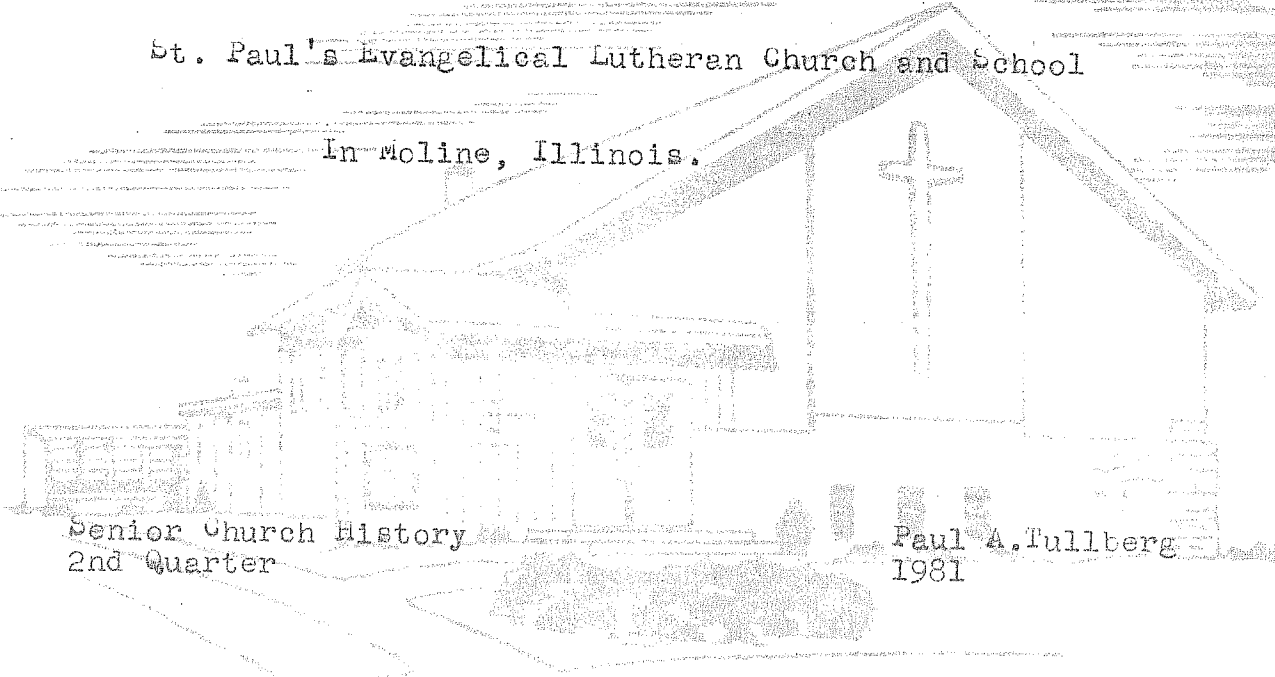


Faithful Witnesses for You, Jesus

A History of

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church and School

In Moline, Illinois.



Senior Church History
2nd Quarter

Paul A. Tullberg
1981

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library
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Writer's Preface

Researching this paper that traces the history of the church in Moline, Illinois, St. Paul's congregation, brings real joy to this writer. He has discovered that he is the first child of one of the founding fathers to enter the public ministry as a pastor. After much prayer and hours of instruction by my parents, my parent congregation, and others I am privileged to enter into the full-time joy of publicly preaching and teaching the only Word that turns the world upside-downside..., God's Word. And if the Lord blesses this world with many more years, I pray that He will also keep St. Paul's his own church, consumed with the zeal to spread the whole of the pure Word as confessed and won by our Lord through Luther's Reformati^on.

