

**MT. ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**A History of Her First Fifty Years: 1946-1996**

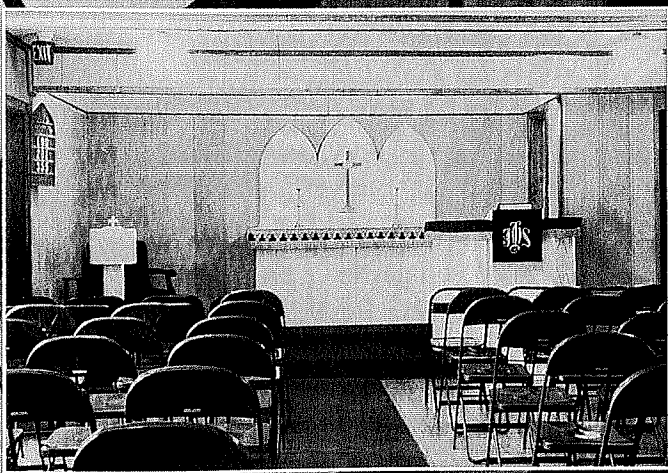
by  
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April 30, 1997

***Celebrating 50 years of Grace  
1946-1996***



***Mt. Zion Evangelical Lutheran  
Church***

***Kenosha, Wisconsin***

A large black and white photograph of a church interior. A Christmas tree is decorated on the left side. The church has a high, vaulted ceiling with a large, multi-paned window in the center. The pews are visible in the foreground, leading towards the altar area.

*Grow in the  
grace,  
and knowledge of our  
Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  
To him be glory both  
now and forever.  
II Peter 3:18*

“Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? And where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord; but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.--ISAIAH 66, 1-2.

With humble and contrite hearts the members of Mount Zion Evangelical Church recognize that this church of theirs is the work of God's hand. The blessings which we have enjoyed and experienced here, both spiritual and temporal have been many and great. To the Triune God alone be glory an honor.

May that God in future years continue His mercies unto us, blessing our congregation with the pure preaching of His Word. May HE cause us to increase in faith and love, that Christ may be more and more formed in us. May we, for many years to come, be able to come here with our sins and find forgiveness in Christ our Lord; may we come with our griefs and hardships and find patience and comfort.

And may the Lord, the Holy Spirit, ever fill the hearts of our people with His Holy Word that this congregation may be “a light” shining unto many, and like “a city upon a hill which cannot be hid”. May He use this congregation and this people to bring many souls to the knowledge of their salvation throughout the preaching of His Word.” (Opening paragraph of the program that was used at Mt. Zion's fifth anniversary service, Jan 21, 1951).

Mt. Zion Ev. Lutheran Church in Kenosha, WI, celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1996. Over those fifty years, Mt. Zion has gone through many changes, in membership and in location. However, two things that have always remained consistent are her people's love for the Lord Jesus Christ, as shown in the paragraph above, and their warm, friendly spirit. I was born and baptized, raised and confirmed at Mt. Zion and I am serving there this year as student assistant. The people and pastors of Mt. Zion have had a wonderful influence on my relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and have always been great at encouraging and supporting my studies for the public ministry. I would therefore like to dedicate this paper to them so that they and future members might always have a simple yet complete written history of the first fifty years of their church.

## **EARLY PLANS FOR A MISSION IN WEST KENOSHA**

By the early 1940's, Kenosha had three well-established WELS churches. Those churches were Friedens Ev., Bethany Ev. and St. Luke's Ev. (Cf. Map in for location). In the early '40's, Pastor Carl Buenger of Friedens began looking for a way to set up a

Lutheran Elementary school in west Kenosha that could serve as a branch of Friedens. But when they asked for a Seminary candidate to start this branch school, the District Mission Board responded, "We aren't in business to have our missionary start a school, but a church" (Interview with Pastor Huebner on April 28, 1997). So the pastors decided to look into starting a new mission church instead. The pastors involved in this planning were Buenger and R.A. Siegler from Friedens and W.K. Pifer and E. Walter Hillmer from St. Luke's.

In spring 1945, those pastors requested that the Southeast Wisconsin District Mission Board call a candidate from that year's graduating class at the Seminary. This candidate was to "serve as missionary at Kenosha, Wisconsin" (Fifth Anniversary, 5).

Pastor Elton Huebner was installed in Kenosha on April 1, 1945 and he began canvassing later that month. He was told to go house to house in three different fields in order to find the best location to start the new mission. The three fields were 1) the area west of the Nash automotive plant between 60<sup>th</sup> and 52<sup>nd</sup> streets, 2) South Kenosha, 3) the Lakeshore Road area north of the Kenosha city limits (cf. The Map for these locations).

