

God's Amazing Grace
25

Years at St. Mark

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God's Amazing Grace

25 Years at St. Mark
In Eau Claire, Wisconsin

by

Tony J. Hansen

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Church History
Professor M. Westerhaus

Foreword

At the outset of this paper, I wondered how I was going to proceed. I had my ideas. I wanted to write about the Wisconsin Synod involvement in the military chaplaincy and why we do not have pastors who are actually officers in the armed services. Then I wanted to write about the history of the Church History Paper. Who started it and why was it assigned? But, I came up with the idea to write my Church History Paper during vicar year in Appleton, WI., as I was learning under Pastor Dennis Belter.

Pastor Belter had explained briefly to me about Riverview Lutheran's recent past. That intrigued me and got me to asking other members about Riverview's history in which everyone in the congregation was interested because their 50th anniversary was fast approaching.

As I began to inquire about Riverview's history, I began to think about my home church, St. Mark, and our 25th anniversary. In my reminiscing about St. Mark, I put two and two together. "Hey," I said to myself, -yes, I actually said, "Hey,"- "I could do the church history of St. Mark for my senior Church History Paper, since everyone from first year on at the Seminary knows that there is a Church History Paper assigned in Senior year.

I had my topic. I knew I would do my paper on St. Mark. But now I asked myself, "How am I going to proceed?" "How I am going to proceed?" is the purpose of this foreword. I know I could have spent time and pages on the in depth tracing of the history of all the meetings and committees and organizations and school functions and the ways and reasons for our worship, but I have decided to do differently, although I realize everything is important.

This paper is intended to give a comprehensive history of the Eau Claire, Wisconsin, Wisconsin Lutheran Synod congregation which has named itself Saint Mark Lutheran. This paper will explore the early beginnings of St. Mark, our ministers and how St. Mark has grown during their ministries, and also how the Lord has blessed St. Mark with its school, plus a few last words concerning a little of this and little of that.

Enjoy reading this paper. I had fun researching and writing it. So, I hope you have just as much fun learning about your St. Mark Congregation.

Dedicated to John W. Hansen, my father.

Dad was on the very first building committee which gave the approval to build the first worship, education, and fellowship complex for St. Mark, and he also always wanted to see me become a pastor. This one's for you, Dad.

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25 Years at St. Mark
In Eau Claire, Wisconsin

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Chapter 1

In The Beginning

(1966-June 1967)

1967 was quite a year. The Green Bay Packers won their second straight championship, their first Super Bowl and lived up to "Titletown U.S.A." as Green Bay's nickname, by defeating the Kansas City Chiefs by the score of 35-10 on January 15. Vince Lombardi resigned as the Head Coach of the Packers soon afterwards and took the Head Coaching job at Washington to coach the Redskins.

But to a few families in the Eau Claire vicinity, 1967 will be more than a mere memory of football. Yes, 1967 will stand out in their memories as the year when St. Mark Evangelical Lutheran Church became incorporated and a full-fledged church.

1992 is the 25th Anniversary of the incorporation of that little church. In commemoration of the 25 years of amazing grace that God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, has showered upon his children in the St. Mark congregation, this is the history of St. Mark.

Like the reason for many beginnings, there has to be a need. And need there was! Three families, Alwin and Thelma Kock, Ken and Carol Trehey, and LaVerne and Lorraine Vetter each had a common need. They all wanted a church that would minister to them in the truth and pureness of the gospel.

Eventhough there were other Evangelical Lutheran Synod churches in Eau Claire, churches with which the Wisconsin Synod is in fellowship, each family wanted to keep with the same liturgy and heritage of the WELS. Independently, without knowledge of what the other families were doing, in January of 1966, each family contacted Pastor H. Marcus Schwartz of Menomonie, WI, to see if there would be a possibility of starting a Wisconsin Lutheran Synod Church in Eau Claire.

Their prayers and requests were answered and granted. On March 6, 1966, Pastor Schwartz held the first service for the tiny group of believers. The first service was held at 10:30 A.M., in the Youth Center Room of the YMCA, located at 700 Graham Ave. in Eau Claire. After an attendance of 14, this little flock continued to worship on a "Sunday-only" basis at the YMCA as Pastor Schwartz and Vicar Robert Berg of Beyer Settlement ministered to them.

Being excited about worshipping, the little flock wanted others to worship with them, so they entered a listing in the Eau Claire Church Directory in the local Eau Claire Daily Telegram. It read:

"WISCONSIN SYNOD Services 10:30 am.
YMCA Youth Center. Robert Berg, pastor."
-March 25,1966.

The room in which the three families worshipped at the YMCA was quite the place for a service. The Youth Center Room at the "Y" was in the basement. Each Sunday, the families had to clean up, then set up the room for services and also

take down the materials which consisted of two candles, a wooded⁹ cross, and some paraments which covered a table that was used as the altar, and then pack them away in an old army trunk that was stored in a side room in the "Y."

The cost to use the room was \$10.00 each Sunday. A letter written to Mrs. L. A. Vetter confirms the price. It is interesting that the reservations for the room were made in the name of St. Paul Lutheran Church of Menomonie, Wisconsin. That would be natural since Pastor Schwartz, from St. Paul's, was the worship leader and since St. Mark was not on its own two feet yet. The letter reads:

April 20, 1966

Dear Mrs. Vetter:

This is to confirm our conversation on the telephone that the Youth Center Room will be available to the St. Paul Lutheran Church each Sunday morning, until we are informed differently.

The charge will be \$10 per Sunday.

*Sincerely yours,
Vic Johnson(signed)
Asst. General Secretary*

On the 19th of April, 1966, there was an organizational meeting held in Menomonie to make a request to the Wisconsin Synod that a mission church be started in Eau Claire. The synod honored the request and declared the little group of believers a mission church.

Soon after the little church received its mission status, the church engaged itself in one of what is now an annual occurrence and fun way to spend a Sunday afternoon in June. In June of 1966,

the about to be St. Mark held its first congregational picnic. This is an event that has been eagerly awaited by the whole congregation and the collegians ever since.

Still, the members knew what took top priority in their lives. They knew that worshipping and serving their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, first and foremost, was the most important. They showed that by carrying on the sacrament that the Lord Jesus instituted on the same night on which he was betrayed. On July 24, 1966, the first worship service with the celebration of the Lord's Supper was held at the YMCA with a total of eight souls communing.

In the late summer of 1966, Pastor Schwartz realized that this little congregation needed their own pastor to care for them, so he wrote to retired Pastor Kurt Timmel of Wausau, Wisconsin, asking him if he would conduct the services which he had started. Pastor Timmel gladly and enthusiastically accepted the opportunity and wrote to Mr. L. A. Vetter on September 7, 1966, informing him that he would be leading the services:

Dear Mr. Vetter,

I just received a letter from Pastor Schwartz informing me that I am to conduct the service at Eau Claire beginning this coming Sunday.

I will be there in ample time to make any particular arrangements necessary.

Numbers for the service:-

340

451

400

54

It will be a pleasure to meet you and to work with you.

Sincerely,

Kurt A. Timmel(signed)

So, Pastor Kurt Timmel came out of retirement to hold the services for the tiny congregation but only on a "Sunday-only" basis.

