

From Pillar To Post:

A History of
St. Luke's Evangelical
Lutheran Church
Saginaw, Michigan

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Sr. Church History
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F O R E W O R D

The reason why this topic was chosen was two fold. The first was to carry out the assignment. Secondly and perhaps just as important, there has never been a detailed history of the congregation ever written out. Since St. Luke's will soon be celebrating its golden anniversary, it seems only appropriate that such a history should be written for this occasion. It is for this reason that seemingly trivial items are mentioned. They are being used in an attempt to jog the memory of the older members and to give some insight into the early years of the congregation to its newer members.

There are many questions which need answering and gaps which need filling. However, the answers to these questions are now buried together with the founding fathers of the congregation.

It is also my goal, in reference to the 50th anniversary, that this paper would be just a start and that as the time approaches, other members might be able to add personal touches and fill in the gaps.

From Pillar To Post...

These words introduced an article run by the Saginaw News on Saturday, December 7, 1940. The article drew attention to the cornerstone laying of St. Luke's first permanent building. After reading about the early history of the congregation, one can see why this phrase is so fitting. At that point in time, the congregation had already conducted services in four "houses" of worship and was presently worshipping in the basement at Vincent's School. Unknown to the writer at that time, there was still one more move that would be made, but that was nearly 26 years away.

St. Luke's was established during the post-depression era. There were many problems which existed. A report delivered by the District Mission Board to the Owosso convention in 1930, noted the problems. There were two things which made mission work difficult. They were the financial lag in the Synod and the depression. The depression was especially noticeable in the larger cities where the mission congregations were located. Workers would lose their jobs and earnings. They could not contribute financially in the usual way and many moved on to another place where jobs would be available. The opening of new mission fields was excluded, since it was not advisable to burden the budget further. The Church Extension Fund was empty. That made the start of new missions in the state impossible. It was a situation which would be regretted in all districts, for mission work was/is our chief work. A restriction could have only serious consequences.

Nevertheless, in spite of this ominous report and the serious overtones that it casts, the report continued that the pastors of St. Paul's congregation on Saginaw's West side, had begun a mission at Riverside Park. God's blessings for the prosperity of their work were asked for.¹

The opening of the new mission is also noted in the minutes of St. Paul's Church Council meeting held on April 27, 1930. The recording secretary wrote about the establishment of a new mission at Riverside Park and that their pastors and teachers would serve it.

What would become St. Luke's Ev. Lutheran Church was conceived, although it still had to endure many problems and hardships.

At that time there were two other W.E.L.S. congregations in the city. St. Paul's numbered about 1350 and St. John's numbered about 280. There were numerous other Lutheran congregations located in Saginaw, however, the southwest portion of the city was without a Lutheran church. St. John's, then located on Elm Street, was the closest congregation to serve the area.

On February 23, 1930, the pastors of St. Paul's- Pastor A. Westendorf and Pastor O. Eckert-began to conduct services in a rented house on Stanley Street, in the vicinity of Merrill Park and school. Several families belonging to St. Paul's attended the services. It seems that the families may have numbered five, however, there are no statistics officially recorded. The mission was recognized as a daughter congregation of St. Paul's. Apparently, the pastors met

with little success, since it is recorded that the services were discontinued.

Services were begun again in 1931. In the summer of that year, Tutor H. Zink was called to serve this field. He accepted the call and entered the field in early August. The small group was now worshipping at 708 Burnham. Since Tutor Zink desired to retain the position of tutor at M.L.S. and since he already had that call, he resigned his office effective September 1st. This was done with the assent of the W.E.L.S. Mission Board.

The Mission Board wasted no time and called candidate Hilmer Eckert as pastor. He began his work on September 1st with the five families from St. Paul's. The work was to be carried out principally in the English tongue, according to the Mission Board's report given in 1932 at the District convention.

A canvass of the area was made and the results showed that the area had good potential. In the same report, it was stated that there was the need for an appropriate site for the services. The rented house was unsuitable and too small. Already the mission numbered about 30 communicants and about 50 Sunday School students, although a number of people had left that part of the city. The 50 Sunday School students could only with great effort be put into the small room. However, the number could easily expand if the missionary had a larger room for the services. The lack of a suitable site posed the biggest obstacle for the growth of the mission congregation. If they could rent a larger house

the Mission Board's mind would be put at ease, but that had not happened at that point in time. The mission in the course of the last 10 monthes (since September of 1931) had baptized ten children and two adults. There were three children confirmed. Attendance at the services and at communion were good. The statistics prompted the closing remark, "We are happy to hear of the opening of this field, rejoice over the progress made, and encourage the missionary to continue in his appointed work."^{1.}

The Lord blessed the work. The congregation continued to grow. A house at 1209 Maple was acquired and on May 30, 1933, services were held at the new location.