His initial canvass was really designed to be a church census. Pastor Huebner talked to the residents of a home to find out if they were active members of a church. He wrote the information down on his canvass cards. He then color-coded each house to determine where the largest concentrations of prospects lived.

By the time Pastor Huebner had finished a canvass of 2400 homes, the Mission Board was so impressed with his reports that they gave him the go ahead to start his church in the area west of the Nash plant. He was told to rent a suitable facility "(vacant store, living room, basement, etc.)" (Fifth Anniversary, 5) and begin conducting church

services. Pastor Huebner compared this early work to “the new mode exploratories that we have today” (Interview on April 28, 1997).

In early June, the Kenosha pastors, including Pastor Huebner, met with members of the Mission Board to consider the best location for the new church. After considering several sites, they decided on Mt. Zion’s present location on the corner of 60<sup>th</sup> Street and 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue (cf. The Map for location). A painter named Alex Potente owned this land at that time. Rental properties were scarce, because of the wartime economy (World War II was still being fought), so Pastor Huebner had to wait nearly three months for the tenants to move out of the flat that he and Pastor Buenger had chosen. Then in August, Pastor Huebner received an anonymous phone call telling him that the tenants were about to move out of the upstairs flat. He immediately called Potente and secured the flat for the new church (Interview with Pastor Huebner on April 28, 1945). Fifth Anniversary makes an interesting observation, “Surely, it was the hand of God that we were able to obtain this particular flat, for it was located in that very house which stood on the property selected as the most desirable choice for a new Lutheran Church” (6). For the next 16 months, that upstairs flat would serve as the church, meeting room and parsonage for the pastor and people of Mt. Zion.

### **PASTOR ELTON HUEBNER:**

Pastor Elton Huebner was born in Manitowoc, WI on September 22, 1920. His father and mother were members of First German Lutheran Church in that city. Pastor Huebner graduated and was confirmed from First German’s school. He attended

Northwestern Preparatory School and Northwestern College in Watertown, WI and graduated in 1942.

He then went on to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, WI. Due to the World War II draft regulations, Seminary students had to go to school year round in those days in order to remain free of the draft. Pastor Huebner graduated from the Seminary in March 1945. He and his friend and classmate, Carl Leyrer, both were assigned to new missions in Wisconsin. Leyrer was sent to Big Bend and Huebner was sent to Kenosha, to canvass "...wherever the Board sees fit for the time being." It's interesting to note that the Big Bend and Kenosha missions were the two fastest growing WELS missions for the next several years.

Pastor Huebner served the people of Mt. Zion faithfully until the middle of 1951, when he took the call to Grace in Milwaukee. He and his wife, Helene, currently live in Menomonee Falls, WI (Interview with Pastor Huebner on April 28, 1997).

Referring to their youth and enthusiasm, Anita Broski said, "(Pastor Huebner) and his wife fit right in" (Interview on April 1, 1997).

### **"THE FIRST BUILDING"**

"The first building", or "The house", served as Mt. Zion's first facility. It was a two flat apartment building on the corner of 60<sup>th</sup> Street and 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue (Cf. Map). At first, the congregation only had use of the second story flat, because there were still tenants living on the first story. The congregation held its first church service there on August 26, 1945 at 10:00 am. 75 people attended that first service, including many from the sister churches in the area. The collection totaled \$25.33 (Celebrating, 2).

As one might expect, the furnishings used by that brand new congregation were not exactly state of the art. They made due with what they had. Elaine Wroblewski was in her early teens when the church started. She remembers the furnishings this way: "Everything was borrowed. Our altar was a library table. We used a music stand for a pulpit. The folding chairs were borrowed from St. Luke's and Friedens. Somebody gave us some candleholders for the altar... We sang acapella for awhile...(later) we had a pump organ donated to us by Willowbrook Sanitarium" (Interview on March 31, 1997). Pastor Huebner, whose father was a building contractor, was a skilled handyman and he did much of the repair and remodeling of that flat himself.

Mrs. Fran Paul remembered that it was a bit of a hassle for Pastor Huebner and his wife, Helene, since the worship facility doubled as their parsonage. "We had to move their (the Huebner's) furniture into the bedroom every week to set up the church... 50 to 75 people could fit comfortably. If the living room got too crowded, some people would sit in the side room and listen...But it was real cozy...homelike" (Interview on April 1, 1997).

