

FIFTY YEARS
OF
GOD'S BLESSINGS

IN THE

DAKOTA -
MONTANA
DISTRICT

Wisconsin
Evangelical
Lutheran
Synod

1920 - 1970

The Dakota-Montana District observed its Golden Anniversary in June 1970. The District was officially organized in July 1920. Prior to this it was a part of the Minnesota Synod.

The 1970 District Convention authorized the Praesidium to appoint a committee to publish an anniversary booklet. May this publication serve as a fitting memorial of the anniversary and stimulate interest in the work of the Gospel throughout the membership of our Church.

The Committee

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DAKOTA-MONTANA DISTRICT

1920 - July 1 - District Status established, Mankato, Minnesota

1922 - June 7-13 - First Convention held at Grover

Attendance: 24 pastors; 20 lay-delegates

Prof. K. G. Sievert is the only attendant of this meeting who was still active in the District at the time of the Jubilee and looking forward to his retirement in June 1971. He spent all his years of service in the District, 42 of which were dedicated to Northwestern Lutheran Academy.

Others of those first attendants at that first convention still living are: E. R. Gamm, New Ulm, Minnesota; W. P. Haar, Montello, Wisconsin; E. E. Kolander, Watertown, Wisconsin; Pastor W. Sprengeler, formerly of Bowdle who passed away April, 1971, was present at the organizational meeting in Mankato in 1920 and served as jubilee speaker to the convention in June 1970.

	Officials		Convention Site	Essays
	President	Secretary		
1920	W. F. Sauer	F. E. Traub	Mankato, Minn.	"Modern Church work in the Light of the Word of God." Pastor E. Birkholz
1922	W. F. Sauer	F. E. Traub	Grover, So. Dak.	"The Faithful Practice of the Word Is the Only Salvation of the Church over against the Dangers That Threaten." Prof. Aug. Pieper
1924	W. F. Sauer	F. E. Traub	Zeeland, No. Dak.	"Christian (Training) Education." Prof. E. R. Bliefernicht
1926	W. F. Sauer	F. E. Traub	Elkton, So. Dak.	"What May We Learn from the Evils in the Corinthian Congregations for Our Age." Prof. E. E. Kowalke
1928	J. P. Scherf	H. Lau Special	Zeeland, No. Dak. Watertown, So. Dak.	"Why is My Church Dear and Precious?" Prof. W. Henkel
1930	J. P. Scherf	H. Lau	Roscoe, So. Dak.	"Augsburg Confession." Prof. J. P. Meyer (Printed)
1932	J. P. Scherf	H. Lau	Rauville, So. Dak.	"The Heroes of Faith in Hebr. 11"
1934	E. R. Gamm	H. Lau	Elkton, So. Dak.	"The Prophet Isaiah's Understanding of the Salvation in the Prophesied Messiah or Savior." Prof. A. Schaller "400 Years of the Open Bible." Prof. C. L. Schweppe
1936	E. R. Gamm	H. Lau	Bowdle, So. Dak.	"The Foolishness of Preaching" Pastor Egbert Schaller "Indifference in Respect to the Pure Doctrine Is the Danger That Threatens Our Church." Pastor G. Schlegel
1938	W. T. Meier	H. Lau	Elkton, So. Dak.	"The Call to the Ministry" Prof. W. Schumann, Sr. "The Confessional Stand of Synod Is the Work and Direction of God." Pastor Th. Bauer

1940	W. T. Meier	K. G. Sievert	Roscoe, So. Dak.	“The Present Status of the Efforts at Merger of the Lutheran Churches of Our Country.” Prof. M. Lehninger “Christian Education.” Prof. R. Janke
1942	W. T. Meier	K. G. Sievert	Grover, So. Dak.	“Our Christian Liberty and its Proper Use.” Prof. E. Reim “Religion and Education” Prof. H. Klatt
1944	W. T. Meier	K. G. Sievert	Bowdle, So. Dak.	“The High Calling of the Christian According to the First Epistle of Peter” Prof. F. E. Blume “An Appraisal of Educational Principles in the Light of Scripture.” Supt. F. Meyer
1946	P. G. Albrecht	K. G. Sievert	Watertown, So. Dak.	“Ecclesia” Prof. E. E. Kowalke
1948	P. G. Albrecht	K. G. Sievert	Roscoe, So. Dak.	“The First Petition: ‘Hallowed Be Thy Name,’ and Its Importance for the Church of God Today.” Prof. A. Schaller
1950	P. G. Albrecht	K. G. Sievert	Bowdle, So. Dak.	“The Lutheran Doctrine of Inspiration” Pastor Wm. Sauer
1952	P. G. Albrecht	K. G. Sievert	Roscoe, So. Dak.	“Luther as Hymnologist” Prof. A. Sitz
1954	P. G. Albrecht	K. G. Sievert	N.W.L.A.	“The Spiritual Principles Concerning Church Fellowship” Prof. C. Lawrenz
1956	P. G. Albrecht	A. Schuetze	N.W.L.A.	“The Koinonia of the N.T.” Prof. W. Schumann, Sr.
1958	W. Schumann	D. Sellnow	N.W.L.A.	“The Principal Question in the Controversy within the Synodical Conference” Pastor E. Schaller
1960	W. Schumann	D. Sellnow	N.W.L.A.	“A Study of Judges 2, 1-5 with its Timely Warning: Be Not Conformed to This World.” Prof. G. Hoenecke
1962	W. Schumann	C. Spaude	N.W.L.A.	“Neo-Orthodoxy, the ‘NEW’ Threat to our Christian Heritage” Prof. A. Schuetze
1964	W. Schumann	C. Spaude	N.W.L.A.	“The Four Silent Centuries” Covering the period between the Old & New Testaments. Prof. O. Siegler
1966	A.P.C. Kell	L. Dobberstein	N.W.L.A.	“Martin Luther and Our English Bible Translations” Prof. F. Blume
1968	A.P.C. Kell	L. Dobberstein	N.W.L.A.	“The Place of Women in the Life and Work of the Church.” Prof. W. Gawrisch
1970	A.P.C. Kell	A. Lemke	N.W.L.A.	“A History of the Dakota-Montana District of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod” Prof. K. G. Sievert

PREACHING THE GOSPEL ON THE DAKOTA-MONTANA PRAIRIES
OR
A HISTORY OF THE DAKOTA-MONTANA DISTRICT
OF THE
WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

By Prof. Karl G. Sievert

What is history? What is meant by the term history in our assigned topic? Consulting Webster's dictionaries for a definition of the word does not satisfy our need for such a definition. Several approaches approach my conception of the meaning of this word, but they do not fully meet it. Let me quote several of these definitions. "History is a narrative of events connected with a real or imaginary object, person, or career; a tale; story; now especially such a narrative devoted to the exposition of the natural unfolding and interdependence of the events treated." Another definition reads like this: "A systematic written account of events, particularly of those affecting a nation, institution, science or art, and usually connected with a philosophical explanation of their causes." To quote one more definition: "The branch of knowledge that records and explains past events as steps in human progress; the study of the character and significance of events. It is usually divided into ancient history, medieval history, and modern history."

These definitions are well taken in their proper scope. But none of them are sufficient for a Christian, especially for one who wishes to write church history, the history of a church body such as a synod or its districts.

Such a writer must recognize that history is not merely the recording of human accomplishment or human failure. To the Christian historian the basic thought for his work is the governance of God in the affairs of men. He will be guided by the God-inspired words of the great Apostle Paul which he proclaimed on the Areopagus in Athens. I quote: "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelling not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands as though he needeth any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if happy they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being." (1) And to the Colossians the same Apostle writes: "All things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." (2)

In view of my urgent request for the histories of congregations, one might ask: what is the scope of

this assignment? Its purpose is not the compiling or recording of the history of the individual congregations of the district. That might be an interesting and extensive task for some future compiler; and perhaps this work ought to be undertaken, as it was done in the sister-district of Minnesota.

My assignment is the writing and presentation of the history of this, the Dakota-Montana District. This shall involve a study of its chronological development, of the economical, social, and political forces which affected and still affect the life of the district. It also involves reference to certain policies of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and their effects on the church life within the district. Thus we shall try to show that to be true which Professor J. P. Koehler wrote in his History of the Wisconsin Synod. He wrote: "Nur so kann eine solche Darstellung das werden, was alle Geschichtsdarstellung sein soll, eine Predigt des Evangeliums von der Gnade Gottes." Freely translated this means: Only in this way (by drawing into the presentation of church history the great thoughts of the Gospel) can the presentation of history become that which all presentation of history must be, namely, a preaching of the Gospel, of the grace of God. (3)

Permit me also to quote the thoughts which I used as an introduction to the history of Zion Lutheran Church of Mobridge, South Dakota: "History is the record of God's dealing with sinful man. It records the grace and mercy of God as it is revealed to man in the building of His church. And it is intimately bound up in the preaching of Law and Gospel, of sin and grace. By the preaching of God's Word the Christian Church was founded. By it the Lord still builds and edifies His Church, the communion of saints, in all places and times." So also the Lord of the Church has built it and continues to edify it in the geographical confines of our district. It is the purpose of this essay to trace the working of God's grace in the district's midst during the past fifty years as well as to recall the more than forty years of mission labor which led to the establishment of this district. May this labor of love for the Una Sancta redound unto the glory of this Lord of the Church, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Surely, the words of the Psalmist apply: "I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Thy Works." (4) And again: "This shall be

written for the generations to come, and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord." (5)

It is my intention to trace the chronological and geographical development of the district first of all.

In the Synodical Reports of the former Minnesota Synod, whose off-spring our district is, this mission area is defined as the Dakota Territory. (6) This is the area now roughly covered by major portions of the states of North Dakota and South Dakota, and a short overlap into Montana. If one realizes how small a church body the former Minnesota Synod was, one can understand a statement, made more than once in those same reports, which deplores the lack of manpower and money, which might have enabled that Synod to possess this great territory churchwise. Then too one would not have needed to read how the fathers deplored "that they would have to yield some of this great territory to the Missouri Synod." (7)

But let us look at this land. Some years ago I described this land in this way. "This is the great western prairie, rolling and almost treeless. Here the larger cities of the East disappear; instead, many small towns strike the eye of the traveler, towns which are grouped around their chief building, the grain elevator. Nearby is the stockyard, for agriculture is the industry of this vast area. And its products are of major importance to the economy of the nation." (8) As these towns were founded and the economy of their surrounding agricultural lands developed, the congregations which were to become this district developed with them.

The first great effort of the Fathers in this great territory were undertaken near the western border of Minnesota and in a general way in the valley of the Sioux River. This fertile land had been opened to the homesteader at a very early date. And by 1880 a large number of families of German descent had found their way into the area to the west of Marshall, Minnesota, into the region now served by our congregations at Elkton and Ward, South Dakota.

One wonders what decided the early missionaries to turn northward from there, because Sioux Falls was already a major city of the state, and Mitchell, Huron, and other larger towns were already in the making. No doubt it was concern for, and contact with, other people of German descent who were settling farther to the North. The names of the present congregations from Ward northward to Mazeppa Township spell out the names of the first mission and preaching stations in that area, which covered approximately 3,200 square miles. And even though many of those early mission congregations have disappeared or merged with others,

the work of the fathers in this area was indeed welcome. For one thing was sadly lacking in those early years. These pioneer settlers either forgot their church, or they were cut off from their church by great distances, or they were falling prey to false preachers.

The next major development was a westward movement from Rauville and Watertown to Redfield. It is interesting to hear how this westward movement began. Quoting freely from the history of Bethlehem Lutheran Church of Hague Township, South Dakota, (this area was once known as Carlton Township, and services were held in the Ballard school), one reads the following. A young Lutheran man had been courting a young Lutheran lady. He finally proposed marriage to her and she consented to the marriage provided the young man could find a Lutheran pastor to perform the ceremony. So the young swain set out for Watertown and Rauville, some fifty miles away. He found Pastor Johl, who came to perform the ceremony. On the same occasion he also baptized a little girl there. Thus he began a mission congregation among a group of German settlers who had come into this area after spending a few years in Chicago, Illinois. They had been drawn westward by the promise of free land under the Homestead Act of 1863.

At about the same time other families had moved into the Henry and Grover areas, drawn westward by the offer of free land, which a grateful government offered to veterans of the War between the States. This offer was also open to others who were willing to settle these western prairies. Still others had been forced westward, because economic depression with its resulting bankruptcies had impoverished them in states farther east. Here was a chance to recoup their fortunes.

And so one notes from various mission reports of those days that, by the year 1887, missionary R. Volkert was living in Redfield, South Dakota. Meanwhile congregations and preaching stations had been established in or near every town between Watertown and Redfield. Most of these have disappeared or have merged with other churches. Still others died out completely when economic conditions caused many a settler to again leave the area.

Meanwhile immigrants of another somewhat different kind had moved into mid South Dakota. These people called themselves Russlaender, German Russians in English. An article in the Sioux Falls Argus Leader, printed sometime this spring, sheds some light on this group, many of whom had first settled at Freeman, South Dakota. While many of them stayed there, others and their friends, who had come later, then

moved northward settling in the Bowdle, Roscoe, and Hein areas (Hein is now known as Zeeland, North Dakota).

Ethnically these people were German. Their forefathers had been lured to leave their fatherland by the promises made them by Catherine the Great of Russia. In appreciation of what these people might mean to her Russia, her manifesto promised anyone who would come to Russia free land, and this land free of taxes. She also promised these people religious freedom and freedom from all military service.

These promises attracted many German peasants, especially those from South Germany. By horse and buggy, or wagon, they made their way eastward to the Black Sea region. The Crimean Peninsula and the area about Odessa were most attractive to them.

In these areas, these immigrants from Germany lived peacefully, until later tsars repealed the manifesto of Catherine. These Germans were now repressed and persecuted. As a result, they began to emigrate in ever greater numbers to North and South America. Many became successful farmers and business men in their new homes. Their offspring, by the way, were among the first to settle in the West-river territory, when this was opened for settlement.

From a religious viewpoint, these people were sincere; but often, as in the case of the Hutterite and Mennonite groups, they were people who had embraced a somewhat mystical religious philosophy. No doubt some of this characteristic was due to the influence of the Greek Orthodox Church and the Russian folk character. Even those immigrants who remained Lutheran were somewhat pietistic. And revivalism appealed to many. Therefore the work among these people was not easy. A former pastor, who served in the Mobridge area, wrote me some years ago how he was ordered out of a prayer meeting of his own members, who were revivalistic in character.

This was the kind of people missionaries R. Volkert and G. Lahme found in the Roscoe, Bowdle, and Hein areas in 1887. The Roscoe people had already been served by a pastor from Aberdeen, named Prey. Then the Missouri Synod served them from Mansfield. Finally by the turn of the century they were served by Pastor J. Gehm of Bowdle and entered the Minnesota Synod. Bowdle members became the major congregation and the center of a large number of preaching stations in the area. All have now disappeared or merged. Many early settlers later were forced to leave the area when droughts and depressions hit them during the 1890's. Others, like Trinity congregation of Theodore Township and St. James of Cloyd Valley

Township, have since merged with the congregations at Bowdle and Roscoe. This entire area was said to cover about 2,000 square miles.

It was also in the decade of the 1880's and the early 1890's that the land west of Bowdle and on to the Missouri River was settled, at first largely by German Russians. The reports of the time state that there were a number of flourishing congregations in this area, but droughts and depressions drove their members out and the congregations died. Akaska, Glenham, and Tolstoy are the congregations still left in the area.

It was at this time that a certain pastor Mundt of the Missouri Synod, who lived at Ellendale, North Dakota, visited the Mound City area and, after serving the settlers there for a time, he organized congregations at Mound City and in Gale Township. But when St. John's of Bowdle received its first resident pastor in 1889, the Mound City people were referred to Pastor Volkert and later to Pastor Malchow for services. These pastors lived so much closer to Mound City than the pastor at Ellendale, and therefore, they could serve that area much better than the men from Ellendale.

It was just a few years later that missionaries, who lived at Mound City by then, took over the work at Hein and soon expanded their work to Linton, North Dakota and a few years later into the Hazelton area. In fact, what was once known as the tri-county area, comprised of Campbell in South Dakota and Emmons and McIntosh Counties in North Dakota, was once served by men from the Minnesota Synod. Losses in these areas were apparently due to lack of manpower which might have possessed this area, if supplied in greater numbers.

One might mention the names of many men who labored in this vast territory. Some stayed a few months, others remained two to four years. But such a list would be too long. Four names stand out from that long list. But they served in the later formative years of the district, during the first decades of this century. These men are Pastors William Sauer, O. Keller, William Albrecht, and A. Fuerstenau.

Somewhat later, about 1908, another major thrust carried faithful missionaries into what is known as the West-river country. Parts of the Sioux Indian Reservation were opened to settlement and soon many localities were settled. Again it was agriculture which drew men into these areas. But cattle was the main agricultural product.

Early records show that two major thrusts were made into this area. The first was made

from the Hazelton field westward across the Missouri River toward Flasher, Carson, and from there southward to McIntosh, South Dakota. Pastor F. Wittfaut, who would later spearhead the move into Montana, was the pioneer in this area also. The second thrust crossed the "Big Muddy" from Mobridge. The Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad, as it was then known, had built its great bridge across the Missouri in the first decade of this century. And settlers moved west with the railroad. And missionaries followed the settlers.

Nor were the early missionaries inactive in other directions. The Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad had planned to cross the Missouri at Evarts, some ten miles south of Mobridge. The missionary from Mound City had begun services in this old cattle town quite early. But when the Mobridge bridge was built, Evarts was moved to Mobridge, where services were begun quite early in the city's history.

This mission work of the early years was not easily done. The available men were far too few, the territory to be covered too large, and the settlers were scattered far and wide. Nevertheless, as another now sainted brother wrote me some years ago, "We were trying to hold an umbrella over that area for our Synod, both on the North as well as on the South line." Here too the names of preaching stations named after the school houses in which services were held, have long disappeared. In this trans-Missouri territory, Lemmon, South Dakota became an outpost for a few years, especially during the pastorate of Pastor William Pankow. Pastor E. Gamm and Pastor M. Cowalsky also were very active in those early years.

Another almost casual advance westward resulted in 1912 from the visit of a certain Pastor Hopp to Montana. He did some preaching and baptizing there and then reported that Montana might offer fine mission opportunities to the Synod. The real pioneer in Montana was the same Pastor F. Wittfaut who had been active at Flasher and Carson some years before.

Pastor Wittfaut's work was certainly different from mission work as it is known today. He carried out his work on a personal basis. The economy of eastern Montana at that early date was dominated by the cattle industry. This spread out the settlers over large areas. And those first settlers were not exactly friendly to the grain farmers who tried to settle there. They were called hunyakkers, a word usually used in a derogatory way.

Permit me to cite freely from a letter of Pastor Wittfaut to the mission board of that day. The particular trip of which he wrote carried him over a route of about 600 miles in one month. Though completely impractical where automobiles were involved, he drove his Model T touring car from

ranch to farm to ranch to farm. His luggage in the back seat, in addition to his personal belongings for the trip, consisted of flour, sugar, and other staple supplies, which he distributed from place to place as needed. Those able to do so paid, and often charity moved the missionary to leave the goods as a gift. At the same time, however, Pastor Wittfaut baptized the newborn, instructed the youth, and conducted services for the families according to need. The finest church he ever had was a country schoolhouse. During his entire ministry there he had no modern chapel at his disposal. The first church in Montana was built after his death. This was in 1933 at Circle, Montana. Only after many years, the district has begun work in the larger cities of Montana and the Dakotas. And it is doing it with buildings furnished early in the history of each mission field. This is, of course, in keeping with the changed mission policy of the General Synod.

It might cast more light on the work of those early years, if we heard a description of one of the pioneer settlers, picturing the work of the missionary in her area. When I was pastor at Emmanuel's of Grover, I often discussed those early years with a grand old lady of the congregation. Her account gave every credit to those missionaries or shall we say circuit riders. Pastor C. Boettcher, for instance, would start from the Marshall, Minnesota area - he lived in various places near there - by horse and buggy. These had been purchased for him and other missionaries by the so-called secretary for the purchase of horses. Pastor Boettcher traveled throughout the entire area of eastern South Dakota. A round trip took approximately six weeks. One might add that even trips which other missionaries made from Rauville to Redfield often required three weeks for the round trip.

When the missionary came into the Grover area, he often found accommodations in Grandmother Fritz's sod hut. Her boys would ride through the countryside with the message: Der Pastor ist hier. And on the morrow they came from east and west, and north and south, on lumber wagon, buckboard, or what have you. The motive power was furnished by teams of oxen, teams of ox and horse, and in a few instances by horses. Services were conducted, children baptized, the youth instructed, and any other religious services were given as needed. Soon a young man of the congregation was available to instruct the young while the pastor was absent. These services were gladly performed and highly appreciated by the people. Services were conducted on any day of the week when the missionary got into the area. And the only complaint the missionary made to Synod officers was this one: Das Roessein hat wehe Fuesse. Poor health finally forced this faithful missionary

to resign.

Even after the turn of the century, particularly during the first decade, pastors were often absent from home over fifty percent of the time, teaching confirmation classes and even school at distant places in their charge. And one must admire the wives of those men who were forced to live under such arrangements in very modest houses - the first ones were often sod houses - and these homes lacked all modern conveniences.

In this connection I should like to quote from another history of a congregation. Pastor Sprengeler wrote in this way: "Let us not forget that these days were pioneer days. Pioneer days were days of hardship peculiar to themselves. These early pastors and our fathers stood ready to weather these hardships, for they appreciated, above all else, the Gospel of Jesus and His love."(9)

Nor was the work of those pioneers made easier by the efforts of sectarian preachers, who often functioned as land agents on the side. They often tried and sometimes succeeded in stealing away members and here and there a congregation. Even other Lutheran bodies were a thorn in the side of more than one missionary, especially in the western areas. In fact, one brother wrote me that a horse trade had been made with the former Iowa Synod, in which they promised to stay out of Selby (though we had started Selby), if Iowa would stay out of Mobridge.

One might ascribe the ease with which congregations sought religious services from any source whatsoever to the ecumenical spirit of the frontier, fostered, as it was, by sectarian circuit riders. Lack of men to serve these congregations and the fact that pastors left their congregations after comparatively short periods could only strengthen that spirit.

In retrospect, one might say that the inability of the early pastors to preach in the English language and the opposition and apathy of congregations where the English language was concerned also were a major hindrance in the mission work of the early days. I think, for instance, of the experience which our missionaries encountered again and again with people of Scandanavian descent. Nationalism was even stronger in many of them than among our Germans. An interesting episode which happened many years ago will demonstrate. A young pastor of our Synod - so the story has it - was courting a fine young lady of a nearby Norwegian Lutheran church. An elder of each congregation formed a self-appointed committee, which decided that this courtship would not do. So they broke up the affair in the interest of the ethnic nationalism of their respective churches. You ask, could this be true? I have the story on the word

of one of those elders.

One could go on at length, writing about the early days of the District. But this must suffice. The development of the Dakota-Montana mission fields had extended into such great areas that the missionaries as well as other members of the Minnesota Synod respectively requested and advised the formation of a new district.

This was not the result of a spontaneous action in 1920, the year the district was organized. As early as 1912, a newly formed conference of the Minnesota Synod had been organized at Lemmon, South Dakota, under the leadership of Pastor William Pankow. And even then the thought of forming a new district was noticeable, if the minutes of the conference in those early years may be believed. And when, in 1915, the first constitution for the Northwestern Lutheran Synod (that was the first name proposed) was drawn up, the creation of a district in the Dakotas was projected. In the constitution of 1917 the division of the Minnesota District was proposed. The fruition of these plans came in 1920. I quote briefly from Professor E. C. Fredrich's History of the Minnesota District, written in 1968.

"The decade of the Twenties produced another beginning and founding which involved the Minnesota District much more directly and which occurred much nearer home. This was the official organization of its sister and daughter, the Dakota-Montana District. The date was June 25, 1920. On that day twenty-three pastors and six lay delegates, all of them Minnesota District members attending its regular convention, held a meeting of their own and voted the Dakota-Montana District into being." (10)

The General Synod, in session at Watertown, Wisconsin from July 14 - 20, 1920, approved and ratified the division of the Minnesota District, thus creating the Dakota-Montana District. (11)

The immediate reasons for the organization of the new district were well-taken, even though future developments did not completely fulfill early anticipations and fond hopes. Among the reasons for establishing the new district, the following were offered in the resolution requesting division. I quote Professor Fredrich again:

1. Much travel time and money would be saved when it came to attending conferences and larger meetings;
2. The area would have officials of its own, living in the field of labor;
3. A more stable ministry would ensue, on the grounds that pastors tend to stay in their

own district." (12)

A fourth reason also heard at the time of organization stated that the members of the new district would take a livelier interest in the affairs of the General Synod. And this would lead to a greater participation in the Synod's work. All this, because of a closer contact with the General Synod.

The division which formed the new district was not harmful to the mother-district. A review of the minutes of the Dakota-Montana District reveals a continued live interest in the affairs of the mother-district; as, for instance, the interest of this district in the various expansion programs at Doctor Martin Luther College shows.

And it is just as true that this District has always been keenly interested in the work of the General Synod. Permit me to mention a few phases of this work. I think of the Polish Mission, now continuing to exist as the Bekenntnis-Kirche in Germany. The District has generally been in the forefront, where the finances of the Synod were concerned.

Of particular interest to many of the early members of the District was the effort toward solving the intersynodical problem, then existing. The first President of the District was an active participant in this "unity endeavor culminating in the Chicago Theses." While the unity movement failed in the end, nevertheless it had brought about a lively study of the Scriptures as related to the doctrines in controversy.

The first meeting of the District, as stated above, was held at Mankato, Minnesota, in connection with the second session of the Minnesota District, meeting from June 24 to July 1, 1920. To repeat again, there were present at the meeting twenty-three pastors, but only six laymen; the latter a substantiation of the request for forming a district which would meet closer to home.

In order to document the beginnings of the District's history in more detail, permit me to quote from the President's Report to the first regular convention of the District, held in the midst of Immanuel Lutheran Church of Oxford Township, better known as Grover, South Dakota. After recounting the depressing conditions of the work of the district missionaries, President William Sauer comforted them with these words:

"And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without the law, as without law (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." (13)

Then the report presents these statistics: Our district numbers about 7000 souls as its members, about half of these, or 3500 being communicant members. Voting members in all congregations number about 1200. The District is comprised of over 55 congregations, 27 being members of the District and 28 not. In addition there are 25 preaching stations. The number of pastors is 32 plus 2 vicars. During the past year six candidates have been assigned to the District by the assignment committee of the Synod. One female teacher is active in the District.

Four years later, President Sauer reported 8000 souls, 4270 communicants, and 1454 voting members in the District. The number of congregations had grown to 32 members, 43 non-members, and 17 preaching stations. The number of pastors in the District was 35 and two new candidates had been assigned. It would seem, on the basis of these early statistics, that the formation of the new district had been justified. And the continued interest in, and support of the General Synod's entire program over the fifty years of its existence fully confirms such justification. Quoting specific financial figures, for instance, would be boring to the listener as well as to your essayist. These figures are in large part revealed in the Statistical Reports of the General Synod, as published over the years.

The following section of this essay will be developed by decades, followed by a short presentation of several topics of importance to the life of the District.

THE FIRST DECADE: 1920-1930

This era is certainly dominated by the person of one man, by the person of the first President of the District, the now sainted Pastor William F. Sauer, who was pastor at St. Martin's Lutheran Church of Watertown, South Dakota. He was a most active man and competent theologian. The welfare of the District was ever his chief concern. And he exercised a major, wholesome influence on the many young pastors who were coming into the District. His zeal is attested to by the statistics, quoted above. The membership grew numerically and, even more so, spiritually under his leadership. Whether in conferences or in private, his contact with the young pastors could only benefit them. He took a friendly, yes, fatherly interest in their work. His active work as a former missionary and within St. Martin's also were a living example of his zeal for the Kingdom of His Lord and Savior.

Of particular importance to many younger men was the staunch Scriptural stance to which he brought the District in the matter of the Pro-

testants. Pastor Sauer was a member of the Committee of Three which was to adjudge the entire Protestant affair for the General Synod. His intimate knowledge of the situation could only benefit the District. There was little disturbance over the Protestants at that time or later. In fact, when, several decades later, one man and a little later another, raised the same question as the early Protestants, there was little sympathy found by them.

One might note here that it was in this decade that the following could be found in a District Report: It is encouraging that "so many houses of God could be dedicated, and so many parsonages could be acquired." (14)

This decade also is most important in the history of the District because in this decade Northwestern Lutheran Academy became a reality, though the thought of it and the wish for it had been conceived much earlier. But more of this later.

THE SECOND DECADE: 1930-1940

Two major developments make up the history of this decade. The first is the transition from German to English as the medium for preaching the Gospel to our congregations. The other is the Great Depression of the Thirties.

The transition from German to English had begun in the previous decade but gained its major impetus in this decade. The driving force in the transition might first of all be found in the events of the First World War. German was almost everywhere the sole medium of Gospel-preaching prior to the war. But the war engendered a tremendous hatred for people of German descent. This also affected our congregations. I well recall how Pastor Sauer and Pastor Carl Schweppe visited every county in which we had churches to seek some relief for these congregations from the oppression of the Safety Directors of these counties. And once the congregations conducted at least some English services, it became hard to drop them again.