After Autumn and two-thirds of Winter had passed with Pastor Timmel leading the services, the time had come for the congregation to come up with a name for itself.

At the same time as the first officers of the congregation were chosen, the name St. Mark, selected because St. Mark's writings represent what the charter members wanted to stand for, officially was the choice for the congregation at an organizational meeting in Menomonie, Wi., at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, on February 5, 1967. The officers were as follows: President, Mr. LaVerne Vetter; Vice President, Mr. Alwin Kock; and Secretary-Treasurer, Mr. Ken Trehey.

One day earlier on the 4th, at the annual meeting, the members were officially accepted into membership. All regular attenders, the new members were: MR. ALWIN AND MRS. THELMA KOCK
MISSES ALDEHEID, GERTRUDE, & MARIE ZUEHLKE
MR. L.A. AND MRS. LORRAINE VETTER (GARY, MARK, SUE)
MR. KEN AND MRS. CAROL TREHEY (TERRI AND MARK).

Although on the outside the little church was moving right along, things did not seem to be going well at all in February. Mr. Vetter wrote to the Mission Board of the Western Wisconsin District informing them that if some other, more substantial measures were not taken at St. Mark, the growth of the church was not going to happen. Knowing that the shortage of pastors was even evident in the 60's, Mr. Vetter suggested that maybe a vicar or upper-classman from the Seminary could stay for the summer and do

some evangelism canvassing work until a permanent man could be called. Otherwise he asked if it would be better for the members to attend church in Menomonie or in Beyer Settlement.

There was a very bright spot in the haze of uncertainty. On February 7, Pastor Schwartz received a letter from Grace Lutheran Sunday School in Eau Claire, Michigan. The letter was:

Dear Pastor:

Our Sunday School, Grace Lutheran of Eau Claire, Michigan, have decided to send the monthly collections to different missions and therefore the month of January was chosen for the Eau Claire, Wisconsin Mission and we would like for you to see that it is received by them.

We thank you very much and hope that this will help a little.

*Sincerely in Christ,
Grace Lutheran Sunday School*

In April of the same year, President of the Western Wisconsin District, Rev. Carl Mischke and Rev. Henry Paustian, District Mission Board Chairman, came up to Eau Claire to see the growth potential of the mission and also to see if it would be feasible to make St. Mark part of a dual parish with St. Peter in Elmwood, Wi..

The two men decided to make the two a dual parish and to give the call for these two churches to the Assignment Committee, the District Presidents of the synod. They could then assign a candidate from the Seminary as the pastor.

Soon after the recognizance trip to the Eau Claire area and the submission of the call to the Assignment Committee, Candidate F.A. Kogler was assigned, in May of '67, to the joint call of St.

Mark, Eau Claire, and St. Peter, Elmwood, WI.

The Rev. Henry Paustian, District Mission Board Chairman, in a newsletter written in April of 1967, states the reason for the fusing of the two calls:

"To this time, our new Eau Claire mission has been served out of Wausau with Sunday services only, but currently an attempt is being made to amalgamate this mission with a small congregation in Elmwood, 35 miles distant, which is losing its pastor and probably would not be able to continue on its own."

Meanwhile during the month of May, after synod gave their approval to select a church site, St. Mark looked to purchase their own property for their own worship facility. They found for sale a choice piece of property, the same plot on which the church stands today, on the south side of Eau Claire. An "Offer to Purchase" was drawn up on May 15th with the figure of \$27,000 the offer. Mr. Roy Langdon owned the land.

There were many buildings on the property. On the southeast corner of State and Hamilton, there was a house which today still stands but was moved and is being used as the parsonage. Behind the house, along Hamilton, stood a garage and also a barn.

In June of '67, Pastor Harold Eckert, Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the WELS, approved the Langdon property for the site of the future St. Mark church.

The once small group of three families now had a church, a called pastor on the way, and a potential plot of land on which they would build their worship facility. In the period of a year and a half, the Lord certainly showed his amazing grace.

Chapter 2 Our First Called Pastor (July 1967-June 1973)

In July of 1967, the Roman Catholic Church was at the center of the religious world. Pope Paul VI planned a two day visit to Istanbul, Turkey, to discuss unity with the ecumenical patriarch of the Eastern Orthodox Church, Athenagoras I.

When Pope Paul and Athenagoras met, they exchanged kisses of peace in Istanbul's church of St. George. This was the first time that a pope had entered and prayed in an Eastern Orthodox church.

Eventhough it seemed like the world was focused ~~in~~ on this historical visit, St. Mark was focused ~~in~~ on Frederick A. Kogler, their new pastor who arrived ^{and} ~~PA~~ was installed on July 24. Pastor Kogler was ordained and installed at St. Peter July 17.

Pastor Kogler was from North St. Paul, MN. He was from the graduating class of 1967 and was assigned to St. Peter, Elmwood and St. Mark, Eau Claire, WI. He served his vicarship under Pastor Marv Doelger in Winner and Witten, SD.

First on the priority list for Pastor Kogler was to get to know the people and the prospects in the Eau Claire vicinity. Living in Elmwood though posed a problem of being immediately available. But Pastor Kogler managed to get around and meet the members of St. Peter and St. Mark. God blessed this effort at St. Peter by increasing their average attendance and also the same way at St. Mark.

Pastor Kogler also wanted to get both churches standing on their own two feet. For Eau Claire, that meant incorporation. It had been on the minds of the council in the past and now it had to come to a reality. However, there was still a matter of finalizing the purchase of the Langdon property staring Pastor Kogler and the Council in the face.

St. Mark needed to obtain the deed and other necessary papers from the American National Bank. American National Bank had been given the papers after Mr. Roy Langdon's representatives had done a survey of the land and drawn up the legal papers for the land. When St. Mark asked the bank about the papers, the bank had ~~told~~^{replied} that St. Mark they needed to come up with the payment and then they would release the papers to St. Mark.

On August 30, Paul Unke, the Fiscal Executive of the Board of Trustees of the WELS sent off a check amounting to \$24,300 written out to American National Bank to close out the deal for the Langdon property. In turn, American National Bank sent the synod copies of the necessary papers after all the details had been finalized. St. Mark now had their property on which they could build their church. Thanks be to God!

Naturally, worship of the gracious, Savior God, the same one we worship, continued at the "Y". Operation of the St. Mark mission as of October 17, consisted of setting up the room at the "Y" for service. Those who picked up students from the University were exempt that Sunday from the setting up, but that was also part of the operation.

In a telephone conversation, Pastor Kogler told me how that began. It began with a few collegians coming to the service on Sunday. The collegians who attended the service would then go back to campus and spread the word around about St. Mark. Posters were put up as to when the services were held and that St. Mark would provide rides for them to and from church. In the beginning of the "campus pick-up," the Vetter family was the sole "picker-upper."

However, the response that Pastor Kogler received from the collegians was so great that the attendance each Sunday was usually comprised of half members, half collegians. St. Mark needed more than the three or four cars to pick up students, but that did matter. The students found ways to get to church. Pastor Kogler really got the whole UWEC Campus Ministry going and thriving.