One minus was the basement of the house, which was never remodeled. It was dank and in need of a paint job. The kitchen was in that basement and the members would use it to prepare snacks and occasional fellowship meals. Mrs. Anita Broski described the kitchen like this, "The kitchen was a minus because of that old gas stove...It was in that crummy old basement" (Interview on April 1, 1997). Other people who remember the basement describe it in the same way, but all of them, including Mrs. Broski, say that they were thankful for it. Mrs. Sandy Zenda remembers waiting in the basement with the other Saturday school children to sing for the Christmas Eve service.



Sandy was nine years old at the time. She and some of the other children admitted that that basement frightened them (Interview on March 27, 1997).

It was during the 16 months on the upper flat that the congregation's Articles of Incorporation were signed and they became West Sixtieth Ev. Lutheran Church (the church was later renamed Mt. Zion because the house was located on a small hill). There were 20 people present at that meeting of organization on January 27, 1946. The signers of the Articles of Incorporation were Pastor Huebner, Frank Lewicke, Carl Lundberg, Fred Miller, Norman Knutson and Chris Schafer Jr., in that order (Fifth Anniversary, 7). Also during this time, the Ladies Aid was organized and the members started a Saturday School for their 22 children.

The new church faced some early obstacles to be sure. As was mentioned earlier, there was the inconvenience of the parsonage doubling as a worship facility. The church furnishings were nothing spectacular. The fact that the church was on the second story made it hard for some people to attend, because it was difficult for them to climb the stairs. They owed a \$10,300 debt to the synod. Their facility did not meet state requirements for wiring and heating. Plumbing work needed to be done in the basement. Because the church was new, it had to set up a church government and finance system to deal with these issues. Also, the members came from many different Lutheran backgrounds, which meant that they all had their different traditions that they wanted to see used at their new church. But:

"...in spite of the difficulties which faced our people, the Lord our God saw to it that our new Church grew and prospered. By His grace He kept our people together, so that during the past year we could definitely notice that our people had now established certain customs and practices of their own and were more and more working together in a spirit of unity and harmony" (Fifth Anniversary, 9).

## **WELS SUPPORT OF THE NEW CHURCH**

From the very beginning, the Wisconsin Synod took Mt. Zion under its wing. They saw great promise in the new mission and they wanted to do what they could to help it along. In addition to immediately assigning a graduate to the field and helping him secure a facility, the District Mission Board helped Mt. Zion financially. In October 1945, after only two months of services, the WELS Board of Trustees was so happy with the reports from Kenosha that they sent Pastor Huebner a check for \$10,300 to purchase a large piece of property next to the rented flat. This piece of property was a little smaller than one acre and is the same property that Mt. Zion church stands on today.

The synod continued to support Mt. Zion financially as it slowly but surely worked its way toward self-supporting status. Until the end of 1950, synod paid \$190 per month toward the pastor's salary and \$35 toward the school support plan, while the members of the church were only required to pay \$15 per month toward each of these. On January 1, 1951, Mt. Zion adopted a financial plan that would eventually make it self-supporting. It finally became self-supporting in February 1955. Throughout that time, the WELS, along with the sister churches in Kenosha, freely supported their little sister. Fifth Anniversary made sure to record their thanks: "It is therefore with grateful hearts that we express our appreciation to our fellow Christians throughout Synod" (11).

## **THE PEOPLE OF YOUNG MT. ZION**

At Mt. Zion's first worship service, held in August 1945, 75 people were in attendance. For the next couple of years, the church had roughly 50 communicant members. But in the late 1940's, Mt. Zion experienced a nice growth spurt and by early

1951, she numbered 160 baptized souls, 106 communicant members and 29 voting members. During this time, confirmation classes numbered 9-10 students. Pastoral acts over those first five years included 36 baptisms, 37 confirmations, nine marriages and two funerals.

Elders who had served during those first years were:

Fred Klemm	1946-
Norman Knutson	1946-1947
Elmer Schnell	1946-1949
Gerald Gollnick	1948-1950
Edward Stuemke	1950-
Edwin Reuter	1951-

Mt. Zion also had a very active Ladies' Aid, organized on May 9, 1946. This group helped raise money for the church and they faithfully cleaned the church every week. By 1951, the Ladies' Aid had 25 members. Its officers in those days were:

Mrs. Alice Weidner, President  
Mrs. Delia Klemm, Vice President  
Mrs. Pauline Nunke, Secretary  
Mrs. Evelyn Schnell, Treasurer (Fifth Anniversary, 12)

Pastor Friedel Schulz said that Henry Schmidt is another name that he remembered fondly from the early years. Mr. Schmidt became president of the congregation later in 1951. He invited Pastor Schulz and his wife, Eunice, over to his house for dinner on their first night in Kenosha (Interview with Pastor Schulz on April 13, 1997).