Another major factor that influenced the transition, developed out of a natural situation. The youth of the congregations were no longer familiar with the German language. Many could not speak the mother-tongue any longer, and even less did they understand the language. And when these young people began to mix with English Americans in the military service, and I might add, began to marry men and women who spoke that language, the drive toward English became irresistible.

This did not come about, except against the strong and often stubborn resistance of the German fathers. I was told by one of my elders: "Luther hat die Kirche Deutsch gegruendet, und Deutsch muss sie bleiben." But the transition

came about in an ever greater measure and with ever greater speed. Think of this that in 1924 there was only one congregation in the District which was all English. A few had some English services and communion services now and then. At that time there were over 300 Gemeindeblatt readers but only 71 readers of the Northwestern Lutheran. But by 1938 the District Report had become all English, though the several secretaries of that era still had the ability to write in the German idiom.

I shall once again quote from Professor Fredrich's History of the Minnesota District. Speaking of the German problem, he writes:

"It is difficult for us to appreciate this task and problem, for we have buried it. Even St. Paul's in New Ulm is ending German church services before the summer is over. We read Luther and preach German in translation. While we breathe a sigh of relief at the non-fulfillment of dire predictions that true Lutheranism could not survive beyond a generation if the German Luther and the Gospel in German were lost, let us not pass this point by without paying a humble and sincere tribute to our pastors in the Twenties (and I would add before the Twenties) who almost without realizing that they were providing a very special and quite rare service, supplied what was required by the times, a bilingual ministry. If only all of us would in our day become as adept in either a classical or modern language as they were in their extra language, a strong resource for the theological and mission growth would be made available to the church."

These words are as true for our District as for that of Professor Fredrich.

While the transition from German to English was of major importance to our congregations, it was not harmful in the end. German had certainly served its purpose in the governance of God on behalf of His church. Through it the souls of many were converted to the great Bishop of their souls, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In many ways the Great Depression of the Thirties was of much greater consequence for our congregations. The era might well be characterized by a casual signature to a letter which I received in those days. The brother signed off with the words, "Your's in the Federal Service". He had reference to the sad fact that practically all of his members were being supported by the Federal Government through one or the other of the various programs that had been created for the very purpose of helping the poor. These were the days when the carloads of cattle being shipped out of the West would bawl all night long as they were unloaded for watering in Mo-bridge. The smell of the Missouri water would start them on their chorus. Then too we often turned on the lights at noon, while eating our

meal. And the lady of the house would spend all day dusting off the furniture. And the top soil of our land was moving southward.

At the same time the economy of the land had reached a low state indeed. The products of the fields that still grew had no price. In fact, the price of grain had taken a major tumble even before the drought had hit. For lack of money to buy fuel, many a farmer burned corn instead.

One can well imagine what effects these conditions had on our churches. It was not unusual to go to church in overalls. Children had perhaps two dresses or two pants at most. This was true even of our Academy students of those years. A number of self-supporting congregations were forced to apply for financial aid to the General Mission board. And more than one congregation lost numbers of communicants, who were forced to leave, when they lost their farms and other possessions. Nevertheless, it was during those years that our people joined with fellow-Christians in other districts to help pay Synod's huge debt. And the pastors and other workers in the church fared no better than their people. The General Synod was forced by the economic conditions of the land to cut salaries severely, and then it was often late in coming.

THE THIRD DECADE: 1940-1950

This decade was a quiet period in the life of the District. Our nation was involved in the Second World War. As was the case with all young men of the nation, our young men also were called into the armed services of our country. Meanwhile technology practically erased the effects of the draft on the farmer. Technology had made possible such great changes in the methods of farming that manpower could easily be spared there. And because farms became larger and larger and because machinery became larger and larger, the youth of the area emigrated into the large urban centers, where they were able to find well-paying jobs. And they hoped that there they would find a better life. The result for our congregations was a gradual loss in membership.

THE FOURTH DECADE: 1950-1960

The continued growth of farms and the development of ever better machines to cut down on the use of manpower continued to keep the District static numberwise, or even to lose members. This is also true because many grain farms gradually were converted to farms devoted to the cattle industry. Another serious factor which prevented major growth in our congregations was due to the decrease in the number of children born in our congregations. A study of the statistical reports of this decade reveals this drastically. And in keeping with modern trends, this decrease in births has

continued in an accelerated way to our own day.

Of far greater impact on our District was the disturbance brought about by what I like to call the "Missouri Compromise". A controversy there was; a controversy so great that at one time the danger existed that the District would be torn apart. The spirit at conferences and district meetings bore out the depressing feeling of gloom which had been inflicted on the District.

The matter of fellowship with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod was basic to the problems of the District. The Synod's relationship with that church had been deteriorating since about 1938. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod was carrying on a courtship with the American Lutheran Church, which, it was hoped by Missouri's leaders, would result in a declaration of fellowship with that body. As early as 1953 it seemed obvious to some that the Synod ought to break with Missouri. One pastor of our District did just that.

Then, in 1956, the General Synod in the special session of the Synod, which met in Watertown, Wisconsin, continued to hold the so-called Saginaw Resolutions in abeyance. The reason for this action was briefly stated: there had been some success in the discussions between the various Synods of the Synodical Conference. (16) The troubled waters in the District dated from that year. It seemed then, and I still think, that our District felt the brunt of this controversy, felt it much more than others. The officers of this District were involved on a personal basis in the opposition to the stand of the General Synod. This was not the case in the same degree in most of the other districts of the Synod.

It was in this same year of 1956 that this District urged the General Synod to adopt the Saginaw Resolution and thus to break with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. This was urged in the interest of restoring the unity of the spirit within the District. (17)

The climax of the internal struggle in the District followed in the year 1957. In disagreement with the General Synod's decision, not to break with Missouri just yet, but "to continue in our vigorously protesting fellowship over against the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod", (18) the Eastern Conference memorialized the Synod to "declare the termination of fellowship relations with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod." (19)

This termination did not materialize in 1957. And the then President of the District made the following declaration to the convention of the General Synod in 1957.

"I cannot follow the course which the Synod has now chosen; for the Synod was wrong when it rejected the Report of Committee No. 11. This decision I shall oppose with all my might because it is the rejection of a clear Word of God.

"Under these circumstances, I will, of course, not be able to serve the Synod on its Union Committee, nor in any other way which would mean support of the Synod's decision to reject the Report of Committee No. 11, and its (i.e., the committee's) use of Romans 16: 17,18.

"While I do not refuse the hand of fellowship to all members of the Synod, I cannot fellowship with those who have advocated the position which the Synod made its own last night. II Thess.: 3:6; 14,15. (It is self-evident that fellowship with those who now or in the future support and advocate the Synod's present position is impossible.)

"I am fully aware of the implications of this statement as far as my District is concerned." (20)

The last sentence soon became operative on the part of the President and a number of his followers. They refused to fellowship with certain members of the District. However, the President did not carry out his declaration to its logical end. And this in the face of the action of the District, called into special session on October 22, 1957, in Aberdeen. At this session, the District voted its support of the action of the General Synod. One might have expected the President to resign. But in the end, he chose to serve out his term of office "according to the dictates of his own conscience." (21) Nor did the results of a special pastoral conference at Bowdle, South Dakota, in the early months of 1958 resolve the difficulties.

Certain members of the District, meanwhile, were meeting in semi-secrecy, apparently to formulate plans for action in this serious matter. And they began to deny fellowship to certain other members of the District who upheld the District's and the General Synod's actions. And when, in 1958, the District elected a new President, the end of the dissension was at hand.

True, the convention of 1958 elected a so-called Committee of Three and Three to seek ways to restore the unity of the District. But this committee reported to the reconvened convention of the District (on January 26-27, 1959) that it had failed. Instead, its report only served to polarize the membership of the District so that no unity could be achieved. And in 1960, the President's Report to the District stated that "in impatient action" five congregations, seven pastors, and more than five hundred communicants had left the District. Actually the number of communicants was close to eight hundred. (1958 Statistical Report: 8040; 1959 Report: 7256) Now the air was cleared and a new spirit took over in the life of the Dis-

trict.

One might ask, why all the haste of the dissidents, especially in the light of the Synod's later actions? Permit me to quote an outside source, which analyzed the same situation for his synod. In the light of this essay, delivered by Professor G. O. Lillegard to the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the course of our Synod was fully justified. I quote:

"There is a great difference between entering a unionistic body and being forced to leave it. The first is not permissible under any circumstances; in the latter case it may be necessary to remain for a shorter or longer period of time for the purpose of testifying against error. (S.C. Proceedings, 1875, p. 24f.)" (22)

Was it perhaps the spirit of legalism, a legalistic interpretation of the historical development of the controversy and the Scriptures involved?

THE FIFTH DECADE: 1960 - 1970

This decade is well described in the words of President W. Schumann who characterized the era well in his President's Report to the District in 1964. And I quote:

"Once again we are happy to report that the work of our District has progressed in the last biennium under the blessing and guidance of the Lord. After the unsettling events of recent years our pastors and congregations are zealously dedicating themselves to the task which the Lord of the harvest has set before them. In the biennium considerably fewer pastors than usual have accepted calls into other districts of the Synod. This has had a salutary effect on our congregations and district life. Our mission growth is again proving the truthfulness of the Lord's promise that His Word shall not return unto Him void. Our people are evidencing a growth in sanctification particularly evident in the realm of stewardship. Our Academy continues to serve us and our Synod well. It was a good biennium and one for which we are truly grateful to the Lord." (23)

In the light of the President's Report to later conventions of the District, the above quotation describes the life of the District throughout this decade. The District pursued and supported the business of the church quietly, but actively.

That this conclusion is not wrong is demonstrated by the fact that the District made a major thrust in its missionwork. The Canadian field was opened in this decade and in spite of the difficulties involved in operating a mission at such great distances, the work is nevertheless progressing under God's blessing.

It is very interesting to know that our Synod had done work in Canada in the particular area in which we are now active as long ago as the 1890's. At that time the Wisconsin Synod had sent a certain Pastor F. Bredlow into Alberta to do mission work. He was a graduate of our college at Watertown, Wisconsin and of our Seminary. Probably his work then was not too successful, because the Synod ordered him to discontinue the work there. Instead he joined the Manitoba Synod, which is now a member of the Lutheran Church of America. He continued to work there until ill health forced him to retire.

Our new call into Canada resulted from the immigration of Germans, some of whom we had served in the Polish Mission. Through a seminary student by the name of Dieter Mueller, whose father had been active in the Polish Mission, our Synod came in contact with these immigrants. And by 1963, we were active in this field. And the work is continuing to grow. The German language is still the chief medium of communication there, although some work is done in English.

This finishes the chronological presentation of the history of the District. However, there are certain topics to which I should like to address myself.

The first of these deals with the mission work of the District over the past fifty years. We know that the development of the District was slow. We cannot speak of great growth as far as numbers are concerned. In 1960 we numbered 7245 communicant members. In 1968 the number was 7477. Nevertheless the spiritual life of the District has always resulted in great activity: the District supported the financial needs as well as the various other activities of the Synod wholeheartedly. And these are the fruits of faith one may expect from a live church body.

One might point to the various reasons for the slow growth of years ago. Lack of manpower, long vacancies, short terms of service in the District by its pastors, the effect of "seminary sermons" (as one man once said to me) all had their deterring effects. Then, too, the dissipation of manpower by ill-advised organization of congregations in many rural areas was another cause for slow growth. Too many such congregations have long since disappeared. Such organizations in country school-houses are understandable in the days of horse and buggy. But when the automobile became popular, our missions should have been concentrated in the towns and cities. The language barrier of years ago also had its grim effects here and there. And no doubt the social needs of many settlers which found satisfaction in the lodges caused many a one to turn away from a staunchly Lutheran congregation.

The slow growth in our own day may be traced to economic reasons, first of all. Already in 1935 there appeared an article called The Social Problems of the Church. This article warned that rural church work was rapidly declining. From 1926 to 1935, ten to fifteen percent of the churches in the state had either become vacant, inactive, or abandoned. Their Sunday School work was becoming lifeless, and youth work was weak. (24)

Another major factor is the decline of the rural population. Farms are becoming larger, and the youth of the land are moving into the cities where they hope to find work and a better life. The late census, for instance, shows a decline of about 22,000 people in South Dakota during the last decade. Most of this loss took place in the rural area. There was about the same decline in North Dakota. The smaller towns are dying, and churches will die with them.

The decrease in the size of families, the rampant spirit of ecumenism, and the religious laxness of our day - these are all contributing factors to the slow growth of the District. Many people seem to think that any religion is good enough for them and their offspring. And the more lax the church becomes, the better they like it.

Nevertheless, have we been as active as we could have been, we who are to be witnesses for Christ? Have we explored new fields, as we might have? Have we, both pastors and congregation members, been as active about the Lord's business as we could have been? Have we used the talents with which God has blessed us to possess the land?

One should ask another question regarding mission work in our area. This question has often caused me to wonder in past years. In connection with this study I have tried to find the answer to this question but found none in the available records of the past. My question is this: Why has our District never shown any active interest in the Indian? He is our geographical neighbor. He is a sinner who needs the Gospel of Christ, the Savior. Therefore the question: WHY?

Another topic of great interest is the matter of Christian education. When the District came into existence - so reports tell us - eleven pastors were conducting twelve schools; and one lady teacher was active at Elgin, North Dakota for two years. One wonders about these schools. I know that some were little more than confirmation schools or even German schools. Only St. Martin's of Watertown had started a parochial school in the decade from 1910 to 1920. But the

school was dropped again, since the congregation became discouraged at the fact that their teacher was being called away all too often. Somewhat later several congregations opened parochial schools, as for instance at Bowdle, Akaska, and Morrystown. But these schools also were short-lived. It is only of late that two schools - the one at St. Martin's of Watertown, another at Zion of Mobridge, have existed for a longer number of years. Two new schools have come into existence during the last year; one at Billings, Montana, a year ago, and another at Rapid City this year.

Nevertheless, a live interest in Christian education has always existed in the District. For instance, in the first third of the life of the District, several major essays on this topic were heard at the conventions of the District. And more than one congregation conducted summer school lasting from one to two months. Such summer schools accomplished by far more by way of Christian training of the young in the Gospel way of life than do the one-week vacation Bible schools of our day. Of late a few congregations have replaced their Sunday School with a Saturday School. This has worked a marked improvement in the instruction of the youth of these churches and is to be recommended to the congregations of the District.

Perhaps the greatest forward thrust in the field of Christian education within the District was the founding of Northwestern Lutheran Academy. This is not the place for a detailed history of the Academy. But I shall briefly sketch its beginnings in order to complete the educational picture of the District.

The Christian education of the youth of the District had become an acute problem ever since World War I. Stringent school laws, particularly in South Dakota, placed almost unconquerable barriers into the past ways of educating the youth of the church. Pastors could no longer teach for lack of state certification. Gaining such certification involved much red tape, though a few men actually got their certificates. The Synod also did not subsidize teachers and therefore the cost of a parochial school prevented the smaller congregations from establishing Christian schools. And the geographical areas, covered by most congregations - often as great as 500 square miles or more - made the operation of parish schools impossible.

These conditions forced the members of the District to search for other means for educating the young people. The following thought became the topic for discussion both at official meetings and also in private conversation. I quote: "We Christians must more and more take the thought to heart that we establish Christian high schools for our

Christian youth." (25)

The so-called Moussa Report (26) helped to bring about the fruition of the hopes of the District. This report strongly advocated that "the Synod should authorize and subsidize the establishment of preparatory schools, or academies, in many different parts of its territory, preferably according to conferences." And in answer to the memorials of the Dakota-Montana District and its conferences, the Synod adopted the following resolution. And I quote: "The Academy to be established in the Dakota-Montana District is to be a synodical Institution supported and supervised by Synod in every respect." (27) One might point out that President W. F. Sauer and Pastor K. G. Sievert were most active in urging that Synod convention to establish the Academy. In addition, the Synod provided a budget of \$5000.00 to implement this resolution.

The Dakota-Montana District also chose the site for the new school. It did this in a special session, held at Watertown, South Dakota on January 11-12, 1928. A number of towns had submitted offers of land and money to induce the District to choose their town as the site for the new school. In order not to interfere with the sphere of Doctor Martin Luther College, and in order to serve particularly the Western area of the District, Mobridge was chosen.

The actual opening of the school now fell on the shoulders of Pastor E. R. Gamm who largely provided for the organization of the physical plant, and of Professor K. G. Sievert as far as the academic organization was concerned. And so the new school opened its doors on September 5, 1928.

The life of the school had its ups and downs. The depression of the early thirties almost led to its closing. The small enrollment became a long-standing argument for closing the school. But by God's grace it survived and became a source of great blessing not only to this District but also to other outlying districts of Synod as well. Its graduates have fulfilled the hopes of many that they would return home and become staunch members and workers for Christ in their home congregations. Others, both boys and girls, have continued their studies at other Synodical schools to serve the Lord in the parish ministry. And the school itself has become the center for the church life of the District. May the Lord of the Church ever preserve Northwestern Lutheran Academy as a nursery of knowledge for the youth of the District and a source for faithful servants of the Lord as church workers. And may its

influence as a religious center for the District never decline.

One does regret, however, that the members of our congregations do not make as full a use of the Academy as they might. In this day of permissive living, of a rebellious attitude in the youth of our land, of a godless materialistic educational policy in our secular schools, and of the devilish influence of the entertainment world, I say, in this day no sacrifice should be too great to give our youth a Christian high school education.

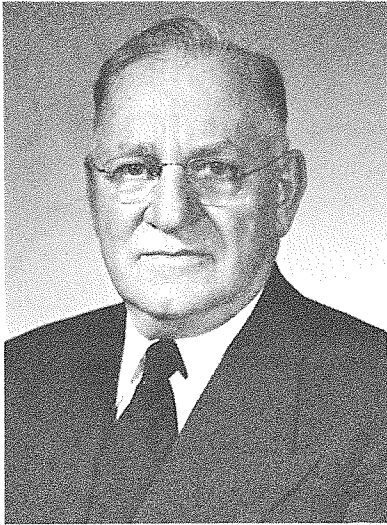
You will permit me a look into the future, as I come to a close. Something I read some months ago - I do not know where anymore - should keep us alert as we pursue the Lord's business. We ought carefully to watch the wide-range rural rehabilitation programs in the making. Irrigation will bring with it smaller farms, and thus larger populations in our areas. The government's planners purpose to create a self-supporting economic environment in the American countryside. Decentralization of industry from the metropolitan areas into the rural areas could open doors for the Gospel which do not now even exist. May we be alert when opportunities to enter new fields present themselves and may we possess the land.

And now to the Triune God, the Lord who created us, redeemed us, and sanctified us unto His eternal glory, be praise and glory forevermore. Soli Deo Gloria!

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15. E. C. Fredrich (see 10), 1969, page 16.
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17. Dakota-Montana Report, 1958, pages 20-21.
18. Ibidem, page 24.
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20. Ibidem, page 24.
21. Ibidem, page 28.
22. Aaberg, A City Set on a Hill, page 217.
23. Dakota-Montana Report, 1964, page 10.
24. The Social Problems of the Church, Brookings, 1935, page 41.
25. Dakota-Montana Report, 1924.
26. General Synod Report, 1927.
27. Ibidem.

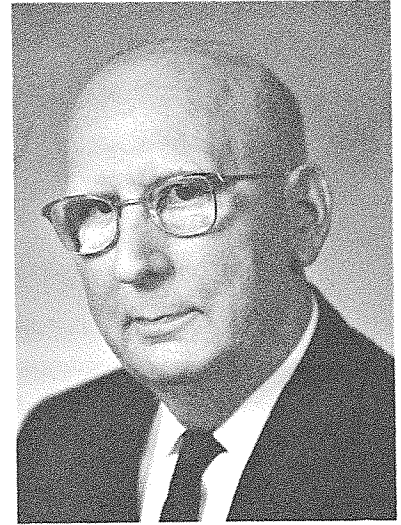
DAKOTA-MONTANA DISTRICT PRESIDENTS



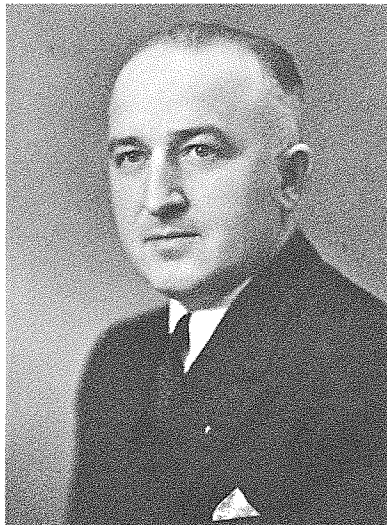
W. F. Sauer
1920 - 1928



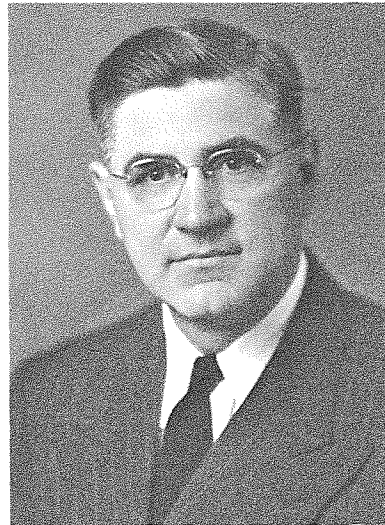
J. P. Scherf
1928 - 1934



E. R. Gamm
1934 - 1938



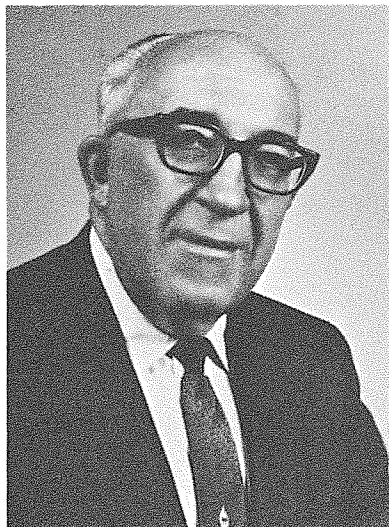
W. T. Meier
1938 - 1946



P. G. Albrecht
1946 - 1958



W. A. Schumann, Jr.
1958 - 1966



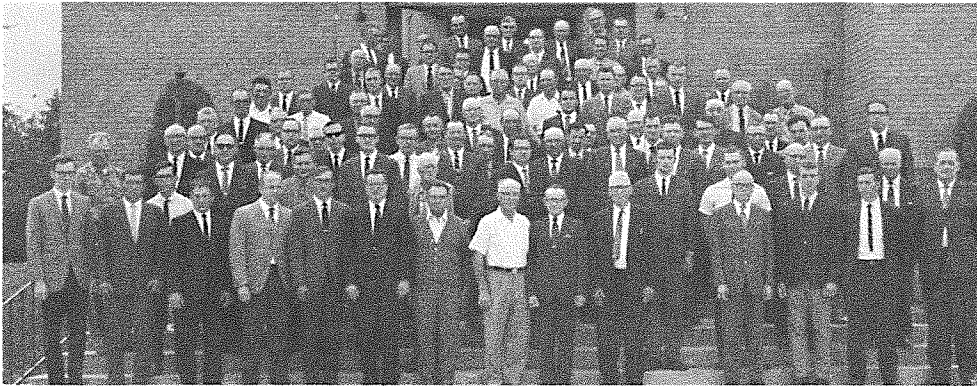
A. P. C. Kell
1966 -

1970 District Officials

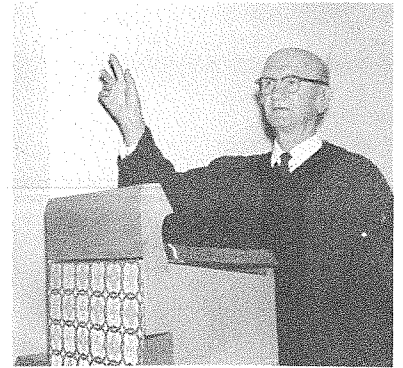
President A. P. C. Kell
1st Vice-president L. A. Dobberstein
2nd Vice-president R. Strobel
Secretary J. M. Engel

Board Chairman

Mission L. A. Dobberstein
Stewardship G. Rothe
Evangelism M. Putz
Education E. Habermann
Student Aid J. Frank
Support G. Bunde



Jubilee Convention Delegates, June 1970



Jubilee Speaker
Pastor Walter Sprengeler,
Member of the District
when it was organized.

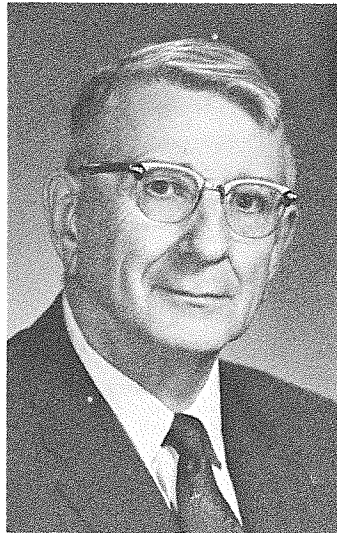
NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN ACADEMY

Northwestern Lutheran Academy, Mobridge, South Dakota, provides students from the Dakota-Montana, Nebraska, Pacific-Northwest, and Arizona-California Districts with a Christian education. Here many are prepared for service in the church. District conventions, pastoral, and delegate conferences are also held here, making the Academy a rallying point for the District.

