

TRAVELING MISSIONARIES

IN NORTHERN MICHIGAN

A History of Salem Congregation,  
Escanaba, Michigan.

Senior Church History Project  
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MISSIONARIES AND PASTORS

G. Thiele	1882
Herman Monhardt	1883-1885
Johannes Ziebell	1885-1888
M. Busak (student of theology)	1888
H. L. Heidelberger	1889

St. Paul's, Escanaba organized 1889

H. C. Zarwell	1889-1891
J. Rein	1891-1895
P. Korn	1895-1896

St. Paul's, Escanaba

*C. W. Wagner	1896-1902
*Wm. Peters	1902-1914

Immanuel, Escanaba

Leonard Kaspar	1899-1909
L. A. Witte	1910-1913
Otto Hohenstein	1914-1915

Friedens, Escanaba 1915

Otto Hohenstein	1915-1920
Christian Doehler	1920-1922

Salem, Escanaba June 30, 1922

Christian Doehler	1922-1931
William Lutz	1931-1957
E. Schmelzer	1957-1958
Armin Panning	1959-1962
J. J. Wendland	1962-1976
William D. Tabor	1976-

\* Michigan Synod Pastors

## TRAVELING MISSIONARIES IN NORTHERN MICHIGAN

The Wisconsin Synod became more and more involved with church extension and mission work in the 1880's. Two factors which helped to promote mission endeavors were the mushroom growth of German immigration during the 80's and the railroads which provided fast and safe transportation. Before 1880, the system in the Northwest part of Wisconsin was that a number of pastors, under the direction of Pastor Mayerhoff, devoted several weeks each to traveling missionary work. Since this system was rather haphazard, it was eventually decided that a special synodical missionary should be appointed.

The first man to fill this position was Pastor G. Thiele. He was sent also into the Upper Peninsula of Michigan to investigate especially the spiritual needs of the German immigrants. Pastor Thiele began his work in October of 1880. He founded twelve preaching stations in Northern Michigan. In addition, he supplied three Marshfield stations, helped Pastor Bergholz in Marathon Co., and later also went to Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls. The strenuousness of this workload forced him to resign after three years.

His successor was Candidate of Theology Herman Monhardt. He was born in Canton of Berne, Switzerland, and received his theological training at our Wisconsin

Synod Seminary in Milwaukee. On November 18, 1883, he was ordained and commissioned by Dr. Adolf Hoenecke in St. Matthew's Ev. Lutheran Church in Milwaukee. On November 23, 1883 Pastor Monhardt set out for Escanaba, Michigan. He confined himself to working in the Michigan Peninsula, centering much of his activity around the Escanaba area. He began his work by serving seventeen preaching stations. The following is his first Missionary Report published in the Synodical Proceedings of June 1884:

Since November 1883 I have been doing the Lord's work in the territory of Northern Michigan assigned to me by the Superintendent of Missions, the Reverend Mr. Mayerhoff. Thus far the results evident at this time are quite satisfactory. The number of stations where I have been conducting services stood at fifteen, to which two more were added, though not of great importance. These stations received the ministrations of the Word as often as feasible, mostly once a month, with a few stations twice a month.

During my tenure a change can be reported at practically all seventeen stations so that in several places an increase can be reported, in others a decrease. For various reasons people moved away. Some were seeking better schools for their children, others a better income and higher wages.

In NORWAY the number of Lutheran members declined considerably, of the five which attended public services, three most likely left this area for good, together with a few single persons who had attached themselves to the preaching of God's Word.

Concerning FLORENCE practically the same thing can be reported since here also a decrease must be announced. The people simply did not find wherewithal to live.

More promising are the following places:

ESCANABA, where during my activity the congregation could enjoy an increase of seven families. Up till now the church attendance has been very good. Since we were in no position to erect our own house of worship, the congregation made a contribution of \$350.00 toward the building fund of the local Augustana Lutheran Church with this understanding that henceforth we can now always assemble for public worship in this edifice.

Last winter FORD RIVER enjoyed an increase of three families who faithfully attended our services. Here most probably the congregation will continue to grow.

Services in FAYETTE are very well attended. A parcel of real estate has been presented to the congregation with work on the new church building scheduled to begin next spring. The number of members remained stable, with no increase or decrease reportable.

Also in INDIANTOWN a piece of land has been promised for church building purposes, but unless financial conditions improve noticeably, a building program cannot as yet be undertaken.

Services at DAGGETT were being conducted in various homes, which practice will have to be continued. The people attend services very well; and the number of families increased by five.

WILSON and POWERS were likewise provided with an opportunity for divine worship.

