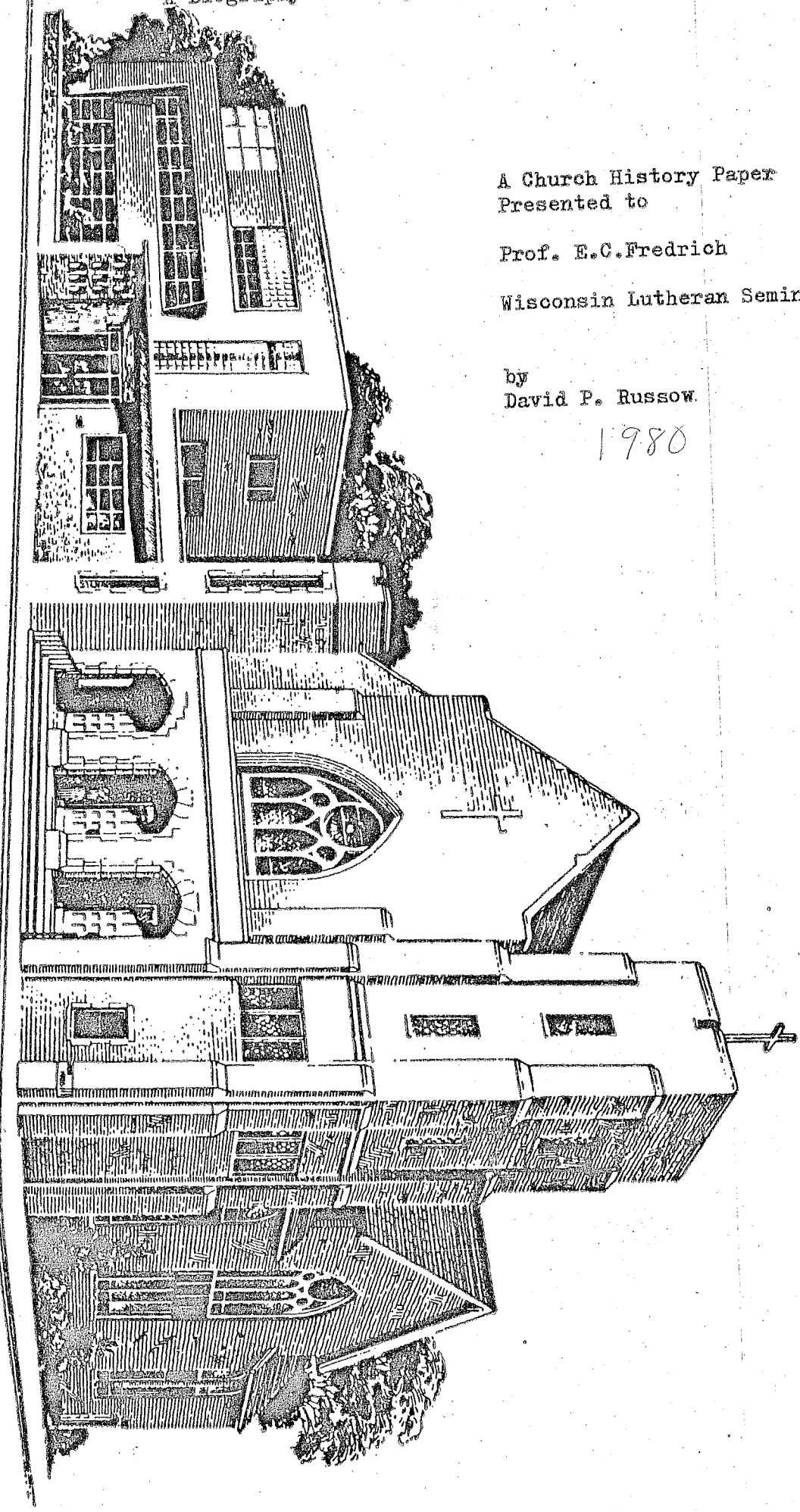


"Same Bringeth Forth Much Fruit": A Biography of a Layman, Henry W. Kresnicka

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Introduction:

It all began with four lots worth of cow pasture, located at the corner of what is now the intersection of E. Chambers and N. Holton Streets, Milwaukee. A man had purchased this small hunk of land. This man happened to be the Rev. Dr. Prof. Adolf Hoenecke, professor of the Wisconsin Synod's Theological Seminary located at 13th and Vine, pastor of St. Matthew's Church located at 10th and Garfield, one of the great founding fathers of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. He wanted to start a Lutheran church there. And so the Ev. Luth. Jerusalem's Kirche got its start, thanks to this honorable, dedicated man. It was the summer of the year 1888.

