

ST PAUL'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

LATIMER, IOWA

A Brief Historical Sketch Written by Request of the Congregation by E. H. Grummer, Pastor

FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY

1895 – 1935

JULY 7, 1935

A MEMORIAL IN RECOGNITION OF THE BOUNDLESS GRACE OF GOD

(The following resolution was adopted by the assembly on the first day of celebration)

“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth (Ps. 121:1-2) As the psalmist, so St. Paul's congregation lifted up its eyes to the hills of Zion and for 40 years its help came from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. For security it dwelt in the secret places of the most High and abode under the shadow of the Almighty. (Is. 91) For spiritual growth and sustenance it was provided with green pastures and led beside the still waters (Ps. 23) of the precious Gospel the unadulterated Word of God.

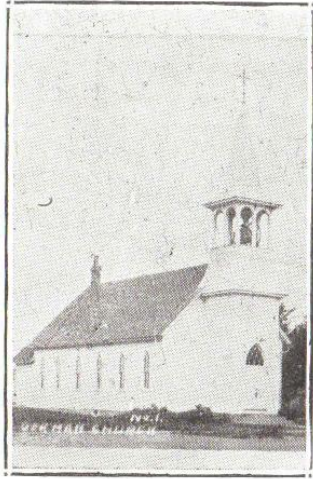
“In recognition of such Fatherly, divine goodness: and mercy, the members of St. Paul's congregation, do, upon this day of celebration of the fortieth anniversary of its organization, dedicate this booklet, containing a brief record of such mercy and goodness of God, to the Glory of our Savior and Redeemer, the only begotten Son, to the boundless Love of our Heavenly Father, and to the sanctifying Power of the Holy Spirit.

With a sense of deep humiliation, we recognize our total unworthiness and confess with Jacob. “We are not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which Thou shewed unto Thy servant.”

Trusting firmly in the benevolence of the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, we plead with Him in this hour in the shadow of the Cross of Golgotha for a continuation of His love, His providence, and His boundless mercy. O great Jehovah, during the years to come, abide among us with that priceless treasure of the pure Gospel. Thru its benign influences may it continue to be a comforting message to the despairing sinner, a beacon to the errant soul, and a haven of peace and rest to the weary pilgrim

“Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.”

Amen.



CHURCH



PARSONAGE

Handwritten notes:
1870
1871
1872
1873
1874
1875
1876
1877
1878
1879
1880
1881
1882
1883
1884
1885
1886
1887
1888
1889
1890
1891
1892
1893
1894
1895
1896
1897
1898
1899
1900



REV. THEO. HANSEN, Chicago, Ill.
Former Pastor of St. Paul's Church



REV. E. H. GRUMMER, Present Pastor of
St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church

A BRIEF HISTORICAL SKETCH OF ST. PAUL'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Any history, of necessity, contains only such facts as can be perceived with the senses with which God has endowed man. Outstanding or epoch-making facts can be compiled from the various records of the congregation, and the material presented in the form of a historical sketch. The following pages present to the reader an attempt of this kind. If the writer could have access to the record of facts in relation to this congregation, as they are retained in the Omniscience of God, this sketch would grow to a massive volume, filled with accounts of God's magnificent deeds, performed in behalf of St. Paul's Lutheran Congregation. For days, months and years, His vigilant eye observed, His mighty hand put to naught the evil counsel of formidable enemies, who sought to disrupt the church. At critical times His divine influence preserved the unity of the congregation, and it was He that steered it by dangerous reefs and treacherous shoals. His generous blessings provided the members with "The Bread of Life," when He, according to His righteousness, could have handed them stones. It would be a delight to relate in this booklet God's glorious works, as they have been enjoyed by St Paul's church for forty years. However, since these are mostly hidden from our eyes, we can only assure the reader that God's glory has been among us thru marvelous deeds without number awaiting the revelation of eternity.

The few facts that we are able to enumerate shall be a testimony unto His faithfulness and a song of praise to the Bridegroom by His bride, the church.

St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Latimer, Iowa, acknowledges the former church Millpond (Beed's Lake), as the mother church. A number of the charter members of St. Paul's Church at sometime held membership in the mother church.

The carloads of tile which have completely transformed the surface and conditions of Franklin County were an unknown factor in those days. To live at that time a distance of 12 to 15 miles from the church and to be in attendance several Sundays in a month was evidence of true and devoted love to the Savior and His Word. Interesting facts of former days are still related of hardships experienced while going to church. Roads that at certain times of the year were almost impassible had to be negotiated with horses and a lumber wagon. Forced to cross creeks and marshes, the horses at times mired down, single trees broke, and traces snapped in an attempt to get an empty wagon thru low places.

May the refreshing of these facts here serve as a memorial to the consecrated hearts who were willing to endure such hardships for the sake of hearing God's Word. In spite of such discouraging events they were found so frequently in their places at church that would by comparison put to shame many of today, who enjoy good roads and an automobile. What a blessing it would be if such consecration could be passed on to future generations, by inheritance.

