

# St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church Manchester, Wisconsin: 1959-1964

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With Whom Are We United?

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The late 1950s and early 1960s brought many challenges for those within the Wisconsin Synod. Many had family and friends within the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. For close to a century, the Wisconsin Synod had been united in fellowship with the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, but now that fellowship was threatened. The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod had changed its official doctrine and practice concerning certain issues. In doing so, they had departed from God’s Word. The Wisconsin Synod many times had admonished her sister synod, but to no avail. The Wisconsin Synod was left to answer some very difficult questions. How long ought they to continue to admonish the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod as an erring brother? At what point was the Missouri Synod showing herself to be a persistent errorist who ought to be avoided?

Many wrestled fervently in prayer and lost much sleep over how to answer these difficult questions. The Wisconsin Synod’s synodical leadership, along with many conventions of the synod, struggled over if, and when, to break fellowship with their sister synod. However, this struggle happened not only on the synodical level; it was also faced by individual pastors and congregations as they tried to do what was right according to God’s Word. There were even a number of pastors and congregations who broke fellowship with the Wisconsin Synod over disagreements on this issue. St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Manchester, Wisconsin, was one such congregation. The following essay seeks to present the history of how that congregation wrestled with this difficult issue. It is not the intent of this author to analyze whether actions were right or wrong, but rather to present the history of how this congregation dealt with the issue of church fellowship during five years of its history: 1959-1964.

### **Brief History of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church**

The first worship service for Manchester area Lutherans was held on New Year’s Day in 1866. Over the next few years, these men and women were served by a number of area pastors, including a pastor from the Reformed Church. When this group of Christians became self-supporting, they

reorganized by ratifying a constitution and calling their own pastor. This took place on Wednesday, January 15, 1873. At this meeting they called Rev. Eugene Walther to serve as their first pastor.

During its early years, St. Paul's Lutheran Church was served by a variety of pastors from a number of different Lutheran synods. From 1879 to 1884 the congregation was served by Pastor Ernest Scherbel of the Augsburg Synod. After he left the congregation in 1884, the congregation called Pastor Heinrich Burmann of the Immanuel Synod. However, Pastor Burmann only served the congregation for four months before he got extremely sick, and died at the age of 38.

Then a strange thing happened. Rather than calling another pastor, the congregation placed a notice in a Milwaukee newspaper, the well-known *Germania*, seeking a pastor. Pastor A. Dietrich answered that ad in October of 1884. In June of the following year, Pastor Dietrich joined the Wisconsin Synod at the suggestion of several members. However, in October of that same year, he was forced to resign from the ministry due to an affair with a hired girl.

The Wisconsin Synod then assigned A. Spiering, a theology student, to serve as the congregation's vicar until the pastorate could be filled. Spiering was supposed to have arrived in November of 1885, but a seizure prevented his coming at that time. In the meantime, a group within the congregation grew impatient and applied for a pastor from the Augsburg Synod. The Augsburg Synod sent Pastor Tege to serve the congregation. Ironically, it is recorded that Pastor Tege and Vicar Spiering arrived in town on the same train. That next Sunday, in an effort to give each man a fair shot at the pastorate, the congregation held two worship services. Vicar Spiering preached in the morning service, and Pastor Tege preached in the afternoon service. After listening to both preachers, the congregation chose Vicar Spiering, and soon after issued him a call to be their next pastor. From this point on, the congregation was affiliated with the Wisconsin Synod and continued to be served by many other Wisconsin Synod pastors. However, it should be noted that the congregation was not an official member of the Wisconsin Synod, but only affiliated with it.

In 1911, St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Manchester and St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Marquette joined together as a dual parish to be served by the same pastor. That arrangement remains to this day.

Until the arrival of Pastor William Wadzinske in 1921, St. Paul's had changed pastors every few years. Then, Pastor Wadzinske served the congregation for thirty-six years before resigning due to poor health in 1957. The congregation then called Pastor Egbert Albrecht to serve them. Pastor Albrecht served the congregation during the final years of church fellowship between the Wisconsin Synod and the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.

### **The Congregation Remains Informed**

Egbert Albrecht appears to have been a very organized and intelligent man. As pastor, he kept his congregation well informed about what was going on in the Synod, especially concerning the fellowship of the Wisconsin Synod with the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. A majority of the congregation's Sunday bulletins included announcements pertaining to Synod happenings. On the Sunday before the Wisconsin Synod's 1959 synod convention, Pastor Albrecht used most of the bulletin to give the congregation the following history of the problems that had arisen within the Synodical Conference:

The Wisconsin Synod will hold its 25th biennial convention at Saginaw, Michigan August 5-12. Chief among its items of business will be the action it takes in regard to its future fellowship with the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.

It is difficult to describe in a few paragraphs the problems that have arisen within the Synodical Conference, that is, among the Wisconsin, Missouri, Norwegian, and Slovak Synods. But differences in doctrine (Bible teaching) and practice (applying God's Word in daily life) have arisen during the past twenty-five years which threaten to split the Synodical Conference. The Wisconsin and Norwegian Synods, after admonishing the Missouri Synod for many years and finding their efforts fruitless, have declared that fellowship relations (fellowship—praying together, communing together, exchanging pulpits, working together on church work) have been strained to the breaking point. In 1955 the Norwegian Synod suspended fellowship with the Missouri Synod. It chose, however, to retain its membership in the Synodical Conference.

The Wisconsin Synod in 1955 declared unanimously in its convention "A church body which creates divisions and offenses by its official resolutions, policies, and practices not in accord with Scripture also becomes subject to the indictment of Romans 16, 17-18. The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod has, by its official resolutions, policies,

and practices, created divisions and offenses both in her own body and in the entire Synodical Conference. Such divisions and offenses are of long standing.”

The Bible verse Romans 16, 17-18 requires that in obedience to the command of the Lord faithful Christians must terminate their fellowship with any church body that persists in error, and should continue only with those whose doctrine and practice are in harmony with the Word of God.

Already in 1953 the Wisconsin Synod declared that the Missouri Synod had “by its persistent adherence to unionistic<sup>1</sup> practices...brought about the present break in relations.” It did not terminate fellowship with the Missouri Synod, however. In 1955 it again did not follow God’s command in Romans 16, 17-18 to “avoid” the Missouri Synod. This failure to “avoid” the Missouri Synod brought a flood of protests both at the convention and after it.

The Synod met again in 1957. It spoke of “the continuation of offenses, with which we have charged the sister synod, Romans 16, 17-18...” The committee on synodical relations presented a report in which it said: “Resolved, that we now suspend church fellowship with the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod on the basis of Romans 16, 17-18, until the principles, policies, and practices in controversy between us have resolved in a thoroughly Scriptural and mutually acceptable manner...” The delegates voted, however, 61-77 (8 delegates abstained from voting) to continue in fellowship with the Missouri Synod. Protests again flooded the synod both at its convention and later.

Professor E. Reim, President of the Wisconsin Synod’s Seminary, the school in which our pastors are trained, declared to the convention: “I find myself compelled to discontinue my fellowship with the (Wisconsin) Synod. I hope and pray that the Synod may yet turn to its former ways and to full obedience to the Word of God, specifically Romans 16, 17-18.”

Pastor M.J. Witt, President of Synod’s Pacific Northwest District, declared to the convention: “This Synod convention by refusing to adopt the Floor Committee No. 2 resolutions has chosen to continue in fellowship with the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. This convention has thereby not only chosen an un-Scriptural course but has also become partaker of the very sin of unionism against which she has admonished the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod during the last two decades. It is my conviction that this Synod by again violating God’s principle and injunction in Romans 16, 17-18, has embarked on a course which makes Scriptural Christ-centered love and patience toward the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod an impossibility.

Out of love to the Wisconsin Synod and out of love and fear of the Word of God, I am compelled to announce my severance of fellowship from the official Wisconsin Synod.

It is my hope and prayer that the Synod will return speedily to God’s will, God’s way, and God’s Word.”

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<sup>1</sup> In the bulletin the following Sunday, Pastor Albrecht clarified for the congregation what it meant to be a unionistic church body: “A unionistic church body is one that is indifferent to God’s Word and carries on church work and worship with Christians who teach false doctrine. God forbids unionism in the many passages of Scripture in which He warns against false doctrine and false teachers, (Matt. 7, 15; Romans 16, 17-18; I John 4, 1; II John 9-11; Galatians 1, 6-9) and in which He asks Christians, and encourages them, to abide strictly by His Word (John 8, 31-32; John 17, 14-17; I Corinthians 15, 57-58; II Thessalonians 2, 13-15; II Timothy 4, 1-5). Unionism does not refer to labor unions” (Bulletin Announcement – August 9, 1959).

In addition to the above two men who severed fellowship with the Wisconsin Synod, fourteen more pastors have since quit the synod because it continues to be in fellowship with the Missouri Synod. The synod found it necessary to appoint a Protest Committee to answer protests directed to it.

Later this week the Wisconsin Synod will convene again. Protests in the form of letters addressed to the convention are again before the Synod. They plead with synod to be obedient to God's Word, to terminate fellowship with the Missouri Synod. The delegates attending the Saginaw, Michigan, sessions will be faced with serious business. In their hands rest the responsibility of the synod's future fellowship with the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.<sup>2</sup>

Although Pastor Albrecht was not a delegate to the 1959 convention, he decided to attend the final three days of the convention due to the issue being discussed. The following Sunday he announced the outcome to the congregation: "The Wisconsin Synod rejected all pleas to discontinue fellowship with the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod in obedience to Romans 16, 17-18."<sup>3</sup> The Wisconsin Synod's repeated failure to break fellowship with the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod resulted in many changes for the Manchester congregation, which would play out in the years to come.

