

A HISTORY OF ST. MATTHEW EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
PORT WASHINGTON, WISCONSIN

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In the mid 1970's, there was a controversy brewing in west-central Illinois in which the residents were threatening to secede from the remainder of the state. They chose to name the new state, if formed, "Forgottonia". Forgottonia seemed to be an appropriate name because of the prevailing sentiment that this particular portion of the state had been forgotten by the rest. There were no major expressways either in place or even in the planning stage. There were no major business developments nor were any businesses interested in coming into the area because of its isolated condition. In short, the prospect of any future economic development in the area was bleak. It was an area of the state which, according to the residents, persistently paid its taxes but had received nothing in return. Its tax revenues they believed went to support their big brother-Chicago.

Obviously, their intention was not to actually secede from the state, But their threat to do so brought them a considerable amount of publicity and called to attention the condition that they perceived as serious to their future survival as an economic and political entity. At the time of the writing of this paper, plans were in progress to build a major freeway between Rockford and Quincy, Illinois thus cutting through the heartland of the area involved in this controversy.

But you might wonder what all of this has to do with a paper written about St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church in Port Washington, Wisconsin. Many miles and completely different realms of interest separate the two. One is purely economic and political and the other is spiritual. Yet there appears to be a common bond which both groups shared for a number of years. That common bond had to deal with the aspect of being forgotten. Indeed, Port Washington-except for a brief mission attempt some ninety years ago- had been forgotten by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod whose headquarters is located just 25 miles to the South in Milwaukee.

Throughout this paper it will become evident that although Port Washington had been forgotten by the W.E.L.S., it had not been forgotten by our Lord and Savior. Just as the Israelites had served in bondage in Egypt until the

appointed time when God would deliver them, so also God in his own appointed time saw fit to establish a W.E.L.S. congregation in Port Washington, Wisconsin. This will become very evident as we review the brief history of St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church. It will become evident that God has richly blessed this congregation from its conception to the present day. As we read the events and milestones that unfold in this paper, let us always be reminded that it is God who has so richly blessed this congregation and who has brought it to where it now stands today- a congregation dedicated to the message of salvation through Christ Jesus.

ST. MATTHEW-ORIGINS AND BEGINNINGS

The story of St. Matthew Ev. Lutheran Church begins in 1979 when the first exploratory service was held. But first it would be appropriate to give a brief history of the town of Port Washington from whose borders many of its members have been derived.

The village of Port Washington is located upon the shores of Lake Michigan approximately 25 miles north of Milwaukee. When the federal government closed a treaty with the Sauk, Chippewa and other Indian tribes of eastern Wisconsin in 1833, the area was thrown open to white settlers. The first recorded deed for land in Port Washington was that of Wooster Harrison which was recorded on September 7, 1835 under the village name of Wisconsin City. During the panic of 1837 Harrison and his partners were forced to flee and the settlement was abandoned for five years. In 1843 Harrison moved back into the area with five other families.

Five year later the village of Port Washington was incorporated on- July 20, 1848. The first official business of the village was a motion to procure a book for record keeping. The second motion was to establish a committee to find a suitable place for a burial ground for the village. The first settlers were Yankee and Irish. Then followed an influx of German Luxemburg and Norwegian immigrants. As a result of severe harvest failures in Germany, over 6000 Luxemburgers came to America between 1854 and 1857. Many chose to settle in Wisconsin with a group of settlers coming into Port Washington. The south side of the village was known as "the Canada side" because of the Irish settlers who had arrived by way of Canada.

However, the German immigrants were greatest in number and as a result contributed much to its cultural life. The dominant religion was Roman Catholic. St. Mary's Catholic Church was established very early in its history and Roman Catholicism has remained the dominant religion in Port Washington even to this day. At any rate, the town of Port Washington was off and growing—from its beginnings with five families to the present population approaching 10,000. It is into this community that St. Matthew held its first service in 1979. (1).