The information of this paper is not original with the writer. It is just bits and pieces of history found in bulletins of the church, meetings' minutes, and newspaper clippings pieced together with conversations and personal feelings. This writer makes no apologies for the strong bias exhibited in this paper. I grew up in this congregation; I was washed clean of all my sins in this congregati^on; and it is my prayer that the zeal for God's Word never dies out but continues to grow and infect the next generation with a burning love for Jesus and all for whom He died and rose.

Faithful Witnesses for You, Jesus

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, had its beginning with the grandfather of Rev. Arnold Mennicke:

"My grandfather was almost 50 years at Immanuel, Rock Island (1929, LCMS). Both of my parents were born and raised here. And as I understand, my grandfather always thought of Moline as a prospective place for a church of the pure Word and the confessions. But it didn't develop at that time. I was born and raised in Edford Illinois. My father had a rural parish there." ¹

In November of 1943 Westside Lutheran Church opened its doors in a vacant store. From the beginning until the present, mission work and Christian education have been part and parcel of this church. Listen again to Rev. Mennicke:

"We (Rev. Mennicke, Rev. Keturicat and 2 others) made the canvass, looked around for a meeting place, found an old vacant store. We announced the first service. Rev. Keturicat preached the first sermon. He was on the mission board at that time and the pastor at Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. He did a good share of the early preaching." ²

Six months later the little band of believers gathered to organize. Pastor Richard Jungkuntz preached the sermon at the organizational meeting. ³ (According to the minutes, Pastor Arnold Mennicke presided. He however was not sure. He was the Mission Board representative and said that he might have indeed presided--but much water had gone over the memory dam.) The congregation incorporated as St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church on May 21, 1944. The following are the founding fathers of St. Paul's:

- Pastor and Mrs. W. Wegner
- Mr. and Mrs. A. Belgarde
- Mr. and Mrs. J. Nightingale
- Mr. and Mrs. M. Tullberg
- Mr. and Mrs. A. Belle
- Mr. and Mrs. A. Eng
- Mr. Otto Pickron
- Mr. and Mrs. T. Kraklow
- Mr. and Mrs. Matt DeWanz
- Mr. and Mrs. W. Hotje

And on May 28, 1944 a portion of the special congregation meeting minutes reads:

"The council recommended that the congregation accept the offer of Mr. Ed Moeller to paint a sign to be hung above our door way. The symbol of the Apostle Paul is to be incorporated in this sign." 7

One reoccurring theme of this paper is clearly the mission theme. This mission congregation was and still is filled with the love and faith of their namesake, St. Paul. Listen in on the July 2nd, 1944 regular meeting:

"Report on vacation Bible school was given by Rev. Wegner a total of twenty-four (24) children were enrolled for 2 weeks, from June 12th to the 23rd, 1944." 5

And at the September 24th meeting, 5 months after beginning we happily have this recorded:

"The body approved the increase to our mission synod obligation." 6

Now as this writer has a strong aversion to dry history, he was pleased to find that humor was alive and well during the life of the congregation. For a little sidelight into the creativity and persistence of these rugged believers take note of this insight:

"The congregation wanted very much to pay Rev. Wegner's traveling expenses for mission calls and pastor service for the congregation, but the Mission board does not approve so the body made a motion to pay the pastor's telephone bill to relieve some of the expense." 7

As you can see from this September 24th, 1944 meeting, where there's a will there's a way. But do not leave this paper

with the feeling that this mission chafed under the thumb of the Mission Board. This mission outpost in Moline knew the main purpose for its existence. For immediately following this motion concerning the phone bill we find this:

" The body made a motion to send all of Special Collection envelopes and basket collection to Mission... for our Mission Festival Sunday." 8

In keeping with this mission theme, the bulletin on the Sunday before their 1st Festival listed the guest speakers at the two services: Rev. Theo. J. Mueller of La Crosse, Wis. and the Rev. Ernst H. Wendland of Washington, Ia. From a conversation with the now Prof. Wendland as well as with Rev. Arnold Mennicke, Pastor Wendland was a frequent guest preacher. The following is copied from this bulletin to show the heart of St. Paul's:

"...Both speakers will bring messages from God's Word encouraging us to continue to fulfill the very personal duty laid upon each one of us by our Savior's Words: "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth," - Acts 1, 8

In preparation for our Mission Sunday, think over the following suggested ways in which YOU can do mission work:

1. BY COMING TO CHURCH REGULARLY. Such testimony cannot be without effect. If men and women, boys and girls, see Christian people faithfully attending church, it cannot leave them unimpressed. Your going to church is a powerful testimony to the power of the Gospel.
2. BY BRINGING OTHERS. Undoubtedly we all have friends and acquaintances who are unchurched, especially in a large community such as ours. These we should invite to attend public worship with us.
3. BY TELLING OTHERS. Tell people of the hope that is within you. Tell them why you are a Christian. To those whom we cannot reach personally, we send missionaries to go into all the world as our representatives and preach the Gospel to all nations.
4. BY PRAYING FOR THE CHURCH'S MISSION WORK. Prayer accomplishes much. Pray for our missions, pray for our missionaries. We should acquaint ourselves with the names of our missionaries and pray for them and for the success of their work.

5. BY SUPPORTING THE WORK OF MISSIONS WITH OUR MONEY.
Each missionary sent out by the Church represents you and me. They are doing OUR work. Therefore we support them financially. Only if we do so are we meeting our full obligation.

LORD JESUS, HELP US TO BE FAITHFUL WITNESSES FOR THEE! "9

Again on April 8, 1945 the minutes tell us:
" Synod Wide Collection was discussed. The pastor read a few of the needs for the funds such as remodeling college buildings, starting new missions, such as our own, until they are self supporting. A motion was made and carried that we contribute to this million dollar fund by having four special envelopes for the month of May 1945 and the basket collection." 10

As an extra bonus from this meeting we gather a valuable gem of info: Lois Wegner and Barbara Kraklow helped Rev. Wegner during the first two years of Vacation Bible School and were publicly thanked for their service.

This writer has read much of the early history. So much so that at night he has bulletins on the brain and meetings' minutes in his mind. So at this point in the paper before the reader is bored to tears, the writer inserts his own personal feeling from what he has read and grown up in. In this way, the reader may be able to benefit from the many dates and names which must of necessity crop up in a paper dealing with history.

St. Paul's is a mission congregation. Yes, it is self-supporting. Yes, it has its own school and is now mortgage free and more mature. Yet it is a mission congregation...heart and core. This paper cannot properly convey the intensity of this congregation in pushing out to reach others with the news that is always good to hear, the news of Jesus and his forgiveness for all.

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From day one, this congregation has been vitally concerned about passing on this news. First of course was handing on to the next generation the treasures of the Lord. The wisdom and traps of the sinful world working against their young was defeated with one weapon - the Word of God. Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and yes, as early as 1945 in April, a blanket subscription to the Jr. Northwestern for all children--all this gives clear evidence they gave of their lives what they confessed with their lips.¹¹

This emphases upon Christian education for family and children always benefit a congregation with true, lasting growth. In one of the early bulletins, November 25, 1945 we read this truth:

"It speaks well for the future of our congregation when our confirmed members show such great interest in Christian doctrine that they feel compelled to review their course of instructions from time to time. A well-indoctrinated congregation will always be a strong congregation regardless of size."¹²

And this encouragement is followed by an invitation to those who had not been able to attend the first lecture-class which in turn is followed by public congratulations for some members of the Sunday School for their exemplary attendance.

As long as you are receiving a flavor of this group the writer will bring to the reader's attention some of the ongoing activities and organizations before we continue with our general overview of the history of St. Paul's.

In 1944 one of the first organizations established was the Ladies' Missionary Guild. These God-fearing women have provided assistance to the Church at home and abroad.