Other names that stood out in the first five years include Frank Lundberg, Fred Miller, Chris Schaeffer and William and Emma Herbrechsmeier. All of these people "did a lot to get (Mt. Zion) going". There was also Mrs. Renata Torgeson, who was the church's first organist (Interviews with Fran Paul and Anita Broski on April 1, 1997).

As far as the biographical information of the early members is concerned, they were mostly lower-middle class people in their mid-thirties. There were a lot of married couples with children ten years old and younger. Most of them were born in the United States, whose parents had been moved to the U.S. from Europe. Almost all of the members were fluent in English and many of them didn't even know German, although you would occasionally here some German being spoken in the background (Mt. Zion never conducted services in German). Most of the members at this time were not new converts, but were transfers from the other WELS churches in Kenosha. There were about as many men as women attending Mt. Zion at that time (Interviews conducted with Elaine Wroblewski, Fran Paul and Anita Broski on March 31 and April 1, 1997). When I asked these three ladies why they felt that these kinds of people were attracted to Mt. Zion, they said that many of them were tired of belonging to a bigger, older church and wanted something that was small and new. They'd heard about the warm spirit at Mt. Zion and they wanted to give it a try. Others transferred to Mt. Zion because it was closer to their homes than the other churches and it was easier to walk, carpool, or take the bus to Mt. Zion. (Remember: not everyone owned cars in the late 1940's).

Also, Pastor Schulz brought up an interesting point. He said that sometimes transfers would come to Kenosha from smaller, rural communities. These people would often be more comfortable at Mt. Zion, because it reminded them for of the little country churches that they came from (Interview on April 13, 1997).

In short, "the people wanted it (Mt. Zion) to go...many attended Mt. Zion, but kept their membership at other (Kenosha WELS) churches. They were mission-minded as far as encouraging their Christian and Lutheran friends to come join us" (Interview

with Elaine Wroblewski on March 31, 1997). "The people were positive and excited about their faith" (Interview with Fran Paul on April 1, 1997).

## THE MOVE DOWNSTAIRS

In December 1946, 16 months after the first service was held in the upstairs flat, the tenants in the downstairs flat moved out. Church activities were immediately moved downstairs and plans were made to remodel and repair that flat. That repair included a new heating system for the entire house, a new conduit and BX wiring system and repainting. "Then came the largest task of all, remodeling the downstairs flat into a suitable chapel." This task was done over the course of the next two years, but an initial estimate of \$3000 ended up at \$8700, due to expensive state requirements and the tremendous rise in labor and prices after the war. So, when this bill was announced in the summer of 1948, there was "...a shock and a disappointment to all of our people. Nevertheless, they pitched in and began to work with zeal and diligence" (Fifth Anniversary, 10).

\$1700 was offered right away by the members so that they could begin the remodeling. They also received a \$3000 loan from the synod's Church Extension Fund, which brought their total synod loan to \$10,300. They were <sup>lent</sup> loaned the remaining \$4000 by a private party. Those were hard times for the people of Mt. Zion, but they looked to their Lord for strength and he gave it to them, along with patience and zeal. They were able to complete their remodeling in 1948 (Celebrating, 2). The new Mt. Zion had a pulpit, new chairs and hymnals. They had their pump organ converted to an electric one. They also bought a brass altar cross to put on their brand new altar. This altar was built

by one of the members, Fred Klemm, who was a carpenter. (The altar and its cross can be seen today in the fellowship hall of Mt. Zion's educational facility). They held classes and meetings in a side room. The pastor as a sacristy used a small room in the back of the church.

Approximately \$600 more was collected in 1951. The people used this money for painting the house's exterior, building a new entrance and porch and adding rain ducts.

### PASTOR FRIEDEL SCHULZ

Pastor Schulz was born in Saginaw, MI on July 3, 1920. He graduated and was confirmed at Salem Lutheran Church in Ann Arbor. He received his high school education at Michigan Lutheran Seminary in Saginaw and graduated from there in 1939. He studied at Northwestern College in Watertown, WI and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, WI and <sup>WI</sup>graduated in 1947.

Pastor Schulz' first call was to two churches in South Dakota. They were Trinity in Clear Lakes and St. John's in Altamons. (St. John's disbanded long ago, but Trinity is still going strong).

