

THE PEACE OF SUN PRAIRIE
A HISTORY OF THE
CONGREGATION
1901-1985

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When one walks through the doors of Peace Ev. Lutheran Church in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, they are stepping into history whether they realize it or not. The congregation is almost one hundred years old and has every indication that it will be around for the next hundred, God willing. However, I wonder just how many of us know how it came to be that on every Sunday we are able to come and worship our God in this place of worship on Windsor Street. It becomes so easy for us to forget what it took for us to enjoy what the Lord has blessed us with and if we can't remember where we have been, how are we suppose to know where we are going? That is why this paper is being written, to uncover what time has erased and to show the building that we call church did not magically appear from thin air. So with that in mind, let us open the doors of our church's history that time has sealed shut.

THE EARLY YEARS

The date was August 9, 1901 when the town of Sun Prairie would be changed forever, for this was the date that the title of Friedens (Peace) Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of Sun Prairie was given to a building and the founding of a church was begun (1951 History Pamphlet). Rev. Dornfeld of Marshall, Wisconsin was instrumental in the founding of this church. Not only did he begin Friedens in Sun Prairie, but he also had his own congregation to attend to in Marshall. This was no small task, because in those days you just couldn't get in your car and travel on a paved freeway going sixty miles an hour. The mode of transportation for the founding pastor of Friedens was a buggy powered by a horse. There was no heater in the winter, no air conditioner in the summer and very little to keep out the elements, yet he faithfully made the trips to Sun Prairie so that the Word of God might be heard.

In the early days of Friedens, there was no permanent building that they could call a church. Rather the first meetings were held at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. August Schumann on 115 King Street, the first home behind the Weisensel's store (Sun Prairie Newspaper 1928 exact date unknown). As with almost if not all of WELS church's, this one was started by

German Lutherans although, by 1928, Norwegian and English Lutherans also made up a portion of the congregation. A church was finally erected on Windsor street on land that was donated by J.W. Chase. The entire church was built for a sum of \$1700.00 dollars but this did not include plumbing, electric lights or running water (History booklet 1951). The church became an incorporated body on March 8, 1902 and the church dedication was the next day, March, 9 (Sun Prairie Newspaper 1928 exact date uncertain). Reverend Dornfeld was not alone in founding this church for there were eleven men who were also instrumental. They were, Carl Fehrmann, Carl Elies, C. F. Gehrke, Paul Gnatzig, Carl Krause, John Kessler, Herman Hahn, Albert Stoltenberg, Julius H. Fehrmann, August Schumann and Fred Fehrmann (History booklet 1951). Carl Fehrmann, chairman; Carl Elies, secretary; and C.F. Gehrke, treasure were also the first church officers (Dedication booklet 1952). The Chas. Brumm and August Kregre families are said to be the first two families to have joined the church (Sun Prairie Newspaper 1928 exact date uncertain).

Up until 1915, Friedens in Sun Prairie, was closely linked with the church in Marshall because Reverend Dornfeld was serving them both. It was not until December 1915, when Reverend Theodore Thurow was called, that Peace broke with the church in Marshall and became a separate, self supporting congregation.

THE DAUGHTER LEAVES HER MOTHER

The Pastor who would lead the daughter church, now on its own, and for the next fourteen years would be Pastor Theodore Thurow from Litchfield, Minnesota. One of the first things that happened under Pastor Thurow was that the parish was moved to its present location. In 1916 a full basement was added which served as a school hall and a variety of other purposes. Therefore, after the basement was completed, the church building was placed on top of the basement. From what I understand, the church was only moved about one hundred feet or so. In this same year, it was also decided to put in a few luxuries in the church like a furnace, electric

lights, and city water. This must have been a very welcome addition for just think what going to church would be without these items. Shortly after these projects were completed, Friedens dove into another building project by building a new parsonage in February, 1917. The dedication for the school hall and new parsonage was held on June 23, 1917. The speakers for this special day were G.M. Thurow of Wisconsin Rapids and Rev. G. Stern of Leeds (Sun Prairie Newspaper exact date unknown 1928). In the minutes for the Quarterly Meeting on January 13, 1924, the expenses for these projects were recorded. The cost of the church moving \$180.00, parsonage \$7306.86, school hall and church improvements \$1180.00 and total improvements on the church \$922.66. The total receipts for the building project ^{cost?} was \$9589.52 but as of 1924, they only had ^{were?} received \$6615.15 to offset the cost.

The money collected to pay for these building projects came from church dues and something that was called a church bazaar. Money for the church was collected much differently than it is today. Everyone in the church was required to give a certain amount, thus having church dues. Church dues were primarily figured this way: [†] The total budget of the church was figured and then divided by the number of members in the church and that sum was what each member was required to pay. If you were not able to pay this sum, you could go before the Church Council and ask to have your church dues reduced. I did find some cases in the church ^{instances} minutes in which this was the case and in every case, they were reduced. I am not condoning this practice, ^{or} am I saying that this is a good way to collect money for the church. There are some problems with collecting money this way. For one thing, human nature being what it is, it only prompts people to give what they have to and no more. For others, the church dues set up may prove to be too much of a burden and a guilty conscience may come upon those who were not able to give what was required. However, the biggest reason for not collecting money this way is that it does not promote proper ^{giving} motivation in given to the Lord and His work. Proper motivation comes only from a thankful heart knowing that Jesus Christ has rescued us from the bondage of sin. Jesus has set us free from any required amounts that we are to give to the church, so let each one give what he in his heart has decided to give.

