

HISTORICAL
HIGHLIGHTS
OF
THE SOUTHWESTERN
CONFERENCE -
MICHIGAN
DISTRICT

By Pastor William Balza

**Presented at the Southwestern Conference
at Grace of Muskegon
May 1, 2001/ Revised June 2001**

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

1954

PHYSICS 551 - QUANTUM MECHANICS

LECTURE NOTES

BY

ROBERT S. MULLIKEN

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF THE MICHIGAN DISTRICT - SOUTHWESTERN CONFERENCE

It wasn't always so. But the longer I have been a part of our Southwestern Conference, the more intriguing the history of our conference has become to me. This is why I agreed to write and present a history of our conference at this time.

I wasn't fully aware of the magnitude of the assignment until I got started about ten months ago. One of my goals was to gather a history of each of the congregations of our conference. I was able to succeed in that endeavor and I thank those of you who submitted your history to me in whatever form it may have been.

One of the things I wanted to avoid in presenting this history is a restatement or a recompilation of what will be contained in the upcoming publication of the Michigan District History which will be an updated version of what was published back in 1970. I am anticipating that each congregation in our conference will be featured in that publication with historical highlights.

I also did not want a simple relisting of pastors and teachers who have served in our conference over the years. That, too, will be included in the new district publication.

For these reasons I have chosen a different format in presenting the history of our conference. Unfortunately, it is not a format that will be easy to present in the form of a paper. I would think that to read all that is to follow this introduction would not be all that profitable (unless desired) and would probably be somewhat boring, to say the least.

My intention, then, is to give you some of the highlights of our conference as it has developed over the years to what we know it to be today. That is why the first section of this presentation is a chronological overview of the organization of the congregations of our conference.

Additional sections include:

- 1) Order in which congregations joined our conference
- 2) Church building dedications for all congregations over the years, together with major additions
- 3) Pastors with longevity in the conference
- 4) Teachers with longevity in the conference
- 5) Officers of our district from our conference as well as circuit pastors and conference chairmen and secretaries over the years
- 6) "Bits and Pieces" which is a listing of various trivia about our conference
- 7) Chronological history of our Christian day schools and Lutheran high school in our conference

An addendum which includes a listing of other Lutheran churches in our conference, some of which may have been former members of our conference.

Unfortunately, I also find some deficiencies in this presentation, beyond the fact that there is not

a whole lot that I can read or present to you. One of those deficiencies is inaccuracies. While I am not positive that there are inaccuracies, that possibility certainly exists any time you have the writing of a history such as this.

There is also the deficiency of incompleteness. One thing I do not claim is that this is a complete history of our conference. In fact, one of my goals for this presentation was to show the development of our actual conference meetings - perhaps showing when the pastors of our conference first met, the frequency they met, and so forth. To this point I have been unable to find any such records of our conference meetings going back beyond twenty years or so. I would need either minutes of meetings or at least agendas of the meetings - none of which I have been able to find available.

Another thing that is lacking completeness is the listing of conference chairmen and secretaries and circuit pastors (formerly called "Visiting Elders"). Again my listing only goes back to about 1960. Some of this is a result of a lack of availability of publications such as the Synod Yearbook, Statistical Reports, District Proceedings. I understand that there may be some copies of these in our synod archives at the Seminary but due to a lack of time I was unable to make use of these publications and they do not allow them off campus.

I would like to think, then, that this will remain an "unfinished" assignment. I would still like to gather more information, especially on the items listed, about our conference for our mutual reference and for the future reference of our conference. I would also ask you to contact me if you may find any inaccuracies in the following information and/or if you may know of some of the incomplete items that can be filled in.

I would be happy to serve as an unofficial "historian" for our conference and from time to time update you on any information which becomes available and may be of interest to you. Also don't hesitate to let me know if there may be some information which is not included in this initial presentation which you would like to see included.