He was called to Mt. Zion late in 1951 and after much prayerful consideration, he took the call and became Mt. Zion's second pastor in December of that same year. His wife, Eunice, was especially excited about this, because Kenosha was very close to her parents, who lived in Milwaukee.

Pastor Schulz served the people of Mt. Zion faithfully for 34 years, before retiring from the ministry in August 1985. He and his wife both enjoyed their time at Mt. Zion

very much. Pastor called it a “terrific experience”. Mrs. Schulz called her time in Kenosha “great years” (Interview on April 13, 1997).

### **GROWING YEARS: 1952-1958**

Elaine Wroblewski probably put it best when she said that in the 1950’s, Mt. Zion was “busting at the seams” (Interview on March 31, 1997). This was largely because the congregation was now organized and could begin thinking more about making outreach efforts behind their new pastor. And the Holy Spirit blessed their efforts.

Pastor Schulz wasn’t able to find many helpers at first, so he carried out early evangelism efforts mostly by himself. But he did this with great zeal, or, as Anita Broski put it, “Pastor Schulz was very big into it” (Interview on April 1, 1997). He canvassed the neighborhood around Mt. Zion often and once canvassed the entire Forrest Park area by himself (cf. The Map).

Pastor Schulz also helped to bring others to the Lord by making sure to do follow up visits. He would call on any new comers to the church by the Tuesday following the service that they attended. Also, he conducted Bible Information Classes for anyone who was interested in coming.

In June 1952, Mt. Zion held their first Vacation Bible School. This was the first VBS ever held in Kenosha. Many children from Mt. Zion and other area churches attended.

Pastor Schulz continued to lead Saturday school for the children. There was one class held at the church and another at the home of Mrs. Bednar, a member living on the north side of Kenosha. These classes were well attended. In 1954, these classes were

moved to Sunday (and became known as "Sunday school"). A member named Edward Winker really pushed the Sunday school, and by 1958, there were 137 students attending regularly. Mr. Winker was its first superintendent.

By 1955, Mt. Zion's membership had grown to 163. They had moved to two Sunday services a week, but the church was still filled to capacity. It was becoming clear that the time had come to move on. It was time for a larger church building.

### THE NEW MT. ZION

After things had gotten under way at Mt. Zion, the synod asked them to work toward reaching self-supporting status as soon as possible. This was exactly what Pastor Schulz and his people had in mind. They began working to decrease the synod subsidy on a monthly basis and by February 1955, "the original debt was retired, the mortgage burned, and Mt. Zion became self-supporting" (Celebrating, 2).

Soon after this, the members of Mt. Zion started planning to construct a new building. The voters decided that they wouldn't start any work until they had \$30,000 in cash or pledges from their own members. So they began a three-year fundraiser in 1955. The name of the fundraising project was "Forward in Faith". During these three years, the pastor and council promoted the program and a contractor was called in to draw up blueprints and create a mock up. The people really got behind this program and by 1958, the \$30,000 had been offered or pledged. (All pledges were paid in full by 1961) (Interview with Pastor Schulz on April 13, 1997).

Once the \$30,000 was raised, the council borrowed another \$55,000 from Kenosha National Bank. This \$85,000 was then used to build the new church and a new



parsonage on the corner of 60<sup>th</sup> street and 37<sup>th</sup> avenue, where an apple and pear orchard was then standing. H.P. Demand (dubbed "High Power" Demand by the preachers in the area), a contracting firm from Evanston, IL guided the project to completion. Pastor Schulz was given the responsibility of being Mt. Zion's contact man with H.P. Demand.

In July 1958, the voters gave final approval to the project and groundbreaking took place. Work continued through the fall and winter and was completed early the next spring. In March 1959, the building was ready for use. On their dedication Sunday, the members and their pastor met in the first floor flat of the original house. Then they marched down the block together into their brand new church building, where they held their dedication service. In his farewell sermon in August 1985, Pastor Schulz said that this dedication was "the high point of my career" (Interview on April 13, 1997). This is the building that the members of Mt. Zion worship in today.

Fran Paul might have summed up the new building project best when she said, "The people were all very excited and proud. The financing wasn't easy, but we managed it" (Interview on April 1, 1997).

### **A FOCUS ON EDUCATION: 1958-1976**

Mt. Zion had always understood the need for Bible study and Christian schools and this understanding really began to show itself in the early 1960's. The Sunday school was continuing to grow. Boy, and soon girl, <sup>or</sup> <sup>p</sup> pioneers were started. A nursery school was started and the Student Aid Fund was established.