The first exploratory service was held on November 4, 1979 with an attendance of 33. Interest by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod into exploring the possibility of locating a mission in Port Washington came about through the request of members of the W.E.L.S. in isolated communities to the north. These were members who had a considerable distance to drive for worship opportunities. Also, Rev. A.T. Kretzmann, of Crete, Illinois had done some preliminary canvass work in the Port Washington-Saukville area at this time. (2) According to Pastor Howard Kaiser, who at that time was pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Cedarburg and Chairman of the Southeastern District Mission Board, requests had brought about synod interest for a number of years prior to 1979. But no action was taken until the retirement of Pastor Adolph C. Buenger and his subsequent move to Port Washington in 1978. It was at that time that formal action began to materialize. (3).

Rev. Adolph C. Buenger, St. Matthew's first pastor and charter member, was born on November 14, 1909 in Kenosha, Wisconsin. He was the son of Rev. and Mrs. Carl H. Buenger, pastor of Friedens Ev. Lutheran Church in Kenosha. After graduating from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1936, he was ordained at Friedens on August 2, 1936 and received his first call into the public ministry to serve as pastor of St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church in Milwaukee. On January 6, 1937 he was united in holy matrimony with Avis E. Stroede in Milwaukee. Pastor and Mrs. Buenger had three daughters who along with his widow are at present members of St. Matthew's. In 1946 he accepted a call as assistant pastor to his father at Friedens in Kenosha. From December, 1948 until his subsequent retirement in 1978, he served as senior pastor at Friedens.

For reasons of ill health, Pastor Buenger moved to Port Washington to begin retirement. Upon his arrival in Port, he was approached by Pastor Howard Kaiser, then pastor of

Redeemer Ev. Lutheran Church in Cedarburg and chairman of the Southeastern District Mission Board, to lend guidance to establishing exploratory services in Port Washington. Pastor Buenger consented and St. Matthew Ev. Lutheran Church had begun to exist as an arm for outreach into the community. Due to his ill health, Pastor Buenger was not able to conduct the preaching duties involved so arrangements were made with Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary to fulfill this obligation. Professors Richard Balge and John Jeske fulfilled this responsibility on a rotating basis with Pastor Buenger serving the original nucleus during the week and providing the necessary guidance for St. Matthew's beginnings.

It was under this arrangement that the first exploratory service was held on November 4, 1979 in the Knights of Columbus Hall located at 107 E. Washington St., in Port Washington. Prior to this first service a business meeting was held on October 4, 1979 with seven in attendance. Those seven included Pastors Buenger and Kaiser, Don, Aurie and Carl Cosentine, and Tony and Betty Branda. The result of that meeting was a decision to organize.

The Knights of Columbus building would serve as their place of worship until April, 1985 when the present facility was dedicated to the Triune God in a cornerstone laying service. Due to this fact, it seems appropriate that we contribute some space in this paper to the history of St. Matthew's first worship facility.

In 1843, just eight years after the first settlers arrived in Port Washington, a small group of Methodists began meeting in private homes. Two years later, they built a worship facility at 107 E. Washington St.. This served as their worship facility until 1912 when the congregation was dissolved. The area Knights of Columbus then purchased the building for a meeting hall. It remained the property of the Knights of Columbus and was available for rent when Pastor Buenger and the mission board began looking for a temporary facility in which to hold worship services. During the years that St. Matthew's congregation worshipped there, the building was purchased by Port Washington Savings and Loan. Shortly after St. Matthew's moved into its present facility, the building was torn down and the land was turned into a parking lot.

The building holds many fond and not so fond memories for St. Matthew members. This writer can recall his first

encounter with the building when he and his family moved into Port Washington. The worship area was comprised of folding chairs centered around a small stage area which had a lecturn and an altar made of two office desks pushed together and covered with white linen. There was a small organ which was rolled out from a locked storage box for use during the services. This comprised the worship facility as well as being the Sunday School classroom. Every Sunday morning members would arrive early to set up chairs and make the room ready for worship. After the service everything was taken back down and the room restored to its original condition. Yet, in spite of its crude appearance, this building served the members of St. Matthew's well. For inside this building there was a sense of warmth and mission zeal that brought people into contact with God's Word and many wonderful fellowship opportunities. This was the real glue that held this congregation together during those beginning years at 107 E. Washington St.