These believers work alongside our foreign missionaries with their gifts and prayers. They work with the mission work at home and even in their own backyards. They also serve in another quieter, less praised manner. Their children are continually exposed to the Lord's love and are trained by women with the Lord's work and workers in their hearts and prayers. This is very familiar to the writer as he grew up in the love of such a woman. He often remembers his mother posting little cards and reminders about missionaries. And if there was pocket change in his pockets when she washed, it went into her little box for missions. She of course was not alone in this, many other women did the same. What a blessing from our Lord to send such women to be of service to His church here and abroad.

Another blessing that flourished with the Savior's joy showering from above was, and is, the choir. It seems the Lord has a love affair with those who sing His praises at St. Paul's in Moline for he saw fit to allow this group to gather on February 14, 1945.¹³ Over the years this group has fluctuated in size with even a major reorganization on August 24, 1954.¹⁴ But the Love that fills their hearts stays with the Savior who bought them, body and soul, and washed them out of death into His life of faith. At a practise session they may wonder how a song can come out of them like flat pancakes. But when they gather in church to glorify the holy Trinity there can be no mistaking the burning love to praise Him with anthems of joy and loud hosannas and alleluias.

This is the atmosphere the writer lived and breathed in his early life - a love for the Word, the Lord's work and His workers, missions, joy and singing. Now just tuck these things into the back of your mind, and let them ferment for

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for several years. Then slowly sip on the fine-tasting history, sit back and marvel at what the Lord is making in St. Paul's.

we left off with the services being held in Johnson's Store on 16 Ave. and 3rd St. in Moline. After much discussion and great care the congregation broke ground for their own church on Thanksgiving, November 27, 1947. The church minutes record:

"Ground breaking ceremonies were held on Thanksgiving Day at the building site. There were 32 members and friends present. The service was conducted by Rev. Wegner. He turned a spade of earth, followed by members of the building Committee: T.A. Kraklow, Martin Tullberg, and Howard Reed." 15

Of course there are always struggles that the Lord allows so that his people may grow. There were problems with meeting in the Store Church as Pastor Ernst Wendland knows firsthand. And there were problems here as well. Difficulties with the contractor delayed and burdened the members. He was released and they carried on...with the Lord's strength and guidance. So on July 19, 1948 the Rev. Otto Pagels of Ixonia and the Rev. Norbert Paustian of Oconomowoc both from Wisconsin were the guest preachers at the Dedication of the Basement Church. The Basement Church today is the Fellowship Hall under the present church at 153-19th Ave, Moline, Illinois.

Yet at this same time, mission work was being carried out on Campbells Island. Unfortunately this little mission is not currently in existence. Yet the endeavor was not without fruit as the Word was preached and souls gathered for Jesus.

The next order of business was the formal education of the children by Christian teachers, in a Christian atmosphere, with Christ-centered motivation and discipline -- a Christian Day School. Yes, as early as 1948 a planning committee¹⁶ was formed to plan and prepare for a Christian Day School. In 1950 it seemed that the Lord was going to let them begin. But sadly in 1951 money was tight and the plan was tabled. A committee took up the tabled task in 1953 and with the help of CME the school was planned, financed and built under the pastorate of Rev. Warren Steffenhagen. In May of 1954, a mere two months before this writer got his first look at God's world, the congregation heard this: "Word has been received that teacher, Edith Bruss, has been assigned to our school."¹⁷ She recently had graduated from DMLC and served as the 1st teacher of our school, at that time K through 4th grade. On August 22, 1954 she was installed and the school dedicated. At this time St. Paul's had the 2nd parochial Day School in the area, the only other one was Immanuel, Rock Island, Ill.¹⁸

Again we should sidetrack for a moment to understand what all was happening, all the bustling change and happy confusion during this exciting period of the congregation's life.

