

# 150 Years

*of Mission and Ministry*



## TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

*69 Griswold Street  
Hillsdale, Michigan 49242*

**1854 — 2004**



# Trinity Lutheran Church

## *List of Pastors*

Wm. Hattsteadt (Missionary) .....	1847-1854
Philip Trautman (Missionary) .....	1854-1860

### Missouri Synod

R. Speckhart .....	1860-1863
J.L. Hahn .....	1863-1873
J.A. Schroepel .....	1874-1875
G.A. Scheiferdecker .....	1875-1877
Martin Towe .....	1878-1879
Marcus Halboth .....	1880-1881
Herman Speckhart .....	1882-1885
Frederick Dryer .....	1886-1888
Frederick Bauer .....	1889-1897
J.C. Horsch .....	1898-1901
Karl G. Schlerf .....	1902-1906
Frederick Dryer (2nd Term) .....	1906-1908
Julius Held .....	1909-1913
S.L. Bruer .....	1914-1918
Paul Kretzman .....	1918-1926

### ULCA

Arthur Schmidt .....	1927-1928
John Eshbaugh .....	1928-1938
Carl A. Miller .....	1938-1941
Clarence M. Alexander .....	1941-1951
Edward L. Gard .....	1951-1952
Marvin F. Sielken .....	1952-1961
John Recher ( <i>supply pastor</i> ) .....	1961-1962
Donald Holm .....	1962-1967

### LCA

Jack Lacey .....	1967-1971
Herbert K. Amala .....	1971-1974
Marvin F. Sielken (2nd Term) .....	1974-1977
Jarl A. Andeer .....	1977- 1985

### ELCA

Steven M. Krebill .....	1986-1998
Ray Peterson ( <i>supply pastor</i> ) .....	March-June 1998
Julie L. Carey .....	1998-

*Pastors . . .*



# List of Charter Members

## Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

March 10, 1854

George H. Beck

Phillip Jung (Young)

John George Schmidt

George Leonard Schmidt

Christian Seiber

John Simon Weisell

John Michael Mueller

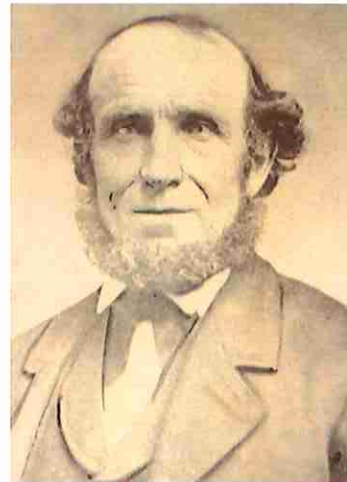
J. Frederick Woerner

John August Holle

John Frederick Graebner



George H. Beck



John George Schmidt

## German Lutheran Church



Rev. G.C. Bauer

The German Evangelical Lutheran Trinity congregation of Hillsdale, Michigan was founded in the year 1849 by Rev. W. Hattstaedt, of Monroe Michigan, and organized in 1854 by Rev. Ph. Trautmann, of Adrian, Michigan, who supplied the congregation until 1860. The church which is still used as a house of worship was built in 1854. Rev. H. Speckhardt, St., was the first pastor residing in Hillsdale. He was called in 1860 and stayed till 1863. The following ministers have served the congregation: Rev. W. Hattstaedt 1849-54; Rev. Ph. Trautmann 1854-60; Rev. H. Speckhardt, Sr. 1860-1863; Rev. J. Hahn 1863-73; Rev. J.A. Schroepel 1874; Rev. G. Schieferdecker 1875-1877; Rev. M. Toewe 1878; Rev. Halboth 1880; Rev. H. Speckhardt, Jr. 1882-85; Rev. F. Dryer 1886-88; Rev. F.C. Bauer, the present pastor, entered his duties in October 1888, being called from Greenville, Michigan. The congregation has seen many a trying day and was on the verge of ruin, caused mainly by too frequent changes of pastors. It is doing quite well at present showing a steady gain of membership. The present membership is about 200. There is a ladies' society with thirty-eight members, a young people's society called "*Der Jugendbund*" with forty-four members and a choir of eight members. All the societies are under the supervision of the pastor. The parochial school, Rev. Bauer, teacher, averages fifteen pupils. The property consists of church, school-house and parsonage (free from debt) and is located on Griswold and South Streets, east. The services are conducted in the German language.

**Brief History of  
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church  
of the  
Michigan Synod of the  
United Lutheran Church in America**

This congregation was organized March 10th, 1854. Prior to this services were held regularly in the homes by pastors from Monroe and Adrian. "In the year 1847, Rev. Hattstaedt of Monroe, Mich., made a missionary journey on horseback to Hillsdale and upon finding several Lutheran families in this locality, started a preaching station....Seven years later Rev. Ph. Trautmann of Adrian, took charge of the work and brought about the organization of the congregation, under the name of Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church, Hillsdale, Mich.....A spacious lot, 6x16 rods, prominently located on Lakeview Hill (Griswold near South St.) was presented to the newly organized congregation for church purposes by Mr. Hesigiah McCollom."<sup>1</sup> On May 2, 1854, cornerstone of first church edifice was laid and in course of time work of construction completed. Later a school building was erected for teaching work of the congregation.

The first regularly called pastor was Rev. Speckhard, who came in 1860 and served the cong. for three years. "His successor was Rev. J.L. Hahn who held the pastorate for 10 years. During his time the congregation experienced a healthy growth; a house on South St. was bought for a parsonage."

From 1873 to 1926 the following served the congregation: Rev. J.A. Schroepel, 1874-1875; Rev. G.A. Schieferdecker, 1875-1877; Rev. Martin Toewe, 1878-1879; Rev. Marcus Holbath, 1880-1881; Rev. Herman Speckhard, 1882-1885; Rev. Frederick Dryer, 1886-1888; Rev. Frederick Bauer, 1889-1897; Rev. J.C. Horsch, 1899-1901; Rev. S. G. Schlerf, 1902-1906; Rev. Fr. Dryer (second time), 1906-1908; Rev. Jules Held, 1909-1913; Rev. S.L. Bruer, 1914-1918; Rev. Paul L. Kretzmann, Oct. 20, 1918 to fall of 1926. Practically all these were members of Missouri Sy.

"In 1925 a difference arose best known to the members themselves, which caused a split and brought about the organizing of St. Paul's congregation, Oct. 17, 1926 by Rev. Paul E. Kretzmann." The majority of the members then applied to the Michigan Synod of the United Lutheran Church in America for spiritual care and oversight. During the winter of 1926-27, the pulpit was supplied by students from the Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary at Maywood, Ill., and members and officials of the Michigan Synod. In the early months of 1927 (*call accepted March 2, 1927*)<sup>2</sup> student A.E. Schmidt was called to be pastor and after his ordination at the close of the school year was duly installed as pastor May 29, 1927.

During Rev. Schmidt's pastorate the cong. was re-organized and a model constitution adopted in accordance with the constitution of the Michigan Synod (Dec. 18, 1928). The congregation was formally received into Synod, May 15, 1928. Women's Missionary Society and a Junior Luther League were also organized during Pastor Schmidt's pastorate. The congregation has experienced a steady growth and the attendance at Sunday School, which was also reorganized, increased considerably. Pastor Schmidt resigned Aug. 19th, 1928, effective Sept. 9, 1928.