I. CHRONOLOGICAL ORGANIZATION OF CONGREGATIONS

- 1852 A few Lutheran families, mostly from Ohio, settled in Allegan County and met occasionally for joint worship and reading services.
- 1855 About 20 Lutheran families in Sturgis organized as "Christian Lutherans". They were served by a Reformed pastor who, against their protests, incorporated them as "The German Evangelical Reformed Church". Fourteen families severed all connections with the Reformed Church and reorganized as "The First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sturgis" and joined the Michigan Synod.
- 1856 Pastor Friedrich Schmid of Ann Arbor came occasionally to Allegan County to proclaim the gospel and administer the sacrament as the request of a resident of Hopkins, Joseph Hoffmeister.
- 1860 Beginning of the Michigan Synod
The Michigan Synod sent Pastor Christoph L. Eberhardt to conduct services in the newly erected Hopkins school house.
- "Eberhardt's zeal matched Schmid's. Using Hopkins in Allegan County as his base, the young missionary began to visit German settlements in the western part of the state. He arrived in Hopkins in October of 1860 and by December, he had already established 16 different locations, covering a circuit of 360 miles, at which he preached regularly. His travels were made mostly on foot, and he served those 16 locations at regular three-week intervals. Whenever he heard that there was a settlement of Germans, including even only one Lutheran family, he made it a point to go there. He carried with him a parcel of Bibles and prayer books, either selling them, or giving them to people who were very poor. He covered Allegan, Van Buren, Ottawa, Muskegon and Clinton counties, traveling as far east as Owosso." (taken from Prof. John Brenner's "A Synod for the 90's: the 1890's", p. 4)
- 1862 After Pastor Eberhardt accepted a call to Saginaw, Pastor Haas served the several families.
- 1863 Pastor Jacob Furrer was sent to Allegan County on November 3 and became the first resident pastor on this side of the state. He ministered to groups in Hopkins, Salem and Allegan.
- 1864 **St. Paul of Hopkins was organized**
After buying a common burial ground during the previous year, Lutheran families from Hopkins, Salem and Allegan effected an organization of their members, and land was purchased for a church site 1.5 miles northwest of Hopkins.
- 1867 **St. John of Sturgis was organized**
- 1868 **St. John of Allegan was organized on September 1** under the leadership of Pastor John Baumann.
- 1868-1903 The congregations at Allegan, Hopkins, Salem and Dorr shared a single pastor until Allegan called its own pastor in 1903.
- 1869 The ELS organized its first congregation in our conference at Holton under the name Holton Ev. Lutheran Church. Initial meetings were held at rural public schools.
- 1881 St. John of Covert Township, Van Buren County, built a new church near the Packard Mill. It is believed to be the first Lutheran church built in Van Buren County.

- 1882 Preaching services began in South Haven.
- 1884 **St. Paul of South Haven was organized**
- 1896 The Michigan Synod breaks from the Wisconsin Synod Federation.
- 1897 Efforts in Benton Harbor as early as 1894 led to the organization of the first Lutheran congregation, called Zion, which quickly dissolved over a disagreement between pastor and members about the construction of their first church building. The next pastor, a graduate, served only a little over six months and resigned on the day of dedication of the new church.
- 1898 **St. Matthew of Benton Harbor** was organized and dedicated first church building, including schoolhouse in basement on August 22.
- 1899 **St. Paul of Stevensville was organized on February 24** as the first daughter congregation of St. Matthew of Benton Harbor. Most of the early members were former members of Trinity of St. Joseph (Missouri Synod).
St. Peter of Dorr was organized as a daughter congregation of Hopkins on December 30.
- 1909 Congregations at Albion, Kalamazoo, Marshall and Sherman joined the Missouri Synod because they were unhappy about the reunion of the Michigan Synod with the Wisconsin Synod.
- 1910 St. Matthew of Benton Harbor began second daughter congregation among German Lutheran immigrants, mostly from southwestern Russia, at Dowagiac on June 1
- 1911 **St. John of Dowagiac was organized on March 19**
- 1911-34 St. Paul of Stevensville joined the Southeastern Wisconsin District until it rejoined the Michigan District in 1934 (Prior to 1911 it had been a member of the Michigan Synod).
- 1912 St. Matthew of Benton Harbor began third daughter congregation at Sodus
- 1916 **St. Paul of Sodus was organized** and a Methodist church was purchased for \$1,500; a day school opened the same year but closed a few years later
- 1919 **Salem of Coloma** was organized as a congregation of the Wisconsin Synod. It left the Wisconsin Synod and joined the Missouri Synod following the break in 1961.
- 1921 **Grace of Eau Claire** was organized on December 31st as a fourth daughter congregation of St. Matthew of Benton Harbor
- 1922-23 Several families in Muskegon Heights approached the mission board about establishing a congregation in the Muskegon area; the group was served for a time by a number of pastors who came from Saginaw, Owosso and Lansing
- 1923 **Grace of Muskegon Heights was organized on November 4th.**
- 1926 St. John of Covert united with St. Paul of South Haven
- 1927 The two small congregations at Salem and Burnips dissolved and their members joined either the Hopkins or Dorr congregations.
First service held at Hart on May 15 by pastor of St. Stephen of Benona (LC-MS). Services discontinued in June of 1937.
- 1935 St. John of Dowagiac and Grace of Eau Claire were a dual parish from 1923-35.
- 1942 Allegan church was renamed "St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church"
- 1945 St. Matthew of Benton Harbor began fifth daughter congregation in Benton Harbor with first service on May 20 at the Berrien County Welfare Building;