After a number of years, sufficient families of Lutheran faith had settled in and around Latimer to justify arrangements for having services in this community.

Rev. Dietrich, pastor at Millpond at the time, was asked to preach in a schoolhouse in Marion township, three miles north of Latimer, in 1894. The services were well attended. Hence, more definite plans could be made for a permanent organization. The next step was that during the year 1895 services were held in the schoolhouse at Latimer.

There was no doubt by this time that there was a need for an organized Lutheran Congregation in this community, so a meeting was called to give this matter due consideration. The results of

this meeting can best be recorded by a translation of these minutes from the German. This is as follows:

Latimer, Iowa
March 3, 1895

On the above named date a number of Evangelical Lutheran Christians met in the schoolhouse of Latimer, the meeting having been duly announced. The greater number of those present were members of Evangelical Lutheran Zion's Church of Mott township, Franklin County, Iowa. The purpose of the meeting was to deliberate on organizing a congregation at Latimer and erecting a church building.

Mr. F. Fahrmann was chosen as Chairman and Pastor Dietrich as secretary. The following resolutions were passed:

1. Be it resolved that we, Evangelical Lutheran Christians of Latimer, Franklin County, Iowa and vicinity, unite to constitute an organization to be known as an Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, Unaltered Augsburg Confession.
2. That the constitution of Zion's Lutheran Church, Mott township, as submitted by Pastor Dietrich be adopted as the constitution of this newly organized body, this body to be known, as Evangelical Lutheran St. Paul's Congregation of Latimer, Iowa. (U. A. C.)
3. That the following be vested with the office of deacons: F. Berghorn, D. Kragel, Wm. Pralle.
4. The following shall assume the office of trustees: Herman Hesse, Fred Fahrmann, Christ Schomberg.
5. That H. Weber act as secretary.
6. To erect a church building.
7. That the trustees purchase 5 acres. bordering the west side from C. H. Cook for the price of \$200.
8. That the trustees take subscriptions for the construction of a church building.
9. That this congregation constitute one parish with Zion Lutheran congregation of Mott township.

(SIGNED)

Fred Fahrmann: Chairman
C. W Dietrich, Secretary

In a meeting held June 21, 1895 it was resolved that the dimensions of the church building should be: 14x28x40 ft. with a steeple 60 feet high. Wm. Borcharding Aug. Senf. F. Fahrmann and H. Weber were appointed in charge of building operations.

Before the church was completed such growth of membership had taken place that steps were taken in a meeting of December 25, 1895 to establish a parish independent of Zion's Lutheran church in Mott township. Rev. Burmeister was pastor of the congregation at the time.

Candidate Westpfahl was called in the month of June 1896 as the first resident pastor. The call was accepted by Pastor Westpfahl. In the fall of this year the church was completed and dedicated to the services of God. Rev. Dietrich was in charge of the services of the laying of the corner stone and dedication.

The newly organized congregation was destined to be tempered in the furnace of affliction. Thus we may summarize the period of stress that came upon the congregation. When the

atmosphere had cleared again the congregation had a new shepherd in the person of Rev. A. Lutz, who was called on August 4, 1897 as the second resident pastor.

The exact date of acquisition of membership in the Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States cannot be established from the records at hand. There is, however, a record that Fred Berghorn was sent as delegate to the District Convention at Germantown in August of 1897.

Realizing more and more the necessity of having a parsonage of their own the members of the congregation considered the possibility of obtaining one. In a meeting of July, 1899 it was resolved to erect a building of the following dimensions: 16x20x12 feet. Rev. Lutz, Mr. Kaus and Mr. Fahrmann were entrusted with the realization of this resolution.

During the next five years the congregation enjoyed a period of growth and progress. Necessary improvements were made. Among these were the laying of sidewalks; the building of a barn and the purchase of a bell. At most meetings members were accepted into voting membership. In the minutes of 1904 mention is made of the celebration of a Mission Festival.

On December 11, 1904, a meeting was called to consider a call directed to the pastor, Rev. A. Lutz. The results of the deliberation were that the pastor was granted a peaceful release. Rev. Theiss was engaged to serve during the vacancy. A call directed to pastor T. Hansen again supplied the congregation with a shepherd.

During Rev. Hansen's pastorate a mission opportunity presented itself to the congregation when an inquiry came from a gathering at Burdette about obtaining the services of Pastor Hansen. Burdette is a little town some 15 miles south of Latimer. The congregation readily granted their pastor permission to extend his activities to this town. There is, however, no record that this venture was successful.

Rev. Hansen remained with the congregation until the month of August of 1908. Having received a call from Sherril, IA, he asked for a release so as to be able to accept the call to Sherril. The same was granted him by the congregation.

The events during his pastorate offered opportunity to further the congregation in Christian knowledge and conduct. As a faithful steward Pastor Hansen became instrumental in developing the spiritual growth of the congregation, which is necessary to remain true to the principles of God's Word.