Before the initial exploratory worship service on November 4, 1979, advertisements were placed in local newspapers and the Northwestern Lutheran, telephone and house-to-house canvassing, as well as informational meetings were held beginning on July 1, 1979. Pastor Buenger also began initial contact work in the area and exploratory mission status was granted on September 9. Pastor Buenger wrote in his report to the General Board for Home missions on April 11, 1980, "My evaluation of the type of people in the nucleus as prospective 'mission' workers is 'Mature, committed and eager. Out of 38 communicants, 25 participated in the religious survey canvass. The others were at work and at least 5 were home with colds. But all were committed to the survey."

As a result, the congregation was definitely organized on April 29, 1980. The first officers were Mr. David Gorton, President, Mr. Curtiss Eddy, Treasurer, and Mr. Nicolin Ballbach, Secretary. It was also on this date that mission status was granted by the District Board for Home Missions under the name of St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Mission.

In May of 1980, a graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary was assigned as the missions first resident pastor. On July 6, Daniel W. Simons was ordained and installed as pastor of St. Matthew Ev. Lutheran Mission. The pastors and professors who took part in the installation service were Professor Richard Balge and Professor John Jeske of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Pastor James Westendorf, former

pastor of Daniel Simons who encouraged him to consider going into the ministry, and Pastor Emeritus Aldolph Buenger.

Pastor Simons assumed the responsibility over 42 communicants, 57 souls and 25 families as was recorded by Pastor Buenger on April 7, 1980 in his request for a full-time pastor. On August 5, the congregation became legally incorporated as St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church. Also that same month St. Matthew's held its first Vacation Bible School with 27 children in attendance-18 of whom were not members of the congregation. In October membership had grown to 85 and on November 3, 1980, just one year after the initial exploratory service was held, attendance for the first anniversary service was 103, an increase of 70. Truly God had blessed their efforts during the first year of St. Matthew's existence.

Already at this early stage in St. Matthew's existence the congregation began initial groundwork on a proposed site and land acquisition for its own church building. Pastor Buenger served on the site acquisition committee until he was called to his heavenly rest on July 25, 1982. Three years later their worship facility would be dedicated at its present location. But before we go into an extended discussion of St. Matthew's building progress, it would be advisable to discuss other aspects pertinent to the congregation. Perhaps this would be the appropriate place to reveal statistical information for those years after 1980 to the present.

ST. MATTHEW HIGHLIGHTS 1981-1987

1981

1981 proved to be yet another year of growth for St. Matthew congregation. The Lord had continued to richly bless the efforts of those involved in carrying out the work of the Kingdom in the Port Washington area. Additional areas pertaining to educational and spiritual growth were added to the responsibilities of Pastor Simons concerning both children and adults. Pastor Simons began a new 2 year confirmation instruction course based upon the new revised catechism in the N.I.V. A youth group was started for the young people of St. Matthew's. The group later organized under the name C.I.A.(Christians in Action). Also the adult information class had continued to reap prospective members. Statistics for 1981 are as follows: (4)

Baptized members: 125
Communicant members: 86
Baptisms: 10 children and no adult
Confirmations: 2 children and 5 adult
Received by affirmation of faith: 8
Average Church attendance: 65
Marriages: 2
Funerals: none
Sunday School enrollment: 16
Vacation Bible School enrollment: 18
Average Adult Bible Class attendance: 15

1982

1982 was a year of not only continued growth but also a year in which additional fellowship opportunities were added to St. Matthew's. The women of the congregation organized an auxiliary dedicated to additional congregational fellowship. Known as "Christian Handmaidens", the group held monthly informational and devotional studies on such topics as "The Role of Women in the Church", "Abortion", and film strips on family life. The group also held a mother-daughter banquet and provided assistance in organizing various congregational potluck dinners. 1982 also brought about the organization of a congregational choir for the purpose of beautifying worship services and additional fellowship opportunities. The men organized a summer softball team. 1982 was also another milestone for the congregation with the acquisition of land in preparation for the building of a parsonage and worship facility. Statistics for 1982 are as follows: (5)

Baptized members: 138
Communicant members: 96
Baptisms: 2 children and no adult
Confirmations: 1 child and 9 adult
Received by affirmation of faith: 9
Average Sunday Church attendance: 74
Marriages: 1
Funerals: 5
Sunday School enrollment: 23
Vacation Bible School enrollment: 29
Average Adult Bible Class enrollment: 25

1983

1983 was again a year of firsts for St. Matthew congregation. The major outreach highlight of the year was the presence of the synod's Travel-Canvass-Witness Team.

