt and start new ministry outreach. A gift from the Bill and Norma Schmidt estate that was earmarked for providing handicap access to the church was a catalyst to begin earnest plans for a remodeling and addition project. The congregation felt strongly about retiring the old mortgage first. A Capital Campaign was initiated in 2000 that was aptly named LIFT which stood for Living In Faith Together. The name had a double meaning in that we intended that a lift be installed in the church to fulfill the dream of the Schmidt family and many others. For the

first time ever, the congregation decided to secure the services of a professional fund raising consultant, Capital Funding, which was an agency of the Synod. Many meetings were held over the ensuing four months and congregation leaders were the first who made pledges. Others followed and God received all the glory. Pledges exceeded \$400,000 and excitement began to grow. We still needed to be patient as some pledges were made to be spread over the next three years. It was the hope of leaders that we would be able to use the services of Laborers For Christ to keep our construction costs down. Many ideas were gathered and a basic plan was presented that remained in an undeveloped form for several years until the old mortgage was retired. That plan was to add onto both sides of the narthex with two offices on the west and a meeting room on the east. The original plan called for the lift to be on the west side. One of the plan problems is that new bathroom space was also needed, but a good way to fit that in had not been found. No one should be surprised that the eventual plan was very different from the original plan. A trip to the vault room in the school basement would reveal numerous blueprints of projects that had been modified before the project was built. Church leaders know that it is cheaper to draw new plans than to make major errors in building. This careful approach has benefited the long term needs of the congregation and school ministry.

In February of 2000, several of our members went on a short term mission trip to Ecuador. Deacon Laska's daughter, Bethany, had already gone on two trips like it before. This time her father went along and was also accompanied by Don Goedde, who was head Elder. Their work in Ecuador was focused upon needed repairs to a Mission House in Quito, Ecuador. Don and Deacon Laska did extensive concrete work using an ancient diesel fired cement mixer and Bethany worked with children in an orphanage. They came back with many stories of how the Gospel is being shared in the mountainous regions of South America. Later that same summer, Rev. Braun led a group of Concordia students on a short term mission trip to Mexico. Some of our youth and his own children went along. They helped to build a small home for a family in Mexico, similar to our "Habitat For Humanity" projects in the United States.

Dennis Hartmann introduced a new requirement that was added to our Voters' meetings in 2000 when it was agreed that all school parents must be active voters in order to receive the benefit of being exempt from tuition. Many school parents have been active in the Voters' Meetings, but through this new requirement all families could be made aware of the significant cost of educating children in our school and thereby be more supportive financially.

In the spring of 2000, the well that had served our school and west teacherage for many years began to fail and it was time for a new well to be drilled. Old pictures of the area in front of the teacherage show a hand pump that was used to water the horses that brought members to church before the automobile was invented. The new well is located at the northwest end of the teacherage lot and draws excellent water volume and quality. Ray Habeck led the trustees in replacing several other components to our water system in the school at the same time.

The Board of Stewardship and Missions started a summer program in 2000 called "Friendship Sundays". Several times a summer they have provided snacks and refreshments after worship to encourage people to linger and talk. During our 150th Anniversary Year, these special Sundays have been connected with the Sundays when special guest preachers were featured. All of this has helped to increase the bonds of friendship in our congregation.

One of the ideas that the congregation has used to call attention to our times of budget shortfall is the use of special “Catch-up Sunday” envelopes. These have been distributed several times each year to encourage extra giving toward our budget. The effort to promote the giving has always been worthwhile. During the summers of 1999-2002, Don and Jean Vetter led a group of volunteers, who worked in concession stands at Milwaukee Brewer baseball games to raise money for our budget. The group of volunteers was able to raise thousands of dollars through hard work. Volunteers included people from age 21 to the late 70’s. The opening of the new Miller Park brought in a large number of fans, with the Cubs games being the best to work because of the size of the crowd and the size of their tips.