The other way that money was raised to pay for the new parsonage and other improvements was a social event called a church bazaar. At the Quarterly Meeting on January 7, 1923, it was decided to hold a church bazaar at the Fuhremann's Feed Store. I do not know what was all involved at this event but some concerns might be raised (See Addendum 1). One thing that I did find that might shed some light was that Mr. Burkenbine still owed cash for the equivalent of two sheep (Minutes Apr. 8, 23). The total money collected from this event was \$3334.66 and from this they had bills totaling \$811.89, leaving them a balance of \$2523.52 to help pay off the church debt.

Rev. Thurow was not only involved in a building project, but it was also under his tenure that English services were introduced at Frieden's in Sun Prairie. Rev. Thurow suggested that English services be held three times monthly and German services twice monthly because many members could not understand the German. The motion was made and seconded and it was decided to have German at 9:30 a.m. and English at 10:30 a.m. with an extra English service each month (Minutes Oct. 12, 1924).

On June 26, 1921, another significant event took place, the 20th Anniversary of Frieden's Ev. Lutheran Church. On this Anniversary Sunday, Pastor Dornfeld (first Pastor of Friedens), Pastor J.H. Schwartz from Marshall, G.M. Thurow of Wisconsin Rapids, and Pastor W. Eggert of Lowell were present. This must have been a very happy and blessed anniversary having a parsonage and newly furnished church. The other big anniversary for the church during Thurow's years came on August 8, 1926, which was the 25th Anniversary. The guest speaker was Rev. Dornfeld (Minutes July 4, 1926).

A first for the church came at the Quarterly Meeting on January 4, 1925, when it was decided to have the organist play an interlude while the collection of the offering was being taken. In that meeting a tradition was started which is continued to this very day. Speaking of offerings, somewhat of a controversy arose at the meeting on January 9, 1927 when it was discussed whether or not to use envelopes to collect the church dues. There was much debate but the motion carried to use the envelopes as long as receipts for the church dues could be retained for

tax purposes. The envelopes were to be used on a monthly basis and be deposited in a box that was to be installed in the church for the collection of these envelopes and so another first for the church was born: envelopes used for collection. There was one more first for the church before Pastor Thurow left. This one was the most important of all, indoor plumbing! Yes that's right, no more going out back to the out house. No more of having to sit on a cold seat. On July 3, 1927 a motion carried that the installation of sewage and toilets take place as quickly as possible (Minutes July 3, 1927). There was much rejoicing! A special collection paid for this colossal comfort.

Here are some other interesting facts during these years. As of 1924, the janitor was paid \$40.00 year and the organist \$52.00 (Minutes Jan.13, 1924). By 1927 the Janitor was up to \$75.00 year and the organist stayed at \$52.00 (Minutes Jan.9, 1927). At the October 12, 1924 meeting it was reported that the mission festival received \$151.24 on that Sunday and that \$143.24 was sent in to Synod and \$8.00 ^{was} going to travel expenses. By 1929 the pastor had a salary of \$1500.00 year (Minutes Nov. 24, 1929). According to the city ⁱⁿ Newspaper article in 1928, Friedens was the only Lutheran Church in either the village or township of Sun Prairie. It was also the second largest.

During his time at Frieden, Pastor Thurow received two calls. The first one was during 1926 when he was going to leave but the congregation asked him to reconsider his ^{request for} acceptance of release and resume the ^{agreed} pastorate of Frieden. Rev. Thurow accepted to remain at Friedens and he was given a month's vacation with pay to be taken at his leisure (Minutes Oct. 3, 1926). His other call came in 1929. At the November 24, 1929 meeting, Pastor Thurow read the call he received from Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church at Menominee, Michigan and asked that he be released from Friedens. The congregation released him and he preached his farewell sermon on December 1, 1929 ending the tenure of Pastor Thurow but not Frieden.

Frieden now had the responsibility of calling another pastor. At the same meeting of November 24, 1929, a call list was made to call a new pastor. The names on this list were Rev. Hoyer of Winneconne, Rev. Witte of Cornell, Rev. Keturakat of Menominie, Rev. Wornfeldt of

Marshfield and Rev. Dornfeldt of Watertown. From this list, Rev. Dornfeldt was called and it was decided that Prof. H. Schmeling of NWC would serve as the interim pastor until a new pastor arrived. At the December 22, 1929 meeting it was revealed that Rev. Dornfeldt declined the call and so another call list was made. The list include Rev. Hoyer, Rev. Keturakat, Rev. Netzman and Rev. Berenthael. Twenty votes were cast with Netzman receiving 15, Berenthal 3, Hoyer 1 and Blank 1. The motion was made and carried that a unanimous vote be given to Rev. Netzman but for some reason the call was not extended to him and a motion was made and seconded and carried that the meeting be postponed until January 12, 1930. At this meeting, Keturakat and Hoyer were nominated as candidates for pastor. The ballot of twenty three votes was cast and the vote count was 22 for Keturakat and 1 for Hoyer. A unanimous vote was given to Rev. Keturakat and a call was extended to him. Pastor Keturakat accepted the call and was installed in March 1930. A new era was begun and for the next seventeen years, he would be the pastor of Friedens.