Those many changes began in 1960. From January 19-21, Pastor Albrecht, along with a delegate from each of his congregations, traveled to Mankato, Minnesota, to attend the Interim Conference. This conference was made up of approximately seventy pastors, professors and teachers who left the Wisconsin Synod because of their conviction that the Wisconsin Synod was disobedient to God's Word by failing to break fellowship. These men were also joined by several pastors from the Norwegian Synod, and even some from the Missouri Synod.

The very next Sunday, a special congregational meeting was announced for February 7, 1960. The purpose of this meeting was "to discuss the problems that are troubling the Synodical Conference, particularly the issues that stand between the Wisconsin Synod and the Missouri Synod."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Bulletin Announcement – August 2, 1959.

<sup>3</sup> Bulletin Announcement – August 16, 1959.

<sup>4</sup> Bulletin Announcement – January 24, 1960.

## Withdrawal and Affiliation

Two weeks after this meeting took place, Pastor Albrecht announced to the congregation that, since the Wisconsin Synod failed to terminate fellowship with the Missouri Synod, he felt that he was “constrained by God’s Word to terminate his fellowship with the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod independently, and to withdraw [his] membership from the Wisconsin Synod until that body terminates fellowship with the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.”<sup>5</sup> In the bulletin that Sunday, Pastor Albrecht included a copy of the letter he sent to President Siegler of the Northern Wisconsin District announcing his actions. Pastor Albrecht wrote:

Dear President Siegler:

God requires that we avoid those who cause divisions and offenses contrary to His Word (Romans 16, 17). The Wisconsin Synod has repeatedly refused to follow this injunction of our Lord, although it has repeatedly said of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod that it is guilty of causing divisions and offenses within the Synodical Conference, and that these offenses have continued and have been aggravated ever since they first began, particularly since the time of the Wisconsin Synod Convention in Saginaw in 1955.

Synod’s present course of action is contrary to Romans 16, 17. Like many others in Synod, it was my hope that a termination of fellowship with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod would result at one of the conventions of Synod held since 1955. But Synod has refused the admonition of its own membership, has chosen to continue in fellowship with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and now follows a course of action contrary to its own time-honored position. Therefore I am constrained by God’s Word to terminate my fellowship with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod independently, and to withdraw my membership from the Wisconsin Synod until that body terminates fellowship with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. I know of no other way of protesting Synod’s action that will not involve disobedience to God’s Word, and at the same time cause Synod to see the seriousness of its action. Therefore I sadly withdraw my membership from the Wisconsin Synod.

It is my sincere prayer that the Wisconsin Synod will, with God’s help, return to the obedience that God requires.

Sincerely yours,  
(signed) Egbert Albrecht  
February 20, 1960

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<sup>5</sup> Bulletin Announcement – February 21, 1960.



On April 3<sup>rd</sup>, two weeks after Pastor Albrecht withdrew membership from the Wisconsin Synod, Manchester's sister congregation held their quarterly meeting. At this meeting, St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Marquette followed Pastor Albrecht's example. They decided to withdraw from affiliation with the Wisconsin Synod and to affiliate themselves with the Mankato Interim Conference. Later that month, the Mankato Interim Conference was to hold a two-day meeting in Faulkton, South Dakota. Due to distance, the Marquette congregation decided to host a one-day conference for those pastors, congregations, and other interested persons from Wisconsin and Upper Michigan who could not make it to the two-day conference in South Dakota. This one-day conference discussed an essay written by Pastor Albrecht entitled, "Can Romans 16, 17 Be Oversimplified?" The conference ended with a worship service with Communion led by Pastor Gerhard Pieper.

Two days later, on April 21<sup>st</sup>, St. Paul's, Manchester, held their quarterly meeting. They also voted to withdraw their affiliation from the Wisconsin Synod and to affiliate themselves with the Interim Conference. However, although Manchester affiliated with the Interim Conference, they were not yet ready to support the Interim Conference with their offerings. Thus, they voted that mission support be withheld until further study could be done.

This further study began by reviewing a booklet entitled "Concerning Church Fellowship." This booklet was being prepared as the doctrinal position on fellowship of the Interim Conference. The leadership of the congregation planned to order one copy of the preliminary edition of this booklet for each family in the congregation. However, when they placed their order, they found out that fewer copies were being made than expected. Due to the booklet's 49 page length and the fact that most people would prefer a final printed form rather than a mimeographed copy, less copies were produced. Thus, the leadership of St. Paul's was forced to reduce their original order of two hundred copies to twenty-five copies for each congregation. Therefore, each council member received a copy, and the rest were handed out on a first come, first serve basis.

The Manchester congregation continued their study of the Interim Conference by hosting a circuit meeting at the end of May. All members, both men and women, were invited to attend this circuit meeting to learn more about the group with which they were affiliated. Members of neighboring congregations were also invited to attend. Approximately two hundred people attended the meeting in which Pastor G. Radtke of Mankato presented a background of the Interim Conference. After the meeting, the fellowship time lasted until almost midnight. "One group of six men, who traveled two hundred thirty miles one way to attend, repeated their feelings about the evening by saying that it was well worth coming the long distance they did."<sup>6</sup>

The Interim Conference planned a convention for August 9-12, 1960, in Watertown, South Dakota. Both St. Paul's congregations chose delegates to represent them at that conference; however, Manchester's delegate was unable to attend. Therefore, Pastor Albrecht and Marquette's delegate attended and reported back to the congregations. At this convention, the Interim Conference formally organized by adopting a constitution. The sixty-nine delegates at the conference chose the official name of the group to be the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC). They chose to meet again in January 1961 at Sleepy Eye, Minnesota, to incorporate their new synod by electing its first boards and officers.

The *Milwaukee Journal* ran a story about the newly organized Church of the Lutheran Confession on Sunday August 21, 1960. The following Sunday, Pastor Albrecht included the story in the bulletin so that members could read what was written about the Synod with which they were now affiliated.

#### LUTHERAN UNIT FORMS NEW CHURCH

Watertown, S.D. – Right wing Lutherans who broke with the Lutheran Synodical Conference in a doctrinal dispute have organized a new church body to be called the Church of the Lutheran Confession.

The action was taken at a meeting here of clergy and laymen from 12 states. Leaders said the group represented about 3,500 Lutherans and their families who had

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<sup>6</sup> Bulletin Announcement – May 29, 1960.

withdrawn since 1957 from the Synodical Conference, comprised of Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches.

Signers of the new constitution did so as individuals. No congregation will be committed until it has had an opportunity to study and ratify the constitution of the new body, according to the Rev. Egbert Schaller of Nicollet, Minn., spokesman for the group.

#### Church Group Accused

The Wisconsin Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod have accused the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod of unscriptural practice in praying and working with other Lutherans with whom they do not have doctrinal agreement.

When the accusing groups hesitated to sever relations, a militant minority representing an ultraconservative view, broke off and formed the Lutheran Interim Conference. Sixty pastors, seventeen teachers and six seminary students have joined the conference, Pastor Schaller reported. Forty-five pastors, three teachers and three students attended the convention here, along with twenty-two lay delegates.

Pastor Schaller said they represented congregations in Wisconsin, Washington, Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming, Michigan, Missouri, Florida, Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

#### Established Own Schools

Previously this confessional group, working without formal organization, has established Immanuel Lutheran high school, college and seminary in Mankato, Minn., and mission congregations in St. Paul, Milwaukee and Denver. A congregation has also been established in Japan.

....The new church body is expected to be legally constituted at a meeting to be called by the officers next January, probably in Sleepy Eye, Minn.

The Rev. M.J. Witt of Spokane, Wash., continued as the interim chairman. The Rev. Paul Nolting, of Sleepy Eye, is the interim secretary.<sup>7</sup>

## **A Decision Needed to Be Made**

As 1960 continued, the members of St. Paul's, Manchester, still had a very important decision that lay before them. Back in April they had voted to affiliate with the Interim Conference, now known as the Church of the Lutheran Confession. However, at that time they were not yet ready to support this

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<sup>7</sup> Bulletin Announcement – August 28, 1960.

new church body with their mission offerings. As they held their mission offerings in reserve, a decision had to be made as to whether or not they would send that money to the CLC or to some other group.

In early September, the church council sent a letter reminding the congregation that this decision needed to be made. It had come to the attention of the church council that not everyone was satisfied with their affiliation with the Church of the Lutheran Confession. Therefore, the council felt that the following information needed to be brought to the congregation's attention:

1. Our congregation never held membership in the Wisconsin Synod. It was affiliated or associated with it. However, the pastor did belong to the synod.
2. Our congregation in April chose to affiliate with the Church of the Lutheran Confession; we did not join this group.
3. Our congregation does not have to join this or any other synod.
4. The pastor of our congregation resigned from the Wisconsin Synod because of its disobedience to God's Word in dealing with the Missouri Synod.
5. The Church of the Lutheran Confession is made up of congregations and pastors who have resigned from the Wisconsin Synod, the Norwegian Synod, and the Missouri Synod in protest to the disobedience to God's Word that today exists in these bodies.
6. Above all else, our congregation and our pastor want to be obedient to God's Word.
7. When a congregation affiliates with a synod and supports it through mission offerings, it thereby also supports the teachings and practices of that church body.
8. Since disobedience to God's Word is a very serious matter, it is of vital importance that we most carefully consider where our mission contributions are to be sent.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, the council announced that beginning on Thursday, September 22, they were planning four special congregational meetings, held each Thursday, leading up to the October 20<sup>th</sup> quarterly meeting.

