

A HISTORY OF  
BEAUTIFUL SAVIOUR EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

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section B

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## INTRODUCTION

I have always wanted to compose a history of Beautiful Saviour Evangelical Lutheran Church. In so many ways its history is closely entwined in the history of myself and my family. Our Lord and our church have meant a great deal to us especially since our departure from the Missouri Synod. The events that led to our leaving that church body make us keenly conscious of true doctrine and the importance of the Holy Scriptures in our lives.

The story of the congregation itself reminds one of the Macedonian call which Paul and his companions received from the Holy Spirit. For the WELS General Board for Home Missions had no plans to begin a WELS mission in Carlsbad. But as we will see the Saviour had other plans. The Wisconsin Synod answered that call and Beautiful Saviour Evangelical Lutheran Church became a reality. To God alone be all the glory!

## EARLY BEGINNINGS

The history of Beautiful Saviour Ev. Lutheran Church finds its roots way back in 1968 in Oceanside California. At that time a Missouri Synod congregation, Immanuel, was being served by Pastor Hugo Warnke. Pastor Warnke was deeply troubled by the Missouri Synod's growing indifference toward doctrinal errors which were creeping into its midst. For several months Pastor Warnke with all his heart emphasized in his preaching the importance of maintaining all of the doctrines of Scripture. As the days and weeks and months passed by Pastor Warnke became increasingly convinced of the great gap which had widened between the Missouri Synod and the truth of God's Word. Finally he felt conscience bound to resign from his ministry at Immanuel and the Missouri Synod. He entered the Wisconsin Synod via colloquy in 1968.

About this time five members of Immanuel left that church, severed fellowship with the Missouri Synod and joined a new mission congregation

of the Wisconsin Synod, Ascension which was meeting in Escondido, California. Then during late 1968 or early 1969 (January-February) 33 more members of Immanuel left that church for confessional reasons and ended their fellowship with the Missouri Synod. The group decided to pursue the idea of starting a WELS mission congregation in Oceanside rather than joining Ascension which was about a half-hour's drive one way.

With this plan in mind 29 people met with Pastor Seager who was at that time serving Ascension for the California Mission Board. The group gathered in the Chamber of Commerce Hall in Oceanside on March 7, 1969. Three days later another meeting of 28 discussed the mission with Pastor Seager and with Pastor Heyn who was representing the Southern California Mission Board as its chairman. It was at this meeting that the group learned that it must first attend inquiry classes and then decide whether or not it was in confessional and doctrinal agreement with the WELS. This was agreed to and so the first class began on March 14 of that same year. Twenty-five gathered together in a home to be instructed by Pastor Seager from the manual, "What Does the Bible Say?". Temporary officers were chosen to lead the fledgling group: John Paris (chairman), Don Floyd (treasurer) and Bill Ray (secretary). A second inquiry class met on March 21 and the third and final class on March 28. All those who found themselves in agreement with the WELS were urged to seek acceptance into the Synod's fellowship on Palm Sunday, March 30 at Escondido. In anticipation of that fellowship the group acquired the Chalet Chapel of Memories on the corner of Fourth and Freeman streets in Oceanside for a first Good Friday service. The entire group was contacted to pledge support for a mission church in Oceanside. The Lord moved this tiny group to commit themselves to \$10,899 per year. Pastor Seager was requested by the group to speak with Pastor Heyn and to get permission to begin a mission congregation in Oceanside. The mission board met on March 25 and supported this request 100%. The matter was

recommended to the General Board for Home Missions in May and approved.

