

THE HISTORY OF ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
PIGEON (BERNE), MICHIGAN  
1878 - 1978

FOR: PROF. FREDERICK  
BY: PAUL G. PRESS  
DATE: 4/9/80

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library  
11831 N. Seminary Drive. 65W  
Mequon, Wisconsin

We begin the account of the history of St. John's Congregation with the words spoken by the sainted Pastor G.F.Wacker on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the congregation: "I will meditate also of all Thy work, and talk of all Thy doings. I will remember the works of the Lord; surely I will remember Thy wonders of old." Psalm 77:11-12.

"In this frame of mind, dear friends, we today should celebrate the 25th anniversary of our congregation. We should remember the works of the Lord, and His wonders of old; meditate on His works and talk of His doings. Who today does not have reason to rejoice, and to praise the works of the Lord?"

If these words were in place 62 years ago, how much more are they in place today? If our forefathers had reason to remember and praise the marvelous works of the Lord then, how much more reason have we today? What we enjoy today- fine roads, ease of travel, excellent church property, a large membership, was unknown 100 years ago. This section of the State of Michigan was known as the "backwoods" 100 years ago. Thick, almost impenetrable, virgin timber stood where today are cultivated fields; deep swamps, water, muck mud and mire were everywhere in evidence where today tilled fields produce an abundant harvest year after year. Travel from place to place through the pathless forests and swamps was possible only over felled trees. Settlers were warned against moving into this section and buying land here. Yet, here and there, a family found its way to this "backwoods" territory, cleared a piece of land, built a log cabin, eked out a living and remained to prosper.

Among these early settlers were also Lutheran families, who formed the nucleus of our St. John's Congregation. Nothing is known about these early settlers and the original founders, and the actual beginning of our congregation. Already at the time of the 25th anniversary only one of the original members and founders of the congregation could be located. But even he could give no reliable information. Neither do the minutes of

the congregation shed any light on the original founders and beginnings of the congregation, since no minutes were kept until 1888, ten years after the congregation had been founded.

The only reliable information was contained in a letter written to Pastor Wacker on the occasion of the 25th anniversary by H. Gangnuss, at that time pastor of New Salem Congregation, Sebawaing. He wrote:

"The first request for the establishment of a Lutheran Congregation in Berne came from Mr. Gottlieb Leipprandt and Mr. Henry Muentener, and a number of other Lutherans. They requested the then officials of the Mich. Synod to send them a pastor. Pastor C.F. Boehner of Reed City, Michigan, at that time circuit preacher of the Michigan Synod, was charged to conduct the first Lutheran service in this vicinity. The first service was held on September 8, 1878. The results were so gratifying that a congregation was immediately organized, taking the name: "St. John's Congregation, Winsor Township, Huron County, Michigan."

Pastor Boehner conducted services in this newly established congregation every four weeks. However, the trip from Reed City was fatiguing and costly; it took up too much of the missionary's time and was fraught with much hardship. During the winter months he could not serve the congregation at all, since the vessels sailing between Bay City and Sebawaing remained tied to their docks, and the railroad between Saginaw and Sebawaing had not yet been built. Therefore, Pastor H. Gangnuss of Sebawaing was given charge of the congregation. He served it every four to six weeks and performed the necessary ministrations. At this time Pastor Boehner was called away from Reed City and Pastor G. Tuerk took his place. Pastor Tuerk, also serving as circuit preacher for the Michigan Synod, now served the young congregation at Pigeon, but only during the summer months as his predecessor had done, and for the same reasons. The first officers of the congregation were: Korn, John Linsen, Henry Maenter.

It is rather unfortunate, of course, that we are in possession of no other information regarding the founding fathers and the actual beginnings of our congregation. It would be interesting to know who the original

members were, although it seems as though Korn, Linsen and Muentener were among them, and with how many members the congregation was organized.