- Grace of Benton Harbor** was organized on August 27
Canvass and exploratory work began in Battle Creek
- 1946 Residence purchased in Battle Creek for parsonage and chapel
- 1947 Services restarted at Hart on May 4 and Our Savior of Hart was organized as a member of the Missouri Synod
- 1948 **St. John of Battle Creek** was organized on April 29
- 1950 First service conducted at Otsego on February 12
- 1951 **Peace of Otsego** was organized on June 3 as a daughter congregation of St. John of Allegan
- 1952 Preaching services began at Bangor in September
- 1955 **Good Shepherd of Benton Harbor** was organized on December 11
- 1956 **Trinity of Bangor** was organized in October as a daughter congregation of St. Paul of South Haven
- 1959 Preaching services began at Hartford as a daughter congregation of Trinity of Bangor.
Grace of Muskegon Heights had a daughter congregation in Muskegon until 1964. The two congregations were united in 1964 with the move to property in Muskegon. The church property in Muskegon Heights was sold in 1966.
- 1960 **Hope of Hartford** was organized on February 21
A daughter congregation to Grace of Muskegon existed from 1959-64 but later united with the mother church.
- 1963 **Holy Trinity of Wyoming** was organized
- 1964 First exploratory service held in Kalamazoo on September 20
- 1965 St. Stephen of Kalamazoo (Parchment) was organized with first resident pastor arriving in June
- 1966 **Our Savior of Hart** left the Missouri Synod and joined the Wisconsin Synod as a home mission (originally a part of the Northern Conference).
- 1967 Grace of Benton Harbor relocated in St. Joseph with dedication of new church and school on March 12; Exploratory services began in Portage on September 10 at Amberly School.
- 1968 **St. James of Portage** was organized
- 1970 First service was held in the South Bend, Indiana area by Pastor Knueppel of Sturgis on November 1
- 1971 First resident pastor installed at Hartford (dual parish with Bangor from 1960-71)
Peace of Granger was organized on December 5
- 1973 **Christ of Holland** was organized
- 1974 Our Savior of Hart joined the Southwestern Conference
- 1979 **Trinity of Wayland** joined the WELS and Southwestern Conference. It was served as a dual parish with St. Paul of Hopkins from 1979-84.
- 1982 Christ of Holland was closed
- 1984 St. Stephen of Kalamazoo (Parchment) was closed
- 1987 St. Matthew of Benton Harbor suffered extensive damage to its church due to an arson fire
Peace of Granger, Indiana was added to our conference as a member of the Southern Circuit

- St. Paul of Stevensville is the first congregation in the conference to have a team of three pastors serving the congregation
- 1988 Grace of St. Joseph called a third pastor
- 1989 First pastor installed at Rockford in July.
- 1990 **Christ Our Savior of Rockford** was organized as a mission and daughter congregation of Holy Trinity of Wyoming
- 1991 Exploratory services began at Michigan City
- 1993 Exploratory services began at Elkhart, Indiana
- 1995 **Lord of Life (ELS) of Holland was organized**
- 1999 **Beautiful Savior of Michigan City, Indiana was organized** as a daughter congregation of St. Paul of Stevensville
- 1999 Christ Our Savior of Rockford added a Youth and Family Staff Minister