On Nov. 18, 1928, the congregation extended a call to Rev. Jno. F. Eshbaugh of Walton, Ind., which

was duly accepted. He began his work as regular pastor on December 1st, 1928 and was formally installed Dec. 23, 1928 by Rev. A.J. Keck, D.D., Pres. of the Michigan Synod.

Nov. 3, 1929 (*Important Events*) - Dedication Service, to consecrate to Glory of God and service of His church following chancel furnishings:

Pulpit (chancel) chair, donated by Mrs. Mary W. Steere in loving memory of her parents.

Pulpit (chancel) chair, donated by Mrs. Emma Hirsch in loving memory of her husband, Mr. Carl Hirsch.

Altar vases, candelabra, and altar coverings, the needlework of which was performed by Mrs. A.E. Spiegel, by the Engelhardts in loving memory of Mr. George Engelhardt.

Also, cabinet pulpit for communion set, which was remodelled out of old organ by Mr. Geo. Morelock.

Summer of 1929 chancel platform was enlarged and carpeted. The sum of \$500.00 by the will of Mr. Fred Engelhardt for the upkeep of the church building, dated September 1934. (*Important bequest*). For many years Mr. Engelhardt was deeply interested in Trinity Lutheran Church and contributed generously to her spiritual and material support. Likewise also his brother George Engelhardt, was another who did much for the church, as were many others whose names might be mentioned, who have entered the church triumphant.

Rev. John F. Eshbaugh resigned on account of ill health and preached his farewell sermon June 12th, 1938.

Rev. Carl A. Miller installed as pastor Sunday evening, Oct. 2nd 1938, by Rev. Stickles and Rev. [Shildooth (sp?)].

Rev. Carl A. Miller resigned Jan. 5th 1941. Call sent to Rev. Clarence M. Alexander at Schribner, Neb. and accepted. He will conduct first services on Aug. 31st and will be installed by Rev. Madsen the same evening.

The congregation celebrated their 88th anniversary with the dedication of a Wicks Pipe Organ September 20, 1942.

Other gifts: 12 choir chairs from Carrie and Jacob Beck. Robes from R. and Mrs. Q. Rockenfelder.

Sunday, Nov. 7, 1943 - Dedicated missal stand, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Quincy Rockenfelder.

Sunday, Nov. 14, 1943 - Dedicated altar service book, gift of Senior League.

Sunday, Nov. 28, 1943 - Dedicated baptismal font, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Quincy Rockenfelder.

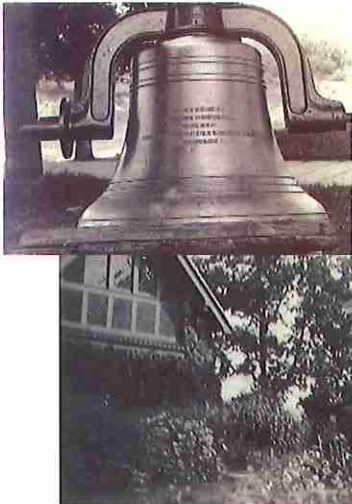
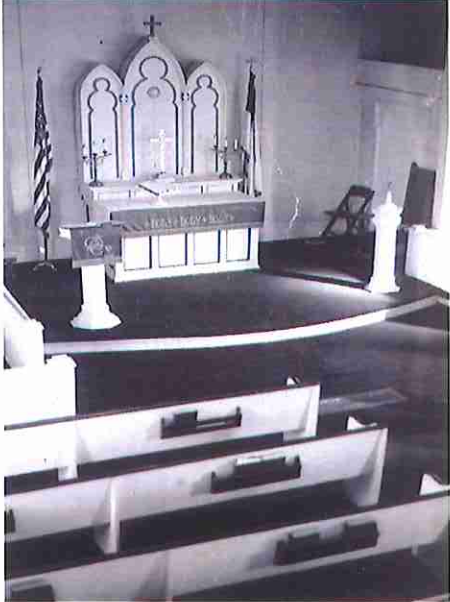
Sunday, December 5, 1943 - Dedication of [Credance Basket (sp?)], gift of Mr. and Mrs. Quincy Rockenfelder.

<sup>1</sup> Apparently this and other quotations are from an earlier history, which we have not yet located.

<sup>2</sup> Italicized phrases are notes in the margins of the history.



*Church Buildings . . .*



*Church Buildings . . . continued*



## **History — 1954-1969**

In the beginning of the second century at Trinity, in 1954, with the newly furnished and redecorated sanctuary, church membership and attendance increased so that two Sunday worship services were instituted. Pastor Marvin F. Sielken (1952-1961) had been a strong tower in directing the church improvements. The next work to be done centered on the recently acquired Lakeview School, now Luther Hall. The north room was converted into a Chapel for the Sunday School, and class rooms were made available for both Sunday School and other meetings. The Lounge was completed and furnished in 1957, as was the Pastor's Study and Church Office. New Service Hymnals were dedicated in August, 1960, and through the guidance, dedication and cooperation of the Sielken family and the entire congregation, Christian fellowship and service continued to grow and increase.

Pastor Sielken's resignation, effective October, 1961, was a most regrettable loss, not only to our congregation, but to the whole community. Although there was no pastor in residence for more than a year, we were extremely fortunate to have the Rev. John Recher, Three Rivers, Mich., retired, as our Supply Pastor and his faithful service was greatly appreciated by all.

The Rev. Donald Holm became pastor in November, 1962, and improvements continued, including an Altar Rail, new Baptismal Font, paneling, new lights and lowered ceiling in the church basement (1966). A Church Library was started and the new Parish Education Curriculum was adopted in Sunday School (1964). One of the last pastoral acts of Rev. Holm was to dedicate the Organ Chimes in June, 1967.

In 1965, Pastor and Mrs. Ivan O. Miller, retired, became members of Trinity and, whenever requested or needed, Pastor Miller has conducted services and performed other pastor duties for which we herewith extend sincere gratitude.

Following the resignation of Pastor Holm, the Rev. Jack Lacey became pastor in November, 1967. During the year and half that Pastor and Mrs. Lacey have been with us, much has been accomplished. An Altar Guild was organized in June, 1968. Our Boy Scout Troop has brought honors to Trinity; they have worked hard in cleaning, painting and improving the south room in the basement of Luther Hall for their meetings.

Memorial and other gifts include new altar vases, new paraments, altar linens, Altar Service Book, and Sanctuary Lamp. The church exterior has been restored by the installation of aluminum siding and remodeling in Luther Hall includes the removal of the south stairway, paneling walls in hall and south room, and carpeting the first floor rooms and hall; a small kitchen area is being provided and two rest rooms have been furnished.

It is extremely difficult to list all memorials and gifts, and especially the hours and hours of hard work of so many individuals and organizations. Special mention should be made of the extensive work of the Church Property Committee members and Pastor Lacey, for without their planning and vigilance these things could not have been accomplished.

In commemorating the one hundred and fifteenth year of the laying of Trinity's cornerstone, it must be remembered that completion of the present structural building program is but just another step towards the realization of a fuller and more dedicated individual and congregation Christian Service. And as we give thanks for the bountiful blessings of the past, may our prayers to Almighty God for the future of Trinity continue without ceasing.