The group was formally organized as St. Luke's Ev. Luth. Church in a meeting held on September 10th. The constitution was read and signed by 22 men. Mr. Sperzel was elected chairman of the meeting. The officers that were elected were: E. Schmidt, chairman; H. Komsdorf, secretary; E. Schmidt and H. Komsdorf, trustees; H. Frick and M. Schmidt, auditors; H. Weber and A. Burk, elders.

One wonders why those men chose to incorporate under the name St. Luke's. The reason will never be known. As is true today, when a congregation tries to select an official name which is distinctively their own, perhaps this was the reason. There were no other congregations in the area with that name. W.E.L.S. already had a St. Paul's and a St. John's. St. Matthew's was located in Freeland. The Catholics could claim St. Peter & St. Paul, St. Andrew, St. Stephen, and others. The other Lutheran churches either duplicated one of the a-

bove names or chose names other than the apostle's. The only flaw in this theory is that St. Luke's Hospital was also located on Saginaw's West side.

The Church Council was soon empowered to make expenditures up to the amount of \$10.00. The mechanics of opening and maintaining a mission can be clearly seen in the minutes of the first meetings. The Church Council went about the business of acquiring chairs, candles, candle holders, and a record book. An offer made by Mr. Weber was accepted and he set about constructing a baptismal font. The pianist was given a present of \$5.00 every three months.

The congregation filed an application for membership with the president and was accepted as a member of the Wisconsin Synod in June of 1934.

The successes and problems of the congregation's early history are recorded in the report to the District convention held in Lansing in 1934. It was noted that the group had moved from the Burnham house to the house on Maple. The house had been transformed into a "pleasant church home." The basic problem still remained-the lack of a chapel was a hindrance to successful work. It was also reported that the congregation organized with 19 voting members, three of whom had moved from the city. In spite of the fact that the congregation had undergone an almost complete change of membership, the statistics were encouraging: 47 communicants, 120 souls, and a Sunday School enrollment of 66. The congregation also reduced its subsidy by \$5.00 a month.³

The congregation gained local exposure in a series of articles run by the Saginaw News about the congregations in the city. On Saturday, November 3, 1934, under the heading "St. Luke's Lutheran Church-One of City's Youngest," the writer reported:

Officially little more than a year old, St. Luke's Lutheran Church has been serving a number of families in the southern part of the west side nearly five years. The present church building is a house which has been remodeled for services. Some of the members, who are wood workers have fashioned an artistic altar at the front of the main room. The congregation numbers 60 communicants members and a growing Sunday School which has an enrollment of 92. Services are conducted in German and English on alternate Sundays.⁴

The article listed the officers of the congregation and the officers of the Ladies Aid Society. They were: M. Lydia Schott, President; Mrs. Mary Robinson, Vice-president; Mrs. Leona Price, Secretary; Mrs. Caroline Tillman, Treasurer.

The year 1935 brought along many more changes. English and German services were still held on alternating Sundays and once again the congregation was outgrowing the chapel.

In January the Building Committee was to report on what steps had been taken to procure a suitable building for worship. On April 3rd, the Committee reported that property could be purchased at 605 Sherman (Meade). Money would be borrowed at 4% interest. The pastor was given the go ahead to close the deal as soon as possible.. The congregation purchased a modest home and remodelled it for church purposes. The total cost of this venture was \$1776.00.

The chapel was on the first floor in what would be

considered the living and dining room areas. A small cross was placed on the roof of the porch in order to identify it as St. Luke's. A member made lectern-which the congregation still uses in one of the Sunday School rooms- served as the lectern and the pulpit. The altar was set along the front wall and had a crucifix and two candles on it. The baptismal font was to the left of the congregation and was made by one of the members. The congregation sat on wooden chairs. An upright piano was placed behind and to the side of the seating area. This piano is still being used by the choir and is in the largest Sunday School room. A simple hymn board was hung near the altar. The pastor's office was located on the second floor.⁵

The congregation dedicated the chapel on June 2, 1935.

The group continued to grow. It accepted 21 new members that year. The statistics given in 1936 read: 180 souls, 64 communicants, and an adult confirmation class of 11.⁶

Synod subsidy was reduced by \$5.00 and the church had a total indebtedness of \$1557.09.