Port Washington was chosen for the pilot program because of its closeness to synod headquarters in Milwaukee where its progress could be closely monitored. Two teams were sent out—one to St. Matthew's and another to Plymouth, Wisconsin. The team, comprised of two students from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and three from Dr. Martin Luther College, came into Port Washington and did follow up witnessing to the unchurched who had been contacted by members of St. Matthew by way of door hangers, religious survey follow ups, and telephone surveys to those not at home during the initial canvass. The results of their efforts were felt in increased awareness by the community to St. Matthew's presence and their awareness to the congregation's desire to serve the spiritual needs of the people of Port Washington. Pastor Simons received 18 solid prospects who expressed an interest in meeting with him to discuss further involvement in the congregation. 1983 also saw the addition of another fellowship arm in the congregation with the organization of the St. Matthew's Men's Group. Also St. Matthew's Sunday School was invited to sing at Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Services which began a yearly event for the Sunday School children. Statistics for 1983 are as follows: (6)

Baptized members: 135
Communicant members: 94
Baptisms: 6 children and no adults
Confirmations: 2 children and 1 adult
Received by affirmation of faith: 4
Average Sunday Church attendance: 76
Marriages: 2
Funerals: 1
Sunday School enrollment: 20
Vacation Bible School enrollment: 30
Average Adult Bible Class attendance: 25

1984

In 1984, the Lord once again blessed the efforts of St. Matthew's congregation with increased growth. However the main item of interest, which occupied a majority of council and congregational efforts, was the extensive plans required to get construction underway for the new worship facility. The office of Sunday School superintendant was established and James Wolf was called from the voting body to serve in this capacity. Statistics for 1984 are as follows: (7)

Baptized members: 157
Communicant members: 107

Baptisms: 9 children and no adults
Confirmations: 2 children and 3 adults
Received by affirmation of faith: 1
Average Sunday Church attendance: 82
Marriages: 1
Funerals: 1
Sunday School enrollment: 22
Vacation Bible School enrollment: 23
Average Adult Bible Class attendance: 22

1985

1985 was a year for much rejoicing for the members of St. Matthew congregation. 1985 marked the completion of their present worship facility and its removal from synod operating subsidy. In other words, 1985 was the year in which St. Matthew became self-supporting and mission status ceased. By God's grace, St. Matthew had grown to the point of no longer needing assistance with its general operating expenses. On August 25, 1985, Pastor Howard Kaiser, Chairman of the Southeastern Wisconsin District Mission Board, wrote in a letter addressed to the members of St. Matthew, "This is a joyful day in the young history of St. Matthew, Port Washington, as you dedicate your new house of worship to the glory of God. During a short span of five years, the Lord had blessed you with land, construction of a new parsonage, and now, this move into your permanent new church. He has blessed you with steady growth in membership so that, since the beginning of this year you no longer need operating subsidy. May the Lord continue to guide and lead you in the years ahead. With the Psalmist we join you in declaring, 'Great is his love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord.'" (8) Statistics for 1985 are as follows: (9)

Baptized members: 150
Communicant members: 102
Baptisms: 6 children and no adults
Confirmations: 3 children and 3 adults
Received by affirmation of faith: 3
Average Church attendance: 86
Marriages: 2
Funerals: 2
Sunday School enrollment: 26
Vacation Bible School enrollment: 30
Average Adult Bible Class attendance: 25