II. ORDER IN WHICH CONGREGATIONS JOINED CONFERENCE

- 1864 **St. Paul - Hopkins**
- 1867 **St. John - Sturgis**
- 1868 **St. John - Allegan**
- (1869 **Holton - Holton (ELS)**)
- 1881? St. John - Covert - joined with St. Paul - South Haven in 1926
- 1884 **St. Paul - South Haven**
- 1894 Zion - Benton Harbor - dissolved shortly thereafter
- 1898 **St. Matthew - Benton Harbor**
- 1899 **St. Paul - Stevensville**
- 1899 **St. Peter - Dorr**
- 1911 **St. John - Dowagiac**
- 1916 **St. Paul - Sodus**
- 1919 Salem - Coloma - joined Missouri Synod in early 1960s
- 1921 **Grace - Eau Claire**
- 1923 **Grace - Muskegon**
- 1945 **Grace - St. Joseph**
- 1948 **St. John - Battle Creek**
- 1951 **Peace - Otsego**
- 1955 **Good Shepherd - Benton Harbor**
- 1956 **Trinity - Bangor**
- 1960 **Hope - Hartford**
- 1963 **Holy Trinity - Wyoming**
- 1965 St. Stephen - Kalamazoo (Parchment) - closed in 1984
- 1968 **St. James - Portage**
- 1973 Christ - Holland - closed in 1982
- 1974 **Our Savior - Hart**
- 1979 **Trinity - Wayland**
- 1987 **Peace - Granger, IN**
- 1990 **Christ Our Savior - Rockford**
- (1995 **Lord of Life - Holland (ELS)**)

1999 Beautiful Savior - Michigan City, IN

III. CHURCH BUILDING DEDICATIONS (Current building in bold print)

St. John - Allegan:	1874 (redecorated in 1904 and 1925; enlarged in 1931, redecorated and remodeled in 1943, relocated in 1943, redecorated in 1956)
Trinity - Bangor:	1960
St. John - Battle Creek:	1946 (large residence used as parsonage and chapel), 1954 (addition in 1962)
Good Shepherd - Benton Harbor:	1959 (addition in 1970)
St. Matthew - Benton Harbor:	1898, 1920 (renovated in 1988 after fire in 1987)
St. Peter - Dorr:	1900 (relocation, addition, renovation and remodeling in 1967), 1993
St. John - Dowagiac:	1911, 1958
Grace - Eau Claire:	1922 (addition in 1937 and 1938 and 1948)
Peace - Granger, IN	1973, 1977
Our Savior - Hart:	1953, 1988
Hope - Hartford:	1964
St. Paul - Hopkins:	1865, 1879, 1893 (remodeled and enlarged in 1944), 1962
St. Stephen - Kalamazoo:	1969 (church closed in 1984)
Grace - Muskegon:	1926, 1959 (additions in 1972 and 1991)
Peace - Otsego:	1957, 1979
St. James - Portage:	1973 (Fellowship and Education Addition in 1987)
Christ Our Savior - Rockford	1993
Grace - St. Joseph:	1947 (basement chapel in Benton Harbor), 1949 (superstructure in Benton Harbor), 1956 (wing added for school), 1967 (addition of gymnasium and classrooms in 1980)
St. Paul - Sodus:	1916, 1919, 1955
St. Paul - South Haven:	1888, 1926
St. Paul - Stevensville:	1899 (extensive renovations in 1924), 1971
St. John - Sturgis:	1869, 1967
Holy Trinity - Wyoming:	1962, 1985 (addition in 1988)
Lord of Life - Holland/ELS	1997 (purchased former Reformed church)
Holton - Holton/ELS	1881, 1939, 1986

IV. PASTORS WITH LONGEVITY IN CONFERENCE (Active ministry only)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Years</u>	<u>Ministry</u>
Pastor H. C. Haase, St. Matthew - Benton Harbor	1908-49	41 years
Pastor Ronald Freier, Grace - St. Joseph (still member of conference)	1960-97	37 years
Pastor Harold Zink, St. Paul - Stevensville (remained member of conference until his death in 1999/ 56 years in conference)	1943-76	33 years
Pastor Kermit Biedenbender, St. Matthew - Benton Harbor	1965-94	29 years
Pastor Waldemar Zarling, Good Shepherd - Benton Harbor	1956-84	28 years

