

One of the Lord's Churches:
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
Neenah, Wisconsin

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Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library
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Senior Church History

Prof. Westerhaus

April 8, 1986

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During the Nineteenth century many people of many nations made the country of America their new home. One of the larger ethnic groups that made its way to the "new world" was the group of German immigrants. One or more of the following reasons moved the German to seek new life across the sea. Some sought freedom from the masses of people which had overcrowded the continent of Europe. It was very hard to find new land to feed new families. Many a young farmer longed for the land where rich land was practically there for the taking. Some sought freedom from the burdensome laws. There were laws that told them what work to do and there were laws that told them in which way they should worship. Real freedoms were hard to find in this land of monarchies. And finally, Germans who preceded them to America, whether relatives or strangers, sent back glowing reports of the beauty and the opportunities of this new land.

As a result thousand upon thousand of Germans came to America. When they arrived they tended to try to live in the same place as other German friends and neighbors which led to concentrations of this people in various areas of the country. Most notably, the Midwest became home for many of them.

Some of these Germans settled in an upper-midwest town in the Fox River valley area of Wisconsin. Some of these Germans were so-called "Old Lutherans", who had left Germany because of reasons of faith. It was these Germans that Pastor Ernst Fachtmann came



Ernst Fachtmann

upon when he came to Neenah, Wisconsin in 1859. Pastor Martin Stephan of Oskosh, who had served these people when he could, told Fachtmann of this group of people in Neenah.

Fachtmann was the Wisconsin Synod's first "Reiseprédiger", or "travelling missionary." He came to the Wisconsin Synod from Brandenburg, Prussia. He was called to the Lutheran congregation at Town Polk in the spring of 1858. Seeing the need for further mission work to be done farther inland, Fachtmann received permission from his congregation to take an extensive mission tour. He travelled north along Lake Michigan as far as Sheboygan and then travelled inland, making stops at Plymouth, Calumet Village, Fond du Lac, and Oshkosh. From Oshkosh he took a steamboat up Lake Winnebago to the city of Menasha. In this sister city of Neenah he found 20 families of "Old Lutherans" which had formed Trinity Lutheran church in 1857. Fachtmann left Menasha for Neenah where he found 51 families that were about to build a church on the island between the Twin Cities.

The site for the church was on a plot of land donated to these early Lutherans by the first governor of Wisconsin, James Doty. Construction was actually begun but the plan was abandoned as impractical to the furtherance of conservative Lutheranism. The site was sold and after five years the early Lutherans in this area split into two groups. One group went to Neenah and the other to Menasha. Both groups retained the name of Trinity.

Fachtmann did not stay in Neenah, but served various groups of Lutherans from New London to Menasha on a rotating basis. A more permanent pastor of the Neenah church was to be found in the person of Pastor E. F. Waldt who arrived in Milwaukee from Alsace, Germany in April of 1859. President Muehlheuser sent him to Fond du Lac where he met Fachtmann. Fachtmann sent him to the Neenah-Menasha mission field. This new missionary arrived shortly before Easter in 1859. Pastor Waldt, though, was in effect a circuit riding pastor who also served groups in Town Greenfield, Winchester, and Woodville.

It seems that part of the ^{result of the} strife that arose between the families which had attempted to build a church on the island, was the acceptance of a call to Oshkosh by pastor Waldt in 1862. Pastor Waldt, though, continued to serve the Neenah congregation traveling on a regular basis from Oshkosh to Neenah. The services were held in the public school and Leavens Hall.

On December 26, 1865, the group in Neenah finally organized as a congregation. This has always been considered the real birthday of Trinity Lutheran Church of Neenah. The congregation called Pastor Waldt to serve them on a full-time basis. Pastor Waldt accepted this call and became Trinity's first resident pastor.

Soon this group of Christians got together plans for the erection of a place of worship. The congregation bought two lots on the corner of Washington and Walnut Sts. as the proposed site for this house of God. The farmers in the church brought in lumber from their forests and the work was supervised by

A. Nussbicker and J. Gerhardt. On the fourteenth Sunday in Trinity, ^{after} in the year 1867, this little church was dedicated to the Lord. A

small two-room parsonage was added onto the rear of the church for Pastor Waldt and his family.

In 1870 Pastor Waldt received a call to serve a congregation in Racine. With the urging of the officials of the Synod he accepted the call. Trinity then issued a call to Pastor Hagedorn of the Hermannsburger-Mission-Institute in Germany to become their next pastor. A couple of important issues were dealt with during his pastorate.