1986

1986 was a year of increased growth activities in membership, Bible study and fellowship opportunities. Aside from the regular Sunday morning adult Bible class, an additional Bible study opportunity was added on Tuesday mornings. The Adult information course, entitled Adult Inquirers, was expanded to both a Thursday morning and evening session. A special education adult class was also added. The Evangelism Committee was expanded to the point of now becoming a separate and effective part of outreach activities. The spirit of fellowship awareness and the ability to function as a congregation dedicated to the spread of the Gospel message still continued to be a vital part of the make-up of the St. Matthew family of believers. Another canvass was conducted in the town of Saukville with follow up visits by members of the Evangelism committee. Members of the congregation formed their own branch of A.A.L and distributed Thanksgiving baskets to the needy in the Port Washington area. Sunday worship services began to be video taped to be shown to the elderly on Sunday mornings at Heritage Nursing Home in Port Washington. Statistics for 1986 are as follows: (10)

Baptized members: 178
Communicant members: 118
Baptisms: 9 children and no adults
Confirmations: no children and 1 adult
Received by affirmation of faith: 4
Average Church attendance: 98
Marriages: 4
Funerals: none
Sunday School enrollment: 30
Vacation Bible School enrollment: 34
Average Adult Bible Class attendance: 34

1987

Thus far in the first quarter of 1987, there is still reason for rejoicing in the abundant grace which God has bestowed upon the members of St. Matthew. The congregation has established a visitor greeting program in which all visitors are greeted after the worship services in an attempt to make them feel more welcome. The Evangelism Committee is continuing its outreach efforts with plans to continue its canvassing begun last fall in Saukville. And the A.A.L. branch once again distributed food baskets for Easter. Statistics thus far in 1987 include:(11)

Baptized members: 185

Communicant members: 124
Baptisms: 1
Received by affirmation of faith: 2
Average Church attendance: 97
Average Adult Bible Class attendance: 38

St. Matthew's Building Program

As was touched upon earlier, St. Mathew congregation began very early in its history with the initial plans for a permanent worship facility. On April 5, 1981, just seventeen months after the initial exploratory service, a meeting was held to discuss the first proposed site report. Pastor Daniel Simons wrote at that time, "When you gathered together for the first time in November of 79 as an exploratory group there were some questions I'm sure. Will a mission be possible? Where will we be 1-2 years from now? Since that time St. Matthew has flourished under God's blessings-a mission here to stay! It is a mission blessed with growth-membership from 33 to 110 today! It is a mission of committed Christians who have and continue to do labor in the Lord's kingdom. Now together we face another step in service to our Lord-the search for a site on which to build His house. In this endeavor it is so important that we remember what Paul wrote in I Corinthians 1:9: 'God, who has called you into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ Our Lord, is faithful'. He is faithful. He will bless our efforts. He will guide us. And He will enlarge His kingdom! For Jesus sake." (11).

Throughout the coming years, site selection and actual construction efforts would be the cause of much labor. Yet not all of their labors were to be labors of love. From the very beginning site selection became a volatile issue. With the presentation of the very first Site Committee Report, divisions within the committee itself and with the Church Council were present. Pastor Simons reported in an April 30, 1981 meeting, "The selection of the site for building the Lord's house is perhaps the single most important decision that faces us in the future. I find it extremely disturbing that sentiment has been so divided over this with uncharitable suspicions and feelings growing toward the men chosen to do this study. The Site Committee Report has never been properly presented and discussed in an acceptable manner at this point....Therefore, as your Pastor, I urge and encourage to the Site Committee and the Church Council the following: No campaigning will be done--this isn't politics, it's the Lord's work. You have been elected by the congregation to supply leadership and direction, and to

foster harmony in this congregation. Let's do that! Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." (12).

Throughout the following year, site selection continued to be a much debated issue. From what this writer has been able to ascertain in researching available documentation and in conversations with Pastor Simons, the crux of the problem appeared to center around the decision to purchase and build within the city limits of Port Washington or to purchase and build in a rural setting. The final decision was to purchase a 3.3 acre parcel of land located in Sauk Creek Ridge subdivision within the city limits of Port Washington.