If the work was to have been done principally in the English language, it was not reflected in the service scheduled. In 1936 the Lenten services, first held in 1935, alternated between English and German as did the Sunday morning services. This schedule remained in effect throughout the year but was changed slightly in 1937. In the October Church Council meeting, it was finally recommended that English services be conducted every Sunday at 10:30 and Ger-

man services be held every other Sunday at 8:30. Lenten services would remain the same with the exception that the Maunday Thursday service was to be conducted in English.

Lenten folders were introduced for the first time and it was suggested that the communicants kneel for the Lord's Supper.

The report given at the District Convention held in Toledo in 1938 was brief and is best summarized with its opening statement, "This station has continued its steady growth." There were now 202 souls and 80 communicants. The Sunday School enrollment slipped to 82 and an average Sunday attendance was 36.⁷

The feeling of change was in the air in 1939. For five years the congregation had been meeting for worship in the chapel and was then faced by the same problem-inadequate facilities. In the July Congregational meeting, the members decided to ask Synod's approval for the construction of a new house of worship. A committee was chosen and preliminary steps were taken. Since it was not possible to obtain another suitable building site, the congregation decided to sell the chapel off the lot and built at the same location.

The following year a building committee was drawn up consisting of H. Dankert, G. Scott, and H. Weber. The Committee reported that it would cost \$250 to move the chapel off of the lot (it eventually ended up in the Sand Hill). There was also some discussion to buy a lot on Ruby Street and move the present chapel there. Here, it would either be sold or used as a parsonage. A tentative option was to

be obtained so that if the congregation could go ahead, they would be in the position to buy this property.

The District convention at Scio came before the next Church Council meeting and the report was given that "the church attendance has increased remarkably during the last half year, so that the seating capacity of the present building frequently has been entirely inadequate. Within another year the present building (the chapel at 605 Sherman) should be fully paid for." The debt stood at \$263.00 as of March 31, 1940. The congregation now consisted of 269 souls, 126 communicants, 100 attending Sunday School, and an average church attendance of 46 at the English services and 18 at the German services. The Synod subsidy continued to be reduced.⁸

In July of 1940, carpenters and architects were contacted in order to get figures and plans on remodeling the chapel or building a new church. The August meeting was crucial. The question which faces all congregations about to undertake a building program was asked. How do you raise the money for the new chapel? Indeed, should the congregation build a new chapel or not? The decision was made. A new chapel would be built and a ceiling of \$8000 was set. The old chapel would be sold and the members of the congregation would try to get what ever they could for it. It was agreed upon that cards would be sent to those members who were not present at the meeting, giving them the first opportunity to buy the house. It was also ^{voted} upon to purchase the house across the street at 602 Meade for a parsonage.

The church received \$600 for the old chapel.

The gears were set in motion. On August 23, Joseph Goddeyne, an architect from Bay City, was engaged to draw up plans for the new church. Bids were opened on October 8th. On October 25th, 1940, the ground was broken for the church building. On November 4th, the general contract was awarded to Charles Engelhardt of Bay City. Wm. Richter & Son had the plumbing contract, Klopff & Son were in charge of the heating plant, and Hans Rupp was awarded the electrical work.

The Saginaw News, on December 7th, wrote the following article:

Pushed from pillar to post and from building to building by the vicissitudes of real estate, St. Luke's Lutheran Congregation moving days are almost over. At 3pm. Sunday the cornerstone of its first permanent church building will be laid at 605 Sherman...calls for a white frame building, colonial style, 70' by 30' with a full basement and a seating capacity of 150 at a cost of \$12000. The colonial styling will be followed inside with exposed rafters and wainscoting in stained wood. Gold trim will set off the furnishings.⁹

In Monday's edition, under the headline, "Italians, British Fight on Desert," there was a picture with the comment "Young Congregation Laying New Home's Cornerstone." Pictured with trowel in hand was Pastor Otto Eckert of St. Paul's.¹⁰

The service was conducted under a tent on a very cold day. Since there were no other musicians available, the singing was accompanied by an accordion player.

During the 5½ monthes that the building was under construction, the congregation met for worship in the Vincent

School basement.

The congregation desired to hold services in the new church building on Palm Sunday and on Easter. As a result, March 30 was chosen as the day of dedication. In the last week, there was much work that still remained to be done. Through the whole hearted co-operation of all who worked on the new building and a number of members who cheerfully put in long hours of hard work, the building though not completed, was ready for use.

The dedication took place on March 30, 1941. Pastor Westendorf spoke in the morning service and Pastor Otto Eckert, Sr. spoke in the afternoon service.