But these are things that will have to remain hidden in the past. Of primary importance is that our forefathers wanted a congregation established in their midst where the Word of God would be taught in its truth and purity and the Sacraments administered according to Christ's institution; that God blessed and prospered their efforts and preserved His word and Sacraments pure and unadulterated to this very day; and that this blessed heritage has come down to us. How grateful we should be for such undeserved grace. How zealously and eagerly we should work and labor to preserve it for ourselves, our children and children's children. How fervently we should pray:

"Lord keep us steadfast in Thy Word; Curb those who ~~by~~ gain by craft and sword Would wrest the Kingdom from Thy Son And set at naught all He has done."

The congregation soon realized that if it should continue to grow and flourish, a resident pastor was imperative. In 1882 it sent Mr. August Schultz as delegate to the convention of the Michigan Synod being held in Sebawaing with the charge to petition the Synod to place a resident pastor in the congregation. The Synod granted this request. And the congregation received its own pastor and shepherd in the person of F. Menke, who, as a candidate for the ministry out of the Hermansburg Mission Society, Germany, had just at this time emigrated to this country. Pastor Menke served the congregation until 1888 and then accepted a call to Tittabawasse, Mich. During his pastorate, at Berne, pastor Menke's activities, however, were not confined solely to the local congregation. As circuit preacher for the Michigan Synod working out of Berne, pastor Menke labored with untiring zeal gathering and ministering to brethren in the faith throughout the Northern half of the Lower Peninsula. His actual field of activity outside of Berne was the territory along the Mackinaw Division of the Michigan Central Railroad running from Bay City to Mackinaw City. Soon preaching

places were established in Sterling, Roscommon, Grayling, West Branch, Standish, Pinconning. Pastor Menke also conducted services in Caro, Caseville, Kilmanagh, and Port Hope. In 1887 the territory along the Michigan Central Railroad was given to Pastor Praetorius, who was stationed in Sterling. Sad to say, but nearly all of the fruit of Pastor Menke's labors was lost. After his retirement from the active ministry because of illness, he returned again to his first love, to the congregation he had first served, and where he had spent six enjoyable and fruitful years. In the congregational meeting of July 1, 1906, he was unanimously received into membership with the congregation. Here he spent his declining years; here he died on May 23, 1907 and was laid to rest in the church cemetery.

Because the congregation did not have its own house of worship, services were conducted in a district school house, which was located on the East bank of the Pigeon River, and on the South side of present Highway 142. The land later was owned by Conrad Zimmer, and is today known as the Jacob Swartzendruber property.

Since a decent and livable home for its pastor was not available, the congregation decided to build its own parsonage. After the congregation had decided on the locality, and the place where first the parsonage and later on the church was to be built, Mr. George Sting, Mr. Friedrich Zimmer and Mr. Jacob Becher, members of the congregation, each donated an acre of land upon which the buildings could be erected. Joyfully the members went to work and soon an adequate, and for those times and conditions, modest and unpretentious parsonage was completed, which the young Pastor Menke and his family joyfully occupied. The members themselves did much of the work on the parsonage in order to keep down expenses. The total cost of the parsonage was about \$400.00. This original parsonage stood on the site of the present parsonage until 1914 when it was moved, to make room for the present parsonage, to the present Alex Mitin farm, and has since been torn down.

As yet the congregation had no house of worship of its own. But as time went on it became apparent that the congregation could no longer content itself with holding services in anything else than its own church building. For the membership was growing, and the district school house was becoming more crowded. Through the efforts of Pastor Menke many families during his time as pastor here, and also later on, immigrated out of Hannover, Germany, to settle permanently in this locality, and joined the congregation. Again the members of the congregation arose to meet the need. An acre of land had already been donated. And everyone was eager and willing and ready to do his share to make their own church building a reality. Within a short time a church building was erected at the cost of about \$1,100.00, and dedicated to the service of the Triune God in the fall of the year 1885. This original building stood on the East end of our present parking lot. At this point in his account of the history of the congregation on the the occasion of the 25th anniversary, Pastor Wacker remarks:

"The question now arises: if at that time 30 members, all of whom were poor and actually penniless, could, besides a parsonage, build this house of worship to the Glory of God, should not 80 families today, whom God at least for the most part has so richly and abundantly blessed with earthly goods, be able to build a better and roomier house of worship, since our present church all too often hardly is able to accommodate all who assemble here even for a regular Sunday service?"

