

The Life and Ministry of Pastor Mentor Kujath:
A Man Who Loved His Church

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Foreword

It was less than four months before the assigned date of this paper when I was standing up in a wedding. My very good friend Luke Kujath¹ was also in the wedding party. After the wedding rehearsal we were conversing when an older man entered the conversation. During this conversation this man spoke with great admiration for Luke's grandfather and his ministry. This was not the first time I had been with Luke while a man of an older generation stopped to talk about his grandfather in this way. There was nothing I could say at these encounters nor could I share with the joy of past memories since my connections with Pastor Mentor Kujath were very scant.² It was at this last time I decided my church history paper would be written about Pastor Mentor Kujath. Personally, this was an excellent "excuse" to learn more about my friend's grandfather. Professionally, my curiosity was peaked on what I could glean from this well spoken of pastor.

Here are the reasons you should read this paper. If you are a friend or a family member of Pastor Mentor Kujath you will enjoy walking through again the many different travels of his life. If you are an aspiring pastor or servant of Christ you will benefit immeasurably from learning about the life and ministry of Pastor Mentor Kujath. As I look at Pastor Kujath through his work and through personal interviews I see a man who loved his church. I see a man who loved his church in the parish, at Wisconsin

¹ Luke Kujath is a grandson of Pastor Mentor Kujath.

² There were two times when I saw Pastor Mentor Kujath. The first was when I was on a "Taste of the Ministry" experience at a circuit meeting in Milwaukee sometime in the early nineties. The second time was on a long trip from New Ulm to Milwaukee. Luke and I were starting our first year at Martin Luther College in New Ulm, MN in August 1995. It was there I learned of my brother's (Andrew Jacobson) death and searched for a ride home. Luke's father Pastor Timothy Kujath and his son Marty along with Mentor Kujath gave me a ride home.

Lutheran Child & Family Services (WLCFS), at Northwestern Publishing House (NPH), and during his retirement.

The Life & Ministry of Pastor Mentor Kujath: A Man Who Loved His Church

Mentor Kujath was born to Edwin and Elsie Kujath December 3, 1922, in Zumbro Falls, Wabasha County, Minnesota. Mentor was the first of three children. His younger brother is Marlyn and younger sister is Audrey.³ In Zumbro Falls Mentor's father worked as a farmer and his mother served as the church organist at St. John's Lutheran Church in Oronoco, Minnesota.⁴ It is here where Mentor was first influenced to enter the ministry by his mother and pastor.

During Mentor's grade school years his family moved to West Allis, Wisconsin, where his father worked as a truck driver. Mentor finished his grade school education at Jordan Lutheran School in West Allis. He then graduated from the high school department of Doctor Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minnesota, in 1939. Next, he attended Northwestern College in Watertown, Wisconsin and graduated there in 1943.

At Northwestern College Mentor participated in extra curricular athletics such as football and baseball. He was an outstanding athlete. In fact during college and seminary Mentor played semi-pro hockey in Rochester, Minnesota. Also through the summers he was hired to play baseball by factories for an industrial league. He played first base. Mentor would keep his glove and skates in his ministry for recreational purposes with his children.

³ Both Marlyn and Audrey are currently living in Milwaukee.

⁴ This church has since merged with another congregation.

Also at Northwestern College Mentor used his rugged good looks and charming personality to woo Margaret Kaercher. They were united in marriage on January 13, 1946. During their marriage they were blessed with four children: Christine, Timothy, Rebecca, and Beth. They also would have 13 grandchildren. Other things that took up Mentor's time at Northwestern College would include studies, reading and his work on the distinguished editorial staff of the *Black and Red*.⁵ All these personal traits and endeavors of Mentor Kujath are summed up in the *Black & Red* this way:

The **BLACK & RED**

MENTOR KUJATH

He's tall, dark, and handsome—beware. Besides, he is also quite an all-around athlete,—baseball, basketball, football. Went to New Ulm for four years. Is really a native Wisconsinian, though he has lived in Minnesota; but now is again of Wisconsin. Wrote up the sports column in the B & R for a year. Is not at all lacking in gray matter, which when in use produces excellent results. Reading (the stars on nights of full and golden moon included) takes up quite a bit of his time, although not as much as he would like. Really a swell fellow. Seminary.

In the fall of 1943 Mentor enrolled at the Lutheran Theological seminary in Thiensville, Wisconsin.⁶ During his years at the seminary students went to school all year round. This was the case so their studies would not be interrupted for service in the U.S. military during World War II. For this reason and that at this time there was no vicar year Mentor graduated from the seminary in December 1945.⁷ In his years in the

⁵ Mentor served on the 1942 – '43 *Black & Red* Editorial staff. Also on that nine member staff included now former WELS president Carl Mischke, former WLS professor Wilbert Gawrisch and former DMLC and MLC professor Theodore Hartwig. The *Black & Red* was the monthly student publication of Northwestern College. Mentor served as the sports writer on the editorial staff. Copies of these *Black & Red* publications can be found currently in the basement of the WLS library.