### **First Meeting – September 22, 1960**

The focus of the first informational meeting was a Bible study on what the Bible teaches concerning the Church. This evening began with a focus on the holy Christian Church as it is confessed in the Third Article of the Apostle's Creed. Pastor Albrecht focused members on how it is faith in Christ that

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<sup>8</sup> Manchester Church Council. "Special Congregational Meetings." Letter to Members of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church. Manchester, WI. September 1960.

makes people members of the holy Christian Church. He reminded them that the vow they had made at their confirmation was to remain faithful to the confession of the church, not to the church itself. He stated, "In our confirmation vow we promise 'to remain steadfast in the confession of this church.' And do not pledge ourselves to any local congregation or group of congregations banded together into a larger body, such as Synods."<sup>9</sup> Pastor Albrecht also reminded them how the outward organization of church bodies has changed from time to time. Concerning this he stated:

This is perfectly right and proper, since the form of outward organization is not essential to the existence of the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints. In fact, when circumstances make it impossible for any outward form the holy Christian Church will still exist so long as two or three are gathered together in Jesus' name. For Jesus said, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18, 20). Even one lone believer, isolated from all others, has the assurance that he is a part of the communion of saints, the holy Christian Church, for the Lord's promise is true, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13, 5).<sup>10</sup>

Pastor Albrecht ended the night with a reminder of why they were there. It was out of concern for their own salvation. It was about the holy Christian Church and their desire to remain members of it. He reminded them that when, in future meetings, they speak about those from whom they were separating themselves, they were "not judging their souls, nor declaring that they are outside of the holy Christian Church, but [they were] warning them that this could be the possible consequence of this turning from the Truth."<sup>11</sup>

## **Second Meeting – September 29, 1960**

The second informational meeting involved a study of what the Bible teaches concerning church fellowship. While the first meeting discussed the holy Christian Church, this meeting focused on what the Catechism calls the visible church. Pastor Albrecht reminded members how the visible church is made up of Christians who have united with each other to form congregations. He also reminded them

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<sup>9</sup> Albrecht, Egbert. *Essay for Congregational Discussion*, September 22 – October 13, 1960, 5.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

that the visible church is made up of congregations who have united with each other to form synods. He continued by sharing with them the purpose for joining with other congregations as a synod. "The purpose of a synod is to train workers for the church (educational institutions), do mission work (home, heathen), visit and care for the invalid and provide general charity where it is needed in the church."<sup>12</sup>

They then discussed how, when Christians unite both into congregations and synods, Scriptural agreement must be the basis for their unity. For

whenever Christians do band together in an outward way, to form a Christian congregation or to establish a synod, it must always be done on the basis of complete agreement in God's Word. The word of God is the only thing that is to be preached and taught in the church. Christians gathered together into a congregation or a synod must be careful that no false teaching or error be permitted in their midst. They dare not join with those who teach false doctrine or have false Christian practice.<sup>13</sup>

"Fellowship with others in the visible church must be a fellowship based upon a common faith and a public confession that rests securely on the entire Word of God. Without that unity in the Word no fellowship is possible."<sup>14</sup> Therefore, they were reminded how God's Word demands that certain things be done when joining together in fellowship with others. "In the first place, God demands that we always test teachers and teachings by the Word and expose and reject every false teacher and teaching. 'Brethren, believe not every spirit, but try (test) the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world (1 John 4, 1)."<sup>15</sup> "God furthermore demands in His Word that we be on our guard constantly against all false doctrine. Jesus says, 'Beware of false prophets' (Matthew 6, 15)."<sup>16</sup> Finally, Pastor Albrecht brought up the passages from God's Word that stood at the very heart of the controversy, Romans 16:17-18. He stated,

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 11.

God has in His Word forbidden us to have fellowship with those who are in error. That includes not only the false teacher, but also those who have been misled by him and his teachings. God says, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16, 17-18).<sup>17</sup>

It is the doctrine taught in these verses, and the application thereof, that was the central focus for the congregation's withdrawal from the Wisconsin Synod and their subsequent affiliation with the Church of the Lutheran Confession. Pastor Albrecht warned the congregation, especially those who wanted to return to the Wisconsin Synod, that "to ignore this doctrine and join in religious fellowship with those who hold to error is called religious unionism. It is, without a doubt, the great sin of our age and a powerful weapon in the hands of the great enemy of the Truth, the devil, the father of lies."<sup>18</sup>

The night of study drew to a close with the following encouragement: "May we always uphold the Truth upon which this congregation was founded and to which each of us has pledged ourselves before the altar of the Lord. May ours be the spirit and strength expressed by the Formula of Concord, 'We have no intention of yielding aught of the eternal, immutable truth of God for the sake of temporal peace, tranquility, and unity...'"<sup>19</sup>

### **Third Meeting – October 6, 1960**

The third informational meeting centered on the problems created by the Missouri Synod. Large portions of the essay that Pastor Albrecht presented to the congregation will be quoted here to show the history of the controversy as it was understood by the members of St. Paul's. To begin, Pastor Albrecht gave the following history of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod:

The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, once the stronghold of genuine Lutheranism, has departed from the truth of God's Word that it once held. Today the Missouri Synod is teaching contrary to the doctrine we have learned. We can see this if we examine the official records of the Wisconsin Synod.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 13.

The beginning of this present tragic situation can be traced back to the union resolutions of the Missouri Synod convention of 1938. In its negotiations with the American Lutheran Church the Missouri Synod adopted the principle that differences of doctrine need not be settled before churches could have altar, pulpit and prayer fellowship. The exact words were “need not be divisive of church fellowship.”

This represented a major change in the historic position of the Missouri Synod. Throughout its glorious history until 1938 the Missouri Synod had steadfastly maintained that agreement on all doctrines of Scripture was necessary before joint worship and work could be entered upon and church fellowship exercised and enjoyed.

Other Lutheran bodies outside of the Synodical Conference have always maintained that it is too much to insist upon agreement in all doctrines of Scripture, but that “it is neither necessary nor possible to agree on all doctrines of Scripture.” On the basis of this opinion of men they reason that the “avoid” of Romans 16 does not apply to those who differ on doctrines which do not directly affect our justifying faith in Christ.

It certainly is true that there are some doctrines in Scripture that one may not even know, or concerning which one may hold a false opinion, and still be saved. If, however, it is shown that a doctrine of Scripture is clearly taught in the Word, it will be accepted by the believer. If, in spite of the clear testimony of the Word, a wrong teaching is maintained, the authority of the Word of God has been denied and rejected. Under such conditions fellowship would be a violation of the will of God.

This reversal of the historic position of the Missouri Synod on the doctrinal requirements for fellowship has removed the solid foundation of the absolute authority of the entire Word of God which had always been the strength of this body. As must certainly always be the result, this action in 1938 was the hole in the dike through which an ever-increasing flow of errors and un-Scriptural practices has rushed. When the absolute authority of the Word is forsaken, departure from that Word must inevitably follow.<sup>20</sup>

After giving this brief history, Pastor Albrecht went on to show how the Wisconsin Synod had admonished her sister synod (Missouri) for its departure from the Word of God.

By 1953 the Wisconsin Synod had charged the Missouri Synod with an imposing list of departures from the Word of God in these words, “That we declare that the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod a) by reaffirming its acceptance of the Common Confession as a ‘settlement of past differences which are in fact not settled’ (Proceedings 1951, p.146) and by its persistent adherence to its unionistic practices (the Common Confession, joint prayer, scouting, chaplaincy, communion agreement with the National Lutheran Council, cooperation with unorthodox church bodies in matters clearly not in the field of externals; negotiating with lodges and Boy Scouts of America with the plea that this

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 14-15.



gives opportunity to bear witness, under the same plea taking part in unionistic religious programs and in the activities of unionistic church federations; negotiating for the purposes of union with a church body whose official position it is that it is neither possible nor necessary to agree in all matters of doctrine and which contends for an allowable and wholesome latitude of theological opinion on the basis of the teachings of the Word of God) has brought about the present break in relations that is now threatening the existence of the Synodical Conference and the continuation of our affiliation with the sister Synod" (Proceedings 1953, p.104).<sup>21</sup>

Pastor Albrecht continued by showing how this was not the first time that the Wisconsin Synod had brought these charges against the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. He explains how these and similar charges were brought against the Missouri Synod in 1941, 1943, 1945, 1947, 1949, 1951, 1953, and 1955. He went on to state:

After ten years of admonishing and instructing the Missouri Synod the pattern had clearly emerged. By its resolutions and actions the Missouri Synod had rejected the patient and loving testimony of the Wisconsin Synod, continued in the departures of the past, and regularly added new offenses. The 1953 convention clearly recognized the pattern and stated, "That we declare that the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.....has brought about the break in relations that is now threatening the existence of the Synodical Conference and the continuance of our affiliation with the sister Synod" (Proceedings 1953, p. 104). That all the world might know that we recognized the Missouri Synod as a body persistently holding to doctrine and practice contrary to the Truth, the Synod declared that "we remain in a state of confession" (Proceedings 1953, p.105). Another letter was sent by the Synod to disavowal of the same. It is to be noted that for the first time in three conventions the action was not unanimous. Not that there were those who by a negative vote wanted to say that the Missouri Synod had not departed from the truth it formerly held, but that some held that in view of the fact that the Missouri Synod had persistently rejected the admonition of the Word, Romans 16, 17 now be applied and the Missouri Synod be avoided.<sup>22</sup>

#### **Fourth Meeting – October 13, 1960**

The fourth special informational meeting held in Manchester first discussed how the Wisconsin Synod had dealt with, and how they continued to deal with, the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. The evening then continued with a discussion of the formation of the Church of the Lutheran Confession.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 19.