Another interesting comment I received involving the students was during a conversation with Pastor Prah. He told me that the synod was not quite sure if the congregation would fly relying only on the regular members, but that the church would flourish with the student attendance enhanced by the pick-up.

Other operations included an ushering system. The duties of the mission usher were to collect and distribute bulletins, to keep a weekly record of attendance, to distribute hymnals and to make sure that they are picked up and put into boxes for storage.

Last in the list of operations, but hardly the least, was the organist. Mrs. Vetter was the regular organist but both pastor and she welcomed any substitutes.

The worship of St. Mark went along smoothly, but the official

needs were lacking. There was no constitution as of yet. That was next on the agenda. At a special congregational meeting on November 11, one more giant step for St. Mark was permitted by the Lord. St. Mark adopted their constitution. Also at the meeting, the officials were again elected for their terms. Mr. H. Weiss was elected as President for 3 years; Mr. D. Schutte was elected as Secretary for 2 years; and Mr. L. Heinemann was elected as Treasurer for 1 year. No one desired to be elected for the Financial Secretary.

It did not take long after the adoption of the constitution that St. Mark became incorporated. It happened on November 30, 1967, the day that the charter three families of St. Mark will most likely remember, rather than the Packer's championship team. On the following page is a copy of the incorporation form.

Since its incorporation St. Mark grew quickly. The attendance quickly rose and the need for a permanent church building was churning in the minds of the members. The idea was brought up in meeting and was approved.

In March of 1968, synod approved a building program for the mission. With the expansion of the Synod's Outreach and the rapid growth, St. Mark was selected as the pilot project for the newly developed architectural department of the General Board for Home Missions.

With such a great responsibility in front of them, and such a great step in the history of a church body, building the worship facility could not be left up to just anyone. So, the congregation

CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION
ST. MARK EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

That the undersigned Harold Weiss, Donald Schutte, and Leslie Heinemann and those who are or may become associated with them for the purposes herein specified have organized themselves into a religious society of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, located in the City of Eau Claire, in the county of Eau Claire, and state of Wisconsin, for religious, charitable and educational purposes, which society shall be known and incorporated by the name of St. Mark Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Dated at Eau Claire, Wisconsin this 30th day of November, 1967.

Harold Weiss
HAROLD WEISS

Witnesses:
Donald A. Losby
Donald A. Losby

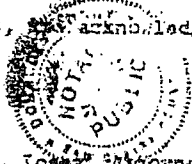
Donald Schutte
Donald Schutte

Gayle J. Quilling
Gayle J. Quilling

Leslie Heinemann
Leslie Heinemann

STATE OF WISCONSIN)
EAU CLAIRE COUNTY) ss.

Personally came before me this 30th day of November, A.D. 1967 the above named Harold Weiss, Donald Schutte, and Leslie Heinemann to me known to be the persons who executed the foregoing instrument, and acknowledged the same.



Drafted by
Donald A. Losby, Attorney.

Donald A. Losby
Donald A. Losby, Notary Public,
Eau Claire County, Wisconsin.
My Commission is permanent.

in a meeting on April 16, 1968, chose a building committee. The members of that very first building committee were Mr. John Hansen, Mr. Donald Schutte, and Mr. L.A. Vetter. Mr. Schutte was voted in as chairman on May 18.

The duties of the building committee entailed looking into all the various aspects of remodeling the present facility. There was a strong feeling though, against selling off any of the property. The preliminary thought was to gut the house and use that as a chapel.

In one of the initial meetings of the Building Committee, it had to be decided whether it would be wiser to build a "pastorate-chapel" for \$30,000 or to wait until the spring of 1969 and hope to get \$50,000 to build a first phase chapel building on the corner of Hamilton and State.

After Pastor Kogler had explained that the college attendance would increase and that membership would increase because of transfers into St. Mark, there was a motion that the Joint Church Council and Building Committee recommend to the voters that the proposed "pastorate-chapel" be built. Pastor Kogler soon after called Pastor Paustian for a \$30,000 loan.

The "pastorate-chapel" was to serve a two-fold purpose. First of all, it would serve as a temporary worship facility and then it would be a home for the pastor.

The high emotions were stunned in a meeting on October 8. Pastor Kogler informed the Building Committee that synod had changed the course of St. Mark's building program. However, synod

thought that because there was so much interest in the building program, it would be best if St. Mark would build a chapel building on the west end of the property. In the future, synod thought, it could be used as a school and a new larger church could be built in conjunction with the existing building. The existing house on the property would not be sold, but used as the parsonage.

The motion was made, seconded and approved. The Building Committee recommended to the voters that St. Mark ask for the \$50,000 for the building. The recommendation was joyously passed.

St. Mark now planned to build the church. The contact man for St. Mark concerning the structure was Duane Anderson, the Synodical Architect. Mr. Anderson drew up the blueprints which became the pilot project for the Architectural Development Department of the Board for Home Missions.

The Eau Claire Daily Telegram printed an article entitled "New Building Planned by Church Here" about the planning of the church in the Sunday paper on September 7, 1969:

"The new building will seat 200. It will include the fellowship hall, a combination study and office, a kitchenette and a mother's room. It will be a one story structure with cocoa brown brick facing.

It is a first unit of a planned three unit complex, according to Rev. Kogler. The ultimate use of the first unit will be for a gymnasium while the others will house a church and day school.

It is interesting to note that Pastor Kogler helped out with designing some of the interior furniture for worship. Pastor Kogler designed the present cross, altar, communion rail, lectern and pulpit. He helped with the design of the altar cloths and also with the light fixtures that presently hang in the nave, the place

of worship. There used to be the same lighting in the fellowship hall, but that form of lighting was changed when the school began.

The original building measured 109'x 47', and was designed with a little bit of Noah's Ark influence in mind. The total cost for the building with all of its furnishings ran the congregation about \$95,000. September 7, 1969 was the groundbreaking day for the blessing God so graciously had granted. 116 people were in attendance for the ceremony.

It seemed like no time had passed until the church itself had been built. From the groundbreaking on September 7, 1969, to the dedication on March 8, 1970, there was a time span of only 5 months.

Dedication was a very special day. It was another one of the manifestations of God's amazing grace. Once again, St. Mark put a notice into the newspaper. The article from the March 6, 1970 issue mentioned that there would be a dedication of St. Mark Lutheran Church and that there were going to be two services, one at 10:30am and one at 3pm.

The guest speaker for the early service was Pastor Norman Berg, the Executive Secretary for the Board of Home Missions of the WELS. The guest speaker for the afternoon service was Pastor O.J. Naumann, President of the WELS. The two liturgists were Pastor Kogler in the early service and guest liturgist Pastor Schwartz from Menomonie in the late.

210 people worshiped and rejoiced together in the early service. In the afternoon service there was a crowd of 430 people

who gathered to thank the Lord for the gift that he gave to the St. Mark congregation. At the time of the dedication, 112 souls called themselves members of St. Mark with an average of 110 each Sunday. The dedication even made it into the pages of the May 10, 1970, issue of the "Northwestern Lutheran," the official periodical publication of the WELS.