In April 1952, Pastor Wegner accepted a call to Zion, Ev. Luth. Church, Columbus, WI. Rev. Warren Steffanhagen was assigned to St. Paul's upon graduation and although the school structure was erected mainly under his pastorate, he had accepted a call to Friesland, Wis. in May of 1954 before the school was dedicated. The congregation extended the first call to Rev. Elmer Mahnke, who had been pastor at Hillsboro, WI. The Lord moved him to accept the call. What with one pastor

leaving, a teacher on the way, the school building winding up and another pastor on the way, things were hectic to say the least. In order for school to open on schedule in the fall the congregation called Tutor Paul Kuske of Northwestern College to serve as vacancy pastor. Listen to this anecdote recorded by Rev. Eugene Ahlswede in his history of the first 25 years of St. Paul's:

"Rev. Kuske must have worked long and hard, for his shoes wore out. As weeks wore on, the congregation could not help but notice the deterioration and dustiness of the good Tutor's shoes. When his service to the congregation was completed, St. Paul's presented him with a new pair of shoes."¹⁹

Now back to our story....as was stated before, there always has been interest in missions and education/fellowship at St. Paul's. As far as the record goes, the Men's Club got its start on April 24, 1947 and still is working today. Often members of this group spearhead projects that require leadership. Under the direction of some of this group a Boy's Club was started in April of 1955. And what is a boy's group without a girl's group, right? Thus the Girl's Club was also begun in 1955. Both of these Christ-centered groups are helping the youth of St. Paul's even today, although in a different form and name - the Pioneers and Paulettes.

Somewhere in all of this a Young People's group was operating. The earliest record found was that on Jan. 15, 1950 the group was going strong.²⁰ On July 12, 1959 is the reference that another leader was needed as the first had to take leave due to family illness.²¹ This group also fluctuates as one would expect, yet it is still available for the youth of St. Paul's under the name of Cross Crusaders.

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remember when all this growth and activity is happening? It was when the congregation gathered with often wet shoes in the leaky basement Church. So, onward Christian Soldiers and up-and-at-em as well. In 1958 the congregation was given permission to find an architect and get their estimates. At this time the body in 1959 purchased the present parsonage beside the church. Groundbreaking was on April 29, 1959 and during construction the congregation huddled in their 2-room school. And yes, the school in 1960 graduated its first class of 8th graders in June: Carol Loete, Terry Mahon, Dennis Needham, and Vicki Tribble.

While we are on the matter of the school, what was happening there? In 1957, Edith Bruss became Mrs. Kenneth Arndt. Miss Luella Kirst was called to teach and Mrs. Walmar Bachman, a member, consented to teach the lower grades. In 1958 Diane Oitzmann was assigned from DMLO to teach the lower grades. She became Mrs. Womack and served until 1961 when Jane Heid was called to teach the lower grades.

1961 - that year makes our ears tingle. And this was a year of trial for the members of the WELS mission in Moline. Liberalism had cancered its way into our sister synod, LCMS. Up until that year the Men's clubs, Ladies' groups, youth and called workers could find fellowship with their sister synod. But now St. Paul's was thrust into the position of a lone sentry of conservative Lutheranism in the now Quad-Cities. As always, when the Lord thrusts His crosses upon His children, He is with them and gives strength. The Lord blesses those

who remain with him and His pure Word. Out of the heat and fire of this trial of faith, the congregation emerged burning with love for the Lord, with a zeal for missionwork and passion for doctrinal purity.