It was another 15 years, however, before this new and roomier house of worship was erected under Pastor Wacker's guidance and direction. About one year after the church had been built, the congregation bought an acre of land for cemetery purposes from Mr. F. Strieter. Total cost about \$100.00.

The congregation now had its own pastor, its own parsonage, its own house of worship and its own cemetery. It needed only one more thing to make the picture complete- a Christian Day School.. The congregation again realized that it could hope for and expect continued growth and prosperity only if its children and youth were brought up in the nurture and

admonition of the Lord, and were trained, founded and grounded in the Word of God. To this end a Christian Day School was established immediately, and exists in our midst to this very day. There besides the three "R's" reading (w)riting, and (a)rithmetic, a fourth "R". religion, was taught, indeed, we may say, was stressed, and was actually the real reason for the establishment of a Day School. For if a man were only body, if life were no more than eating and drinking, a secular education as provided by the State schools to prepare a child to take its rightful place in society would suffice; a school maintained and supported by the congregation, often at great expense, would not be necessary. But man is also soul. He has an immortal soul that must be saved from eternal perdition. That this may be achieved, a person in this life already needs the knowledge of the true God, of the Savior Jesus Christ, of sin and grace; he needs to know that the Savior Jesus Christ died for him on the cross to redeem him from all sin and iniquity and to save him from eternal death. Herein lies the imperishable beauty of and the real reason for the existence of our Day School. It gives a child a thorough training in all branches of secular learning; it equips a child to take its rightful place in society. But above all, it provides the child with the knowledge necessary for its eternal salvation; it equips it to take its rightful place among the saints in glory.

During the winter of 1888 a change of pastors took place. Richard Praetorius, then pastor at Sterling, Michigan, was called to serve the congregation and accepted the call. However, his stay in the congregation was neither long nor blessed when one considers the consequences. Already after 2 and one half years, in which much unrest and distrust was evident, and strife and contention and disharmony prevailed in the congregation, Pastor Praetorius caused a split in the congregation and set up an opposition altar at Pigeon. Every effort was made to peacably settle matters and to

prevent trouble and an open break. Several investigations were conducted by Synod officials, but the trouble worsened. As a last resort, a change of pastors was decided on. To this both the pastor and the congregation agreed. However, within a few weeks after this agreement was reached, Pastor Praetorius left the congregation that had called him, and to which he had pledged himself as shepherd, and with ~~eight~~ eight of his former members of St. John's organized Cross Congregation, Pigeon. Today it is a thriving ALC Congregation that has just built a new church building.

Faced with the situation of being left shepherdless by having an opposition congregation established in a most unjustifiable manner by its former pastor, the membership of St. John's tendered a call to Wendolin Linseman, then at Waterloo, Michigan, to be its pastor and shepherd. He ~~accepted~~ accepted the call and was installed in September, 1891.

Many problems faced the new pastor. Many things had to be set in order. And in all of them the new Pastor under God was highly successful. Faithfully and conscientiously he performed the various and varied duties of his office. During his tenure of office four of those who had left the congregation with the former pastor returned to become and remain zealous and faithful members.

Pastor Linseman stressed especially the Day School. In spite of his advanced age he was in the classroom regularly, and with but few exceptions taught daily. During these infrequent absences from the classroom, the members of his family substituted for him. During his term of office an addition was built to the parsonage and the parsonage provided with a full basement.