Ever since Victor Pannier passed away in 1997, his family reflected on a suitable use for his memorial funds. Several years later a wonderful project seemed appropriate. Victor had always been outspoken in witnessing, so the decision was made to erect a large illuminated informational sign in front of the gymnasium as a witness to those who drive by. It has been used to announce school and church special events and also it has displayed clever phrases with spiritual connotations. Mr. Wegner has enjoyed changing the messages and has received input from passers-by.

In fall of 2000, Mrs. Barb Schallock left to take a position with the preschool in Adell. It gave her a chance to work under Ellen Anger who had once been a student teacher with Mrs. Schallock at our school. Mr. Wegner’s daughter, Janette, had recently completed her teaching degree at Concordia River Forest and she was contracted to teach 3rd and 4th grade. Ms. Wegner brought substantial energy to the classroom and was a natural as a coach. Her dedication and work ethic were highly appreciated.

By 2001, Deacon Laska had continued his DELTO studies and advanced into the “Vicar” stage. The congregation tried to get accustomed to this new title, but he was still “Greg” to many who worked closely with him. He began to assist Rev. Osladil with more of the hospital visits, especially as they both were covering the dual parish. Sometimes on the same day we could have members in hospitals in Sheboygan, Milwaukee and West Bend.

During the summer of 2001, a real shuffle took place within our staff. Ms. Janette Wegner had been contracted to teach for just one year. The congregation called a new graduate from Concordia, Mrs. Keri Gosa, to teach in the 3rd and 4th grade classroom. But later in the summer, Rev. Braun accepted a Call to be the Pastor at a church in Flower Mound, Texas. This left the congregation with very short notice to replace his wife, Linda Braun, who had been teaching in our 1st and 2nd grade class. Mrs. Gosa was then asked to teach the 1st and 2nd grade class instead and the congregation contracted with Janette Wegner to teach one more year in the 3rd and 4th grade class.

Sheboygan Area Lutheran High School undertook a major expansion plan during 2001. The gymnasium was made nearly 50% bigger in order to accommodate several physical education classes at a time, to allow several sports teams to practice at the same time, and to be able to host major gatherings, including the graduation service. The school enrollment was now averaging nearly 60 students per grade and had come a long way since the humble beginning in

the rented building at Ebenezer! The wrap-around plan for classrooms was also completed and featured a high-tech classroom for distance learning. LHS students could take classes in distance learning through Concordia Mequon and get full college credit.

A new Lutheran High School in the area opened its doors for the fall term in 2001. Located in Jackson, Wisconsin, the school is under the direction of Dr. Cary Stelmachowicz, one of our own members. Several of our high school youth now attend Living Word and find themselves competing in athletics with their former classmates from Sherman Center who are at Sheboygan Area Lutheran High School. This new high school has grown quickly under Dr. Stelmachowicz and the capable leadership of many lay people.

Everyone knows the importance of the date September 11, 2001. The TV monitors in our school were on all day as the tragic events of terrorism against our country began to unfold. Rev. Osladil and Vicar Laska led a prayer vigil that evening in church. Like all other churches in the nation, our attendance on the Sundays that followed went up significantly and the talk among our young men turned to the prospect of enlisting to serve their country. In our regular Prayer of the Church on Sundays we have included by name those young men from our congregation and immediate circle of friends and family who have placed their own life at risk by serving in the military. A bulletin board in our narthex displays pictures and addresses of each of them so that they remain in our prayers. This same practice was followed by the congregation during prior times of war and international conflict. God has already answered those prayers by bringing Nathan Preder and Tim Fleischmann home safely. When each man was finally able to join us again in worship, the congregation welcomed them with hearty handshakes and a long ovation before our Divine Service began.