Mt. Zion itself never had a Christian Day School, nor did it ever really consider starting one since there were already three WELS schools in Kenosha. However, they

did have a school arrangement set up with Friedens. The arrangement was set up so that Mt. Zion's children would pay Friedens a subsidy for each child that attended Friedens' school. In return, Mt. Zion's pastor and one of her councilmen would attend Friedens' monthly School Board meetings (Interview with Pastor Schulz on April 13, 1997).

In the mid-1960's, the congregation felt that it was again time to expand their facilities. They wanted to add an education unit to their church building in order to provide more classrooms, a kitchen and a meeting place. The total cost of the unit would be a little over \$100,000. The voters decided to have a three-year fundraising drive, again based on pledges, but this time, member enthusiasm was not as high and their three-year goal was not met. The remaining money was then borrowed from the bank and the construction began. Camosy Contractors did the work. Groundbreaking took place in August 1968 and in May 1969, the education unit was completed and dedicated. This building was connected to the East Side of the church and included four classrooms and two offices upstairs and a kitchen and fellowship hall in the basement (Celebrating, 3).

A couple of years after this, Mt. Zion became involved in high school education. In 1971, they joined a federation of WELS churches in that area to establish Shoreland Lutheran High School. Mt. Zion's educational unit was Shoreland's home from 1972-1976. Classes were held in the four classrooms and during that time, enrollment increased from 45 to 106 students (Celebrating, 3). Shoreland moved from Mt. Zion in 1976 and soon after, it moved into its current facilities in Somers, WI.

Evangelism also started to pick up at Mt. Zion in the late 1960's. It was at this time that the District had a good workshop on evangelism training, which Pastor Schulz

attended. He came back very enthused about it and began encouraging his members to have some evangelism programs. The people were in favor of it and they formed Mt. Zion's first evangelism committee. Unfortunately, when it came time to ask for volunteers, the people's enthusiasm was not so great. A couple of women did step forward to volunteer, though. They, along with Pastor Schulz, some teens from Mt. Zion and the vicar from Bethany Lutheran went out canvassing and witnessing a couple of times, both in Mt. Zion's area and in Bethany's area (Interview with Pastor Schulz on April 13, 1997).

### SYNODICAL CONFERENCE PROBLEMS

Mt. Zion had always been a member of the Wisconsin Synod. However, many of her members had friends and relatives who were members of the Missouri Synod, or were themselves former members of Missouri. Also, Mt. Zion enjoyed the blessings of fellowship with Missouri, such as taking part in the Walther League, a nation-wide youth organization, run by Missouri. And Missouri's Pastor George Beiderwieden, Eunice Schulz's father, was occasionally invited to come and preach at Mt. Zion. So it is easy to understand why some at Mt. Zion, as well as the rest of the WELS, were saddened when the Wisconsin Synod was finally forced to split with the Missouri Synod in 1961 and leave the Synodical Conference in 1963. WELS left the Synodical Conference (which was what the fellowship between WELS and Missouri that was established in 1872 was called), because Missouri was allowing errors to run free within their synod.

Pastor Schulz kept a close eye on the discussions between the two synods in those days. He held open meetings at Mt. Zion on Sunday evenings in 1960, so that WELS

members could come and learn as he went through the whole matter and explained it. He says that in general, the people at Mt. Zion didn't give much attention to it. When the split finally came, a little over 20 of Mt. Zion's 200 members left the WELS and joined Messiah Lutheran, a Missouri Synod church on the North side of Kenosha (Interview with Pastor Schulz on April 13, 1997).

### PASTOR GREG GIBBONS

Pastor Gibbons was born in Saginaw, MI on May 23, 1953. He graduated and was confirmed at St. Paul's Lutheran in Saginaw, where he also attended high school at Michigan Lutheran Seminary. He graduated from MLS in 1971, Northwestern College in 1975 and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1979.

Pastor Gibbons first call was to Cross of Glory in Baton Rouge, LA. He served there for two years before taking the call to Good Shepherd in West Bend, WI. In 1985, he took the call to Mt. Zion.

He says that he really enjoyed all the fellowship opportunities at Mt. Zion. He also was thankful for the number of young adults that he was able to take through his adult instruction class. He was also the first pastor at Mt. Zion to have a vicar. (He had six, in fact). That was another opportunity that he remembers fondly.

Pastor Gibbons, his wife, Sue, and their children currently live in Livonia, MI. He is the pastor of Lola Park Lutheran Church. His goal in his ministry is to "continually preach Christ crucified and offer forgiveness in Word and Sacrament" (Interview with Pastor Gibbons on April 30, 1997).