IRON MOUNTAIN is a very active place where

we experienced an increase of two families. Here too services were held in the homes, which practice will have to be continued.

For the future IRON RIVER and STAMBAUGH are likewise promising fields because homesteads are being staked out for many of our people. Here too an expansion is reportable.

Things in CRYSTAL FALLS were progressing nicely, two families even joined our congregation, however our people are now showing more aversion toward, than affection for, the Word of God.

For the future WHITNEY, on the Metropolitan Branch, is a promising field.

During this period of time ( from November to June ) I traveled by rail 3012 miles, by horse and buggy 508 miles, on foot 175 miles and on the boats 102 miles for a grand total of 3,902 miles.

Twenty-four children were baptized, ten persons were confirmed, namely one each at Powers, Hermansville, Iron Mountain, Stambaugh, Fayette, Florence, and four in Indian-town. Seven marriages were solemnized, one burial service was conducted, and 119 persons were communed. Respectfully yours, H. Monhardt  
Missionary at Large

Pastor Monhardt also visited Quinnesec, Stephenson, Wallace, Menominee, Manistique, and Marquette during his ministry in the Upper Peninsula. At Escanaba he conducted services for a time in a German hotel. The first baptism recorded at Escanaba was that of Fred Rudiger in April of 1884. By 1885, there were three organized congregations: Holy Cross, Daggett, with 11 communicant members, St. John's, Ford River, with 13 communicant members, and St. Peter's, Stambaugh, with 15 communicant

members. In addition to these three places, regular services were conducted at Hermansville, Norway, Iron Mountain, Indiantown, Wilson, Escanaba, Fayette, Manistique, Iron River, Crystal Falls, Florence and Commonwealth. In 1885 Pastor Monhardt accepted a call to Caledonia, Wisconsin.

In the early part of May, 1885, Candidate of Theology Johannes Ziebell took over the mission field. He resided at Escanaba, and served the same areas regularly that Monhardt had with the addition of Quinnesec. In 1887 he reported that he was experiencing some opposition in the area, which was caused by union Methodists and free thinkers. At this time services were held every four weeks at Iron River, Stambaugh, Ford River, Daggett, Escanaba, and Florence. Pastor Ziebell took a call in 1888.

From May 28 to July 15, 1888, the congregations around Escanaba were served by Student of Theology M. Busak. At this time Escanaba had services every two weeks with 30 - 40 people in attendance. There were more than 100 families in the entire field of labor.

In 1889, Pastor H. L. Heidelberger from Hartland, Wisconsin was installed at Escanaba on the seventh Sunday after Trinity, the fifteenth of July. Pastor Heidelberger had been commissioned by the Synod to

succeed Pastor Ziebell. It was in 1889 that the group of Lutherans at Escanaba were organized into a congregation. They adopted the name, " The German Evangelical Lutheran St. Paul's Congregation. " The constitution was signed by the following: Louis Lippold, Wm. Froehlich, Fred Luecke, Fred Haehnemann, George Kaufmann, John Hartwig, Henry Koenke, Gottlieb Essig, Jacob Moersch, Michael Dam, F. Schroeder, Fred Bittner, H. Breitenbach, Wm. Sprenger, Karl Meyer, Paul Kositzky, Julius Flath, Julius Riten, Emil Wickert, Fred Selig, Herman Bittner, Emil Noe, Wm. Thielicke, Herman Rudiger, Louis Kaufmann, Herman Buhrisch, Emil Rudiger, Robert Williams, Oscar Langhammer, Henry Burmeister, Emil Unger, A. E. Habermann, Adolph Hinze, Louis Willard, Michael Liedke.

At this time a piece of ground was purchased and the first German Lutheran church was constructed at Escanaba. When the church was built, there were about 30 families with 80 attending services. The Swedish Augustana Lutheran Church, whose building had previously been used by the Germans for their worship services, is now Bethany Lutheran Church, L.C.A. The first small German church was built on the corner of 4th Avenue South and 12th Street. This is also the present site of the church, which was enlarged and remodeled in 1925.



The town of Escanaba, which means " flat rock, " was growing rapidly at this time. The little settlement on Sand Point became the county seat already in 1861. However, there was little growth until after the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad came into town in 1883-1884. There was an influx of German settlers between 1881 and 1893, but the area was a melting pot for settlers of many different nationalities.

Pastor Heidelberger was forced to put down his office for a while in order to regain his strength. Rev. H. C. Zarwell came to replace Pastor Heidelberger. There is some confusion in the various records and histories as to which of these two men were active at the time of the congregation's organization and the construction of the church at Escanaba.