That wasn't all the happenings for the year. In April of 1970, Pastor Kogler accepted the call from St. Mark to be its full-time pastor. Vacation Bible School was held for the first time in June. And in October, Pastor Kogler moved into the parsonage at its newly relocated position, the very same place it is in now.

1971 held a few changes for St. Mark also. In May, the sidewalk, curb and gutter was put in on the Hamilton side of the property. In the summer, our present bell was bought from Luther Hospital and the flag pole was installed.

During the few years Pastor Kogler was at St. Mark, the church building was not the only highlight. Pastor Kogler, who, from the word go, had always been in favor of Christian education, wanted to start a Christian Day School as well.

He planned this out very carefully. Pastor got the wheels in motion and, as the Lord willed, he founded the St. Mark Christian Day School. More details come in chapter 4. Since St. Mark was not quite ready yet for a CDS, he instigated a Saturday School program. The children would come to school on Saturday morning from 9:00 - 11:00 for Bible History lessons and activities. There was a short break too. The purpose was not to have a substitute

for Sunday School - Sunday School started in September of 1967 - but to give the members a taste of Christian Education and to use this as a stepping stone to a day school.

The idea was a success. The members favorably welcomed the Saturday School program. There was only one other parochial school, Epiphany Lutheran School, in the Eau Claire area at the time and that was Missouri Synod.

As the Saturday School program grew in number and acceptability, the thought of having a full time day school drew ever so much closer.

The time had come to decide whether or not to open the doors to a school. The congregation had given its support to the Saturday School, would they do the same toward a day school? According to Pastor Kogler, there was no problem in the wanting, but the support, since the church was a little too small, was the concern.

Three families took the challenge and stepped forward to get the school going. As Pastor Kogler called it, "It was a venture of faith." George Shaker, Mr. and Mrs. L.A. Vetter, and Mr. and Mrs. Ken Trehey made that venture to start the school. In a matter of three short years, the one time dream that Pastor Kogler had of a school was becoming a reality.

January 1972 proved to be the month that the Lord granted another prayer. In a January Voter's Meeting, the congregation gave its approval for the Christian Day School.

After spending 1972 preparing for the new academics at St. Mark, the Board of Education, in a January '73 Council Meeting,

received the green light for calling a Christian Day School teacher. What a true blessing from the all-gracious God!

With a new building, a school about to start for the 73-74 school year and so much else going on, what would make a pastor want to change his place of service? A divine call would do just that.

Very early in the month of January 1973, Pastor Kogler received a call to Columbia, Missouri. With much prayer, advice, and consideration, Pastor Kogler felt it was in the best interest of the Kingdom of God to accept the call. For some personal reasons, though, he needed to decline the call to Missouri however the Minnesota District then issued him another call in February to Emmanuel, West St. Paul, Minnesota. That call he accepted and began serving.

That left the almost 6 year old, incorporated congregation without a leader. In a call meeting on January 15, 1973, the church voted to call Pastor Ronald Waterstradt to be its new pastor after receiving an unanimous vote. Also during the same meeting, there was a motion to call Pastor John Zickuhr, of Beyers Settlement, as the vacancy pastor. That passed too.

In a meeting on January 28, Pastor Zickuhr happily accepted the call to be the vacancy pastor and would not try to change around the schedules of St. Mark too much.

After attempting to call 4 pastors from the field, Pastors Waterstradt, Edward Schaewe, Carl Pagel, and Charles Tessmer, all of whom declined the call to St. Mark, the congregation decided to

go to the Assignment Committee for a Candidate as its pastor.

St. Mark knew what "Call Day" was all about already. St. Mark received its first pastor through "Call Day" and just a few days before the 1973 "Call Day" at the Seminary, the Doctor Martin Luther College "Call Day" affected St. Mark when Miss Charlotte Fitschen (the future Mrs H.H. Prah) received her assignment to St. Mark as its first parochial school teacher.

On May 27, 1973, the Assignment Committee assigned Candidate Herbert H. Prah to be the pastor of St. Mark, Eau Claire and St. John, Hay Creek. The Hay Creek church was added to the call at the recommendation of the voters in the January meeting earlier in the year. Pastor Kogler had been serving St. John, Hay Creek since 1968.

During the time of the vacancy the parsonage was cleaned up and sharpened up by the Ladies Guild and playground equipment was positioned on the south side of the church.

Praise God for all he did during the ministry of Frederick Kogler. He truly brought about His will. His word always was proclaimed. He did great things for St. Mark. Praise his holy name!

Chapter 3 The Prahl Era (July 1973-Present)

Once again the month of July was a momentous one for St. Mark. In 1973, July 8 was the day on which St. Mark ordained and installed their second and present pastor, Herbert H. Prahl.

Pastor Prahl was originally from Germantown, WI, a small town just north and a little west of Milwaukee, WI. He attended Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Northwestern College, and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, and in 1973, graduated from the Seminary. Pastor served his one year of vicarship learning at St. John Lutheran Church in Juneau, WI, under Pastor Carl Mischke, the first vice-president of the synod and president of the Western Wisconsin District at the time.

When he arrived at St. Mark, Pastor Prahl was blessed in reaping what another man had sowed. I'm referring to the work that Pastor Kogler had begun concerning the school. Preparing the people of the congregation for the school had been completed; the facilities were ready; a teacher had been called and the students were enrolled. The only things that needed to be done yet were to install Miss Charlotte Fitschen as teacher and to officially open the doors of St. Mark Lutheran Christian Day School.

Pastor Prahl got right to work. With the first day of school right around the corner in August, the days were accomplished that Charlotte Fitschen should be installed. August 5 was the significant day.

Miss Charlotte Fitschen was a native of Lake City, MN. She was assigned to Eau Claire and graduated from Dr. Martin Luther College in May of '73. The beginning of her teaching career began as a student teacher at Peace Lutheran in Hartford, WI.

Miss Fitschen's full-time teaching began at St. Mark on August 24, the date that also marked the opening of St. Mark Lutheran Christian Day School. There was only a half day of school on the 24. The following Monday, August 27, was the first full day of classes.

With school now going, Pastor Prah! jumped right into the saddle and got to work. He threw himself right into the WELS Campus Ministry and ministered to the students as well as his members.

Campus Ministry has always been a strong part of the St. Mark history. Ever since Pastor Kogler initiated the ministry in the late 60's, Campus Ministry has been readily accepted and has been a blessing to St. Mark.

Pastor Kogler had done a wonderful job with the students, but Pastor Prah! came into his own and made the Campus Ministry a vital part of the church.

As was mentioned before, it has been said that St. Mark mission would not flourish on its own but needed the support from the college.

I asked Pastor Prah! just what is so important about the Campus Ministry. He answered in a couple of ways. "First of all," he said, "it gives the students a way to get to church and

worship when otherwise they might not." Pastor also said, "Campus Ministry makes them feel loved and important."

Pastor emphasized that Campus Ministry does as well as it does due to the 'campus pick-up.' The 'campus pick-up' intensifies the effectiveness of the program greatly.