⁶ Today the Theological Lutheran Seminary is known as Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and located in Mequon and not Thiensville because the cities borders were changed at a later time.

⁷ The vicar program was started on a voluntary basis in 1952. Because of World War II there were graduates at WLS in March of 1945 and in December of 1945. These two graduating classes are pictured at WLS together in the 1945 picture. There was no graduation in 1946. A more complete history of this

parish Pastor Kujath also did post graduate work at the seminary during two summers and at Milton College in Milton, Wisconsin.

**The Life & Ministry of Pastor Mentor Kujath:
A Man Who Loved His Church – In the Parish**

Mentor Kujath was called following his graduation from the seminary to serve St. Peter Lutheran Church in Brodhead, Wisconsin. He was installed and ordained January 27, 1946. This was a busy month for Pastor Kujath as he was making adjustments to a new town as a new pastor with a new wife.

Pastor Kujath did not stay in Brodhead very long as he accepted a call to serve St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Janesville, Wisconsin. He was installed December 5, 1948. However, at the request of St. Peter Pastor Kujath continued to serve them until 1953 as a dual parish with St Matthew.

At St. Matthew Pastor Kujath became the third pastor in their six-year history following Pastor Ernest Wendland. St. Matthew was a mission congregation with 85 souls when Pastor Kujath accepted this call. A one-word summary of Pastor Kujath's work would be growth. St. Matthew grew significantly during Pastor Kujath's tenure as pastor. Pastor Kujath used God's Word to empower the members of St. Matthew to see that the Holy Spirit was working to add souls to their church. In 1952, a booklet highlighting the first ten years of St. Matthew's history began with this foreword by Pastor Kujath:

Our blessed Savior, Jesus Christ, likens the Kingdom of God to a mustard seed, which though small grows into a mighty plant (Matthew 13:31). As we look to our congregation in the past with its small beginnings, to the

time can be found in Missionary Daniel Sargent's church history paper (Essay File 2317) *The seminary, Northwestern College and the draft during World War II.*

present with its God-given growth, and to the future with its promise of even greater growth, God-willing, we see this parable of the Savior taking place in our midst.

By 1954 St. Matthew had become a self-sustaining congregation. But as St. Matthew continued to grow in membership there also was an increasing need for new facilities for worship and education. Using his gifts ^{for} of gathering facts and writing with persuasive language Pastor Kujath pushed for a new structure in a pamphlet:

But what we have is not adequate even for the present, and left this way will only handicap us in the future. Our chapel seats only 95 in any degree of comfort. Even with two services every Sunday we cannot serve our present membership. And if you were present at either of the children's Christmas Services, you wondered how more than 150 persons were crowded into the chapel for each service. Our Sunday school classes are scattered from the third floor attic to the downstairs kitchen. The appearance of our entire set-up seems to indicate a lack of permanency. And a permanent building in a permanent location is what people expect of a Church. Worst of all we do not have facilities for a good religious training, in a Christian Day School, for our children. They are the future Church!

These statistics were given to help demonstrate the need for a new building.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Confirmed members</u>	<u>Total Membership</u>
1942	10	15
1947	65	115
1952	150	225
1953	177	288
1954	200	320
Future	?	?

It was decided to construct a building that would eventually serve as both a temporary chapel and a school. On July 10, 1955, the congregation held the groundbreaking ceremony. The building was completed with a dedication service observed on June 19, 1961, with Pastor Kujath leading the service. Although Pastor Kujath was not the pastor at this time much thanks was given to him for his

encouragement and constant reminders to not only focus on the building of a church, but more importantly on the building of souls.

While in Janesville Pastor Kujath also had a hand in starting a new mission in the southwest part of Janesville. This new church would be named Peace Lutheran Church. Ground was broken for the new church in 1957, but its history starts four years earlier. It was in 1953 when a Sunday school survey was taken by St. Matthew members in the southwest part of Janesville known as the Fisher Addition. At that time it was found that there were approximately 75 children who would be enrolled in Sunday school. The mission board of the Western Wisconsin District purchased the following year eight lots of land. With the annexation of this land and continued building of new homes in the area plans were made for the erection of the church. Peace Lutheran Church would continue to be served by St. Matthew's next pastor, James Thrans, for one more year.⁸

In summary Pastor Kujath's eight years at St. Matthew, a 14-year old congregation, had seen growth from 85 to more than 400 souls and it had erected a four-room school and temporary church.⁹ In addition he supervised the planning for the construction of Peace Lutheran Church on the southwest side of Janesville. Pastor Kujath also served as visitor of Circuit I of the West Wisconsin district for several years.¹⁰ This office required him to visit annually each of the 25 congregations in an area north to Oconomowoc and south to Moline, Illinois. He also served on a synod committee studying colleges and academics. He was a member of the board of regents of the

⁸ Today Peace has 407 souls and is served by Pastor William Finn.