Academy Faculty



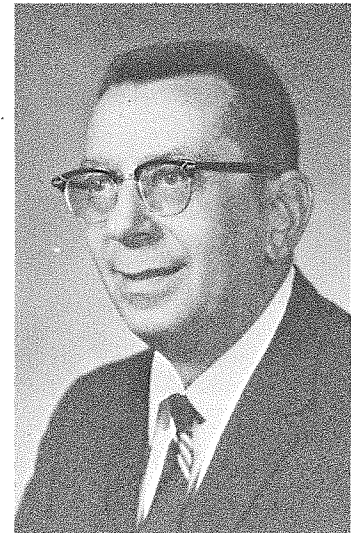
Daniel Malchow, Pres.
1968



Karl G. Sievert
1928



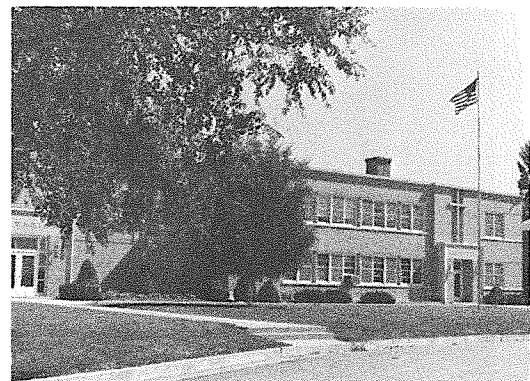
Wayne B. Ten Broek
1954



Victor J. Weyland
1957

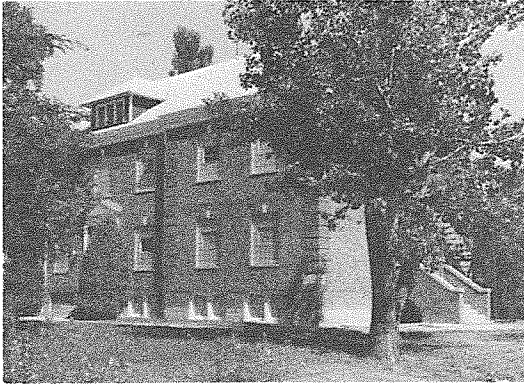


Historic White Building



Auditorium & Administration
Building

NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN ACADEMY

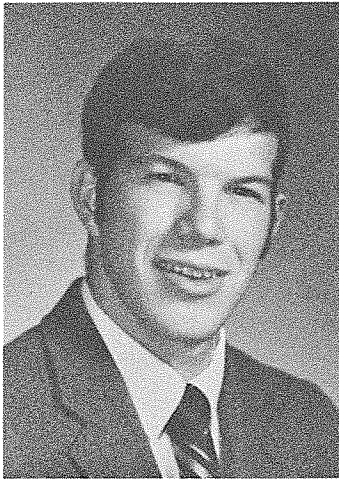


Boys' Dormitory

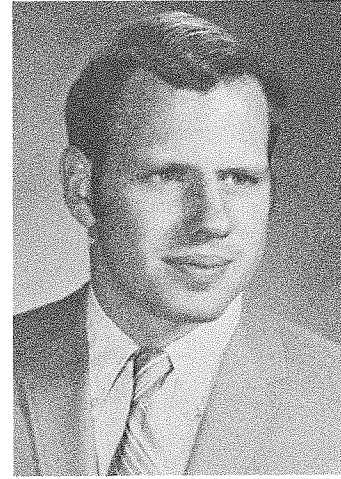
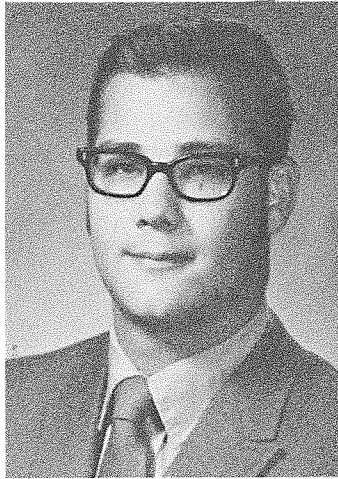


Girls' Dormitory

Daniel P. Luetke,
Ass't. Instructor



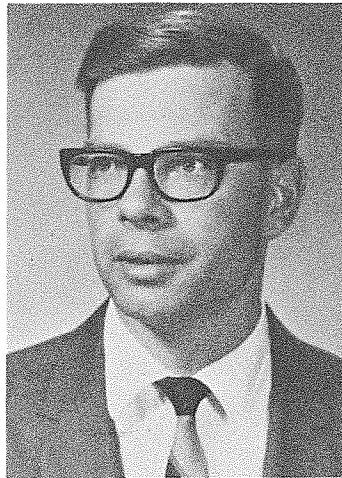
Charles H. Buege,
Ass't. Instructor



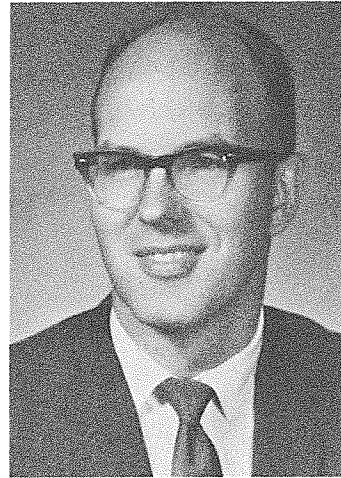
Robert A. Bock,
Ass't. Instructor



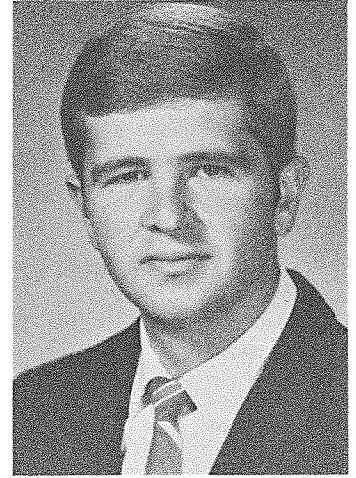
Theodore A. Pelzl
1959



William M. Birsching
1959



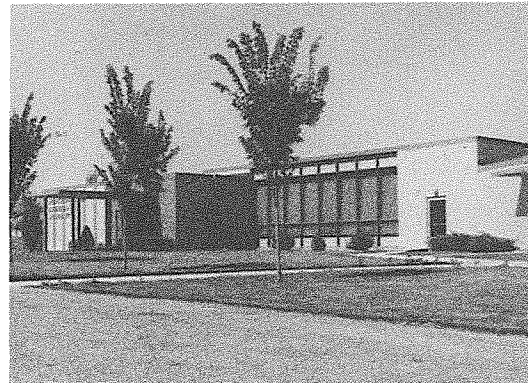
Paul H. Wilde
1970



Ronald C. Georg
1971



Dining Hall Activity



Student Union - Dining Hall

ALBERTA - MONTANA CONFERENCE



Building used by Trinity,
Bashaw, Alberta,
Organized in 1965

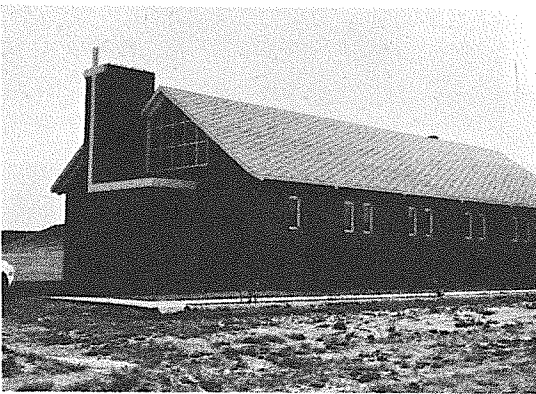
FORMER PASTOR

Ernest Klaszus

Served from Wetaskiwin



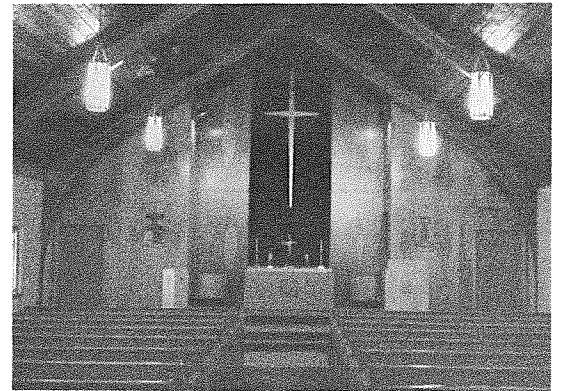
Interior, Trinity, Bashaw, Alberta



Salem, Circle, Montana, Organized in 1933

FORMER PASTORS

Ernest Kuehl
Otto Heier
Oscar Lemke
Allen Hoff
Alfred Walther
Harry Wiedmann
Jerome Spaude
Richard Strobel
Theodore Kretzmann
James Humann
Paul Stuebs



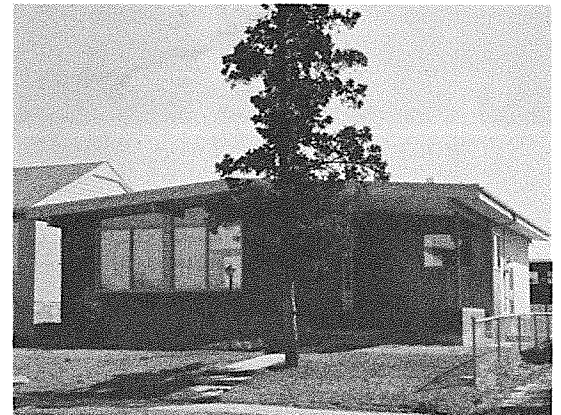
Interior, Salem Circle, Montana
Served from Wolf Point



St. Matthew's, Edmonton, Alberta, Organized
in 1963

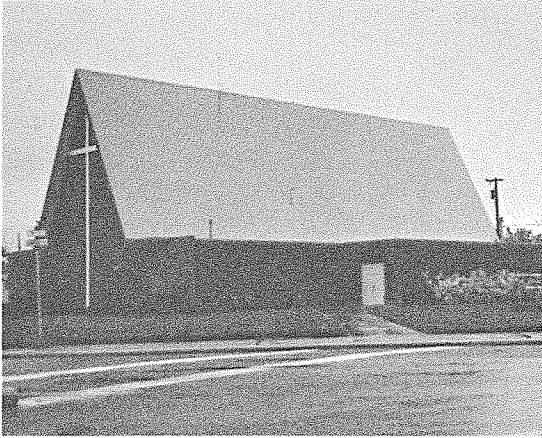
FORMER PASTORS

Dieter Mueller, Vicar
Waldemar O. Loescher
Richard W. Strobel,
Vacancy Pastor



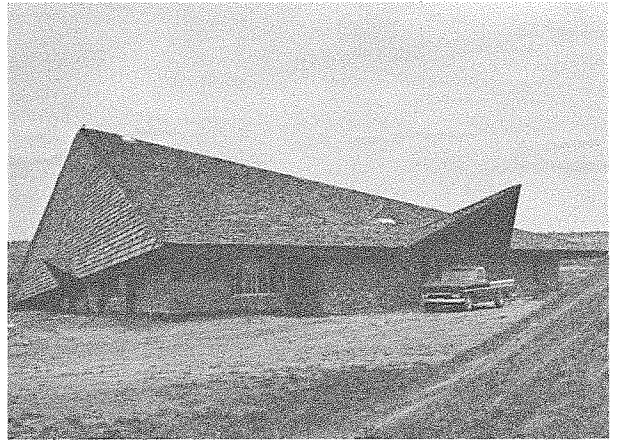
Parsonage, Edmonton, Alberta

ALBERTA - MONTANA CONFERENCE



Faith, Billings, Montana
(Now sold)
Organized 1954

Faith Lutheran merged
with Lamb of God
Lutheran in 1969 to
form Apostles Lutheran
Church.



Apostles, Billings, Montana



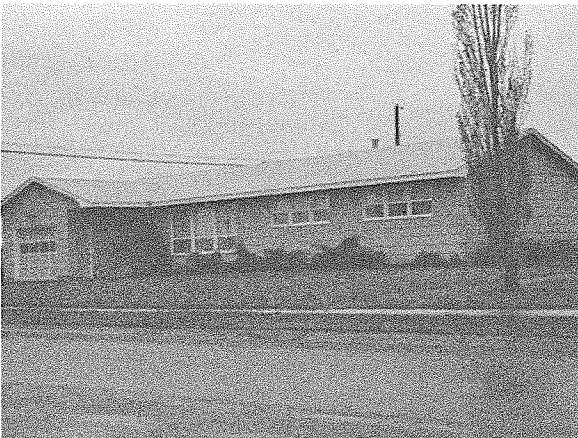
Pastor Harold Wood

FORMER PASTORS

Harry N. Wiedmann
Norbert R. Meier
James Schneider



Teacher Jerome Scheitel
Apostles Lutheran School
Opened 1970



Old Teacherage



New Teacherage

ALBERTA - MONTANA CONFERENCE



Trinity, Ekalaka, Montana
Organized 1956

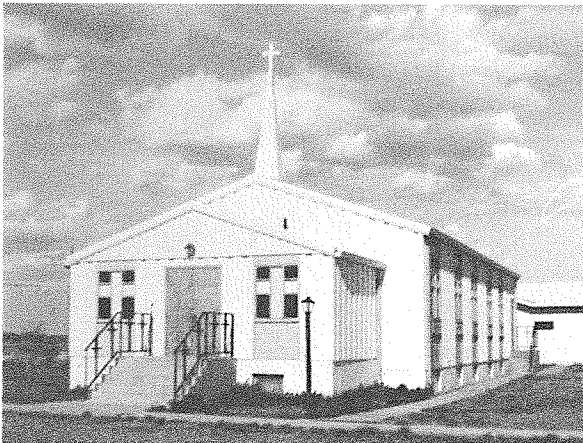
FORMER PASTORS

Leland Wurster
Vicar Lowell Smith
Vicar Melvin Schwark
Vicar Donald Dengler

Served from
Glendive, Montana



Interior, Trinity, Ekalaka, Montana



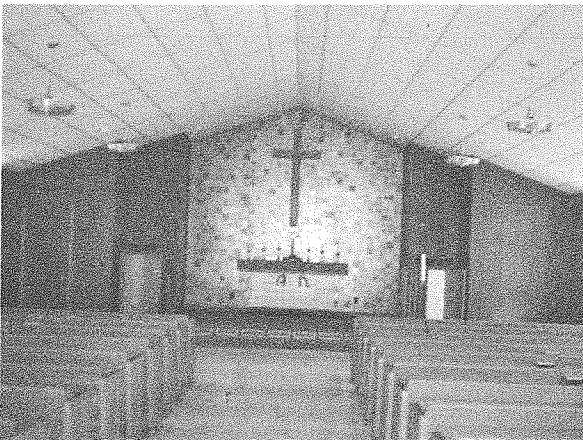
Messiah, Glendive, Montana
Organized 1958

FORMER PASTORS

Jerome Spaude
Kenneth Lenz
James Humann
Paul Stuebs



Pastor Robert Weimer

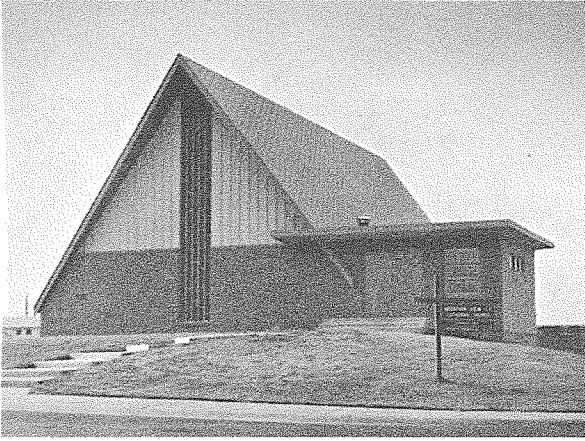


Interior, Messiah, Glendive, Montana

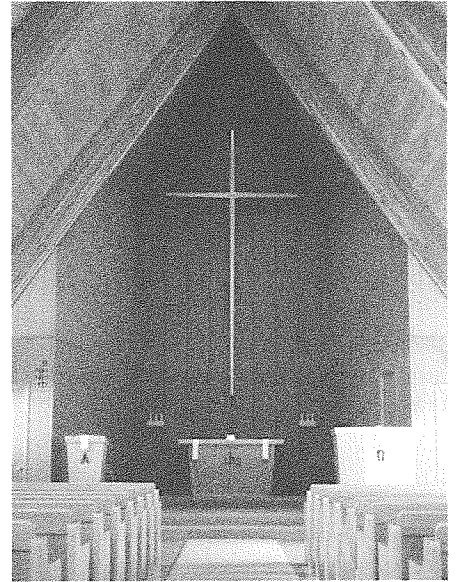


Parsonage, Glendive, Montana

ALBERTA - MONTANA CONFERENCE



Mountain View, Great Falls,
Montana, Organized 1961



Interior, Mountain View
Great Falls, Montana



Pastor John Sullivan

FORMER PASTORS

David Valleskey
Roland Zimmermann

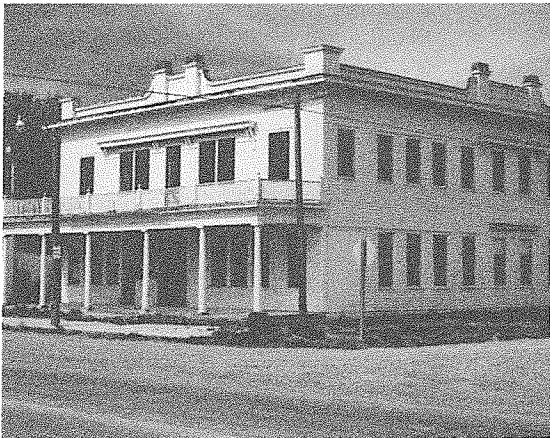


Parsonage, Great Falls, Montana

FORMER PASTORS

Norbert Meier
James Schneider

Served from
Winnett, Montana

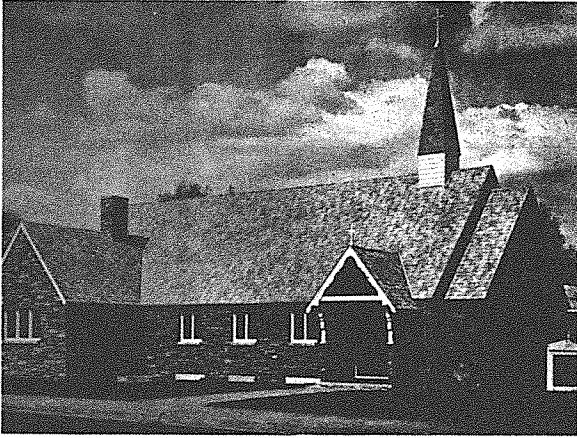


Building used by Holy Trinity
Lavina, Montana
Organized 1959



Interior, Holy Trinity
Lavina, Montana

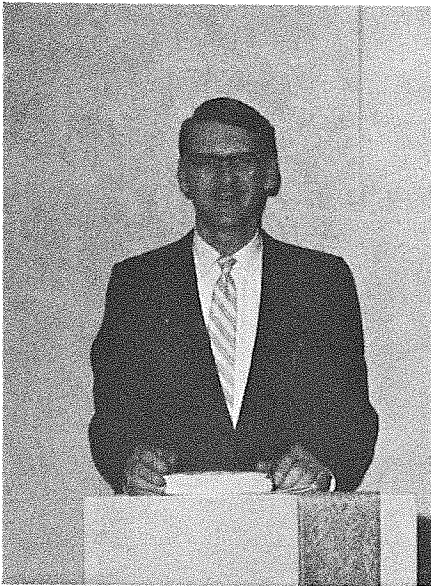
ALBERTA - MONTANA CONFERENCE



St. Paul's, Livingston, Montana
Organized 1949



Interior, St. Paul's, Livingston,
Montana



Pastor Kenneth Lenz

FORMER PASTORS

- Alfred Walther
- Norman Bafenz
- Gerald Hinz
- David Valleskey



Parsonage, Livingston, Montana



Faith, Melstone, Montana
Organized 1959

FORMER PASTORS

- Vicar Norbert Meier
- Vicar Victor Thierfelder
- Norbert Meier
- David Zietlow

Served from
Winnett, Montana

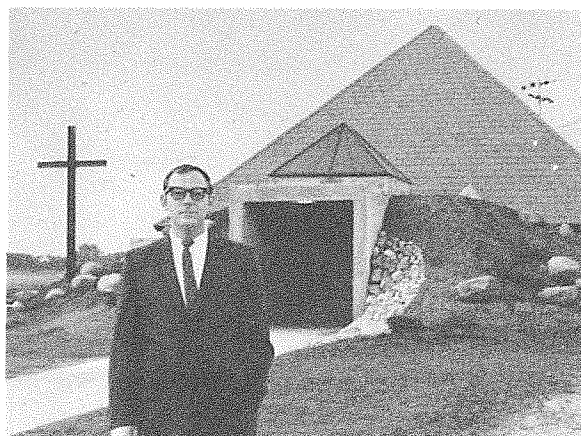


Interior, Faith, Melstone,
Montana

ALBERTA - MONTANA CONFERENCE



St. Peter's, St. Albert,
Alberta, Organized 1966



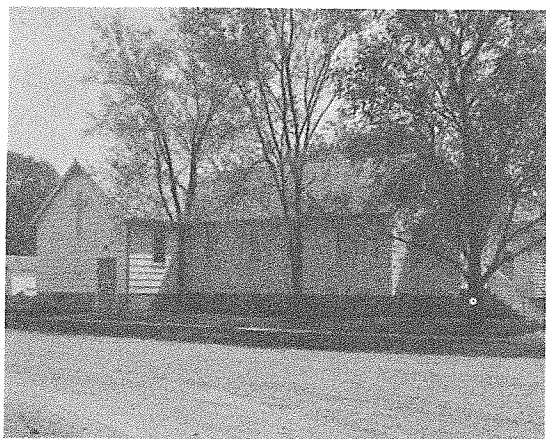
Pastor Daniel Deutschlander



Parsonage, St. Albert, Alberta

FORMER PASTOR

Ernest Klaszus



Trinity, Terry, Montana
Organized 1937
Served from Glendive

FORMER PASTORS

O. P. Medenwald
Frank Wittfaut
R. A. Kettenacker
E. M. Bode
Hogey W. Bergholz
A. Walther
Leland Wurster
Vicar Donald Dengler

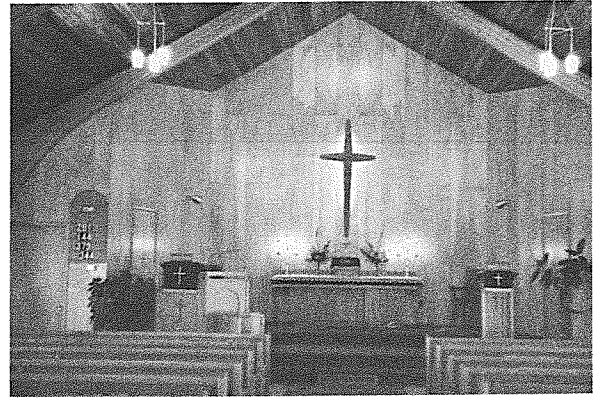


Interior, Terry, Montana

ALBERTA - MONTANA CONFERENCE



St. John's Wetaskiwin,
Alberta, Organized 1965



Interior, St. John's,
Wetaskiwin



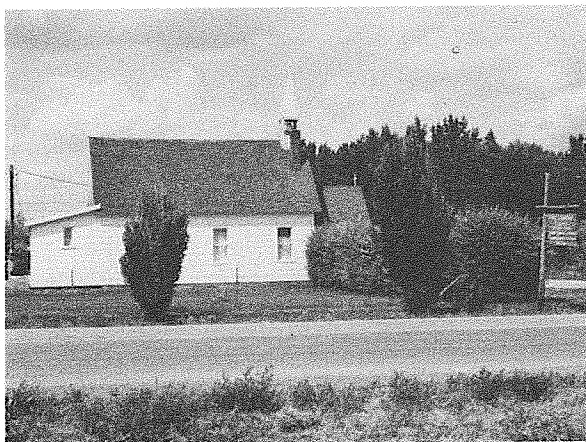
Pastor Richard Strobel

FORMER PASTOR

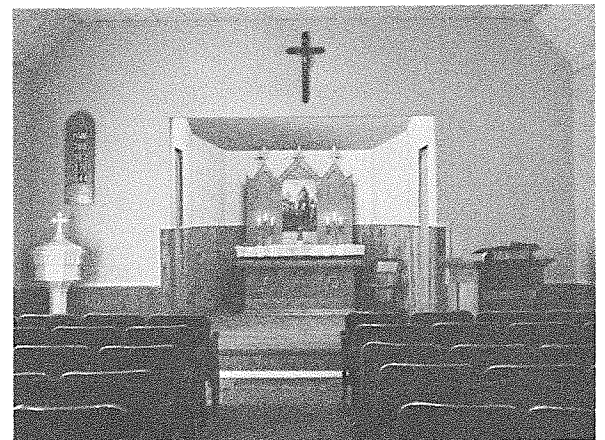
Waldemar Loescher



Parsonage, Wetaskiwin, Alberta



First Lutheran, Winnett,
Montana, Organized 1952



Interior, First Lutheran,
Winnett, Montana

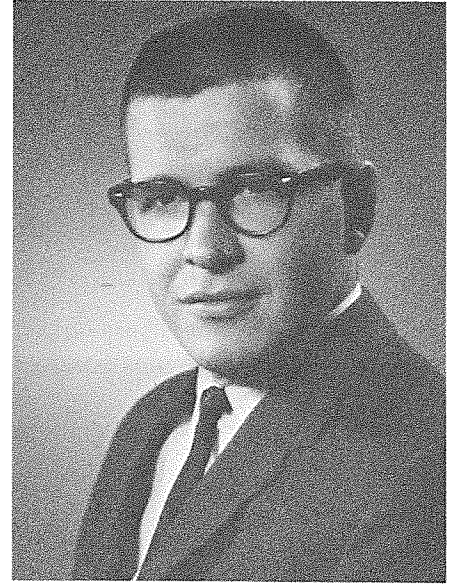
ALBERTA - MONTANA CONFERENCE



Parsonage, Winnett, Montana

FORMER PASTORS

- Walter Leege
- Vicar Norbert Meier
- Vicar Victor Thierfelder
- Norbert Meier
- David Zietlow



Pastor Joel Frank

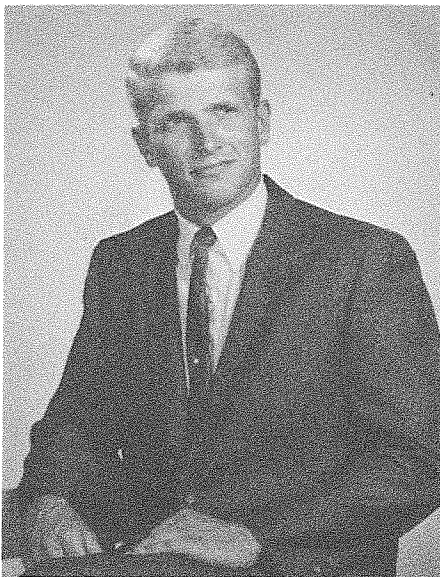


The Vida (Presserville)
Congregation moved to
Wolf Point in 1970

Good Shepherd, Wolf Point,
Montana, Organized 1949



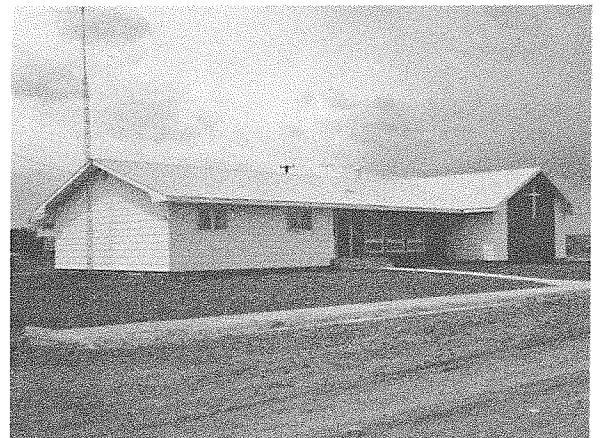
Interior, Good Shepherd,
Wolf Point, Montana



Pastor Paul Stuebs

FORMER PASTORS

- Alfred Walther
- Harry Wiedmann
- Leland Wurster
- Jerome Spaude
- Leland Wurster
- Richard Strobel
- Kenneth Lenz
- Theodore Kretzmann
- James Humann



Parsonage, Wolf Point, Montana

EASTERN CONFERENCE

FORMER PASTORS

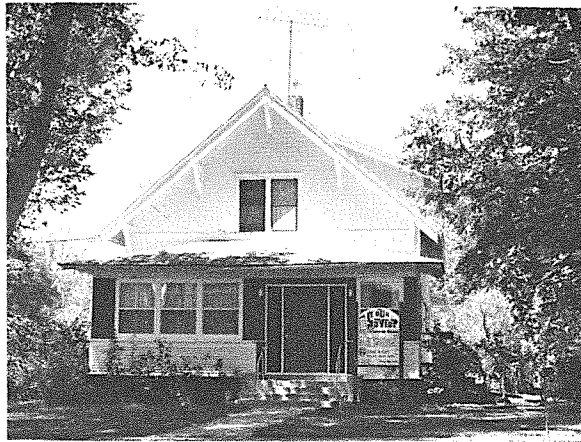
Christian Boettcher
R. Polzin
E. L. Luebbert
H. Hupfer
R. Polzin
August Sauer
Wm. C. Albrecht
H. Atrops
H. L. Sprenger
F. G. Reuter
R. A. Kettenacker
Robert Steffenhagen
Roy Reede
H. A. Birner
H. Witte
C. L. Reiter
Vicar David Valleskey
Chester Cone
Loyal Schroeder



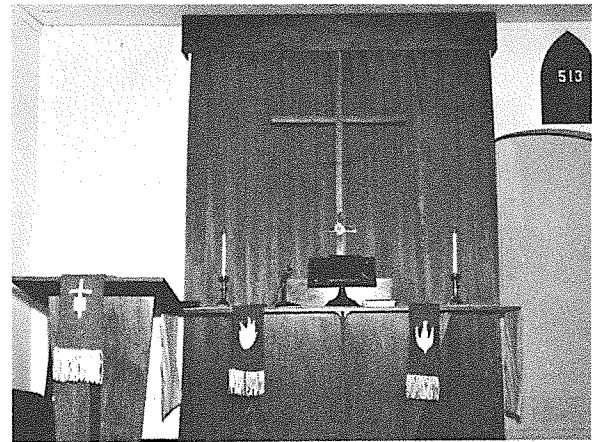
St. Paul's, Argo Township, S. D.
Organized 1883
Served from Brookings, S. D.



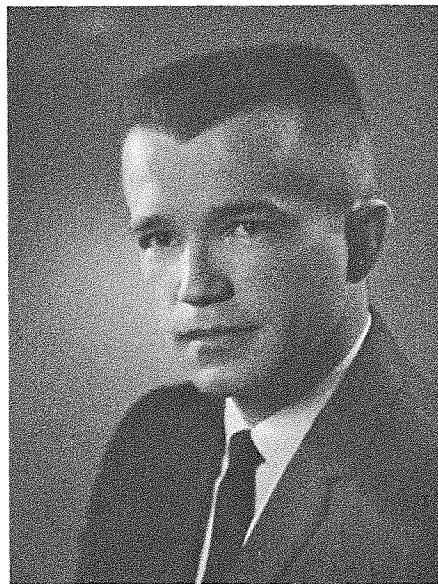
Interior, St. Paul's, Argo Township, S. D.



Our Savior Chapel and Student House,
Brookings, South Dakota
Organized 1967



Interior, Our Savior Chapel,
Brookings, South Dakota



Pastor Ronald Heins

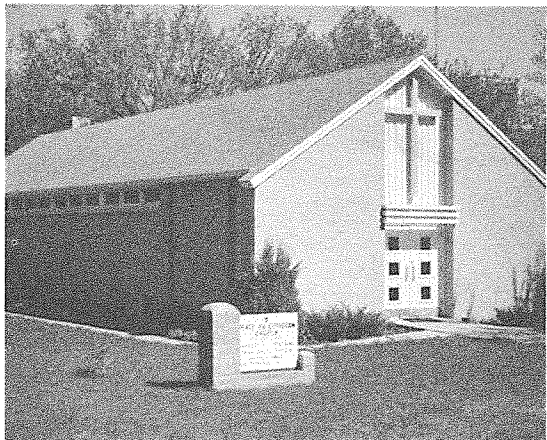
FORMER PASTORS

J. Brandt
L. Ellenberger



Parsonage, Brookings, S. D.