The Rev. Elmer Mahnke accepted his call to Grace Av. Luth. Church, Milwaukee, Wi. and Pastor John Jeske served during the fall and winter months of 1962 and 1963. If the reader has made it to this point in the paper and managed to remain awake through the dates and names listed thus far, the writer has found your reward. Again from the 25th anniversary booklet this piece of history is recorded:

"Pastor John Jeske (of Milwaukee, Wis.) was semi-retired and hampered by poor eye sight, but his faithful service endeared him to the members of St. Paul's. It was decided that Pastor Jeske should fly rather than drive to Moline. One winter eve, a snow storm diverted his flight from the Quad-City airport to Clinton, Iowa. The plane skidded on the icy runway. Pastor Jeske said that he didn't think anything was wrong until he looked out and saw a fence post poking through the wing. The Jeskes, Pastor and his wife, proceeded to Moline via bus. Their evening was as yet not complete. Their bus took them with the rest of the passengers to the air terminal in Moline. A Member, who shall remain nameless, was to pick them up. However, they were stalled at the Moline terminal when, the nameless one, locked his keys in the trunk."²²

In all of this did the warm mission hearts get a bit chilly? Listen for yourself and judge from the record. In the spring of 1963 Rev. Reuben Reimers became the shepherd for this flock. The minutes leave no doubt as to the primary purpose for this congregation: "A motion was approved to send a letter to the proper Wisconsin Synod officials, encouraging and offering to be helpful in beginning a mission congregation in Davenport. (Iowa)"²³

But the Lord's plans were not quite ready for that to happen yet. In 1964 He called both Luella Kirst and Jane

Heid to different fields. But in the same year He also sent Mr. Roland Helmreich to teach and be the first principal. Mrs. Helmreich was called to teach and lower grades which she did until 1966 when she left to be a full-time mother and home-maker. So in 1966 Dene Werner was the emergency teacher followed by Helen Lochner who was called to teach the Lower Grades in 1967.

This is the period that brings such good memories to the writer. Jane Heid could do no wrong as this writer's teacher. One thorough washing of my mouth with a bar of soap so cleaned up my act that I cannot even remember what I said, but I do remember her telling us about Jesus, His blood and our Help and Hope. This writer also traces his love for the laws of nature the Lord has made to Mr. Helmreich. His love for science and reading really rubbed off on me. And I fondly remember Mrs. Helmreich who taught me most of what I know as far as the piano goes. What between her skill at teaching and my parent's determination that I practise, I now can enjoy God's great gift of music.

In 1965 Pastor Reimers went to Immanuel, in Hutchinson Minn. Rev. Theo H. Mahnke served as vacancy pastor until the Rev. Eugene Ahlswede accepted the call to shepherd at St. Paul's. So it was that the Lord now decided it was time to act. The word went out, they got to work, and after much prayer and leg-work Gethsemane Evangelical Lutheran Church in Davenport Ia. was brought together.

A part time Vicar was assigned to help St. Paul's while this extra work was going forward. Vicar Leroy Martin assisted until the Lord granted the 2nd pastor to the now

Quint-cities, the Rev. Ralph Scharf. (Writer's note: Pastor Martin always seems to enjoy conversations with those he served during this time. It seems that he will always be known and remembered as the youthful "VICAR MARTIN" in their hearts and minds. A veritable fountain of youth for him!!)

On January 1st, 1969, under the pastorate of Rev. Ahlswede St. Paul's became self-supporting. The desire for this has already been seen from the minutes quoted at the beginning of this history. At this time there were 345 souls and 229 communicants as it celebrated 25 years of God's grace.

What was happening now in the leadership and teaching positions desired by the congregation? Pastor Ahlswede received and accepted a call to a different area of the kingdom, and thus the Lord gave Rev. Robert Bitter to St. Paul's in 1975. In 1971 Mr. Helmreich also accepted a different call, and we received Mr. Reynold Kremer. Under him in 1975-76 a 9th grade was added to the school. In fact, the congregation added a \$28,000.00 room. And in the great year of national celebration, 1976, the school had 51 students enrolled with some from the Gethsemane Congregation in Davenport.