Only a month after the 9/11 tragedy our congregation suffered a private grief of its own. Our long-time school and church secretary, Nancy Schmitz, passed away peacefully in her sleep. Because her death was so unexpected, Pastor Osladil, Vicar Laska, and each of the teachers spent time with the students during the following days to talk about the reality of death and the special promise of heaven through our faith in Christ. Nancy was a treasured person on our staff who gave many extra hours to her ministry because she loved the children so much. Nearly every child at one time or another became sick during school or scraped a knee on the playground. Nancy immediately became "Mom" to each of them until a parent could arrive. The way she handled the hot lunch program and coordinated the volunteers made everyone feel like we were in Nancy's kitchen at her home. Her smile and constant love and encouragement showed her inner faith that responded to the love that Jesus had for her. Her life and work in our school and church ministry demonstrated that "Whatever you do for the least of my brothers, that you do unto Me." (Matthew 25:40)

Mrs. Jodi Pierce, a member of Emmanuel in Adell, was hired as the new secretary. In January of 2003, a change was made with the responsibilities of secretaries. Mrs. Pierce relinquished the church secretary duties to Mrs. Sandy Preder in order to free up time to focus on the school secretary duties. Mrs. Preder had served as our bulletin secretary since 1980. Sandy learned how to use the computer very quickly and Jodi appreciated being able to concentrate on the school business. Because Sandy has been one of our church organists for a long time, she has been especially helpful to the Pastor in hymn selection for our services. In summer of 2004,

Mrs. Pierce decided that she would like to go back to part time child care work and Mrs. Nancy Ernst was hired as the new school secretary. She brought to the job many years of experience as a secretary, her experience as one of our key parent volunteers and her natural experience as a Mom. Needless to say, she fit right in!

Rev. Osladil continued to work with the leadership of both parishes during 2001 and 2002 and many drafts of a new dual parish covenant were discussed. It was brought up that we were the largest dual parish in the Synod. Most other parishes that shared a pastor were very small. The more the leaders talked about it, the more the discussion turned toward considering a bold move. At a time when small congregations of other denominations in our area were merging or beginning to share a pastor, we were led by the Holy Spirit to move toward rescinding the dual parish agreement in favor of separate pastors for each parish. On April 28, 2002 a vote was taken during separate Voters' meetings at each church. The voter turnout was the largest ever at both places. The final decision was clear when Sherman Center voted 71-23 and Adell voted 48-36 to become separate. Proper respect and consideration were given to Rev. Osladil because we knew that his Call would remain in effect for as long as he wanted to stay. The dual parish dissolution would only happen when he would take a Call to one of the two churches or be called elsewhere.

The playground that had been built by volunteers with used telephone poles in 1988 had become obsolete by 2002. Plans were made for a new "state of the art" playground that had all of the modern safety features yet could encourage creative play on the part of our children. With donations from our members that were matched by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, a new playground was completed behind the school. Again, dozens of volunteers showed up to put it all together. The volunteers were organized into teams and there were enough wrenches, screwdrivers and drills brought to the project to fill a hardware store. This playground is expected to meet our needs for many years. Also, in 2002, another large project was completed that was overdue, the replacement of our school roof. The most interesting part of that project was watching many bats come out of cracks in the eaves. The new roof work has sealed those holes, so the bats had to find a new home.

With the beginning of the fall term in 2002, Mrs. Adrienne Scott was called to replace Janette Wegner. Mrs. Gosa was moved up to teach 3rd and 4th grade and Mrs. Scott taught 1st and 2nd grade. Mrs. Scott's husband, Phil, was from England and we enjoyed whenever he had some British chocolate to share. Because of his medical background, he taught the entire staff how to do CPR and first aid procedures. The 1st and 2nd grade classroom was often changed into something unusual when Mrs. Scott taught special themes, especially an extended section on dinosaurs. Mrs. Scott also took on the role of Youth Director and showed a great level of organization and maturity in all that she did.