In the summer of 1908 Rev. R. H. Beer accepted the call extended to him by the congregation. When he took charge of the work, the congregation was at least twice as large as when it was organized thirteen years before. Exact figures cannot be given as to its numbers, but a record of attendance of Communion shows an attendance of 116 at this time; whereas, at the time of organization it is recorded as 56. Basing our estimate on these figures, the congregation succeeded in doubling its membership over a period of thirteen years. Such an increase in the Lord's Kingdom gives cause for great joy and is a testimony unto the guiding and guarding hand of the Lord. Such success is not a special merit of man, but a miraculous deed of God. Only by the divine power of the Holy Spirit can souls be added to the number of believers.

With such a heritage, Pastor Beer was given vast opportunities for service. That the pastor availed himself of these opportunities and that the Lord continued to bless the efforts of the pastor and congregation during the 18 years that Pastor Beer served in Latimer is evident from the following figures, as taken from the statistical year book of 1923. These figures are as follows:

Souls: 425, Communicants: 275, Voting members: 67, Sunday school pupils: 50, Communed: 396, Total contribution: \$3312.00. Taking into consideration the limited number of families that banded together in 1895, we must admit that these figures write history which bears out the truth of God's Word that His Word shall not remain without fruit.

The congregation found it necessary, during the pastorate of Rev. Beer, to enlarge their buildings. In 1909 an addition of 16x20 feet was voted to be added to the parsonage. The cost was estimated at \$1050. In 1914 an annex was built to the church, which added 10 feet to the building. A willingness also prevailed to do something constructive in the interest of Christian knowledge for the youth, which culminated in the erection of a school measuring 32x24x10 ft.

Because of prevailing political conditions and in the interest of local mission, services in the English language were begun in the year of 1918.

In the year of 1920 the twenty-fifth anniversary of the congregation was given consideration in a service.

In 1924 Pastor Beer was given a peaceful release upon his request, because of impaired health.

A call was extended to Pastor Grummer of Spencer, Iowa, to fill the vacancy. He began to serve the congregation in October of 1924.

Because of changing conditions an increase in the use of the English language during the services became necessary.

In the interests of the young people of the congregation, the pastor was encouraged to organize a society among them and after this was accomplished, the society joined the young peoples' organization of the church, the Walther League.

With improved roads and an increase of membership it was considered possible to establish a Christian Day School. An attempt to do so was crowned with success. A teacher was called in the person of K. J. Traugott.

The number of children attending, and the necessity of instructing eight grades made it necessary to convert the school into a two-room school, and the hiring of another teacher for the lower room. This was successfully done, and the school has continued in that way for nine years, that is, to date. The establishing of a school necessitated the purchase of a teacherage. The congregation proceeded to do this and bought a house and several lots across the street, south from the parsonage: The house was in need of repairs and so the congregation had it remodeled after the teacher had lived in it for some time.

Because of prevailing circumstances, quite a number of members of the congregation purchased three lots, east across the alley from the parsonage and presented it to the congregation.

In the year of 1934 a society was organized among the ladies of the congregation with the purpose of caring for and beautifying the cemetery. The venture proved very successful even during the first year.

Thus St. Paul's Congregation is striving toward the goal, increasing numerically and growing spiritually. Its vision for service in the Lord's Kingdom is being enlarged from year to year. It is faithfully holding fast to that which it has received thru the Lord's blessings. Its adversary, the Devil, is working day and night to work havoc among its membership and does succeed in creating difficulties and disturbing the peace at times, but after the storm has subsided by the influence of God's Word, it is evident that Christ the Shepherd, has overruled the evil intentions of the Devil and has converted a threatening loss into a gain.

The humble beginning of 40 years ago has developed into membership of 462 souls, 344 communicants, 82 voting members, 650 communed, 104 enrolled in the Sunday School, 38 scholars in the Christian Day School, and an annual contribution of about \$5,000.00. The value of its property, though fluctuating with the value of real estate, can conservatively be estimated at \$16,000.

As we bring this brief sketch to a close we are passing in spirit forward into the years ahead and see St. Paul's Congregation keeping step with time. We see the future members entering its ranks of membership, the pastors and teachers called into its service and released again; we see its forces united in that great conflict around the Cross of Christ, contending to extend the borders of His Kingdom; and from the closing words of this record, we, who have participated in this celebration wish to inspire them with renewed courage with the battle cry:

Stand up! stand up for Jesus! Ye soldiers of the cross;
Lift high His Royal Banner, it must not suffer loss;
From victory, unto victory His army shall he lead,
Till every foe is vanquished, and Christ is Lord indeed.
Stand up! stand up for Jesus! The trumpet call obey
Forth to the mighty conflict, in this His glorious day
Ye that are men, now serve Him against unnumbered foes:
Let courage rise with danger, and strength to strength oppose.