Pastor Wynfred Westendorf, St. Paul - South Haven	1940-67	27 years
(also served St. John - Dowagiac from 1929-40/ 38 years in conference)		
Pastor William Balza, St. Paul - South Haven	1974-	27 years
Pastor Henry Peter, St. Paul - Sodus	1961-87	26 years
Pastor Louis Meyer, St. John - Allegan	1937-62	25 years
Pastor Arnold E. F. Hoenecke, Grace - Muskegon	1925-50	25 years
Pastor Patrick Bell, Grace - Eau Claire	1977-99	22 years
(also served St. John - Allegan from 1974-77/ 25 years in conference)		
Pastor Hugo Hoenecke, St. John - Sturgis	1930-54	24 years
Pastor William Essig, St. Paul - Stevensville	1920-43	23 years
Pastor Martin Haase, St. Paul - South Haven	1918-40	22 years
Pastor Stephen Otto, St. Peter - Dorr	1979-	22 years
(also vicared at Grace - St. Joseph from 1977-78)		
Pastor Fred Adrian, Holy Trinity - Wyoming	1980-	21 years
(also vicared at Grace - St. Joseph in 1974)		
Pastor E. T. Lochner, St. Peter - Dorr	1929-50	21 years

V. TEACHERS WITH LONGEVITY IN CONFERENCE

Arvin Jantz, St. Matthew - Benton Harbor	1925-69	44 years
Hans Johannsen, St. Matthew - Benton Harbor	1961-95	34 years
Kenneth Nolte, Grace - St. Joseph	1968-	33 years
David Brohn, St. Paul - South Haven	1968-	33 years
Bonnie LaGrow, St. Matthew - Benton Harbor	1969-74;1975-	31 years
John Eggert, MLHS	1974-	27 years
Lucy Nimtz, St. Matthew - Benton Harbor	1953-78	25 years
Sue Holzhueter, St. Paul - South Haven	1972-98	26 years
Don Holzhueter, St. Paul - South Haven	1972-97	25 years
Virgil Raasch, St. Matthew - Benton Harbor	1956-77	21 years
Kenneth Kasten, Good Shepherd - Benton Harbor	1978-98	20 years

VI. OFFICERS OF THE DISTRICT FROM OUR CONFERENCE (* served while they were members of our conference)

District Presidents

Pastor Friedrich Schmid	1860-66 (First Pres. of Michigan Synod)
Pastor Christoph Eberhardt	1881-90 (Pres. of Michigan Synod)
Pastor Frederick Krauss	1910-26
Pastor Norman Berg	1962-68
*Pastor Waldemar Zarling	1968-84

District Vice-Presidents

Pastor Henry Richter	1930
*Pastor Ernst Wendland	1955-61
*Pastor Waldemar Zarling	1962-67
Pastor John F. Brenner	1966-84
*Pastor Gerald Schroer	1988-98
*Pastor Paul Naumann	1994-

District Secretary

Pastor Theodore Sauer 1948-55
Pastor Ray Frey 1955-63
***Pastor William Balza 1980-88**

Circuit Pastors (known as "Visiting Elders" up to 1977)

NOTE: Conference had only one "Visiting Elder" up to 1970

Conference

Wynfred Westendorf (19 \62)
Ronald Freier (1962-70)

Northern Circuit

David Tetzlaff (1970-74)
Dan Westendorf (1974-84)
Dennis Valleau (1984-88)
Steve Otto (1988-96)
Paul Stern (1996-)

Southern Circuit

Ronald Freier (1970-80)
Henry Peter (1980-86)
Gerald Schroer (1986-90; 1999-)
William Balza (1990-92)
Robert Meiselwitz (1992-93)
Mark Wessel (1993-95)
Pat Bell (1995-99)

Conference Chairmen

Daniel Westendorf (197?-78)
John Graf (1978-79)
Henry Peter (1979-82)
William Balza (1982-83, 89-91)
Fred Adrian (1983-89)
Pat Bell (1991-99)
Robert Duehlmeyer (1999-)

Conference Secretary

Pat Bell (197?-78)
Richard Raabe (1978-79)
Dennis Valleau (1979-87)
Dale Klessig (1988-89)
Rodney Schwab (1989-92)
Phil Heyer 1992-98)
Dean Fleming (1998-)

VII. BITS AND PIECES

- **St. John of Allegan** is the longest standing church building in use in the conference. It was dedicated on October 25, 1874. It continues to serve as the house of worship for the congregation.