The years of Pastor Linseman's pastorate saw the congregation grow exceptionally. In almost every congregational meeting applications for membership were presented. From the minutes of congregational meetings it is



evident that no less than 38 new members were added to the congregation during this four year period. How many souls and communicant members this number represented cannot be determined. It may well be that the head of the family applied for membership and that other members of his family were received into membership with him. If ~~it~~ this was the case then the number of new members added to the congregation during these years could be more than doubled.

Again a situation developed that threatened the continued existence of the congregation and which, we can well imagine, took the edge off the joy and happiness over the wonderful growth of the congregation. Now a few members joined the Lodge, particularly the Masonic Order. These members were dealt with immediately; and the evil, which was like a cancer eating away at the very heart of the congregation, was pulled up by its very roots. Some members left the Lodge and thus remained members of the congregation. Yet in the long run, the congregation did not suffer by its stand opposing the Lodge, but became stronger and more fully rooted and grounded in the Word of God. For since the Lodge and the Church are opposed to one another in principle, they cannot exist side by side in a Christian Congregation.

In September, 1895, Pastor Linseman received a call from our Michigan Lutheran Seminary at Saginaw to become its Director, which he, with the consent of the congregation, accepted. The congregation was fortunate in securing the services of a pastor almost immediately. It tendered a call to Pastor G.F. Wacker, who was stationed in Mayville, Michigan, at this time. He accepted the call and was installed on October 27, 1895. His annual salary was to be \$400.00, free firewood, and free parsonage. Three years later his annual salary was raised to \$500.00 with the stipulation that if more than \$500.00 is contributed during the year for salary, he was to re-

ceive this also; but if less than \$500.00 is contributed during the year for salary, he was to donate the amount lacking to the congregation.

Up to this time the Day School had been conducted in the church building. The congregation now felt that a separate school building was necessary. The question arose as to whether a new church should be built, and the old church converted into a school house; or whether a new school should be built. In a meeting held in December, 1895, a resolution was adopted to build a new school house, and a building committee was appointed consisting of Valentine Heck, Henry Meyer, Herman Nieschulz, Sr., John Dietzel, and Henry Clabuesch. In August, 1896, the new building was dedicated. Pastor F. Menke and Prof. B. Merz were the festival speakers. Originally the building was to have been of frame construction and measuring 36 by 24 by fourteen. These specifications were later on changed to 38 by 24 by 12 and brick construction. The total cost of the building was \$600.00. This school building stood on the west end of our present parking lot and was in use until 1935, when the present school building was erected.

Through constant use as a classroom, the church had become badly in need of repair. Therefore the congregation decided to make the necessary repairs. The outside of the building was painted and the inside re-decorated at a cost of \$125.00.

The church tower had so far only been an ornament, for it had never been provided with a bell for which it was intended. \$115.00 was needed to purchase a bell and this sum, and more, was readily contributed. In December, 1897, the bell could be dedicated. Pastor C. Binhammer was the festival speaker. This bell cracked not long after it was installed and was replaced. This new bell was then placed in the tower of our present church and is still pealing forth its pleasant sounds, calling worshippers to services. The cracked bell was purchased by Edward J. Anklam and today occupies a prominent place in his flower garden.

It is rather interesting to read the resolutions adopted by the congregation pertaining to the ringing of the bell. For instance. The bell was to be rung for five minutes one hour before, for five minutes on-half hour before, and for two minutes two minutes before the beginning of services; every Saturday evening for ten minutes at 5 o'clock during the winter months and at 8 o'clock during the summer months; for weddings; for funerals when the funeral procession leaves the home, when it approaches the church, when it enters and leaves the church, when it arrives at the cemetery. For weddings the groom was to pay the Janitor \$.50 for ringing the bell; for funerals the janitor was to serve without expecting extra pay.