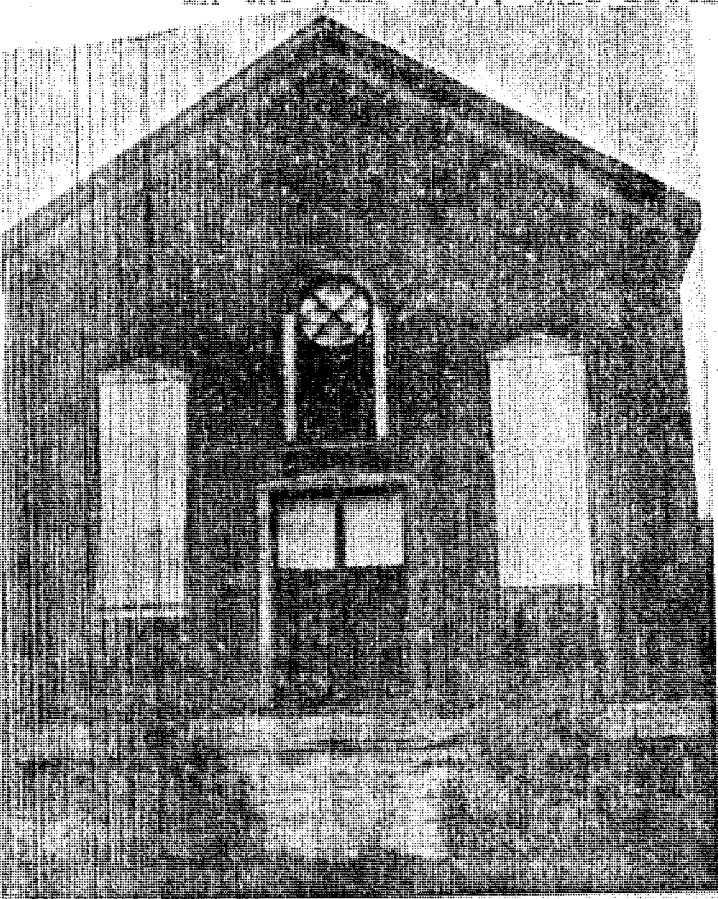
The question of lodges seems to have plagued Trinity at this time.

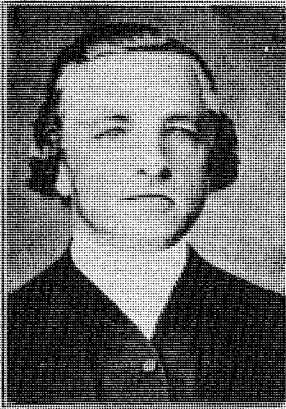
Pastor Hagedorn took a definite stand against the lodges which resulted in

several lodge members leaving Trinity and forming Immanuel Lutheran church. With the lodge question settled, Trinity accepted the constitution which the Wisconsin Synod used as a basis for membership on Nov. 30, 1873. Yet another result of this more confessional stand was the merging again of the Menasha congregation with Trinity under the pastorate of Pastor Hagedorn. This fellowship lasted until 1890.

The second issue that was dealt with at this time was the all-important issue of a Christian day school. Pastor Hagedorn urged the congregation to consider their children's educational needs.

Trinity's 1st Church
(1867-1888)





REV. C. F. WALDT
1867-1870



REV. HAGEDORN
1870-1875



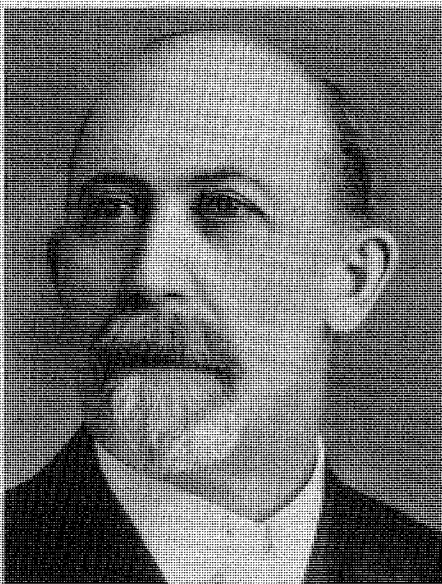
REV. OTTO HOYER
1875-1880



REV. G. DENNINGER
1880-1887



REV. T. GENSIKE
1887-1897



REV. A. C. J. FROEHLKE
1897-1935



REV. E. C. REIM
1935-1940

The congregation was moved to build a modest one-room school house on the corner of Walnut street and Washington Avenue. Pastor Hagedorn had complete charge of the school. All the subjects were taught in the German language, since practically all the people of that day used it still as the mother tongue. The school was furnished with home-made benches which sat four to six children. Such was the bare and meager beginning of Trinity Lutheran School.