THE KETURAKAT YEARS

What was once a daughter church of Marshall, Friedens grew up and became a mother. Rev. Keturakat not only served the church to which he was called but he also started up a mission congregation in Cottage Grove. Now that Pastor Keturakat was serving two churches, a major issue that came up time and time again was when to hold church services. To complicate matters, German and English services were both being held and times needed to made for these as well. When Rev. Keturakat arrived in March, English services were being held every Sunday at 10:00 a.m. German services were only being held once a month and when the German service took the place of the English in the morning, there would be a English service in the Evening. It was also decided to have English services on main holidays and German services on the day following (Minutes March 16, 1930). One can see a very definite trend of the church moving from German to English. When the mission in Sun Prairie was started, the service time had to change to 10:30

a.m. in Sun Prairie and 9:00 a.m. in Cottage Grove. Sunday School in Sun Prairie would then start at 10:00 a.m. (Minutes Jan.12 1931). By October 1, 1934, German services were voted only to be held in the afternoon until January 1934 (Minutes Oct.1 1934) but then in 1935 it was voted to have German the first Sunday of every month with English in the evening and no Sunday School on this day (Minutes Oct.6, 1935). Then from about 1936 to 1939 there was some stability in the times of the church services. In the winter months church would begin at 10:00 a.m. and in the summer it would begin at 9:00 a.m. By 1936 the German services were fading fast and at a meeting on April 19, the matter of the whether to have German services was left up to Pastor Keturakat. The time of Sunday School was always being moved around it seemed. The major issue was whether or not to have it before or after church. Both times were tried and who is to say if one worked better than the other for the Minutes give no answer. Little did they know that the time of when to hold church would be the least of their problems, for trouble was just on the horizon.

With the mid 1930's, came the depression and its effect was felt in the congregation. In 1933 both the janitor's and organist's salaries went down to \$40.00 and \$35.00 respectively (Minutes Jan.8, 1933). The Pastor was paid when they were able to pay him, which they were struggling to do. Grain was needed to feed the livestock at NWC and the farmers were asked to contribute (Minutes Oct.6, 1935). Yet it would get worse. With very little money to go around the organ needed to be repaired (Minutes Jan. 7, 1934). Then to top it all off, in the fall of 1936, the parsonage was destroyed by fire beyond the point of repair, so a new one had to be built but no money was available to do so. What to do? Well in the January 3, 1937 meeting, it was moved to build a new parsonage only if funds could be received from the insurance company. While waiting for the funds from the insurance company, a special meeting was held on February 20, 1937 to discuss the bids they had received from the builders. The bids came in as follows: Stegerwald \$4350.00, Chase Lumber and Fuel \$5200, and F.C. Thomson \$3300.00. As you can imagine the one from F.C. Thomson was accepted. It was not until January 9, 1938 that they had the money they needed to finance this project. The insurance company came through with

\$2883.29, members provided \$649.50 and a loan was taken out for \$300.00 making the total \$3832.79. When there is a will (under God of course), there is a way and a new parsonage was built. The financial concerns remained with them even into the early forties. To show you just what type of strain they were under, a motion was made at the June 8, 1941 meeting to sell the church benches at \$300.00 to pay off a debt and that the old benches be installed in the church.

The church was in a financial strain but then something happened to bring them and the rest of America out of it: World War II. Even though the war ^{brought} did bring new concerns for the church, it did relieve the financial problem. So much so that by 1944, the pastor's salary was increased to \$25.00 a month and the organist was given \$65.00 year . The janitor was given a \$5.00 bonus and promised \$15.00 at the end of the year if he did a good job (Minutes Jan.5,1944). At this same meeting, we can see some of the signs of the times. A discussion was made about displaying flags in the church and in the January 9, 1944 meeting it was approved that donations could be accepted for this purpose. There was even enough money to buy new hymnals and in January 18,1942, a motion was carried to use the order of service found in this new hymnal. Oh, by the way this new hymnal is now what we call our old hymnal. This hymnal was the old red or blue Lutheran Hymnal. A Spirit welfare drive was held for the armed forces to purchase reading material for them (Minutes Oct. 1 1944). There was so much confidence in the finances, that instead of making much needed and extensive repairs on the church, it was decided to establish a church building fund (Minutes Apr.2, 1944). Then at the July 8, 1945 meeting, the motion carried to establish a building fund and that the pastor would go before the congregation and explain the building plans. It was to be made clear that no plans would be made until after the war. Nevertheless, the first step in building the present church that we enjoy now was complete.

The war did eventually come to an end and to commemorate this blessed event, a special worship service ^{was} would be held for the men and women of the armed forces to welcome them home. The date of this service ^{was} would be held on what else, Washington's birthday (Minutes Oct.7 1945). With the war being over, purchases were made on a lot in the back right of the present

church (Minutes July 6, 1947). This lot, however, was not for the new church building, but with the thought in mind of building a school.

In September of 1947 something unexpected happened, Pastor Keturakat received a call. A special meeting was called on September 7 and Pastor Keturakat asked for a peaceful release and it was given to him. Pastor Keturakat left the Friedens congregation to go to Missouri. Once again the process of calling a pastor needed to begin. It was decided that when the new pastor arrived, he would receive \$175.00 a month plus \$35.00 from the Cottage Grove Church (Minutes Sept. 21, 1947). On October 27, 1947, a meeting was held to call a new pastor. Seven pastors were on the list and a call was first extended to Rev. Winter but he declined. Another meeting was held on November 18, 1947 in which Rev. Wiedenmeyer of Frankville was called. He accepted the call and was installed in January of 1948. During the time of the vacancy, Pastor Horlamus served the congregation.

SHORT TIME SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

Pastor Wiedenmeyer may have only been at Friedens for about two years, but some significant events did take place. One of the first things that happened when Pastor Wiedenmeyer arrived was a change in the constitution. At the meeting of January 25, 1948, the constitution of the church was changed to read, "To have annual meeting on the last Sunday in January instead of the first Sunday." It continued to read, "To elect three elders and three trustees for one term of three years each. And the Council members to elect its own presiding officers among themselves".