By the fall of that same year, October 10th to be exact, under the Professor Hoenecke's direction and with 28 people, (some from St. Matthew's, some from St. Marcus', some from St. John's, some from Immanuel's, and some from no church) Jerusalem congregation officially began.

The congregation wasted no time in getting things rolling. This out-city group decided to immediately erect a building to house, not only a church, but also a school. The building was built with two large rooms for the Christian day school on the first floor, and one large room on the second floor for the place of worship. That structure was dedicated into the Lord's service on March 10, 1889 and served the congregation for sixty-four years.

Once the group had a building, they realized that they couldn't always depend on outside help and the Rev. Dr. Prof. Hoenecke. So they called a meeting, and on March 24, 1889 they called Jerusalem's first pastor, Candidate J. F. Gustav Hardens. Pastor Hardens became "pastor" on May 5,

1889 when he was ordained and installed by Hoenecke. The next day Pastor Harders taught school; 74 children were in attendance.

With that many children, it's imaginable that there were also quite a few parents and adults involved. The church was in a prime location; it grew right off the bat. It became evident that the original structure was undersized, so in 1891 more land was purchased, the building was moved, and the property was made ready for a new structure. On November 10, 1893 the present church structure was built in a first class manner and with a first class, majestic style.

The congregation continued to grow and increase during the pastorate of Rev. Harders. During Pastor Harder's service, his health necessitated two leaves of absence. These temporary vacancies were served by Seminarian Ed. Wedekind, and the honorable Professors August Pieper and J.P. Koehler. In 1907, Pastor Harders accepted a call to serve in mission to the Apaches. He later wrote the books YAALAHN and DOHASHTIDA, of synodical fame. He died in 1917.

Pastor Harders was a great man and a good servant. During his service Jerusalem was shaped by the Lord. Organizations popped up and functioned. By the time of her 25th anniversary in 1913, Jerusalem had a mixed choir, men's choir, and a ladies' aid going in full swing. The school's faculty had increased in number to six, with R. M. Albrecht as principal. The Lord was blessing Jerusalem with able and gifted workers and she was flourishing.

The second pastor was Rev. Henry Gieschen, Sr. Jerusalem continued to grow with the growing community around her. Under Pastor Gieschen's charge changes began to take place within the church. The church building was modernized with remodeling and electrical installations. English

services began in 1912 on a once a month basis. In 1919, the English was increased to four times a month and with the work load increase, Jerusalem took the step to providing Pastor Gieschen assistance by calling a second pastor, the Rev. Henry Gieschen, Jr. With father and son working hand in hand, the Lord saw fit to bless their efforts and the congregation through those efforts to the growth and increase of the congregation in His Word.

On August 29, 1926, Henry Gieschen, Sr. was called to his eternal reward; it was the day of the fortieth anniversary of Pastor Gieschen's ordination. By November, Pastor Walter Gieschen, the brother of Henry Gieschen, Jr., was called as assistant pastor. Rev. Walter Gieschen served until August, 1931, and until June of 1935 Rev. Henry Gieschen served Jerusalem by himself. Then Candidate John C. Dahlke was ordained and installed on July 7, 1935 as assistant pastor in Jerusalem's service and the Lord's.

Another turn-over took place when Rev. Gieschen accepted a call to serve St. Paul's in Ft. Atkinson. Dahlke continued on alone as the congregation prepared to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary.