Campus Ministry has the purpose of just what the name implies. Campus Ministry serves the students as the WELS CAMPUS MINISTRY MISSION STATEMENT says, "*The WELS Campus Ministry exists to make disciples for Jesus Christ on secular campuses. This work shall be accomplished by nurturing, training, training and equipping WELS congregations, students and interested individuals to witness and reach out to those campuses.*" It brings church to them and them to church. During meetings, there is a Bible study and discussion on a whole variety of topics remembering that all is discussed from a Biblical frame of mind.

The students seem to enjoy the organization. They have made it their own and have planned retreats, outings, and have made phone calls for their mailing list. Just recently, in 1991, the collegians and members of St. Mark have joined forces to begin a 'Host Family' program in which a family from St. Mark has a collegian over for supper, to watch a game on T.V., or just to visit.

Pastor Prah1 has definitely done a wonderful job with this very vital part of the ministry while in his years at St. Mark. The Lord has blessed his efforts in such a way that the synod has recognized his work for the Lord in calling him to be the

Chairman of the Campus Ministry Committee. The Lord has definitely blessed his efforts and we give thanks to God.

Campus Ministry is vitally important, but Pastor Prahls call just isn't to the students at UW-Eau Claire. He is the shepherd of St. Mark and he has guided St. Mark through quite a journey in his 19 years.

1974 proved to be a quiet year for Pastor as if being a pastor fresh out of the Seminary was not enough. There were a few prominent events that happened in 1974.

The first thing that happened was the completion of the first year of operation for St. Mark CDS. That in itself was tremendous. A mission church of only 6 years of existence supported, as best it could, along with help from synod, its school with no problems. Miss Fitschen stood firm and was not driven out of the teaching ministry by the energetic, little group of pupils. Then on the final day of classes, Pastor Prahls led the closing service which was followed by a picnic featuring a grill-out. In August, as the Lord willed, the second year of classes began.

As the first semester of the second school year came to an end, the students could not wait a minute longer for vacation. Miss Fitschen nor Pastor Prahls could wait either - for a different reason other than just vacation. On December 28, 1973, Pastor Herbert Prahls and Miss Charlotte Fitschen became one in the Lord as they made their promises to each other before the Lord and guests on their wedding day. They were married at St. John Lutheran Church in Lake City, MN.

So, when the students returned from vacation, their teacher still looked the same but her name had changed. Did that cause a stir! As one of those students, I, a little third grader, remember being a little confused at times as to what to call her. I heard quite a few 'Mrs. Prells' from my fellow students who could not get out the 'Prahl.' In a short time, though, everything was back to normal. So was the business of the church.

However, Mrs. Char Prahl's beginning a married life meant an end to her teaching at St. Mark, but only for a while. On January 9, 1975, The Board of Education reluctantly accepted the resignation of Char Prahl. In the same meeting, it was decided that a new teacher should start on August 1.

1975 proved to be a year of transition. Not only did St. Mark say 'good-bye' to their teacher and 'welcome' to the new one, but St. Mark also started saying their 'farewells' to the King James Version of the Bible.

The New International Version of the Bible had come onto the scene. Yes, there were those who opposed the translation, but the NIV was and is much easier to understand because it was translated in to the language of today.

To convince a congregation who had so strongly held to the KJV for so long, changing the version of the Bible that is used must be handled carefully, very carefully. And that was how it was handled, carefully.

At a meeting on December 15, 1975, there was a motion to print the New Testament Scripture readings on a bulletin insert - the Old

Testament was not available yet. That motion passed and the practice of printing the Scripture readings on a bulletin insert continued.

1975 also saw the birth of the 'Let's Get Acquainted' picture board, the consent to pave the parking lot, a project that was supported solely by Ken Trehey, another new teacher Bonnie Zastrow, and Kindergarten, which Char Prah1 taught.

That brings us to 1976, the 10th anniversary of the start of St. Mark. What a cause to celebrate and give thanks to the Lord! A service was planned on March 14 with the synodical president Pastor Carl Mischke preaching in the 9:30am service. Pastor H. Marcus Schwartz preached in the 7:30pm service. The concert choir from Dr. Martin Luther College also joined St. Mark in the festivities by praising the Lord with song.

In ten years St. Mark observed a church building, a school, two new pastors, two new teachers and many more members. The influx of members along with the larger number of college students attending caused a shortness of chair space. There needed to be a change; there had to be another service added so there would be enough room to sit. On July 25, 1976, the motion carried to have two services each Sunday morning, September through May, at 8:30am and 10:30am.

Come November of 1976, St. Mark still had some reservations about the New Testament NIV. Those people who had any questions were to direct them to pastor. Gradually, St. Mark accepted the translation and it has been used ever since.

The Lord graciously blessed St. Mark with the increase of members and collegians attending church. But he also blessed the school in enrolment causing another shortness of space. That led the church to go ahead and build on an education wing.

A Building Committee was selected including Michael Benrud, John Brandt, Murray Knecht, Michael Koehler, Pastor Prah, George Shaker, Jay Stuedemann, and Ted Zenda (Chairman).

The men went to work acquiring estimates on construction and obtaining the proper legal papers. On August 7, 1977, the official groundbreaking for the educational wing of St. Mark commenced the beginning of the new school rooms.

The construction was completed by the start of the second semester of school. Miss Andrea Dunsmoor, who replaced Bonnie Zastrow, and her students moved from their one room school to their new educational wing soon afterwards.

The addition had six rooms just as it does now. Pastor had a new office which is now the departmental classroom for CDS and for Sunday School, a custodial room, two bathrooms, and two classrooms. The former classroom became the present Fellowship Hall.

Dedication of the additional wing occurred on March 6, 1978, at 4:00pm. Only the great amount of volunteer work on the addition accelerated the completion so the dedication could take place so soon after the groundbreaking.

The Lord in his limitless love, showered his blessings upon the St. Mark congregation from its beginning in 1966 to 1978 and on from there. God especially showed that his ever protecting hand

was over the church building and school in the summer of 1980.

If you remember how I started out this chapter, July's seemed to be momentous months for St. Mark. The 1980 July proved the same. On July 15, in the evening, it seemed as if the whole sky let loose with her fury. The clouds, without much warning at all, twisted and turned and howled and conjured up a storm as fierce as anyone had seen in Eau Claire in the recent generation.

The storm left its mark everywhere the eye could see: trees were down, roofs were ripped off of houses, cars were thrown around like toys. St. Mark was not spared the damage. The roof was ripped open from altar to entry, hymnals were soaked, and the carpeting was drenched.

However, God meant this for the good of St. Mark. Members volunteered their time out of Christian love to clean up. The roof was repaired being better than it was in the first place and the only cost to the congregation was for the added insulation in the roof. The rest, including carpet and hymnals, was paid for by insurance. One of the blessings from this was that the gas bill dropped in half for the winter.

God surely showed his grace and in 1981, St. Mark once again worshipped the Lord in an anniversary service. 1981 marked the 15th anniversary of the beginning of the congregation.

The celebration occurred with guest speaker Pastor Fred Kogler preaching in both services on March 15. Pastor Prahl mentioned in the bulletin for the day that if St. Mark had kept all its members up to that point there would have been an guesstimated membership of

about 500 communicants.

Since St. Mark had grown greatly in number and memberships, the congregation decided to put together a pictorial directory. Midwest Studios of Rockford, Il. put the directory together.