It may not seem all that significant that in 1948 action was taken to provide an outside bulletin board but what was significant was the name that would be placed on that board. In the meeting of January 30, 1949, the congregation of Sun Prairie underwent a name change from Friedens to Peace. The official date for this name change was to be July 26, 1949. The minutes read this way, "Notice is hereby given that the corporate name of the German Evangelical

Lutheran Friedens Congregation, a religious corporation located in the Village of Sun Prairie has been changed to that of Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church" (Minutes Jan. 30, 1949).

The meeting of January 30, 1949 was significant for another reason as well. A motion was made, seconded and carried that the Cottage Grove Church which was started by Pastor Thurow, be released to the Norwegian Lutheran Synod of the Synodical Conference at anytime. Therefore, the Cottage Grove Church was dissolved. One church may have been dissolved, but another one was going forward. In the February 11, 1949 meeting, ^{it was resolved that} the pastor and the Church Council would go to each communicant member to obtain an estimate of pledges they would receive if a new church would be built. However, in December of 1949 Pastor Wiedenmeyer received a call and by May of 1950 he was released from the congregation to go to Phoenix, Arizona (Minutes December 18, 1949). The reason why he didn't leave until five months after he had accepted the call was that he did not want to leave his adult confirmation class in the middle of instruction and he also wanted to have time to pack (Minutes March 28, 1950).

Upon Pastor Wiedenmeyer departure, Pastor R. Horlamus once again served as the interim pastor from May to September of 1950 until Rev. Toepel accepted the call. The meeting to call Rev. Toepel was ^{held} made on June 22, 1950. The other names on the call list were Rev. Berg, Rev. Zinker, and Rev. Lemke. The council also asked that Rev. Horlamus name be added to the list. Pastor Emil Toepel from Onalaska was installed on September 3, 1950.

A NEW BEGINNING

Not only was there a new pastor in town but a new church was on the minds of everyone. On March 28, 1950, it was discussed to hold a meeting in the early Spring to discuss the possibilities of building a new church. The meeting did take place and on July 13, 1950 a building committee was established. Three men were appointed to this committee, Mr. Marvin Ratzlow chairman, Mr. Erich Lenz and Mr. Herman Mundt. The actual decision to build came on October 8, 1950 (Dedication booklet pg.6).

Stephen and Kemp of Wauwatosa were chosen as the architects to draw up plans that would hold 275 people (Minutes Jan, 28, 1951). It was also decided that the actual building would begin when fifty percent of the cost has been pledged and twenty five percent of the entire cost has been collected. On May 13, 1951 the congregation was polled and around \$45,000.00 was pledged by the members of Peace at this time which was not quite half of the \$112,000.00 that was estimated the building would cost (Dedication booklet pg.6). However, by July 15, 1951 enough money had been pledged because this was the last Sunday that the people of Peace worshipped in the old church. It also happened to be the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Peace formerly known as Friedens (Directory 1981). The old church was sold on July 14, 1951 and for the next twelve months, the congregation gave a new meaning to the word show time as they used the Prairie Theater for their place of worship. The actual construction began on September 12, 1951 and ^{at} on the April 11, 1952 meeting it was said that the basement should be ready by the first part of June to hold services. Actually, it wasn't until July 27, 1952 that the first service was held in the basement. Dedication Sunday was held on December 7, 1952. It was built for a total cost of \$129,000.00. A letter of thank you was sent to Sun Prairie's City Hall thanking them for the use of the theater.

Not everything in the construction went as smoothly as hoped. It seems that there were some questions over the pricing of the brick and of some poorly done work. As it turned out, an arbitration board was brought in. The arbitrators ruled that the architect, contractor and owner were responsible for one third of the alleged damages in regards to the construction of the building. So instead of \$12,000.00 dollars that was still owed, Peace only had to pay 3500.00 (History 1954).

Another new beginning for the church during this time was a purchase of a new organ. At the April 13, 1952 meeting, Mr. LaRay Gest reported that a Wicks Pipe Organ was about to be purchased. Organ Dedication Sunday was set for February 15, 1953 (Minutes Jan. 26, 53). Along with the organ, a chimes fund was established and a bequest from the William Ohnstedt Fund made it possible to start a public address system fund (Minutes Jan.21,55). It was also in

1955 that a new organization got started, the Youth Group, or what is now ^{known} to Peace as Faithful ^{You} Serving Him (FYSH). The budget for this thirty-one year old organization was set at one hundred dollars (Minutes Sept. 28, 1955). Not only did a new organization come into existence, but a new Sunday Service as well. On November 18, 1956, the first ever Charity Sunday was held (Minutes Nov. 5, 56). On this Sunday, a collection would be taken to help some charities in the area. The money received on this Charity Sunday would go to the Lutherans Children Friend Society (\$100.00), Bethesda Lutheran Home (\$200.00) and Altenheim Old Folks Home (amount unknown). Oh by the way, Sunday Services, were being held at 8:00 A.M. and 10:00 A.M. with Sunday School at 9:00 A.M. and Communion on the last Sunday of each month (Minutes June 4, 56).

In October of 1957, the purchase of new land was being discussed behind the church property and in January of 1958, ten lots (2.1 acres) were purchased for \$7,500. This land was purchased with the hope of someday being used for a Lutheran ^{Elementary} School.