January 16, 1938 marked the rededication of the church as the congregation did celebrate their fiftieth year of organization and the Lord's grace. The church had been redecorated. The congregation had only one charter member yet living, but there were now many more souls under Jerusalem's spiritual care, far more than at her beginning. The school was large and thriving under the principalship of E. Krause. Councils and committees were larger. The Men's Choir was bigger than ever. There was now a Ladies' Choir, and Junior Choir along with the Mixed Choir which was still going strong. A Senior Bible Class and a Junior Bible Class were now meeting. The Ladies' Aid was twice what it was in 1913, and a

new group, the Ladies' Guild, had been formed. The congregation was now supporting the Lutheran High School. And over the fifty years 4,963 had been baptized, 2,505 had been confirmed, 1,911 married, 1,255 buried; voting members numbered 475 and total communicants numbered 1,500. Har-der's, the Gieschen's, and Dahlke's work had truly been blessed by the Lord, and in the October 9th (1938) German service, Prof. Aug. Pieper reminded the assembled that all glory was the Lord's. In two other services, Henry Gieschen and Walter Gieschen concurred in their messages.

Needless to say, the congregation's work continued and expanded. The congregation, under Dahlke, was given enough foresight to foresee that that work must continue and expand. In 1926, a school building fund was begun, but with the Depression and World War II, building was out of the picture. The war ended, things looked up. Rev. Dahlke became president of the South-eastern Wisconsin District of the synod, and so carried this extra load. Then in April of 1950, the Rev. Lewis M. Bleichwehl was called to fill a vacancy left by Dahlke's acceptance of a call to St. Paul's, Tomah. Bleichwehl came and asked, "Why can't we build a new school now?"

The congregation answered and gave the go ahead. At the cost of \$305,000 the new school was built and dedicated on September 19, 1954. The Rev. Prof. Carl L. Schweppe, president of Dr. Martin Luther College, preached the school dedication sermon. The church also got a massive face lift inside and out at the cost of \$63,500. The synod's missions needed supporting and Jerusalem gave it. The Wisconsin Lutheran High School's 3 million dollar building project needed supporting, and Jerusalem jumped to its support. In all of this, somehow, a 1957 debt of \$105,000 was reduced to \$18,500 within six years. The Lord was giving Jerusalem a heyday.

Pastor Bleichwehl had served strenuously in the interest of the congregation and the furtherance of the Lord's Kingdom, then ended his pastorate by resignation in 1957. He left the plant of Jerusalem large and beautiful and the congregation large and booming. Then through Divine Call, Pastor Eldor A. Toepel became Jerusalem's shepherd on November 24, 1957. He worked with Leonard Engel, the principal, as they faced the new years ahead.

The neighborhood surrounding Jerusalem began to change, minorities began to move in. This did in no way change the work nor the blessings on that work for Jerusalem congregation. That was evident as the congregation geared itself up for the 1963, 75th anniversary. The church was repainted and new furnishings were added within. The Diamond Jubilee was observed on October 13, 1963.

Upon the 75th anniversary, Jerusalem's shepherd, Rev. Toepel wrote:

While we fittingly look back to the past, humbly thank God for the undeserved blessings received, and think and talk about how things once were and once were done, we cannot continue in this position of retrospect for long. Lest we take a stance facing the past which soon becomes fixed, rigid, and sterile, we quickly must turn to the present, boldly lay hold on the tasks on hand, confidently look to the future, and accept every challenge that presents itself to us. So long as the world remains, the work of the Church, and of every Christian, will not be finished. We must move forward! Souls are dying; wickedness and unbelief abound. The Good News of Salvation must be brought to lost souls with greater effort and zeal. Our thinking and our methods must be changed as the times demand, as the world rushes into changes, and as new and different opportunities to witness of Christ arise. Today we are faced with problems and meet challenges which our forefathers never experienced. Many of our fine German Lutherans have moved away or have died. Our neighborhood has changed greatly. The corner of Holton

and Chambers Streets is now considered a part of the inner circle of the city. Jerusalem's membership has sharply decreased in the past two decades. But there are more people living in the vicinity of our church and school today than there were a quarter of a century ago when the membership of the congregation was twice the size of what it is now. Many of these people are not German and are not Lutheran. Some are such who have fallen away from the church, others are unchurched and know not Christ, others are of different race, and ALL are precious souls bought with the Blood of Christ. All must be told of the Savior and be invited to hear the Gospel. We have fine facilities and an excellent location. Our church is the only church on the two-mile-long Holton Street. It is the only Lutheran Church from North Avenue to beyond Capitol Drive, and from Richards Street east to the Milwaukee River. Above all, we have the Glad Tidings of Salvation and the promise of Christ's almighty assistance and presence. So onward with joy, and to the future with confidence and zeal! God fulfills His promises. He proved it to our fathers. He will not forsake us as we hold fast to and continue in His Word, and bring its glad tidings to all people. The Word of the Lord grows. Let us get busy in sowing this precious Seed among all people everywhere, especially in our immediate community.