Finally the big day arrived on March 30. Twenty-seven people from the group reaffirmed the true Lutheran faith on that Palm Sunday joining the Wisconsin Synod. The group's first official voters meeting took place on April 1, 1969. Plans were made to begin regular Sunday services starting on April 20 at the Chalet Chapel of Memories. This facility was obtained for \$100/month for Sundays and \$10 per each additional use for special services. The group was to be called "exploratory" until official sanction could be obtained from the Mission Board as it was that May. On this point it is interesting to note that the congregation never appeared in the Northwestern Lutheran under the "exploratory status" listing. It was first listed under the heading "Names Requested for Our New Missions" (NWL, vol. 56#14, July 6, 1969). The congregation was always self-supporting in the sense that it required no operating subsidy from the Synod. However it did make use of interest subsidy until January 1, 1979. This first voters meeting also decided to form a committee to purchase such essential items as, hymnals, communion ware and something to use for an altar etc.

The congregation gathered together for the first time to worship their suffering Savior on Good Friday April 4. Attendance at this service reached 102 because a number of our brothers and sisters from Ascension were present. They were unable to obtain the use of the Escondido Women's Club for their own service.

Another voters meeting convened on April 8 with the voters assembly of Ascension. Service times were set at 9:00 A.M. for Ascension and 11:00 A.M. for the Oceanside group. Sunday school was put at 10:00 A.M. Pastor Heyn was present and he suggested that the group decide on a name for itself. Pastor Seager's salary and expenses were shared with Ascension at \$330 per month.

The following evening the voters gathered together again and selected out of seven considerations the name. Beautiful Saviour Evangelical Lutheran Church. A constitution committee was appointed and Mr. Floyd Sims was elected to serve as the Financial Secretary until the constitution could be written and approved and officers officially elected according to it. A ladies group was formed April 14 at the Guidotti home and decided to meet the first Monday of the month.

Mr. Bud Wessos consented to construct a portable altar, cross, candle holders, a missal stand, lectern, flower stands and many other items for our worship services. The stone missal stand which he made is still in use today on the church altar. We thank God that He led this man to use his talents in His service. April 20 saw the first Sunday worship service. Fifty-three were present with 31 attending the Sunday School. Thirteen children made up the first Sunday School classes. The congregation was committed to Christian Education particularly of its youth from the very beginning and hoped someday to have a Christian Day School.

Official organization of the congregation occurred on May 14 with the constitution and by-laws being accepted by the voters and submitted to the Synod for ratification. The following men were elected to govern the affairs of the congregation: President-John Paris, Vice President-Don Rebar, Treasurer-Don Floyd, Recording Secretary-William Ray, Financial Secretary-Floyd Sims, Elders-William Guidotti, Harry Jones and Rod Lindsey, Trustees-Karl Steinke, George Lindsey and Bud Wessos. Fifty-three people formed the charter membership. The twenty-seven who joined the Synod on Palm Sunday, five who had left Immanuel earlier, one unidentified person and twenty more who joined the congregation between March and May.

The Lord continued to bless the little flock in so many ways in those early days. The congregation was officially accepted into membership at the August 6-13 1969 convention of the WELS. In July of that year Pastor

Lyle Lange was ordained and installed as the first permanent pastor of Ascension and so Pastor Seager moved to Oceanside to better serve Beautiful Saviour on a full time basis. Bad news reached the ears of the congregation when Pastor Seager had to give up his service in their midst because of his failing health. But our Lord and Savior provided the congregation with a shepherd. Pastor Lange began to serve both Ascension and Beautiful Saviour very capably. Pastor Lange continued to labor for the Lord Jesus and confirmed the first confirmation class consisting of four: Charles Sims, Cindy Guidotti, Steve Wright and John Ray. John will complete his training at DMLC for the teaching ministry in 1981 and Steve Wright his training at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary for the pastoral ministry in 1983.

#### THE MOVE TO A PERMANENT LOCATION

Originally in May of 1969 the General Board for Home Missions had approved a loan of \$25,000 for the purchase of 3 acres of land as a church/school/parsonage site. During the last months of 1969 and the early months of 1970 the Land Acquisition Committee of the congregation (Karl Steinke, Bud Wessos and S.P. Nelson) searched for a prospective site to permanently locate the congregation. At long last on March 11, 1970 the committee recommended a 3 1/2 acre plot on the corner of Elm Ave and Valley St. in Carlsbad a city just to the south of Oceanside. The voters approved their choice. After Mission Board approval the land was finally purchased for \$40,000 in July of 1970 after clearing Escrow.