Heretofore the pastors had also been teaching school. However, the increased enrollment at this time, between 70 and 80 pupils around the year 1898, and the fact that the pastor's health prevented him from adequately taking care of his duties in the congregation, and the duties required of him in the classroom, made it necessary to relieve the pastor of classroom work, and to call a full time teacher. F. Neusiis, a graduate of Woodville, Ohio, Teacher's Seminary (at that time affiliated with and supported by the then Ohio Synod, and since then closed) was called and installed as teacher in September, 1899. After two years Mr. Neusiis accepted a call to Oshkosh, Wisconsin, and J.H. Doepfer, also a graduate of Woodville, followed him as teacher in our school. He served the congregation until 1905 when he was forced to resign because of ill health. Thereupon Mr. Oester accepted a call to St. John's and taught here until the spring of 1907 when he accepted a call to Emanuel, Lansing.

On September 6, 1903, St. John's celebrated the 25th anniversary of its founding and organization. The annual Mission festival was also celebrated at that time. The festival speakers were Prof. Baer, Director of Michigan Lutheran Seminary and pastors F. Menke and C. Binhammer. The congregation

at that time numbered 71 voting members, 10 contributing lady members, 12 contributing young people, and 462 souls. The congregation was unable to get a teacher for the school term of 1907-1908. Pastor G. Wacker therefore volunteered to teach. In July of 1908 the congregation extended a call to Teacher Louis C. Sievert who accepted. He was paid a salary of \$450.00 and provided with a rent free home.

In the September meeting of 1910 the matter of building a new church came up for discussion. The majority of the members were opposed, so the matter was dropped. However, in the October meeting of 1912, a new effort was made to build. A committee was elected to look into the matter and bring in a report. The congregation also decided to buy several additional acres of woodland directly south of the school. A week later the committee brought in its report, recommending that the congregation build a new church. This all agreed upon. The question where to build the new church, however, caused a delay for several years. Some members wanted the church built in Pigeon and others in Berne, where the old church was.

Early in the year 1914 a movement was started to build a new parsonage before building a new church. This movement culminated that year in the construction of a new brick parsonage on the same place where the old one had been. The total cost was \$2,500.00

In 1914 Teacher Sievert was given an honorable release, so that he could accept a call to a congregation in Wisconsin. Teacher Sievert had taught in the congregation from 1908-1914. As no teacher could be obtained, Pastor Wacker taught the school term of 1914-1915. In May 1915 the congregation sent in a requisition for a teacher to the Dr. Martin ~~L~~uther College of New Ulm, Minnesota. Mr. Jacob Wirth accepted the call to Berne. He taught from 1915-1917. In 1917 Teacher Wirth was drafted in to the army. Pastor Wacker again taught school during the term 1917-1918

In October 1916, the congregation decided to build the new church , after having received enough pledges to warrant the undertaking. It was decided to build south of the school, on the new land purchased in 1912. The size decided upon, was 38 ft. by 56 ft. with a seating capacity of 260 in the main auditorium and 90 in the balcony. Construction was to be of solid brick, full basement, own electric battery plant, hot-air heating system, new altar, baptismal font, pulpit, pews, and an electric action pipe-organ. Construction was begun in 1917 as soon as the weather permitted. The construction of the building progressed so well, that the new church could be dedicated in January 1918. The total cost was about \$17,000. The speakers for the dedicatory services were: Pastors J. Westendorf, G. Binhammer and A. Stozkopf. The building committee consisted of the following: Pastor G. Wacker, Henry Nieschulz, Gustav Guetlech, Henry Clabuesch, Charles Maier, and Ernest Wachner.

In the spring of 1918 the congregation sent a call to Teacher Leo Luedtke of Tawas City, Mich., to become the instructor in their Christian Day School. Teacher Luedtke accepted the call and arrived August 1, 1918. Besides teaching in St. John's Christian Day School since 1918, he has also served as secretary of the congregation since 1928. In July, 1918, the congregation decided to dismantle the old church and construct a new teacherage, using as much of the material of the old church as possible. Desiring to have the new teacherage closer to the school, a parcel of land adjoining the property of the congregation to the east, was purchased from Mr. Fred Elbing. Construction was begun in the spring of 1919 and finished by late December. The cost was about \$5,000.00. The new teacherage was occupied on January 1, 1920.