St. Mark was growing. Its families were growing and the Prahl family was no exception. With the pastor's family enlarging, the parsonage needed extra room. May of 1982 marked the groundbreaking for the parsonage addition. It was completed and was dedicated in August. This was just one more way the Lord had shown his love.

1983 ushered in the beginning of the Family Bible School. This took the place of the VBS program and was intended to get the entire family, parents and children, into Bible study. FBS was a smash hit. Enrollment was very encouraging and FBS is still a part of the summer education in God's Word at St. Mark.

St. Mark had grown, grown to the point of being too large for its 1986 facility. So the plans were set into motion for another addition. This time it was going to be an addition to the worship area. The plans were to add an extra thirty feet to the west end of the church so more people could worship. The addition was ratified in the spring of 1986. The groundbreaking ceremony was held on August 10. Previous to the groundbreaking, Bob Brown and Fred Klingbeil drew up the architectural blueprints for the addition in the summer.

Construction went on without a hitch except for one delay. The delay had to do with some NSP cables. The cables needed to be

moved before the work could commence.

Once again, after much hard, volunteer labor from the congregation, St. Mark had another blessing from God. On March 1, 1987, the new addition was dedicated. Don Bitter addressed the congregation.

The stained glass windows in the front of church were designed by one of St. Mark's members, John Beck, a former professor at UWEC. They were assembled by Jean Schroeder, another gifted member of St. Mark.

The Sampler made itself known to St. Mark in 1987. Reaction to the alternate and more modern liturgical format was very receptive. Actually, it was so well liked that St. Mark has not gone back to page 5 or 15 of the red, "The Lutheran Hymnal." A poll was taken to find out the reaction and from that poll comes a bit of trivia. It has to do with the favorite hymns of the Sampler. St. Mark's favorite hymns at the time were 715, 713, and 708.

1987 also marked another anniversary for St. Mark. This time it was the 20th anniversary. President Mischke was the guest preacher at the 2:00pm service on November 8. Pastor H. Marcus Schwartz spoke to the congregation too.

The 20th anniversary sparked a flow of activities. A 20th anniversary committee sprang up to provide an approach for the celebration, to focus everyone's faith on the Trinity and the blessings God has given, and to direct the energies for the future in ways that serve and glorify God.

There was a wonderful program after the special service. It started off with an anniversary dinner, followed by a video presentation, displays, and a confirmation reunion. The church was decorated with banners. The old members wore a certain color name tag while the newer members wore a different color. Plus St. Mark put a note about the anniversary in the Northwestern Lutheran. The anniversary was wonderful and brought about glory to God for his grace.

But the greatest highlight of 1987 came when St. Mark went off mission status it had been on since its beginning in 1966. St. Mark was now a full self-supporting church. This was quite the anniversary gift for St. Mark! God's grace showed again.

1990 saw the absolute completion of the entryway. The old wall and door through which you went into the Fellowship Hall was torn out to open the entryway a bit more. Linoleum was laid down in front of the counter-top for ease of cleaning. This was all completed in August.

What about now? 1992 has brought something completely foreign to St. Mark. 1992 has introduced the vicar program to St. Mark. The program was ratified on February 2. If the Lord permits St. Mark to have a vicar, the vicarship will definitely bless the congregation in more ways than meet the eye. Not only will the congregation be able to help a Seminary student grow up in the church, but he will be able to bring the Word of God to St. Mark.

From a one room school and a new church to a large Christian education complex, the Lord has certainly blessed the congregation

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called St. Mark of Eau Claire. He has used his servant Herbert Prah1 to continue to build up the church with the gospel. May the Lord always permit the preaching of His word be done in truth and purity at St. Mark. May His grace always shine forth as it has through prosperity and misfortune.

Chapter 4

The Lion Roars

"St. Mark Lutheran Christian Day School," as Pastor Kogler once said, "was a total venture of faith." So why would anyone try to do something that has no guarantee to be permanent and beneficial. Certainly the "beneficial" was there, but the "permanent" was not always a given. When the initial Board of Education made their first infantile steps, they were being carried along by the Lord, the same Lord who said, "Let the little children come unto me, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." He is also the same God who said through Solomon in the book of Proverbs, "Teach a child how he should live and he will remember it all of his life."

Granted, St. Mark Lutheran Christian Day School was never a guaranteed thing, but with the Lord on the side of his church, he would "make all things work out for good to those who love him." That was all that was needed.

Pastor Kogler, as was mentioned earlier, was totally for Christian Education. Introducing the school mandated some very cautious walking. Pastor began introducing the school by starting a Saturday School program and intended to use this as a stepping stone for the CDS. St. Mark was not yet large enough nor ready to accept the CDS idea unanimously. However, Saturday School was readily accepted by the congregation.

The CDS issue caused strife among the congregation. St. Mark was split 50/50 as to supporting of the school. So, Pastor Kogler

chose three men to be on the Board of Education to guide the promotion and procedure of the school and to hopefully be able to calm the waters with those who did not accept the idea of the school.

The three men were specially chosen by Pastor Kogler. The first of the three men was Mr. John Brandt, a man who had children who would most likely go to school at St. Mark. The second man was LaMoine Steinke who had children who would not be going to school at St. Mark, but he still supported the project. The third man was Mr. George Shaker. Mr. Shaker did not have any children nor was he married, yet he supported the school with his whole heart.

Pastor Kogler's wisdom showed itself in the selection of these men: one of these three men could identify with any of the other men in the congregation who did not support the school and they in turn could defend and attempt to convince the others to change their minds. This calmed the waters and the school took form.

All of the preparation took place in the last couple years of Pastor Kogler's service at St. Mark. In two years so much was accomplished, including the buying of the desks for the school.

Mr. Shaker remembered that. He told me that Pastor Kogler found an advertisement about a school in Madison, WI, selling off its old school desks. Pastor contacted Mr. Shaker and the two of them traveled to Madison in a pick-up with the mission of buying some desks. When they arrived the two bargain shoppers found desks that were in great condition for St. Mark. The beat-up desks were

being sold for a \$1, the good desks for \$4.50. Pastor and Mr. Shaker returned with 15-20 good desks which St. Mark is still using.

The time sorrowfully came when Pastor Kogler left St. Mark and accepted the call to Emmanuel in West St. Paul, MN. Would the school program now go down the tubes? No, it did not. The Board of Education put in their call to the Assignment Committee for a teacher and in May of 1973, Miss Charlotte Fitschen accepted the assigned call.

St. Mark received its new pastor, Herbert Prah1 also in May through the Assignment Committee. When he arrived, one of Pastor Prah1's first official acts as pastor was to install Miss Fitschen. She was installed on August 5, 1973.

The Lord granted St. Mark Lutheran CDS an enrollment of 10 little souls to learn that first year in the 1st to 5th grade. They were Carla Abbate, Kim and Kristi Brandt, Caryn and Leanne Brown, Tony Hansen, Jeanie Heinemann, Terry Peterson, and Jacquie and Mark Schwartz. 6th grade was added in the 74-75 school year for Caryn Brown, the first graduate from St. Mark Lutheran CDS. 7th grade was added in 1981 and 8th grade was added in 1982. 7th and 8th were temporarily dropped for room in 1983-1985.