*School House/Parsonage . . .*



## **History**

One hundred years of Christian life and service for Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of Hillsdale had its beginning on March 10th, 1854, at which time the congregation was organized and adopted its constitution in the German language under the leadership and guidance of Pastor Philip Trautmann.

Seven years earlier, in the fall of 1847, the Rev. William Hattsteadt, pastor of the Lutheran Church of Monroe, organized the Lutheran church in Adrian and then started a preaching station in Hillsdale when he found several Lutheran families in this locality. This was the year Hillsdale was incorporated as a village and the Court House burned down destroying most of the records. It was only seven years prior to this time, in the year 1840, that Chief Baw Beese and his band of Pottowattomie Indians had been forced to leave the shores of Baw Beese Lake where their forefathers had established their homes as early as 1721.

The original site of the city was on the present fairgrounds and the whole section was very heavily wooded, and a little group of perhaps a dozen or fifteen homes sprang up on the hill, which soon became known as "Dutch Hill" because most of the families were German, spoke and understood German, and although they were beginning a new life in a new country, they brought with them from their fatherland their religious belief and continued in many of their native customs.

The times were hard, the winters were bitter, trees had to be felled, innumerable hardships were experienced, wild animals were still seen occasionally in the woods, and it is recorded that as late as 1849 two bears were killed three miles east of the city.

It was in these times and under these conditions that the Rev. Hattsteadt made his first trips to Hillsdale from Monroe on horseback, and although no doubt there was a stopover at Adrian, it was still a long, hard journey. The railroad has been completed as far as Hillsdale in 1843, and soon after making his first contacts this mode of transportation was used. These visits were made as often as possible, usually about every four weeks or so, and this arrangement continued until 1860, when Pastor Trautmann accepted a call from the church at Adrian, and he then ministered to the needs of the Lutherans of Hillsdale, as well as Coldwater and Ridgeway.

In order to give these early settlers the inspiration and encouragement they desired and needed to carry them through the weeks when he could not be with them, the pastor made the most of his opportunities and preached long and fiery sermons and led them in the singing of the old German hymns they loved so well.

At that time, church services were all held in the homes of the worshipers, each family taking its turn, and the first services were held in the log cabin home of Mr. and Mrs. George Beck, which was later replaced by the brick residence now standing at the 266 East Bacon Street.

There were not many in this early group, as the list of charter members reveals the names of only nine families, but what they lacked in numbers was made up in courage and determination. And they were determined to establish a church so that their children might be brought up in the faith of their fathers. They were handicapped in their conversation and business dealings with most of the townspeople and experience many difficulties because they could understand and speak but little English and many misunderstandings (and sometimes worse) developed because of this fact. Of course this situation was overcome in time, but in the beginning the German language which they all spoke and understood became a common bond which brought them closer together.

Naturally there were dissensions, disagreements and differences of opinion among themselves, but they relied greatly upon the advice and counsel of their spiritual leader in secular as well as religious matters,

in family and neighborly disputes, in financial and business transactions; and with few exceptions his advice was accepted and followed; he being both judge and jury in many instances.

When church services are so accessible today, and ignored and shunned by members and non-members alike, it is difficult to realize how great was the joy of these families whenever they were privileged to have the Rev. Hattstaedt or the Rev. Trautmann visit them in their homes, preach to them the Word of God in their native tongue, and administer the Holy Sacraments.

After the Rev. Philip Trautmann settled in Adrian, it became much easier for him to visit Hillsdale and he soon brought about the formal organization of the congregation, after which the members set about making plans to erect a church building and through the generosity of Mr. Hezekiah McCollum and his wife Sabrina, received a "large lot six rods in front on Griswold Street and extending back sixteen rods, for the particular uses and purposes of the Lutheran Congregation of Hillsdale, but for no other uses and purposes"; and so the cornerstone for the church was laid on May 2nd, 1854, and this building in which we are worshipping today is the same structure those early stalwarts worked so hard to build and is a testimony of, and a tribute to the courage, strength and determination of these founders.

The land had to be cleared, which was no small task, but the men were as strong as their determination, and the work was finally accomplished. Funds had to be raised and one of the members was paid by the congregation to collect money for the building, visiting Coldwater, Reading, Allen, and other nearby villages, as well as the businessmen and residents of Hillsdale.

The building was erected on a rock foundation and built of timber that would last a century. It was originally heated by two stoves, one near the chancel and the other toward the back of the nave; at first backless benches were used. Later, pews were made in the church by one of the members and when they were completed he, realizing the financial condition of the congregation, locked the church doors and refused to turn over the key until such time as he received payment for his work. Naturally this did not discourage the members for long and the emergency was met and they could worship in their church, in pews which permitted an occasional nap.

For nearly ten years the Rev. Trautmann made regular visits from Adrian and served the congregation at Hillsdale most faithfully; preaching, administering the Sacraments, counseling and advising, even though he was frail in body and ministered to three other congregations. However, his home congregation at Adrian was growing and demanded more of his time and so in the year 1860 the little group at Hillsdale had grown sufficiently to make it possible for them to consider having a resident pastor. They applied to the Synod for one and the Rev. R. Speckhardsen (later Speckhart) responded and became the first local pastor, serving the congregation for three years. He and his family lived in three rooms of the house which still serves as a residence at what is now 28 Lakeview Court; one room downstairs was used as living room and kitchen combined, while two unheated rooms upstairs furnished sleeping quarters for the family.

In 1863 the Rev. J.L. Hahn became pastor and during the ten years he held the pastorate the congregation experienced a healthy growth and was able to purchase a house and lot on South Street for a parsonage; a large upstairs room of which was used for a schoolroom where the pastor conducted a Christian day school. This continued for several years until a little brick schoolhouse was built next to the church. Here classes were conducted, usually Monday through Thursday of each week. The pastor would have no classes on Friday, thus giving him time for preparing his sermon and performing other pastoral duties. On these days when there was no parochial school, the pupils were supposed to attend the public school, the pupils were supposed to attend the public school, conveniently located on the other side of the church.

This situation presented difficulties, inasmuch as all classes in the church school were conducted in the German language and on Friday the students were to convert to the English language for their classes in reading, writing and arithmetic. This was quite a problem for both teacher and pupils, but it continued

for some time. Due to local conditions, this parochial school was discontinued about 1885. For a time the school building was used in Saturdays for catechetical instructions and elementary classes in German. About 1919 the Ladies Aid added a kitchen to the building, thus making it a suitable place for social functions for all church organizations, until it was made into the present parsonage in 1950.

Little of unusual interest is of record for the next eight years after Rev. Hahn left, except that the congregation was ministered to by four pastors, one of whom had a wife and seven daughters to provide for on a yearly salary of somewhere around \$300; another, who was a very large man physically, would make weekly visits to the swimming hole at the local mill pond on each Saturday night during the summer, after dark, for the purpose of taking his weekly bath, his wife standing guard while he was thus engaged. In 1882 the Rev. Herman Speckhart answered a call from the congregation and accepted Hillsdale as his first pastoral charge. He was the son of the Rev. R. Speckhart, the first resident pastor of the congregation.

During these years and those preceding them, these hardy German Lutherans had many, many happy social gatherings and they were happiest when they could all join together in singing the old folk songs of their fatherland, to the accompaniment of the guitar. Sometimes the more daring would brave pastoral disapproval and join in a lively dance.