The evening's study began by looking at what the Lord requires of a Christian when he sees his brother erring. It also attempted to answer the question of what the Lord required of the Wisconsin Synod when it saw its fellow Lutheran church body departing from the truth of God's Word.

Pastor Albrecht reminded them that "when error appears, the Christian's first and immediate reaction should be to correct and admonish. This he is moved to do by a love for the brother which flows from his love of the Truth."<sup>23</sup> He then gave the example of how the Apostle Paul corrected and admonished the Apostle Peter when he erred (Galatians 2:11-21). Through the use of this example, Pastor Albrecht pointed out how "a public sin demands a public rebuke."<sup>24</sup>

The discussion then turned from how to correct and admonish an erring brother to how to deal with him if he is unrepentant. Pastor Albrecht pointed the people to Romans 16:17 where the Apostle Paul gives the description of an errorist. The errorists are those who "'cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned.' These aren't people who in weakness or ignorance fall into an error of doctrine, but rather people who promote, preach, publicly proclaim, practice, defend, and seek to further their errors."<sup>25</sup> Pastor Albrecht then warned:

These things are very serious! Such who are "causing divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned" are dangerous to the faith and salvation of believers. Paul isn't speaking of people who cause divisions in the Church for non-scriptural reasons. These he condemns elsewhere as what we call schismatics. No, these are people who cause divisions and death-traps by departing from the written Word and practice. Such people are errorists. By their errors they lead believers away from the Truth, thus harming souls.<sup>26</sup>

For this reason, Pastor Albrecht pointed the people to what God says in Romans 16:17 about how the unrepentant brother should be treated: he is to be avoided. Pastor Albrecht then pointed out how this

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 25.

avoiding has nothing to do with social life, politics, or business practices, but rather with “all ways and manners by which we express our faith with one another.”<sup>27</sup>

A question that, quite possibly, was on many people’s minds was answered. Why would God command us to avoid those who cause divisions and offenses in the Church? The answer given was that God “wants to protect us and our children from the dread power of error which works secretly like a leaven and a cancer. One of the great, but today forgotten, themes of the Bible is separation for the sake of preservation.”<sup>28</sup>

After discussing how and why God wants his people to avoid the errorist, Pastor Albrecht showed the congregation how all this was relevant to the discussion about the Wisconsin Synod. “From 1938 to 1953 the Wisconsin Synod patiently admonished the Missouri Synod in a Scriptural manner. But the Missouri Synod rejected this admonition. It publicly and privately taught, preached, and practiced its errors, and tried to gain followers for them. It was now no longer an erring church body which needed to be admonished, but an errorist that needed to be avoided.”<sup>29</sup> However, the 1953, 1955, 1956, 1957, and 1959 conventions continually delayed terminating fellowship with the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod in the hope that further admonition would bear fruit.

According to Pastor Albrecht, at this point two positions stood before the Wisconsin Synod concerning when fellowship must be terminated with an erring church body.

The Synod’s position, as evidenced by its actions since 1955, was that fellowship must be terminated when you reach the conviction that admonition is of no further avail. The question of time was thus left to human judgment, and when the judgment of many is involved, as is the case in a synod, separation can come only when a majority of the synod has reached the conviction that further admonition is of no further avail.

The other position said that separation is called for when Scriptural correction has been offered and rejected and the erring body continues in its error despite admonition. This

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 26.

makes the time for separation not a matter of human judgment, based upon reason, but a recognition of certain facts, based upon the Word of God.

It was evident then, that the real decision before the Wisconsin Synod in its 1959 convention in regard to future relations with the Missouri Synod would be to decide which principle should be applied.<sup>30</sup>

The Wisconsin Synod in its 1959 convention voted to continue vigorously protesting the actions of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod rather than break fellowship with her at that time. Because of this vote, many pastors left the Wisconsin Synod. It was these pastors which joined together to form the Church of the Lutheran Confession.

The end of that evening's meeting included a short history of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. Below is the summary of the formation of the CLC, which Pastor Albrecht used as the ending of that evening's lecture.

This new church body [the CLC], born out of controversy, has changed nothing. It teaches nothing new. It is simply holding to that high standard of complete obedience to the Truth that the Wisconsin Synod once held, but has surrendered for the sake of outward peace.

There is no other course left us, if we wish to be obedient to the Word of God, than to separate ourselves from the Wisconsin Synod. Only in this way can we be preserved from the unionistic spirit that has now also infected the Wisconsin Synod. Only in this way can we still bring admonition that may yet wake up the Synod and stop the tragic course upon which it has embarked.

In our April meeting we voted to leave our fellowship with the Wisconsin Synod to affiliate with the Church of the Lutheran Confession. We have followed the right, God-pleasing course. It only remains for us now to support this same Church of the Lutheran Confession with our mission offerings. This is the matter that will be considered in our meeting next Thursday.<sup>31</sup>

### **Fifth Meeting (Including Quarterly Voter's Meeting) – October 20, 1960**

The fifth and final special meeting also included the congregation's normal quarterly voter's meeting. As this meeting began, Pastor Albrecht gave the fifth and final section of information to help the congregation's voters make a decision on whether or not to support the Church of the Lutheran

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 32.

Confession with its mission offerings. He entitled this section, "The Decision That Lies Before Us." In his remarks that evening he made it very clear what he believed was the right course of action for the congregation to take. As stated previously, there were members within the congregation who wanted to return to the Wisconsin Synod; thus, Pastor Albrecht made his opinion very clear about this. He stated:

By a majority vote a congregation determines whether it will uphold the Truth or reject it. We voted correctly to uphold the Truth. And this evening when we decide the matter of supporting the Church of the Lutheran Confession with our mission offerings, we will do one of two things. Either we will continue to stand upon the confession and teaching that this congregation has always upheld, or we will adopt a new principle, different from what we have always taught in the past. What the Wisconsin Synod teaches in its principle of church fellowship is not the old position of the Synod, nor of our congregation...

We should state again that when a congregation is affiliated with a synod, it thereby supports or confesses the position of that synod. For many years we supported the Wisconsin Synod, and it is doubtful that many in this congregation have had deeper affection for and roots in the Wisconsin Synod than I have. But because the Synod turned aside from the old paths and has been disobedient to the Word of God, and does not follow its own teaching, I withdrew my membership from it—a membership I had enjoyed for many years...

If this congregation this evening should reverse its action of April, and vote to affiliate again with the Wisconsin Synod, that act would end my ministry here at St. Paul's at once, for the confession of this congregation would then be changed. St. Paul's and I would no longer hold to the same confession. This congregation would then no longer be governed solely by God's Word. The Wisconsin Synod's new teaching on church fellowship would then be a part of the congregation's doctrine.

This evening we will not merely vote on whether to support the Church of the Lutheran Confession with our mission offerings, but this vote will also determine the future doctrinal course of this congregation.<sup>32</sup>

If the previous paragraphs were not clear enough, Pastor Albrecht declared that "God has not only laid an obligation upon me, but also upon you. Unless it can be shown from the Word of God that your pastor is leading you contrary to the Word of God, the only right and safe course for you as a member of the Flock of God is to follow him."<sup>33</sup> "As a congregation we face one of two possible effects in the

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 33-34.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 35.

decision before us. Either we will be strengthened in the way of obedience that we have always upheld in this congregation, or else we will begin a new course that does not demand complete, unquestioning obedience."<sup>34</sup>

After Pastor Albrecht had finished his discussion of the decision that lay before the voters that evening, a vote was taken. The vote was made by silent ballot. When the votes were counted that evening, the members of St. Paul's had followed the leading of their pastor. They voted in favor of supporting the Church of the Lutheran Confession with their mission offerings.

### **Continued Participation in the CLC**

Since Manchester's congregation was now fully affiliated with the Church of the Lutheran Confession, it was the desire of the pastor that each family would subscribe to the new publication of the CLC known as the *Lutheran Spokesman*. The pastor enlisted the help of the JOY Club<sup>35</sup> members to make this a reality. On Tuesday, December 27, 1960, members of the JOY Club attempted to visit the homes of all members of the congregation. They delivered to each family a copy of the constitution of the Church of the Lutheran Confession, along with a copy of the new December Issue of the *Lutheran Spokesman*. While they were in the members' homes, they collected the \$2.00 fee for a year's subscription from anyone who wished to subscribe to that monthly publication.

In January of 1961, Pastor Albrecht, along with a delegate from each St. Paul's congregation, traveled to Sleepy Eye, Minnesota, for the official organizational meeting of the CLC. At this meeting thirty-four congregations signed the newly-adopted constitution of the CLC and became charter members of that new Lutheran Church body. Also, forty-six pastors, four professors, and six teachers signed the constitution. Pastor Albrecht was one of those signers. Thus, Pastor Albrecht became a

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>35</sup> The JOY Club was the congregation's youth group. JOY was an acronym which stood for "Jesus, Others, Yourself."

charter member of the CLC, while both of his congregations remained only affiliates of this new church body. However, even though the congregation at Manchester did not officially join the CLC, they extended an invitation to the CLC to hold its next synod convention in Manchester. The CLC decided to hold their second annual convention in Spokane, Washington, but said they would keep Manchester's invitation in mind for future conventions.