St. Mark Lutheran Christian Day School has seen many changes in its teachers and it can be a little confusing keeping them in order. Here is the list of teachers in the chronological order in which they came.

1973-1974 Charlotte Fitschen (grades 1-5)
1974-1975 Charlotte Fitschen-Prah1 (1-6)

1975-1976 Bonnie Zastrow (1-6) Charlotte Prah (Kdgn)
 1976-1978 Andrea Duns Moor (1-6) Charlotte Prah (Kdgn)
 1978-1979 Andrea Duns Moor (K-2) Nancy Heup (3-6) Charlotte
 Prah (Preschool)
 1979-1980 Andrea Duns Moor (K-2) Jay Storm (3-6) Charlotte
 Prah (Preschool)
 1980-1981 Andrea Duns Moor (K-2) Jay Storm (3-7) No Preschool
 1981-1982 Andrea Duns Moor (1-3) Jay Storm (4-8) Charlotte
 Prah (Preschool) Casey Bandelin (Kdgn & Pre)
 1982-1983 Andrea Duns Moor (1-3) Jay Storm (4-8) Casey Bandelin
 (Kdgn & Pre) Preschool Helper Brenda Demulling
 1983-1984 Karen Schinske (1-3) Jay Storm (4-6) Casey
 Bandelin (Kdgn & Pre) Brenda Demulling (Pre)
 1984-1985 Karen Schinske (1-3) John Kanter (4-6) Casey
 Bandelin (Kdgn & Pre)
 1985-1986 Karen Schinske (1-3) John Kanter (4-7) Casey
 Bandelin (Kdgn & Pre)
 1986-1987 Karen Schinske (1-3) Paul Kelm (4-8) Casey Bandelin
 (Kdgn) Linda Krueger (Pre)
 1987-1988 Karen Hong (1-3) David Noack (4-8) Casey Bandelin
 (Kdgn) Linda Krueger (Pre)
 1988-1990 Cherie Wehausen (1-3) David Noack (4-8) Casey
 Bandelin (Kdgn) Linda Krueger (Pre)
 1990-1991 Cherie Wehausen (1-3) David Noack (4-8) Casey
 Bandelin (Kdgn) Charlotte Prah (Pre)
 1991-1992 Cherie Wehausen (1-3) David Noack (4-8) Casey
 Bandelin (Kdgn) Charlotte Prah (Pre)

Paul Kelm had the unique opportunity to serve as teacher to the missionary children in Japan for a year after teaching in Eau Claire.

St. Mark has also been blessed with being able to help train teachers for the Teaching Ministry by participating with DMLC in the student teacher program. These are the students who have spent time learning at St. Mark:

1979 - Denise Fenske
 1981 - Darci Martin
 - Cindy Schultz
 1982 - Dawn Fuerstenau
 - Marie Oechler
 1983 - Kristen Arnold
 1985 - Mark Ohr

Through out the years the Lord has also blessed the school

with its pupils. The first year of school brought about 10 students for Miss Fitschen to teach. The number progressively increased from 10 to 58 as the peak in the 1983-1984 school year. Currently St. Mark has 44 students enrolled, all according to the pictures on the school hallway.

The Lord also blessed the school through the steady increase of enrollment with a 2 classroom addition. In 1977, August 7 was groundbreaking day for the school addition. Room in the fellowship hall for classroom space was cramped. So, the church gave the 'go-ahead' to build a two classroom addition. It was completed soon after the new year and the students rushed into their new classroom like 'Sooners.' Dedication of the addition was held on March 6, 1978.

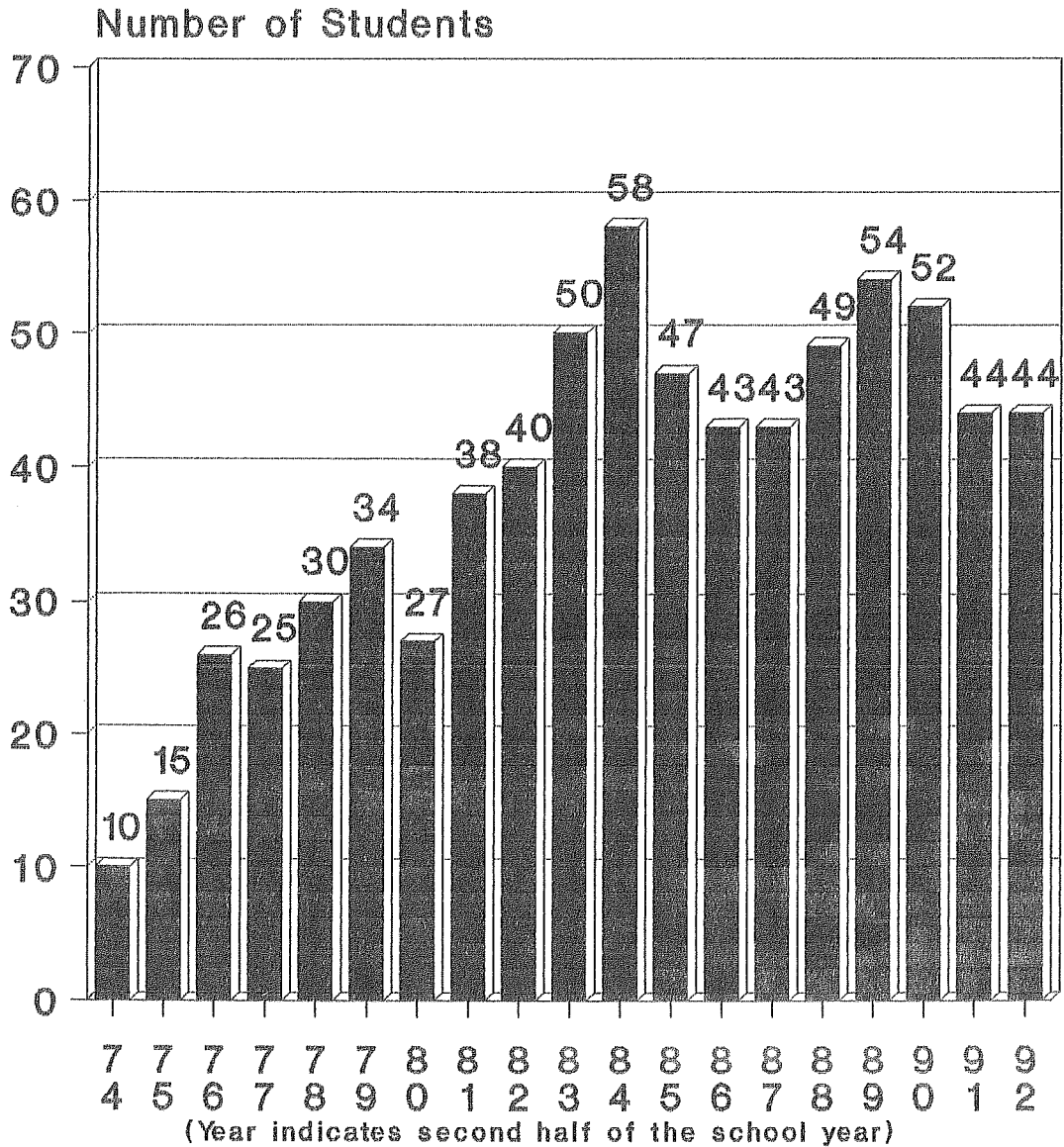
The following page has a graph depicting the rise and fall of the enrollment at St. Mark. Although the numbers are not always constant, the Lord's amazing grace remains the same toward St. Mark.