The Rev. Frederick Dreyer followed Rev. Speckhart and though he was pastor for only two years at this time he returned some eighteen years later for another two years at Trinity. It was during his pastorate, in 1887, that the "Frauen Verein" was organized with a membership of nine ladies. Their meetings were held immediately following church services and consisted mainly of roll call and the paying of their dues of ten cents per month. The following year (1888) the membership increased greatly, there being thirty-seven names on the membership list. In 1915 the name was changed to Ladies Aid Society and they became much more active. In the minutes of their meeting for January, 1915 they report that "the congregation is in debt \$300, and the Jugendbund \$30, so that it is up to us to try to see what we can do to help them out." And they did.

During the pastorate of Rev. Frederick Bauer, the "Jugendbund" was organized and flourished, and many were the picnics and outings they enjoyed at the New York Central Railroad Park at Baw Beese Lake, the pastor and his family taking an active part. Rev. Bauer, as was the case with several other pastors, was able to teach classes in German in the city public school system, thus bolstering the very meager salary the congregation was able to pay him as pastor.

It was at this time also that it was found there were several Lutheran families in and near the vicinity of Reading and Rev. Bauer began preaching at regular intervals to these people in a schoolhouse north of Reading. In later years a church building three miles west of Reading was first rented and then purchased by that congregation.

In 1904, during the time when Rev. Karl G. Schlerf was pastor, the congregation celebrated its fiftieth anniversary and made extensive improvements in the church. A beautiful new steel ceiling was installed, the plastered walls were covered with burlap, the Ladies Aid laid new carpet throughout, the present brass chandelier and wall brackets (which once again shine forth in all their original splendor) replaced the old treacherous kerosene lamp chandelier, a new 1050-pound church bell was presented by Mr. F.W. Stock to replace the old cracked one, and the church interior was redecorated and the exterior repainted.

As has already been mentioned the congregation was organized and established in the German language and all services were conducted in that language, as well as the instructions in the day school. This continued until about 1914 when English services were held every third Sunday and gradually the transition took place until in 1918 when, owing to war conditions, all services were changed to English; however, minutes of congregation meetings were recorded in German as late as December of 1920.

There were differences of opinion and policy in the church as well as out of it, as is to be expected.

Church membership did increase and then for a time there was a disinterested attitude which was no doubt experienced by most denominations.

Up until the year 1926 this congregation had been associated with the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and other states, willingly supporting the work of the Synod; however, at this time it became necessary to resign from that body when the pastor insisted that any and all members of fraternal organizations must either leave such organizations or be expelled from the church. A large majority of the church council and members opposed this action and appealed to officials of the Synod for relief; not receiving it, the members whose ancestors had been founders of this church found it necessary to resign in order to preserve the entity of this congregation, inasmuch as some members were not attending services and some were seeking church affiliation in other dominations in the city.

And so it was that Trinity withdrew from the Missouri Synod, and after prayerful consideration and investigation voted to affiliate with the United Lutheran Church of America. This action was taken were many vigorous and heated discussions; much correspondence and numerous personal visits from members of various synodical bodies; until in November of 1926 when the Rev. Dr. A.H. Keck, then President of the Michigan Synod of the United Lutheran Church of America, was contacted and invited to visit Trinity and explain to the congregation the United Lutheran Church. His explanation, his understanding and guidance were extremely encouraging and comforting to the congregation. It was like finding a quiet harbor after a violent storm; like the rainbow after the tempest; peace after bitter conflict. And each and every member of Trinity today, as well as future generations, owes a deep debt of gratitude to those men who fought and worked so determinedly to keep the congregation together when it was so near dissolution; who were so insistent that this congregation be affiliated only with a synodical body that strictly adhered to the true Lutheran doctrines as established and taught by Dr. Martin Luther; who refused to give up in the face of what appeared at times to be insurmountable difficulties; but nevertheless continued until they knew without the slightest doubt that they had found what they had been seeking and received that for which they had been asking.

Dr. Keck continued to make occasional visits to Hillsdale to conduct services and assist the congregation until the Rev. Arthur Schmidt accepted a call and became its first United Lutheran pastor. Although Rev. Schmidt was in Hillsdale little more than a year (from 1927 to 1928) he helped Trinity in taking its first steps in the U.L.C.

The Rev. John F. Eshbaugh succeeded him as pastor and remained in Hillsdale for the next ten years preaching, teaching and furthering the work of the church until 1938 when he resigned because of ill health.

He was followed by Rev. Carl A. Miller and it was during his pastorate that the interior of the church was redecorated entirely in white and new red carpeting was laid throughout the chancel and nave.

In 1941 after Rev. Miller resigned, the Rev. Clarence Alexander came to Hillsdale with his family from Nebraska to minister to the needs of Trinity for the next ten years and although the congregation did grow in numbers, this period was more notable for several great improvements to the church property. A new pipe organ was donated; the basement of the church, which hitherto had been excavated no more than was necessary to accommodate a heating unit and a passageway to that unit, was completely excavated thus making space for a kitchen, Sunday School rooms, etc. After the basement was finished, it was decided to convert the little brick school building adjacent to the church into a suitable and attractive parsonage, and many of the members put in long hours working on these projects and many thanks and much appreciation is due them for their work, for it would have been financially impossible for the congregation to have paid for all the work that was so willingly given. And so it was with heavy hearts that Trinity accepted his resignation and bade farewell to Rev. Alexander and his family when they left in 1951 to return to Nebraska.

Rev. E.L. Gard accepted a call from Trinity as first pastoral charge and he, with his youth and enthusiasm encouraged and brought into closer membership the young people of the congregation.



Although he remained but a short time all were sorry when Rev. Gard left in 1952 to become a chaplain in the service of his country.

After several months without a pastor the Rev. Marvin F. Sielken accepted a unanimous call from Trinity in November, 1952. Already during his pastorate of slightly more than a year, this congregation has enjoyed a growth, both in spiritual strength and in numbers, never before experienced in all the hundred years of its existence. His tireless efforts throughout the renovating, decorating and refurnishing program have brought about miraculous results originally undreamed of, and even had they been dreamed of would have been discarded as impossibilities. Fortunate indeed is Trinity to have a spiritual leader with the knowledge and ability, coupled with the willingness and eagerness to carry out this centennial memorial program. Both Pastor and Mrs. Sielken deserve the undying gratitude of the entire congregation for their devotion to the whole church program. Their constant vigilance is responsible for the strict adherence to true colonial tradition and has resulted in a beauty of perfection, awesome and inspiring, which is a tribute to their sacrificial efforts.

It would be difficult, of not impossible, to estimate the hours and hours of hard and tedious labor so generously given by the men and women of the congregation, as well as friends, during the past months. It is equally difficult to list all the donors of money as well as specific memorials; but certainly every individual who has given one or a thousand dollars, one or a thousand hours of labor, or offered one or a thousand prayers to Almighty God for the success of this undertaking, upon seeking the work accomplished, cannot help but hear the words "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

The courage of the founders of our church was nearly equaled a few months ago when, in the face of the extensive redecorating program already under way, and when its financial condition was strained almost to the breaking point, the congregation voted to purchase the Lakeview School property. In view of the healthy and continuing growth of church membership under the leadership of Pastor Sielken, it was apparent that it would soon become necessary to secure additional space for the expansion of the Sunday School and all social activities of the entire congregation. The available Lakeview School building appeared to be the solution, and after due and prayerful consideration by the Church Council and entire congregation it was added to the church property.