Our Media Center became fully operational in September of 2002 when new Dell computers were purchased. This gave our school enough computers so that an entire classroom can use the Media Center at one time and each child can be at their own computer. Dale Becker was chairman of the Board of Education and he was determined to see the new technology used by our staff and students. He spent many hours working on the hook-up of our network and loading software. We also obtained an internet connection which opened the doors of learning to

the rest of the world. After several years of getting accustomed to our new technology, Mrs. Gosa has become our staff computer person and has worked closely with our internet provider and consultants. She and her husband, Dave, who is a Lutheran School teacher at St. John in Mayville, designed our own website during the summer of 2004 and it has had over 1000 visitors to the site. Anyone can keep up to date with what is happening at St. John by going to www.stjohnrandomlake.org and viewing recent entries. Mrs. Gosa has also carried some other extracurricular duties such as coaching girls' volleyball and our school forensics team.

Church Building Centennial

On November 2, 2002, the congregation celebrated an important anniversary. The beautiful brick church building had been standing as a place for the faithful administration of Word and Sacraments for 100 years! A celebration service took place with former pastor, Rev. Robert Lindau, preaching. An anniversary book was published that featured a pictorial and narrative tour of our church building. It included facts and figures of the original construction along with a detailed explanation of the many architectural and spiritual features of the building with its furnishings.

Dual Parish Ends and Vicar Laska Becomes Pastor

In December of 2002, Rev. Osladil announced that he was leaving to accept a call to the Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer in Sheboygan. He preached his last sermon in January and the congregation knew that big challenges lay ahead. The resolution that had passed 9 months before would finally go into effect. The dual parish was officially over. It can be said that the working relationship with the brothers and sisters in Christ at Emmanuel over the prior 45 years was excellent and the dissolution was done without any hard feelings. Both congregations were convinced that they were on a new track for reaching the lost in our community. Some decisions fell into place quickly as the Emmanuel voters decided to ask for a new graduate from the Ft. Wayne Seminary spring class. Sherman Center voters asked Rev. Don Johnson to be the Vacancy Pastor assisted by Vicar Laska who was scheduled to be ordained in the fall. At the April Voters' meeting the decision was made to call Vicar Laska to be the fourteenth Pastor of St. John upon completion of his certification for ordination from Concordia St. Louis.

Vicar Laska was certified at a ceremony at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis in early September as part of their very first DELTO graduating class. He was ordained at his home congregation, Trinity in Sheboygan, on September 27, 2003. Rev. Dr. Luke Schnake preached at his ordination. He had been Rev. Laska's pastor at the time when his lay ministry study first began. Rev. Laska's daughters, Bethany and Faith, sang a duet at the ordination. The installation of Rev. Laska took place the next day at St. John with Rev. Bryan O'Connor, former pastor of St. Andrew, West Bend as the preacher.

One of Rev. Laska's first adult confirmands was Lyle Maas. Everyone knows about Lyle's wonderful smile and how he has been one of our most faithful members. At the end of each Divine Service he shows his cross to people in the narthex. Using a specially designed curriculum from Bethesda for developmentally disabled adults, Rev. Laska was convinced that Lyle had sufficient understanding of the Lord's Supper and the six chief parts of Luther's Small

Catechism to be confirmed and to be invited to receive the Body and Blood of Christ. In Lyle Maas we can see the simple faith that Jesus said we must all have!

After 42 years of serving as our Congregation Treasurer, Walt Friedemann retired from his position at the end of 2003. He desired to spend more time taking care of his wife Marlene. His father-in-law, Arno Stolper, had held the position of treasurer for 27 years before Walt! During Walt's years of service, the staff and payroll had grown substantially as did the number of regular bills to be paid. One of the reasons that Walt could do his job, is that the people of St. John have always given back to the Lord in full appreciation for what the Lord has done for them. The congregation honored Walt with a gift of a large, hand-crafted nativity set made by Bob Krueger. Walt has had a collection of nativity sets and this one was very special to him as he had always been very special to us. As we expected, the work that Walt did could not be replaced by one person and now Jean Vetter, Jenny Backhaus and Jeanne Reseburg share the responsibilities.