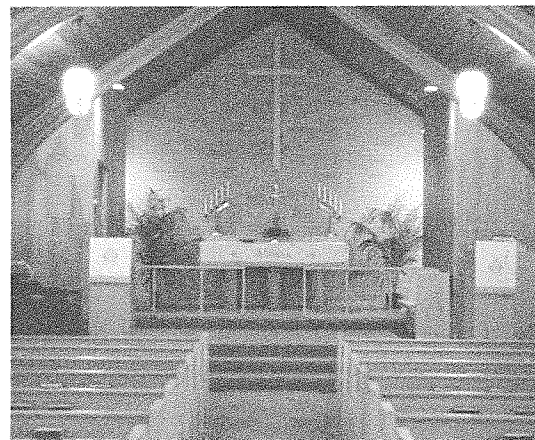
EASTERN CONFERENCE



Peace, Clark, South Dakota
Organized 1923
Served from Raymond

FORMER PASTORS

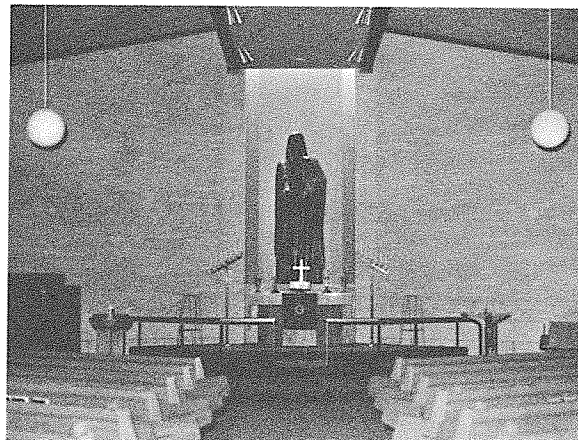
M. Keturakat
W. T. Meier
R. J. Palmer
G. Schmeling
W. Zickuhr
H. Hempel
R. T. Beckmann
E. Hallstein
M. Schroeder
R. Zink
Vicar L. Ellenberger
D. Ninmer



Interior, Peace, Clark, S. D.



Trinity, Clear Lake, S. D.
Organized 1935



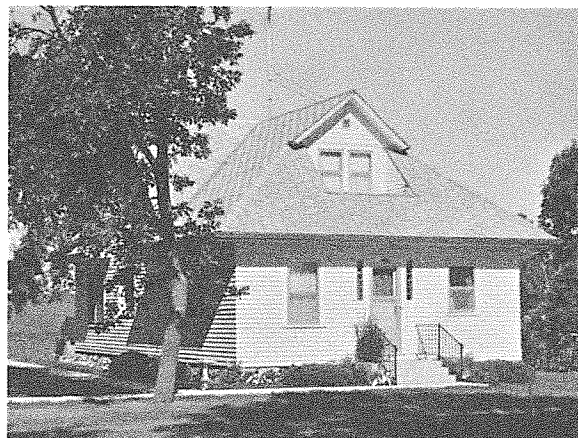
Interior, Trinity, Clear Lake, S. D.



Pastor R. H. Roth

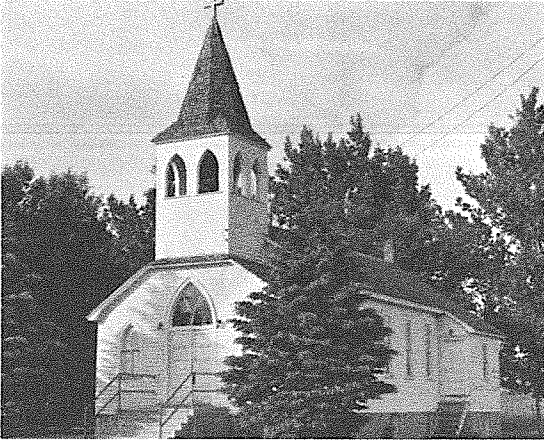
FORMER PASTORS

Donald Rossin
Helmuth Rutz
Egbert Schaller
Hans Schultz
D. Kuehl
Friedel Schulz
Daniel Gieschen
Albert Sippert
John Brandt



Parsonage, Clear Lake, S. D.

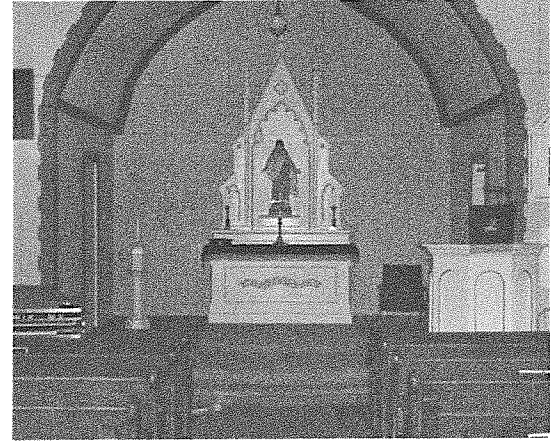
EASTERN CONFERENCE



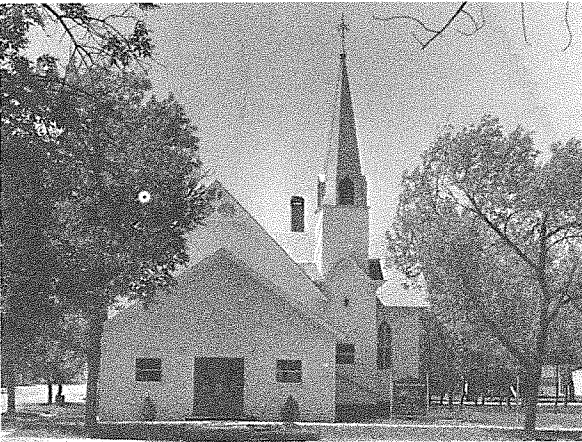
St. John's, Dempster, S. D.
Organized 1912
Served from Estelline

FORMER PASTORS

W. C. Hellbusch
O. Klett
R. Vollmers
H. Lau
L. Lehmann
A. Sippert
E. Bode
H. Birner
H. Witte
H. Ellwein



Interior, St. John's, Dempster, S. D.



Trinity, Elkton, South Dakota
Organized 1889



Interior, Trinity, Elkton, S. D.



Pastor Keith Haberkorn

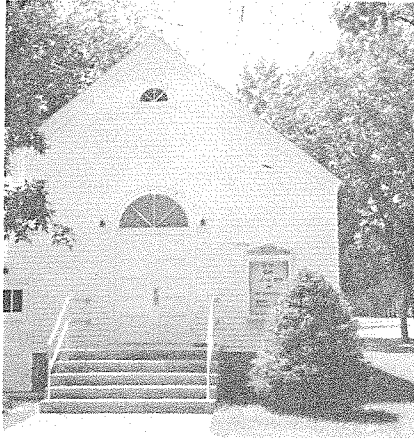
FORMER PASTORS

R. Polzin
J. Ch. Albrecht
G. M. Schoemperlen
J. Dammann
G. Fischer
C. Mikulski
J. Monich
A. W. Eggert
H. C. Sprenger
J. Engel
Wm. J. Lindloff
R. Wendland
L. Ellenberger

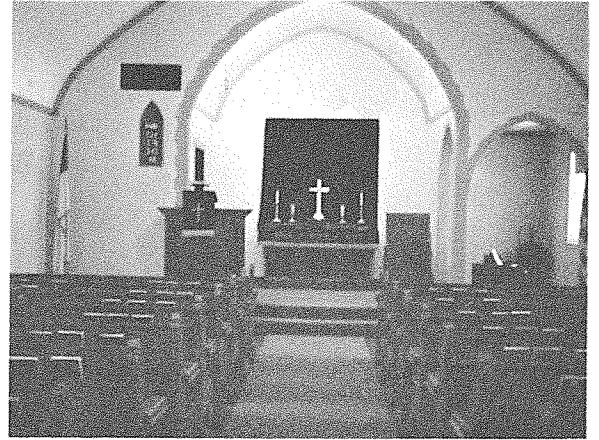


Parsonage, Elkton, S. D.

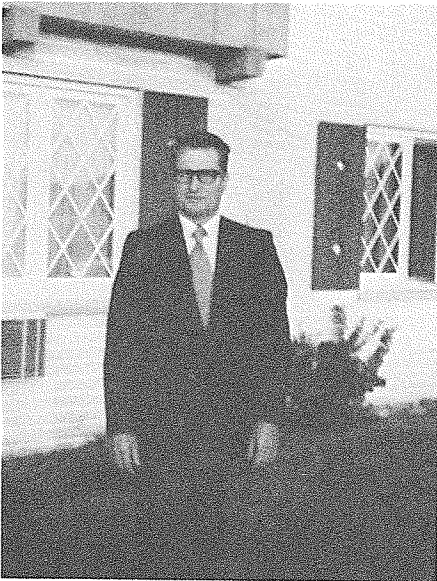
EASTERN CONFERENCE



Mt. Calvary, Estelline, S. D.
Organized 1937



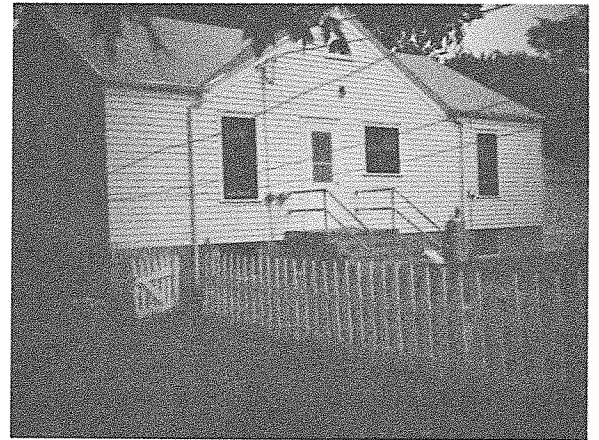
Interior, Mt. Calvary, Estelline, S. D.



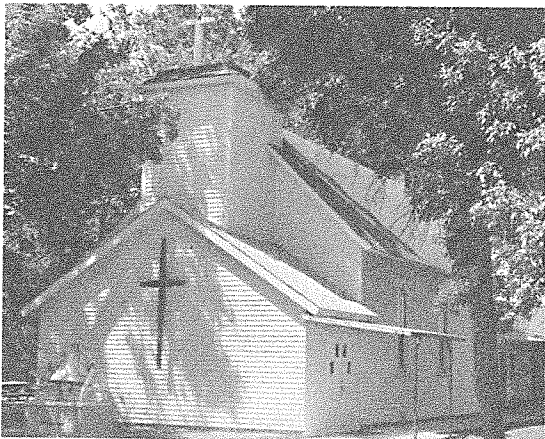
Pastor Henry Ellwein

FORMER PASTORS

E. John
F. Ehlert
W. C. Hellbusch
O. Klett
R. Vollmers
H. Lau
L. Lehmann
A. Sippert
E. Bode
H. Birner
H. Witte
H. Ellwein



Estelline Parsonage



St. Peter's, Goodwin, South Dakota
Organized 1898
Served from South Shore

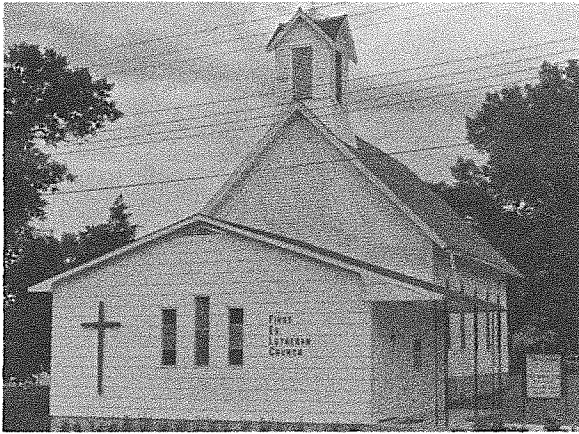
FORMER PASTORS

Mlotkowsky
O. Wolff
Frank Ehlert
E. Kolander
H. Lau
D. Rossin
W. F. Dorn
A. A. Hellman
E. Semenske
R. Reimers
V. Thierfelder
J. Schneider



Interior, St. Peter's, Goodwin

EASTERN CONFERENCE



First, Gary, South Dakota
Organized 1924



Interior, First, Gary, S. D.



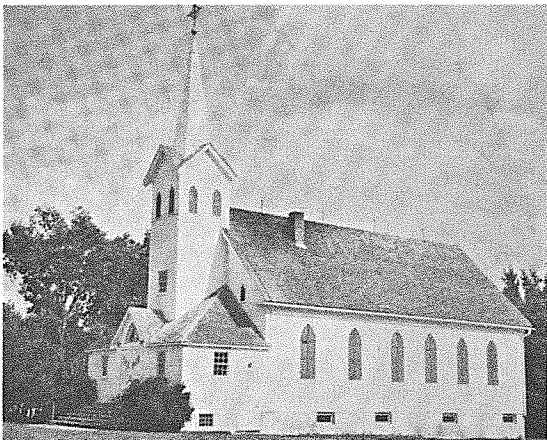
Pastor Gerald Geiger

FORMER PASTORS

- H. Lau
- Donald Rossin
- F. C. Reuter
- H. Rutz
- Wm. Lange
- Harold Hempel
- Roy Reede
- Gerhard Eckert
- Warren Steffenhagen



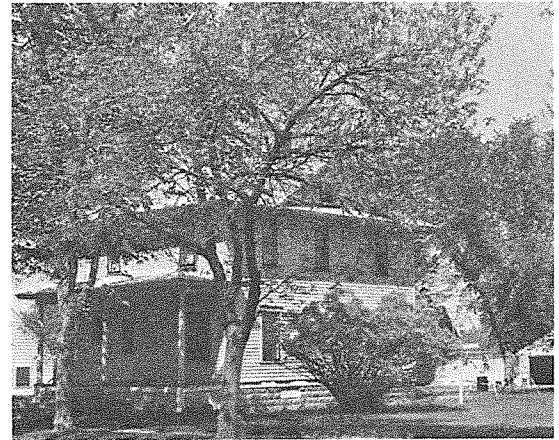
Parsonage, Gary, S. D.



Emmanuel, Grover, S. D.
Organized 1884
Served from Henry, S. D.

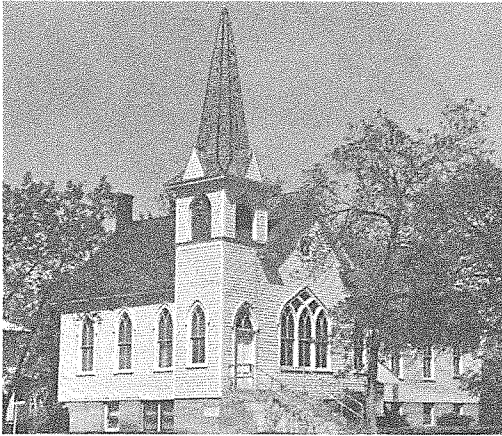
FORMER PASTORS

- Christian Boettcher
- Johann Johl
- Emil L. Luebbert
- Emil G. Fritz
- John R. Baumann
- Max Michaels
- Theophil Albrecht
- August Pamperin
- Karl G. Sievert
- Walter F. Sprengeler
- H. E. Rutz
- Christian Albrecht
- Arthur P. C. Kell



Parsonage, Hendricks, Minnesota

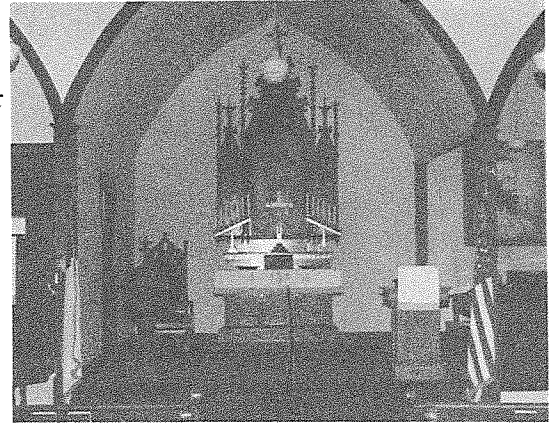
EASTERN CONFERENCE



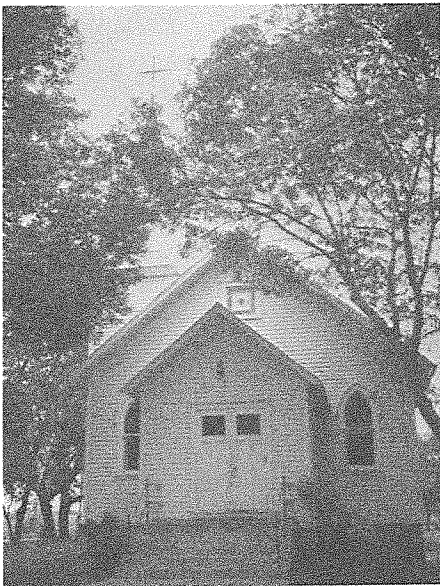
Trinity, Hendricks, Minnesota
Organized 1890
Served from Gary, S. D.

FORMER PASTORS

C. Boettcher; R. Polzin & H. Hupfer
R. Polzin
A. Sauer
Wm. Albrecht
H. Atrops
H. L. Sprenger
A. H. Birner
R. E. Bretzmann
F. C. Nitz
C. L. Reiter
David Valleskey
Chester E. Cone, Jr.
Loyal Schroeder



Interior, Trinity,
Hendricks, Minnesota



St. Paul's, Henry, S. D.
Organized 1894

FORMER PASTORS

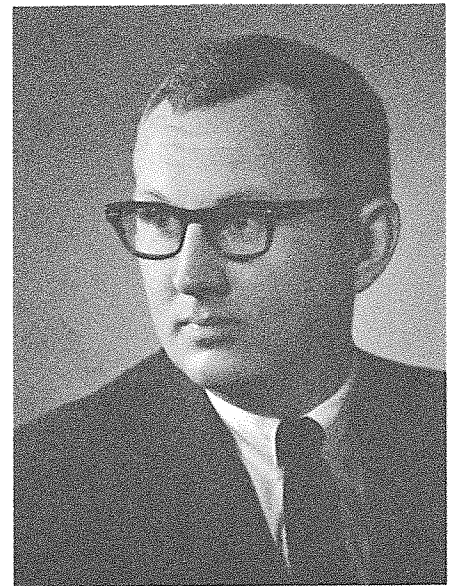
Christian Boettcher
J. Johl, E. Luebbert, G. Lahme
G. E. Fritzke
E. G. Fritz
J. Baumann
Max Michaels
G. Schmeling
B. R. Hahm
Wayne TenBroek
Clarence Hanson
Paul Schliesser



Interior, St. Paul's, Henry, S. D.

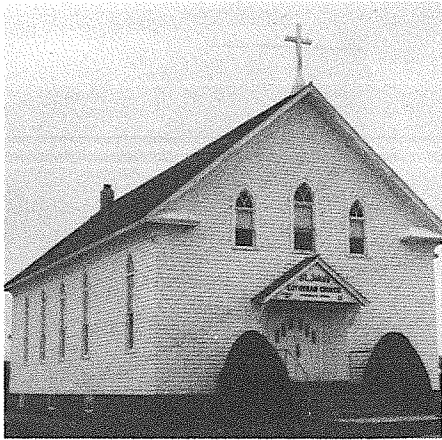


Parsonage, Henry, S. D.



Pastor Raymond Ziebell

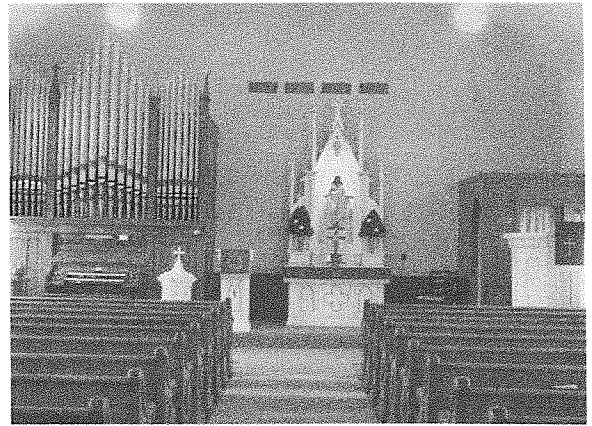
EASTERN CONFERENCE



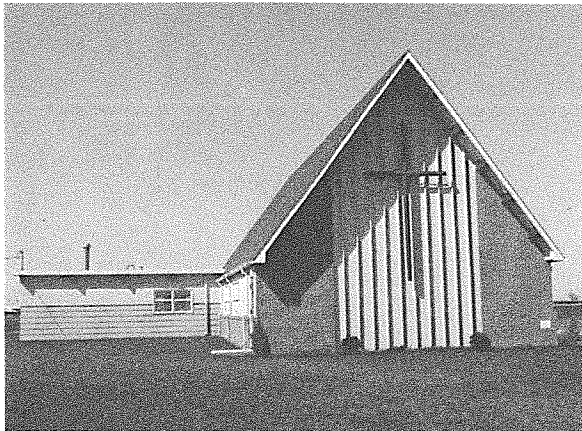
St. John's, Mazeppa Township,
South Dakota, Organized 1888
Served with Rauville

FORMER PASTORS

F. Johl
G. E. Fritzke
E. G. Fritz
E. L. Luebbert
R. Polzin
Paul Hinderer
J. Carl Bast
M. W. Keturakat
O. W. Heier
H. C. Schnitker
R. W. Steffenhagen
W. C. Nickels
M. H. Eibs
L. Dobberstein
N. Pommeranz



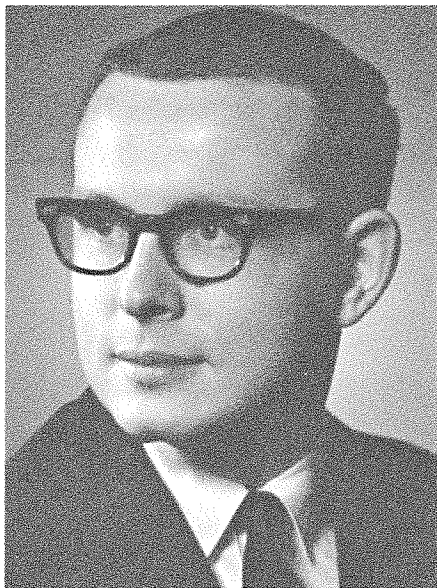
Interior, St. John's, Mazeppa, Township



Ascension, Moorhead, Minnesota
Organized 1965



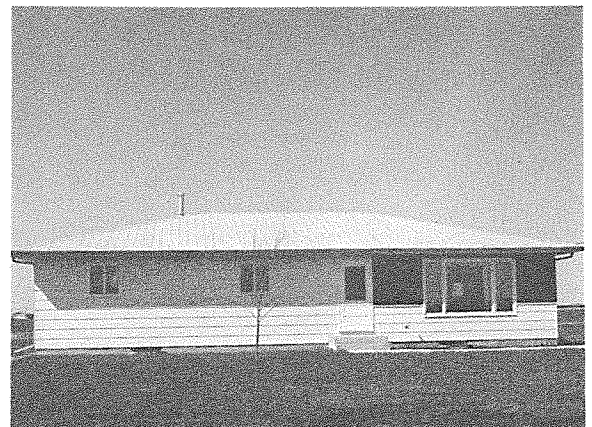
Interior, Ascension,
Moorhead, Minnesota



Pastor Martin Schulz

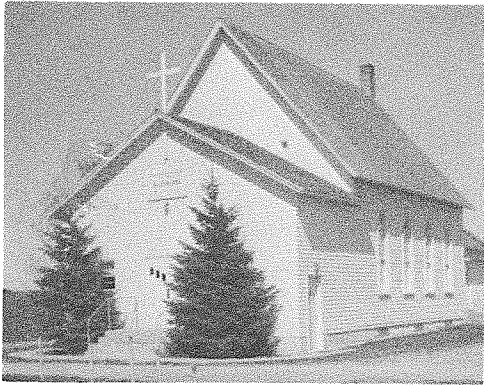
FORMER PASTORS

Marvin Putz
Vicar Dennis Hayes



Parsonage, Moorhead, Minnesota

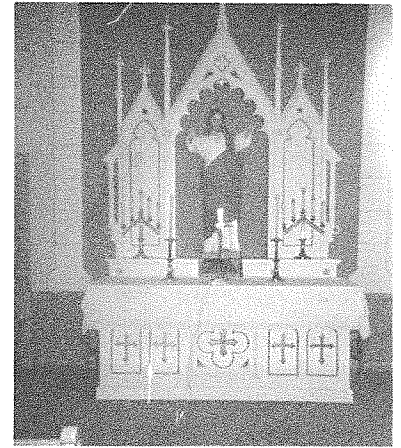
EASTERN CONFERENCE



**St. John's, Rauville
Township, S. D.
Organized 1889
Served with Mazeppa**

FORMER PASTORS

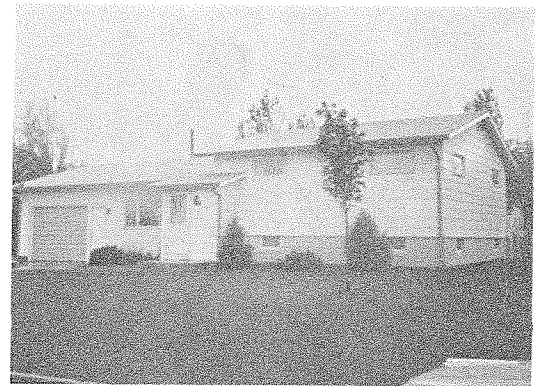
- Chr. Boettcher
- F. Johl
- E. Luebbert
- R. Polzin
- W. Sauer
- O. E. Klett
- J. B. Erhardt
- G. Schlegel
- M. H. Lemke
- B. A. Borgschatz
- M. H. Eibs
- L. Dobberstein
- N. Pommeranz
- P. Schliesser



Interior, St. John's, Rauville, S. D.



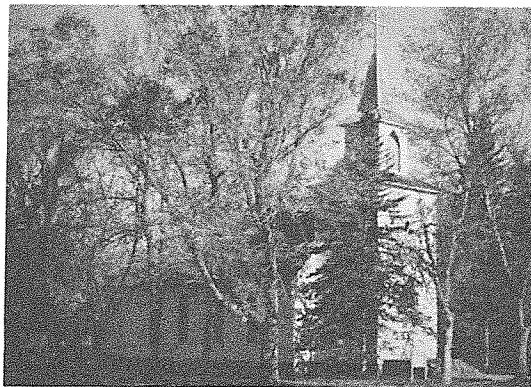
Pastor Walter Herrmann



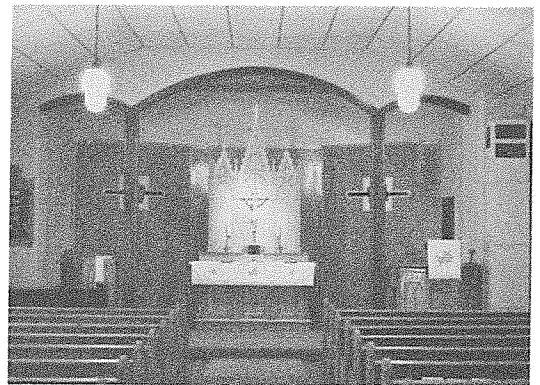
**Parsonage at Watertown, S. D.,
for Rauville and Mazeppa**

FORMER PASTORS

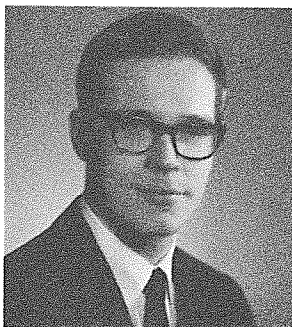
- Franz Johl
- E. Luebbert
- G. Lahme
- G. E. Fritzsche
- E. Fritz
- J. R. Baumann
- G. Adaschek
- M. Michaels
- W. Hellbusch
- Kerber
- L. Koeninger
- M. Keturakat
- W. T. Meier
- A. W. Fuerstenau
- L. Lehmann
- K. Bast
- E. Becker
- R. T. Beckmann
- E. C. Hallstein
- M. Schroeder
- R. Zink
- Vicar L. Ellenberger
- D. Ninmer



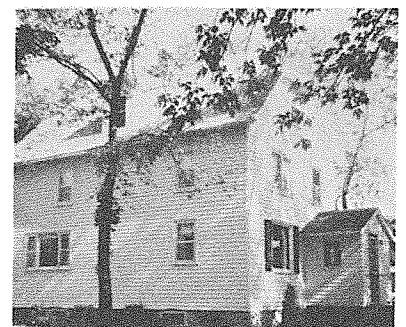
**Bethlehem, Raymond, S. D.
Organized 1884**



Interior, Bethlehem, Raymond, S. D.

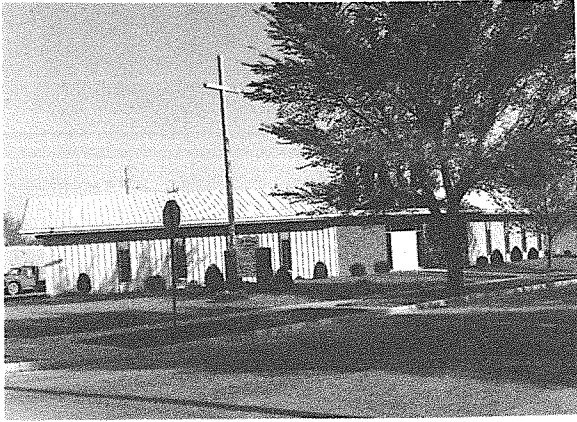


Pastor Gerhold Lemke



Parsonage, Raymond, S. D.