Although it may seem that the material growth of the congregation has been stressed in this history, this growth has been possible only because of the spiritual strength of the congregation, developed through the years. And though it has been impossible to enumerate all of the accomplishments of each pastor who has served Trinity, it is gratefully acknowledged and recorded that each in his own way contributed to the spiritual growth and strengthening of the congregation.

It would be equally impossible to name all lay members who have been instrumental in establishing and maintaining this congregation throughout the years. Many are they, both men and women, who have labored unceasingly for the growth, betterment, and glory of the church and their names as well as their accomplishments are held in loving and precious memory, and it is with thankful hearts that we pay tribute to each of them today.

Thus have passed the first one hundred years of Christian life and service for Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hillsdale; and with a prayer of thankfulness for all the blessings of the past and a petition that they may be continued in the years to come, we fear not for the future of Trinity, especially when "whatsoever we do in word or deed is all done to the glory of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him."

(Much of the above historical data has been taken from an earlier history written by Fred H. Seitz, and much grateful acknowledgment for same is hereby expressed.) —Caroline Seitz

*Luther Hall . . . original*



*early renovation*



*Luther Hall . . .*

*renovation/addition*



## **History — 1954-1969**

In the beginning of the second century at Trinity, in 1954, with the newly furnished and redecorated sanctuary, church membership and attendance increased so that two Sunday worship services were instituted. Pastor Marvin F. Sielken (1952-1961) had been a strong tower in directing the church improvements. The next work to be done centered on the recently acquired Lakeview School, now Luther Hall. The north room was converted into a Chapel for the Sunday School, and class rooms were made available for both Sunday School and other meetings. The Lounge was completed and furnished in 1957, as was the Pastor's Study and Church Office. New Service Hymnals were dedicated in August, 1960, and through the guidance, dedication and cooperation of the Sielken family and the entire congregation, Christian fellowship and service continued to grow and increase.

Pastor Sielken's resignation, effective October, 1961, was a most regrettable loss, not only to our congregation, but to the whole community. Although there was no pastor in residence for more than a year, we were extremely fortunate to have the Rev. John Recher, Three Rivers, Mich., retired, as our Supply Pastor and his faithful service was greatly appreciated by all.

The Rev. Donald Holm became pastor in November, 1962, and improvements continued, including an Altar Rail, new Baptismal Font, paneling, new lights and lowered ceiling in the church basement (1966). A Church Library was started and the new Parish Education Curriculum was adopted in Sunday School (1964). One of the last pastoral acts of Rev. Holm was to dedicate the Organ Chimes in June, 1967.

In 1965, Pastor and Mrs. Ivan O. Miller, retired, became members of Trinity and, whenever requested or needed, Pastor Miller has conducted services and performed other pastor duties for which we herewith extend sincere gratitude.

Following the resignation of Pastor Holm, the Rev. Jack Lacey became pastor in November, 1967. During the year and half that Pastor and Mrs. Lacey have been with us, much has been accomplished. An Altar Guild was organized in June, 1968. Our Boy Scout Troop has brought honors to Trinity; they have worked hard in cleaning, painting and improving the south room in the basement of Luther Hall for their meetings.

Memorial and other gifts include new altar vases, new paraments, altar linens, Altar Service Book, and Sanctuary Lamp. The church exterior has been restored by the installation of aluminum siding and remodeling in Luther Hall includes the removal of the south stairway, paneling walls in hall and south room, and carpeting the first floor rooms and hall; a small kitchen area is being provided and two rest rooms have been furnished.

It is extremely difficult to list all memorials and gifts, and especially the hours and hours of hard work of so many individuals and organizations. Special mention should be made of the extensive work of the Church Property Committee members and Pastor Lacey, for without their planning and vigilance these things could not have been accomplished.

In commemorating the one hundred and fifteenth year of the laying of Trinity's cornerstone, it must be remembered that completion of the present structural building program is but just another step towards the realization of a fuller and more dedicated individual and congregation Christian Service. And as we give thanks for the bountiful blessings of the past, may our prayers to Almighty God for the future of Trinity continue without ceasing.

## **History**

In 1847 the Rev. Wm. Hattsteadt of Monroe started a preaching station for Lutheran families in Hillsdale. His first trips were on horseback about every four weeks. He held the first services in the log cabin home of Mr. and Mrs. George Beck on East Bacon Street.

On March 10, 1854, Trinity Lutheran Church was formally organized and adopted its constitution in the German language, under the leadership of Pastor Philip Trautman of Monroe.

Through the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Hezekiah McCollum, the congregation received a large lot on Griswold Street (6 by 16 rods) for the "particular uses and purposes of the Lutheran Congregation, but for no other uses or purposes." The land was cleared, plans were made, funds were raised and the church building was erected on rock-like foundation of timber that would last a century.

In 1860 the Rev. R. Speckhart became the first resident pastor. He and his family lived in three rooms of a house in back of the church property (now Lake View Court).

When the Rev. J.L. Hahn was pastor (1863-1873) the congregation purchased a house and lot on East South Street for a parsonage. A large upstairs room was used for a schoolroom where the pastor conducted a Christian day school. After several years a little brick schoolhouse was built next to the church. In 1885 the parochial school was discontinued; however, the school was used for catechetical instructions and elementary classes in German for many years.

From 1874 to 1882 four pastors ministered to the congregation, one of whom has a wife and seven daughters to provide for on a yearly salary of approximately \$300. In 1882 the Rev. Herman Speckhart came and was followed by the Rev. F. Dryer in 1886, who was here for two years and returned about 18 years later for another two years.

In 1887 the "Frauen Verein" was organized by the ladies with nine members and grew to 38 members the following year. In 1915 the name was changed to The Ladies Aid Society and became very active, having many ice-cream and pie socials and eventually their famous sauerkraut suppers. Their funds were always available when needed by the congregational treasury.

The Rev. F. Bauer (1889-1897) was popular with the young members. The "Jugendbund" was organized in the early 1890's and enjoyed many socials and picnics at the New York Central Railroad Park at Baw Beese Lake, where a bowling alley, a pavilion and bathing facilities were available. In 1918 the name was changed to The Luther League.

When the Rev. Karl Schlerf came in 1904, preparations were made to celebrate the 50th anniversary, and extensive improvements were made, including a beautiful new ceiling, and brass chandelier, and wall brackets (replacing the old kerosene lights). The plaster walls were covered with burlap, new carpet was laid, and a 1050-pound church bell was presented by Mr. F.W. Stock. The interior was redecorated and the exterior was repainted.

Until 1926, the congregation belonged to the Lutheran Synod of Missouri; however, because of the issue regarding fraternal organizations, the majority of the Church Council and congregation, those who ancestors has founded the congregation, after prayerful and deliberate consideration, found it necessary to resign from the Missouri Synod and subsequently, under the guidance of the Rev. Dr. A.H. Keck, became affiliated with the United Lutheran Church of America in 1927.

The Rev. Arthur Schmidt became the first U.L.C.A. pastor. The Rev. John Eshbaugh succeeded him (1928-1938), and he was followed by the Rev. Carl A. Miller (1938-1941). During this time, the interior of the church was redecorated entirely in white and a new red carpet was laid, and the old

varnished pews were painted white.