The month of April 1919 marks the beginning of English services. At first there was an English service conducted in the evening once a month. Later the English services were increased to two evening services a month. In 1930, the two evening services were abolished and conducted in the morning, in conjunction with the German service. During the course of years various changes were made in the order of English and German services. At the present time we have English services every Sunday morning .

The first English communion services in the congregation were begun in the spring of 1930. It was left to the pastor's discretion how often they were to be conducted. In 1932 it was decided to have eight German and four English communion services during the year. Then there were six German and six English communion services during the year. Now there are two English services a month.

In 1922 the congregation together with other property owners in Berne petitioned the Bad Axe Electric Light Co. To build a branch line through Berne from their main line running a mile east of Berne. This the company promised to do, provided the property owners would pay a certain percent of the cost. The property owners decided to do this. The congregation then sold its light plant for \$400. This \$400. and an additional \$200. was paid toward the expense of building the electric line through Berne.

The year 1928 marked the 50th anniversary of the congregation. A special Jubilee service was conducted on September 9th. Speakers for this service were Pastors: Linseman, J.Gauss and Arthur Wacker. Also in 1928 the matter of building a new school was broached but nothing definite was done until 1929, when the congregation decided to start a school building fund. Four envelope collections a year were designated for the fund. During the year 1934, a steam heating plant was installed in the church, to replace the former hot-air heating system which had proven very unsatisfactory.

As the years passed by since 1928, it became more and more apparent, that a new school building was becoming necessary. Therefore, in the spring of 1935 a committee was appointed to ascertain whether the old Mennonite church in Berne could be moved and converted into a school. The committee reported that the building would not serve the purpose. There upon a new committee, consisting of the schoolboard, Ed. Anklam, Otto Rathje, Gustav Guetlech, Carl Sting, and Otto Fluegge, was appointed to obtain plans for a new school. The plan the committee presented within a short time was accepted. It was decided to start at once with the construction on a site between the church and the parsonage. A one room school with a full basement was erected. The over all size is 26 ft by 48 ft. There was indecision as to the type of building, whether it should be a brick or a frame structure. To decide the matter, two subscription lists were circulated, one for brick and one for frame construction. The list with the largest amount subscribed should decide the matter. The amount subscribed for brick construction was more than twice as much as that for frame construction. The building was completed during the summer and cost about \$5,500. Pastor G. Wacker dedicated the school on the last Sunday in August 1935. In the summer of 1944 an annex 24 ft. by 14 ft. was built to the south side of the school to provide a classroom for the pastor's confirmation class and better lavatory facilities for the school.

On January 24, 1936 St. John's Congregation was shocked by the news of Pastor Wacker's death. Pastor Wacker had been in ill health for a long time. Early in December 1935, he went to the University Hospital in Ann Arbor, Michigan, for a diagnosis of his illness. He submitted to an operation the latter part of January and seemingly was improving. The Lord, however, had decided to call His faithful servant home. Pastor Wacker's body was laid to rest in the congregation's cemetery to await the day of resurrection. Pastor Wacker served St. John's Congregation from 1895-1936. He also had served the Kikenny Congregation from 1895 -1923, when that group dissolved

and joined St. John's in Berne. He had likewise served Elkton from 1929-1936.

During Pastor Wacker's illness and for a short time after his death, theological student Fred Schwartz conducted the services. Pastors C.C. Henning and B. Hahm served the congregation during most of the vacancy. The congregation began calling in April 1936. The first call sent out was returned. In may a call was sent to Pastor. A.W.Hueschen of Owosso, Mich. Pastor Hueschen accepted and was installed July 5, 1935.