With the Lord's guiding, the congregation responded. The work went on. The forefather's sons and sons' sons were now at work. Rev. Paul Knickelbein, a son of the congregation, was there to preach for the congregation, jubilant upon its 85th anniversary, on October 21, 1973.

In 1978, Pastor Toepel ended his labors and joined His Lord in the eternal Jerusalem of Heaven. Pastor Duane Erstad became the new and present pastor of Jerusalem. On October 8, 1978, he and the other 330 Jerusalem communicants and their families observed Jerusalem's 90th anniversary. Another son of the congregation, Pastor Charles Clarey, preached on I Thess. 1:1-5, and following the service a noon dinner followed. At the dinner, "a former dispatcher for the Milwaukee police department served

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as emcee and kept the crowd in stitches with humorous incidents from the past. All those in attendance enjoyed this unusual opportunity for fellowship." (The Northwestern Lutheran, February 4, 1979, p.45)

The emcee of that dinner was unnamed in the above sighted publication; it is that emcee who is the subject of this paper, this biography.

Silver, golden, diamond jubilees' historical, commemorative editions are printed and we read more about pastors, principles, and even architects, but laymen seem to be relegated to their place in pictures and identifications of those pictures. While it is true that the "feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace" are beautiful, and while we do respect and hold in esteem such great leaders sent by the Lord, they are obviously not the only ones that make up a congregation's history.

Pastors come and pastors go, principals come and principals go, professors aid and professors cease from aiding, this can be seen in Jerusalem's history. But we sometimes forget that laymen are very instrumental in all of the history of a congregation. This was essential to the 1980 Mission Seminar of the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary; we are laborers, pastor - principal - layman, together with God. That is true to the history of Jerusalem, this pillar church of the Wisconsin Synod.

If this paper is to have a thesis, let it be this: while the lives and labors of called church workers are important, are historically interesting, and evoke our praise, respect, acknowledgment, and recognition, the lives and labors of the faithful layperson ought deserve the same - under God and to His glory.

The purpose then of this paper is to carry that thesis out in regards to that 90th anniversary dinner emcee, a layman, a pillar of Jeru-

salem in his own right, a fifty-plus year member, a man whose name is Henry W. Kresnicka.

I. Childhood and Church

Henry W. Kresnicka was born on July 2, 1903 in a house located about 14th and Lloyd Streets within the Czech-Bohemian section of Milwaukee. Henry's father, Joseph (d. 1934), came from Prague; his mother, Margaret (d. 1952), came from Munich. He was the third child (third of eight) born to the family. He was named Henry after a matinee movie star Henry B. Wathel, without a middle name. Later the "W" was added at the time of his baptism. Henry's sister, Margaret, dubbed him with the middle name, Warren, a name she especially liked.

Henry had a typical childhood for its time, a childhood that he himself considered to be a nice one. Along with Francis, Joseph (d. 1904), Mildred, Libby, Margaret, Julia, and Angeline, Henry grew up in an English speaking home because that's what young Americans spoke. Though his parents both spoke German, they were training their children for life here in the new country.

Education in the first two decades of this century usually ended, for many, with graduation from grammar school. That was Henry's education. He graduated in 1917. But much of his education was learned right at home from his parents. Henry's father was basically a kindhearted, fun-loving person. He was tough, but soft hearted. He taught his children lessons in respect for elders and government and discipline, discipline that was stern, yet kind. But one thing that was missing in the Kresnicka home was any religious training at all.

Henry's parents were open minded about religion. His mother had been

confirmed a Catholic, his father was really nothing. Both parents could be labeled as "free-thinkers". They had been married by a justice of the peace, which wasn't really all that common in those days of a religiously oriented society. Religion was something that wasn't discouraged, but neither encouraged; religion was never criticized in the home. But none of the children were baptized as children and no Bible graced the Kresnicka home. About as close as religion came to the household, was in the song "O Holy Night" which papa Kresnicka loved to sing as he sang to his children.