Something that was not so new at this time was the ^{Parsonage}. The eighteen years of existence were not kind to it and it was badly in need of repair and modernization, especially the kitchen. This would be a continuing problem for the congregation until 1969. In 1955, the kitchen underwent repairs and a new linoleum floor, Formica countertops and birch cupboards were all added (Minutes May 22, 55). In 1956 in the ^{at} September 10th meeting, the congregation decided to put a new roof on the Parsonage. There was also a problem with the heating system and many other lesser repairs were constantly being done.

By 1954, the new ^{Pastor} that had come to Peace in 1950, was not so new anymore. In fact, in November of 1954 he had a call to Sparta, Wisconsin but he declined that call (Minutes Nov. 8, 54). Then in 1957, he received another call to Hortonville, Wisconsin and like the first, it was also declined (Minutes May 6, 57). A year and a half later, Rev. Toepel would receive his third and final call while at Peace, because ^{and} ^{to} this one he would accept ^{from} Baraboo, Wisconsin. There is more ^{to} of this story concerning this call however. It seems that sometime in 1958, Rev.

Toepel became very ill, to the point where he was unable to perform in the capacity to which he was called. So when the call from Baraboo came, he wrote this letter to the Church Council,

"Regarding the call from Baraboo. I have decided to accept the call, that is if the congregation there is willing to wait for me to get well again. That of course is my problem. (having a pastor on the payroll who cannot work). Not to place you in an unfair position I am submitting my resignation to be effective last Sunday. Consequently I have no more salary coming. I thank you for continuing to pay my salary during my illness.

I request that you call a special meeting of the congregation to act upon my resignation and to set the stage for calling a new pastor.

There are many details that need to be taken care of in this kind of situation. I will do everything in my power to help. However, the doctor insists that I remain inactive for another month at least. Therefore, I would suggest that you appoint chairman Kreger or anyone else from your midst to confer with me on whatever matter you wish.

The District President is Pastor Richard Mueller, Jefferson, Wisconsin. He will prepare a list of candidates upon request" (Minutes Nov. 19, 58).

A special meeting was called to discuss Pastor Toepel resignation on November 30, 1958. A total of 57 votes were cast. Forty three said no to Rev. Toepel's resignation and fourteen voted yes. One can see the love and caring that the congregation had for their pastor. This matter still had to be resolved, so on December 14, 1958, another meeting was called in which Pastor Toepel once again asks for his resignation because he intends to take the call to Baraboo. This time the congregation accepts his resignation and a meeting was set for December 28, 1958 to call a new pastor.

Before we say good-bye to Rev. Toepel, an interesting story must be told. Back in 1955, Pastor Toepel took up another occupation besides being the shepherd of Peace. Due to his financial problems (whether perceived, inflicted upon himself or otherwise) he took up a part time job as a taxi cab driver in Madison. Yes, that's right, that cab driver that you just passed by on the road who you said looked a lot like Pastor Toepel, actually was Pastor Toepel. As you might imagine, in response to Pastor Toepel taking a part time job, the Council agreed to give the Pastor/Cab Driver a raise for his car expense bringing the total to \$500.00. If this would

not be enough for him to be able to quit the part time job, a raise in his salary would be considered (Minutes Jan.22, 1956). From what I understand, he did not have this job very long. With that said, let us now turn our attention to the calling of a new pastor.

THE SIXTH PASTOR

The time had come for Peace to once again call a pastor. This pastor would be the sixth pastor of a fifty seven year old congregation. As mentioned earlier, December 28, 1958 was the date set to call a new pastor. On the call list at this meeting, there were nine men for consideration: Traugott, Frank Horlmu^s, Bradtke, Hillmer, Laper, Nommenson, Nitz and Mueller. Seventeen votes were cast with Mueller receiving ten of them. At the January 25, 1959 meeting, it was revealed that Pastor Mueller had returned the call and so another call list was made. The pastors on this list were Hillmer, Frank , Bradkte, Horlemu^s, Laper, Nitz, Nommenson. Pastor Wegner was added to the list by a motion from Mr. Howard Chausee. Of the twenty four votes cast, the top three "vote getters" were Laper (6), Wegner (5), and Horlemou^s (4). A ballot was cast again for these three men and the results were as follows: Laper (19), Wegner (1), and Horlemou^s (4). Pastor Laper of Wautoma, Wisconsin was subsequently called. He accepted the call and was installed on May 24, 1959. The sixth pastor had arrived.

One of the top priorities and dream of Pastor Lapers' for Peace was to see it start a Christian Day School. This concept was nothing new for Pastor Laper. At the two previous churches where he had served, Christian Day Schools were opened (Directory 1969). Therefore, it really should have come as no surprise to anyone when in 1962 it was discussed to open a kindergarten for the fall of that year. Starting a school is no easy task and many things need to be taken into consideration but Pastor Laper having experience, led the way so that by the July 15, 1962, a list was given to the Church Council of things to consider. On this list were things like: Church basement used as classrooms, half day with a teacher from

congregation, start with simple building, public schools were already overcrowded, cost of teacher \$1200.00, and possibility of fifteen children enrolling. A fact finding committee was set up to discuss these items and determine if it was feasible at this time to start a school for the fall of 1962. On August 15, the committee reported back to the Council saying that it felt that all the difficulties in starting a school could be resolved and it recommends that a school be started. A vote was taken on this recommendation and was defeated by a vote of twenty-two to eight. The motion was made seconded and carried not to start a school this year. A setback and disappointment for Pastor Laper but he did not give up.

