

**HERBERT C. KUSKE**  
“From Friedens to Peace: Fifty Years of God’s Grace”

Senior Church History  
Professor Brenner  
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Rev. Herbert Kuske began his public ministry even before his seminary days were over. He received an emergency call late in 1944 to teach the upper grades at St. Paul's Lutheran School in Norfolk, Nebraska. After finishing the school year in Norfolk, Pastor Kuske returned to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. In the summer of 1947 he was able to help start Good Hope of Omaha, Nebraska. While helping to construct the church building, he was also busy knocking on doors and preached the first seven sermons there in Omaha. During Pastor Kuske's final year at the Seminary, he also helped serve a vacancy at Cross Lutheran of Charles City, Iowa for three weeks and served as a substitute teacher for several weeks at two schools in the Milwaukee area.

In May of 1948 he graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and received a call to be the tutor at Michigan Lutheran Seminary in Saginaw, Michigan. He served there two years, and on completion of his duties as tutor, he married Lorraine Spiekerman on June 24, 1950.

In that same year Pastor Kuske was called to be the assistant pastor at Friedens Lutheran in Kenosha, Wisconsin. At the time Friedens was one of the largest congregations of the Synod. While he was there, the congregation built an educational wing.

After seven years of service at Friedens, Pastor Kuske accepted a call to serve a dual parish at Zion in Mobridge and St. Jacobi in Glenham, South Dakota. During his time in South Dakota, Zion built the first of three churches that were built during his various pastorates.

In the fall of 1961, the Holy Spirit called Pastor Kuske back to Saginaw, Michigan; this time to serve at Christ Lutheran. During his ministry, Christ congregation built another church building.

Pastor Kuske then served St. Paul Lutheran of Stevensville, Michigan, where he was one of two pastors. During his years of service from 1970 to 1984 he served with three different men. There the third church was built under his guiding hand.

In 1984, he made one of the biggest changes of his ministry as he began his work at Christ Lutheran in Abita Springs, Louisiana. Once again Pastor Kuske found the congregation he was serving busy with a building project. This time they built a parsonage.

He followed the Lord's call in 1992 to serve in Owensville, Missouri at Peace Lutheran. Pastor Kuske served as a semi-retired pastor while there in Missouri until April of 1997. After fifty years of service in the public ministry he retired full-time from the public ministry and returned with Lorraine to Saginaw to enjoy their retirement among family and friends.

Pastor Kuske has served our synod in a number of key roles. He served twice as circuit pastor. Once for his final two years in the Western Conference of the Dakota-Montana District, and from 1992 to 1996 in the Southern Conference of the Minnesota District. He was also on the Michigan District Mission Board for fourteen years, serving as chairman for nine of those years. He then also served four of his six years on the South Atlantic District Mission Board as chairman.

Pastor Kuske characterized his fifty years in the ministry by simply looking at his first and last parishes. He started at Friedens and ended at Peace. He saw what was then quite common German work slowly slip out of use, to almost becoming extinct today in WELS congregations. He noted the formality not only of dress, but also of membership in his early years. He saw the standards of dress for the pastor become more and more informal and people's attitudes toward membership do the same. He also recognized God's blessings of his people along with the rest of our nation in its increasing prosperity as well as technological advancements.

Perhaps what strikes one most about Pastor Kuske in reminiscing with him, is his acknowledgment of God's grace during his fifty years of ministry. This is how Pastor Kuske recognized God's grace in giving the privilege of serving in the full time ministry:

I must freely confess that my years of preparation were not model years. Mine was not the example of a fine Christian life, nor was I a model of faithful application of the gifts God had given me. The Old Adam came on pretty strong. But the New Man created in me at my baptism did prevail by the grace of my heavenly Father. He chose to use even me! What an encouragement to each of us that God could use even us for ministry.

*Feed my lambs*     In spite of my flaws, nearly fifty years ago He  
*Feed my sheep*     commissioned me: "*Feed my lambs. ... Feed my sheep*" (John 21:15,17). What an awesome responsibility! It was not long before my Old Adam raised doubts that I was qualified for the task. I could relate very well to youthful Solomon: "... 'But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties.' ... God said, ... 'I will give you a wise and discerning heart.'" (I Kings 3:7,12) My New Man came through by reminding me that God makes no mistakes, and he had called me into the ministry. My New Man was ready to serve God as a pastor. (page 3, "Baptism Fourthly" In the Life of the Pastor," presented April 17, 1996 to Minnesota District Pastor's Conference)

It is clear from Pastor Kuske that he sees not only God's grace in bestowing such a privilege upon him, but also in seeing God's grace everyday of his life in empowering his New Man to take hold of God's promises of forgiveness and his presence. Pastor Kuske's kind and caring manner simply underscores the value he places on God's gracious hand during his lifetime.

It has been a privilege to get to know Pastor Kuske and have the opportunity to discuss his fifty year ministry filled with God's grace. I look forward to more opportunities in the future. I pray the Lord will continue to graciously look upon Pastor Kuske and Lorraine during their retirement. May the Lord also look upon all of his children and grant them that same gracious presence as we strive to serve Him in His kingdom and the peace of knowing that Our Lord is faithful to his promises. Amen.