Something that I believe that was very uncommon to a typical Milwaukee boy's childhood would be the fact that a household which was not opposed to church never attended one at all, ever. Henry doesn't remember ever being inside a church during his childhood years. In fact, Henry remembers a family, some neighbors by the name of Schuhburg, who attended a Lutheran Church on the corner of 6th and Concordia. Henry used to sit and watch the Schuhburgs go to and come from church in their Sunday best. He viewed the Schuhburgs as nice, hard working people who seemed to enjoy this weekly event, and Henry thought, "This is something I'd like to have." But it was only a thought, a thought that Henry never shared with anyone back then.

As a boy, Henry thought about God, as do most people. His thoughts were these: "I had an awe and reverence for God. But we didn't use the name of Jesus." As a boy, Henry's contact with the church was practically nil. But that would change as Henry reached the courtship stage of his life.

II. Wife and Work

Somewhere towards the end of the summer of 1927, Henry met his wife-to-be, his "Helinka" (as his parents called her) at Lincoln Park beach and ended up that day at a dance in the Pavillion in Garfield Park (then called Papst Park). Needless to say, Henry quickly got her phone number, because he enjoyed her company and appreciated the fact that she came from a nice, well-run and disciplined home; that she was a wholesome girl.

What followed for Henry and his new found love, Helen, were what Henry called, "beautiful sweetheart days", days of poems, flowers, hikes, picnics, friends and finally even church. Wednesdays and Saturdays, maybe even Sundays, were 'date' days. When the mid-week Advent services for 1927 started at Jerusalem, Helen suggested "going to church" on their Wednesday night date. Henry agreed.

Perhaps a number of things played into Henry's decision to go into a church for the first time, to go there with his Helen. Helen's parents' reaction to their daughter dating an unchurched fellow was never voiced to Henry or ever mentioned, but Henry had a feeling that they would prefer him not on the outside of Helen's life-long church, Jerusalem, but on the inside. Helen never pushed Henry, though, but on one occasion Helen mentioned that she felt badly that he wasn't Lutheran. Henry had a hurting thought, he told me, the thought that the word "heathen" was not good.

So they went to church that Advent eve, and sat on the south side of the church (where they still sit today). Henry thoroughly enjoyed the service. And after the service, Henry met Rev. Henry Gieschen, Jr. Gieschen's eyes lit up and he said to Helen's beau, "Just call me Henry." That broke any remaining ice. Henry started going to church regularly, and the walking didn't seem to bother him as he attended church, went to parks, and made a day of it on Sundays. Henry's parents, by the way, thought all

of this was fine for their son.

The couple became engaged and after a years' engagement they were married on Henry's birthday, July 2, 1929. The house still stands where they were wed; it was the parsonage of Henry Gieschen, the wedding was in his study. Helen's brother and fiancée stood up for them, and later they for them in the same room. From their present home at 420 E. Chambers, the Kresnickas can still sit on their porch or look out the window and see the old, former parsonage and the window to the room where they wed. It was a joyous day for them in 1929 as they became a new family. Perhaps even a more joyous day was when Henry became a member of the Lord's forgiven family through the sacrament of Holy Baptism, on a day less than two years before the wedding. It was on March 8, 1927 in the presence of church officers E. J. Wegner and Wm. Simmons with Viola Groskopf and Margaret Kresnicka present that Henry was baptized. He and his sister were instructed, both baptized and confirmed by Pastor Gieschen. Margaret (d. 1979) became very dear to Henry as the Word of God and the Savior became very dear to both brother and sister. Henry looks back at all of the circumstances that led him to his Lord and to his Jerusalem, today, and he can only thank the Lord. It was Helen who led him to the church but it was the Holy Spirit who through the Word grabbed him and with or without his wife-to-be Henry would have, as he claims, gone on to be instructed, baptized, and confirmed. But Henry was blessed with both wife and the Word.