By this time there was enough development and growth among the missions of the peninsula that a second worker was needed. In 1891, Candidate Gustav Schmidt was ordained and installed in Florence, WI, being entrusted with 8 preaching stations in the Upper Peninsula. Two years later, when Schmidt's health had failed him, Candidate Martin Hillemann took up residence at Iron Mountain following his ordination. He served 4 other parishes. Both of these men were able to travel by railroads from one preaching station to another. Now

as each parish or area begins to have its own pastor, we will concentrate more on the Escanaba situation.

Pastor Zarwell served for about one year, and was followed by Pastor J. Rein. Again there is some confusion as to which of these men was active when the parsonage at Escanaba was built. Pastor Rein served for four years from 1891-1895. In the latter part of 1895 Pastor P. Korn, a traveling missionary, took charge of several stations in the U. P. On September 1, 1895, St. Paul's Congregation, Escanaba, reorganized according to the laws of the state.

Pastor Korn lived for a time in a rented house about two miles south of the village of Hyde. Besides the lumber industry in this area, some families began farming. There were enough Lutheran families living near Hyde to establish a preaching station there. This station grew and became an organized congregation in 1900.

One of the churches greatest enemies in the Upper Peninsula was ( and still is ) the many anti-Christian lodges in that area. Up until 1895, some members of the church at Escanaba were affiliated with lodges. In a meeting held on January 1st, 1896, it was announced that all those belonging to such organizations were thereby forfeiting their membership in an orthodox

Evangelical Lutheran Church. On April 30, 1896 the Ladies Aid was organized at Escanaba.

In 1896, C. W. Wagner, a Pastor of the Michigan Synod, took charge of St. Paul's, Escanaba. During his ministry, some members refused to bow to the constitution of the congregation concerning lodge membership. At the heart of the issue was not only liberal views but actually compromising the Word of God. The result of the controversy was a splitting of the congregation. Those who desired to abide by all of God's Word left St. Paul's, held their own services in another location, incorporated themselves under the name of Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church, and built their own church on 1st Avenue South. This conservative group was served by Pastor Leonard Kaspar, a traveling missionary, from 1899-1909. Pastor Kaspar wrote in the Gemeinde Blatt, an official paper of the Wisconsin Synod, July 15, 1900: " This whole vicinity is practically under the influence of lodgery. " From 1910-1913 Immanuel was served by Pastor L. Witte, from Daggett. During Pastor Witte's time the Ford River station was closed due to the decline in the lumber industry at Ford River. Pastor Witte was followed by Otto Hohenstein.

It is possible that, as some records show, Pastor Dasler from Rapid River may have served the conservative Immanuel group before Pastor Kaspar came. ( At this time Pastor Dasler was also serving the Sault mission. He made the 170 mile ( one way ) rail trip frequently. In 1900 five families organized a Lutheran congregation there. )

The liberal, compromising, "lodge" group kept the name St. Paul's. When Pastor Wagner left, a call was extended to Pastor Wm. Peters, another Pastor of Michigan Synod. Pastor Peters served St. Paul's congregation from 1902 till the day of his death on November 22, 1914. By this time both congregations had appointed committees to work on the prospect of uniting. After meeting repeatedly, the committees presented their conclusions to the congregations.

In 1915, both congregations decided to dissolve and form one congregation. Pastor Otto Hohenstein, the pastor of the Immanuel congregation, took charge of the reorganized Friedens Evangelical Lutheran congregation. This united body now pledged to abide by the entire Word of God in doctrine and practice, the Lutheran Confessions, and the constitution of the congregation. Pastor Hohenstein served the Friedens congregation until 1920.