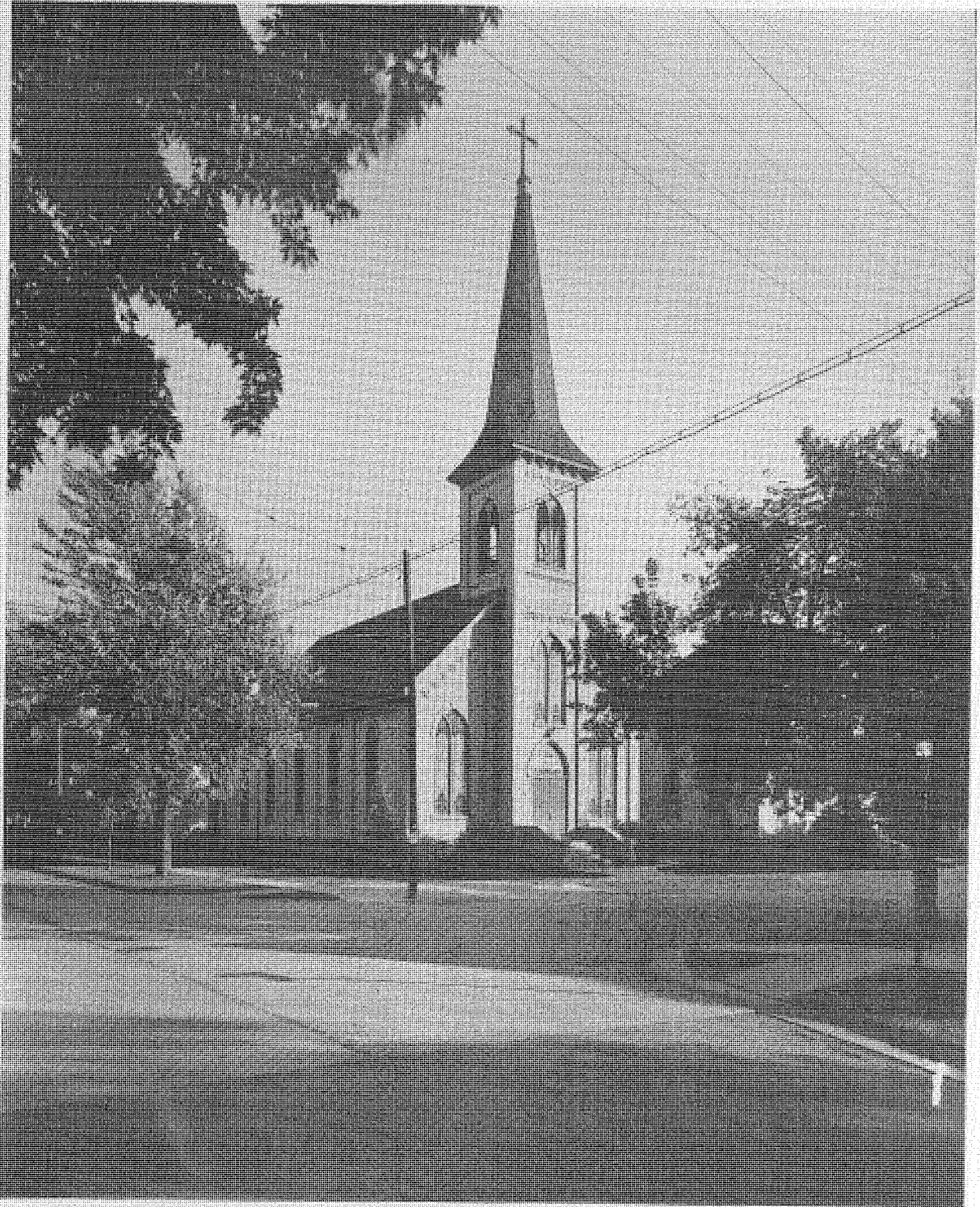
Illness forced Pastor Hagedorn to resign his call in 1875 so the congregation once again turned its attention to the business of filling its pastorate. After several calls were sent out and declined, Candidate Otto Hoyer accepted and arrived in the summer of 1875. Pastor Hoyer was single when he arrived but with his marriage a new parsonage was built which served the congregation until 1899. During this time the first full-time teachers were called to the school. The first was a Mr. Sprengling. He was succeeded by a Mr. Benz. Neither of these teachers seemed to have served very long because by 1880 the school was again without a teacher.

A congregation in St. Paul, Minnesota extended a call to pastor Hoyer in 1879 which he accepted. He remained with Trinity until the March of 1880 in order to diminish the length of the vacancy at Trinity. Pastor Gustave Denninger succeeded him later on in that same year. When Pastor Denninger arrived he found a school without a teacher. A good share of his time had to be spent as a teacher rather than a pastor. But, the 1880's ^{was} a time of a great influx of German immigrants into the Neenah area. Both the church and the school grew quite noticeably. Therefore, a part-time teacher

was called to assist the pastor. Continued growth in the school necessitated the calling of another full-time teacher to teach, serve as organist, and direct the choir. Six different men filled this position in the next fourteen years. The help did not come any too soon since enrollment in the school topped 100 in the 1880's. At this time the children from the Menasha church were also using Trinity's school. Practically in the midst of the phenomenal growth Pastor Denninger accepted a call out of Neenah to Brillion, Wisconsin. In May, 1887 the congregation called its fifth pastor in only twenty two years. Pastor Traugott Gensicke of Iron Ridge became their next pastor.

His pastorate is notable especially for the acquisition of properties and the building of buildings. About six months after Pastor Gensicke came to Neenah, the church empowered him to contact the members for the purpose of getting subscriptions for a new church. It was a successful campaign because on April 15, 1888, the church voted to build a new house of God. The present lots on which the current church was built were too small for the proposed church so four lots about an eighth of a mile away were purchased. A building committee was elected and a Mr. Gruenhagen of Oshkosh was engaged as the architect. The dedication of this church took place on October 21, 1888. The Pastors Jaeckel, Hagedorn, and Dornfield preached the sermons for the occasion. This church was to serve Trinity congregation for some 74 years.

There were other improvements that were made during the ten years of Pastor Gensicke's service. Sheds were built to house the teams with which the farmers came to church. An organ was bought



TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
(1888-1962)

PH 1A

for the price of \$1,000. The final major project of this era was the decision to build a new school house.

We already spoke of the extraordinary growth ~~that~~ Trinity school experienced in the '80's. The little one room school house was well past its usefulness. The congregation met on Feb. 26, 1893 and voted to build a new school. Less than eight months later the new school was ready for dedication. The new school contained two classrooms, a meeting room for the choir, and another small storage room. With all this building, the congregation found itself somewhat strapped financially for years to come.