⁹ Today St. Matthew has 782 souls and is served by Pastor David Sievert and Staff Minister Arden Wentzel. Additional information on Pastor Kujath's service as pastor at St. Matthew can be found in Pastor Phillip Sievert Church History paper (Essay File 2535) *Walking with God for 50 years: a history of St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Janesville, Wisconsin.*

¹⁰ Today a visitor is referred to as a circuit pastor.

Jefferson County Lutheran High School association.¹¹ At this time he was also writing for the Northwestern Publishing House.

Late in 1956 Pastor Kujath accepted a call to Zion Lutheran Church, ^{town?} leaving St. Matthew in January of 1957. Pastor Kujath was installed as associate pastor at Zion on January 20, 1957. Serving as pastor at that time was Pastor O. B. Nommensen who retired in 1959. Pastor Kujath then assumed the full pastoral duties at Zion. The membership growth of Zion required more pastoral services. In addition administrative work made undue demands on the pastor's time. In the spring of 1959 a part-time secretary was hired and in the fall of the year a part-time vicar was called.

Membership growth also caused the school enrollment to grow. In 1957 the gym was converted into two temporary classrooms. In 1958 a temporary kindergarten room was built in the school basement. These makeshift arrangements led to an extensive church renovation project in 1960. More than a year was required to complete the improvements, which included a new stairway on the west side of the narthex, lowering the pulpit, moving the altar against the chancel wall, new communion rail, new carpeting, complete redecorating, rewiring, new lighting, new restrooms, remodeling of the kitchen and an addition of a public address system. The exterior of the building was also repaired. A new kindergarten room and church office were also part of the \$90,000 Church Renovation Project of 1960. The additions to the original small school left a very small playground and parking was also a problem. Therefore in 1963 two homes east of the lot were purchased, torn down and the entire area was made into a hard surfaced playground and parking area.

¹¹ Today this high school is known as Lakeside Lutheran High School.

The reason for all these renovation and building projects was growth at Zion. Zion's communicant membership numbered 905 when Pastor Kujath arrived and the school had an enrollment of 198 with six full-time and one part-time teacher. The church at Pastor Kujath's departure from Zion in 1963 numbered 1,155 communicants and the school had an enrollment of 244 students with nine full-time teachers. By this time the congregation had grown to the point where the services of a full-time secretary and vicar were needed.

During his years at Zion Pastor Kujath also served the church at large in other capacities. He served at various times as chairman of the audio-visual aids committee of the Wisconsin Synod from 1958 until 1977. He was also a member of the boards of the Home for Aged Lutherans, Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministry and Racine Lutheran High School.

So far the results of Pastor Kujath pastoral ministry has been set forth. The results of his parish ministry were growth in members and construction of new and updated facilities. Yet now it is good to take a deeper look at what brought these results in the parishes Pastor Kujath served.

First it is not a "what" that brought these results, but a "who." The Holy Spirit who guides the Holy Christian Church worked through the personality and talented gifts of Pastor Kujath. Part of the personality of Pastor Kujath was a tremendous work ethic. He did what was necessary to get the work done. He was detail oriented. If something needed to be done it was done well. He also was a good communicator. He was direct and clear. After he spoke you were not left wondering what he really meant or how he

really felt. This was reflective in Pastor Kujath's writing, preaching and the way he conducted meetings.

It is interesting to hear co-workers refer to Pastor Kujath's demeanor in meetings as "vehement," "blunt," or "abrasive," but at the same time appreciating these qualities as assets to his ministry. Pastor David Rutschow, currently the District President for Southeast Wisconsin District,¹² comments, "I would agree with the blunt/direct and seemingly abrasive comments above, but when I got to know and work closely with him, I did not find myself disliking those things." All others interviewed for this paper concurred with this point of view.

Another item Pastor Kujath was known for was as Pastor David Tetzlaff¹³ coined, "clerical flamboyance." Pastor Tetzlaff pointed out Pastor Kujath was one of the first to wear a white robe. He dressed sharp and often wore white buck shoes. His bow ties were also striking. These things are only important in that they displayed how Pastor Kujath carried himself. He marched to the beat of his own drums. He conducted his ministry in a way he saw fit in reaching others with the gospel. He did worship differently. Pastor Tetzlaff described Pastor Kujath's worship as "progressive" in that he was not afraid to try different services. To these points others also agreed.

Above all these things though the Holy Spirit worked through Pastor Kujath's compassion. Perhaps not all would agree who saw only his "strong-willed" personality, but Pastor Kujath displayed his compassion mostly on a one on one basis. Pastor Kujath

¹² Pastor David Rutschow served with Pastor Kujath on district council, when Pastor Kujath was district secretary Pastor Rutschow was a circuit pastor. Later Pastor Rutschow served with him on the district praesidium when Pastor Kujath was still secretary of the district and Pastor Rutschow was 2nd and then 1st vice-president of the district.