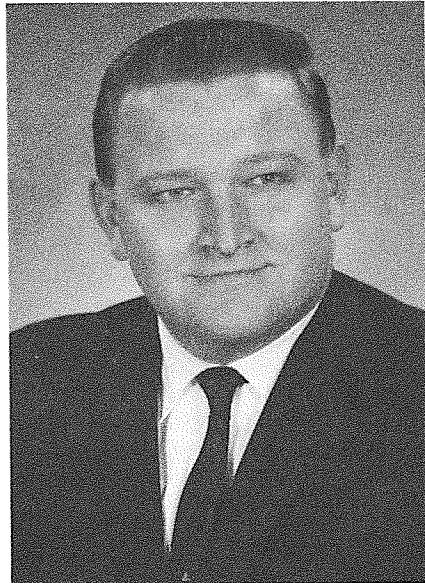
EASTERN CONFERENCE



**Good Shepherd, Sioux Falls, South Dakota
Organized 1957**



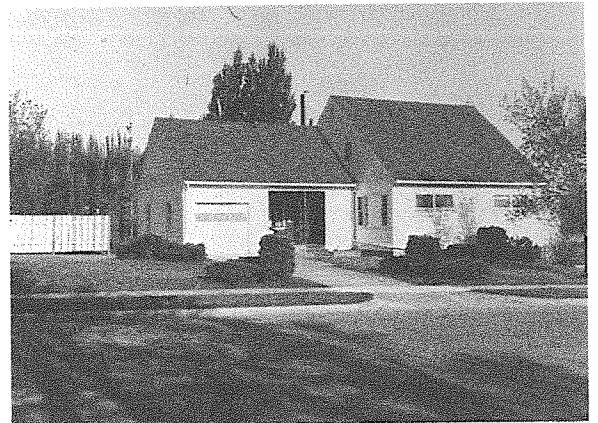
Interior, Good Shepherd, Sioux Falls, S. D.



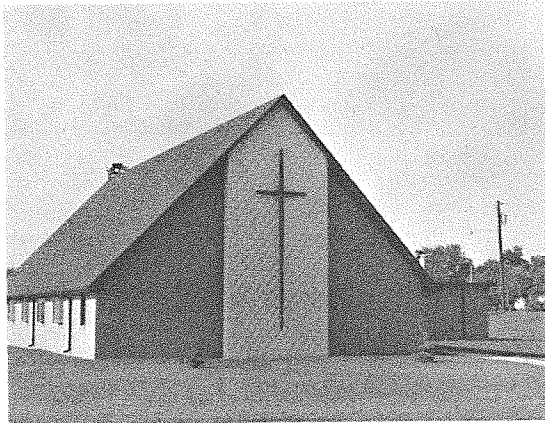
Pastor James Babler

FORMER PASTORS

Neil Jordahl
Herbert A. Birner
David Krenke



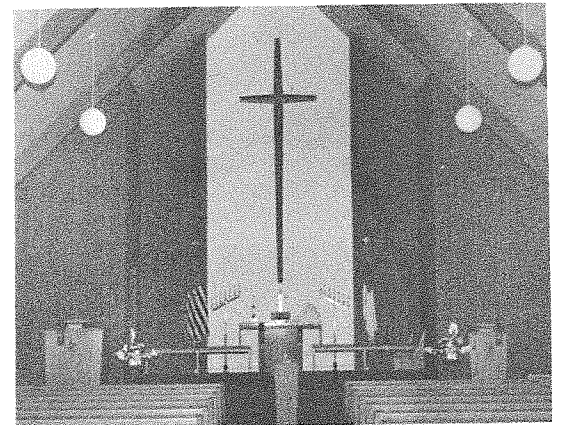
Parsonage, Sioux Falls, S. D.



**Our Savior's, South Shore, South Dakota
Organized 1967, Merger of St. Luke's,
Germantown and Immanuel, South Shore**

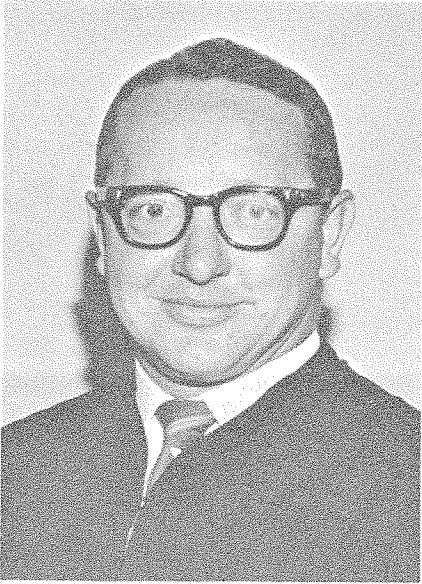
FORMER PASTORS

C. Boettcher
F. Johl
E. Luebbert
R. Polzin
J. Carl Bast
F. Kolander
A. Lenz
H. C. Buch
C. E. Found
H. W. Winkel
W. L. Beckendorf
Vicar Raymond Cox
R. Schultz

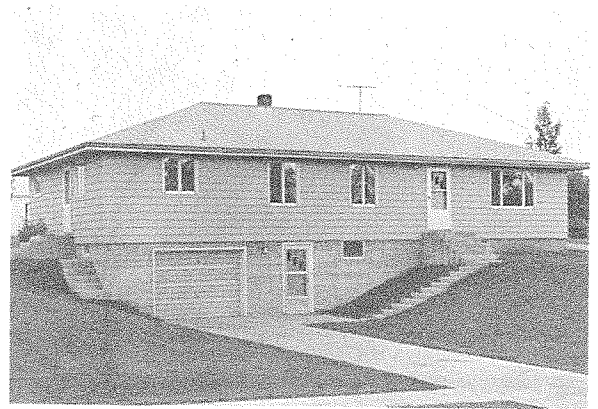


Interior, Our Savior's, South Shore, S. D.

EASTERN CONFERENCE



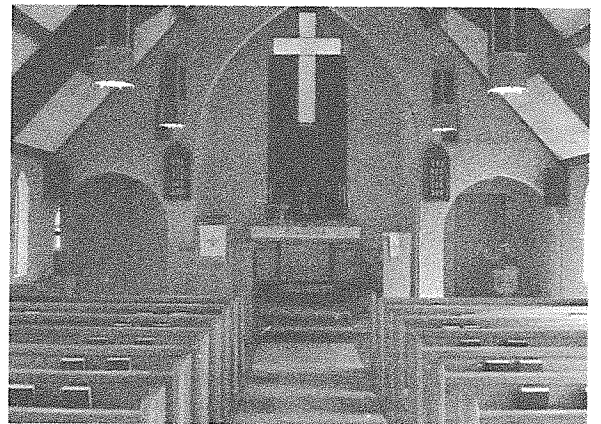
Pastor Edward Werner



Parsonage, South Shore, S. D.



**St. Paul's, Valley City, N. D.
Organized 1935**



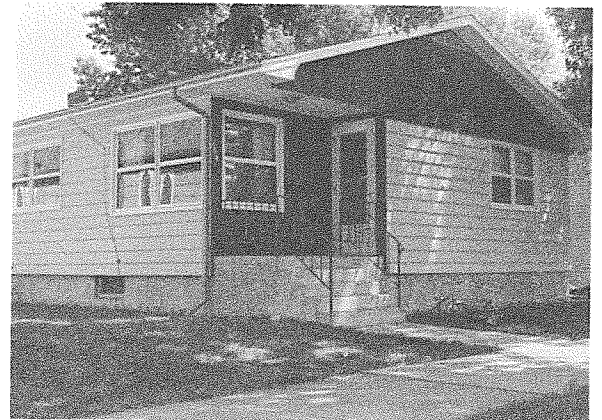
Interior, St. Paul's, Valley City, N.D.



Pastor William Russow

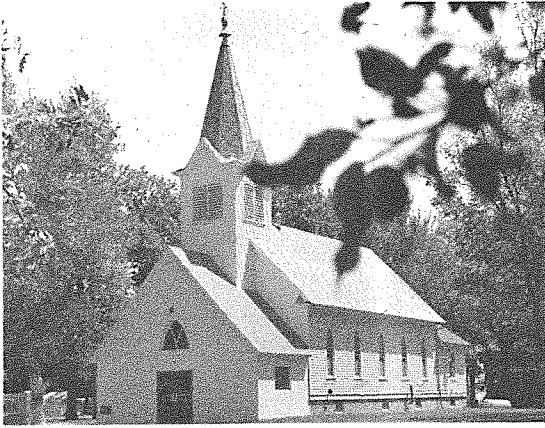
FORMER PASTORS

- J. B. Erhart
- William Lange
- J. B. Erhart
- W. Dorn
- J. J. Wendland
- Kurt Eggert
- Donald Kolander
- Martin Lutz
- Marvin Putz
- N. R. Carlson



Parsonage, Valley City, N. D.

EASTERN CONFERENCE



Immanuel, Ward, S. D.
Organized 1886
Served from Elkton, S. D.

FORMER PASTORS

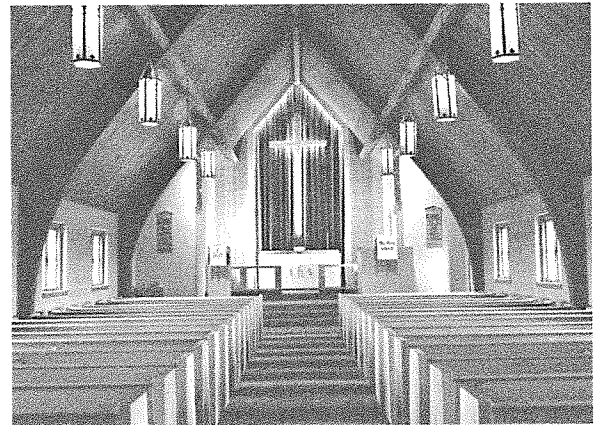
C. Boettcher
A. Reim
R. Polzin
J. Ch. Albrecht
G. H. Schoemperlen
J. Dammann
G. Fischer
G. Mikulski
J. Monich
A. W. Eggert
J. Engel
Wm. J. Lindloff
R. Wendland
L. Ellenberger



Interior, Immanuel, Ward, S. D.



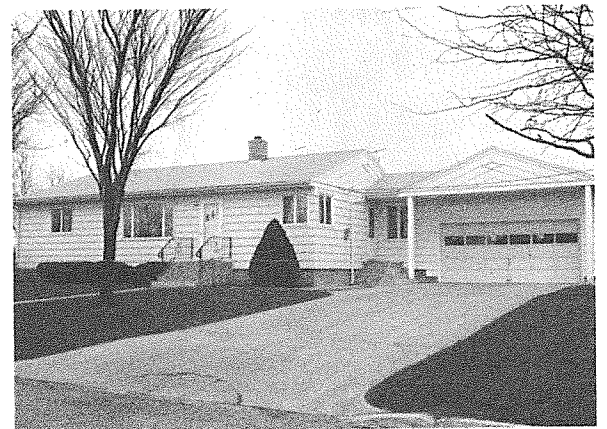
Bethlehem, Watertown, S. D.
Organized 1956



Interior, Bethlehem, Watertown, S. D.

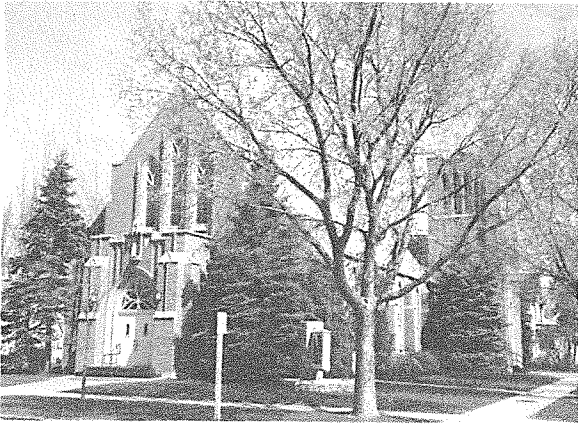


Pastor A. P. C. Kell,
District President



Parsonage, Bethlehem,
Watertown, S. D.

EASTERN CONFERENCE



**St. Martin's, Watertown, S. D.
Organized 1886**



**Interior, St. Martin's,
Watertown, S. D.**



Pastor Elwood C. Habermann

FORMER PASTORS

- C. Boettcher
- J. Johl
- E. Luebbert
- R. Polzin
- W. F. Sauer
- W. T. Meier
- W. A. Schumann



**Parsonage - - St. Martin's,
Watertown, South Dakota**

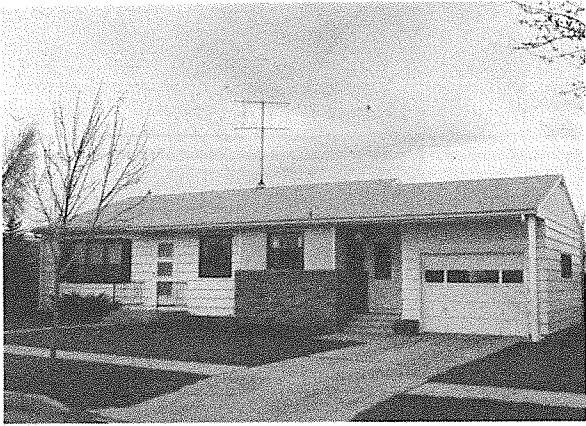


**St. Martin's Christian Day School
Watertown, South Dakota, Opened 1914**

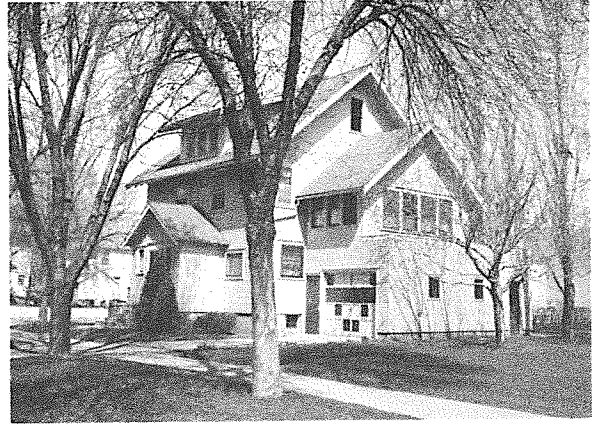


**Faculty at St. Martin's, Left to Right,
A. Roehler, K. Degner, R. Menk,
S. Eckhard, & K. Wendt**

EASTERN CONFERENCE



Teacherage, St. Martin's,
Watertown, South Dakota



Lady Teacher's Residence,
St. Martin's, Watertown, S. D.



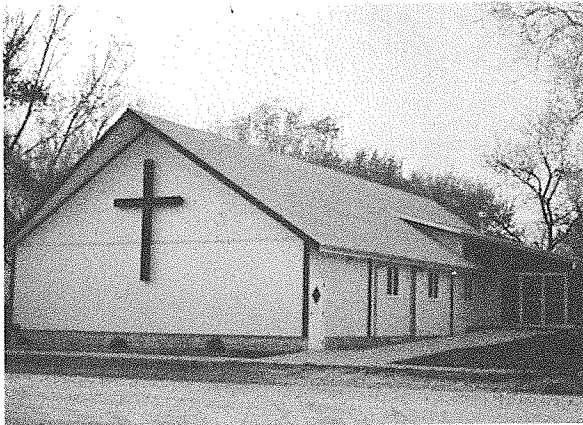
Bethlehem, Hague
Township, South Dakota
Organized 1885
Served from Willow Lake

FORMER PASTORS

- J. Johl
- E. L. Luebbert
- G. Lahme
- G. E. Fritzke
- E. G. Fritz
- J. R. Baumann
- M. C. Michaels
- R. J. Palmer
- H. C. Schnitker
- G. Schmeling
- B. R. Hahm
- W. H. Zickuhr
- A. L. Wood
- R. F. Zimmermann *



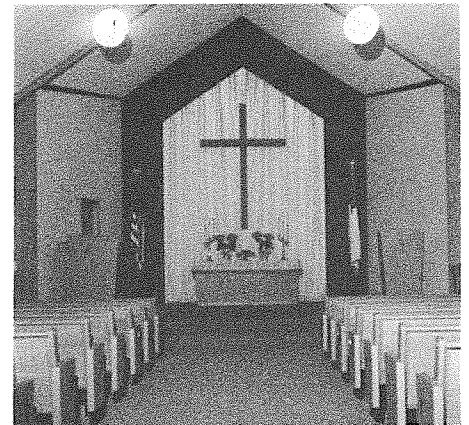
Interior, Bethlehem, Hague
Township, South Dakota



Willow Lake, Willow Lake,
South Dakota
Organized 1923

FORMER PASTORS

- K. G. Sievert
- R. J. Palmer
- H. C. Schnitker
- W. H. Zickuhr
- A. L. Wood
- R. F. Zimmermann

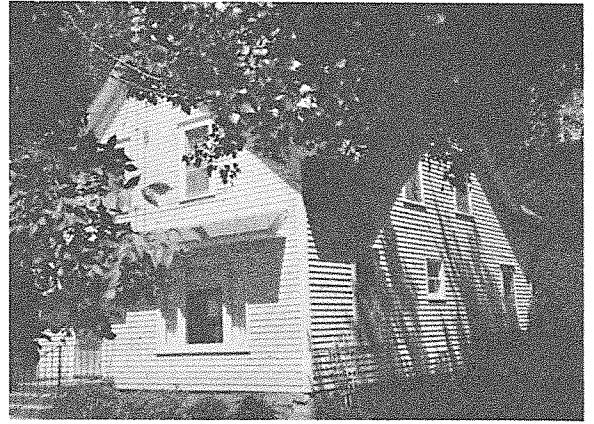


Interior, Willow Lake,
Willow Lake, S. D.

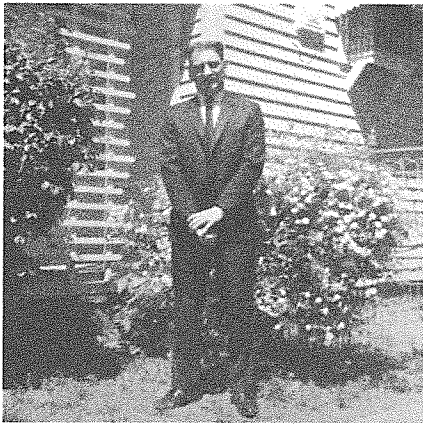
EASTERN CONFERENCE



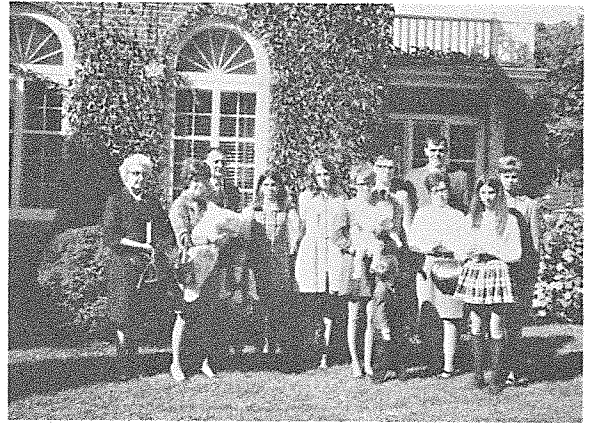
Pastor Gilbert Bunde
Willow Lake, S. D.



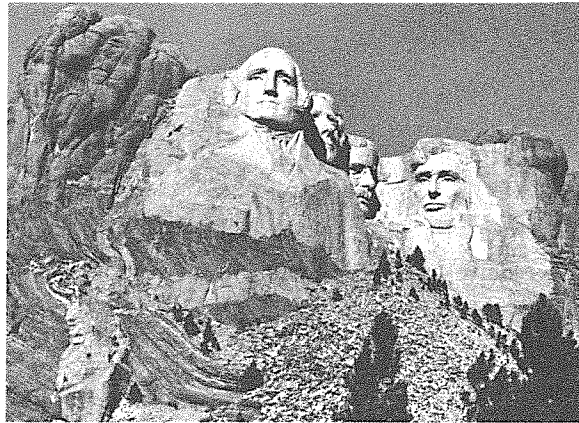
Parsonage, Willow
Lake, S. D.



District Missionary,
John Engel,
Serving in this
capacity since 1969.

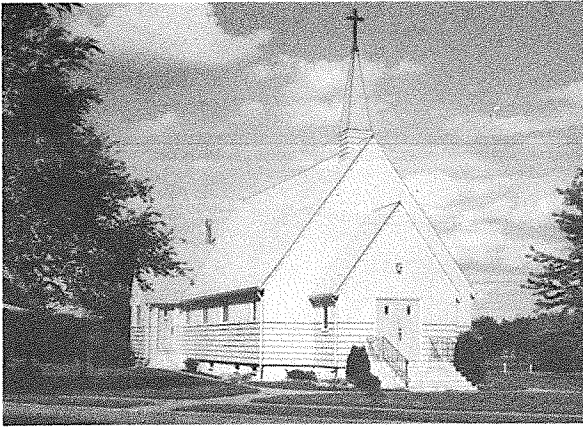


A typical Sunday morning gathering
at District Missionary's exploratory
service at Yankton, South Dakota

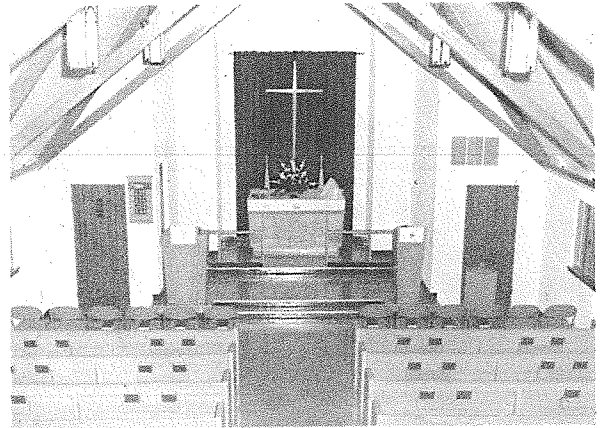


Many and varied also are God's
blessings in the beauty of nature
in the Dakota-Montana District.

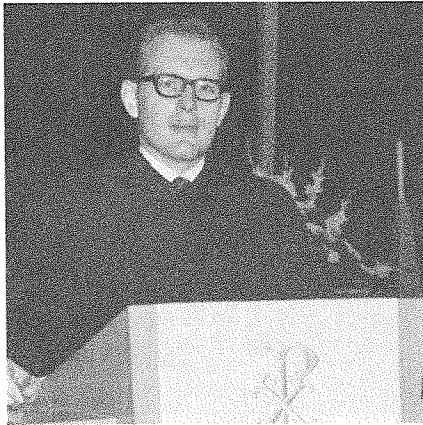
WESTERN CONFERENCE



Trinity, Aberdeen, S. D.
Organized 1954



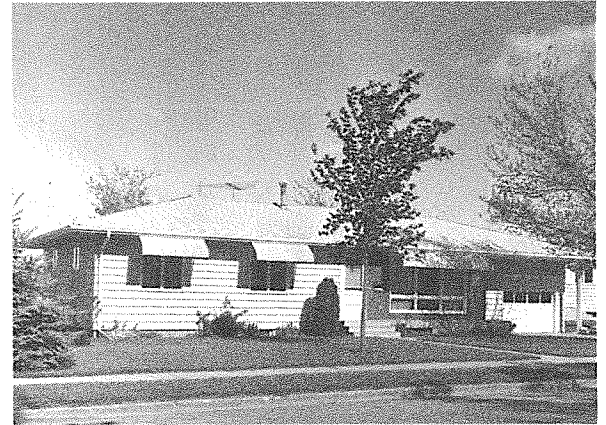
Interior, Trinity, Aberdeen, S. D.



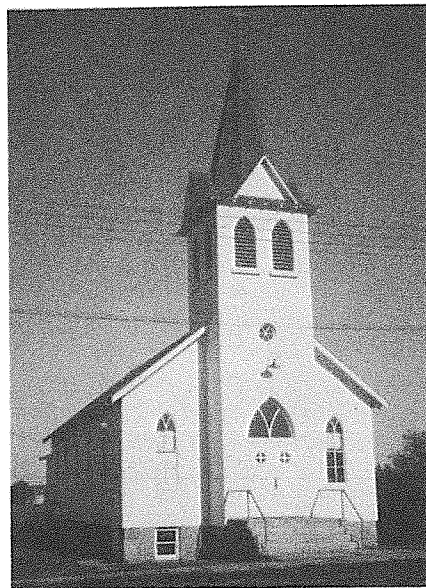
Pastor Wayne Schulz

FORMER PASTORS

Warren G. Radtke
James A. Fricke
Cyril W. Spaude



Parsonage, Aberdeen, S. D.



Zion, Akaska, S. D.
Organized 1911

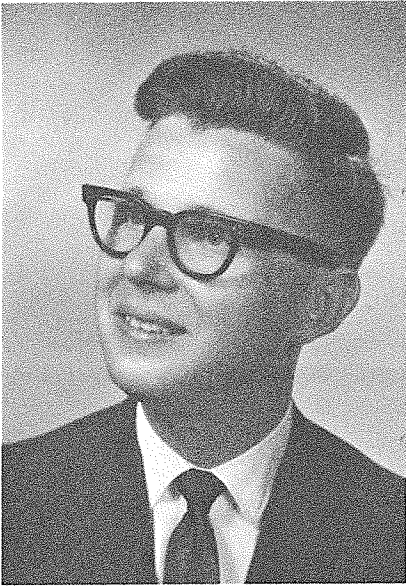
FORMER PASTORS

Wm. G. Albrecht
Hans Eggert
W. F. Sauer
Theophil Albrecht
Arthur Fuerstenau
Theo Bauer
W. Harvey Heckendorf
B. A. Borgschatz
Ralph Gehrke
Marcus Albrecht
Lloyd Huebner
Kermit Biedenbender
Edgar Gieschen
Walter Herrmann
Daniel Deutschlander



Interior, Zion, Akaska, S. D.

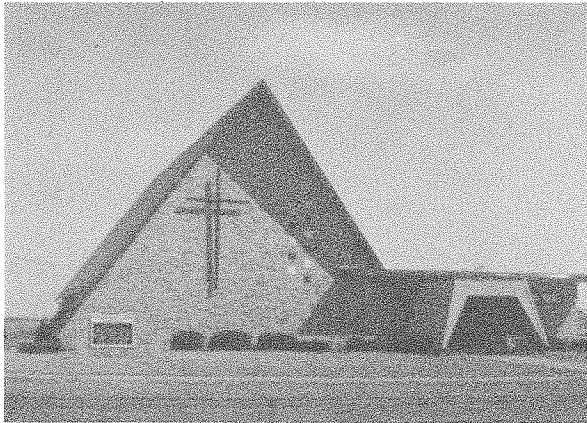
WESTERN CONFERENCE



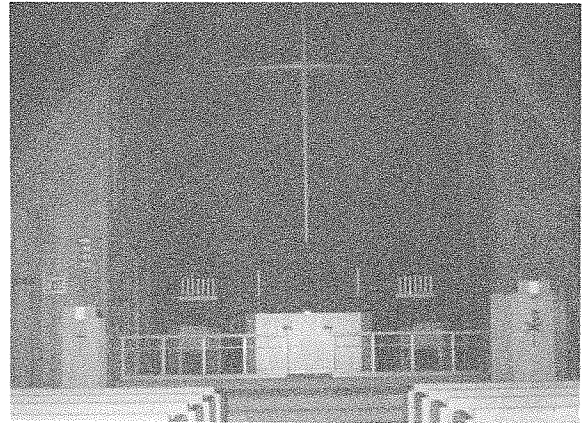
Pastor Durant Shook



Parsonage, Akaska, S. D.



Our Saviour's, Bismarck, N. D.
Organized 1960



Interior, Our Saviour's,
Bismarck, North Dakota



Pastor George Rothe

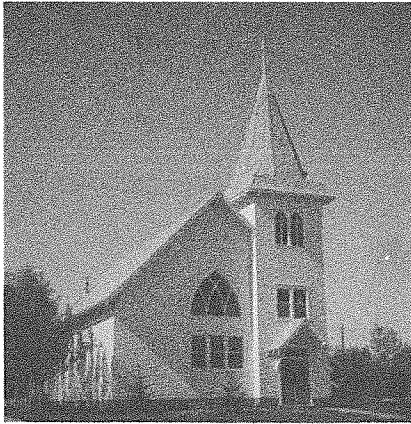
FORMER PASTORS

- R. Pope
- R. Zimmermann



Parsonage, Bismarck, N. D.

WESTERN CONFERENCE



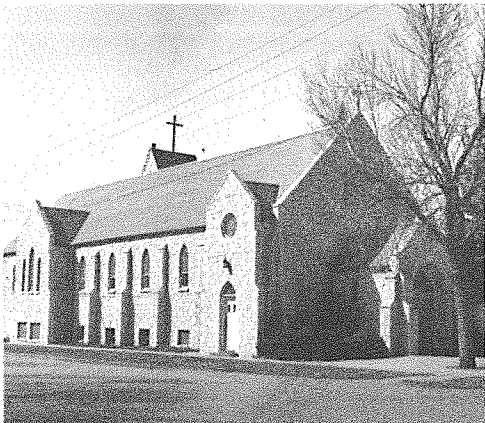
Christ, Bison, S. D.
Organized 1938
Served from Hettinger, N. D.