A second teacher was now engaged as a second class was added to the school. However, strife and unrest which led to factions in the church caused the school to loose enrollment. The Menasha congregation split away from Trinity once again in 1890. So the second teacher was dropped as well as the second class. Another casualty of this strife was ^{that} Pastor Gensicke who resigned in 1897. Trinity was heading into the Twentieth century as a troubled and struggling church.

^{In the midst of this}
The Lord blessed His church in Neenah with the long and faithful ministry of Pastor Albert Froehlke. Pastor Froehlke came from a church in Lewiston, Minnesota in 1897 to serve Trinity for over 37 years. As a part of his call, he also served the Town Clayton Church and the church at Mears Corners. As the Lord's servant he ably led Trinity well into the Twentieth century.

The parsonage was once again considered inadequate so in 1899 a new residence was built which was the parsonage until 1962. This was to be the last of the construction work for Trinity for quite

some time.

Under Pastor Froehlke's leadership the school once again was filled with vitality. Early in the new century a second class was once again established and a second full time teacher was placed in charge. Trinity seemed to have a hard time keeping its full time male teachers. From the time that the first male teacher was called until 1912 a total of 26 years, nine men filled this position. Things changed somewhat in 1912 with the arrival of Mr. Wilhelm Hellermann. Mr. Hellermann would stay at Trinity until his death some 50 years later. With the arrival of Mr. Hellermann in 1912, the congregation built its first teacherage on the corner of Oak and Washington Sts.

This activity brought to a close 50 years of God's blessings for Trinity Lutheran church in Neenah. Shortly before its 50th anniversary in 1916, the church was redecorated and a 1,800 pound bell was dedicated. With hearts filled with thanksgiving and love the congregation praised the Lord for 50 years of His continued grace and blessing. The Lord had increased his church to include 750 communicants, a voting membership of 211, and 88 children in school. In April the church celebrated its Golden Anniversary with a special service of thanksgiving.

The second fifty years were to prove no less vibrant than the first fifty years. Again a remarkable growth was experienced beginning in 1916. For several years thereafter new members were taken in practically every meeting. But the new members were not quite like the old type of new member. Many of these members were quite Americanized. Most spoke fluent English. In light of

of this new "problem" the question of introducing English into the church service and classroom was addressed. Unlike other churches, though, Trinity solved its problem with relatively little difficulty. On November 26, 1916, it was resolved to introduce some services in English. The second Sunday of the month, in the evening service, was designated the time for an English service. Two years later the first and third Sundays were set aside for English services. And already in 1921 services were conducted in both languages every Sunday. This concluded a swift and evangelical switch to serve both the German and the English speaking members of Trinity. A potentially divisive issue was smoothly dealt with.

More changes could be expected as well in the school as enrollment increased. The first change was a change of policy. In the beginning, pupils were required to pay "Schulgeld" in amounts varying from fifty to ninety cents per month, depending on how many children there were in one family. This is how expenses were met in the school. But the congregation came to see that the education of its children was every members' concern and resolved to discontinue this collection from the children.

The children were also expected to purchase their own textbooks. Families with many children found this an onerous financial burden. Several organizations in the church donated sums of money to buy the old textbooks from the children and made them the property of the school. From that time until the present children pay only a small book rental fee for modern and up-to-date textbooks.

1925 was another year of decision for Trinity. It was in this

year that another expansion of the existing school classes^{was contemplated}. Up to this time there was no eighth grade. The pastor and the congregation felt that it would greatly enhance the confirmation instruction and the Christian education of its ~~children~~ to add another class. A third class was added in the July meeting of the congregation and a third teacher was called to teach this class. A canvass of the congregation was made for the support of this new teacher. For the first time members were able to pledge whatever they desired rather than a stipulated amount as in the past. Thus the school was also supported by free will offerings.

This year also saw the addition of a somewhat controversial Gymnasium to the existing school house. The first proposal for the building failed to pass by a narrow margin. Later the same year it was again placed before the congregation and this time it passed. The congregation granted permission for a 15,000 dollar loan. The building would cost \$24,000. The remaining amount was to be raised through a fund drive. This drive only netted \$6,000, though. The project was commenced even without sufficient funds on hand. Again the church was burdened with a large debt. It was not until 1940 that the Ladies Aid and the Mother's and Daughters Circle donated the remainig \$7,000 to ^{eliminate} ~~finalize~~ the debt.

All the talk of finances, the necessity of raising post-World War I salaries, and other factors precipitated a change in giving to the church's needs. At first the dues which each member was expected to give were raised to finance the higher overhead. Then in 1918 an envelope system for the young people of the congregation was initiated. The mode of giving for the regular

contributors was changed to a quarterly paying of dues instead of one lump sum. Finally, a system of which we are all familiar was introduced in 1931. The congregation voted to "introduce the envelope system and let the board work out the details to the best interest of the congregation." This constituted a striking departure from the previous way of giving to the Lord's Church as the members of Trinity knew it. It must have been a change for the better, though, since the system still survives to this day with only minor changes in its implementation.