¹³ Pastor Tetzlaff was at the seminary while Pastor Kujath was pastor at Zion. Pastor Tetzlaff preached for Pastor Kujath a couple times and heard a number of his sermons.

was a people person. He excelled at comforting God's people with the gospel. He exhibited this especially when working with the sick and shut-in. He also exhibited this while working in counseling sessions.

The Holy Spirit used Pastor Kujath's personality and gifts to build his church in the parish. Wherever Pastor Kujath was serving the church grew. Those in his congregation appreciated his love and gift for preaching. Another attribute the Holy Spirit used to bring members into the church was his joy in teaching adult confirmation class. Of course there were struggles in his congregations. It was said Pastor Kujath took broken marriages and disputes within his congregations very hard. Overall, however, we have to be in awe at what tremendous results the Holy Spirit brought through Pastor Kujath's work in the parish! At this time it looked like there was no way Pastor Kujath could be called out of parish ministry.

**The Life & Ministry of Pastor Mentor Kujath:
A Man Who Loved His Church – At WLCFS**

Pastor Kujath's acceptance of the call to serve at WLSCF can be described as shocking and at the same time as no surprise at all. One would be hard pressed to imagine him as a young boy influenced by his mother and pastor to become anything else than a pastor. One also would be hard pressed to picture this student at NWC or the seminary with aspirations for anything else than parish ministry. At the same time, however, Pastor Kujath's varied work during parish ministry as a member of different high school boards, the Home for Aged Lutherans, other committees and his communicating gifts made him fit for this new scope of ministry. And while the scope of his ministry would be new, the purpose would be the same, which was to reach people

with the gospel. The acceptance of this new position was decided on that basis. Pastor Kujath felt he could reach more people with the gospel.¹⁴

Pastor Kujath began his new duties December 1, 1963, as associate director of public relations for the Lutheran Children's Friend Society in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin. This social services society was supported by the 4 churches of the Synodical Conference – Wisconsin Synod, Missouri Synod, SELC (Slovak) and EL^SC (Norwegian). ^{as a} The result of the resolution passed by the delegates in the 1961 Wisconsin Synod convention broke "pulpit and altar fellowship" with the Missouri Synod. At the time of the division, it had to be decided exactly how such joint efforts in the Lutheran Children's Friend Society would be dissolved.

It was decided arrangements would be made by the Wisconsin Synod to separate and begin their own welfare services. Support of the joint effort in Lutheran Children's Friend Society was promised until the Wisconsin Synod agency was up and running well. When asked about the relations between Missouri and Wisconsin during this break Pastor Kujath stated, "It was a remarkable and very happy situation."

It must be noted though the transition was not always a happy situation. Pastor Ernst Lehninger, the Executive Director of Lutheran Children's Friends Society since 1956, took some heat for not resigning from the Agency immediately after the split. Pastor Lehninger stated how two pastors in particular wanted him removed from the Wisconsin Synod. These men would not even commune with him. However, the support of then Southeastern Wisconsin District President Adolph ^{Buenger} Binger helped smooth over this conflict. The lack of immediate withdrawal was not because of refusal to follow through

¹⁴ Pastor Kujath would later go back to each of the congregations he served and preach a church anniversary sermon: September 10, 1967, at St. Matthew's 25th anniversary, October 1, 1967, at Zion's 75th anniversary, and May 1, 1968, at St. Peter.

with the 1961 synod convention resolution, but for the sake of the children in the society. Pastor Lehninger and others would not leave the Agency until Wisconsin Synod had arranged a similar agency so those being served at Lutheran Children's Friend Society would not be hurt by the breakup of the Synodical Conference.

A brief early history of the Wisconsin Children and Family Services, Inc. would be helpful at this time.¹⁵ Eventually in 1965 a new facility was purchased at 6800 North 76th Street. On July 13, 1965, the Board of Directors filed the Articles of Incorporation for "Wisconsin Lutheran Convalescent Home, Inc.:"

Care for the spiritual needs of Lutherans in fellowship with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod during periods of their physical and mental incapacitation.

This statement was changed two weeks later:

BE IT RESOLVED: That the convalescent home known as Wisconsin Lutheran Convalescent Home, Inc. to be operated by this corporation shall give preference to the admission of patients to all people of the Lutheran faith regardless of Synodical affiliation.

On January 13, 1966, it was decided the Wisconsin Lutheran Convalescent Home, Inc. was definitely in need of expanded services not only to accommodate more patients and residents, but also to provide social services for our Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod members. The purpose of this newly expanded Agency would be:

To care for the spiritual needs of children, adoptive parents, troubled families, the aged, the convalescent, and handicapped in a Lutheran welfare program including, but not limited to, custodial care, consultation, casework service, and the maintenance and operation of foster homes and to provide such other Christian welfare service as the Board of Directors may decide to institute.