Even though the ^dDay school program was defeated, other things were being done in the area of education. In 1963, a new Student Education Fund was established for people who were interested in entering the full time service of the work of the church (Minutes April 21, 1963). A questionnaire was sent out in 1964 surveying the congregation concerning the Christian day school situation. Two hundred, twenty-five questionnaires were sent out, but only ninety returned. The congregation was just about split down the middle as to whether or not to have a Christian Day School. Thirty-nine said yes, forty-three no, and eight had no reply (Minutes Sept. 25, 64). Due to this questionnaire, it was decided to drop the question of the Day School until more interest is developed. Once again the proposal was defeated so another avenue had to be taken. It was not until 1981 that a program was set up for children to attend a Christian Day School. Peace asked Eastside Lutheran in Madison if they would allow the children of Peace to go ^{there} their. At first they declined because they were in the middle of a vacancy but in the meeting of January 14, 1981, it was announced that Eastside had agreed to let the children of Peace make use of their school. A tuition program was then put in place for those children attending Eastside. It was not exactly what Pastor Laper had in mind, but it was a beginning.

The Christian Day School was not the only educational concern for the congregation in the 1960's. There was also much discussion about a "problem" with Sunday School. The problem was overcrowding. What a blessed problem indeed! Wouldn't it be great to have problems

like this all the time! However, even joyous problems need to be addressed so on July 20, 1964, a meeting was called to discuss this situation. There were between 180-200 children attending Sunday School at this time and two recommendations were made. The first was to have two sessions of Sunday School or, secondly, create a building fund for a new educational ^{building} school. After much discussion, no decision was made at this meeting, so a questionnaire was given to the people. The majority of the people favored two sessions of Sunday School between services. It was decided to have two sessions of Sunday School. One session would be from 8:45-9:30 a.m. and the other from 10:00-10:15⁴⁵ a.m. There was a slight problem with this because church was at 8:00 and 10:30 a.m. Therefore, Sunday School and church overlapped one another. How they handled this was that in the first service the children would leave immediately after the sermon and begin Sunday School. Then in the late service, the children would come in right before the sermon (Minutes June 6, 67). As you can imagine, this caused disruptions in the church service and it probably was not the best of situations. Eventually the second service was changed to 10:00 a.m. and Sunday School to 10:45 a.m. with the children leaving after the sermon in the second service as well (Minutes Oct.22, 67).. Eventually this practice was dropped as the numbers decreased.

As the Education Program grew, the church needed to do so also. From 1962-1972 many additions and improvements were made to the church which are worth mentioning now. In 1957 folding doors were added to the basement. This may not sound all that significant but doing so separated the basement into nine classrooms. Think how valuable this became for the Sunday School program with it's overcrowding. By 1962, the church was already ten years old and was in need of some redecoration. Inside the church, the interior was painted and murals were placed on the east wall. The three murals would be pictures of the birth of Christ, Christ and the children and resurrection of Christ (Minutes Oct.11, 62). The inside brickwork in front of the church also needed some tender loving care and so it was decided to clean the brick and paint the mortar joints. The three crosses that are on this brickwork would also be worked on. The large cross was covered in twenty-three karat gold leaf to represent the cross that Jesus

was on. The medium cross was to be painted white to represent the repentant sinner. Finally, the small cross would represent the non-repentant sinner and therefore be painted black (Minutes Oct.5 62). In 1963, the original bell from the first church was placed in the tower and electrical ringing arrangements were installed (Directory 1981). The sign that you see on county "N" was put up in 1964 when Mrs. Buss agreed to have the sign put up on her property (Minutes May 25,64). Thank you! The front entrance of the church was remolded in 1966 to provide a handicap and altar statue (Directory 1981). Also in 1966 the stained glass window project began for the nave and was completed in 1968 (see Addendum 2). Wagner brothers Co. did the installation and the artist was Dennis Steinbacher. The large windows cost about \$640.00 a piece and the smaller ones were about \$100.00 each (Minutes Aug.1, 67). Some of the money, \$1800.00 to be exact, for the windows came from the Lutheran bowling league tourney (Minutes June 6,67).. Peace must have had some pretty good bowlers back then to have \$1800.00. It was reported at the November 7, 1967 meeting that Mr. Lenz wanted to donate a new cross as a remembrance of his upcoming birthday. However, at the December fifth meeting, after talking with Mr. Lenz, the cross was changed to a Jesus blessing statue. Our beautiful parking lot was enlarged and the east drive put in 1967 (Dir. 81). More stained glass was brought into the church balcony in 1972-1974. However, temporary lighting for these windows caused a fire in the balcony. Not to worry though, for a kind-hearted neighbor saw the fire, reported it and disaster was avoided before any extreme damage could be done. All of these remodeling ventures are noteworthy but there is one that tops them all.

Recall that I said that the parsonage was in continuous need ^{of} for repair up until 1969. The reason why it did not need to be repaired is that a decision was made to build a new one (Minutes Sept.8 69). At the May 14, 1970 meeting, plans ^{for} of the new parsonage were shown and a building permit was being obtained. Construction began soon after that and the open house for the parsonage was June 27, 1971 (Minutes June 3,71). The total cost of the project was around \$40,000.

Not only was the decision made to build a parsonage, but on November 16, 1969 a burning ceremony was held because the mortgage was fully paid on the church. The enthusiasm of being debt free was short lived because they would soon have a mortgage to pay on the parsonage. Oh well, win a few, lose a few.