Pastor Clarence Alexander (1941-1951) increased membership. A new pipe organ was donated, the church basement was completely excavated, and the little brick schoolhouse was remodeled into a suitable and attractive parsonage.

The Rev. E.L. Gard was pastor one year and left to become a chaplain.

During the pastorate of the Rev. Marvin F. Sielken (1952-1961) the one-hundredth anniversary was celebrated. Many improvements were made; namely, the interior was replastered and redecorated by members, a new altar and red dossal curtain were donated, as well as new pews and kneelers. The Rev. Sielken worked tirelessly along with many members to bring about these improvements. New copies of the *Service Book and Hymnal* were dedicated in August, 1960. Also at this time the congregation purchased the Lakeview School property, now Luther Hall. The interior was in extremely bad condition, so cleaning and many repairs were necessary. Luther Hall now has Sunday School classrooms, rooms for meetings, and a lounge as well as the church office.

Although there was not pastor in residence for more than a year, we were extremely fortunate to have as Supply Pastor the Rev. John Recher of Three Rivers (retired), whose many visits, sermons, and faithful services were greatly appreciated by all.

The Rev. Donald Holm (1962-1966) continued improvements, including memorials of a new altar rail, baptismal font, organ chimes, a church library and paneling, lights, etc. in the church basement.

In 1965 Pastor and Mrs. Ivan O. Miller (retired) became members, and whenever needed or requested Pastor Miller conducted services and performed other pastoral duties.

Pastor Jack Lacey (1967-1971) assisted in organizing an Altar Guild. The Boy Scout troop brought honors to Trinity. New altar vases, new paraments, altar linens, altar Service Book, and sanctuary lamp were all dedicated as memorials.

Pastor H. Amala (1971-1974) encouraged the organization of a youth choir, which was appreciated by the members.

From 1974 to 1977 Pastor Marvin Sielken was Supply Pastor, he and Mrs. Sielken having returned to Hillsdale and becoming members of Trinity. We were indeed very fortunate to enjoy his services again.

In the summer of 1977 the Rev. Jarl Andeer became pastor. A choir was organized under the direction of Mrs. Paul Lucas, which is very much appreciated. Memorials included new offering plates by the Deller family and much needed new church bulletin board with planter by the Peters Family in member of Wayne Peters, former Council member, Secretary and dedicated member of the congregation. In January 1979, the Worship Service, as set forth in the new *Lutheran Book of Worship*, was adopted.

Although we have mentioned the pastors, their wives and families have always been ready and willing to assist in congregational affairs.

In commemorating the 100th and 125th year of the laying of Trinity's cornerstone, "it must be remembered our work is never completed but each program is just another step towards the realization of a fuller and more dedicated individual and congregational Christian Service. And so we give thanks for the bountiful blessings of the past, and may our prayers to Almighty God for the future of Trinity continue without ceasing."

Note: Much of the above historical data has been taken from earlier histories written by Fred H. Seitz and others. Grateful acknowledgment for same is herewith expressed. —Caroline Seitz

## **Trinity Celebrates 125 Years**

Periodically a family interrupts its routine of usual activities to observe a special occasion like a birthday. Such a special celebration will take place on May 6, 1979, at Hillsdale, Michigan, when Trinity Lutheran Church will observe its 125th anniversary. The oldest church of the Michigan Synod of the Lutheran Church in America, Trinity has invited guests to help celebrate with festive programs of worship, fellowship and food. Preparations involve cleaning the house and polishing the furniture, glass, silver, etc. May 6 is the closest Sunday to the anniversary of May 2, 1854, when the cornerstone was laid.

A family remembers its past with stories of ancestors, grandparents, relatives, neighbors and friends. So former pastors and members who moved away will return to join in the festivities planned for the day. The church, the original one, still stands on "Dutch Hill" as some people remember the location. It stayed where it was. It didn't move away, but two buildings were added to the complex as the congregation grew and programs became more varied. Of course, improvements were necessary, but the character of the family of Trinity shows in the maintenance projects that go on. At times the family is so many that they crowd the scene, and sometimes there is lots of room.

In the official records the congregation of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, as it was named, laid the cornerstone on May 2, 1854, on land purchased in March, 1854. But the beginnings go back to 1847 when the Reverend William Hattstaedt commuted from Monroe, Michigan, to serve the Lutheran families of the Hillsdale area. On March 10, 1854, the Reverend Philip Trautman of Adrian, Michigan, assisted the congregation in its organization and adoption of its constitution. In 1860 the Reverend R. Speckhardsen (later Speckhart) served as the first local pastor. In the 1860's a little brick schoolhouse was built next to the church. It housed the parochial school, which was discontinued in 1885, then served as a community center for social functions, especially the popular sauerkraut suppers. In 1950 it was converted into the present parsonage. In 1952 the congregation acquired the Lakeview School property, located on the other side of the church, providing greater versatility for church functions.

The colonial style architecture of the church and its famed chandelier are reminders of the cherished values of the past, but the heritage that is expressed in the life of the church family goes back to the depths of the Old Testament and the good news Christianity. In the 1800's worship services were conducted in German, but the family today is a mixture of many nationalities. Until 1926 the congregation associated with the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio. As a result of a series of historical events, Trinity withdrew from the Missouri Synod and voted to affiliate with the United Lutheran Church of America of November 26, 1926, and thus now is part of the Lutheran Church in America.

The talents and activities of the church family are many. The pastor has always been active in the Ministerial Association, participating in community services on special occasions. The Methodist Bell Choir will provide special music during the May 6 festivities. Just as Trinity started out as a preaching station a long time ago, now there is interest in Trinity assisting another mission church, such as one in the Traverse City area, as its share of the project in Division of Missions in North America

(DMNA).

The education of the family is an on-going thing. The decision-making head of Trinity, the Church Council, was instrumental in the congregation's accepting the new LBW. Pastor Jarl Andeer trained lay members as assistants in the worship service. In the fall of 1978 the choir under the direction of Mrs. Paul (Kristin) Lucas studied the new order of worship, and beginning early in January, 1979, instructed the congregation.

In this International Year of the Child, Trinity encourages children to kneel at the altar with their parents during Holy Communion service. The Lutheran Church Women participate in social services and care of foster children.

Hours of volunteer work of many kinds keep the family going, and the family keeps growing. Happy Birthday!

### *Ladies' Aid . . .*





*Youth . . . then and now*



*Confirmation . . .*



Our cover design is a representation of two prominent features of the interior of our church, one that is an older part of the building, and one that is a recent addition. The older feature is the chandelier, which along with the side wall lights, was installed in 1904 at the time kerosene lamp fixture which had been in use up until that time.

The new feature, a wooden processional cross, was handmade for Trinity by Ted Purschwitz, who is Anne Ashes' father, and who lives in Bremen, Indiana. Mr. Purschwitz used beams from carriage house over 100 years old, and worked from a design described by Pastor Krebill and drawn by his daughter. The cross is patterned after the processional cross at Schenk Chapel at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio. The cross was given by Eric and Neil Bowsher, and was used for the first time on Easter Sunday, April 3, 1988.