The total amount borrowed at this time was \$13,807. When everything was counted, the total expenditures amounted to \$13,588.97. The report on the new building was complete, all the way down to the 26¢ spent for sawdust. There was \$1.99 spent for the wood, iron, and rope for the bell. The cost of used sinks and two laboratories was \$13.00. The price for used and new light fixtures was \$35.62. The turpentine for the floor was \$1.99¹².

In order to get the church property cleaned up, a general work day was scheduled for Saturday June 7th. "Tools needed are shovels, rakes, wheelbarrows. Bring along also a cheerful disposition and ambition" Volunteers were solicited from the congregation for the upkeep and cleaning of the building.¹²

Other items of importance at the Council meetings were noted, as the lack of an organist. The shortage was to be such

announced in the other churches and if there were no results, an ad was to be placed in the paper. The disposal of the left over fill dirt was delegated to the building committee. A vacuum cleaner was bought for \$5.00. Permission was granted to Mr. Weber in order to purchase a rubber stamp with St. Luke's Church on it. Mr. Dankert was authorized to buy grass seed for the lawn. Flags for the church were donated by Mr. Brandle and E. Fick.

The congregation now numbered 269 souls, 140 communicants, and a Sunday School attendance of 115. Average attendance at the English services was 72 and 26 attended the German services.¹³

The next biennium was one of steady growth. There is recorded a motion that the organist be paid. Two months later it is noted that a motion was made and carried to look for a new organist and to go outside the congregation if necessary. The secretary could also rent an adding machine whenever he sees a necessity.

The 1944 District report shows the growth of the congregation. There were now 313 souls, 161 communicants, and the Sunday School attendance dropped to 98. Church attendance at both services increased slightly.. Finally, a parsonage was needed.¹⁴

In the September meeting of 1946, this need was solved. The motion was made and carried to purchase the house at 602 Meade (across the street from the church), if it was possible. It was acquired for \$7000 with the money borrowed

locally. Prior to the purchase of the parsonage, the pastor had been living with his father in St. Paul's parsonage on Bond Street.

The organist was now paid \$1.00 per service.

In April of 1946, St. Paul's decided to assist St. Luke's and purchased lots for the congregation for a future school. This action was carried out in the July meeting.¹⁵

While the '50's was a period of controversy for the Synod and its relationship with the LC-MS, The years were ones of steady growth spiritually and physically.

An organ fund was established in 1950. The Synod subsidy was reduced and finally dropped in 1952. A service was held on July 7th celebrating the occasion. Both the church and the parsonage debt were liquidated in 1953. On October 29, the mortgage burning took place and the sermon, based upon 1 Kings 8:57, had the theme "Prayer for God's Continued Grace and Blessing."¹⁶

There were a number of other projects undertaken in the course of the ten years. The parsonage was wired and painted. The church floor was sanded. The chimes were purchased in 1956. The organist was paid \$2.00 per service.

A typical Sunday morning in those years included a 7:30 English communion service, a 9:00 German service, Sunday School was at 10:10, and at 11:00 was the second English service.

The question of the school lots came up in the early 50's. It was agreed upon that the lots were not big enough nor were

they desirable. It was unanimous to sell the lots with any members of the congregation to be given priority to purchase them. The money received from the lots was offered to St. Paul's, who in turn declined the offer.

As was mentioned, this was an era when there was unrest in the Synod. St. Luke's was not immuned from the doubts or the questions, since there were many LC-MS churches in the area. The church declined the offer of a local ALC church to join in a joint Reformation service. However, during these troublesome years, there was no strife with-in the congregation. The membership changes that did occur were a result of members moving and not a result of the controversy. Perhaps, the reason why the congregation did not suffer as much as other congregations in the area and in the Synod as a whole, was because it was well informed with the issues that were being discussed.

Beginning already in 1954, there was a report given on Church Union to the Council and Voters. In the following six years, the other issues were talked about: our position against scouting, essays about Lutheran church bodies, articles on the arguments against chaplaincy, chaplaincy and the armed forces religion, politics in the church, a report on the joint elders meeting on the relationship between LC-MS and WELS, Northwestern Lutheran articles and reports, reports from the Synod president about the Missouri Synod, an article about co-operation in externals, and others. As the controversy heightened, the topics dealt with inter-synodical

matters, of particular importance and concern about the continued resigning of pastors and teachers from our Synod.