At Manchester's next quarterly meeting in April of 1961, the congregation exhibited its desire to continue to support the CLC by authorizing two special offerings during that year. One offering would go to support the erection of chapels by the CLC, while the other would go to support Immanuel Lutheran College of Mankato, Minnesota, the CLC school program for the training of pastors and teachers.

Although the congregation's official vote showed support for the CLC, not everyone was in agreement. There were still members within the congregation who thought they should return to fellowship with the Wisconsin Synod. This can be clearly seen by a letter dated February 9, 1961, sent to the members by Pastor Albrecht. Part of that letter reads:

Quite often we hear remarks about our returning to fellowship with the Wisconsin Synod. The suggestion is made that when the Wisconsin Synod breaks relations with the Missouri Synod, then all of us who have left the Wisconsin Synod should automatically return to the synod.

We do not know what the Wisconsin Synod will do in its August convention. In each of those meetings they voted to continue their fellowship with the Missouri Synod in spite of the fact that the Missouri Synod had caused divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrines which we have learned. (Romans 16, 17)

If the Wisconsin Synod should break relations with the Missouri Synod in August, that act would still not solve the problem of our relations with the Wisconsin Synod. Why? ... The Wisconsin Synod no longer holds to what it always taught, but has a new doctrine or teaching. This new and wrong teaching has affected various other related teachings of the synod. And only when the Wisconsin Synod has returned to its old position, teaching what it used to teach, can and will we take up our fellowship with the synod.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Albrecht, Egbert. "Lent and Holy Week." *Letter to Members of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church*. Manchester, WI, February 9, 1961.

Even though there were some who hoped to return to affiliation with the Wisconsin Synod, the congregation remained affiliated with the Church of the Lutheran Confession. The voters chose a delegate to send to the second annual synod convention to be held in Spokane, Washington. However, later it was decided by the church council that, in view of the expense involved in sending a delegate to the conference, it would not be necessary for a delegate to go, for Pastor Albrecht could bring back a report of the meeting for the congregation. The pastor decided to combine the trip to the Spokane convention with his yearly vacation.

### **Manchester to Host Third Annual Synod Convention**

When Pastor Albrecht returned from vacation, he gave a report to the congregation about the convention. Probably the most significant part of the report was the fact that the delegates of the Spokane convention had voted that Manchester should host the third annual synod convention of the CLC.

In January of 1962, the members of St. Paul's, Manchester, began preparations for the August Convention. At the January voter's meeting, three committees were set up for these preparations: a housing committee, a building and grounds committee, and a transportation committee. For each of these three committees, a committee chairman was elected. The three men who chaired these committees made up the Convention Committee.

On April 14, 1962, this Convention Committee sent a letter to all the members of St. Paul's. This letter reminded the people that the convention was going to be held in Manchester in August. It also announced the dates chosen for the convention. The third annual convention of the CLC would be held from Thursday, August 9<sup>th</sup>, to Tuesday, August 14<sup>th</sup>. The letter then continued by asking for their help in preparing for the convention. The committee stated that "the most pressing need will be the housing for delegates. Since we have no motels in our immediate vicinity, nearly all the visitors will have to stay with



us in our homes."<sup>37</sup> Therefore they asked all members to consider housing delegates. The second biggest need for the convention was preparing meals. To fulfill this need, the Convention Committee accepted the Ladies' Aid Society's offer to take the lead on this. Therefore, the committee let all members know that the Ladies' Aid Society would be contacting them about donating food and looking for help in serving the meals.

On July 1<sup>st</sup>, the St. Paul's Ladies' Aid Societies<sup>38</sup> began asking for volunteers to help serve the meals. In the July quarterly voter's meeting, the congregation voted to buy whatever was needed for the meals. However, many food items were donated and thus did not need to be bought. Some of the most notable donations were that one family offered to supply all the chickens needed for one meal, while another family supplied all the ham needed for another. Still another family provided all the sweet corn needed for several of the meals.

The voter's assembly also decided that "no request would be made of the visitors to contribute even a free-will offering for meals. Since the congregation invited the convention to meet in [their] midst."<sup>39</sup> However, since the congregation did not want a free-will offering given for the meals, the convention delegates chose instead to collect a free-will offering which they gave to Missionary Fred Tiefel who traveled from Japan to attend the convention. This money was designated for the purchase of a mimeograph to be used in Missionary Tiefel's Tokyo congregation. Therefore, the following was adopted and made part of the convention minutes:

It is herewith recorded in the minutes of this convention that in response to the wonderful meals which the host congregations provided without charge to the delegates, the convention delivered the sum of \$286.00 in the name of St. Paul's of

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<sup>37</sup> Convention Committee. "Upcoming Convention." *Letter to Members of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church*. Manchester, WI, April 14, 1962.

<sup>38</sup> The Ladies' Aid Society from the Marquette congregation joined the Ladies' Aid Society from the Manchester congregation in preparing and serving meals to the convention delegates.

<sup>39</sup> Bulletin Announcement – July 22, 1962.

Manchester and St. Paul's of Marquette, to Missionary Fred Tiefel for the purchase of a mimeograph for the Japan Mission.<sup>40</sup>

It is also interesting to note that in the month before the convention took place, the Manchester and Marquette congregations were featured in the *Lutheran Spokesman*, the official publication of the CLC.<sup>41</sup> The article gave a brief history of both congregations and then stated, "Although neither congregation is a formal member of the CLC, the convention will offer the Manchester and Marquette families an opportunity to become acquainted with the operation of a synod, and to learn to know many faithful pastors, teachers, and laymen who will be visiting the community."<sup>42</sup>

### **Manchester Considers Starting a Christian Day School**

The year 1962 was an important year for the Manchester congregation, not only because it was allowed to host the Synod convention, but also because it began discussing the possibility of starting a Christian Day School. In two meetings, held February 4<sup>th</sup> and March 4<sup>th</sup>, the congregation discussed what was meant by a Christian Day School and the need for having one. At the April voter's meeting a brief report was given, including an announcement that the teachers and members of the Luther Memorial Church in Fond du Lac had been invited to speak with Manchester's members at their next school meeting in early May. In late June, a school committee of four men was chosen by the Manchester Church Council to contact members and obtain information about possible enrollment in a Christian Day School. On Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, a special congregation meeting was held in Manchester to consider the cost of starting and operating a Christian Day School.

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<sup>40</sup> Bulletin Announcement – August 19, 1962.

<sup>41</sup> This article is included as Appendix B.

<sup>42</sup> Albrecht, Egbert. "A Convention Welcome." *The Lutheran Spokesman*, July 1962: 10-11.

At the congregation's annual meeting on January 10<sup>th</sup>, the congregation voted not to start a Christian Day School. Pastor Albrecht showed his displeasure at this decision in his comments included in the next Sunday's bulletin.

The congregation's vote to decide the matter of starting a Christian Day School was premature. But worse, it was a reflection of a very unwholesome attitude toward our Savior's words: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not." We all know that the future lies with our children. Any church that does not properly provide for the education of its children is bound to die. Note the spiritual decay in the Reformed church bodies. An active congregation may well be breathing its last from a spiritual standpoint. What a warning for all.<sup>43</sup>

Even though the congregation voted not to start a Christian Day School, the pastor continued to promote the idea. On July 2<sup>nd</sup>, a special meeting was held for all those who were interested in Christian Day School education. The stated purpose of this meeting was "to determine whether a Christian School could be started this coming September."<sup>44</sup>

Those interested in starting a Christian Day School brought a proposal before the July quarterly voter's meeting. They wanted to start a Christian Day School and thus they "offered to assume all financial obligations for the creating and operating of the school."<sup>45</sup> All they asked from the congregation was the permission to temporarily use the church basement as the school house. By a vote of 41 to 29, the request was denied. Pastor Albrecht again showed his displeasure through a bulletin announcement.

Jesus is the Head of the Church. He has commanded every Christian to preach and teach His Word. This can be done in various ways. But the Lutheran Church knows of no better method of training children to become responsible Christian boys and girls than the Christian Day School.

Since the church basement is used for the Sunday School, meetings of various societies, and was given considerable use for recreational purposes, especially dartball, it seems contradictory to our whole Christian program to find that children cannot be taught

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<sup>43</sup> Bulletin Announcement – January 13, 1963.

<sup>44</sup> Bulletin Announcement – June 30, 1960.

<sup>45</sup> Bulletin Announcement – July 21, 1963.

God's Word more thoroughly in the same place. We are sure that the building was dedicated for God's glory and for the teaching and preaching of His Word.

We are concerned over the fact that among those who denied this request, were some who have been very irregular in their church and communion attendance. We hope that every one measured carefully the responsibility he has assumed by his vote. We hope that no one has heaped sin upon sin.<sup>46</sup>

On July 24<sup>th</sup>, just one week after the voter's again denied the starting of a Christian Day School, a meeting was held to create a Christian Day School Association that would work toward the establishment of a Christian Day School.

On August 11<sup>th</sup>, Pastor Albrecht included an announcement in the bulletin that very likely was viewed by some as an attack against them for their unwillingness to support the start of a Christian Day School. That announcement read:

We are happy to report that Messiah Congregation in Eau Claire, where the Immanuel students will attend services, has just begun a Christian Day School. Two weeks ago the eleven voters of the congregation voted unanimously to begin a school this fall in the church. Last Sunday they met again and called a teacher.