Athletics in schools have become a greater and greater part of education. Since 1974, Mrs. Vicki Petermann has been devoting time to the school by teaching physical education to the students. Vicki has a BS Degree in Physical Education from UW-Eau Claire.

Just in the recent past though, the athletics have heated up. As of 1988, St. Mark has participated in an athletic program featuring flag football, volleyball, and basketball in a very competitive manner.

Student Enrollment At St. Mark Lutheran School

From 1973-74 school year to 1991-92 school year



Year

Data taken from class pictures

This "venture of faith" started so long ago has blossomed by the Lord's grace and will into an effective and useful tool of the church. Its purpose continues not only to educate the minds and souls of St. Mark's young lambs, but proves effective in building up the physical welfare of the students as well.

Chapter 5

St. Mark Potpourri

After recounting the history of the beginning, the building of the church and school, and what has happened during the ministries of Pastors Kogler and Prah, it is now time to look at what really makes up the St. Mark congregation, its people. This chapter is devoted to the uniqueness of what could only happen at St. Mark through its members.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of St. Mark is how it interacts within itself, fellowship. The annual church picnic is evidence of that. For as long as I can remember, the church picnic has always been held at Carson Park at the Oak Pavilion. There has always been the home-cooked, delicious, fattening foods on the menu of the pot-luck dinner. After dinner games for both the adults and children give ample opportunity to burn off all the extra calories from the feast. The initial picnic came about in June of 1966 and has been a regular tradition since then.

The picnic is not the only type of fellowship St. Mark has. There are different activities for the men, women, and children. For the men there is softball and men's Bible class to name a couple. For the women there is the 'Women of St. Mark,' and the International Dinner and other organizations. The children have youth group and boy and girl pioneers. Plus, the whole family can get involved with Family Bible Class, co-ed softball, and bowling. Oh, I can not forget the Variety/Talent Show that started in 1989.

Another characteristic that sticks out is worship. The

'Outdoor Service.' is a definite tool that the congregation has enjoyed. St. Mark instigated the service in July of 1989, due to rain the service was postponed until the following year. On July 15, 1990, at 9:00am St. Mark had its 'Outdoor Service' at the bandshell in Owen Park. Following the service St. Mark enjoyed its fellowship again with light breakfast foods and coffee. The service was very well liked and the congregation looks forward to this each year now.

But most unique to St. Mark are its gifted members, some of whom the Lord has called to carry out different tasks. Deb Kramer comes to mind immediately. On June 15, 1985, Debra Kramer was commissioned to our WELS Nursing Station in Lilongwe, Malawi, Africa for a minimum of 2 years. Pastor Daniel Westendorf of Hartford WI, did the actual rite of commissioning and Pastor Prahll was the service leader. Previous to June of 1985, Deb was chosen for service in 1984. She spent 5 months of time at Seneca College in Toronto, Canada, studying tropical diseases, obstetrics, and cultural adaptations.

Deb returned from Africa in 1988. She gave many little speeches around the area as to what Malawi was like and tried to recruit other nurses to commit time to go. Deb's arrived back at St. Mark on the 16th of October and gave one of her presentations to the assembly after a fellowship pot-luck dinner. Three days earlier she gave a presentation to the campus students and also enjoyed a pot-luck there too.

Deb has not been the only one who has used her talents for the

Lord's work. Three young ladies of our congregation have gone through the teacher training college of our synod, Dr. Martin Luther College, and have received calls into the field.

The first of these ladies was Susan Vetter, daughter of LaVerne and Lorraine Vetter. She received her call and graduated in May of 1981. Her call took her to Norfolk, NE. Since then she has married and is teaching at St. Paul in East Troy, WI. Earlier in 1981, in January, Sue was the first to receive a scholarship gift from the St. Mark Scholarship Fund. The fund still grants a gift to those sons and daughters of the congregation who are studying at synodical schools.

Terri Hall was the second daughter of the congregation to receive a call into the teaching ministry. Terri is the daughter of Bob and Donna Hall. She also graduated from DMLC and was assigned in 1984 to teach at West Koshkonong Lutheran School, an Evangelical Lutheran Synod school, in Cottage Grove, WI. Since then Terri has married and now lives in Minnesota.

Our third daughter of the congregation who is in the teaching ministry is Amy Zenda. She is the daughter of Ted and Carol Zenda. Amy graduated from DMLC in 1991. Her call has taken her to Trinity at Belle Plaine, MN, to teach 1st and 2nd grade plus be involved in athletics.

Isn't this what being a Christian is all about? Isn't wanting to serve our Lord with all our heart, soul, and mind the ingredient? We have been freed from the death grip of Satan, sin and the sinful flesh to be slaves of God. We believe that our good

works get us nowhere when it comes to earning salvation; Jesus lived perfectly for you and me.

This history of St. Mark's 25 year existence has only scratched the surface as to how the Lord has blessed you. He has blessed you in more ways than I could ever put down on paper.

My St. Mark family, God has showered his grace on you abundantly, more than you could ever dream of. It is truly amazing that God loves us, you and me, and he does. He has loved us so much that he gave his cherished, one and only Son so you and I could be rescued from the chains of hell. Always remember how the Lord has blessed you in the past 25 years. No one else could have done such a thing. The Lord will continue to bless you. You have his promise. He will watch over Zion, his church, the Holy Christian Church. You are a part of that church. Give thanks to God, for his amazing grace endures forever!

I rely on the hymnwriter for my closing statement:

*Oh, that I had a thousand voices
To praise my God with thousand tongues!
My heart, which in the Lord rejoices,
Would then proclaim in grateful songs
To all, wherever I might be,
What great things God has done for me.*

(TLH 30:1)

I would like to thank all the people who have helped me with my research of this 'book.' I know that I said this would be a comprehensive history but when I got going I did not know when to stop.

I would like to thank:

Pastor Frederick Kogler who talked to me on the phone and was watching the clock for me as I talked and in Christian love told me 'to get off the phone.'

Pastor Herbert Prah who has given me answers like "I can't really tell you. I don't know," to the most difficult questions.

Jan Zimmerman whom I caught completely off guard when I called her and wanted everything she could get her hands on for this paper.

Lynn Phillips who was so quick to open the files for the 1990-1992 Council Minutes yet I used hardly any of them.

George Shaker whom spilled his heart out telling me about buying the desks for the school.

Mildred Hansen who got many phone calls from me as I asked about very important topics of the paper but who always insisted on turning the questions on me to how my day went at school and work.

and to

Cindy, my wife who endured some of the long nights with me and what seemed like forever to get this 'thing' done so our life at home could get somewhere back to normal or at least close to it before our baby comes.