## **TRINITY AT 135**

### ***REMEMBERING OUR PAST. . .***

The original site of the city of Hillsdale was on the present fairgrounds. The whole section was heavily wooded. A little group of homes sprang up on the hill above the fairgrounds and soon became known as "Deutsch Hill," since many of the families were German. Although they were beginning a new life, in a new country, they brought with them from their fatherland their religious beliefs, spoke the German language, and continued in many of their native customs. It was from among these families that missionary preacher from Monroe, Michigan, in the year 1847, found enough Lutheran families to start a preaching station. The missionary traveled from Monroe to Hillsdale on horseback at first, and later traveled by railroad, making the trip about every four weeks. At that time, church services were held in the homes of the worshipers. The first services were held in a log cabin home on East Bacon Street.

Later, the Rev. Philip Trautman, of Adrian, ministered to the Lutherans in Hillsdale. He gave these early settlers the inspiration and encourage they needed to carry them through the weeks when he could not be with them, by preaching long and fiery sermons, and led them in the singing of the old German hymns they loved so well. It was under Pastor Trautman's leadership that Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized and adopted its constitution in the German language on March 10, 1854. This early group of only nine families was determined to establish a church, and though they were handicapped in their conversation and business dealings with the townspeople, they set about making plans to erect a church building. Land was donated on Griswold Street and the cornerstone for the church was laid on May 2, 1854. This building we are worshiping in today is the same structure that was build by these dedicated early founders. Funds had to be raised and one of the members was paid by the congregation to collect the money for the building.

The building was erected on a rock foundation and built of timber. It was originally heated by two stoves, one near the chancel and the other toward the back of the nave.

At first, backless benches were used. Later, pews were made in the church by one of the members. By the year 1860, the little group had grown sufficiently to apply to the synod for a resident pastor. Trinity's services continued in the German language until the year 1918. The congregation resigned from the Missouri Synod in the year 1926 and joined the United Lutheran Church in America.

The early history of Trinity establishes its beginning, but recalling dates and events cannot begin to tell of the hard work and careful planning by many pastors and members during 135 years of Christian service. We can rejoice in the work that was done in the past and look forward to the future.

*(The historical data has been taken from histories written by members of the Seitz family.)*

## *EMBRACING OUR FUTURE. . .*

*The work begun in phases in 1986 continues. . .*

The first phase began when representatives of the Hillsdale County Senior Center approached the congregation about sharing space in the unused building adjacent to the church. Luther Hall, originally Lakeview School, was built in 1907. It was purchased by Trinity, under the leadership of the Rev. Marvin Sielken, in 1954. It served the congregation well throughout the 1960s and 1970s as a parish hall, but in the early 1980s it was closed after problems arose with the heating system. In 1986, an agreement was worked which involved sharing the costs of renovation with the Senior Center. After extensive renovation, the Hillsdale Senior Center began its operation in Luther Hall. The building is now a vital center of community service, as well as a place for fellowship for Trinity members.

During Phase II, the lower level of the Luther Hall was renovated by Trinity to provide pastor's office, meeting rooms and secretary's office. Parking was provided behind the buildings.

The results of Phase III are seen today as we dedicate the newly completed church renovation project, including the barrier-free access from the parking area, narthex, sacristy and rest rooms. Also, during this phase, the Wicks organ was replaced by an Allen organ, which was installed in the balcony. This is the third organ purchased by the congregation during the 135-year period.

*And the work goes on. . .*

The Seniors, with the congregation's approval, at their expense, have re-modeled another area of the lower level of Luther Hall to provide them with extra space needed for their program. At the same time, they have created a barrier-free access from Lakeview Court, as well as a re-modeled stairway from the upper level.

The next phase for Trinity will be to provide handicapped parking space and an expanded parking lot.

Each phase is just another step in Trinity's dedication to Christian service, and to spreading the Gospel.

## *ORGANIZATIONS - Then and Now. . .*

"Frauen Verein" was organized in the early days of Trinity. This was an active group of ladies who provided funds needed by the congregational treasurer. Later, this group was called the Ladies Aid Society. Many of our members remember the sauerkraut suppers served to the whole community of Hillsdale. In the historical display in Luther Hall, you will see the *Lutheran Cook Book*, edited by the Ladies Aid Society in 1937. In it you will find a recipe for SAUR KRAUT by Fred Oppel (Walt Oppel's dad). Please note the instruction, "Don't make in the light of the moon." You will find some familiar names among the contributors to this cookbook — Bach, Seitz, Halterman, Perry, as well as Oppel.

Today, we have the Mary Martha Circle. New acolyte albs were purchased from the general memorial fund. The Mary Martha Circle purchased scapulars, which are color overlays to match the church year colors. Members sewed the scapulars, and they were first used in May 1988.

It was in the 1890s that the "Der Jugendbund" was organized with 44 members. This group became known as the Luther League. In years past, the Luther League, along with their families, took trips to Stratford, Ontario, where they attended the Shakespeare Festival. Today, our Trinity Youth also enjoy camping and canoe trips, as well as service projects to the church and the community.

Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not stop them, because the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these." (Matthew 19:14)

Have you watched the faces of the little children who come forward every Sunday for their very own sermon? They are eager and so happy to be a part of this congregation. The future of Trinity is in these little ones!