As the years of the 1930's unfolded the people of Trinity had to face the reality that the years of service by their dearly loved Pastor Froehlke were coming to an end. His health was beginning to fail as the years of tireless service began to take their toll. On May 19, 1935, Pastor Froehlke ended 37 years of service to Trinity by tendering his resignation. Sadly, the church accepted his resignation. But before he could preach his farewell sermon and before his replacement, Pastor Edmund Reim, could be installed, Pastor Froehlke became very ill and died a short while later. On June 8, 1935 Trinity put to rest its beloved servant at the age of 69 years, 10 months, and 25 days.

A full month later, on July 7th, Pastor Reim, from Town of Forest, Fond du Lac County, was installed as pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church. The vitality which was strongly in evidence during the patorate of Pastor Froehlke continued during the ^{pastorate} ~~pastorate~~ of Pastor Reim. Membership continued to grow and the enrollment in the school continued to increase. The School again needed to be remodeled to make room for another classroom. The

cloakroom and the hallway which adjoined it was made into a fourth classroom. A son of the congregation, Candidate Amos Schwerin, who had not yet received a call into the pastoral ministry, became the fourth teacher in the fall of 1935. He continued to served until the fall of 1939 when he accepted a call as a pastor. Candidate O. Hoyer replaced him for a year until he became ill and retired. The time had now come to call a permanent fourth full-time teacher. A Mr. Winfried Stoeckli of Madison was called to teach in the fall of 1940.

Pastor Reim took it upon himself to introduce a new system of record keeping. The family records; births, deaths, baptisms, and weddings were made easier to record and find. In February of 1937, the congregation accepted its fair share of the Synod's debt, incurred during the depression, by pledging itself to pay \$5,000. A few months later the new English Constitution was accepted by the congregation to replace the old German Constitution which had been in place since 1873. These changes in the operation of the congregation served to smooth the transition of the Synod and Trinity congregation into the modern age in America.

Pastor Reim's annual report to the congregation on January 19, 1939 recommended that the congregation study the building needs of Trinity. The membership had grown to around 7,000 souls and the present buildings were no longer adequate. A new central heating plant, school, and church were under consideration. Rev. Weber, of the committee on Church Architecture and Planning in the Missouri Synod, was even solicited for advice. However, before an architect could be engaged Pastor Reim received a call to a professorship at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. When Pastor Reim

accepted the call to the Seminary the building work was brought to a standstill.

It would take a gifted man to take on a congregation of such magnitude by himself. With this in mind the congregation sent its first call to Pastor Edgar Hoenecke of Plymouth, Michigan. However, he returned the call. The next man to receive their call

was Pastor of Collins, accepted the in Neenah on 1940. Pastor to Trinity end of its years as a The Parochial follows; communicants, were in Grade the Sunday members. The grown by over



G. A. Schaefer Wisconsin. He call and arrived October 29, Schaefer came right at the first seventy-five congregation. report read as souls, 1,590; 1,190; 168 school, and School had 95 congregation had 50% in the third

25 years. More than the numbers, though, the blessings could be counted in the souls saved for eternity and the blessing and peace of the Gospel which had been shared with the Lord's church in Neenah for what was now seventy five years.

The influx of people into the Twin Cities remained great and Trinity was growing so rapidly. It became apparent that the wise

thing to do would be to ask the Mission Board to begin a mission on the west side of Neenah. Already in early 1941, the congregation passed a resolution to turn to the Mission Board for help, ^{also} expressing a willingness to release members to serve as a nucleus for this new mission. On December 15, 1941, the first service was conducted at Martin Luther Evangelical Lutheran Church, the new mission. Now this church is large and flourishing with a membership of over 1,100 souls.

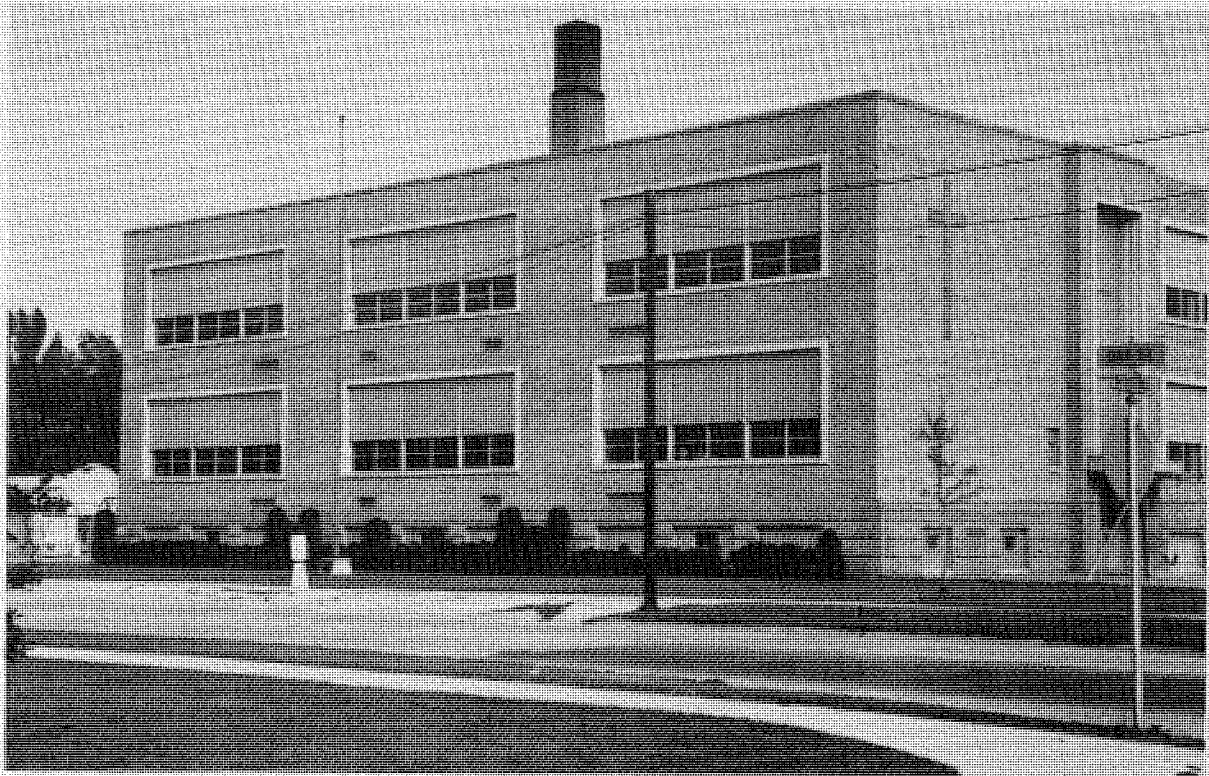
Still, Trinity kept growing until it reached 2,000 souls. The Planning Committee thought of relocating the church and school on a new site on the south side of Neenah. Instead, in early 1948, another mission was established on the south side, Grace Lutheran. This congregation also has ^{around} 350 to 400 souls.