There are several significant anniversary dates during the tenure of Pastor Laper. The 10th anniversary of the new church was celebrated on Nov. 20, 1962 with Pastor Toepel as the guest speaker (Minutes Oct.3, 62). President Oscar Nauman was asked to be the guest speaker for the 70th Anniversary of Peace held on December 3, 1971. Walter Schumann Jr. of Trinity, Watertown, was the guest preacher for the 20th Anniversary of the church in December of 1977.

In 1977, new personal were added to the church. The first was the hiring of a part time secretary and the other was the beginning of the vicar program. Peace had a total of seven vicars between 1977-84. The seven vicars that served the congregation were, Bruce Wietzke, James Renz, Steven Spencer (installed during the first outdoor service of church), Richard Frost, Jeffrey Londgren, Jay Blum and Mark Schoeneck.

Pastor Laper has the distinction of not only the longest tenure of any pastor that has served Peace, but also the only Pastor to date that has not accepted a call to go to another church once at Peace. It is not as if he did not have any opportunity to either. In 1964 he had a call to Sioux City, Iowa and then another one in 1980. All told, Pastor Laper^{had} served Peace about thirty-six years when he retired in the Summer of 1995.. What is in store for Peace as it approaches it's ^oOne ^hHundredth Anniversary and beyond? That remains to be seen for this is still history in the making!

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

As of 1996, Peace has two Pastors, Elton C. Stroh, who arrived in February of 1985 after it was decided by the Church Council in 1984 to call a new head pastor while Pastor Laper serve^d

as the assistant. The other pastor is Dale Reckzin who arrived in August of 1995 to replace the retiring Pastor Laper. Pastor Laper's dream of having a Christian Day School was made a reality in 1993 when Peace began a day school. Currently they have grades ranging from pre-k through second grade and ^{are} adding third grade in the fall of 1997. Only time will be able to write the history from where I ended but one thing is for sure, "Workers, buildings and organizational forms may change over the years, but the basic purpose and work of our congregation remains the same-- **TO RECEIVE THE UNCHANGING GOOD NEWS OF OUR SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST REGULARLY IN THE WORD AND SACRAMENTS AND TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS WITH OUR COMMUNITY AND THE WORLD!"** (Directory 1986).

ADDENDUM 1

STAINED WINDOWS ADDED AT PEACE

During the sermon this Sunday at Peace Ev. Lutheran worship services, special reference will be made to the Bible history and doctrines portrayed in new stained windows installed in the church nave.

The project was begun about two years ago when two large west windows and two small east windows were ordered and delivered. Now the remaining four large windows, together with fifteen more small windows have been completed.

The six large windows on the west side of the nave portray some of the most important events of Bible history. The Creation is the subject of the first window. The prophecies concerning the promised Savior are portrayed in the second window. The announcement of the birth of Jesus to the Shepherds is the subject of the next window. The fourth window declares that our redemption has been accomplished. Jesus words, "It is finished" accompany the crucifixion scene. The last two large windows portray the message of Easter morning "He is risen" and of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the disciples and Peter declared, "The promise is unto you and to your children and to all that are afar off."

The middle three small windows along the east side symbolize the means of grace- The word that is read and heard with the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. The seven windows on the left of center contain Scripture verses which present a brief summary of Christian doctrine: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart" - "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" - "By the law is the knowledge of sin" - "The wages of sin is death" - "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son -- Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" - "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through Jesus Christ."

The seven windows to the rear contain selected words spoken by Jesus: "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden" - "Be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee" - "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" - "No man cometh unto the Father except by Me" - "I go to prepare a place for you" - "I will come again and receive you unto myself" - "All power is given unto Me in heaven and earth; go ye therefore and teach all nations."

The windows were produced and installed by Wagner Brothers, Inc., of Milwaukee and the artist in charge was Dennis Steinbacher."

Article taken from Sun Prairie Newspaper Date unknown

"Hence along with the steady increase of freewill offerings we have witnessed the gradual disappearance of sales and suppers, bazaars and lotteries."⁷ It is to be hoped that this observation made in 1956 is still true and will prove to be increasingly so. The pastor will work toward that end. Why?

The reason is not that suppers and sales can be called sin in themselves. We are speaking here of practices that are not contrary to state law and do not involve gambling. In opposing money-making projects the pastor must be careful not to overstate his case. Very often when the question is asked why a particular project is desired, the motivation that makes it objectionable will become evident. Frequently the reason for a project is one that conflicts with good stewardship practices. For a congregation to depend on the proceeds of a sale or supper to do, at least in part, what the freewill gifts of Christians are to accomplish will be destructive of Christian stewardship. To invite non-members to a supper the purpose of which is profit is to seek support for the church where it should not be looked for. The unbeliever may even be hardened in his self-righteousness by thinking he is doing his duty to God by paying the price of a dinner ticket. Generally also the donated time and goods are poorly rewarded so that the profit is more seeming than real.

On the other hand, the supper that is arranged for fellowship within a congregation and incidentally shows a profit can hardly be considered destructive of Christian stewardship. Nor need a so-called "bargain center" that makes usable second-hand clothing and goods available to the poor at a minimal price do injury to good stewardship even if it distributes its profits to charities which are normally supported by freewill offerings. Categorically to reject every supper or sale without regard to motivation leads to legalism and a failure to examine

7. T. A. Kantonen, *A Theology for Christian Stewardship* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1956), p. 5.

THE SHEPHERD TRAINS CHRISTIAN STEWARDS

carefully the reasons that make so many of these practices unwise if not wrong.