The second problem that the congregation was faced with was not unfamiliar, i.e., church expansion. During this early period, specifics are a bit sketchy. The problem was first mentioned in the January 13, 1957 Council meeting. An expansion committee consisting of E. Schuetz, A. Klement, L. Stenzel, W. Roeske, and B. Gaiser was established. They presented their first report in April. Property on West Michigan, apparently between Grout and Maple, was up for sale. The parcel of land was 11 lots long and two lots deep. The congregation was willing to offer \$10,000. However, the price was set at \$12,000. Another piece of property on Maple Street by the pickle factory was checked out. A period of time elapsed but in the April 12, 1959 Council meeting, the matter was brought up again.

The Expansion Committee presented a detailed report on what lay ahead. There was no doubt that expansion was needed. It was reported that there was overcrowding in the 2nd service each Sunday, which resulted in a lack of parking spaces. The situation became even more acute during the winter months. The lack of space was equally troublesome in the work of the Sunday School, making it difficult to expand or even handle it properly.

Three proposals were presented as possible solutions. The first plan was to divide attendance at the services

with the addition of a third Sunday service. This would be only a temporary measure. It was pointed out that it would place an undue burden upon the pastor and the desired effect was doubtful since most families preferred attending a Sunday morning service. A third English service would be scheduled for the afternoon or evening, since the morning was booked solid. There was concern expressed for those attending the German service, still conducted twice a month. Providing that the people who attended this service agreed, it was suggested to have these services scheduled in the evening. This would mean a net increase of only two services per month, rather than four or five, if the English service was scheduled in the afternoon.

Plan two considered the possibility of adding to the present church building and property. Again, this would be only a temporary measure since it would not provide for the congregations desires for the future. Even if the house and the lots adjacent to the church property could be purchased, this plan would simply provide for greater seating capacity, while the parking problem would still remain. The parking problem would discourage those who might consider attending the church or the Sunday School. The cost of remodelling, purchasing, clearing, etc, for the purpose of providing a parking area or for developing a Christian Day School would be staggering. "It is impossible to estimate the length of time that will pass before the congregation will be anxious to start their own school. However, the

benefit of parochial school training is apparent as can be seen from the effort of many of our Synod's congregations who have such schools." (While the grade school question was not new, since many of the children of the congregation had attended St. Paul's Day School and MLS, this was the first time that it was officially recorded in the minutes.)

Plan three was considered a long range program. It would be working against the normal sentimentality attached to the present church building and location. At the same time it had to be recognized that the need for the expansion of the Lord's work with-in the congregation was a prime consideration. Re-location presented the opportunity to realize a much greater sense of satisfaction in further developing this work instead of curtailing it. Property just outside the western edge of the city limits was presently being offered at a reasonable price. This property would have been impossible to obtain at a later date. To avoid encroachment upon other congregations-especially Bethany which had not moved to their present location but who worshipping ^{was} on State Street off of center- and to remain in the same general area, the land search was confined to property south of Gratiot.¹⁸

Proposal number 1 was accepted. Those attending the German services were to be contacted in reference to a time change for the services. Plan number 2 was rejected. Proposal number 3 was also accepted, although a special meeting was to be called in order to make a final decision as to the

best pieces of property available.

There were two parcels of land in the running. The one consisted of 27 acres at the price of \$32,000. This property is located near the railroad tracks on South Center, where the Central Church of the Nazarene now stands. The second parcel consisted of five acres at the cost of \$15,000. This was originally a parcel of 30 acres on which State Lanes Bowling Alley had an option. Re-zoning of this area did not occur and so five acres were up for sale to the church, The other 25 acres went to Wright Reality.

Because of the size and the price, the Center Street property was rejected. The Gratiot Street parcel was accepted by a 15 to 12 vote. The closeness of the vote expressed the feeling of sentimentality in remaining at the present location. A \$5,000 down payment was made. With that the 50's came to an end.

The climax of ten years of planning occurred in 1967 when the present church building was dedicated. But before this was to happen, many obstacles and changes were encountered.

The Synod controversy came to a close with very little effect on the congregation. There appeared to be no problem in meeting the payments on the new property and frequently, larger payments were made. Improvement of the church at Meade continued-a new outside bulletin board was constructed by H. Strieter in '59 and later moved to the present site. Painting was done, sidewalks were leveled and improved at

on both the church property and at the parsonage, and once again an organist was needed.

In October of 1962, the congregation suffered the loss of their pastor due to an unexpected and fatal pedestrian accident. Pastor Eckert had served the congregation for 31 years.