This exciting period of mission work and expansion was followed by an equally exciting period of building and physical expansion. The School was the first earmarked for expansion. The ^{new} School was estimated to cost the congregation \$50,000 in 1940 when the congregation was first ready to build. In 1950, when the actual work was begun, the cost had risen to more than \$225,000. On April 6, 1950, the actual work was begun. One year to the day, later, the project was completed. On June 10, 1951, Trinity dedicated its new six-room school for the feeding of the Lambs of Christ. Children from Trinity, Martin Luther, Grace, and Bethel Lutheran in Menasha were in attendance in the new school. This arrangement continued until Bethel, then Martin Luther, and finally Grace opened their own schools.

The final phase of the master plan of the late '30's called for the erection of a new House of God. After the school loan was



OLD SCHOOL



NEW SCHOOL



H. BRAUN
1889-1907

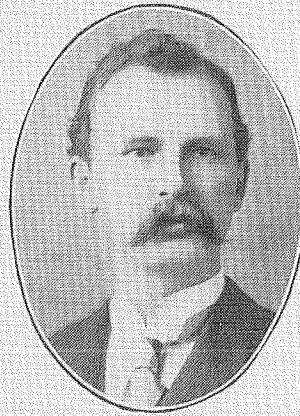


PAULA SAUER
1899-1903

FORMER TEACHERS



IDA KUEHL
1903-1916



WM. A. GERHARDT
1907-1911



W. HELLERMANN
1912-1962



WINFRIED STOEKLI
1940-1962



SYLVESTER QUAM
1953-1964

repaid efforts began for the gathering of funds for the new church. At first, it was planned that the new church would be adjacent to the new school, but the property that needed to be bought was not available. The building committee was forced to look across the street to the other side of Oak Street for additional properties. The needed land was purchased for 50,800 dollars.

The congregation directed the building committee to engage the services of an architect to draw up plans for the new building. By midsummer of 1961, the architects had completed the plans and the project was let out for bids. In early August ground was broken and excavation began a few days later. On May 29, 1962 the cornerstone was laid. The progress was excellent and by July 29, 1962, Trinity was able to dedicate this new beautiful edifice to the Glory of God.