Church Addition and Remodeling

During the summer of 2003, the Building Committee began to refine the plans for a major remodeling. The original plan to use Laborers for Christ was no longer looking like it would save us money and serious doubts were raised about what we could afford. Added to the plan was the need to replace the church roof. Many members questioned the need for two new offices on the west side of the narthex as the original blueprints were drawn. When Rev. Laska expressed his desire to remain in his office in the school and that it was possible to convert a storeroom next to his office into a secretary's office, everything seemed to fall into place. By dropping the two new offices over \$100,000 was saved in projected cost. The new plan that was finally adopted included a remodeled narthex and entrance stairs, two new handicap access bathrooms, a lift and a new multi-purpose room which has been named the "Friendship Room".

The groundbreaking took place in early January of 2004 and then the demolition began. The entire concrete floor of the narthex was ripped out in one day. The men had fun playing with jackhammers and heavy equipment and the women served by feeding the workers. Over the next six weeks, the congregation met for Divine Service in the gymnasium, but everyone was willing to be patient. The general contractor, Pankow, out of Plymouth, was accommodating and allowed our volunteers to do as much of the work as possible to save on the final cost. Besides the demolition, our volunteers did all of the painting. In the middle of the project, a decision was made to replace all of the carpeting in the church. A donor offered to cover the entire cost. A review was also done to determine if the communion rail should be moved down since the carpet was being changed but the Voters elected to keep it where it had been since 1955. The cornerstone was inserted into the addition and the dedication of the new space took place at our outdoor worship service on September 12, 2004. Final cost of the project including the new roof was over \$300,000. Even though we needed to secure a mortgage to complete the project, the Capital Campaign called Living In Faith Together (LIFT) had enabled us to pay off the old mortgage, do other substantial improvements including new boilers in the school, and address a variety of bills. Over \$500,000 in gifts, bequests and special appeals had come in through that campaign.

In 2004, we began the second round of national accreditation as a Lutheran Elementary School and worked through the renewal process. Again, we had numerous meetings to establish goals and strategies for continued academic excellence. All staff members and many congregation leaders were involved along with some of our tuition parents. The “Visitation Team” completed their work in March of 2005 and we now are approved as a nationally accredited school of the LCMS for our second seven year period.

In August of 2004, our oldest living member, Kaetchen Wagner, celebrated her 100th birthday. Some of her relatives from Germany came for the event. The Sounder had a front page story about her life and faith. Only one month later there was cause for celebration again as her heavenly Father called her home to eternal life in Christ. Her passing was marked in the same way that we have shared our grief when others have gone on to heaven. Our steeple bell was tolled to correspond with the number of years she had been on this earth. The service at St. John has been called, “Celebration To Eternal Life” for a long time rather than a “funeral” service. It expresses our sure and certain hope of the promise of eternal life and the resurrection of all flesh at the Second Coming of Christ. After a graveside committal, there is usually a lunch served by the ladies of the congregation. Most people stay for the meal to tell stories about the deceased loved one, to visit, and to eat some of the best desserts in the county.

Under the supervision of cemetery sexton, Dick Horn, our cemetery has undergone a number of improvements. A new section was added for those who choose cremation, since not as much space is needed per plot. A crew reset many of the stones that had begun to tilt so that the rows looked straight again. In 2005, Willis Stolper took on the meticulous job of drawing a complete map of the cemetery. This was especially challenging since some of the stones have been worn from the weather and were hard to read. The older stones are all in German so Willis’ expertise in the German language helped with that as well. For the last few years, the lawn mowing and trimming have been done by volunteers organized by Mr. Wegner. This saves the congregation over two thousand dollars per year. Mr. Wegner, Mr. Kohler, Mr. Broetzmann, and the Tom Spieker family do most of the mowing. A new mower was donated by members that makes the job easier to complete.