¹⁵ A more complete history of this organization can be found in Pastor Robert Fleishmann's Church History paper (Essay File 2052) *The involvement of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod in social issues and social relief: the Committee on Relief; Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Services; Lutheran for Life.*

Since the scope of services offered by the Agency had expanded, the name of "Wisconsin Lutheran Convalescent Home, Inc." would no longer be a suitable description. Therefore on March 4, 1966, the name of the Agency was officially changed to "Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service, Inc."

It was soon after this Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service, Inc. called key personal from the Lutherans Children's Friend Society. Pastor Ernst F. Lehninger received a call to serve as the Executive Director of the Agency and assumed full duties in July 1966. Pastor Kujath received a call to serve as Public Relations Manager in October 1966.

This position was similar to his at Lutheran Children's Friend Society and so we bring forth his responsibilities here. It was his task at WLCFS to organize the entire mailing program and write original brochures. In general his work was to interpret the services of this unique agency to the church constituency for their information and support. Pastor Lehninger comments, "This was a most vital position in order to get the Wisconsin Synod constituency to know about the work of their Agency."

However, it would be misleading to think of Pastor Kujath's position as office work. Pastor Kujath was on the road again and again. His travels took him all over the state of Wisconsin and elsewhere. His son Timothy was a frequent companion when he went on the road. Pastor Lehninger comments, "Pastor Kujath preached at least 3 times a month during his ministry at WLCFS." Following worship he would give a presentation about WLCFS. This presentation would include a video explaining the history, facilities and services offered at WLCFS. During the week Pastor Kujath would meet with different Ladies' Aid organizations, Men's Clubs, and even youth groups in the greater

Milwaukee area. It was deemed as very important to have personal face to face contact between the staff at WLCFS and WELS congregations. While travel did eventually wear on Pastor Kujath he did very much enjoy meeting many people throughout the Wisconsin Synod and sharing how WLCFS could help meet their needs.

In 1967 WLCFS began building another resident center and an administration building. The resident center to be erected would be a one-story, no basement, forty-eight bed facility for the aging, which would connect to the convalescent center near the East Wing nursing station. The administration building would be a two-story, no basement facility, completely air conditioned and carpeted. The building would have an upper and lower reception area, two meeting rooms, numerous offices and even a small chapel for baptismal and adoptive services.

The purchase and building of facilities and the calling of extremely gifted workers set WLCFS as a most valuable resource to reach hurting Christians and their families with the gospel. One area Pastor Kujath was involved during his call at WLSCF was counseling. He along with Mr. Frederick Matzke, appointed to serve as Director of Social Services in 1972, began a "Pastor as Counselor" program. They led workshops in nine of the ten districts for a 5-year period in the early seventies. These workshops gave practical suggestions for pastors and allowed for a sharing of ideas among pastors.¹⁶

**The Life & Ministry of Pastor Mentor Kujath:
A Man Who Loved His Church – At NPH**

Pastor Kujath was installed as editor-in-chief of Northwestern Publishing House (NPH) September 22, 1974, at Gloria Dei-Bethesda Lutheran Church. His primary

¹⁶ A more complete summary of this workshop was written by Pastor Kujath and Mr. Matzke in a slim book entitled *Pastor as Counselor*.

reason for taking this call was the same one that led him to accept the position at WLCFS. He felt he could reach more people with the gospel. The time spent away from his family while traveling for WLCFS was also a factor.

The goal of NPH throughout its history has always been to reach as many people as they can through the ministry of the printed Word. It is also their desire to do this at the lowest cost possible. Pastor Gordon Snyder who served on the board for NPH from 1969 to 1999 said they also thought of the work as "holding up the prophets hands." NPH was to serve also as a support for pastors in their ministries. Throughout its history NPH has seen steady growth in its volume of production of materials.

Pastor Kujath as editor-in-chief at NPH was responsible for bringing recommendations to the board of the publishing house. He would evaluate the quality of an author's work and the ability of the work to sell to its targeted readers. Pastor Kujath did not do this work all by himself. He was very good at delegating responsibility with other editors. Pastor Kujath's work at NPH was more of a Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. type of schedule than his other calls.

The number of publications continued to increase during Pastor Kujath's tenure as editor-in-chief, but he and the publishing house did face their share of difficulties. One problem was the location of NPH when Pastor Kujath started as editor-in-chief. The Book of Report and Memorials of NPH in 1977:

A very serious problem, which has been developing for some time, has now become a very serious situation. The area in which the Synod Administration and Publishing House buildings are located has recently deteriorated rapidly. Vandalism to the buildings and to the automobiles of employees has caused much damage, and there is an ever present potential of very serious destruction of property.

Furthermore, the market value of our properties are declining rapidly while at the same time the cost of property we will before long be forced to acquire is steadily rising, and suitable sites are fast disappearing from the market.