The classes will be held in the church, since there is no basement or other meeting room in the building. This will serve temporarily, until they can add a classroom addition to their building. The congregation, which has only 64 communicant members, has not been afraid to trust the Lord when He promises to help us in all that we undertake in proclaiming His saving Word to sinners.<sup>47</sup>

The Lutheran School Association, made up of Manchester and Marquette members who were interested in beginning a Christian Day School, officially incorporated as a non-profit religious organization on August 29, 1963. Two days later they purchased the Dantz Tavern School at auction for the price of \$3100. Three days later, on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, a letter was sent to all members of the two congregations informing them that, the night before, the Association extended a call to the first teacher of the Christian Day School. It also announced that the school year would begin the following Monday,

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<sup>46</sup> Bulletin Announcement – July 21, 1963.

<sup>47</sup> Bulletin Announcement – August 11, 1963.

taught by members until the new teacher arrived.<sup>48</sup> Also, this letter announced how the school would be funded: "All support for the school is obtained by free-will offerings. Parents of our two congregations who desire to enroll their children are required to join the Association, and by means of free-will offerings, to support the work it is doing. [However] if requests come from people outside of our church memberships, they shall pay a tuition to have their children enrolled."<sup>49</sup> The letter closed by announcing that an envelope was included for anyone who would desire to contribute to the school. Needless to say, this was not favorably received by all members.

### **Congregation Supports Synod Schools**

Pastor Albrecht was not only a member of the Church of the Lutheran Confession, but he also served on that Synod's Board for Education, as well as serving as the chairman of the Standing Committee on Constitutional Matters. In March of 1962, he traveled to Mankato, Minnesota, to represent the Board of Education in calling a second full time professor to Immanuel Lutheran Seminary located in Mankato. At the end of May, Pastor Albrecht again traveled to Mankato because he was asked to preach for the graduation service of Immanuel Lutheran High School, College, and Seminary.

On January 8, 1963, Pastor Albrecht, along with a delegate from each St. Paul's congregation, traveled to Eau Claire, Wisconsin, for a special CLC convention. This special two-day convention was held for the purpose of purchasing the Ingram Estate in Eau Claire as a permanent location for Immanuel Lutheran High School, College, and Seminary which was currently located in Mankato, Minnesota. As a result of this special convention, the 75-acre Ingram Estate, which was valued at more than \$200,000 was purchased for only \$85,000.

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<sup>48</sup> The school year began September 9, 1963, with an enrollment of 24 children ranging from Kindergarten to eighth grade.

<sup>49</sup> Lutheran School Association. "Christian Day School." *Letter to Members of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church*. Manchester, WI, September 3, 1963.

Many churches, including St. Paul's of Manchester, were holding special offerings for the new location of the CLC schools. Therefore, the Immanuel Lutheran College Choir traveled to these churches performing sacred concerts for them. This choir sang a concert in Manchester on Good Friday that year (1963). Also, on May 5, 1963, Professor Martin Galstad of Immanuel Lutheran College was the guest preacher in Manchester and Marquette. He preached on Christian education in connection with the \$100,000 drive that the CLC was holding for the new Eau Claire property, to pay for the land and its renovations. Throughout the month of May, the congregation held two special trips to tour this new property in Eau Claire. The first trip was taken by the 8<sup>th</sup> graders of the confirmation class. The second trip was open to all members, of which thirty-two participated.

At the end of May, 1963, the Church of the Lutheran Confession sent out a request for volunteers to help remodel and construct buildings on the Eau Claire campus. Over the next few months, a number of members participated in this volunteer work. The congregation also sent a number of food shipments to the school to help feed the volunteer workers, as well as the students. The following is an example of one of the food shipments. On August 1, 1963, Pastor Albrecht delivered: "35-40 lbs of beef and pork, 4 lbs of wieners, 4 lbs of coffee, 5 lbs of butter, 15 lbs of cheese, 3 lbs of shortening, 5 lbs of sugar, 1 case of peas, 1 case of corn, beans, cucumbers, squash, onions, cabbage, apples, cookies and potato chips, and 5 dozen eggs."<sup>50</sup>

The Men's Club and the Ladies' Aid Societies of both St. Paul's congregations also decided to support the schools by purchasing a used school bus for them to use. They set aside \$400 for this purchase. When other congregations and individuals found out about this, they offered some money as well to be able to purchase a better, used bus. On Saturday, November 23, 1963, the congregation purchased a used bus from Laper's Bus Service in Fairwater, Wisconsin, for \$450. It was a 1951 Chevrolet with a forty-eight passenger capacity. The next day, it was filled with food donations and sent

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<sup>50</sup> Bulletin Announcement – August 4, 1963.

to Eau Claire. All the extra money received for the bus was also sent along to be used on upkeep of the bus.

### **Fellowship Issues Arise Within Congregation**

The 1963 October quarterly voter's meeting was scheduled to discuss a doctrinal paper concerning church fellowship. This, however, was postponed due to the lengthy discussion at that meeting concerning a fellowship problem that had arisen within the congregation. As noted many times already, there were a number of members within the congregation who wished to return to fellowship with the Wisconsin Synod. At the beginning of the 1963 school year, three families from within the congregation enrolled their children in confirmation class at St. John's Lutheran Church (a Wisconsin Synod congregation) in Markesan, Wisconsin. They did this without ever consulting with or notifying Pastor Albrecht. The reason they gave for their actions was that they wanted their children to receive Wisconsin Synod instruction. Yet they did not want to give up their membership at St. Paul's.

This situation was not unprecedented. It had happened in the past that members of Manchester received their confirmation instruction in the Markesan congregation. However, at those times, both the Manchester and the Markesan congregations were affiliated with the Wisconsin Synod. Now that the Manchester congregation was no longer affiliated with the Wisconsin Synod, this became a fellowship issue. Pastor Albrecht informed the families, as well as the congregation, that:

The right thing for these families to do is to send their children to the Manchester confirmation class and have them instructed by Pastor Albrecht. The Manchester congregation unanimously called him to be their pastor, and in his Call, obligated him to instruct the children of the congregation for confirmation.

If this is not satisfactory, and they still wish to have their children taught in a Wisconsin Synod church, then they will want to join that same church. How can they choose one church for themselves and a different one for their children?<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Bulletin Announcement – October 27, 1963.

Many members of the congregation were in favor of allowing these three families to remain members in Manchester and have their children educated in Markesan. However, Pastor Albrecht informed these families that, under this arrangement, he could not and would not recognize them as members. He told them that if they now desired the services of a pastor, they should no longer contact him, but rather contact the pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in Markesan.

### **The Breaking Point**

After almost four years of affiliation with the Church of the Lutheran Confession, those who wished to return to affiliation with the Wisconsin Synod drew up a petition to do so. They wanted the congregation to vote on whether they should remain affiliated with the Church of the Lutheran Confession or whether they should return to affiliation with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, since the Wisconsin Synod was no longer in fellowship with the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

St. Paul's of Manchester held their annual meeting on Thursday, January 9, 1964. Knowing the importance of this meeting, a tape recording was made of it. The meeting was called to order and an opening devotion was given by Pastor Albrecht. The Secretary's and Treasurer's reports were read and approved. After that, the meeting departed from the proposed agenda.<sup>52</sup> The next thing on the agenda was the election of church council members. However, some of the men proposed as candidates for the church council had signed the petition to return to affiliation with the Wisconsin Synod. This caused a problem. The congregation's chairman announced, "It is necessary for those who serve on the church council to be in agreement with and to work together with the pastor that is called by the congregation, and maybe these men are willing to withdraw their names from that petition."<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> The Agenda for this meeting is included as Appendix C.

<sup>53</sup> *Annual Voter's Meeting - St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Manchester, WI. January 9, 1964. Four Track Reel to Reel Tape.*



Before anyone could withdraw their names from nomination or from the petition, one member put forth the following motion, "I would then move that this congregation go back to the previously established, and re-affiliate with the Wisconsin Synod."<sup>54</sup> In the ensuing discussion, strong feelings were expressed. An argument began over whether or not the congregation had been given a proper chance to vote on affiliation with the Church of the Lutheran Confession to begin with. The following conversation ensued:

(member) "When we switched over to the Interim Conference, now CLC, I asked for a valid vote, and did you fellers give it to me. No! One made the motion, and the other one seconded, and that stuck! And now I want a valid vote to see which way we're going. I make a motion we take a vote."

(another member) "I second that motion."

(chairman) "A motion has already been made and seconded."

(first member responds angrily) "Well, then act on it!"

At this point Pastor Albrecht begins to relate again the history of all that has happened, including the reasons why the congregation initially broke with the Wisconsin Synod as well as why they should not yet return to fellowship with the Wisconsin Synod. He also related the history of the formation of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. He then continued with the following speech:

You people have called me here to be your pastor. You moved me down here from Marquette, MI. You obligated me to lead you in the truth of God's Word. And I publicly promised that I would do everything in accord with God's Word to do that very thing. It has been my highest concern to think of the welfare of our congregation...If you want to undo what we have done which is all in keeping with Scripture, then you are not only going to complicate this very matter which stands between the CLC and Wisconsin but you are by your action going to remove me as your pastor. And, I would like to ask you if I am guilty of teaching anything or preaching anything that is false doctrine, if I am guilty of a scandalous life or if I have willfully neglected my duty. It is the Lord who gives pastors to Christian Congregations.