But the Lord had plans to move the congregation to Carlsbad even sooner than anyone expected. For in June the owners of the Chalet Chapel of Memories found it necessary to raise their rent to a level beyond the means of the young congregation. Again the Lord provided a place of worship for His people at the Carlsbad Women's Club which was a very short distance from our newly acquired property. The congregation used the Women's Club regularly from August 9, 1970 until November of 1972.

Pastor Seager who had been suffering from an illness for some time which had kept him from his work of preaching and teaching resigned from his call as Missionary-at-Large in April of 1970. A special service of Thanksgiving to God was held at which 135 persons gathered. At a reception afterwards Pastor and Mrs. Seager were presented with a money tree. On July 3, 1972 the congregation received the sad yet happy news that the Savior had called Pastor Seager home to his eternal rest. He was certainly missed by all he served and will be fondly remembered as a bold preacher of God's Word in all its truth and purity.

On a much happier note that May of 1970, the congregation received permission to call its first permanent pastor. About this same time the congregation after having moved to the Women's Club changed its name to "Beautiful Saviour Evangelical Lutheran Church of Carlsbad California. The voters agreed on August 26 to extend a call to Pastor Jon Mahnke of Trinity Lutheran Church of Eugene Oregon. He accepted the call on September 27 and was subsequently installed on November 8th.

Pastor Jon Mahnke was born August 6th 1939 in Milwaukee Wisconsin. He began to prepare for the ministry at Northwestern Prep and Northwestern College in Watertown where he graduated in 1961. He completed his studies at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon Wisconsin in 1965 after vicaring for one year in Pomona and San Jose California. July 11 he married Miss Myrna Backer of La Crosse Wisconsin. They have been since blessed with five children: Philip, Andrew, Matthew, Rhonda and Nathaniel. Philip was taken back to his heavenly Father in 1968. Pastor Mahnke is still serving the Lord at Beautiful Saviour.

Pastor Mahnke and his family were settled in a rented house on Basswood Ave. However plans for the parsonage were soon completed by Synod Architect Duane Anderson. Mr. Randy Hutson's bid of \$22,900 was accepted by the voters in March of 1971. Groundbreaking occurred that April and the structure was finally dedicated May 12, 1972.

Pastor Mahnke began information classes for Lutherans who desired to enter into fellowship with the WELS in January of 1971. That very next month he also began a class for several non-Lutherans. The congregation continued to be blessed with growth in numbers by the Lord as it had in 1969 and 1970. The growth graph may be consulted for a more detailed description of this growth.

The first wedding of the congregation was held in the Chapel of the Royal Palms in Carlsbad. Miss Linda Lacher and Mr. Philip Dumas were joined in the ceremony performed by Pastor Mahnke.

On March, 1972 the voters assembly approved the bid of \$111,796.00 from the Holly Construction Company of Escondido to build our chapel and fellowship hall. Ground was broken that April 16th and dedication on December 3 only two months behind schedule. Two hundred sixteen gathered for the first service in the new building. An even larger number, 350, assembled that afternoon for a special service of Thanksgiving to the Lord for this new building.

At the close of 1972 Beautiful Saviour Ev. Lutheran Church numbered 145 souls and 97 communicants. The Sunday School had grown to 47 children. In 1973 the congregation spawned a daughter when fourteen of its members left to begin a new WELS mission in southern Orange County to the north a few miles. The first service of Living Word Ev. Lutheran Church was held in Mission Viejo High School on February 4, 1973. This congregation is presently thriving under the care of Pastor A.R. Beyersdorf and has a Christian Day School.

#### YEARS OF "QUIET" GROWTH

Very early in its history Beautiful Saviour Church directed its efforts into Christian Education particularly of its youth. The first Vacation Bible School was held during the summer of 1971 at the Carlsbad Women's Club. More than 70 children participated with some coming from Escondido as well as at least one adult participant from Ascension.