- Other congregations within the conference with church buildings of at least 70 years old or older are **St. Matthew of Benton Harbor** (1920), **Grace of Eau Claire** (1922) and **St. Paul of South Haven** (1926).

- **St. Matthew of Benton Harbor** is the only congregation in the conference which still holds weekly services in German. **St. Paul of Stevensville** held weekly German services until 1994 and occasional German services are still being conducted. A number of other older congregations in the conference conducted German services earlier in their history.

- **Pastors who have served two different congregations in the conference** (not as dual parishes or as vacancy pastor):

- Pat Bell (Allegan 1974-77 and Eau Claire 1977-99)
- Stephen Mischke (Battle Creek 1982-88 and Granger, IN 1998-)
- Tom Naumann (Hart 1989-96 and Grace - St. Joseph 1996-)
- Henry C. Richter (South Haven 1901-03 and Sturgis 1906-19)
- Albert Schoenberg (Allegan/Dorr/Hopkins 1875-81 and South Haven 1887-94)
- Wynfred Westendorf (Dowagiac/Eau Claire 1929-40 and South Haven 1940-67)

- **Names the same**

- *Berg*: E. J. (1945-54) and Norm (1954-60) (both Grace - Benton Harbor/St. Joseph) - father and son
- *Bickel*: A. M. (Hart 1949-56) and Elton (Kalamazoo/Portage 1965-71)
- *Dolan*: David (Hartford 1971-75) and John (Portage 1978-84) - brothers
- *Franzmann*, Werner (Coloma) and Curtis (MLHS 1974-93) - father and son
- *Frey*: Oscar (Allegan 1903-10), Ray (Battle Creek 1971-82), Jim (Hart 1979-89) and Aaron (Otsego 1998-)
- *Haase*: H.C. (St. Matthew - Benton Harbor 1908-48) and Martin (South Haven 1918-40) - brothers
- *Hoenecke*: Arnold (Muskegon 1925-50), Hugo (Sturgis 1930-54) and Paul (Bangor/Hartford 1958-66) - Hugo and Paul were father and son
- *Kionka*: Karl (Dowagiac 1940-50) and Gerhardt (Hartford 1975-87)
- *Meyer*: Louis, Sr. (Allegan 1937-62) and Louis, Jr. (Battle Creek 1964-70) - father and son; John P. (Eau Claire 1963-66); also *Meier*, Wayne (Granger, IN 1977-84)
- *Naumann*: Paul (Good Shepherd - Benton Harbor 1996-) and Tom (Hart 1989-96 and Grace, St. Joseph 1996-)
- *Otto*, Stephen (Dorr 1979-) and Vicar Robert (Good Shepherd - Benton Harbor 1971-72)
- *Peters*: Herman (St. Matthew - Benton Harbor 1898) and Dr. Paul (Allegan 1919-20); also Henry Peter (St. Paul - Sodus 1961-87)
- *Sauer*: Harold (Muskegon 1964-67) and Theodore (Portage 1977-78)
- *Wendland*: Ernest (St. Matthew - Benton Harbor 1948-62) and Paul (Hopkins 1984-89) - father and son
- *Westendorf*: Wynfred (Dowagiac 1929-40 and South Haven 1940-67); Daniel (Hopkins /Wayland 1972-84) - uncle and nephew; Vicar Thomas (Good Shepherd - Benton Harbor 1973-74)