FORMER PASTORS

P. Kuske
W. R. Krueger
H. J. Wackerfuss
G. Ehlert
R. Reede
M. Hermann
J. A. Bolasch
R. Wendland
H. Flegel
N. Engel



Interior, Christ, Bison, S. D.



St. John's, Bowdle, S. D.
Organized 1891



Parsonage, Bowdle, S. D.

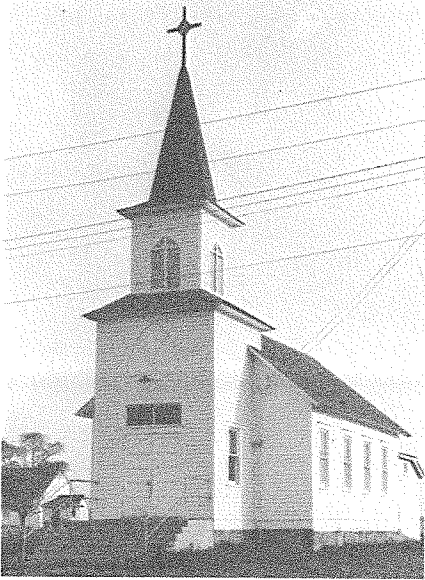


Pastor Loyal Schroeder

FORMER PASTORS

G. Lahme
Volkert
C. F. Malchow
Julius Engel
R. Fehlau
J. C. A. Gehm
Otto F. Kleer
Carl Schweppe
F. Traub
P. G. Albrecht
K. G. Sievert
W. F. Sprengeler

WESTERN CONFERENCE



Zion, Burt, North Dakota
Organized 1922
Served from Elgin, N. D.

FORMER PASTORS

W. Sprengeler
Theophil Voges
Walter Herrmann
Paul Kuske
Oscar Lemke
Henry Ellwein
Vicar Richard Yecke
Gerhardt Cares
John Murphy
Vicar William Bernhardt
David Neumann



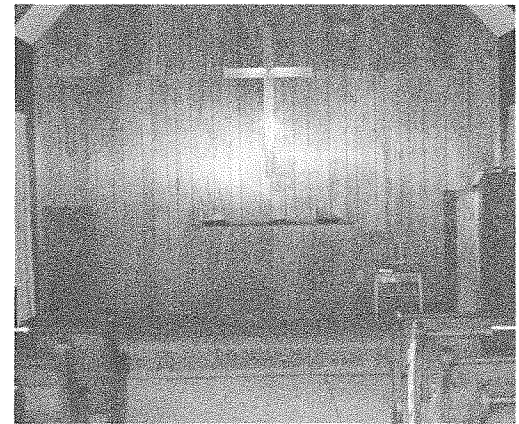
Interior, Burt, North Dakota



Trinity, Carson, N. D.
Organized 1908
Served from Elgin, N. D.

FORMER PASTORS

Frank Wittfaut
Peter Schlommer
Fredrick Traub
Adolf Lenz
W. J. Schmidt
Herm. Mutterer
E. J. Otterstatter
Donald Boerner
Harold Johne
George Enderle
Lyle Schalow
Richard Strobel
Vicar Kirby Spevacek
William Russow



Interior, Trinity, Carson, N. D.



First English, Dupree, South Dakota
Organized 1914
Served from Faith, South Dakota

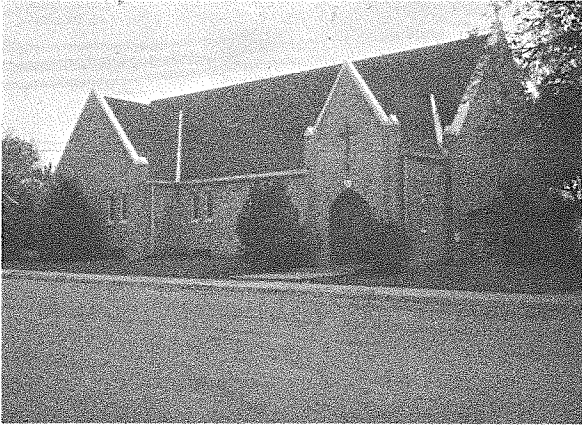
FORMER PASTORS

A. W. Blauert
E. H. Neumann
H. Schaar
H. Sprengeler
E. W. Penk
Hugo Schnitker
A. G. Eberhart
E. Mehlberg
H. Russow
H. Bauer
A. Brueckner
W. Hein
J. Brandt
R. Wendland
H. Flegel
N. J. Engel



Interior, First English, Dupree, S. D.

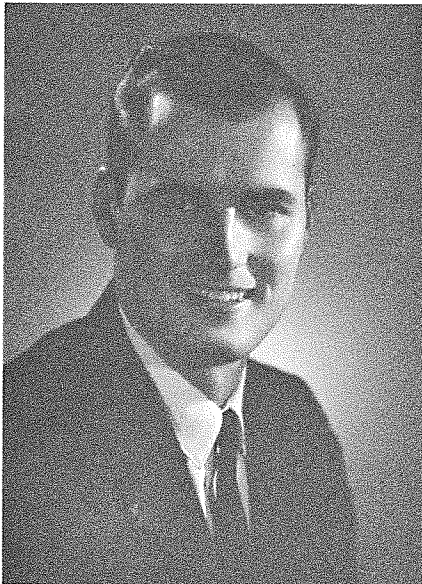
WESTERN CONFERENCE



Immanuel, Elgin, N. D., Organized 1909



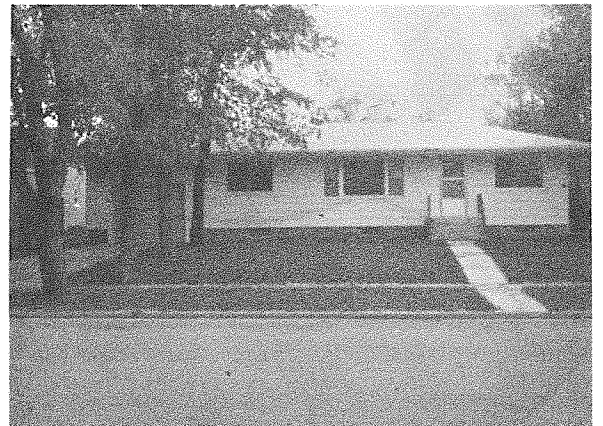
Interior, Immanuel, Elgin, N. D.



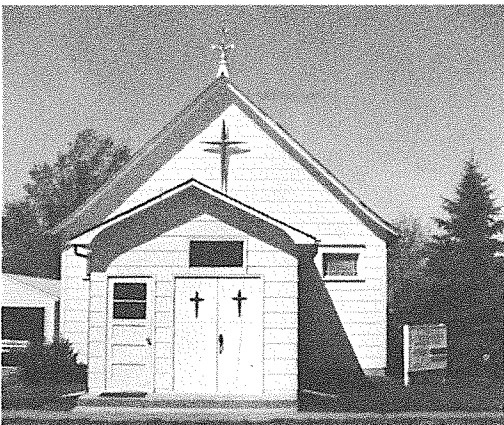
Pastor David Neumann

FORMER PASTORS

Frank Wittfaut
W. Limpert
Fredrick Traub
Adolf Lenz
Walter Herrman
Paul Kuske
Oscar Lemke
Henry Ellwein
Vicar Richard Yecke
Gerhardt Cares
John Murpy
Vicar William Bernhardt
David Neumann



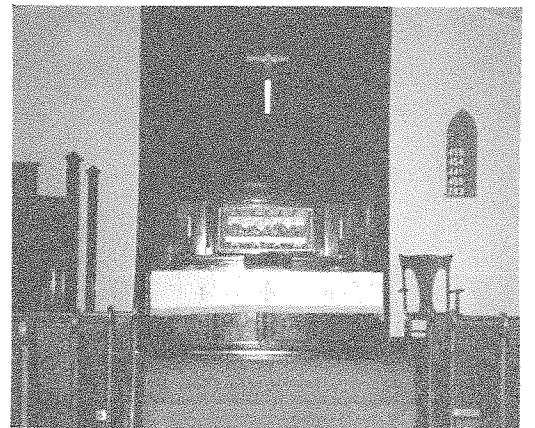
Parsonage, Elgin, N. D.



St. Paul's, Faith, S. D., Organized 1914

FORMER PASTORS

A. W. Blauert
E. H. Neumann
H. Schaar
H. Sprengeler
E. W. Penk
Hugo Schnitker
A. G. Eberhart
E. Mehlberg
H. Russow
H. Bauer
A. Brueckner
W. Hein
J. Brandt
R. Wendland
H. Flegel
Nathan J. Engel

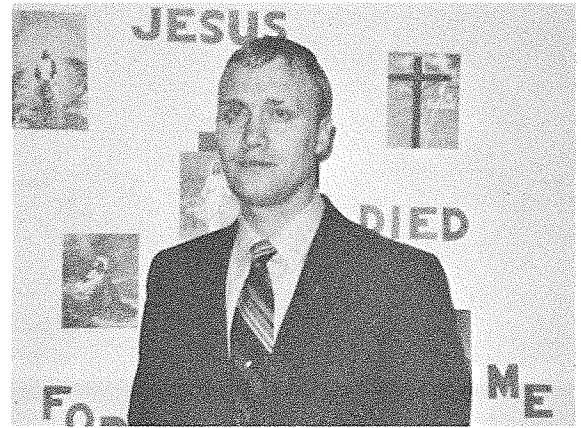


Interior, St. Paul's, Faith, S. D.

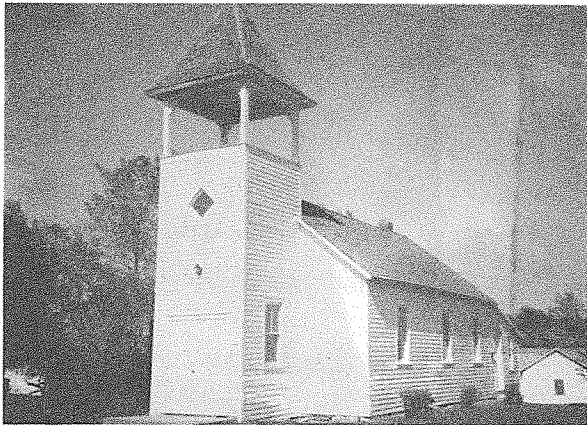
WESTERN CONFERENCE



Parsonage, Faith, S. D.



Pastor Thomas Schmidt



Trinity, Flasher, North Dakota
Organized 1911
Served from Mandan

FORMER PASTORS

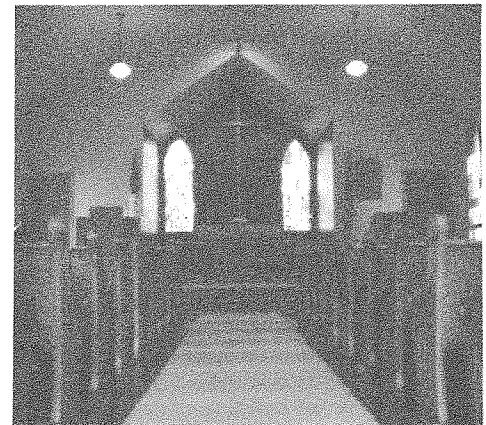
- Frank Witfaut
- Peter Schlemmer
- W. J. Schmidt
- H. A. Mutterer
- E. J. Otterstatter
- Donald Boerner
- Harold Johne
- George Enderle
- Lyle Schalow
- William Russow



St. Jacobi, Glenham, S. D.
Organized 1920
Served from Mobridge

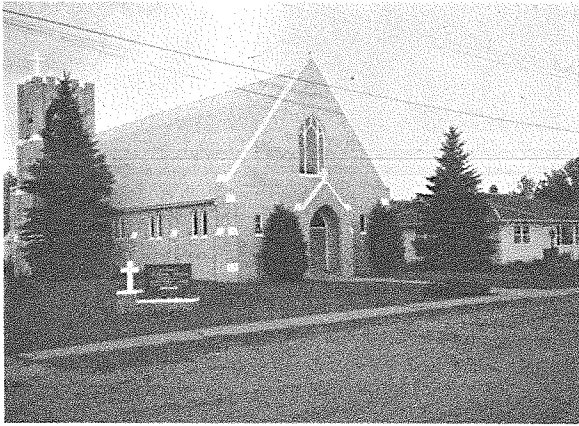
FORMER PASTORS

- A. Eggert
- E. R. Gamm
- G. Schlegel
- K. G. Bast
- P. Press
- H. Kuske
- H. Birner

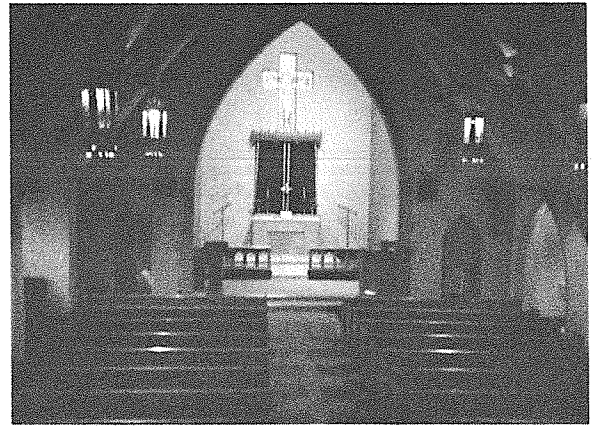


Interior, St. Jacobi, Glenham, S. D.

WESTERN CONFERENCE



St. Paul's, Hazelton, N. D.
Organized 1923



Interior, St. Paul's, Hazelton, N. D.

FORMER PASTORS

- W. Sauer
- G. Adascheck
- M. Schuetze
- C. J. Schrader
- E. G. Hertler
- J. F. W. Pieper
- J. H. Abelmann
- Sam Baer
- W. Herrmann
- G. Schlegel
- H. A. Schultz
- H. Heckendorf
- G. J. Ehlert
- George Baer
- Edmund O. Schulz
- Daniel Buske



Pastor Nathan Engel



Parsonage, Hazelton, N. D.



Interior, Redeemer, Hettinger, N. D.



Parsonage, Hettinger, N. D.

FORMER PASTORS

- P. Koch
- T. G. Van der Bloemen
- R. Buss
- Donald Krause



Redeemer, Hettinger, N. D.
Organized 1953



Pastor Fred Fedke

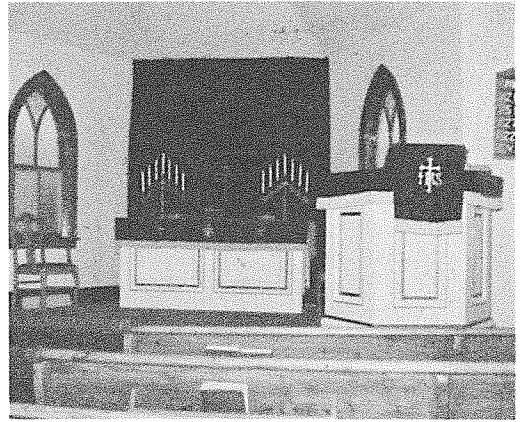
WESTERN CONFERENCE



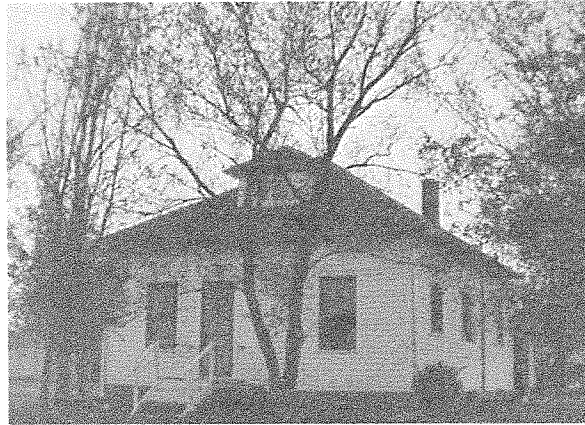
Peace, Isabel, S. D., Organized 1942
Served from Faith

FORMER PASTORS

Max Cowalsky
B. A. Borgschatz
Armin Schuetze
Marvin Hanke
Norman Lindloff
Stanley Holt
John H. Johannes
David Krenke
H. Flegel
Vicar H. Filter
Nathan Engel



Interior, Peace, Isabel, S. D.



Parsonage, Isabel, Vacant



St. Luke's, Leith, N. D.
Organized 1940
Served from Elgin, N. D.

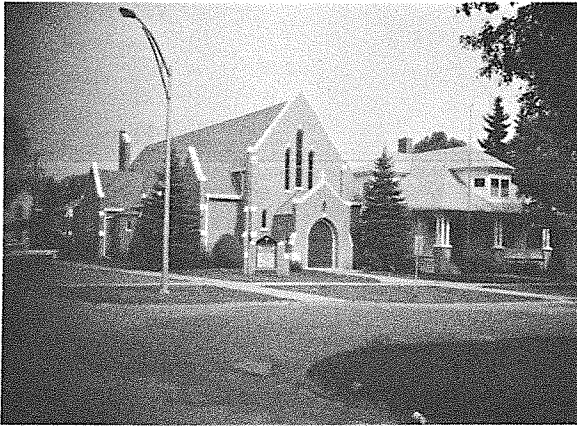
FORMER PASTORS

Paul Kuske
Oscar Lemke
Henry Ellwein
Vicar Richard Yecke
Gerhardt Cares
John Murphy
Vicar William Bernhardt
David Neumann

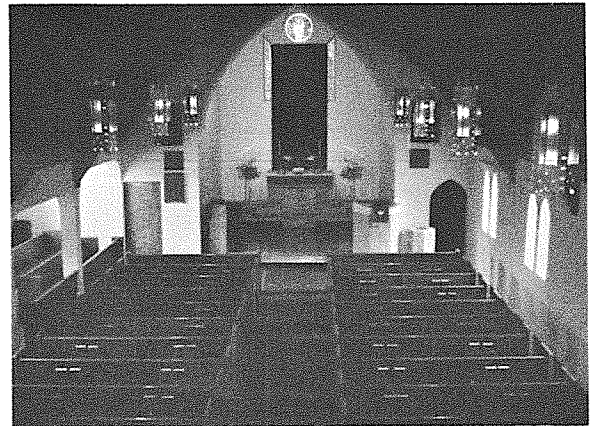


Interior, St. Luke's, Leith, N. D.

WESTERN CONFERENCE



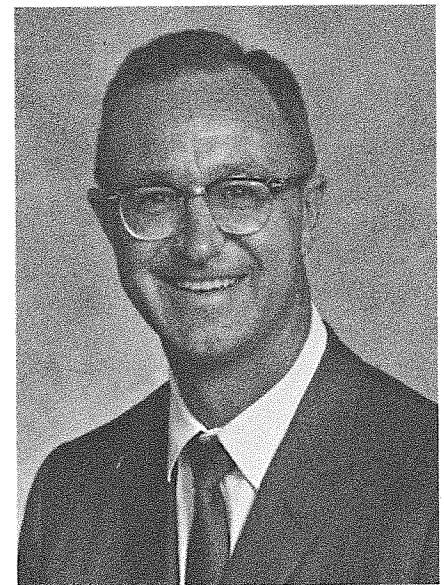
Redeemer Church and Parsonage,
Mandan, N. D., Organized 1935



Interior, Redeemer, Mandan, N. D.

FORMER PASTORS

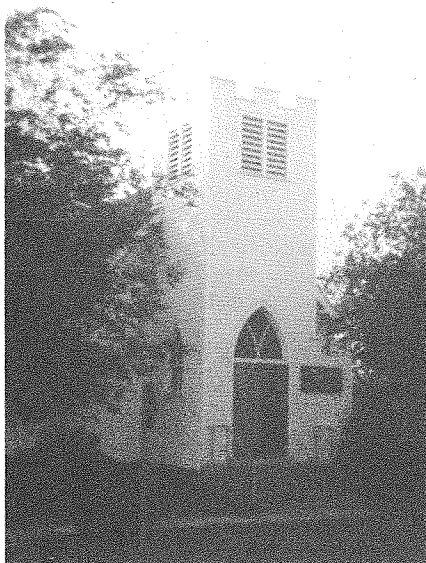
Edward Krueger
Paul Kuehl
Reginald Pope
Richard Strobel



Pastor Marvin Putz

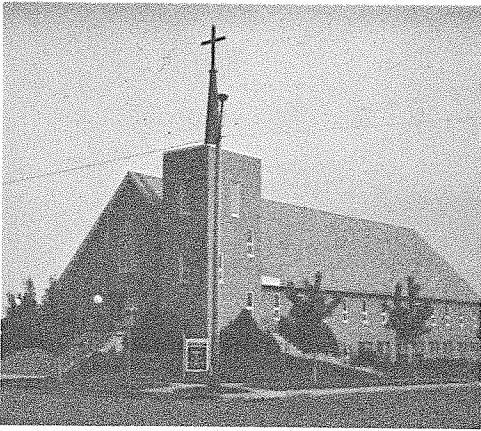
FORMER PASTORS

P. Bast
E. Gamm
Strassen
W. Krenke
J. J. Wendland
R. E. Bretzmann
A. H. Birner
Clarence Koepsell
Marvin Radtke
Gerhard Birkholz
Carl Hilmer
Donald Krause



St. Paul's, McIntosh, S. D.
Organized 1924
Served from Morrystown, S. D.

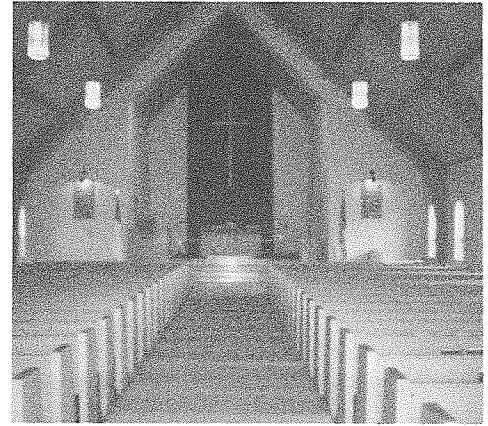
WESTERN CONFERENCE



Zion, Mobridge, S. D.
Organized 1912
School in lower level.

FORMER PASTORS

J. Schaefer
E. Berg
E. Kionka
A. Eggert
E. R. Gamm
G. Schlegel
K. G. Bast
P. Press
H. Kuske
H. Birner



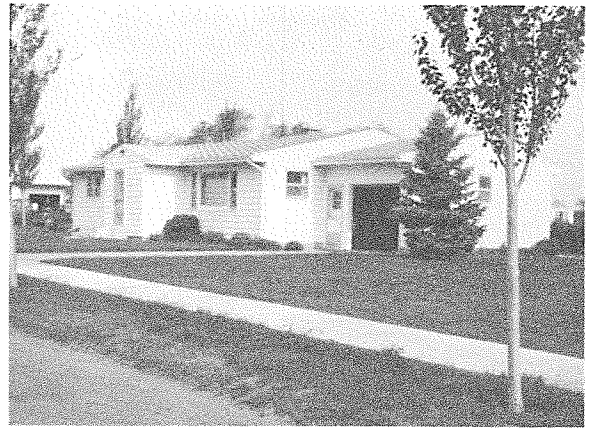
Interior, Zion, Mobridge, S. D.



Pastor David Krenke

FORMER TEACHERS

R. Scharleman
Renata Pape
Rhoda Arndt
Mabel Goede
Naomi Kiecker
Julia Oelhafen
Jeanette Ohlmann
Elsa Klein
Linda Wendt
Anita Lemke
Karen Springer



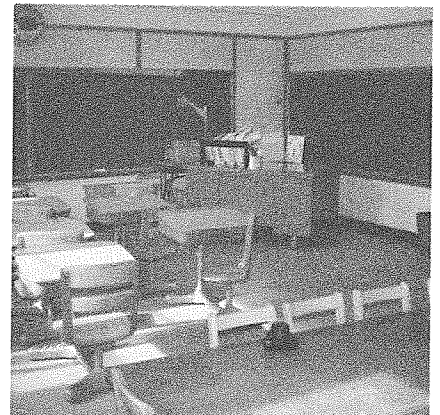
Parsonage, Zion, Mobridge, S. D.



Dorothea Knutson, Teacher

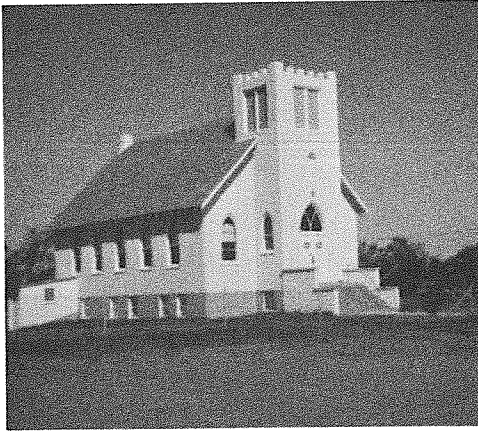


Cheryl Spettel, Teacher



Interior of one classroom,
Zion, Mobridge, S. D.

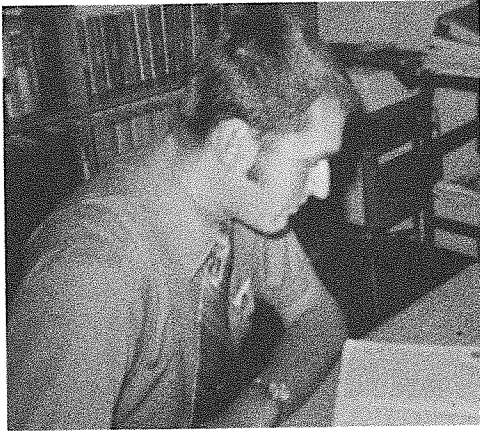
WESTERN CONFERENCE



Christ, Morrystown, S. D.
Organized 1919



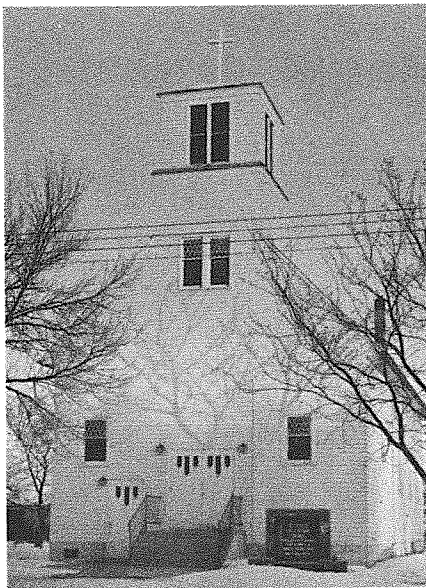
Parsonage, Christ, Morrystown, S. D.



Pastor Dennis Hayes

FORMER PASTORS

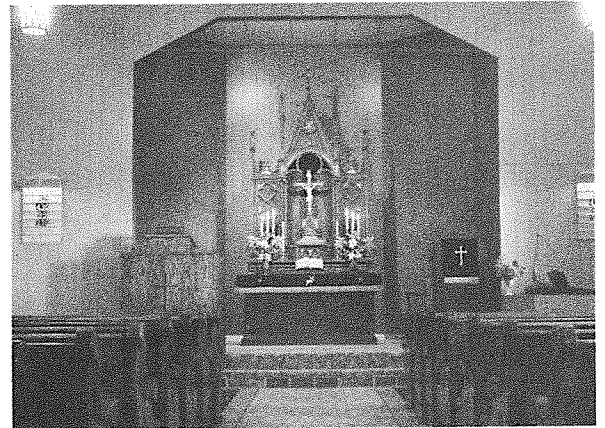
- P. Bast
- E. Gamm
- H. J. Schaar
- B. R. Hahm
- Wm. H. Wiedenmeyer
- Clarence Koepsell
- Marvin Radtke
- Gerhard Birkholz
- Carl Hillmer
- Donald Krause



St. Paul's, Mound City, S. D.
Organized 1887
Served with Zeeland, N. D.

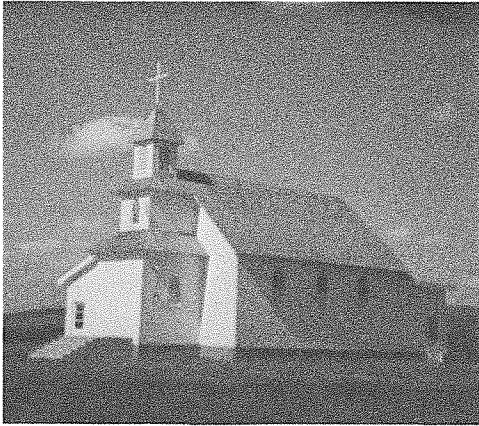
FORMER PASTORS

- Mundt
- Schuelke
- Malchow
- Fehlau
- Engel
- Eichler
- Wm. G. Albrecht
- Hans Eggert
- W. F. Sauer
- J. H. Renner
- Behrens
- E. H. Behm
- A. W. Blauert
- E. Schaller
- A. A. Hellman
- H. A. Sauer
- Theodore Hartwig
- H. Juroff
- Donald Lindloff
- W. O. Loescher
- A. Lemke

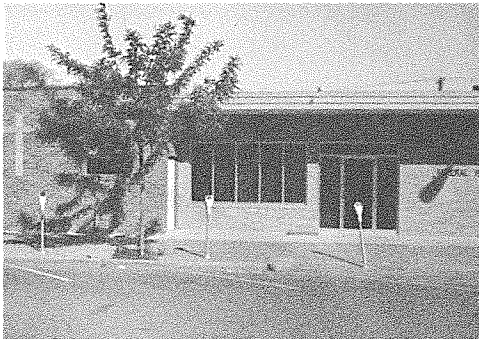


Interior, St. Paul's, Mound City, S. D.