The vacancy pastor for $2\frac{1}{2}$ months was Pastor Herbert Kuske of Christ Ev. Lutheran Church. The MLS professors and Pastor O. Frey took care of the worship services. At the special Congregational meeting held on November 6, the congregation extended a call to Pastor Wernor Wagner of Tucson, Arizona. The cover letter gave a brief history of St. Luke's and noted that it was about to enter a building program. It also mentioned that German services were still held twice a month and that a sermon read off in German would suffice.

Pastor Wagner accepted the call and was installed by Pastor Kuske on January 14, 1963.

Within the year many changes occurred. A Sunday bulletin was put out and the church announced the times of the services in the Saginaw News. (Prior to this the Council decided not to run an ad unless the other WELS congregations in the area would do likewise. German services were discontinued on the first Sunday in November.)

To add to the already troublesome parking problem, the city of Saginaw converted the south side of Meade Street into a fire lane and erected no parking signs there, eliminating much needed parking spaces. They were later moved to the

north side of the street, where the loss of parking spaces was minimal due to the many driveways and alleys.

Maintenance was the primary order in 1964. The tubes in the organ were repaired, painting, floor finishing, etc was done at both church and parsonage.

In July, the congregation directed the Expansion Committee to draw up a questionnaire to determine the interest and the desire of the members in regards to the new building. By January 1965 all the questionnaires were returned and talk turned toward the building of a new parsonage.

On April 25, 1965, the congregation engaged Thomas Schmidt of Saginaw as the architect. The members set an estimated ceiling of \$150,000 for the new building and asked for a seating capacity of 300-400. The church property at 605 Meade was to be sold, eventually, to Trinity Baptist Church in July of the year.

The Expansion Committee was relieved of its work of planning with the thanks of the congregation and a Building Committee was appointed to supervise the actual building operation. The committees for the undertaking consisted of

Finance Committee
Walter Roeske, Chairman
Harold Fritzler, Secretary
Robert Dittenber
George Kaufman
August Klement
Harold Strieter, Ex officio

Building Committee
Leonard Grams, Chairman
Lyle Jacobs
Kenneth Lample
Harold Strieter, Ex officio

Bids were received, arrangements for a loan were made with the Heitner Corporation of St. Louis, Mo., and work was now ready to begin. The ground breaking ceremony was held

on June 12, 1966.

At the September 25th Congregational meeting, the pastor reported that he had received a call from St. Matthew's Ev. Lutheran Church of Janesville, Wisconsin. He asked for his release on October 9 effective as of October 30th..

was
At a special meeting held for the calling of St. Luke's third pastor on October 16th. The pastors on the call list consisted of G. Cares, Monree; H. Sauer, Muskegon; A. Walther, Milwaukee; T. Horneber, Zilwaukee and T. Frey were added to the list. The call was extended and then declined by Pastor Horneber. On November 27, another call meeting was held. The list consisted of Pastors Sauer, Cares, and Walther. Professor Kaesemeyer was added to the list. The call was extended and accepted by Pastor Sauer. He was installed on January 29, 1967 by Pastor Brenner of Bay City.

Pastor Kuske served as vacancy pastor.

Meanwhile, there were other developments. A joint meeting was held with Bethany, Christ, and St. John's in regards to establishing a joint Christian Day School.

The work of the Building Committee continued. An estimate was taken on the church and parsonage. They were valued at \$35,000 and \$15,00 respectively. An ad was placed in the paper for the selling of the church. The congregation received an offer from the Board of Control at MLS in reference to the possibility of hold^{ing} worship services and Sunday School in their gymnasium, if the new church was not finished before the buyers of the old church desired to move in.

As was written previously, the buyer was Trinity Baptist, who bought the church and property for \$23,000, a little below the price of \$27,000 that the congregation had hoped for.

Cornerstone laying for the new building took place on June 4, 1967 and the dedication of the building was on June 25, 1967. Pastor Brenner delivered the sermon in the morning service and Pastor Kuske spoke at the afternoon service.

The offer made by MLS did not have to be used.

There were two problems that confronted the congregation. The first consisted of meeting the payments for the church. The other was the growing concern over the general condition of the parsonage.