The congregation continued to hold a V.B.S. every summer using it chiefly as a mission arm. An active Evangelism program was started in 1977 as a follow up of the V.B.S. Currently 158 children attended the 1979 V.B.S. The Sunday School has also grown from those first 13 to 73 as of 1980.

The dream of a Christian Day School came true on July 25, 1979 when Jason Nelson was installed as the first principal and teacher. The fellowship hall was eventually converted into two classrooms to accomodate the school. School opened for the first time September 7, 1976 with 13 children in grades 1-5. Grades 6-8 were eventually added. In the fall of 1979 kindergarten began after Nancy Nelson accepted the call to teach for one year. Now the school can thankfully boast an enrollment of 53 children in K-8. The faculty was first expanded with the induction of Cathy Johnson in August of 1978. Unfortunately this March 31, 1980 Jason Nelson announced to the congregation that he had accepted the call to begin a new Christian Day School at Shepherd of the Valley in Westminster, Colorado. In spite of the sadness which will be felt when Jason and his wife Nancy leave our midst at the close of this school year we can rest assured that the Lord will provide another faithful principal for our school as He wills. Mr. Nelson felt that the Lord was directing him to begin new schools.

In a related area it is with joy that the congregation can report that five of its members are enrolled in our Synod's worker training program this school year, one at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and the other four at Doctor Martin Luther College. Five other members also began to train at DMLC down through the the years but did not complete the course and are presently serving their Lord in other callings.

By Easter of 1978, March 26th, God had so blessed the congregation in numerical growth that two services had to be held each Sunday in order to accomodate the worshipers. On April 29, 1979, Good Shepherd Sunday, the

congregation held its first anniversary celebration out of thanksgiving to the Lord for 10 years of existence. A special potluck dinner was held that evening at nearby Magnolia School from 5-8 P.M. The members of all the San Diego county WELS congregations were invited to join in the celebration especially those of Ascension, Escondido and Living Word, Mission Viejo. A special thank offering designated for Risen Savior a new mission congregation in south San Diego was collected. This offering was out of gratitude for the more than \$27,000 in loan repayment assistance received from the members of the Synod.

This year Beautiful Saviour has once again embarked upon an ambitious building program. Since the current facilities for offices, the Day School, Sunday School and VBS are inadequate and the fellowship hall accommodations absent because of the Day School classrooms, construction of a new building is soon to begin.

The voters assembly has approved the construction of a two-story structure containing two classrooms, offices and a fellowship hall to the west of the present school. As of July 1, 1979 \$43,189 are available in the building fund. But since no money is presently being granted for such a Phase Three project by the CEF on account of the economic crunch the congregation has embarked on a note program. Eventually it is hoped to sell 125 one hundred dollar unsecured notes to the membership of the congregation. It was necessary to sell \$80,000 worth of these notes by October 12, 1980 in order to begin the project. Thanks be to God that as of January 1979 \$83,200 in notes were sold. The whole project will cost at least \$170,000.00. We hope that in spite of the present economic situation all these plans will be brought to their completion by our gracious God so that Beautiful Savior may be better equipped to bring the precious message of salvation to the community.