The new Friendship Room has already been used in so many ways that our members often wonder how we got by without it. The Sunday Bible Study taught by Rev. Laska has doubled in attendance because of the high visibility and placement of the study between services. The room has been used for meetings, mid-week catechism instruction, after church friendship gatherings, bridal room, “cry room” during services, wedding receptions, weekday Bible Study, Mission Circle, and church library. The relocation of the beautiful “Eternal Eye of God” stained glass window is a prominent feature of the room and gives the room the feel of a chapel.

Our remodeling also opened the alcove area for special use as we saw during Christmas of 2004 when the decorating committee displayed the nativity scene there. It is currently being used by the 150th Anniversary Committee to highlight the special banner of our theme along with pictures and the historic model of the church and school buildings. This display depicts the church in the early 1900’s, and was constructed many years ago by Rudy Weinhold, one of our members.

Late in the summer of 2004, Mrs. Forshee accepted a call to be Music Director at Trinity, Freistadt, under our former Pastor, Rev. Robert Lindau. It was sad to see her leave because she had done a fine job teaching and working with our choirs, operettas, and worship services. During her time at St. John she had also mentored a number of student teachers from Concordia.

Her departure left us with big shoes to fill and we knew that it would not be possible with such a short amount of time available to get an exact replacement of talents. A young woman came to us at the last minute from Concordia Mequon. Ms. Erin Malenke, whose home was in Alabama, was contracted to teach kindergarten and work with the school choir and music classes. Ms. Malenke was not formally trained in music, so Mrs. Marlene Broetzmann continued her volunteerism by serving as our Choir Director until a replacement is found.

Beyond the work of our local congregation, many things have been changing with our Synod leadership. Our Synod has been in a contentious state for the last 35 years ever since an event called "Seminex" took place on the St. Louis seminary campus. Though our Synod has always been considered a conservative denomination, there are a range of conservative to liberal points of view regarding theology and practice within the Synod. Each of the conventions held every three years has marked how the points of view have changed one way or the other. After the death of the LCMS President, Dr. Barry, just before the 2001 convention, a great deal of political maneuvering had taken place. The election of Dr. Jerry Kieschnick from the Texas District received raves by some and others saw his election as a turning point. In the aftermath of the 9/11 tragedy, a prayer service took place at Yankee Stadium in New York City that included the LCMS Atlantic District President Dr. David Behnke. Many were critical of his participation and claimed that it violated rules against unionism and syncretism. President Kieschnick had given his approval to Dr. Behnke's participation because he considered it to be a stated exception to the standard rules of our clergy joining with the clergy of other faiths. Over the ensuing years, the Synod leadership has become embroiled in that controversy and others. At the 2004 Convention, Dr. Kieschnick was reelected and yet many of the issues that divided the Synod were so closely split that one could not say that there is a trend in one direction or another. Throughout these times, Word and Sacrament ministry has continued at St. John and our faithful members entrust the issues of controversy to the Lord's good guidance and direction. Our congregation, its pastors, and teachers have always adhered to our historic Lutheran confessional documents. Nothing can sway our ministry from the Word of God rightly preached and the Sacraments properly administered!

At the end of 2004, another long-term volunteer retired from his position. Our Congregation Chairman, Don Pfeifer had been in that office for thirteen years. For Don and the many volunteers from years past who finally completed their time of service the Scripture says "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." (Matthew 25:21 KJV) Another name came forward from the lips of many to replace Don. Dale Becker, who had been our Board of Education Chairman, was elected and his leadership skills were immediately appreciated.

Our custodian, Harriet Jentsch also retired at the end of the year. Her heart was with the children but she felt it was time for someone younger to take on the day to day tasks of keeping our school clean. Randy Forst began to help with the custodial work in January of 2005 assisted Mrs. Sharon Kohler. In 2005, the congregation also recognized the 35 years of service in the

teaching ministry by our Principal, Richard Wegner, and he was presented with a commemorative plaque.