The parsonage on Meade Street was deteriorating. In spite of the repair work already done, namely, plumbing repairs, plastering, and repairs to the front steps, the house was in need of more work. In April of 1972, the parsonage was inspected to see what could be done. The total cost for repair work amounted to \$5,691.00. This figure included paint trimming, the repair to the storm windows and the screens, garage and porch repairs. The value of the parsonage would increase an equal amount. The question was raised as to how to finance the repair work. Should the congregation repair it or sell the parsonage? The Heitner Corporation was also drawn into it. They had no objectives to the selling of the house providing that the proceeds were to be applied to another piece of property. An appraisal of the house was the first item on the check list. In April of 1973,

the appraisal figure came in at \$16,900. It was then decided to sell the property and to plan for another. Trinity Baptist was given first crack at purchasing the property. An offer of \$13,900 was received from the church. The congregation countered with an offer of \$14,900, with a minimum offer of \$14,500. It was finally sold in June for \$15,000. Part of this amount was used for the payment on improving the church parking lot, the remainder was used as a down payment on the new parsonage.

The congregation had two choices in regards to the new parsonage. It could either build a house on the property behind the church or it could purchase a house. In order to build, water and sewer connections were needed. There was also the problem of gaining access to Gratiot or some other road. The house itself would cost about \$36,000.

The second option was chosen. There were five houses on the initial list.¹⁹ All of them were located near the church or only a short drive away. Some were new. One was nine years old. The prices ranged from \$39,900 to \$44,500. In July of 1973 a house located at 1591 Briarson Street and which was not on the list presented in April, was bought. It was a five year old house costing \$37,800. The congregation agreed on a 20 year plan, with payments of \$250 per month. A loan was taken out at 8½ interest.

During the years immediately following the building of the new church, a second problem developed. It seemed that the congregation was always pleading for funds when pay-

ments were coming up. On one occasion, the congregation was short \$7,000. In 1974 it looked as if the congregation would fall \$13,000 short on the payment. On both of these occasions the full payment was made as the members, in one way or another, came up with the funds to make the payment. The struggle continued and climaxed in 1978-1979.²⁰ A payment of \$60,000 was needed to make the final payment on the principal. Re-financing was a possibility but the interest rate would be tremendous. A special drive was held. With the aid of an \$8,000 loan from a member, the payment was made. The member loan was repaid and on September 30, 1979, a service of thanksgiving was held as the title and deed to the church property was presented to the congregation by the Heitner Corporation. Professor Jerome Spaude of MLS was the guest speaker on this occasion. The sermon based upon Psalm 100, took as its theme "David's Picture of a Thankful Congregation."

The retirement of the church building debt has made it possible to double, triple, and even quadruple the monthly payments made on the balance for the parsonage.

There were other things which happened during these years since the congregation moved into its new building. It hosted the closing service of Synod's 1967 convention and witnessed the commissioning of one of our missionaries to Hong Kong.²¹

There have been numerous requests made by businesses and private home owners as to the purchase of our property in the back forty. Businesses have continuously requested

the usage of our parking lot, some presenting very tempting offers. These offers have all been turned down since the church would be legally responsible for any accidental injury on the church property whether or not we granted permission for its use. Some have even offered a lifetime of free usage of their parking lots, if we would allow them to use our lot.

Then there is the driving range next door. There have been a number of confrontations with the owners of the driving range. They had agreed to erect a high fence to stop any stray golf balls. Nevertheless, there were some very notable slices and hooked swings which resulted in broken windows. The course is liable for any and all damages to church property by misguided golf balls, regardless of prior or present ownership. At times windows went for months without being repaired. The windshields of cars were not spared either by the early Sunday morning golfers, who needed to get in a few extra practice swings before they hit the golf course. To add fuel to the fire, the owners frequently confronted the youngsters of the congregation, who were in the habit of searching for golf balls and when one was found, to throw it over the fence onto the range. The author and one of his confirmation class members had this happen to them a number of times. The problem still exists, only this time golf clubs are taken along to chip the ball over the fence.

What does the future hold in store for St. Luke's? Only God knows for sure. The area has developed well. The

driving range is for sale. There is talk that a new street will run through the back of the property. If this does happen, apartments-which are blossoming in the area- or private dwellings could be built there. There is great potential for a mission outreach.

The church itself has now established an organ fund.²² The Christian Day School is still on the back burner.

Indeed, God alone knows what will eventually happen. God willing, the congregation will continue to grow outwardly and more important, inwardly in His Word and Sacraments.