With the site selection determined and the land purchased with synod Board for Home Missions approval, the next chapter in St. Matthew building plans began with the Building Committee seeking chapel planning authority. However as these plans progressed the Synod Board for Home Missions informed the congregation that the moratorium placed upon parsonage construction had been lifted. Due to a shortage of funds in the synods Church Extension Fund, the Board for Home Mission had regrettably placed a moratorium on new parsonage construction. With the moratorium lifted and the reality of the present rented parsonage having to be vacated within the next few months, St. Matthew's Building Committee took upon the added burden of constructing the parsonage. Plans for the chapel, although not halted completely, were placed upon the back burner.

Millcraft, Inc. was contracted to build a three bedroom raised ranch home on the church property. The structure was factory manufactured and delivered to the site in two sections. Construction on the parsonage began in October of 1983 with the masonry, plumbing and electrical work being contracted out. The congregation did all of the carpentry work which turned out to be a tremendous undertaking as all of the outside work was done during the winter months. The winter of 83-84 proved to be the coldest on record which made the task that much more difficult. But the members who volunteered their time and talents persevered and the parsonage was completed. Pastor Simons and family moved into the completed structure in February of 1984. With the volunteer effort of the members, the parsonage was built and came in under budget with a final cost of \$64,288.31.

With the parsonage project completed, St. Matthew's members once again focused their efforts toward the

construction of their house of worship. Architectural plans were drawn up by Therm Design Center, Waupaca, Wisconsin in contemporary architectural design. The plans called for an approximate 4,000 square foot combination worship and fellowship building. An earthen berm was planned to make the building more energy efficient.

After the architectural design was approved, W.B. Corporation, West Bend, Wisconsin was hired as the general contractor. The groundbreaking service took place on September 30, 1984 and construction was underway. The architect in charge of the project required monthly meetings with all of the contractors and subcontractors involved. As a result, the building was completed without any major problems. Landscaping and trim work, both inside and out, was done by members of the congregation and with the completion of the building came the task of equipping it for worship. The large cross above the altar, made out of barn beams donated by a member, was constructed by members in the garage of the parsonage. The pews were donated by the Bethesda Lutheran Home in Watertown, Wisconsin. Many other items such as the bronze altar cross, candlesticks, and ceiling fans for the nave were donated by members of the congregation.

With construction nearly completed, the cornerstone laying service took place on April 21, 1984 just seven months after the construction began. The choir sang two hymn selections, "Jesus Shepherd of the Sheep" and "The Church's One Foundation". The sermon text was Ezra 3:11, "With praise and thanksgiving they sang to the Lord: 'He is good; his love to Israel endures forever.' And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the Lord, because the foundation of the house of Israel was laid." (N.I.V.).

St. Matthew's first worship facility was completed and dedicated to the Triune God in August thus placing St. Matthew's Building Committee on inactive status. Final costs for St. Matthew's first worship facility were \$247,751.00. In a period of just five years, St. Matthew congregation went from exploratory beginnings to now worshipping in their own facility with a beautiful parsonage at its side. Indeed, God had truly blessed their efforts in Port Washington.

In view of the many blessings, one would imagine that St. Matthew congregation would most certainly recognize the true source for their growth. As one of their members expressed to this writer in a questionnaire that was prepared

in order to accumulate background information, this indeed was recognized. He wrote, "We (that is St. Matthew members) know and see that it was our Lord's hand that was responsible for guiding us to where we are now. It will also be the Lord who will sustain us and His Word that will give us future growth." (13). Indeed, the glory is all His.

As a member of St. Matthew and a Seminary student about to graduate and enter into the public ministry, I believe that a proper way to bring this paper to a close would be to draw some words of wisdom from the great Reformer, Dr. Martin Luther, which he in turn derived from his diligent and painstaking study of the Holy Scriptures. His words were addressed to ministers of the Gospel, but could well apply to all believers who are ministers by means of the universal priesthood. His words were words of warning for "ministers" who may get a big head if church growth occurs in their churches, as if their genius brought it about. He wrote, "The Gospel is not delivered unto us that we should thereby seek our own praise and glory and that people should praise us who are its ministers, but that the benefit and honor of Christ may be glorified and the Father be praised in the mercy He renders us in Christ, His Son, whom He has delivered for us all and in whom He has given us all things. Therefore the Gospel is a doctrine in which we should by no means seek our own glory. The Gospel places heavenly and eternal things before us, things which are not our own, which we have neither made nor merited....Therefore he who seeks his own glory in the Gospel speaks of himself, but he who speaks of himself is a liar, and there is unrighteousness in him. On the other hand, he who seeks the glory of Him who sent him is true and there is no unrighteousness in him.(John 7:18)" (14).