As to work, Henry remembers working for a nickle an hour (\$1.50 a day) in fields as a boy. He worked as an errand boy, and clerk, as delivery man for Harley-Davidson, and inspector for the Wisconsin Audit

Beaureau; as cashier for Swift and Co., and blacksmith for Ward and Allen; as ticket agent for a freight and passenger ship service, and finally, as a policeman, beginning January 8, 1930 (according to police records). This last job was his life's main employment, with it he supported his family and church, from it he retired after 38 years on the force. Henry was a top-notch dispatcher for the Milwaukee Police Department. Having walked a beat, and directed traffic Henry climbed as high as he could go before the step of sergeant. But advancement was not first in his life; that was his Savior, and church, and family. He even turned down the position of assistant chief dispatcher so that he wouldn't have to work nights enabling him to best serve those first things in his life to the ultimate use of his capabilities, and gifts, and time. The Lord had truly guided this son through faith in the Son.

II. Music and Missions

When Henry officially, retired from the police force on November 12, 1968, retiring with recognition from the police chief and mayor, Henry also retired with recognition by an article in the Milwaukee Journal. On Sunday, November 3, 1968, the article, "Santa Retires, but Not From Band," by Henry L. Norton, appeared with a brief sketch of Henry, his life, and his different roles. One of his roles was that of a musician. The Journal writer reports:

In a musical role, Kresnicka has appeared in public hundreds of times. He joined the (police) band 30 years ago as a tenor soloist. For 19 years he was a member of the police department quartet. As band manager, he has been master of ceremonies at concerts and programs and has led community singing. When the Milwaukee Arena opened in April, 1950, he led 12,000 people in song. As a member of the Milwaukee chapter of the Socie-

ty for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America, Inc., he pioneered the annual "Barbershop Harmony Under the Stars" programs at Washington Park, and was chairman of the first 13 of them. He also frequently performed as master of ceremonies, song leader or member of one of the groups.

Henry had inherited a love for music back in his youth from a father who loved to sing and play the accordion, and from three sisters who played the piano. He put talents into and love for music not only in the public's eye in that good work, but also in some specific Kingdom work within one of our missions.

Pastor Paul Knickelbein, a son of Jerusalem, was called to be missionary to the inner city St. Phillip's mission (then known as Divine Charity). The mission was meeting in an abandoned church located at 5th and Meinecke, back in 1942. Pastor Knickelbein contacted Henry, his friend and acquaintance from his membership days at Jerusalem, he wanted a choir to get started at St. Phillip's. Henry answered this informal but important call.

Henry came and got a choir organized. It consisted of about 15 people as an average, on and off. Henry used to have the rehearsals on Sunday afternoons. He made a go of it, and worked as best as he could. He brought his two young daughters, Arlene and Judy, with whom the Lord had blessed the Kresnickas, and they played the piano for him. His girls also played for the services at St. Phillip's, and later Henry supplied an unused, portable organ which belonged to the police department, for the beautification of the services in the mission.

Henry remembers some of the problems that he had to cope with as he started that choir from scratch. The people weren't too familiar with

Lutheranism, so Lutheran chorales weren't sung, but neither were the real spiritualistic songs. Henry struck the happy medium by teaching the rather basic hymns, lively songs, and "some gospel" songs. Things progressed with the Lord's help. Henry recalls one man that caused a few problems, the man came one day to sing after he had "tipped a few too many," but Henry could deal with such situations.

St. Phillip's had relocated in the old St. Matthew's building at 10th and Garfield, but that location soon gave way to the West Freeway Plan. When the congregation moved to its present location, on the corner of 1st and E. Chambers, Henry ceased his choir director career. He bid Pastor Milton Burke, whose children Henry's daughters baby sat, farewell and the choir was in other hands. Henry said, that he, "felt real proud of what he had in that little choir." I'm sure the Lord who blessed his labors was proud too that His Word was being proclaimed by that little choir. The Lord had blessed the Kresnickas with their talent in music and the Church through that. And while Henry claims he had little talent in music and that it was only self taught, it was really a gift which the Lord had given him to bless him and others through that gift.

IV. Service and Surrender

Henry, along with the rest of his family, put his musical talents to work in Jerusalem congregation also. For Henry, with shift changes and other circumstances, says, that he was only able to get 16 to 18 years in as a member of the mixed choir. His wife still belongs. But music wasn't his only field of service. Christian education was BIG with Henry.