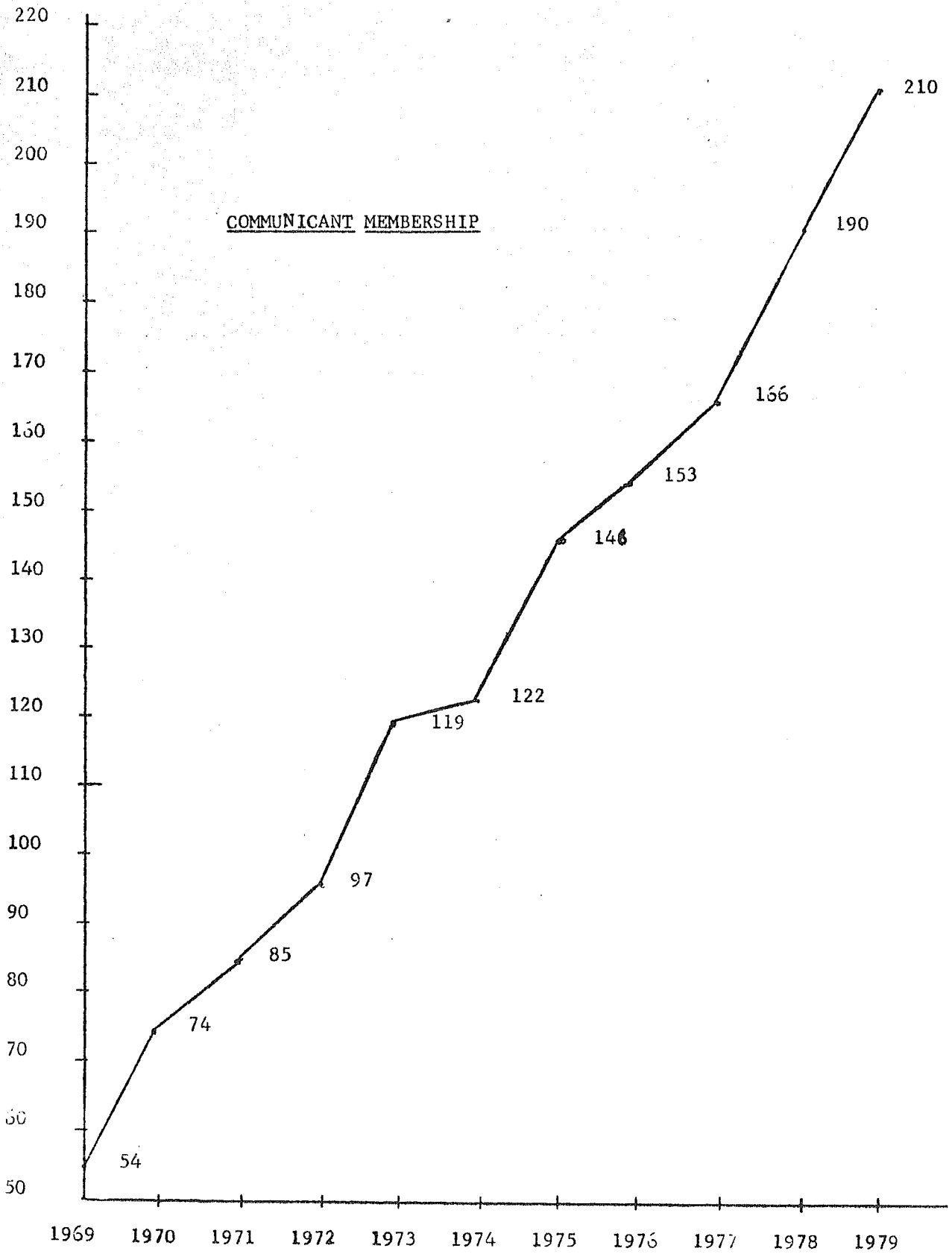
While the growth of Beautiful Saviour Ev. Lutheran Church has

proceeded at a rapid rate through the years we know that we have only our loving God and Saviour Jesus Christ to thank.

#### APPENDIX

The information for this paper was obtained by writing to Pastor Hugo Warnke who is now serving Ascension Escondido, California. His recollections provided the story for those early months. The rest of the data was gathered by the author's father, William H. Ray and Pastor Mahnke from the congregation's records. My special thanks to these men for taking time from their busy schedules to help me. I wrote up a questionnaire to indicate what I was looking for and sent it home. The rest of the information was gleaned from the Northwestern Lutheran as indicated in the paper.

Das Ende



Our joy as children of God compels us to praise God as we see Him expand  
His Kingdom in our midst.