Every one of our pastors has brought his own style of ministry to us along with his response to God's call to serve faithfully through the right teaching of the Word and proper administration of the Sacraments. Rev. Laska begins every service with his "Good morning, and how are you? All members respond to this by saying, "Blessed by the Lord". That has already become so engrained that many have said they respond with the same answer now to anyone who asks "How are you?" Rev. Laska also likes to conclude every meeting with the singing of the common doxology to praise our Triune God and to also help us understand that all of our blessings flow from Him and not from our good works. Rev. Laska's Confirmation services the last three years have featured statements of faith on the part of the new confirmands and his weekly Divine Service uses old hymnal, new hymnal, printed order of worship and some new hymns. This is in keeping with a vote taken at the Voters' meeting in April of 2002 that showed a preference for a blended service and some variety of music.

One of the advantages of not being in a dual parish is that we are now able to plan worship times without having to compromise on our preferences. The addition of an early morning Sunday service along with mid week services has enabled our overall worship attendance to increase 30% over what it had been four years before. Our quarterly Voters' meetings now take place between services and somehow all the business that needs to be conducted is completed within the hour.

Addition of Preschool and Christian Child Care

When Emmanuel Adell announced the closing of their preschool during the middle of the summer of 2004, our Board of Education charged Mr. Wegner with the task of establishing a preschool and childcare facility at St. John within a year. The first step taken was to move our kindergarten classroom upstairs to where the Music Room had been. This enabled changes to take place in the former kindergarten room with equipment and furnishings. By the end of the 2004-2005 school year, everything was ready for the fall term, including the hiring of Mrs. Barb Schallock to run the preschool. We welcome Mrs. Schallock back to our staff after her five years of experience in the preschool and child care field. Fourteen students are already enrolled for the first year and we expect this new educational opportunity to be a wonderful feeder for the rest of our school. We can now say that we have Lutheran education available from cradle to grave with preschool through grade 8, Sunday School, Lutheran High School at Sheboygan or Jackson, Youth Bible Study, College at Concordia University in Mequon, and continuing adult education through our various Bible studies.

Near the end of the spring term in 2005, two of our teachers announced that they were leaving. Ms. Erin Malenke decided to move back to her home area in Alabama and Mrs. Adrienne Scott, her husband and son Evan needed to move to the Milwaukee area to fulfill her husband's employer's requirement that Phil be closer to the hospital when he is on call. The Board of Education considered many candidates and recommended to the Voters that two new teacher candidates be placed in our school. Melissa Pratt comes from Houston, Texas and is a graduate of Concordia Seward. She will teach in the 1st and 2nd grade classroom, and handle departmental instruction of music in grades 1-8. Her husband, David, has been called to teach

and serve as the Technology Director at Sheboygan Area Lutheran High School. Called to teach kindergarten, serve as departmental instructor for art and help with the Youth Group is Katie Prah, a graduate of Concordia River Forest. She is the daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Larry Prah in Grafton, Wisconsin.

150th Anniversary Year

During fall of 2004, an Anniversary Committee was formed to plan the celebration of our 150th Anniversary. Ron Vorpahl was named Chairman and the committee developed plans that would help us celebrate throughout the year. A brochure was printed that highlighted events of preaching by former pastors and sons of the congregation, a German Historic Service, a Celebration Dinner and Festival Service on August 7. Preaching at the Festival Service was Rev. Randolph Raasch, from First Immanuel Lutheran Church in Cedarburg. A banner designed and sewn by Jeanne Reseburg was hung in the narthex alcove featuring the theme, "Our Heritage of Faith". The committee gathered many pictures to be displayed in the narthex, used in this book and set in a power point presentation. Since Pastors Huebner and Ries had written detailed historical accounts of the congregation for past anniversaries, Rev. Laska set to the task of editing their work and honoring God's love for us by updating the congregation's history. The practice of passing the history of ministry from one generation to another is important, but not as important as the passing of the faith to the next generation. The Apostle Paul said it this way to young Pastor Timothy, "You've heard my message, and it's been confirmed by many witnesses. Entrust this message to faithful individuals who will be competent to teach others." (2 Timothy 2:2 GW)