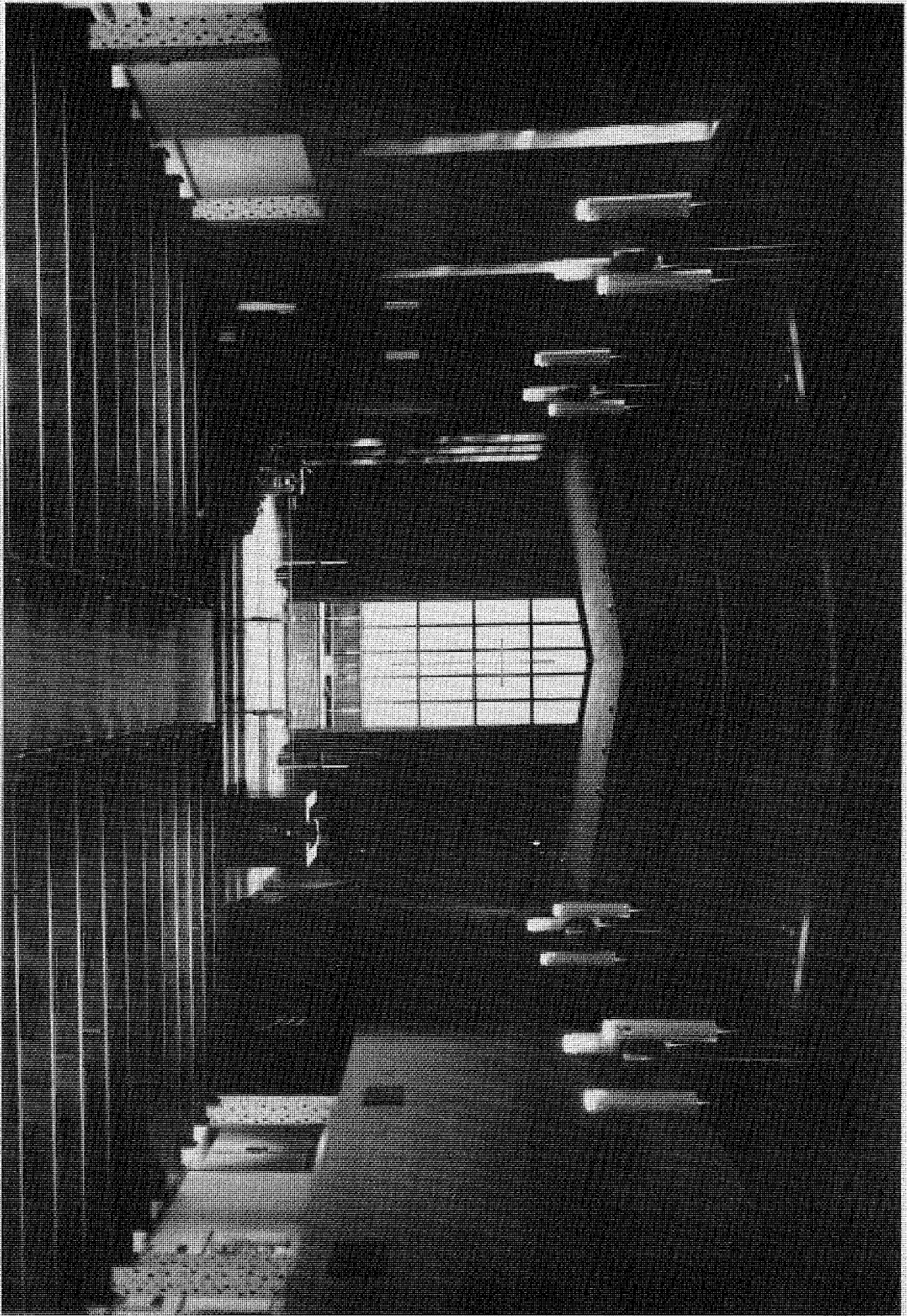
Three services were held to celebrate this dedication. Five sons of the congregation---Pastor Amos Schwerin, Prof. Paul Kuehl, Pastor Donald Sellnow, Pastor Daniel Malchow, and Pastor Julius Manteufel,---served as either speakers or liturgists during these services. In the evening service, Prof. Martin Albrecht conducted a sacred concert to dedicate the new organ. It was a great day of rejoicing for the people of Trinity as they offered to their Lord this new church, parsonage, and organ.

It would seem that Trinity would have been done with building now for quite some time. However, 1963 saw the necessity of a new addition to the school. Increased enrollment moved the congregation to authorize the building of two additional classrooms onto the school. In 1971 still another addition of a gymnasium, choir room,



TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

Interior of Present Church



and ~~since~~ ^{various} other small additions finally completed the school as it stands today. The children at TLS have a modern and comfortable building in which to grow physically and spiritually.

Trinity also became involved in another area of education during the 1950's. Interest had been expressed in the Fox Valley area for quite some time that a Lutheran high school would be started to continue the Christian education of our children through the twelfth grade. Up to this time, a few hardy souls were daily sending their children some 30-50 miles to Winnebago Lutheran Academy in Fond du Lac. This, however, was only feasible for a few families. In the mid-fifties Fox Valley Lutheran High School began to serve a federation of churches in the Fox Cities area. Today over 600 students from some 48 member congregations attend FVL. Some of our pastors and teachers that serve in our Synod as well as thousands of dedicated laymen and women are a result of the Christian education of this high school.

Another educational system served to help Trinity out in its obvious need for pastoral assistance. It amazes the writer that one man was able to serve so large of a congregation so ably as had the last three pastors. In 195²₅ the Seminary in Mequon added a fourth year to its curriculum which was to give its students some on-the-job experience in the pastoral ministry. Trinity was one of the first congregations to implement the vicar program among WELS churches. Certainly, this was a real blessing and help for Pastor Schaefer as he shepherded this huge congregation. Trinity has had vicars every year, with the exception of 1976-1980, since this time. Twenty seven men had the pastor and people of Trinity

as their able teachers to help prepare them for the ministry.

With all these changes and additions at Trinity it is quite apropos that the Christians at the Lord's church of Trinity should have the occasion of their centennial during which they could stop and reflect on all the blessings which He had showered on His church for these hundred years. The last twenty five years leading up to 1965 were some of the most important years in Trinity's history. They were years of expansion, mission work, and education. They were years that stood Trinity Lutheran Church in good stead for its entrance into its second century as the Lord's church.

For eleven more years, Pastor Schaefer continued as the only pastor at Trinity. By 1976 he had served Trinity for 36 years. He had served in the Lord's vineyard for 44 years. The time had come for Pastor Schaefer to receive some assistance from an ordained man who could help reduce the load of this dedicated man. In the fall of 1975 Trinity resolved to call another full time pastor to do the work in this challenging congregation. Pastor Douglas Engelbrecht received their call in February of 1976. He was installed as their ninth pastor in June of 1976. The vicar program was suspended for the next four years as these two men served the needs of this congregation alone.