I wonder if you are really clearly interested in the Wisconsin Synod. Having talked with you, some of you, I have found that you are not even acquainted with what the differences are that stand between [us]. I think that there are other things probably that

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

lie behind your feelings. There are some perhaps that are not pleased that obedience to the Word of God requires strictness. Some of you I think resent the fact that there is a Lutheran School in operation, which does not involve you in any way. That do not remember that you are here dealing with matters that are sacred and that have to do with God's Word and that you must be ready to answer before the Lord whatever action you take, even as I must be ready to give an account to my Lord for the leadership that I have shown you.<sup>55</sup>

After Pastor Albrecht had finished this speech, a vote was taken by secret ballot to determine whether to stay affiliated with the CLC or to affiliate again with the Wisconsin Synod. The voters were all given sheets of paper and told to write either CLC or Wisconsin. When the vote was tallied, thirty-seven had voted to remain with the CLC while sixty-nine had voted to return to the Wisconsin Synod. At this point, Pastor Albrecht voiced his opinion about the action that they had just taken.

[This action you took] is contrary to God's Word. You have hereby terminated my ministry from you and from St. Paul's Church. I will continue to be the pastor of all those who want me to be their pastor and I would like to meet with those people upstairs. I would like to say this, an action like this, which is not in keeping with Scripture, if there is anybody with any kind of an office or position in this church, it is gone and you don't need any kind of a release or transfer to come out of this congregation. And all who would still like to do what is right; I would like to meet with you upstairs.<sup>56</sup>

At this point, all those who wished to remain with the Church of the Lutheran Confession walked out of the meeting with Pastor Albrecht. They went upstairs into the church and had their own meeting.

Those who remained in the basement took a brief break. When they returned to the meeting a very different mood was evident. It seemed as if the weight of the last four years had been lifted off of their shoulders. They began this next part of their meeting by electing a chairman and secretary. Then they continued down the agenda from where they had left off. The next thing on the agenda was elections for the church council. However, before they could hold elections they first needed to figure out who was still there. They asked all who were nominated to stand. At this point they realized that they would need to take nominations from the floor, as well, in addition to those who had been

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

previously nominated. Also, before they could vote, they had to figure out how many positions needed to be filled. When the current church council members were asked to stand, there were only three remaining. Therefore, they had to elect three more men to the church council: two men to fill the positions left by expired terms, and another one to fill the position of one council member who left with Pastor Albrecht. In a similar way, they filled every position that had been vacated.

After all positions were filled, the voters were quick to discuss a few other things that needed to be settled immediately. The majority of those decisions were regarding finances. At that time, the church's safe was kept at the parsonage. Thus, technically, all of the congregation's money was currently in the pastor's possession. Therefore, they wanted to make sure that matters of money were faithfully and properly handled so that he would not just take all of the funds with those who left the congregation. Thus, they voted to prorate Pastor Albrecht's January salary for the nine days that he had served the congregation. Then they looked carefully at the Treasurer's report to determine what money belonged to whom. They determined that any mission money that had been given up to the previous Sunday's offering should be sent to the Church of the Lutheran Confession. However, any mission money given in the future was designated to be sent to the Wisconsin Synod. They then discussed money that had been given for a Lutheran School. The voters decided that that money belonged to the congregation because it had been given for the purpose of a St. Paul's Lutheran School, which did not exist. The school that was started was not a part of the congregation, but was established by the Lutheran School Association, a separate entity.

The following day, Pastor Albrecht sent a letter<sup>57</sup> to every family in the congregation informing them of the voter's decision the night before, and how that ended his ministry at St. Paul's. He announced how this decision caused a division in the congregation. A sizable group, by leaving with him the night before, had already chosen to retain him as their pastor. Now he wanted to give everyone a

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<sup>57</sup> A copy of this letter is included as Appendix D.

chance to make the same decision. Thus, with the letter, he included a sheet for them to sign requesting him to be their pastor, along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope. He also announced to all the members that he would hold two services on Sunday morning in Marquette. All of Manchester's members who wished to retain him as their pastor were invited to begin worshipping in Marquette.

For the following two Sundays, Manchester's former members worshipped at Marquette. Then, on Tuesday, January 21, 1964, the members of Marquette held their annual meeting. At this meeting they followed Manchester's lead, voting to return to affiliation with the Wisconsin Synod. Because of this action, Pastor Albrecht also resigned as pastor at St. Paul's, Marquette.

Two days later, on January 23, 1964, the members who wanted to keep Pastor Albrecht as their pastor founded Faith Lutheran Church. Beginning on February 16, they worshipped at the Marquette Methodist Church, but by the end of May that building was no longer available to them. Therefore, they then worshipped at Dantz Tavern School until a new church could be built. The school that had been started by the Lutheran School Association in 1963 was retained by Faith Lutheran Church (CLC).

### **Picking Up The Pieces**

The remaining Manchester and Marquette congregations both affiliated again with the Wisconsin Synod. Pastor Walter L. Strohschein was the first to serve the vacancy. However, due to a very busy schedule, Pastor Strohschein asked Pastor Paul Kolander of Kingston, Wisconsin, to take over the vacancy at the beginning of May. On May 10, 1964, the congregation received word that their prayers had been answered. Pastor Lloyd Wenzel, the first pastor to be issued the call, had accepted. He was installed on June 21, 1964, as pastor of both congregations.

The pains caused by the fracturing of these congregations were long-lasting. The split fractured not only congregations, but also friendships and even families. Some parents left the congregation, while their children stayed. Some children left the congregation, while their parents stayed. There were even situations where a wife left, and a husband stayed, and vice versa. In many cases, this left children

caught in the middle. For many years there were hard feelings between many families and friends. Many even refused to talk to one another.

The anger over what had happened even caused many of those who remained with the Manchester and Marquette congregations to dislike even the thought of formal Christian education. It took many years before these members were willing to support the area Lutheran Grade School, and even more years before they began to support Winnebago Lutheran Academy, the area Lutheran High School.

## **Conclusion**

The five years, 1959-1964, were hope-filled and exciting years for Manchester's congregation, yet at the same time challenging and very difficult. Those five years saw seventy-eight children be baptized, fifty-three young men and women confirmed in their faith, twenty-two wedding services performed and thirty-eight men and women taken home to heaven. Ministry was very active in this small community. Yet, it was also a time of great struggle. There was not full agreement on what direction the ministry should take; nor was there agreement on whom the congregation should unite with in fellowship. Clearly all wanted to faithfully follow God's Word, yet there were disagreements about the right way to do that.

Even though there have been years of strife and difficulty in its history, God has richly blessed this congregation and these people. God's Word has been faithfully preached, and his sacraments have been administered among people in this congregation for more than 135 years. The theme passage that St. Paul's used for their 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary fits well: "The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy" (Psalm 126:3).

**SOLI DEO GLORIA!**

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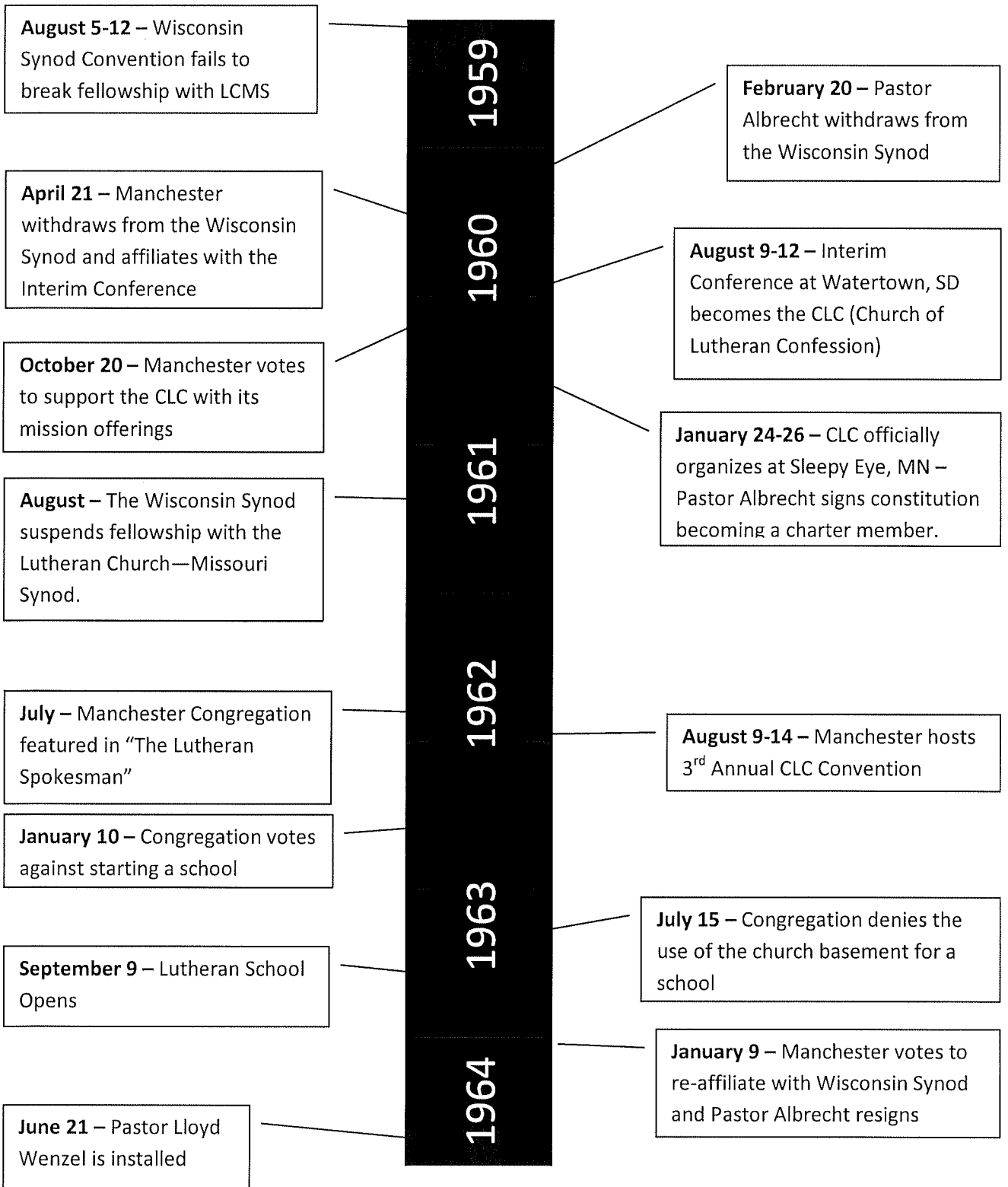
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## Appendix A – Timeline





## A Convention Welcome

Two St. Paul's Lutheran Churches form the Manchester-Marquette parish in a decidedly Lutheran community in south-central Wisconsin. The larger congregation is located in Manchester, and its white frame church is a focal point in the little village. The church steeple can be seen for miles, and the church bells ring on Saturday night and early Sunday morning alert the community for the coming worship service.