This historical account is respectfully dedicated on the 25th day of June in the Year of our Lord 2005, the exact 475th Anniversary of the Presentation of the Augsburg Confession and the 425th Anniversary of the publication of the Book of Concord. The history written by Rev. Dr. Edmund Huebner on the occasion of the 90th Anniversary and the updated history written by Rev. Herbert Ries on the occasion of the 125th Anniversary were instrumental in providing this orderly account of the 150 years of life and ministry of St. John Lutheran Church and School. Grateful thanks are given to the friendship, advice and input given by Willis Stolper in preparing this account. Many thanks to my patient wife, Roberta, who has allowed me to take the many hours of time to complete this special project. "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him, all creatures here below. Praise Him above, ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen."

Rev. Greg Laska

HISTORICAL LISTING OF CHURCH WORKERS AT ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL

PASTORS

Rev. W. Kolb	1855-1861	6 years
Rev. Multanovsky (Vacancy)	1861-1863	2 years
Rev. Brose	1863-1866	3 years
Rev. List	1866-1873	7 years
Rev. Philip Wambsganss	1874-1895	21 years
Rev. Edmund Huebner	1896-1941	45 years
Rev. Gerhard Huebner	1941-1945	4 years
Rev. G. Meyer	1945-1952	7 years
Rev. Edmund Zapf	1952-1958	6 years
Rev. Richard Bolin	1958-1961	3 years
Rev. Martin Lutz	1961-1965	4 years
Rev. Herbert Ries	1965-1983	18 years
Rev. Nicolaus (Vacancy)	1983-1984	1 year
Rev. Robert Lindau	1984-1996	12 years
Rev. Bryan Osladil	1997-2003	6 years
Rev. Greg Laska	1995-Present	10 years

TEACHERS

Rev. W. Kolb	1855-1861	6 years
Rev. Multanonovsky	1861-1863	2 years
Rev. Brose	1863-1866	3 years
Rev. List	1866-1867	1 year
T. J. Brater	1867-1873	6 years
A. Ehrmann	1874-1889	15 years
Carl Peters	1890-1936	46 years
Elmer T. Mueller	1936-1944	8 years
Edward Kurth	1944-1967	23 years
Sophia Neumann	1955-1956	1 year
William Osius	1956-1959	3 years
Marlene Broetzmann	1959-69,1978-96	28 years
Colleen Kohl	1967-(half yr.)	.5 year
MaryAnn Zuengler	1967-(half yr.)	.5 year
Thomas Weinz	1968-(half yr.)	.5 year
Anton Peatow	1968-1974	6 years
Mrs. Kenneth Berth	1969-1970	1 year
Joy Kiekhaefer	1970-1972	2 years
David Haberbosch	1972-1978	6 years
Cora Robinson	1974-1976	2 years
Frank Wegner	1974-1981	7 years
Marcia Weinhold	1978-(half yr.)	.5 year
Timothy Zastrow	1979-1997	18 years
Richard Wegner	1981-Present	24 years
Barbara Schallock	1983-2000, 2005-Present	17 years
Chris Lindau	1986-1996	10 years
Marlene Forshee	1996-2004	8 years
Carrie Guenther	1997-(half yr.)	.5 year
Linda Braun	1997-2001	4 years
Dan Hueller	1997-1998	1 year
Greg Kohler	1998-Present	7 years
Janette (Wegner) Thompson	2000-2002	2 years
Keri Gosa	2001-Present	4 years
Adrienne Scott	2002-2005	3 years
Erin Malenke	2004-2005	1 year
Katie Prah	2005-Present	
Melissa Pratt	2005-Present	
Barb Schallock	2005-Present	