- *Zahn*: David (Stevensville 1987-99) and Kenneth (teacher at Sturgis 1978-90)
- [*Kurth*: John (MLHS 1982-85) and *Kuerth*: Roger (Otsego 1982-87)]
- **Famous descendants**
 - John F. Brenner (Battle Creek 1949-53), son of former synod president of the same name.
 - Stephen Mischke (Battle Creek 1982-88 and Granger, IN 1998-), son of former synod president, Carl H. Mischke
 - Paul Naumann (Good Shepherd - Benton Harbor 1996-), son of former synod president, Oscar J. Naumann
 - Fred Toppe (Portage 1971-76), son of former president of Northwestern College, Carlton Toppe
 - Former vicars, Robert (Good Shepherd - Benton Harbor 1972-73) and Richard (Grace - St. Joseph 1984-85) Gurgel, brothers of the current synod president, Karl Gurgel.
- **Pastors who served in a foreign mission field** either before or after serving in our conference:
 - Glen Hieb (Dowagiac 1980-86) - Japan
 - Michael Hintz (Granger, IN 1985-98) - Central Africa
 - Geoffrey Kieta (Muskegon 1998-) - South America
 - David Rosenau (Grace - St. Joseph 1983-87) - Apacheland, Arizona
 - Theodore Sauer (Portage 1977-78) - Central Africa
 - Jim Sherod (vicar at Grace - St. Joseph 1987-88) - Japan
 - Richard Starr (Grace-Muskegon 1992-96) - South America
 - E. H. Wendland (St. Matthew - Benton Harbor 1948-62) - Central Africa
 - Paul Wendland (Hopkins 1984-89) - Central Africa
 - [Ronald Freier (Grace - St. Joseph 1960-97) - longtime member of World Mission Board 1977-2001)]
- **Pastors who served as district presidents:**
 - Frederick Krauss (Sturgis 1893-1900) - Michigan
 - Norm Berg (Grace-Benton Harbor/St. Joseph 1954-60) - Michigan
 - *Waldemar Zarling (Good Shepherd-Benton Harbor 1956-84) - Michigan
 - A. P. C. Kell (Battle Creek 1946-49) - Dakota-Montana
 - Walter Beckman (Battle Creek 1958-63) - North Atlantic
- *Only one to serve as district president while member of conference
- **Pastors who were or became professors:**
 - John Dolan (Portage 1978-84) - MLC
 - James Fricke (St. Matthew - Benton Harbor 19) - NWC
 - James Korthals (Stevensville 1976-80) - NWC & WLS
 - Roger Kuerth (Otsego 1982-87) NWP/LPS
 - Dr. Paul Peters (Allegan 1919-20) - WLS
 - Ernest H. Wendland (St. Matthew - Benton Harbor 1948-62) - WLS
 - Paul Wendland (Hopkins 1984-89) - MLC and WLS
- **Sons who became professors**
 - John Brenner (Battle Creek) - WLS
 - Larry Retberg (South Haven) - MLS
 - James Westendorf (South Haven) - WLS
 - Mark Zarling (Good Shepherd - Benton Harbor) - WLS
 - Tom Zarling (Good Shepherd - Benton Harbor) - DMLC

VIII. CHRISTIAN DAY SCHOOL/HIGH SCHOOL HISTORY IN THE CONFERENCE

- 1890 St. Paul of South Haven operated a day school until it closed in 1919.
St. John of Sturgis operated a school until 1900.
- 1895 St. Paul of Hopkins opened its first school house. Saturday classes were held into the 1950s and the school house sold in 1968.
- 1898 St. Matthew of Benton Harbor opened its school with 18 students.
- 1899 **St. Paul of Stevensville** opened its school. A second classroom was added in 1912.
- 1916 **St. Paul of Sodus** opened its school.
- 1919 St. Matthew of Benton Harbor closed its school through 1924 during the building of new church.
- 1925 **St. Matthew of Benton Harbor** reopened its school with 40 students in grades 6-8. Classes were held in the old church.
- 1934 St. Matthew of Benton Harbor rebuilt its school with a second classroom to accomodate the lower grades.
- 1945 St. Matthew of Benton Harbor added a third classroom to its school in the basement of the present church.
- 1950 St. Matthew of Benton Harbor built a new school.
Grace of Eau Claire opened its day school with pastor as teacher.
- 1954 St. Matthew of Benton Harbor added four classrooms to its school building.
- 1955 **Grace of Benton Harbor (St. Joseph)** opened its school.
- 1957 Grace of Eau Claire dedicated new school building on November 17th
- 1958 **St. Paul of South Haven** opened its school with a new building and 61 students in grades 1-7.
- 1961 **Grace of Muskegon** opened its new school.
St. Paul of Stevensville dedicated its new school building.
- 1962 St. Paul of Stevensville dedicated its new school on February 25. Construction began in 1960.
- 1962-63 Enrollment peaked at St. Matthew School in Benton Harbor with 291 students and eight teachers.
- 1964 Grace of Muskegon dedicated its new school building on November 8th
Holy Trinity of Wyoming opened its school.
- 1965 St. Paul of South Haven added two classrooms and a gymnasium to its school
- 1967 The new Grace Lutheran Church and School was dedicated in St. Joseph
St. Paul of Sodus opened its school.
- 1968 St. Matthew of Benton Harbor built a second addition to its school with two more classrooms
St. Paul of Sodus dedicated new school building.
- 1970 **Michigan Lutheran High School** opened as a two-year high school at Good Shepherd of Benton Harbor. It became a full 4-year high school in the 1972-73 school year.
- 1972 Dorr and Hopkins sent nine children to Holy Trinity School in Wyoming.
- 1975 The joint school of **St. Paul of Hopkins and St. Peter of Dorr** opened in the fall with an enrollment of 21 students in grades 1-8
Trinity of Bangor opened its school with 19 students.