Both of his daughters went all the way through Jerusalem's school. While they did, Henry served three, three year terms on the board of edu-

education. Henry remembers the old school: the time he and others put in long hours on hands and knees refinishing the floors; the time that he, because of some city regulations, saw to it that the school's bowling alleys were floored-over and the controversial friction that followed his action. He remembers the time when he and others had to move the desks and equipment of the old school over to Divine Charity's basement for school while the new school was being built; the work was arduous, bolt heads were missing, desks were varnished in, but painting the little chairs was enjoyable. He remembers the time during WWII when he scrounged up some piping to make coat racks for the childrens' coats. And he remembers the happy days of the day-long school picnics when he'd bring a police musical combo and entertained at Current Park.

The motivation for all of this work and experiencing was found in the fact that Henry realized how important a Christian education was. He hadn't had it. Being instructed later in life, Henry's love for God's Word prompted him to see that children had what he didn't. He loved children and what's more, I believe, he loved children's souls. He knew that they needed God's Word, the Word that he considered to be, "a refreshment that's always needed and welcome."

Henry was happy to see the completion of the new school in 1954, a school which he had helped plan for. As his daughters left the grade school, Henry ended his years on Jerusalem's board of education. But his interest in Christian education didn't end at all. Henry went on to serve as a delegate to the Wisconsin Lutheran High School delegation. He may be retired from that now, but he still serves on the "house committee" for various activities at the high school, supervising tickets, etc. He also functions yet as a reliable man who'll do phone contact work for

various high school activities.

Henry's served his Lord and society in many different ways. He remembers^{em} being offered a warehouse full of out-moded ladies gloves. Henry took it upon himself to unload that cargo into his garage and basement. From that point on he became a supplier of gloves for Pastor Schroeder's use in the special ministries, to Bethesda Home in Watertown, to the Jewish Women's thrift store, and to our Milwaukee Federation's thrift shops. Henry still has a few dozen pair left. The "welcome refreshment" of God's Word was evidently nourishing Henry himself and the fruits, the light shining in the world also, was seen in Henry's concern and kind actions.

Probably one service that Henry rendered will be the most remembered by many in Milwaukee: his role as Santa Claus in the Milwaukee Christmas Parade. The Journal reporter, in the before mentioned article, says;

The role which he has been seen by the largest number of people, probably, is Santa Claus. Kresnicka has the build for it and also the outgoing personality. At least 13 times he has been the jolly, red-coated man in the sleigh in Downtown Toyland Christmas parades, and he has played the part on many other occasions. He likes children and also has a good policeman's knack of being able to draw clues from the most casual conversation: In a minute or two he is talking so familiarly about a child's family and friends that there is no doubt in the youngster's mind that this is really St. Nick. After the parade he would hurry over to the Milwaukee Children's Hospital, quietly confer with the nurses about identities, then visit with each child, addressing him or her by name and wanting to know why he hadn't seen the child in the crowd down on the avenue.

Now Henry realizes that many a good Lutheran may have looked upon his role as Santa with a bit of questioning on their minds as to the appropriateness of that role. Henry merely answers that he was not troubled in his conscience, and loved to help in many a helpless situation, espec-

ially in regard to his Children's Hospital visiting. He hopes that no offense was given or taken. All in all, one has to see, this kind man's, this believing man's, heart as it reached out.

As far as his service to the city as a policeman, the records are sealed in the archives of City Hall. But this can be said, Henry was instrumental in, and cited for the apprehension of the culprits in a \$45,000 bank robbery. That was big money back in the 50's. He did a fine job on the case as dispatcher. There was really only one "black mark", as Henry calls it, in his service. He tells about the time in 1934 when serving as a traffic cop, Sergeant "Weasel" tagged him with a regulation violation. Henry was charged with not raising his signal arm to the required 45° angle and hurrying the pedestrians across too fast. Sergeant "Weasel" later became a very close friend.

Henry's service to the police department was curtailed when in 1963 he was knocked to the ground suffering a concussion and contusions while investigating a double parked car that was blocking the traffic. He was off duty. The driver of the car sped away when asked to produce his license and Henry flew to the pavement. He recovered, but not completely, and a minor stroke in 1967 brought about the end of his service to the department.