## **PASTOR JOHN BECK**

Pastor Beck was born in Virginia, MN on February 9, 1958. He grew up in Balsam Lake, WI. He attended public schools through twelfth grade before going to Northwestern College to study for the public ministry. He graduated from NWC in 1981 and from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1985.

Pastor Beck's first call was to do exploratory work in Anchorage, AK. From there, he was called to serve Divine Savior in Pullman, WA. He returned to Alaska a few years later to serve King of Kings in Wasilla, AK. He accepted the call to become Mt. Zion's fourth pastor in the spring of 1995.

Pastor Beck says that one of the things he likes most at Mt. Zion is that her members are always friendly and nice to visitors. And since he is used to serving in mission churches, where he was required to do much of the administrative work, he especially appreciates the organization and structure of Mt. Zion. The fact that other members take care of a lot of the administrative work allows him to devote much more of his time to the duties of his office.

Pastor Beck's biggest goal for Mt. Zion is to continue to encourage his people to become more active in adult Bible study. He points out that this will help provide fuel for the people that will help them to joyfully carry out their work in their Savior's Kingdom (Interview with Pastor Beck on April 30, 1997).

### **FOCUSING ON SPIRITUAL GROWTH: 1977-1997**

One very important aspect of Mt. Zion's ministry has been its pastors' emphasis on spiritual growth, especially in the form of Bible Study. During the last twenty years, I

can remember several times hearing encouragement from my pastors to come to Bible class on a regular basis and to study the Bible on my own.

In the early 1980's, Pastor Schulz started a teen Bible class, which focused more on the spiritual needs of people that age. Pastor Gibbons held mid-week evening Bible classes during the summer. And Pastor Beck's greatest emphasis during his every member visits two years ago was the need for Bible study, both in the church and in the home.

This emphasis over the years has resulted in members who are well educated in their Bibles and who enjoy serving their Savior through his church. Some of these services in recent years have included Gospel outreach programs in 1987, '89 and '91, a remodeled parsonage for the pastor, a generous Student Assistance Fund and a complete remodeling of the church building (scheduled to begin work later this year).

## **THE VICARS**

Mt. Zion has enjoyed the service and training of six vicars. They were Steven Handorff (1988-89), Ronald Koehler (1989-90), Timothy Honke (1990-91), Todd Vertz (1991-92), Matthew Schaeve (1992-93) and Peter Martin (1994-95). All but one of these men is serving in the public ministry today.

## **DIFFERENCES 50 YEARS LATER?**

The people whom I interviewed said that Mt. Zion is larger today than it was when it first started (of course, they knew that that was obvious!). But aside from size,

and a different building and faces, none of them said that Mt. Zion has changed very much over the years.

Fran Paul said it really hadn't changed any over the years, because the people still had their warm, friendly spirit. She is happy that the people are more open to new ways of doing things now than in the past, but she says that it's doctrinal stance is still as strong as ever (Interview on April 1, 1997).

Anita Broski said she enjoys the unity of the people at Mt. Zion. "Everyone went along then and everyone goes along now. There aren't a lot of dissensions." Both she and Mrs. Paul said that they love Mt. Zion very much and feel at home there (Interview on April 1, 1997).

Elaine Wroblewski pointed out the fact, as did the other ladies, that the times are different now. Back then, there were many more one-income families and more children in the families. Today, most families have two incomes and fewer kids. She says that in recent years, young people have not remained as faithful to their church as they did in the 1940's. However, she feels that that trend is changing again and that more young people are getting more involved at Mt. Zion, especially because of church-sponsored youth activities (Interview on March 31, 1997).

Pastor Schulz feels that the same friendly spirit he saw at Mt. Zion 45 years ago remains today. He said that in the early years, there was an original nucleus that ran the church and kept newcomers from breaking in. But after these passed from the scene, many different individuals had a chance to socialize and hold positions in the church.

Eunice Schulz added that two other things that have always remained constant at Mt. Zion. The first is that the members are good stewards of their time and possessions.

The second is that the parents have always shown a concern for their children's education and spiritual well being (Interview with Pastor and Eunice Schulz on April 13, 1997).

As Mt. Zion celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we see that the Lord has showered his blessings upon that church. He has done this through her called workers who have been so faithful to their Lord and their ministries. And he has done this through her members, whose love, kindness and dedication to Jesus and each other have been evident throughout the decades.