If we at St. Matthew have and maintain the fervent desire to grow, as we surely should, not for personal glory, but for the sake of blood-bought souls who may be won for eternal citizenship in Christ's Kingdom through our church, then St. Matthew should be enjoying even better blessings and God-directed success when our 25th, 50th, or even Centennial anniversaries arrive.

Normally church history papers are not written about congregations which have had their beginnings so recent in their history. This is usually reserved for special occasions such as a 50th or a centennial celebration. But the God-given growth which has so rapidly taken place in a city which had possibly become the "Forgottonia" of the

W.E.L.S., prompted this writer to compile this report. It is with mixed emotions that I write this report- recognizing that I will soon be leaving their midst. Yet their enthusiasm and their fervent love for the Gospel will forever be a part of my memory. May God, the Holy Spirit continue to instill in them this same desire for sharing the message of salvation with others to the same extent that He has in the few short years that this congregation has existed. Indeed, the glory is all His.

Respectfully Submitted in the Name of Christ Jesus,

Darryl W. Kenagy

Senior at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and a member of St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church, Port Washington, WI.

ADDENDUM

Below is a listing of the original charter members of St. Matthew congregation as recorded by Pastor Adolph Buenger for November 30, 1979:

Dennis Baer
Nicollin Ballbach
Mr. and Mrs. Earl Biedenbender, Jodie
Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Branda, James and Amy
Pastor and Mrs. Adolph Buenger, Ardis and Lois
Mr. and Mrs. Donald Cosentine, Carl
Mr. and Mrs. Curtiss Eddy, Heather, Heath and Paige
James Finster
Mrs. Betty Froemming, Walter
Mr. and Mrs. David Gorton
Mrs. Kathy Heinen
Mrs. Margaret Kramer
Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Kultgen, Debra, Pam and Jim
Elmer Mahnke
Mrs. Ruth Teske
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Weisheim
Mr. and Mrs. Norbert Netz
Mrs. Paula Jacobs, Christopher
Mr. and Mrs Adolph Hansen

This writer would also like to express his thanks to the following members who contributed to the research material by responding to my charter member questionnaire:

Mr. Adolph Hansen
Mr. and Mrs. James Wolf
Mr. and Mrs. Norbert Netz
Mrs. Adolph Buenger, Ardis and Lois
Mr. and Mrs. Earl Biedenbender
Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Kultgen
Mr. and Mrs. Donald Cosentine

A special thanks to Pastor Daniel Simons whose input was invaluable for the preparation of this paper.

ENDNOTES

1. Taken from information supplied by the Port Washington Women's Club.
2. Information received from Aurie Cosentine, daughter of Pastor Adolph Buenger and a member of St. Matthew
3. Information received by telephone conversation with Pastor Kaiser on April 14, 1987. Pastor Kaiser now serves St. Pauls Ev. Lutheran Church, 73rd and Burleigh in Milwaukee.
4. Quoted from the Statistical Report of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod for 1981.
5. Ibid for 1982.
6. Ibid for 1983.
7. Ibid for 1984.
8. Quoted from a letter addressed to the members of St. Matthew congregation dated August 25, 1985
9. Quoted from the Statistical Report of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod for 1985.
10. Ibid for 1986.
11. Quoted from the notes of Pastor Daniel Simons for presentation at the 1st site selection committee meeting
12. Quoted from a church document entitled Misc. Items Concerning the Site Committee.
13. Quoted for the research questionnaire of Adolph D Hansen member of St. Matthew congregation.
14. Quoted from "What Luther Says", Vol. II, #2946, pp. 937-938, as compiled by Ewald M. Plass, (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1959.).