Training in stewardship according to biblical principles is the most effective way to rid the congregation of undesirable practices for gain. Our opening quotation saw the increase in freewill giving as the reason for a decline in suppers, sales, bazaars, and lotteries.

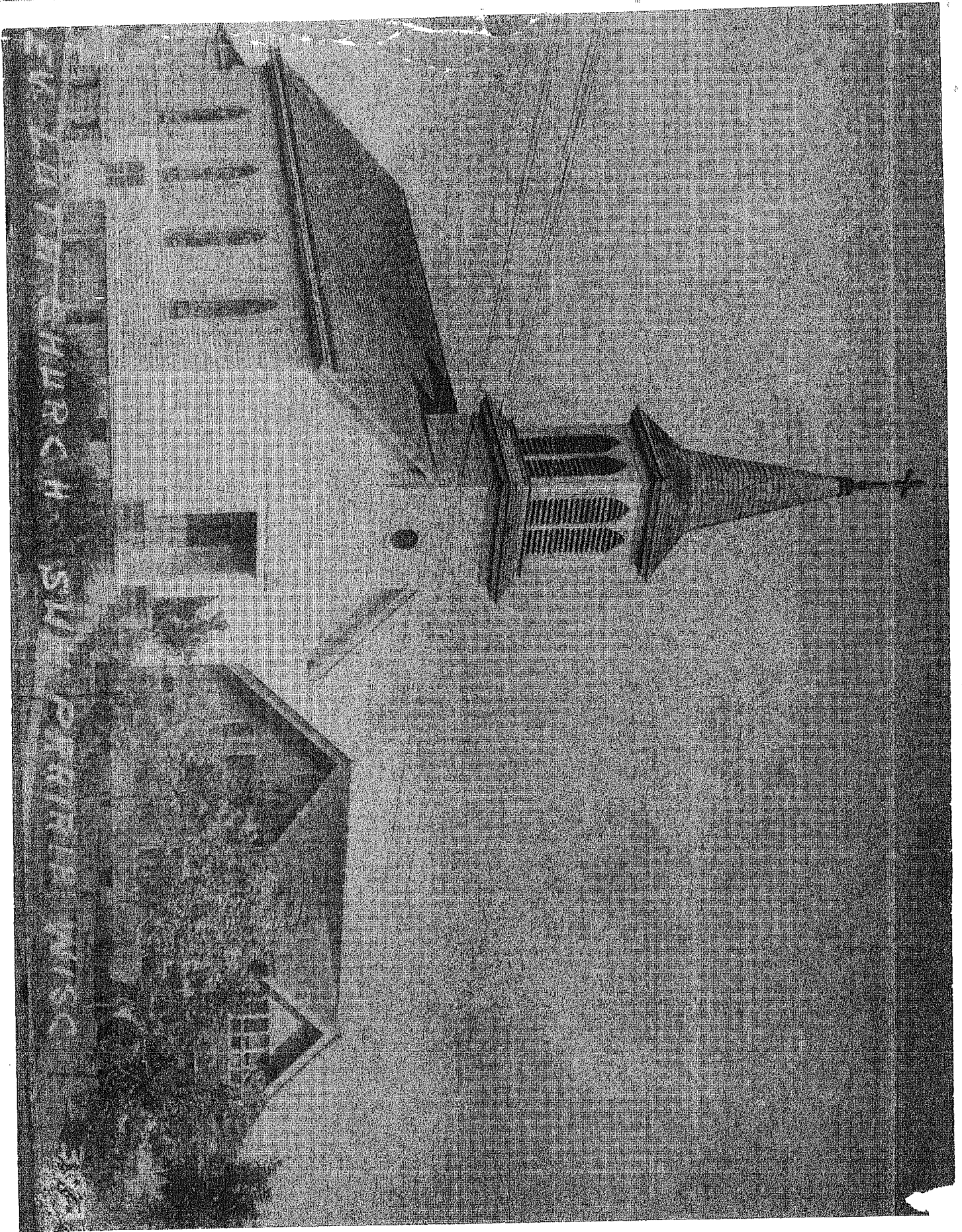
ADDENDUM 3

Statistics on Membership Enrollment

	First 25 years	Second 25 years	Third 25 years
Baptisms	184	325	492
Confirmed	154	343	502
Marriages	40	83	141
Funerals	50	76	122

Taken from Directory 1981.

1st Church + Parsonage





THE REV. E. DORNFIELD
 Founder & Pastor
 Peace Ev. Luth. Congregation
 Sun Prairie, Wis.

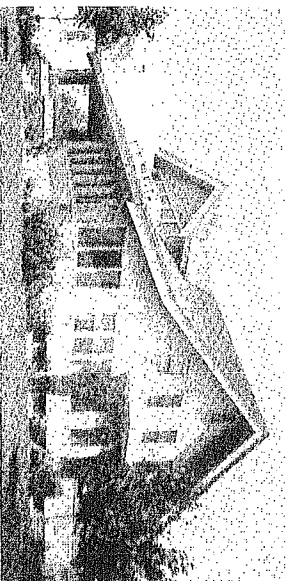


PASTOR THEO. THURROW

Dedication services for the new parsonage and school hall were held on June 23, 1917. Speakers were the Rev. G.W. Thuro of Wisconsin Rapids and the Reverend G. Stern, of Leeds.

The following men served on the building committee: the Reverend Theo. Thuro, Chr.; J. L. Fuhrmann, sec'y.; W. H. Paulmann, treas.; Geo. Kroncke, Wm. Ohnstedt, and Otto Riepel.

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FORMER PARSONAGE