It was a struggle to discover some way of implementing the proposed relocation. In 1979 our Synod resolved:

a) that the two relocations take place only should non-budgetary funding become available and b) that the relocation needs of the Northwestern Publishing House receive consideration prior to those of the Synod Administration Building.

Finally in the fall of 1985 a new publishing house was built on the east side of 113th Street in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin. NPH in cooperation with the Synod fiscal office was able to negotiate a loan that left no impact on any synodical funds.

Another problem that more directly included Pastor Kujath involved a lack of growth in sales. These questions were being asked toward the end of the seventies: "Are the people not sufficiently interested in the materials offered or even aware of the need for them, or of their availability? Are their personal concerns not answered in them? Is the vernacular or the manner or style of presentation not suited to their reading habits?"¹⁷

This situation was much the concern of the Synod and the Commission of Christian Literature (CCL). Pastor Kujath became a member of this commission when he accepted the call as editor-in-chief for NPH in 1974. The CCL's purpose was always to look for suggestions from anyone who detected a particular need in the life of God's people. The members of the commission met twice a year. They also had a semi-annual newsletter called *the Courier*, which relayed their work to the members of the Synod. The CCL was looking for remedies to solve the slumping sales. Their research led to this conclusion:

¹⁷ These questions were posed in the Book of Reports and Memorials of NPH in 1979.

Lack of specific suggestions in the responses on implementing a program of publication, for which a general need was expressed, seems to confirm the feeling of the CCL that the precise needs, the precise answers to those needs, and the precise costs and manpower involved in meeting these needs, are not yet known. An in-depth study of the publishing needs of every department of the Synod, as well as the desire and expressed needs of the members of the WELS congregations (both pastors and laymen), and the needs of our schools from K to 12, would perhaps provide the specifics we are lacking.

It is the consensus of the CCL that the two-year period between the 1977 and 1979 conventions should be used to clearly determine the missing statistics. This would require the commission's engaging a full-time researcher for a period of time, to meet with varied departments of the Synod, to consult with pastors and teachers at conferences in all areas of our Synod and with faculties at synodical schools, to interrogate members of the WELS congregations, to inquire into the publishing ventures of other church bodies who have apparently met successfully some of the problems which confront us, to investigate the capacity of Northwestern Publishing House as presently staffed and equipped, etc. It would seem that the information gathered in this manner would enable the CCL to make some intelligent and informed recommendations to the 1979 convention of the Synod.¹⁸

In attempting to find and free a man capable of evaluating all the aspects of publishing Christian literature, as it affected the synodical program, the commission was led to Pastor Kujath. He was extended a one-year call to undertake the research. He was granted a year's leave of absence from his regular duties by the publishing house Board of Directors and assumed his responsibilities as researcher February 1, 1978.

These were the questions the Synod asked when it authorized the CCL to engage a publishing researcher for a year:

1. What are our publishing needs?
2. Who are the potential writers of the needed materials?
3. Where are the facilities for producing the printed products?
4. When can these publishing needs be met?
5. How can the publishing program be financed?¹⁹

¹⁸ This conclusion was published in the Book of Reports and Memorials of the CCL in 1977.

¹⁹ These questioned were printed in the fall, 1978 edition of *the Courier*.

Pastor Kujath's research involved a great deal of travel and correspondence, meetings and phone calls, and much office work. During the ten district conventions in 1978 a questionnaire was distributed, filled out and returned by 1,870 pastors, teachers and lay delegates in attendance.

In addressing publishing needs Pastor Kujath relayed that the range of needed published materials is wide. He also stressed the responsibility of the author, editor and publisher to provide readable books in the vocabulary and style of the targeted reading audience. Another significant issue was the lack of coordination from various boards, commissions, committees and agencies with responsibility or authority for publishing. In response to this issue Pastor Kujath suggested an annual meeting of representatives from each group with responsibilities or authority for publishing.

An example of this last point is reflected in the publishing of Werner Franzmann's *Bible History Commentary*. A misunderstanding between NPH and Franzmann led him to withdraw his manuscript and put it into the hands of the WELS Board for Parish Education (BPE). The misunderstanding was that NPH wanted all 3 volumes of his work before printing while Franzmann wanted each book published at its completion. It was said Franzmann thought by their action NPH did not like his work. Who was right and who was wrong was not the issue here, but the BPE publication of his work. Professor Richard Balge states, "The purpose of the BPE was to commission writers for projects and not function as a competing publishing house."²⁰

The work of unifying publishing efforts in the Synod made significant progress in 1986:

²⁰ Professor Richard Balge of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary served on the Board of NPH from 1979 to 1991.