The educational system at Trinity continued to remain strong. The school now consisted of nine separate classrooms with nine full time teachers on the staff. Mr. Hellerman, who served the church for nearly 50 years as teacher and principal was called to his Savior's side in 1961. Mr Winfried Stoeckli served the school from 1940 until his death in 1962 as both teacher and

principal. Mr. Sylvester Quam served from 1953 until 1964 as both a teacher and principal. Mr Dale Schaumberg replaced Mr. Quam as principal of our school until he accepted a call to Arizona. Then Mr. Robert Moldenhauer was called to replace him. In 1975 Mr. Jimmy Groth was made the teacher of the eighth grade and principal. Mr. Groth is still serving in this capacity. If any of these name are familiar it is clear that Trinity had very able and gifted men to guide the affairs of Trinity Lutheran School.

In 1980, old age and the effect of the pain that permeates our world moved Pastor Schaefer to tender his retirement from the ministry. He had served this vibrant congregation for practically 40 years. On

March 2, 1980, the congregation gathered to pay its fond farewell and speak its thanks for the work and the dedication of Pastor Schaefer. A special service was held with a reception held in the gym in the afternoon. In this way the Lord brought to an end the long and blessed ministry of this faithful man. Pastor Schaefer was already a rather sick man and a little more than seven months later on October 6, 1980, he was called to his eternal rest. He died at the age of 73 years, 11 months, and 28 days.

With Pastor Schaefer's death, the vicar program was reinstated. Six more vicars have served Trinity since this time. 1986 is



Pastor Douglas Engelbrecht

the last year for the vicar program for the time being, however. Talk began in the fall of 1984 about the need for a second pastor to serve this parish of over 1,800 souls. By the October budget meeting in 1985, this talk had come to serious action as the congregation resolved to call a candidate from the 1986 class of our Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Work is now in progress to obtain a parsonage and prepare for the arrival of this pastor in the summer.

Enrollment had dropped in the school during the late 70's and early 80's due to the end of the baby boom. But in 1985 several new developments brought about a resurgence in enrollment. The kindergarten was blessed with over 20 pupils which forbodes larger classes to come. The church in Winneconne, St Paul's, began sending sixteen or so children to Trinity school in the hopes of gaining a nucleus of students in order to start a school of its own in the not-too-distant future. Finally, a pre-school was started in the fall of 1985 for those children who were four years old. A tenth teacher was called to teach this new pre-school. The school now has 192 children enrolled plus 13 in the pre-school. The spirit of Christian education still remains a strong and vibrant spirit at Trinity.

1985 was a big year for Trinity for another reason. The church has become sensitive to the needs of the elderly and the handicapped. Plans were written up and then revised for the purpose of adding a wheel chair ramp, an elevator, and bathrooms to the front of the church. This \$225, 000 project is close to being approved by the congregations which ^{will} help it to serve all people

without discouraging them because of their handicaps.

A few words need to be said about the organizations at Trinity. A variety of organizations have been started for a variety of reasons ranging from service to fellowship.

Twenty men of Trinity assembled and founded a mutual aid and benefit society on January 10, 1876. They called their organization "Der Krankenverein", or Aid Society. The purpose of this organization was to assist needy members and their families when sickness or death struck the family. Dues were collected from the members and then distributed to those who had need. Even in these modern days of insurance and Social Security, the Aid is still active and helping the members of Trinity.

March 5, 1873 marked the beginning of the Ladies Aid. Its purpose was to carry on charity work within the congregation and among the charitable institutions of the Synod. The Ladies Aid was also helpful in some of the building projects and school projects throughout the years. Today the Ladies Aid still meets once a month, on the first Wednesday of the month, to sew and fellowship and learn from God's word. They also do most of the serving at luncheons at the funerals of members.

Another ladies group was begun, on May 24, 1924, to lend aid and support to the school and the Sunday School, and to have regular meeting in the interest of furthering Christian fellowship. Throughout the years they have helped out these schools and given financial help in purchasing extra materials, furnishings, and etc. They still have this same purpose today as they meet regularly on the second Wednesday of the month.

During the '1970's a mission minded group of ladies formed an organization under the Synod's proposed name of the Lutheran Women's Missionary Society. In this group the ladies have an opportunity to learn more about our Synod's mission work. They are able to serve as an impetus in their own congregation for the doing of mission work. They, also, have opportunity to give financial and physical support ^{to} of the WELS mission efforts throughout the world.

There are several other organizations that are mostly of a fellowship nature. They are: The Men's Club, The Young People's Society, The Pioneers, and the Couples Club. These organizations, too, help from time to time in serving the church in various functions.

And so the Lord has blessed His church in Neenah. Today it is a church of 1,856 souls and 1,450 ^{communicants} ~~souls~~. It is a church that for almost 125 years has been showered with the grace of God. The pure Word remains. Dedicated pastors, teachers, and laypeople are continually working for the Lord's kingdom and its spread in Neenah and elsewhere. The prayer of Trinty surely is this---that the Lord would continue to be with His church and continue to guide it and bless it as He has for these One Hundred and Twenty One years. May our Dear Lord God be praised!

Works Used

Seventy Fifth Anniversary Booklet - Schaefer, Hellermann.

One Hundred Years Anniversary Booklet - Schaefer.

"Ernst August Gottlieb Fachtmann" WELS Historical Institute Journal,
Armin Engel.

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Various newspaper articles and personal accounts.

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