In 1938 a Sunday School was organized chiefly for the purpose of giving the pre-school children and children not able to attend the Day School on account of distance, a training in religion. However, classes for all ages were arranged. There were eight classes with fifteen teachers including substitutes. At the present time there are about 90 children in attendance including the Junior Bible Class.

In 1942 the church was redecorated at a cost of \$700.00. In April 1949 it became necessary for the congregation to call another pastor, since Pastor A.W. Hueschen had accepted a call to Morenci, Michigan. Pastor Hueschen served the congregation from 1936-1949. Pastor Fred Schroeder of Findlay, Ohio accepted in October of 1949. 1953 marked another mile-stone in the history of St. John's Congregation. It commemorated the 75th anniversary of its founding in the 1878.

As we take up the history of St. John's of Pigeon since its 75th anniversary we note first of all that Teacher Leo Luedtke Sr. in the annual meeting of 1954 announced his retirement from the office of the teaching ministry. He asked that his resignation take effect as of the end of the school year of 1954. His request was granted. Although his active work as a teacher in the classroom ended then, he continued to teach in word and conduct until his death. He departed this life on Dec. 23, 1976.

Pastor Schroeder continued here until May of 1963. He had suffered a heart attack, severe enough that it took many months before he could return



to the pulpit. During that time the congregation was served by a number of vicars from our Seminary in Mequon, Wisconsin. He was followed by Pastor Marvin Hanke of Chaseburg, Wisconsin. He was installed and in office by Oct. of 1963 when he is mentioned in the minutes of the congregation. In March 1967 Pastor Hanke was granted a peaceful release to accept a call to Minnesota. The congregation was then without a pastor until June of 1968 when the present pastor, Pastor Philip K. Press, was installed.

As the 100 th anniversary approached the congregation decided to re-decorate once more and to add a stop to the organ. Thus our organ now has a new 8 foot diapason rank added to it at a cost of some \$3,500. Thanks primarily to the Ladies' Aid the basement has been carpeted and the congregation paid for the wainscoting. The redecoration of the interior of the church itself was done in February and March of this year at a cost of some \$10,000.00. It is not only the members of our congregation that are pleased with the result but visitors and guests have gone out of their way to remark on the pleasing atmosphere presented by our church. It invites to worship.

But on what basis are we to worship? What is to be the guide for our worship, the source of our worship? The Voters of our congregation chose as the motto for our 100th anniversary:

GOTTES WORT UND LUTHER'S LEHR  
VERGEHEN NUN UND NUMMERMEHR

Yes, God's Word and Luther's Doctrine Pure, now and forever shall endure. Such is the basis of our worship, such the source of our worship at this time. We earnestly pray the Lord that He will keep us in the one true faith unto our end and that He will work this faith and conviction in our children and our children's children. May God graciously and mercifully grant it, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Source of Information taken from the Church Council minutes  
of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church Pigeon (Berne) Mich.

PASTOR'S OF ST. JOHN'S PIGEON (BERNE) MICH.

F. MENKE 1882-1888

R. PRAETORIUS 1888-1891

W. LINSEMAN 1891-1895

G.F. WACKER 1895-1936

B.R. HAHM 1936

A.W. HUESCHEN 1936-1949

FRED A. SCHROEDER 1949-1963

M. HANKE 1963-1967

PHILIP K. PRESS 1968- ?

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PRINCIPAL'S OF ST. JOHN'S

F. NEUSIIS 1899-1901

J.H. DOEPHER 1901-1905

E. OESTER 1905-1907

L. SIEVERT 1908-1914

J. WIRTH 1915-1917

LEO LUEDTKE 1918-1954

L. SCHULTZ 1954-1958

R. SCHERZER 1958-1967

JOHN SCHULTZ 1967-1975

T. BUEGE 1975-1977

J. ZOELLNER 1977- ?