- 1978 **Good Shepherd of Benton Harbor** opened its school
- 1979 **Peace of Granger** opened its school.
- 1980 Grace of St. Joseph dedicated new gymnasium and four additional classrooms
- 1981 **Peace of Otsego** opened its school
- 1983 **St. John of Dowagiac** opened its school with new school building dedicated on September 11
- 1984 St. John of Dowagiac dedicated school addition on September 3
- 1985 St. John of Dowagiac added a pre-school
- 1987 St. Matthew of Benton Harbor added a pre-school
St. John of Sturgis dedicated its new school and began classes
- 1988 Good Shepherd of Benton Harbor dedicated its two-classroom addition
- 1989 St. Paul and St. Peter School of Hopkins dedicated its new school building on August 20
Grace of St. Joseph added a pre-school
Holton of Holton opened its school.
- 1990 St. John of Dowagiac added three classrooms to school.
Peace of Granger dedicated educational building on April 22
- 1991 St. James of Portage began a pre-school
St. John of Sturgis added a pre-school
- 1992 Grace of Muskegon closed its school
- 1995 Peace of Otsego added a pre-school
Holy Trinity of Wyoming added a pre-school
- 1996 Christ Our Savior of Rockford opened a pre-school
- 1997 Trinity of Bangor dedicated addition to its school
- 1998 St. Paul of South Haven added a pre-school
- 1999 St. Paul of Sodus dedicated its school addition
- 2000 Holton of Holton dedicated its classroom building with four large classrooms
- 2001 Grace of Eau Claire and St. Paul of Sodus merged schools at Sodus

- Addendum -

Missouri Synod congregations in conference area

St. Matthew - Ada
Redemption - Battle Creek
St. Mark - Battle Creek
St. Paul - Battle Creek
Holy Cross - Belding
Trinity - Berrien Springs
Immanuel - Bridgman
St. Paul - Buchanon
Trinity - Buchanon
St. Paul - Caledonia
St. Paul - Cassopolis
Salem - Centreville
St. Paul - Centreville
St. Paul - Coldwater
Salem - Coloma
St. Paul - Colon
Grace - Coopersville
Trinity - Glendora
St. John - Grand Haven
Christ the King - Grand Rapids
Hope - Grand Rapids
Immanuel - Grand Rapids
Messiah - Grand Rapids
Mt. Olive - Grand Rapids
Our Savior - Grand Rapids
Redeemer - Grand Rapids
St. James - Grand Rapids
St. Matthew - Grand Rapids
Bethel - Grandville
Christ Our Savior - Holland
Zion - Holland
New Hope - Hudsonville
St. John - Ionia
Holy Cross - Jenison
St. John - Jenison
Immanuel - Kalamazoo
University - Kalamazoo
Zion - Kalamazoo
St. Mark - Kentwood
Christ - Marshall
St. John - Ludington
Shepherd in the Pines - Middleville
Our Redeemer - Muskegon
St. Mark - Muskegon

Trinity - Muskegon
Prince of Peace - New Buffalo
St. Paul - Niles
Trinity - Paw Paw
St. Michael - Portage
St. Peter - Rockford
Trinity - St. Joseph
Trinity - Sawyer
Lakeshore - Spring Lake
St. Matthew - Spring Lake
Christ - Stevensville
Salem - Sturgis
Trinity - Sturgis
St. Peter - Three Rivers
Faith - Whitehall
Grace - Wyoming
St. John - La Porte, IN
Trinity - La Porte, IN
Immanuel - Michigan City
St. Peter - Mishawaka
Emmaus - South Bend
Faith - South Bend
Our Redeemer - South Bend
St. Paul - South Bend
CLC
Faith - Coloma
Rock of Ages - Jenison
Redeemer - Sister Lakes