As a Christian father and husband, Henry served his family, with Helen, to raise two daughters who continue to serve the Lord. Arlene, who married Ralph Bleichwehl, Pastor Bleichwehl's son, lives up in Oshkosh and is a member of our Grace congregation there. Judy lives in New Ulm, Minnesota and teaches organ, piano and music at Dr. Martin Luther College.

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While Henry doesn't get around as well as he used to, Helen makes up for it with service in the choir, Ladies' Guild, LWMS, Bethesda Home organization, and an institute for the blind. Both Kresnickas served and serve as the Lord moved and motivated them, serving as lights in the church and world around them, that the Father was glorified through them.

To use a euphemism, Henry, is in the twilight of his years now. As he looks back, he says, "My life's been interesting and satisfying; but nothing that I should wave a lot of flags about." By those words Henry surrenders all glory to the Lord, not to himself for his accomplishments. He is adamant on this point. He also surrenders the rest of his life on earth to the Lord's care, guidance and providence with a firm trust, trusting in Him and the merits of Jesus for his eternal life.

As for his mother congregation, Henry surrenders her future to the Lord also. He told me that he thinks about Jerusalem's future a lot. He says, "Jerusalem will continue as long as the walls stand. The neighborhood may someday be rebuilt, but for now we need backyard missionaries like Paul Knickelbein, Gary Schroeder, Jim Witt, and Duane Erstad. - I believe that it will be a more heartbreaking or trying era ahead for Jerusalem. But we have to teach Lutheran, I didn't know any better until it was taught me. And if it's taught it'll depend on good, strong, dedicated pastors, teachers and councilmen. - We're dealing with mixed people now and we can't patronize them, just be genuine and sincere and give what we've got. The old German core left, isn't quite ready yet, but its changing. We've got Lewis and Stingly now (two black church officers) who render excellent service which pleases me, the church and I'm sure, the Lord."

As for the school, on March 30, 1980, Palm Sunday, a merger was voted on and passed for beginning a joint school effort between St. Phillip's

and Jerusalem congregations, beginning in the fall of 1980. Henry voted yes to the issue and says, "We did it in the 50's when we built the new school. It'll work with the Lord's blessing. Perhaps discipline will be a problem to watch out for. But any problems that may arise we'll just have to be prepared to meet and meet them accordingly." He surrenders the future of the school, his dear school, to the Shepherd's care.

Conclusion

Henry W. Kresnicka has been blessed with a marriage which is now going on 51 years. Henry W. Kresnicka, like Spurgeon, the English preacher, smokes a good (Havanah) cigar to the glory of the Lord. Henry W. Kresnicka, a devoted policeman, band leader, tenor, board member, father, husband, Santa Claus, and above all, Christian, is a man who has an uncanny, remarkable love for his congregation, and fellow believers. He talks a lot about the ties, the closeness, the fellowship, the "family-feeling" he has and enjoys when he meets fellow members, synodmembers and Christians.

Henry W. Kresnicka and his life could well be summarized by a paragraph which Oscar J. Naumann, then president of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, addressed to Jerusalem in a letter dated September 13, 1978 upon Jerusalem's 90th anniversary. The letter read: "By His grace we are God's people. It is He that has made us and not we ourselves. We are the divinely guided and richly pastured sheep of the Good Shepherd." How truly that fit the life of the emcee for that celebration's dinner.

Henry W. Kresnicka, you won't find that name in any of the anniversary books or even specifically in the 90th anniversary article. But he was there, for fifty-two years he's been there in Jerusalem's history. He and his life have lived up to and served in the light of his confirmation

verse given him back in 1927, a verse which was in the front of the church garnishing the wall around the altar, which in 1963 was painted over, the verse of Jesus : "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." John 15:5.

Resources:

1. Zur Erinnerung an das 25jährige Jubiläum der Ev.-Luth. Jerusalems - Gemeinde. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1913.
2. Golden Jubilee - Jerusalem Ev. Lutheran Church.
3. 75th Year - Jerusalem Ev. Lutheran Church.
4. "The Northwestern Lutheran". Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House. February 4, 1979.
5. Jerusalem Lutheran Church Records.
6. 90th Anniversary File, Jerusalem Lutheran Church Office File.
7. Interviews with ^Henry W. Kresnicka.