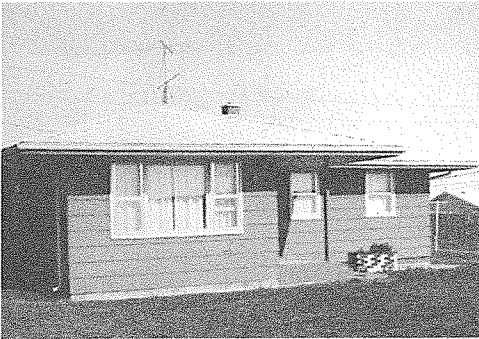
WESTERN CONFERENCE



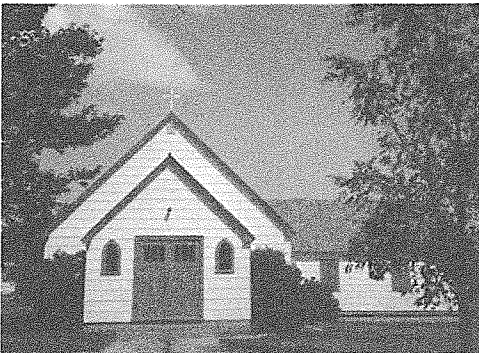
St. John's, Paradise, N. D.
Organized 1910
Served from Morrystown, S. D.



Redeemer, Pierre, S. D., Organized 1970, Mission
Worships at Thompson - Isburg Funeral Home



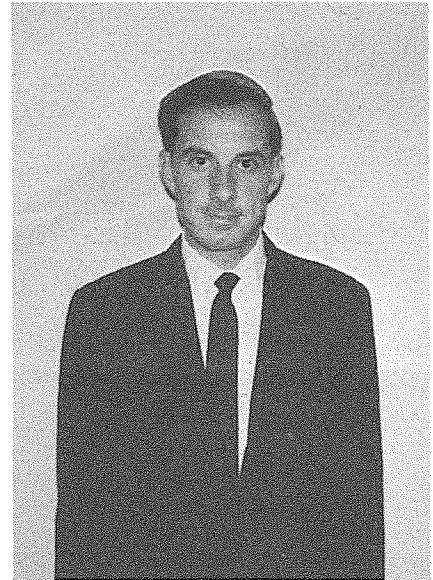
Parsonage, Pierre, S. D.



Zion, Reeder, N. D., Organized 1911
Served from Hettinger, North Dakota

FORMER PASTORS

- G. Wiedemann
- P. Bast
- E. R. Gamm
- Strassen
- W. Krenke
- J. J. Wendland
- R. E. Bretzmann
- A. H. Birner
- H. Mutterer
- E. J. Otterstatter
- D. E. Baemer
- H. R. Johne
- George Enderle
- Lyle F. Schalow
- Vicar Kirby Spevacek
- Wm. Russow



Pastor Floyd Brand, Pierre, S. D.



Interior, worship facility, Pierre, S. D.

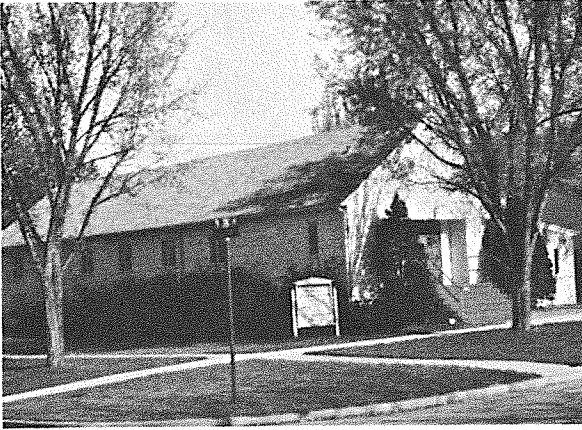
FORMER PASTORS

- G. Bartells
- H. F. Eggers
- R. Gose
- W. Weidorn
- E. W. Muehly
- G. Keschull
- W. R. Krueger
- T. Bauer
- W. Herrmann
- R. Reim
- P. Kuehl
- E. Semenske
- R. Steffenhagen
- P. Koch
- T. G. Van der Bloemen
- R. Buss
- Don Krause

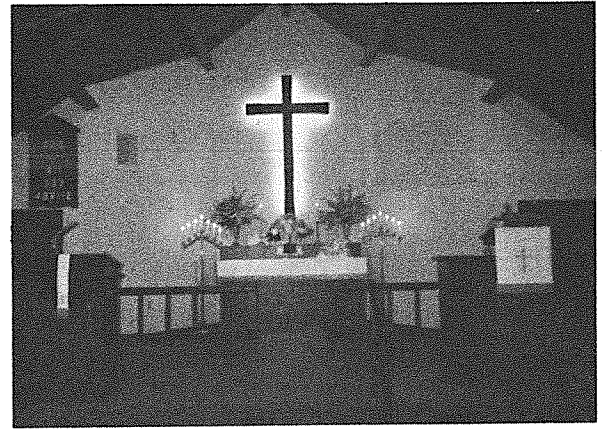


Interior, Zion, Reeder, N. D.

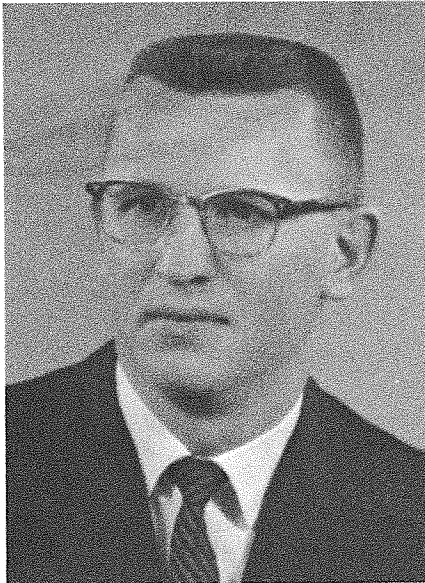
WESTERN CONFERENCE



St. Paul's Church and School
Rapid City, S. D., Organized 1942
School Opened 1970



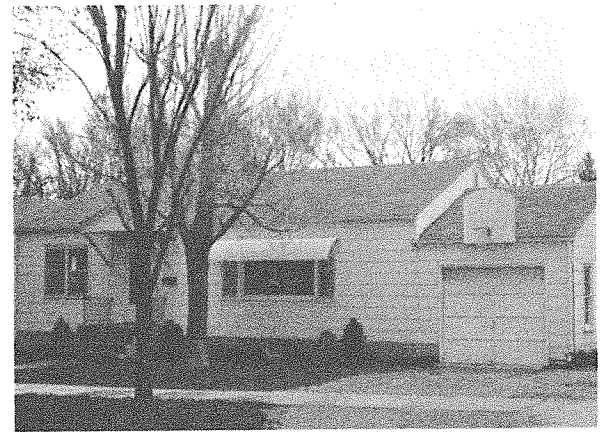
Interior, St. Paul's, Rapid City, S. D.



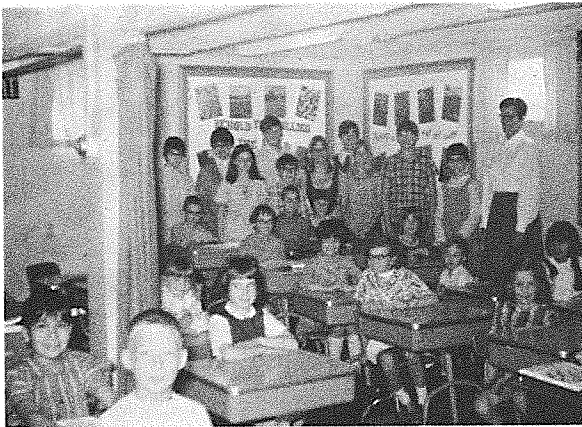
Pastor Leroy Dobberstein

FORMER PASTORS

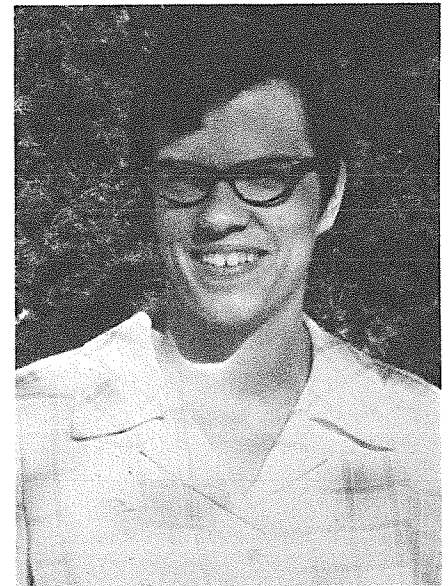
- Albert Eberhardt
- Wayne TenBroek
- Hogey Bergholz
- Harold Sauer
- Gordon Fuerstenau
- Donald Sellnow



Parsonage, Rapid City, S. D.

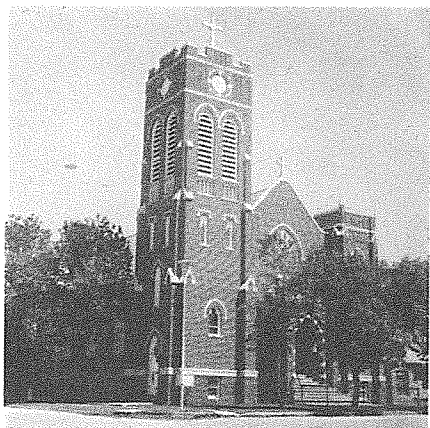


Parochial School Students
Rapid City, S. D.

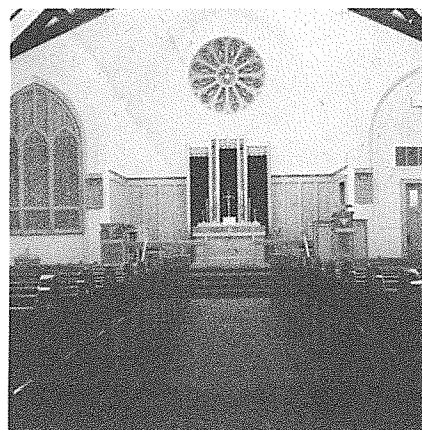


Miss Beverly Heine, Rapid City, S. D.

WESTERN CONFERENCE



St. Paul's, Roscoe, S. D.
Organized 1893



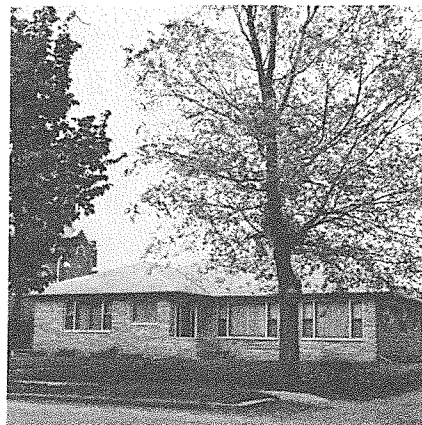
Interior, St. Paul's, Roscoe, S. D.



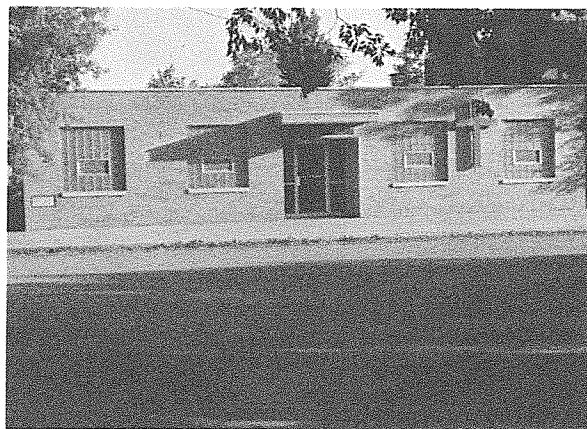
Pastor Gerhard Geiger

FORMER PASTORS

Prey
Kiess
Helmreich
Wm. Meyer
J. C. A. Gehm
Keller
A. C. Bartz
Kerber
Ernest Birkholz
F. Manteufel
J. P. Scherf
Herbert Lau
George Boldt
Waldemar Schuetze
Martin Janke
L. Pingel

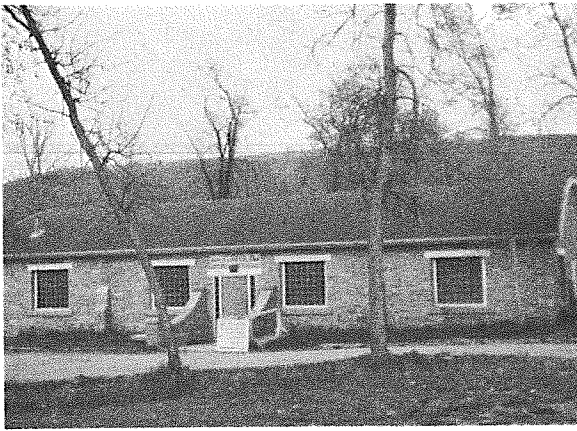


Parsonage, Roscoe, S. D.



Education Wing, St. Paul's,
Roscoe, S. D.

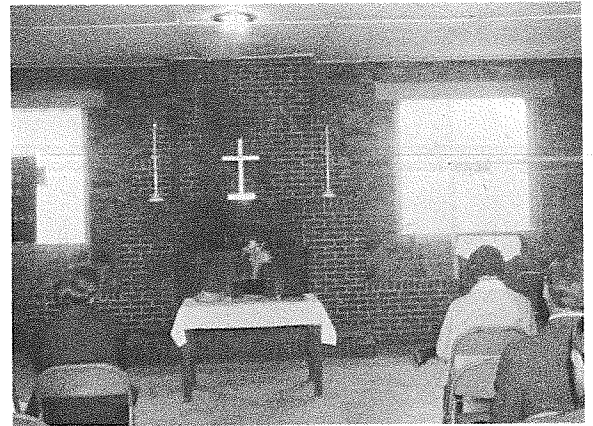
WESTERN CONFERENCE



Hope, Spearfish, S. D., Mission meeting in Rifle Club Building, Organized 1969, Served from Sturgis, S. D.

FORMER PASTOR

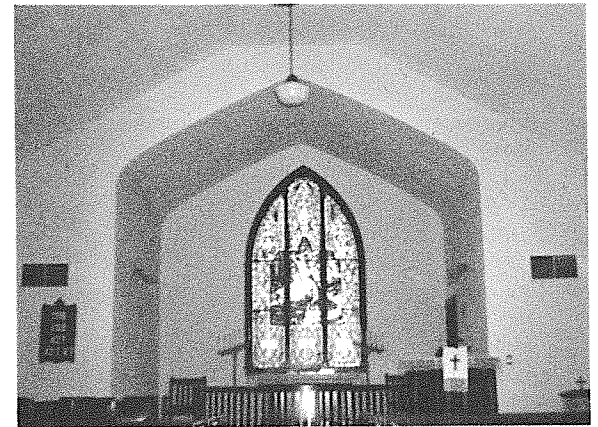
M. R. Hahm



Interior, Hope, Spearfish, S. D.



Trinity, Sturgis, S. D.
Organized 1940



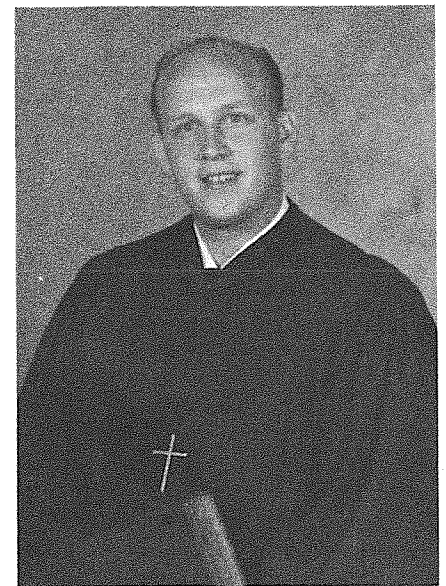
Interior, Trinity, Sturgis, S. D.

FORMER PASTORS

Albert Eberhart
Robert Reim
G. A. Fuerstenau
D. C. Sellnow
David Kock
George Rothe
Vicar Arthur Valerio
M. R. Hahm



Parsonage, Sturgis, S. D.

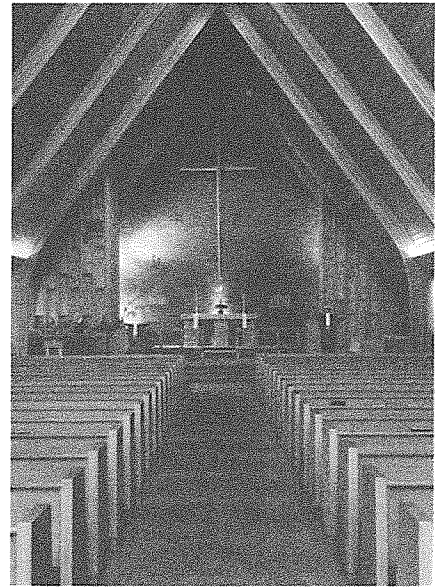


Pastor Martin Hahm

WESTERN CONFERENCE



St. John's, Tappen, N. D.
Organized 1924



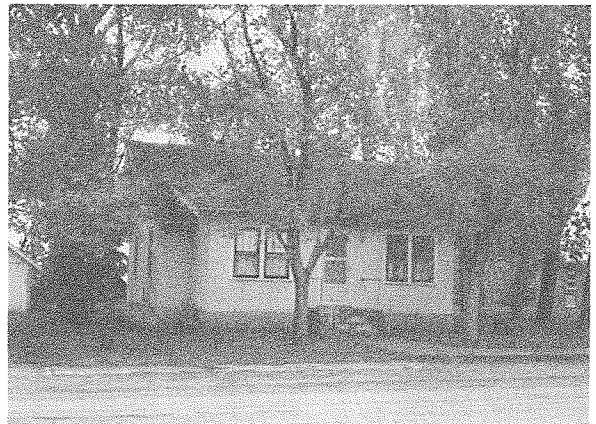
Interior, St. John's,
Tappen, N. D.

FORMER PASTORS

Sam Baer
C. Strassen
E. Hinderer
Wm. Holzhausen
E. L. Mehlberg
Reuben Kettenacker
Loren Schaller
E. J. Otterstatter
Fredrick Mutterer
Ernest Klaszuz
Walter Oelhafen, Jr.



Pastor Russel Kloehn



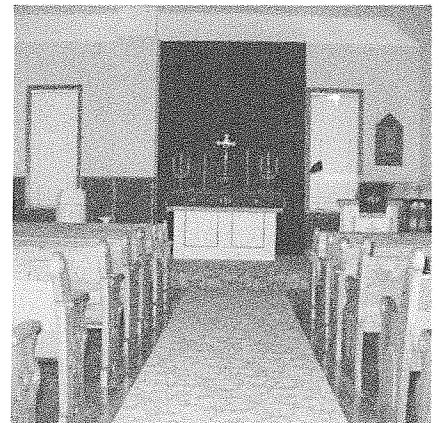
Parsonage, Tappen, N. D.

FORMER PASTORS

E. H. Kionka
Max Cowalsky
B. A. Borgschatz
Armin Schuetze
Marvin Hanke
Norman Lindloff
Stanley Holt
John H. Johannes
David Krenke
Vicar H. Filter
Nathan Engel



St. Paul's, Timber Lake, S. D.
Organized 1910

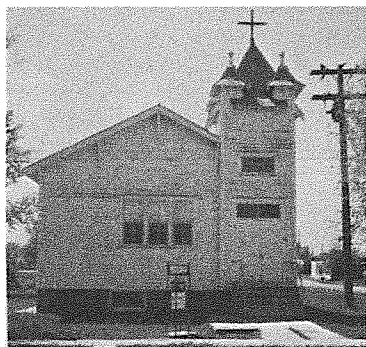


Interior, St. Paul's,
Timber Lake, S. D.

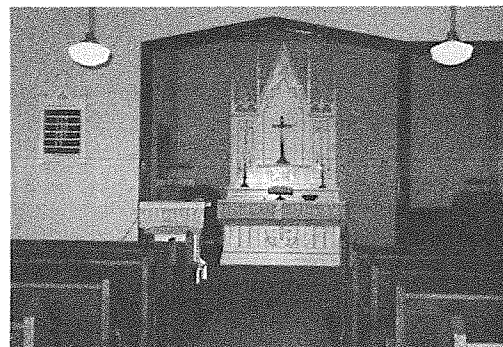
WESTERN CONFERENCE

FORMER PASTORS

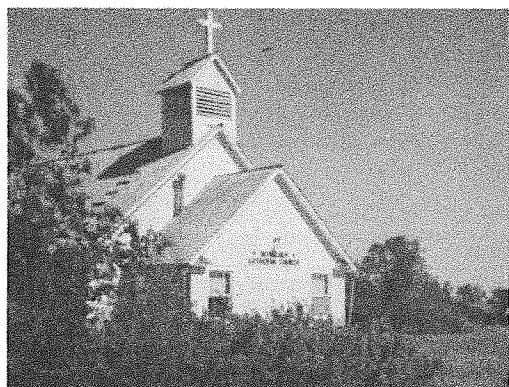
Wm. Lindloff
J. Bauer
P. G. Albrecht
L. G. Lehmann
F. E. Blume
Walter Herrmann
B. A. Borschatz
Ralph Gehrke
Marcus Albrecht
Lloyd Huebner
Kermit Biedenbender
Edgar Gieschen
Walter Herrmann
Dan. M. Deutschlander



St. James, Tolstoy, S. D.
Organized 1928
Served from Akaska, S. D.



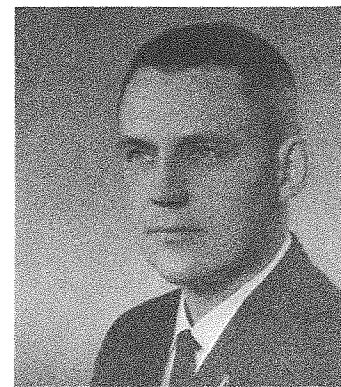
Interior, St. James, Tolstoy, S. D.



Bethlehem, Watauga, S. D.
Organized 1924
Served from Morrystown, S. D.

FORMER PASTORS

H. J. Schaar
B. R. Hahm
Wm. H. Wiedenmeyer
Clarence Koepsell
Marvin Radtke
Gerhard Birkholz
Carl Hilmer
Donald Krause



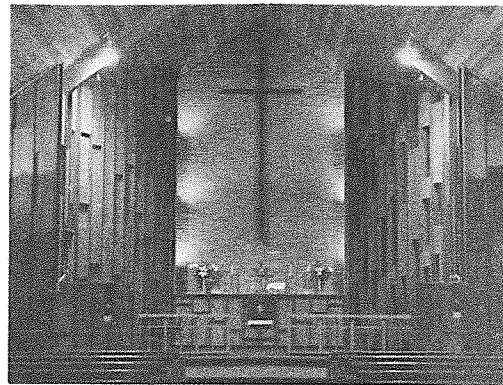
Pastor Donald Fors
Zeeland, N. D.



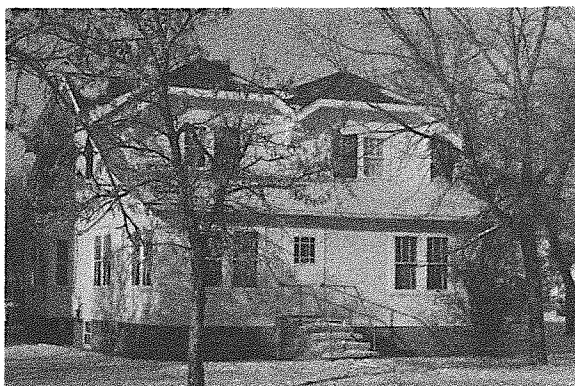
Zion, Zeeland, N. D.
Organized 1910

FORMER PASTORS

W. F. Sauer
M. Keturakat
E. Neumann
E. Kolander
Sam Baer
J. E. Bade
W. Herrmann
Phil Janke
Ernest Klaszus
Waldemar Loescher
Arnold Lemke



Interior, Zion, Zeeland, N. D.



Parsonage, Zeeland, N. D.

OUR DAUGHTER DISTRICT'S GOLDEN JUBILEE - 1970
DAKOTA-MONTANA DISTRICT

Rev. E. R. Gamm
Graduate of Wisconsin Synod Seminary 1917
Assigned to McIntosh, South Dakota parishes
Called to Mobridge, South Dakota 1923
Called to Marshall, Minnesota 1938
Retired 1969

Presented by Rev. E. R. Gamm
Minnesota District Convention
July 29, 1970
Dr. Martin Luther College
New Ulm, Minnesota

To introduce myself: This is written wie der Schnabel gewachsen ist (as the mouth has grown; in my style and way)

Members of the Minnesota District of the Wisconsin Synod:

By the grace of God I was privileged to be at the first convention of the Minnesota district of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan and other states at St. Paul, Minnesota in June 1918, as a member of the fourth conference district. It was also my privilege to be at the meeting of the third and fourth district conferences of the Minnesota district in June 1920, which organized the Dakota-Montana district at Mankato, Minnesota. It had come to maturity after 42 years of mission work in South Dakota, North Dakota and Montana. It was time to separate. The reasons for the separation are stated in the Synodical report of 1920 as follows:

1. "It would save the congregations and pastors traveling expenses and burdensome trips because conferences and Synod conventions would be held in its midst. (Actually expenses were shared by all pastors, though not always gladly, however the trips were time-consuming.)

2. Synodical officials, president and superintendent of missions would live in our midst, which could only be advantageous, because our district consisted almost exclusively of mission fields.

3. The pastors and missionaries would remain longer at their station for experience teaches that comparatively few pastors are called out of their districts."

Distance to conferences and conventions was the greatest factor in bringing about the organization of the Dakota-Montana District which is now celebrating its 50th anniversary, and as I was a member of this district for 25 years, from 1917 to 1942, this essay will present some of the history of the District and my personal experiences.

I. The Beginning: First Missionaries in the Dakota Territory

The first general missionary of the Minnesota Synod was Pastor J. Hunziker in 1876, whose field of labor extended to the Dakota line,

but he said that "he was not equal to the task" and therefore desired help. That man was Christian Boettcher in 1878, who at the end of his first year had "27 preaching places, 19 in Minnesota and 8 in the Dakota territory." His first report to the Synod in 1879 should interest us: "It was on Friday before Christmas, 1878, (December 20) when I arrived in Marshall, Lyon County, Minnesota...Finally I wish to remind you that I cannot continue to live in Marshall for any length of time due to the high cost of living and rental, and that I must support my family with my meager income...Furthermore the number of services for my family are so few, and reading services not easily arranged because only a few Germans live in Marshall who have so little interest in the preaching of God's Word, that they will not even attend services. A more suitable place to live would be in the midst of a settlement of 12 Lutheran families about 20 to 22 miles west of Marshall. A homestead of 80 acres is to be had there. It is not worth very much, but for a pastor, who is not a farmer and does not desire to be one, which he should not, nor dare not do; it would be good enough, if it had a dwelling. However, since the people have been living there barely a year, and are so poor that they have no bread to eat due to the crop failure, therefore, I have suggested to the committee of three for the consideration of Synod the following plan: 1. That the Synod build a home there, lay claim to the 80 acres, or 2. That Synod build the parsonage for the congregation and give title to the congregation as soon as the amount invested has been repaid. In both cases let it be done in the name of the Lord."

This is only an excerpt of his report. His proposal was accepted and in the fall of 1879 his address was Minneota, Minnesota. The parsonage, which also served as a Christian day-school, was located about six miles south and west of Taunton. It is amazing to think that his mission travels took him as far as Redfield, South Dakota, about 150 miles from his home, and that he served people in eight counties in the Dakota territory. The Minnesota Jubilee Book of 1910 lists the following congregations in South Dakota which were founded by him: Argo 1880, Germantown and Grover 1882, Havana 1881, Henry, Mazeppa and others. (Dates

not mentioned.)

“Er konnte die Strapazen nicht laenger ertragen (strenuous work).” The burden was too great for Pastor Boettcher as he accepted a call to Omro, Minnesota, in 1884. As no suitable men could be found (page 28) a portion of the field was turned over to the Missouri Synod. In 1887, the Pastors Johl and Polzin assumed the work, followed by Pastors Luebbert, Lahme and Volkert, when the field of missions was extended to Bowdle, South Dakota, which became the center of future expansion. Pastor Lahme began at Bowdle and established a church at Theodore, South Dakota, in 1888. However, Zeeland, North Dakota was canvassed by Pastor Lahme from Redfield, South Dakota where he must have resided for a time while serving Bowdle and surrounding area. An opinion expressed about the Zeeland area by one of the pastors who served there applies to much of the mission work in the Dakotas: “By and large, one must say that this field suffered much because of the frequent change of pastors and because of the lack of insight on the part of the congregations regarding the location of the living quarters for the pastors” (page 283). That problem continued to the present time. One pastor remained one month, some not much longer.