End notes, Additions and/or Corrections

1. page 3, Report of the Dist. Mission Bd, 1930, published in in The Synodic Report of the Convention of the Mich. District, NPH, Milwaukee, pages 37-38, 41.
2. page 5, Report of the District Mission Bd, 1932, p. 33.
3. page 6, Report of the District Mission Bd, 1934, p. 31.
4. page 7, Saginaw News, November 3, 1934, "St. Luke's Church- One of City's Youngest."
5. page 8, Personal pictures
6. page 8, Report of the District Mission Bd., 1936, p. 30-31.
7. page 9, Report of the District Mission Bd., 1938, p. 27.
8. page 10 Report of the District Mission Bd., 1940, p. 29.
9. page 11 Saginews News, December 7, 1940, "Young Congregation Laying New Home's Cornerstone."
10. page 11 Saginaw News, December 9, 1940, "A Big Moment."
11. page 12 Report on St. Luke's Ev. Luth New Church Building.
12. page 12 Letter accompanying the above report.
13. page 13 Report of the District Mission Bd., 1942, p. 36.
14. page 13 Report of the District Mission Bd., 1944, p. 43-44.
15. page 14 Report of the District Mission Bd., 1946, p. 36.
16. page 14 Correction: The subsidy was eliminated in 1952. The parsonage debt was through on July 7, 1952. The service on July 7th was for the subsidy and parsonage debt elimination. The mortgage on the church ended on October 29, 1953. The service of thanksgiving was held on Thanksgiving Day, November 25, 1954.
17. page 18 Report of the Planning Committee to the Voting Members of St. Luke's Ev. Luth. Church., April 12, 1959.
18. page 21 Heating and Plumbing-Remer Plumbing and Heating Inc. Electrical Contractor-Lighthouse Electric.
19. page 24 Other possibilities:

1133	St. Andrews Rd	44,500	new
4785	Brook Rd	43,900	4 yrs.
870	Westchester Dr.	43,900	9 yrs.
	Crutchfield	44,500	new
331	N. Frost	39,900	4 yrs.
	Plymouth Dr.	35,900	new

End notes, Additions, and/or Corrections (cont.)

- 20 page 25 During this time, the Church was willed two properties. The Kragenbrink property sold for \$11,000 and the Steinpress property sold for \$6,000. Of the \$15,000 received for the old parsonage, \$7,000 went to pay off parking lot improvements, \$8,000 went as a down payment on the new parsonage.
- 21 page 25 In June of 1968, the Men's Club Chicken Bar-b-Que was inaugerated. It serves as a yearly celebration of the new church dedication and is a prelude to the annual Sunday School picnic held on the same Sunday. All proceeds go to the building fund.
- 22 page 27 The previous organ was purchased in June of 1970 from a Mrs. Herm at the price of \$1,000.

Signatures Affixed To the First Constitution

Adam Burk	Fred Price	Henry Weber
Emmil Frick	Edward Raths	Ben Wick
Eugene Frick	Fred Robinson	Carl Wick
R. Frick	Edward Schmidt	Henry Wick
L. Grams	Mike Schmidt	Henry Wiegand
Andreas Kitsch	David Simon	
Louis Klein	Fred Smith	
Henry Komsdorf	Mr. Soot	Pastor Hilmar Eckert

Gratiot

X5501
Present
Church

The
Village

Saginaw
Country
Club

Golf
Side

Center

Superior

Wheeler

Maple

Burrows

Sand

Hill

Vincent

Green
Jordan

Ring

Burnham

Wood

Joslin

Kendrick

Meadow
old chapel church
X605

Ruby

Michigan

Hazen
Hamilton

Niagara
Holmes

W. Michigan

Stanley

Merrill
Parrish

Gilbert

Arthur

Grout

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

Bulletins: St. Luke's Church Dedication June 25, 1967
St. Luke's Church Mortgage Burning September 30, 1979

The Saginaw News: November 3, 1934; "St. Luke's Lutheran Church-
One of City's Youngest"

December 7, 1940; "Young Congregation Laying
New Home's Cornerstone"

December 9, 1940; "A Big Moment"

Newsletters (sent to the boys in the service) Nov. 1951-Sept. 1962

Reports: Report of the District Mission Board-from the Synodic

Report of the Conventions of the Michigan District,

Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee.

1930 Salem, Owosso p. 37-38, 41.

1932 St. John's, Bay City p. 33.

1934 Emanuel, Lansing p. 31.

1936 St. Matthew's, Benton Harbor p. 30-31.

1938 Zion, Toledo p. 27.

1940 Salem, Scio p. 29.

1942 Bethel, Bay City p. 36.

1944 St. John's, Wayne p. 43-44.

1946 Emanuel, Lansing p. 36.

Report of the Planning Committee to the Voting Members
of St. Luke's Ev. Lutheran Church

Report on St. Luke's Ev. Luth. New Church Building

Minutes: St. Paul's Ev. Luth. Church-Church Council Minutes

St. Luke's Ev. Luth. Church-Church Council Minutes
Quarterly Meeting Minutes