"In this, our fiftieth anniversary year, our efforts will focus on opportunities for growth... God has been gracious to us. We have the gifts to overcome our weaknesses. We have the strengths to carry out a vigorous Gospel ministry. We have the faith to see our way through this world of sin. We have, in the love of Christ, the motivation to do the good works prepared by God for us to do" (Celebrating, 3).



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

*Celebrating 50 years of Grace.* This is a pictorial directory with a brief history in the front. It is abbreviated as "Celebrating" in the parenthetical documentation.

*"Fifth Anniversary of Mt. Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church."* This is a short history of Mt. Zion written in January 1951. It is abbreviated "Fifth Anniversary" in this paper.

I would also like to offer my sincere thanks to the people who gave me interviews. Their information was very valuable to me and it gave me a clear picture of the past. They are listed below in the order that I interviewed them.

*Mrs. Sandy Zenda*

*Mrs. Elaine Wroblewski*

*Mrs. Fran Paul*

*Mrs. Anita Broski*

*Pastor Friedel and Mrs. Eunice Schulz*

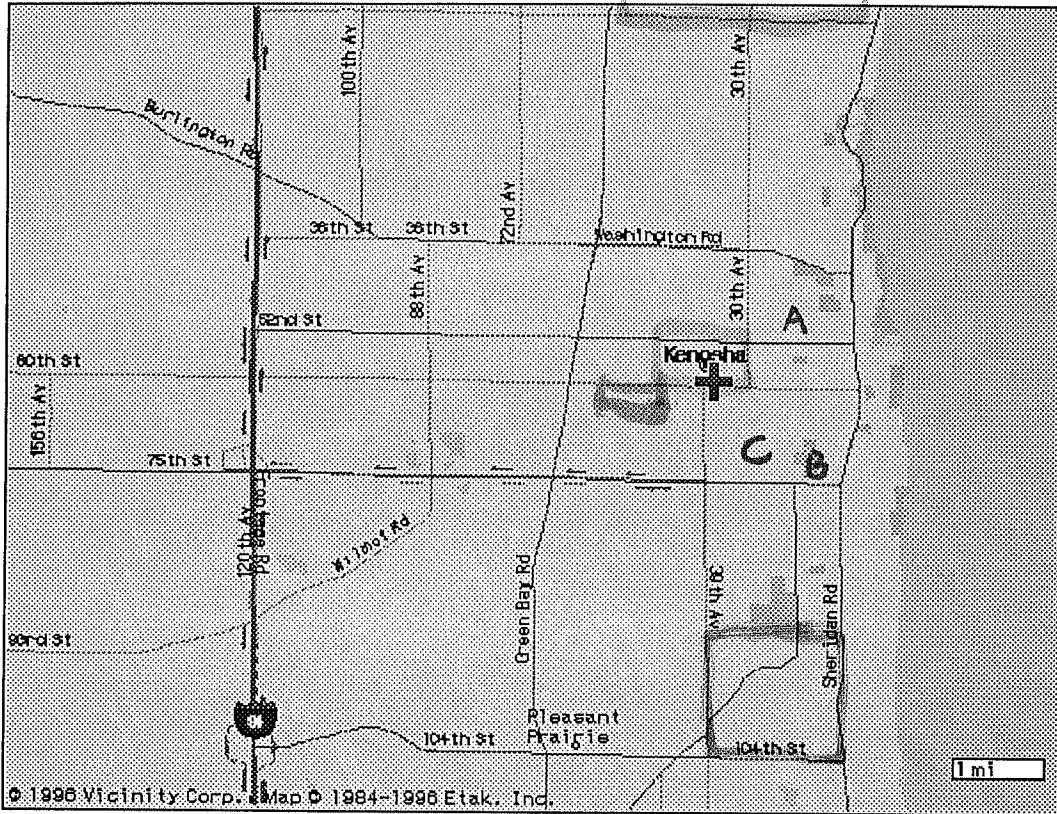
*Pastor Elton and Mrs. Helen Huebner*

*Pastor Greg and Mrs. Sue Gibbons*

*Pastor John and Mrs. Cindy Beck*

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## Legend

The Four Churches in Kenosha in 1950:

- + = Mt. Zion
- A = Friedens
- B = Bethany
- C = St. Luke's

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Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary  
 Mequon, Wisconsin

The Original Areas Canvassed by Pastor Huebner

-  = The area between 52<sup>nd</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> St west of The Wash Plant
-  = South Kenosha
-  = Area around Lakeshore Rd North of Kenosha City Limits
-  = The area of Forrest Park. Later canvassed by Pastor Schulz