After a number of years of meetings and discussions we are extremely happy to report that Northwestern Publishing House and the Board for Parish Education have adopted Cooperative Publishing Procedures, which will guide our joint efforts in the production of BPE manuscripts. It is hoped that this document will, in fact, serve as a guideline for Northwestern Publishing House in its service to other synodical agencies as well.²¹

In search for potential writers Pastor Kujath favored the use of skilled WELS pastors and teachers. He noted the experience of authors using their spare time to write for a publication deadline was a negative one. He suggested a leave of absence or reduced workload for authors in their present field. Full-time writers could also be used.

Pastor Kujath also researched the finances of NPH. In a survey the WELS constituency favored a combination of Synod subsidy and higher prices. Pastor Kujath appealed to pastors and teachers to promote their products. In order to more easily facilitate this a program was started in 1979 appointing one pastor in each of the 45 conferences to serve as a contact pastor for the publishing house. NPH also engaged in 1979 a professional marketing agency to examine their marketing methods and make recommendations for increasing the distribution and use of their publications.²²

These problems Pastor Kujath helped NPH work through in the late seventies and early eighties pale to what will be reported now. Pastor Kujath had to work through three disheartening incidents involving inappropriate actions by ^{three} workers of NPH. Editor John Trapp resigned over a doctrinal issue. Another incident involved editor Roland Cap Ehlke and his resignation following an inappropriate counseling session with a female. The final incident was letting go a manager at NPH who embezzled money from NPH.

²¹ Book of Report and Memorials for NPH in 1987.

²² Pastor Kujath's, "Publishing Research Report to the Commission on Christian Literature" can be found in the Book of Reports and Memorials in 1979.

The amount of money was never announced, but some believed it to be as much as six figures. Pastor Kujath's wife felt he lost some of the joy of the ministry after dealing with these issues. Regarding these incidents Pastor Rutschow comments:

Impressions I always got in those cases were that 1) Mentor Kujath was clear on the issues and had done his homework before dealing with them; and 2) He was not afraid to take a position and hold it.

There were other significant works by NPH that Pastor Kujath had a hand in and deserve to be mentioned but will not be elaborated on. He was involved with the change of the predominant use from the KJV to NIV, he help facilitate the production of *Christian Worship*, and he was with the CCL when they proposed the *The People's Bible*.

During his tenure as editor-in-chief Pastor Kujath served the church at large in various other capacities. He was chairman ^{of} on the audio-visual aids committee until 1977, he was a member of the Commission on Christian Literature (CCL) from 1974 to 1985, the secretary of the Southeastern Wisconsin District (SEW) from 1972 to 1989, and served various vacancies in the Milwaukee area. As the chairman of the audio-visual aids committee Pastor Kujath showed his blunt and perhaps vehement character in his opening comments in the Book of Reports and Memorials for the audio-visual aid committee:

1971 – We would like to state this again as our considered opinion: The members of our Synod want and need more audio-visual aids.

1973 – In spite of sounding like a worn record we have to emphatically state again as we did in 1971: “The members of our Synod want and need more audio-visual aids.”

1975 – We choose to take the calculated risk of repeating what we have been saying to you the past four years: “The members of our Synod want more of our own audio visual materials.”

Pastor Kujath also served well as the secretary of the SEW district. As secretary he would record minutes for district meetings. Pastor Tetzlaff who served as a circuit pastor in the SEW district for 20 years comments, “ ‘Ku’ took minutes that were concise and to the point.” Pastor Kujath also took the reading of the minutes seriously. His wife tells the story of how at a district conference or convention he was reading a previous sessions minutes when there was quite a bit of conversation noise on the floor. Pastor Kujath said vehemently, “Gentlemen sit down and shut up!” Although Margaret Kujath is unsure if he used the word “Gentlemen.”

So far has been communicated what Pastor Kujath did in his positions at WLCFS and NPH, but not as much how. His personality and gifts did not change from the time he was a parish pastor. Therefore much of the way he conducted himself in the parish also applies with how he handled himself at WLCFS and NPH. He was compassionate. He was direct and clear. Yes blunt and sometimes seemingly abrasive. His aim was always to touch peoples’ heart with the gospel. One item that can be noted here that was different to his time as a parish pastor was working with others. To this point Pastor Rutschow comments:

Although he was many years my senior, he immediately received me when I came on the district praesidium. He did so very warmly, and that was always my experience. Likewise with my input at meetings, etc. he received and considered it. Also while he maybe sounded a bit “strong” on the outside, I generally found he had a gentle and even somewhat humble, unassuming side. If he was complimented on the minutes he kept or how well he maintained delegate lists, he didn’t beam with pride, but more likely would fidget with discomfort. That would especially be the case if the setting were fairly public.

Pastor Lehninger adds, "My working relationship with Mentor was congenial and pleasant. He had no cross words when expressing his points. He did not always agree with me, but he always respected my decisions."