In 1907, a new era began in the Dakotas. The Indian reservation west of the Missouri was opened to the public, or to anyone who was lucky in the 1906 lottery at Aberdeen. The reservation had been leased by two cattle companies, with a dividing fence running from the Little Cannonball (Cedar) River to the Grand River, the father of one of our Mobridge professors working as fence rider (Mr. Barney Ten Broek, member of the future church in McIntosh). Before the lottery winners could file their homestead claims, the Indians were permitted to select a section each for husband and wife, and half a section for each child. (This information I received from an Indian in McIntosh.)

The Milwaukee Railroad built a bridge across the Missouri River to extend its line to the west coast. The little village of Evarts, South Dakota, the end of the Milwaukee Railroad, where Pastor W. Sauer had gathered a flock, was moved to Mo. Bridge, later called Mobridge, residences and stores included. When the bridge was completed, Pastors Keller and Bartz made a mission trip to Lemmon, South Dakota where Pastor W. Pankow resided later and extended his mission field south to Meadow, South Dakota and west to Hettinger, North Dakota. Pastor J. Pieper had served a settlement of Lutherans across the river from Zeeland, North Dakota in Morton County. In less than ten years there were pastors living at McIntosh, Faith, Timber Lake, Lemmon and Meadow, South Dakota and at Flasher and Elgin in North Dakota,

each parish consisting of three to six congregations. In terms of miles this field reached about 150 miles west and southwest of Mobridge and 100 miles northwest. Pastor Cowalsky serving Timber Lake, Trail City and Isabel; Pastor Blauert at Faith, Dupree, Red Elm, Lantry, Chase, etc; Pastor Behm at Meadow, Drew, Athboy, Bison and area (umgegend); Pastor Kuether at Lemmon, Shadehill, White Butte and in North Dakota, Hettinger, Hendlye and area; myself at McIntosh, Watauga, Morristown, South McIntosh in South Dakota; Swastika and Paradise in North Dakota; Pastor Schlemmer in Flasher, Carson and Noel in North Dakota; Pastor Limpert in Elgin, Burt, Regent in North Dakota and in Montana; Pastor Wittfaut at Terry, Ismay, Olanda, Wolf Point, etc. Pastor Kionka of Mobridge served Shields and Freda in North Dakota.

All these stations - approximately 30 - were served by eight missionaries. The growth on the east side of the Missouri River was quite rapid. Pastor Hertler at Temvic, Hazelton, Streeter and Hampden, North Dakota followed by Pastor A. Maas, and soon by Pastor S. Baer. At Akaska, Tolstoy, Sherman and Eales, South Dakota was Pastor Fuerstenau. When the field was divided, Pastor W. Lindloff resided at Tolstoy and served Sherman and Onaka. (The above quoted from 1918 record)

(Very few of these names of cities are found in the 1968 report because of merging churches. However, many new names appear.)

Other veterans who served in the Dakota fields and who are members of the Minnesota District were: O. Netzke, E. Hertler, Th. Bauer, W. Lindloff, H. Sprenger: 50 years ago; E. Penk, W. Schmidt, P. Kuske: 40 years ago; E. Knief, J. Erhart: 30 years ago; Th. Hartwig: 25 years ago. Pastor R. Reede is one of the first graduates of Northwestern Lutheran Academy. Many others in other Districts also served there at one time or another.

The zeal of the missionaries never ceased. Opportunities were found everywhere and with the advent of cars and better highways in less than 25 years of its existence, the District had by the grace and mercy of God been able to extend its borders in the east to Sioux Falls, southwest to the Rapid City Area, west as far as Livingston, Montana, northwest to Bismarck-Mandan to Valley City in the northeastern part of North Dakota.

The Lord continued to open more doors for the missionaries to enter in and preach the saving Gospel of Christ, so that according to the 1968 statistics, there are now eleven preaching stations in Montana and four in Canada. De-

tailed statistics are available in Synodical reports.

When the Dakota-Montana District was organized, the congregations of the third district of the state of Minnesota were permitted to select the district they preferred. Thus Balaton, Hendricks and Marshall became members of the new district. Balaton returned in 1928 to the Minnesota District and Marshall in 1942. Hendricks retained its membership to this date. Some of the names in former records are no more to be found, some merged with others, some were lost to the Iowa and Missouri Synods and some discontinued. There are now, besides the Eastern and Western Conference, the Alberta-Montana Conference and a total of 37 pastors in the District and some vacancies.

II. Rather than bore you with statistics, the transportation problem might enliven this essay, for after all, this was the number one reason for establishing a new district. The hardships that Pastor Boettcher endured in the service of the Lord, traveling from Minneota, Minnesota to Redfield, South Dakota and of Pastor Lahme from Redfield, South Dakota to Zeeland, North Dakota, were of a different nature. When they left home, they did not return for weeks. My trips to conferences in Minnesota were made by train and were time-consuming. Leaving McIntosh by train at 8:00 a.m., arriving in Aberdeen at noon, waiting there till 7:00 p.m., transferring to another depot, changing again at Watertown, arriving at Fairfax at 4:00 a.m. This was more dependable transportation than by car or team. We were able to return the same week. Before the graveling of the highways, cars were very unreliable when it rained. It required five hours to travel to our convention in Zeeland in 1924, a distance of only sixty miles from Mobridge. Due to rain one morning, a number of pastors were compelled to take the train to a conference in Faith, South Dakota. A one day conference at Tolstoy was cancelled because of rain. Cars traveled in caravans on the way to a conference in Lemmon as all needed assistance in negotiating the graded gumbo roads. A visit to the home folks at Watertown, Wisconsin, in 1918, required 3½ days in a Ford, which had a top speed of an estimated 45 miles an hour, as they had no speedometers. There was always a delay of an hour or more at the Missouri River ferry at Mobridge and any rain along the route also delayed the journey. No travel across the ferry before 6:00 a.m. nor after 6:00 p.m. We were isolated in the winter, except for one season, when a pontoon bridge served the public. As the owners forgot to remove them, and with the ice break-up in spring, all boats disappeared. In 1925, the first bridge was built across the Missouri, finally permitting the missionaries to visit one another more frequently. When we moved to Mobridge in January of 1923, household goods were moved by freight train. The car remained in McIntosh. The Lord had His designs for that also, as it permitted

me to serve the vacancy, going by train to McIntosh then by car from there, until the next pastor arrived. Trips to Synod meetings and long journeys east were not only more convenient by train, but less expensive as pastors had reduced fares if they had a booklet with coupons, which were accepted for travel on certain trains.

III. The second reason for organizing a new district was because of the advantages of having the officials living in the District. Before the District was organized our first superintendent of missions lived in Wellington township, Minnesota and the next one in Stillwater and the president of the District in Red Wing. To communicate with them was difficult, as parsonages did not have phones and it required a messenger from the phone office with an additional charge of 10, 15 or 20¢, and usually messengers were not available until after school hours. At a salary of \$55.00 monthly one had to be frugal as food prices were much higher during the First World War than they are today (Potatoes \$10.00 a cwt., sugar \$30.00 a cwt., hard coal \$24.00 a ton, gas 35¢ a gallon, interest 12%). However, certain congregations were very liberal with food supplies.

The advantages of having officials close to or in the field of activity became evident very soon. Missionaries rented any place available. The Synod owned parsonages in Mobridge and McIntosh, supplied funds for the Faith parish. Soon after the District was on its own the superintendent of missions with a trustee, went on a parsonage buying spree, which continued until every pastor in the west river area had a home: Lemmon, Bison, Morrystown, South Dakota; Elgin, Burt, Flasher, Haynes and Hettinger, North Dakota; costing from \$1200 to \$2600 each. These were palaces compared to the store loft, rooming houses, lean-tos attached to churches and offered the privacy needed.

Services were conducted in the kitchen or bedroom of the two-room sod huts, with the sewing machine as altar, or in good weather outdoors. School houses were preferred rather than lodge halls or other churches. The famous Yellowstone Trail was graded only a few miles on the reservation, but it was not maintained and the buffalo trails were just that. All trips were by team the first year, also during the winter and spring months. Travel by team had some advantages. The members of one parish could see me coming, phone each other by barbed wire phone and have an hour to get to church. On the route to the Paradise colony, a trip by team to a farm took four hours. The sentiments expressed by Pastor Boettcher were mine—I was not a farmer. To repair an inner tube was a pleasure in comparison to driving a team when

the harness loosened or the wagon tongue fell out. It had always been said that a team will get one there. It got me into a fence corner on a blizardy Sunday morning. The team went through the icy river at another time, but on the return it refused, so I walked to the next preaching place. A cowboy with his lariat solved the problem and brought the team to my preaching place. Rivers were dangerous. Pastor Scheitel was a victim of the Yellow Medicine River in 1892. In the spring of 1923, the Little Cannonball or Cedar River washed away several new bridges. I was warned not to cross it, rather to be taken across by boat and walk for about three miles. My team hiring at the livery stable came to an abrupt end when the owner discovered that the harness was covered with foam. After a severe tongue lashing, I heard that driving a livery team was not in my line. They refused to give me another team.

After the reservation had opened up to new settlers, itinerant pastors followed them, but the German-Russians had a way of accepting them or dismissing them. One of them opened his Bible, laid it on the school desk, came to the front of the desk, sat on the Bible. He was told not to return as they did not want a pastor who sat on a Bible. If I were to express it in the words used in the German language it would embarrass you.

The policy of the Wisconsin Synod had always been that when a Seminary graduate was assigned to his first call he was on his own. So at the only place where I was installed, it seemed to be the proper thing to do after about four months of preaching to organize. In the course of discussing the constitution, I was relieved of my duty, "because I read my prayers out of a book". They were a colony of Bet-Brueder. A few years later another young pastor had a similar experience. The language issue was unfortunately decided by a vote of six to five on Sunday. The leader (and every congregation had one) visited every home on Monday and the vote was ten to one for German only, so the pastor was told that he need not serve them any longer. A hurried call was made to the president of the District and the visitor of the conference (which involved me) who then made the 150 mile trip. The pastor was permitted to repeat his German sermon in English, providing someone was in the audience who did not understand the German. Had the resolution been carried out, German services would have been conducted only once a month. Many other pastors had to learn, to their regret, the principle "this is a German church, the Germans support it; the English can have services some other time, but not at 10:00 a.m." This was not only true among the German-Russians, but in my own St. Mark's Church in Watertown, Wisconsin. My own father, a member there, said that the English services can be had at any time but not at 10:00 a.m. Not until 1938 did the Dakota-Mon-

tana District begin to use only the English language at its conventions.

The people were always more interested in building places of worship than in parsonages. Before the organization of the District, remodeled schools, also churches were located at Mobridge, Red Elm, Meadow and Lemmon, South Dakota; Elgin, Carson and Flasher, North Dakota. Within twelve years churches were erected at Hettinger, McIntosh, Morrystown and Paradise. In the first quarter century, the borders expanded to Livingston, Montana.

IV. Christian education was very limited. Pastor Boettcher conducted school in his parsonage four days a week in spite of his busy schedule. Naturally, the standards required now were not demanded then. The pastors had summer school, or what is known today as Vacation Bible School. To arrange instruction periods for the confirmands for a parish of four to six churches was most difficult. There was very little time for vacations as the summer months had to be utilized for that purpose; children were kept at the parsonage for daily instruction. In one congregation, members offered to keep the pastor a day and a night for each child in the family. That settled the problem of lodging.

Nevertheless, the District was ridiculed, chided and rebuked because it had no parochial schools. In 1921, one family of the Elgin congregation supported the first and only school in the District for two years. However, it had to be discontinued because and I quote: "The general mission board could not be interested to also support a teacher." Efforts were made from time to time to support Christian day schools at Bowdle, Morrystown and Jamestown, North Dakota; Akaska, Mobridge and Watertown, South Dakota. Only Mobridge and Watertown are still in existence, according to the latest statistics. Rapid City and Billings, Montana have recently opened schools since the book was printed.

Why has it been so difficult to maintain Christian day schools? One reason is that missionaries were primarily interested in becoming self-sustaining. In 1917, the salary was \$660 which was gradually increased to \$1200 as top salary 25 years later. The records show that some were self-sustaining at \$400, \$750 and \$1,000 annually. To interest the members in supporting a teacher was impossible. Missionaries were thankful when they were relieved of the support from Synod's treasury. However, a valiant effort had been made by the District to obtain permission from the state for pastors to teach the children. Some of us received our credit ratings from Northwestern College and

the Seminary, which were accepted by the Department of Education in Madison and were accepted by the State Department of South Dakota. By the authority of the District, we lobbied unsuccessfully February 22-26, 1929 at Pierre, South Dakota, for a law to dismiss school children for one year, to be taught by any pastor having a teacher's certificate. We had hoped to gather all children of a parish at one place.

Prior to that, Christian education was discussed at every conference. Finally, the pastoral conference of the District meeting at Raymond, South Dakota, in 1927, formulated an appeal to Synod:

1. "To consider the need of a Synodical institution in our midst.
2. To help us obtain such school, to erect it if possible west of Aberdeen.
3. That certain offers would be made to reduce the cost to a minimum."

Other conferences appealed to Synod to support such a project.

Action by Synod followed that same year:

1. "The Synod authorized the founding of an academy at its meeting in August 1927.
2. It permitted the District to select the site.
3. Synod elected the Board for the Academy. Upon the request of the Dakota-Montana delegates, Prof. Bliefernicht and Prof. Klatt were elected as advisors to the Board.
4. The Synod appropriated \$5,000 for the bienium."

Arguments to establish an Academy in the Dakota-Montana District were:

1. "The great distances some students had to travel.
2. That the proportion of students per communicant member at our colleges were greater than from any other district."

This favorable decision by the Synod has always been appreciated.

At a special meeting in January 1928 at Watertown, South Dakota, offers were presented by: "Bowdle, 30 acres of land and \$3,000; Elgin, North Dakota: 40 acres of land, free light and water for 5 years and \$10,000; Moberge: the use of a school to be vacated by August of that year, a plot of land of no less than 28 acres and the school house to be moved onto the selected site. Roscoe: the free use of an old school building and \$31,450, including a tract of land." Other offers were made but they were not official and not in writing. Out of 64 votes Moberge received 51.

The Northwestern Lutheran Academy (this name was suggested by Rev. J. P. Scherf and adopted by the Board) began its first year, 1928-29, with an enrollment of 24 and Prof. K. Sievert as the first professor, now completing his 42nd year there and his 50th in the Dakota-Montana District. The white frame building, directly behind the new public school, served as a class room and dormitory for the boys and lodging for the temporary custodian, a member of the congregation. A vacated 14 room hospital building on the other side of town was rented for \$75 a month and served as a girls' dormitory, the dining room for all students, the home of Mrs. Schlemmer, the first matron and the home of the first custodian and his wife, Rev. and Mrs. P. Hinderer, Sr.

The board had engaged a landscape architect to select one of four sites. (Here a blue print, sketched by the landscape architect, was shown to the assembly.) He, with the board, chose the 28 acres overlooking the Missouri River, now is (because of a dam construction) at the edge of a lake. He then sketched the drawings, indicating where all future buildings were to be placed. That is why the white frame building faces the city, while all others were to overlook the lowlands, river and bluffs. In the summer of 1929 the white frame building was purchased and moved, set on a foundation and repaired by the local congregation. Synod at its meeting granted the erection of a boys' dormitory which was completed in the spring of 1930 except for the second floor. In March 1930, the boys moved from a home, which had been rented for lodging, the girls were transferred to the white frame building under the supervision of another matron. It also served as a dining hall until all facilities were ready in the new dormitory.

When the new dormitory was under construction, the water pipes of the Milwaukee Railroad were discovered. As it had no easement on our property, it consented to tap into its line, if the pipes could remain. This arrangement was accepted by the Academy board. So the Academy had free water for many years. City water is now used.

The second year Prof. Sievert was assisted by his father, a retired teacher, until Pastor Traub took over the duties of the second professor. Soon the financial crash of 1929 affected the enrollment and support. Prof. Sievert's residence and the home of Prof. Traub served as the girls' dormitories. To help alleviate Synod's financial difficulties, the District had a special offering taken and paid approximately one-half of the first professorage. Prof. Traub built his own home, however lost it in the depression. The

financial crash affected everyone within a few years. Two banks closed in Mobridge, one in Glenham, also in Zeeland, North Dakota, where the District kept its funds. Professor and missionary salaries were reduced by 20% and a few months later by another 10%. (Pastors in self-sustaining congregations accepted what they could get as some served as treasurers of their congregations.) In one year not one call was issued to the graduating class of the Seminary, except as tutors of our colleges. The Lord withheld His blessing from the fields which looked like plowed fields in the fall instead of fields of grain. Sweet clover and Russian thistles were fed to the cattle; and housewives canned the thistles as vegetables. Yet the Lord sustained us and blessed us bountifully with a new spirit to spread the Gospel. The entire enrollment of the Academy was down to twelve students. Today more than a hundred are preparing to work in His kingdom. It must be mentioned that one graduate of Northwestern Lutheran Academy will be celebrating his 30th year in the ministry and several others have passed the quarter century mark.

Year after year proposals were made to close the Academy and transfer the students because of the lack of funds and the small enrollment, but the Lord has maintained it in spite of all opposition. A few students were expelled the very first year and a few in the following years. In spite of a sincere desire for growth, discipline was most essential in its formative years. Much could be written about the trials and tribulations of the infant school, but synodical reports tell the story.

V. The third reason for a new District was: that missionaries would remain longer at their stations. In the 1928 report, we read: "We regret that a considerable number of young pastors have left the District after so short a service and that several older pastors have also left the District." Also, "Only a few pastors are still at their station where they were two years ago." In the 1954 report we read in the president's report: "the exodus from our District the past year was unprecedented." After 34 years that was still the complaint, that pastors remain only a few years. Eighteen years after the organization of the District only five of the 23 pastors were members of the District. Of the 40 pastors who were on the roll call in 1938, only five remained 16 years later. Of the 32 listed in 1954 only three are listed in the 1968 statistical records. (This is not an accurate record as someone might have joined the District in 1940 and who might have been present some years after 1954). But it indicates the trend.

A careful review of the continual turn-over will reveal a few other facts. In our day, Seminary graduates had been advised to go alone into the fields of missions, as the wives may not be able to bear the rigors of the area beyond the Missouri

River. Of the early missionaries it is recorded "sie konnten die Strapazen nicht ertragen." (They could not bear the hardships) This statement appears repeatedly.

It is now almost 100 years since the first missionaries entered the Dakota territory and more than 60 years ago that the first missionary pushed on across the Missouri River. Only a few stayed longer than two years. It must be recorded that of the six professors now at the Academy at least four have been there more than ten years (Sievert, TenBroek, Weyland, Pelzl). The constant turn-over in the distant mission fields was due to a longing for companionship, and hardships encountered in the areas. Some such incidents related could be duplicated many times by the various pastors: the burning of a cross on the parsonage lawn was a most unpleasant experience; the placing of a skull and cross-bone symbol found at the entrance to the home of a pastor was another. Threats of various kinds were quite common. The lack of telephone communication between pastors and visits with one another were very infrequent. A conference was like a reunion. An explosion of the lignite in a heater with all the stove pipes falling down on Christmas Eve, when I was at another mission field and not returning until the following day, was an unforgettable holiday evening for the wife alone for several days. Other trying experiences were perhaps some of the reasons why missionaries soon left for other churches. That the Lord had provided me with an orphan spouse was one factor in remaining in the Dakotas for 21 years. One must recall the blizzard of March 20, 1920, when the coast train offered no service from Monday till Friday, when many died in the storm and thousands of cattle suffocated. Graduates, who took their brides against the advice of the professors, crossed the Missouri River on the ferry with eyes dampened, as beyond was only sky and country.

A church was built and dedicated in 1921 at Paradise, North Dakota: the following is the history of that congregation.

As this scene of American life has disappeared, I wish to relate some of it here: The colony of German Russians, originally emigrated from Germany to the Odessa, South Russia area, where Lutherans lived in one village, Baptist in another, Congregationalists in another. Our Lutherans at Paradise emigrated to Eureka, South Dakota, the wheat center of the United States and from there to the prairies between the Cedar and Cannonball Rivers. A Sunday in the life of this congregation would add something to the life of a missionary that is no more. This group of eight families settled about 25 miles north of McIntosh, South Dakota. The pastor arranged

to ride with the mail carrier to Swastika on the Cedar River. A member called for him there. He spent Saturday night with some member and was returned to Swastika for services Sunday afternoon. When the pastor had \$4.00 to spare for a livery team, he started very early for a 10:00 a.m. service. He arrived at the home of the nearest family after fording the river and opening from four to eight gates. With a voice that could be heard everywhere in the farm yard the father called, "Buben der Pfarrer kommt." (Boys, the pastor is coming) The boys rushed out, took the team, the suitcase, laprobes and other equipment such as a footwarmer, etc., so the pastor need not concern himself about trivial matters. The pastor was highly respected and honored. Services were conducted and the hymns sung with the tapping of the feet by the leader. Only familiar hymns dared to be used.

After the services, the pastor went for dinner, not where he was invited, but where he was told to go, to one of the sod houses which had been kalsomined every year with the favorite "Himmelblau" (Heavenly blue) and white-washed outside. The homes were immaculately clean. They did not have the comforts and conveniences of our homes; the kitchen table, straight back chairs, steel beds, no rugs, no rockers, no radios and of course, no phones; but their warm hospitality made up for any lack of conveniences. At the dinner table, only men were permitted and the pastor's wife when the pastor had to hurry to his next preaching place. The table was set with plates, knives, forks, spoons and cups. The food served was a bowl of potatoes, a plate of roast pork with the hide and immense slices of bread, no butter and no jelly. When tea was served a slice of lemon was added. The bread had been kept in refrigeration between the feather beds, serving as a "bread box". The fuel used was the cow chips, prepared by the horses stomping on the manure near the barn, dried, cut in squares and stacked. There were no outhouses which caused some problem before the church was dedicated. One member offered to build one and sell it to the congregation after the dedication. A meeting was held and an equal amount of cash, collected (after the second service) from each member, and the church and outhouse paid for with cash at a total cost of \$2,100. The outhouse was not usable by noon.

When the pastor left the church and the home there was always some farm produce given - eggs, cream and meat. Cakes were unknown until the pastor's spouse showed them how. Many incidents could be recorded but this is merely a sample of a life that is no more.

Missionaries become discouraged because of the many problems in the field of labor and when an error in judgment (debts, drink, Sunday labor, etc.) has been made, it is difficult to regain the con-

fidence of the people. The wife has family ties and the longing for home never ceases. Others can select their place of labor, but the pastor is assigned; they keep their friends (college and classmates meet at conferences) but the wives must find new ones.

Nevertheless the Holy Spirit builds His church and uses the enthusiasm of the servants of the Lord in preaching the Word, so that the borders will be extended, the stones will be added. The problems of the moving ministry will always be with us. May the motto of every pastor be that of the apostle "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified". If the seed of the true Word is sown the Lord will give the blessings and in another 50 years the District will have another story to record.

AREAS ONCE SERVED BY THE DISTRICT

Altamont, South Dakota
Arco, Minnesota
Athboy, South Dakota
Aurora, South Dakota
Baker, South Dakota
Brockway, Montana
Bruce, South Dakota
Bryant, South Dakota
Carl, North Dakota
Carrington, North Dakota
Castlewood, South Dakota
Cloyd Valley, South Dakota
Cottonwood, South Dakota
Date, South Dakota
Drew, South Dakota
Eales, South Dakota
Faulkton, South Dakota
Florence, South Dakota
Gale, South Dakota
Germantown, South Dakota
Grass Range, Montana
Hague, North Dakota

Havanna Township, South Dakota
Haynes, South Dakota
Hidewood Township, South Dakota
Ipswich, South Dakota
Jamestown, North Dakota
Lemmon, South Dakota
Marmarth, North Dakota
Marshall, Minnesota
Meadow, South Dakota
Milroy, Minnesota
Olanda, Montana
Oxford Township
Piedmont, South Dakota
Sand Springs, Montana
Streeter, North Dakota
Theodore Township
Trail City, South Dakota
Walker, North Dakota
White, South Dakota
White Butte, South Dakota
White Sulphur Springs, Montana
Windsor, North Dakota

Aberdeen, S. D.	Trinity Schulz, W. 42	Melstone, Mont.	Faith Frank, J. 24
Akaska, S. D.	Zion Shook, D. 42	Mobridge, S. D.	Zion Krenke, D. 51
Argo, S. D.	St. Paul's Heins R. 28	Moorhead, Minn.	Ascension . . Schulz, M. 34
Bashaw, Alta.	Trinity Strobel, R. 20	Morristown, S. D.	Christ Hayes, D. 52
Billings, Mont.	Apostle's Wood, H. 21	Mound City, S. D.	St. Paul's . . Forss, D. 52
Bismarck, N. D.	Our Savior's Rothe, G. 43	Paradise, N. D.	St. John's . . Hayes, D. 53
Bison, S. D.	Christ Fedke, F. 44	Pierre, S. D.	Redeemer . . Brand, F. 53
Bowdle, S. D.	St. John's Schroeder, L. 44	Raymond, S. D.	Bethlehem . Lemke, G. 35
Brookings, S. D.	Our Savior Heins, R. 28	Rapid City, S. D.	St. Paul's . . Dobberstein, L.A. 54
Burt, N. D.	Zion Neumann, D. 45	Reeder, N. D.	Zion Fedke, F. 53
Carson, N. D.	Trinity Neumann, D. 45	Roscoe, S. D.	St. Paul's . . Geiger, G. 55
Circle, Mont.	Salem Stuebs, P. 20	Sioux Falls, S. D.	Good Shephard . Babler, J. 36
Clark, S. D.	Peace Lemke, G. 29	South Shore, S. D.	Our Savior's Werner, E. 36
Clear Lake, S. D.	Trinity Roth, R.H. 29	Spearfish, S. D.	Hope Hahm, M. 56
Dempster, S. D.	St. John's Ellwein, H. 30	St. Albert, Alta.	St. Peter's . . Deutschlander, D. 25
Dupree, S. D.	First English. Schmidt, T. 45	Sturgis, S. D.	Trinity Hahm, M. 56
Edmonton, Alta.	St. Matthew's. Strobel, R. 20	Summit, S. D.	St. John's . . Herrmann, W. 34
Ekalaka, Mont.	Trinity Weimer, R. 22	(Mazeppa)	
Elgin, N. D.	Immanuel Neumann, D. 46	Tappen, N. D.	St. John's . . Kloehn, R. 57
Elkton, S. D.	Trinity Haberkorn, K. 30	Terry, Mont.	Trinity Weimer, R. 25
Estelline, S. D.	Mt. Calvary Ellwein, H. 30	Timber Lake, S. D.	St. Paul's . . Schmidt, T. 57
Faith, S. D.	St. Paul's Schmidt, T. 46	Tolstoy, S. D.	St. James . . Shook, D. 58
Flasher, N. D.	Trinity Putz, M. 47	Valley City, N. D.	St. Paul's . . Russow, W. 37
Gary, S. D.	First Geiger, G. 32	Ward, S. D.	Immanuel . . Haberkorn, K. 38
Glendive, Mont.	Messiah Weimer, R. 22	Watauga, S. D.	Bethlehem . Hayes, D. 58
Glenham, S. D.	St. Jacobi Krenke, D. 47	Watertown, S. D.	Bethlehem . Kell, A.P.C. 38
Goodwin, S. D.	St. Peter's Werner, E. 31	Watertown, S. D.	St. John's . . Herrmann, W. 35
Great Falls, Mont.	Mt. View Sullivan, J. 23	(Rauville)	
Grover, S. D.	Emmanuel Ziebell, R. 32	Watertown, S. D.	St. Martin's Habermann, E. 39
Hazelton, N. D.	St. Paul's Engel, N. 48	Wetaskiwin, Alta.	St. John's . . Strobel, R. 26
Hendricks, Minn.	Trinity Geiger, G. 32	White, S. D.	St. Paul's . . Heins, R. 28
Henry, S. D.	St. Paul's Ziebell, R. 33	(Argo)	
Hettinger, N. D.	Redeemer Fedke, F. 48	Willow Lake, S. D.	Bethlehem . Bunde, G. 40
Isabel, S. D.	Peace Schmidt, T. 49	Willow Lake, S. D.	Willow Lake Bunde, G. 40
Lavina, Mont.	Holy Trinity Frank, J. 23	(Hague)	
Leith, N. D.	St. Luke's Neumann, D. 49	Winnett, Mont.	First Frank, J. 26
Livingston, Mont.	St. Paul's Lenz, K. 24	Wolf Point, Mont.	Good Shephard. Stuebs, P. 27
Mandan, N. D.	Redeemer Putz, M. 50	Yankton, S. D.	Mission Engel, J. M. 41
McIntosh, S. D.	St. Paul's Hayes, D. 50	Zeeland, N. D.	Zion Forss, D. 58

This book has been prepared for publication
by the District Anniversary Committee.

Pastor Gerhard H. Geiger, Chrm.
Pastor Wayne I. Schulz, Sec.
Pastor Gerhold Lemke

Notes