Helen Lochner left in 1972 for more of the Lord's work elsewhere. Carolyn Radtke then taught from 1972-1973. At this time also Mrs. Ahlswede was called to teach kindergarten in 1973. When Carolyn Radtke left, Sharon Sting accepted the call to train the lambs under the care of St. Paul's. One year after she was teaching, Mrs. Charlotte Wiese was called to teach kindergarten. She accepted the service and from 1974 to the present she has been faithfully teaching the next generation the timeless truth of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. From 1976 to 1979 Kathy Burger served as the teacher of the

middle grades. In 1977 the now Mrs. Trier (nee Sting) left the Lord's work mainly concentrating on her family. In 1977 when Rev. R. Bitter left for a different call, Rev. Dietz of Davenport served as vacancy pastor helped by his vicar, Michael Frick. In 1977 the Lord allowed the congregation to receive the gift of a former missionary to a foreign field. The Rev. Julius Wille became the overseer of this flock of Jesus. In 1977 when Mr. Bremer was directed to a different area of the kingdom, Mr. Michael Falk was called to be principal. He served until this present year. Mrs. Julius Wille also was called to teach the lower grades in 1977 and in 1980 Mrs. Connie Davis, who had been Gethsemane's called teacher, was released to be the teacher for St. Paul's lower grades.

It was under the pastorate of Rev. Wille that the longstanding debt was methodically whittled away and the Synod finally repaid. The mortgage was burned and the Lord granted his mission a breath of freedom from debt.

The work in Moline is hard and continually a struggle for the people of God. Yet the workers in the congregation have proved to be tireless. The Lord has made such in St. Paul's who raise questions not about wishing for "good old days". Rather their quest lies in how best to spread the News about Jesus today and tomorrow, for their growth and to spread His Name to the next generation. During the last two summers Vicar C. Heup and then Vicar^r Gumm helped in a canvassing effort. Even as this is being typed the Lord is working great things in St. Paul's of Moline. Perhaps one or more children have been urged by their parents and pastor to be full-time pastors and teachers. Perhaps one more adult has been baptized into Christ.

Perhaps another class of adult confirmands has united before the Lord's Altar to receive the Sacrament. Perhaps more youth are touching their peers in highschool with the Words of their Master Jesus. Perhaps a mother is quietly telling her child about Jesus, the Lord King, the Savior of all, the only Way to God. Who knows what the Spirit of the Lord is working for His people? Let the reader keep his eye on this congregation and see what will happen, for the Lord is keeping His watchful eye on St. Paul's.

DOWN MEMORY LANE WITH ST. PAUL'S

In Nineteen Hundred and Forty-four,
God opened yet another door.
St. Paul's of Moline was his choice,
For which we really can rejoice.

Things weren't easy but we were young,
We rolled up our sleeves, the Lord's work had begun.
A permanent church was what we needed,
so eventually the Pinkel property to us was deeded.

A church costs money that you know,
so to our Wise, Synod we had to go.
A contractor started our basement church,
but eventually left us in the lurch.

So back to work we went again,
becoming our own contracting men.
In the year of our Lord in Forty-eight,
our church we were able to dedicate.

But, whenever there was a hard rainfall,
the floor had to be squeezed and mopped by all.
In Fifty-three we were blessed again,
a school for our little Lambs we were to begin.

The church began to have growing pains,
So, back to the planning stage again.
But, first a parsonage we were to buy,
from an estate adjoining our property close by.

In Fifty-nine we got our church,
but Synod again had to open its purse.
God's blessings again in Sixty-one,
self supporting we were to become.

A teacherage we were able to buy,
O, the Lord's blessings sometimes we wondered why.
Our property now was about completed,
but, the C.E.F. was about depleted.

The debt looked big to puny men,
but God blessed us again and again.
In Nineteen Eighty we are debt free,
God blessed us all again you see.

The stone Samuel named "Ebenezer" in trust,
certainly also applies to us.
The meaning of the Name is quite clear,
and to a believing Christian quite dear.

"Hither to Hath the Lord Helped us",
The Lord to us has always been just.
Yes, St. Paul's members can surely see,
and each can say it also applies to me.

D.A.K.