**The Life & Ministry of Pastor Mentor Kujath:
A Man Who Loved His Church – During Retirement**

Pastor Kujath retired from NPH and the full-time ministry July 1, 1989. Not much will be said about Pastor Kujath's work during retirement, but let that not imply he did not do much. Quite that contrary! He served full-time as an instructor of religion at Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School (KML) to fill a vacancy in the 1991-1992 school year. He continued to serve there part-time the following year and on a substitute teaching basis after that. He also served as the recording secretary for the Board of World Missions (BWM). During his retirement he served vacancies in Oklahoma City, at St. Luke in Kenosha, Wisconsin, and at Gethsemane in Milwaukee. These vacancies were rather lengthy. They extended for several months. Pastor Kujath's last sermon was on a December 31st at Gethsemane. In that week he was diagnosed with lung cancer. He did not preach again and he didn't smoke again either. Pastor Mentor Kujath was called to his eternal home in August 1998.

Pastor Kujath was a man who loved his church. When you consider all the work he did and how he did it is there any other way to describe his ministry? What wonderful things the Holy Spirit worked for his church through this man! Does his life have any meaning for you? Yes. First, appreciation for all the Holy Spirit accomplished through him. Any other meaning? Yes. An example. You or I may not have Pastor Kujath's personality or talents, but we do have his example of using all the gifts God had given

him for his church. A man who loved his church. Praise and thanks to God for all his work done through Pastor Mentor Kujath.

Putting names and faces together

Mentor Kujath
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Donald Lau
Blue Earth, Minnesota

Gale Maas
Milwaukee, Wisconsin



BLACK & RED

1942 EDITORIAL STAFF



•1943•

•M•ALBRECHT•





The Old St. Matthew's Church
Used 1945-1956

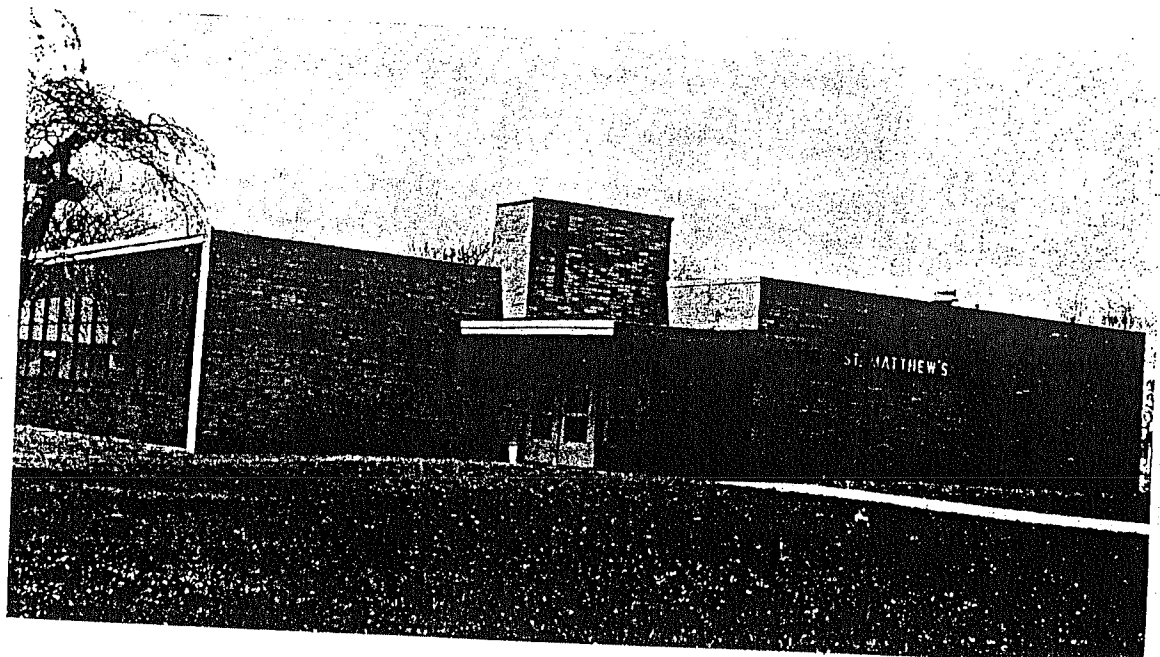


Rev. Mentor Kujath
1948-56

St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church and School

Janesville, Wisconsin

June 18, 1961



We dedicate it

to the glory of God



—Voice-Journal Photo by Harry Lindquist
 New associate pastor at Zion Evangelical Lutheran church, the Rev. Mentor Kujath, is shown here with his family, and with the Rev. and Mrs. O. B. Nommensen, Zion pastor and his wife. Left to right, Mrs. Nommensen, Mr. Nommensen, Mr. Kujath and his wife. Christine Kujath, age 6 and Rebecca, 19 months, are seated with their mother, Mrs. Kujath, in the foreground.

Pastor Called to So. Milwaukee



REV. MENTOR KUJATH



Publishing Researcher Rev. Mentor Kujath and his secretary, Evelyn Schneider, computing the statistics