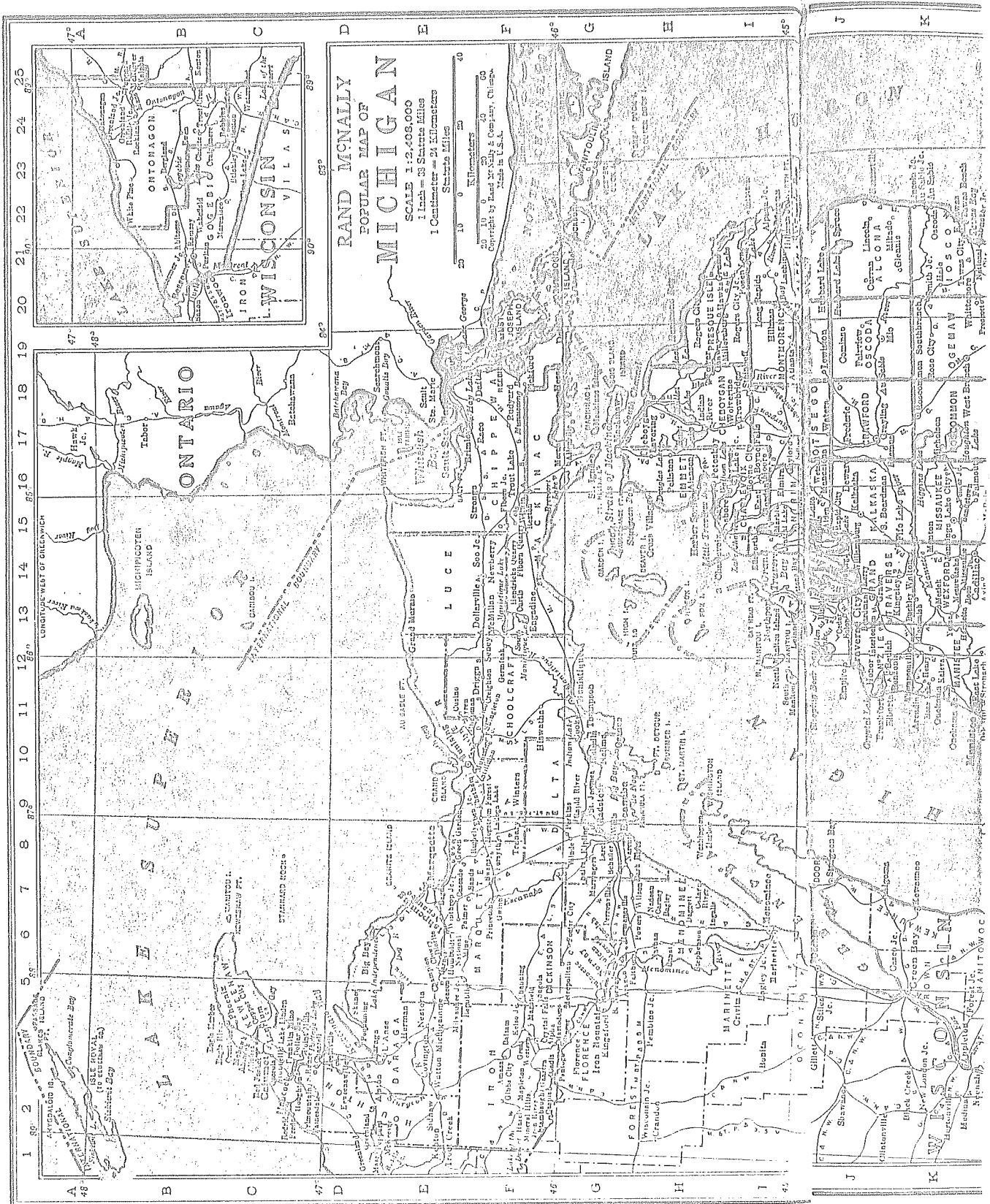
Since 1900, the Hyde parish had been affiliated with the Escanaba parish. In 1920, it was considered advisable that there henceforth be a change in parish boundary lines. Therefore Hyde, Powers, Hermansville and Wilson were linked together and served by Pastor Gutzke, a candidate, from Powers. Eventually the Wilson congregation and the Hermansville congregation consolidated with the Powers congregation, leaving the present dual parish of Powers and Hyde.

On July 4, 1920, Pastor Christian A. F. Doehler was installed at Friedens, Escanaba. On June 30, 1922 the congregation changed their German name, Friedens, to Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church. Thus the same congregation has had four different names!

Pastor Doehler served Salem until 1931. He was followed by Pastor William Lutz, 1931-1957 and Pastor E. Schmelzer, 1957-1958. Pastor Armin Panning came in 1959. He was able to find a wife among the daughters of the congregation. His successor, Pastor J. J. Wendland, came in 1962 and took with him many of the congregational records when he left in 1976. Perhaps, some of those records might have proved useful in writing this paper if they had been available.

Under the direction of the Holy Spirit and the present Pastor Tabor, Salem congregation is planning to

build a new church in the near future. We pray that the Lord of the church would continue to bless this congregation and the many other congregations which He has prospered in the Upper Peninsula.



**RAND McNALLY**  
**POPULAR MAP OF**  
**MICHIGAN**

SCALE 1:2,493,000  
 1 Inch = 73 Statute Miles  
 1 Centimeter = 24 Kilometers

0 10 20 30 40  
 Kilometers  
 0 10 20 30 40  
 Statute Miles

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