*Sunday School . . .*



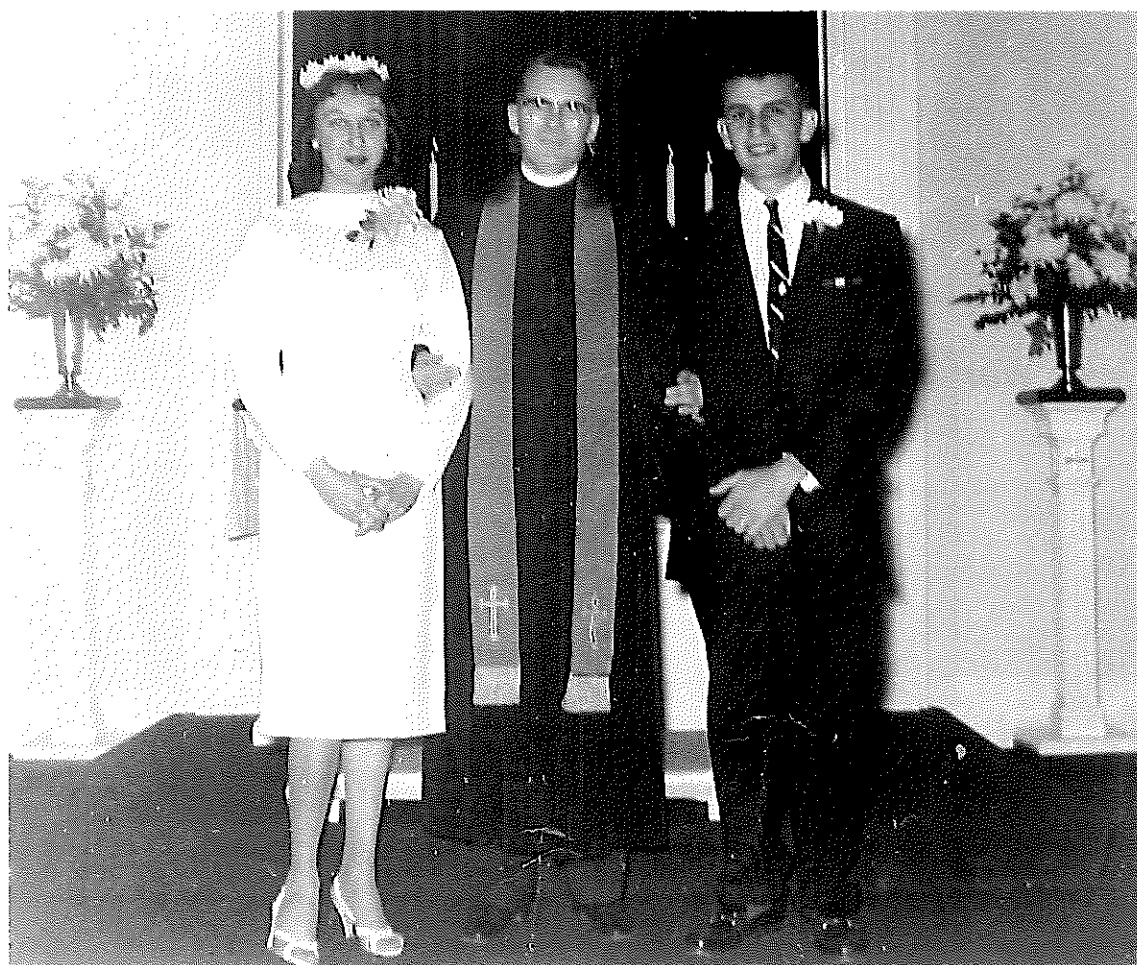
*Wee Worship . . .*



*Choir . . .*



*Wedding . . .*



# **150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration: May 2, 2004**

## **Trinity Lutheran Church, Hillsdale, MI**

**1998-2004**

As I write this update of Trinity Lutheran Church's history for the past 6 years, during which time I have also been serving as pastor here, I feel small. What a privilege to be called to a congregation with such a rich history. What a privilege to become part of that history as well.

I am the first woman pastor to serve this congregation in its history. I believe I am also the first single parent to serve as well, joining the congregation with my 2 children, Jillian and Jay. But by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, we have become partners in ministry...a match made in heaven! I came to Trinity directly upon graduating from Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio. Being a pastor is a second career for me; I was formerly employed in various radio and television broadcasting locations in the Cadillac/Traverse City area, and was the church choir director as well, at Zion Lutheran Church in Cadillac prior to attending seminary.

As I review previous "histories" of this congregation, it occurs to me that if Trinity Lutheran had remained a congregation of the Missouri Synod, I wouldn't be here since they do not ordain women. It was also a double blessing for me to be called to Hillsdale, which is the county in which my parents were born and raised. Although I did not live in Hillsdale as a child, I visited here regularly to see my grandparents, uncle and aunt. What an amazing sense of humor God has...

When I first sat down to write this historical update, I thought that our recent renovation and addition to Luther Hall would be the highlighted accomplishment during these past 6 years. But, in my review of the history, it seems that building and renovation projects are not a novel venture for this congregation at all. In fact, there have been building and renovation projects of all shapes and sizes during the tenure of more pastors than not! I can say, however, that our current project was the most expensive. After the Senior Center moved out in the fall of 2002, we contracted with the Mission Builders of the ELCA to gut the first floor of Luther Hall and put a large addition off the back of the building for a new kitchen and bathrooms. This has recently been completed at a cost of \$352,000.

Of course, many years of discussion and discernment about expanding our facilities here had not resulted in any action until a surprise gift of \$75,000 from the estate of Frances Seitz arrived in 1999. At that time, serious deliberation began as to what we might do to increase our usable space in the buildings we own here. The congregation began discussions with the ELCA Region 6 Building Consultant, Pat Dever, and their architect to determine what might be possible. In the meantime, a subsequent and also unexpected gift from the estate of Frances Seitz arrived bringing the total estate gift to \$217,457.84. The Seitz family, who had been prominent and extremely supportive members for so many years, had continued to bless this congregation from beyond the grave!

And so with money in the bank, after a brief stall when we were overwhelmed by the initial schematic drawing by the ELCA architect which we could not afford to bring to fruition, we regrouped and moved ahead with Dawn Vagle and Dave Holliday at the helm of the latest building committee. After several interviews, the committee recommended the hire of architect Mary Swanson of Swanson Design in Lansing, which the congregation approved, and the plans for adding on to and renovating Luther Hall moved forward. The result of that effort is before you today. A second Phase of this project, also designed by Mary Swanson, is planned to expand the church sanctuary. The design and time line for that project will be approved after the Luther Hall project is paid off in 3+ years. We had hoped that our recent Capital Fund-raising Campaign would provide pledges enough to expand the church this year, but the local economy and

God apparently thought we should wait a bit.

In contrast to the long and rich history of this congregation, it is not the latest building project that has defined these past 6 years...it is our increased capacity for mission and ministry. Here are what I consider the highlights:

1999: Pastor Julie, Michelle May and Marty Morrison joined others from our synod to participate in a mission trip with the Habitat for Humanity Jimmy Carter Work Project in General Santos City, Philippines—over 300 homes were built in 1 week

1999: ELCA With One Voice hymnals were purchased with memorial funds for use at the 11:00 a.m. worship service

2000: Began the Alpha program as an Evangelism ministry to the community

2000: Six youth and the pastor travel to St. Louis, MO, for the ELCA National Youth Gathering.

2002: Random Acts of Grace tag team began doing random acts of kindness and gift giving out in the community to demonstrate God's free gift of grace

2002: The ELCA Worship & Praise songbooks were added to the church repertoire by the donations of individuals/families and memorial funds

2002: May: Samaritan Place Transitional Shelter was dedicated in the old parsonage. To date, 20 homeless women and children have lived in the house for up to 6 months while they learn skills and save money so that they can obtain permanent housing

2002: June: Pastor Julie, Marty Morrison, Sue Langston-Sponsler, Hope Skiver, Jeanne Holliday, Sarah Holliday joined others from our synod to participate in a mission trip with the Habitat for Humanity Jimmy Carter Work Project in Durban, South Africa—over 100 houses were built in a week

2002: December: The tiny food pantry of plastic bins in the narthex becomes King's Kupboard Food Pantry operating out of the lower level of Luther Hall. Food is provided to all in need, regardless of eligibility. This ministry of incarnated grace has provided food to over 12,000 people to date, especially the working poor who cannot get help in other places that adhere to poverty guidelines.

2003: Winter: The church basement is renovated as office space for the pastor and secretary in time for the arrival of the Mission Builders to renovate Luther Hall

2003: Nine youth and 3 chaperones travel to Atlanta, GA, for ELCA National Youth Gathering

1998:

2004: Annual operating budget grew from approximately \$80,000 to \$116,000

Membership growth from 143 members to 186

Our Mission and Vision Statements, which we formulated in the spring of 1999 and updated in spring of 2002, truly speak to the nature of this congregation and its ability to incarnate God's grace and the hospitality of Jesus Christ. "The Mission Statement of Trinity Lutheran Church is to nurture faith through proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ by word, sacrament, deeds and loving relationships to ALL people." "As proclaimers of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Vision of Trinity Lutheran Church is to maximize our gifts and resources to reach out with God's love and serve the global community."

And so we are, as the Body of Christ in this place and time, ever thankful for the grace of God bestowed upon us to do just that. Praise God for 150 years of grace, faith, and perseverance in the name of Christ...and the assurance that God will provide in all our years to come, from here to eternity.

In abundant grace and joyful thanksgiving,

Rev. Julie L. Carey

April 27, the year of our Lord 2004