Writer's Postscript

The following is some bits and pieces of information about the writer specifically directed to you, the reader, and those future readers at Moline who may be thinking about becoming a pastor or teacher somewhere in the Lord's kingdom:

Pastor Elmer Mahnke was the tool used by Jesus to plant the seed in my heart to become a pastor. This happened when I was 8 years old. The fire has been burning ever since. I daily thank God that He gave me Christian parents who fanned this desire into a flame. What a blessing to have parents so intensely interested in Christian training and education. Christian Day School, Sunday School and Vacation Bible School was taken for granted that I attend...As well as when the time came, the long haul up to Northwestern High School and College.

I feel I grew up in missions as well. Missionary John Janosek was a "son" of the congregation. Prof. Ernst Wendland had ties of friendship with my folks as well. And these two men, besides spending years in Africa, spent a good many hours before the throne of God in our prayers. Recently as I talked with Pastor Wille he mentioned that the ratio of churched to unchurched in the Moline area was almost the same as in the area where he was in Africa. (And they call Africa the Dark Continent??) Thus you can readily see that the Lord Jesus has seen to it that my love for him, his work and workers was always growing.

This writer sympathizes with those who are studying for the public ministry and are getting discouraged. It does seem to be a long haul at times. Just once did the Lord allow me to have that terrible feeling of doubt to creep its slimy way into my heart. And in the event that one of the future readers, one possible pastor or teacher, who is reading this has doubts, I offer a helping hand. This hand of help was extended to me by Pastor Eugene Ahlswede and to this day I use what he told me:

One day, when I was home for a break from NWPS, I was practising on the organ up in church. He came to see who was playing so I came down from the loft and asked to talk a little about being a pastor. I had been getting a rosy-perfect picture. Pastor Ahlswede said sure he would talk. So he plopped down in his work-clothes in the front pew and calmly stuck his feet up on the pew back. Needless to say my mouth dropped to the floor, I calmly sat down across the aisle in the front pew and put my feet up as well. So there we sat, me on the left, Pastor on the right, not looking at each other, but at the chancel and the 12' cross.

I told Pastor that I had heard all the rosy pictures about being a pastor. But I knew there must be other things as well. I wanted some straight talk. "What is it really like being a pastor?" And he told me. He told me about studying, being called for help at all hours of the night, not feeling well and still working, long hard hours. He told me of not enough time, of trying to get back the wandering and knocking on doors to get to those who don't know about Jesus. Then he told me of self-doubts: was he being faithful, a good pastor, a help to the flock. Then he sighed and said: "Paul, there are still days when I wake up and wonder if I am really supposed to be a pastor."

Then he paused and I wondered now what?! If my pastor has problems and even wonders and doubts at times, how can I ever be a good pastor???

Then he continued: "But usually about then I remember that in all of this my life, if Jesus uses me to reach out and save one person, just one, from hell, then, it really is all worth it!!"

And I can still see him sitting there, in his work clothes, with his feet up on the pew, looking at that cross, with peace washing over his face and a smile tugging at the corners of his mouth.

Thanks, Pastor!

END NOTES

1. Rev. Mennicke - taped conversation with writer, 1981
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Congregational Minutes
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Congregational Bulletin
10. Congregational Minutes
11. Ibid.
12. Congregational Bulletin
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Congregational Minutes
17. Ibid.
18. Moline Daily Dispatch Newspaper, Aug. 23(?), 1954
19. 25th Anniversary Booklet, Rev. Eugene Ahlswede
20. Congregational Bulletin
21. Congregational Minutes
22. 25th Anniversary Booklet, Rev. Eugene Ahlswede
23. Congregational Minutes.

Thanks to Mr. Kraklow for the poem and Mrs. Needham who remains a help to history with her memory. Also the many to whom I do not formally give menti on I thank for information gleaned and especially for the prayers and warmth that pushed me through to the goal set for me by the Lord Jesus.