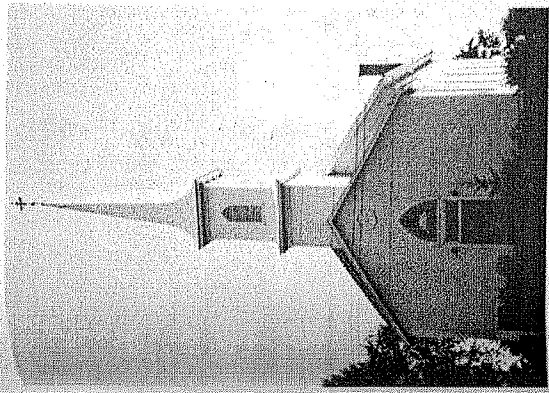
The Marquette congregation also has an inviting white frame church located near the edge of a bustling resort village on Lake Puckaway. The summer season brings tourists to the area, many of whom visit the Sunday services.

The Manchester congregation has 372 communicant members, and the Marquette congregation has 115. The majority of the members are engaged in farming, or do related work in canning factories, etc.

The churches had an unsettled background, and actually struggled through some tragic times in their early history. The Manchester congregation had its origin in 1866, and was served by four different pastors in the ensuing years. On January 13, 1873, after re-uniting the dissenting factions in its midst, the congregation adopted a constitution and called the first resident pastor. This date is considered the congregation's actual organization date. The congregation was plagued with

trouble. Several pastors proved unfaithful, factions again developed, and, as each pastor left or was requested to leave because of offensive conduct, the congregation shifted from synod to synod, searching for a faithful shepherd. In fact, at one time they advertised in the Milwaukee paper, *Germania*, for a pastor. Twice during the years before 1886 the congregation had two pastors at the same time, each serving a separate faction. But finally, in 1886, with the advent of Pastor A. Spiering from the Wisconsin Synod Seminary, relative peace prevailed in the congregation. The church, after having floundered about for years, remained in affiliation with the Wisconsin Synod. In 1960, however, this affiliation had to be terminated in obedience to the truth of God's Word, and the congregation and pastor turned to the Church of the Lutheran Confession.

The history of the Marquette congregation shows similar drifting from synod to synod. The congregation was organized on June 21, 1877. Marquette was served by pastors from nearby Markesan and Kingston until 1919, when the Manchester pastor, the Rev. William Heidtke, served the congregation. This arrangement has continued since that time. Like their sister congregation, the Marquette members terminated their fellowship with the Wisconsin Synod and affiliated



ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH  
Manchester, Wisconsin

CLC Convention Site, August 9-14, 1962

with the CLC.

These congregations are now approaching their ninetieth and eighty-

## The Things That Come To Pass

### LFC Joins ALC

In June, at its 66th Annual Conference held in Minneapolis, the Lutheran Free Church voted, 530 to 112, for organic union with the American Lutheran Church. Application for membership in the ALC will be presented at the general convention of the larger body next October, at Milwaukee. It is anticipated that other arrangements to carry out the merger will be completed by February 1, 1963. On two previous occasions, in 1955 and 1957, the congregations of the LFC by referendum had defeated such a merger move. Last fall, however, in another referendum the matter was carried. This already indicated what would be done by the conference.

fifth anniversaries. It is fitting that they can usher in their festival year by serving as hosts to the CLC convention in August. Although neither congregation is a formal member of the CLC, the convention will offer the Manchester and Marquette families an opportunity to become acquainted with the operation of a synod, and to learn to know many faithful pastors, teachers, and laymen who will be visiting the community.

Both congregations have organized committees to assist with housing, transportation, meals, and to provide for the general welfare and comfort of their visitors. Although the meetings themselves will be held at Manchester, the Marquette members are cooperating with Manchester in every way to make their August guests feel welcome. They are looking forward to convention time!

PASTOR E. ALBRECHT

## Appendix C - Annual Meeting Agenda (January 9, 1964)

St. Paul's Lutheran Church --- Manchester, Wisconsin

ANNUAL MEETING --- January 9, 1964

1. Call meeting to order
2. Opening devotion
3. Secretary's report
4. Treasurer's report
5. Election of two Church Council members (Terms of Bernard Fiegel and Russell Schwandt expire)
 

Candidates proposed by the Nomination Committee: Wilbert Flagel, Floyd Schwandt, Milan Stellmacher, Roland Jahnke, and John Tetzlaff
6. Approval of Envelope Committee suggested by the Church Council:
 

Elmer Ahrens	Leo Spielvogel	David Kelm
John Schulz	Albert Neumann	Walter Lohrey
Bernard Sell	Adolph Wuerch	William Neuman
7. Approval of a Sunday School Superintendent suggested by the Church Council:
 

Donald Smith --- Roland Riese
8. Approval of Nomination Committee for 1965 suggested by the Church Council:
 

Roland Jahnke (Chairman)	Russell Schwandt
Bernard Fiegel	Wilbert Flagel
Walter Affeldt	Robert Bornick
9. Organist
10. Janitor
11. Old Business
  - A. Constitution proposed by Constitution Committee
  - B. Report of delegate to CLC Convention held in Marquette, Michigan, August 1963 (August F. Schwandt)
  - C.
  - D.
12. New Business
13. Adjournment with prayer

## Appendix D - Letter Announcing Resignation

January 10, 1964

Dear Member of St. Paul's,

I regret to inform you that a majority of voters at our Annual Meeting last night ended my ministry at St. Paul's. They passed a resolution to affiliate with the Wisconsin Synod, even though the Wisconsin Synod is still guilty of false teaching. By this action I am no longer pastor of St. Paul's Congregation.

Please remember that you, as a congregation, called me and moved me and my family into your midst, and obligated me to teach and preach only the truth of God's Word. I promised publicly that I would do so with the ability that God gives me. I have tried my utmost to lead you faithfully according to God's Word.

~~Because the Wisconsin Synod failed to obey God's Word and to break fellowship with the Missouri Synod (before 1961) I withdrew from the Wisconsin Synod. In five special meetings of the congregation, we studied the synod problems, and you also ended your fellowship with the Wisconsin Synod for the same reasons, and affiliated with the Church of the Lutheran Confession. You even invited the Church of the Lutheran Confession to hold its 1962 convention in Manchester.~~

Last night, in direct opposition to all this, a majority voted to affiliate with the Wisconsin Synod. When the Wisconsin Synod has straightened out its wrong principle of church fellowship, will be obedient to God's Word, and will correct the wrong done to faithful pastors by violating their divine Calls, we will return to fellowship with the Wisconsin Synod. But these things must first be straightened out.

I regret last night's congregational action, since this only complicates the matter more. Now St. Paul's Congregation is taking part in the Wisconsin Synod's wrong position. It has ended my ministry, even though I have not taught false doctrine, led a scandalous life, nor willfully neglected my duty, as the tenth Article of our constitution specifies. I am convinced that some who voted for this matter are not sincerely interested in the Wisconsin Synod. Some have resented the strictness that goes along with being obedient to God's Word. Some have resented the fact that a Christian Day School has been created by interested members of the Manchester and Marquette congregations, even though they are not involved in any way by this school.

The action of last night now means a division in our St. Paul's Congregation. I will continue to be the pastor of all those who want me as their pastor. A sizable group have already chosen to keep me as their pastor by leaving the meeting immediately after the vote was taken. In order to give all members a chance to express themselves, I am enclosing a form and a self-addressed envelope for each communicant member of St. Paul's. If you wish to have me continue as your pastor, please sign the enclosed form and return it. It is not necessary for you to obtain a release from membership. Any position that you may hold in that congregation, such as Sunday School Teacher, society officer, etc., is no longer binding.

Two services will be held at Marquette Sunday morning, January 12. The first service will begin at 8:30, the second, at 10:00 o'clock. Sunday School will meet at Marquette at 9:15. You are invited to attend Marquette's services. There will be a meeting of all the former Manchester members after the 10:00 o'clock service.

May the majority of voters who have brought about this tragic situation, recognize the seriousness and far-reaching consequence of their action, and pass one more resolution---a resolution to reconsider. May the Lord lead you to uphold His Truth, wherein alone there is salvation.

*[Faint, illegible text]*

Sincerely yours,  
Egbert Albrecht

Dear Pastor Albrecht,

I want you to continue to be my pastor.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature