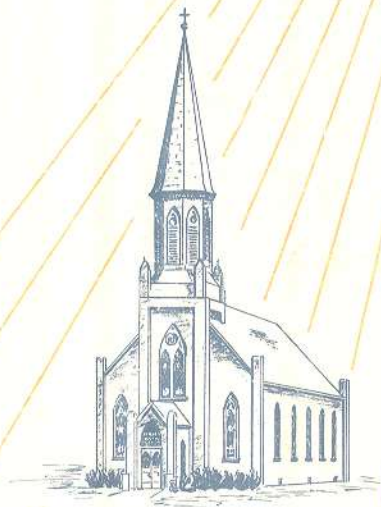


# A Century of Grace



1864

1864-1964



1878



1958

## Concordia Lutheran Church

Geneseo, Illinois

MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE UNTO THE LORD,  
ALL YE LANDS.

SERVE THE LORD WITH GLADNESS: COME  
BEFORE HIS PRESENCE WITH SINGING.

KNOW YE THAT THE LORD HE IS GOD: IT  
IS HE THAT HATH MADE US, AND NOT WE  
OURSELVES; WE ARE HIS PEOPLE, AND  
THE SHEEP OF HIS PASTURE.

ENTER INTO HIS GATES WITH THANKSGIVING  
AND INTO HIS COURTS WITH PRAISE: BE  
THANKFUL UNTO HIM, AND BLESS HIS NAME.  
FOR THE LORD IS GOOD; HIS MERCY IS  
EVERLASTING; AND HIS TRUTH ENDURETH  
TO ALL GENERATIONS.

PSALM 100.



Dear Members of Concordia:

One hundred years may seem like a long time to us, but in God's reckoning, it is less than a second. For us, these last hundred years have been years in which the grace of God has been richly showered upon this, our beloved congregation.



The difficulties encountered in the early years of our congregation's history almost amounted to a desperate struggle for existence. But the promise of the Lord held good, that His Word would not return to Him void, but would do that which He purposed and accomplish that which He pleased.

God has been good to us in this, that we have had the privilege of having His Word taught in our midst in all its truth and purity, and the Sacraments administered according to Christ's institution. This means much, especially when the forces of evil are trying to overthrow God's Word.

But we also realized that the Word of God is not to be confined to one area, but is to be proclaimed in all the world to every creature. Not only are we to enjoy its blessings, but these blessings are to be shared with others.

May we then, confidently looking forward and trusting in His might, continue to have His Word in use among us, and not forgetting our mission obligation make possible its spread into all the world where sinners live and die.

For the blessing of these past one hundred years, we thank our God, and pray that in the years to come He may always remain present among us with His love and mercy and grace.

Your Pastor

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steve Persa". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "Your Pastor".

*With gratitude we dedicate this booklet  
to the pastors who by the grace of God  
served Concordia during her first 100 years.*



REV. HORN



REV. DOERFFLER



REV. PERSA



REV. BERGEN



REV. ELLING

*SOLI DEO GLORIA!*

## HISTORY OF CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CHURCH: 1864 - 1964

The German people who had come to this area and had settled in and around Geneseo were for the most part Lutheran. The outlook as far as being ministered to by their Church was gloomy indeed. There was no Lutheran Church to be found. The thought of being without a Church was difficult to bear. Some attended the services in the German Methodist Church. But the revivalistic atmosphere, the attempts at conversion, the sawdust trail, and other things warned them that this was not what they were seeking, and would never satisfy them.

In the year 1859 there appeared a Pastor by the name of Markwart. He gathered together the people of the Lutheran faith and held services in a room above the Post Office, where the Public Library now stands. On the first Sunday he baptized 15 children. However, he did not remain long. Suddenly, for no apparent reason he disappeared.

Now they sought a Pastor in Davenport, Iowa, and found one who belonged to the Reformed Church. His name was Frohwein. After six months, this pastor went on his way. For a time now the people were without any services whatsoever. The sectarian preachers used this occasion as an opportunity to try and win the Lutherans for their Church, but they met with little or no success. In the year 1862 a Pastor F. Veitz put in his appearance, but remained only four months. Once again an attempt was made to secure the services of a pastor in the person of Pastor Mockwitz. But they were disillusioned with him also.

Pastor Doescher, a pastor of the Missouri Synod, who was stationed at Hampton, Illinois, and also held services at Edford, now came and served the Lutherans in Geneseo. He conducted services for several months, and on July 7th, 1864, organized these Lutherans into a congregation. The congregation took the name of Concordia Lutheran Church. The following officers were elected: August Eichhorn and Ludwig Hillmer were elected as deacons; Wilhelm Rittinger, Jacob Jung and Henry Schmitz as trustees; Johann Rasmus as secretary and Friedrich Zimmerman as chairman.

Services had been held here and there, and often much difficulty was experienced in trying to find a suitable place for worship services. The main thought now was to build a church. Action followed. On the 24th day of July, 1864, the decision was made to purchase property and to proceed with the building of a church. The site, on which the present church stands, South Oakwood and East North, was purchased for \$287.50. The church was built at a cost of \$1308.99. Needless to say, the realization that they had their own church filled the hearts of the members with the greatest of joy. Sacrifices for the church were readily and willingly made. However, there remained a debt of \$950.99 on the church property.



FIRST CHURCH 1864

In August of 1864, Pastor E. O. Fuenstueck, who for a short time had assisted Pastor Doescher at Hampton, Illinois, was called to be the pastor of this congregation and accepted. The constitution was adopted in the year 1866. Pastor Fuenstueck also conducted services every other Sunday among the German Lutherans in Edford Township. The congregation had barely become accustomed to having its own pastor, when Pastor Fuenstueck left the congregation and joined the Iowa Synod.

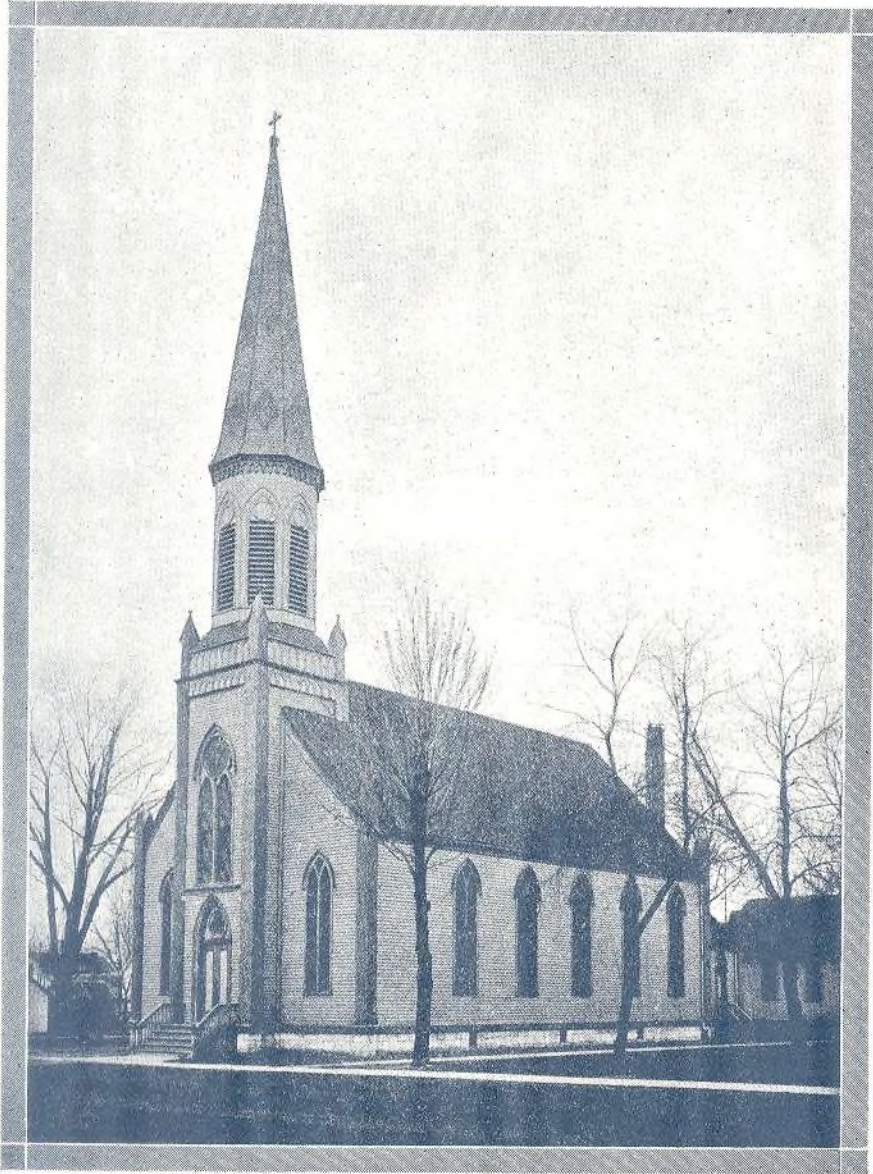
Candidate E. A. Ernst, a graduate of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, was called to be the pastor of the congregation, and in 1868 was installed as Pastor of Concordia Lutheran Church. In the year 1868, under the pastorate of Rev. Ernst, a parochial school was begun. The beginning was small. A house was rented, and 13 members collected \$67.00 to pay for the initial costs. The house served also as a residence for the Pastor. But Pastor Ernst did not remain long, and in 1869 accepted a call to Providence, Rhode Island. This naturally proved to be a very disturbing hindrance to the growth and upbuilding of the congregation. Once again the congregation began to call a Pastor and received one in the person of Candidate F. Horn, a graduate of the seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. His ministry in the congregation was extremely blessed.

Pastor Horn, who came in 1869, installed Teacher Warnecke as the principal of the school. When teacher Warnecke accepted a call to Milwaukee, Pastor Horn took over the duties of teaching in the school. He built at his own expense the building what was to serve as the school. The congregation later reimbursed him for the cost of the school. The congregation became strong, inwardly and outwardly. The Church became too small. In 1874 the church became a member of the Missouri Synod.

Pastor Horn worked diligently toward the upbuilding of the congregation. Because the work of preaching and teaching in the school became too much for Pastor Horn, a student named Mende assisted for a time. This student labored until March, 1875, when he accepted a call to Cleveland, Ohio. Because the work had proved too much, and because his health had begun to suffer, Pastor Horn was granted a leave of absence, and he took a vacation trip to Germany, hoping to regain his health. That was the last time the members saw their Pastor. While in Germany, Pastor Horn suffered a hemorrhage and passed away the 22nd of September. The congregation was greatly saddened by the loss of its Pastor. Upon resolution of the congregation, Pastor Guenther of Edford conducted a memorial service for Pastor Horn.

Following a long vacancy during which Pastor Guenther of Edford conducted the services, the congregation again obtained the services of a pastor in the person of Candidate P. Hansen from the seminary at St. Louis. In 1875, Pastor Hansen was assisted for a time in the teaching in the school by student Grumm, until the congregation received another teacher by the name of Zoell. His work was crowned with much success. However, he had to resign in October of 1879 because of ill-health. During the pastorate of Pastor Hansen the congregation decided to build a new church, and to move the old church to a lot directly east of the church and use it as a school. This was in the year 1877. Pastor Stephan of Iowa submitted plans for the new church. The building was to measure 40 feet by 70 feet, exclusive of the chancel and sacristy. The church was built according to the plan submitted at a cost of \$4899.11. The members eagerly set to work and began to collect the funds for the new church. They fell short of their goal. The deficit had to be financed at 10% interest.

Dedication services were held on February 3, 1878, and invitations had been extended to the neighboring congregations to attend this service. However, before the new church building was completed, Pastor Hansen accepted a call in September, 1877, to Worden, Illinois. The congregation quickly received the services of another pastor. Pastor Mangelsdorf, who because of a nervous breakdown had been inactive, became his successor. Teacher Aenger, who had been called to succeed Teacher Zoell, taught until February of 1880. Pastor Mangelsdorf also taught school until the year 1883. Because the congregation did not have a parsonage of its own, the pastors had to live in rented houses. A wonderful opportunity presented itself in the purchase of a parsonage by acquiring the house that was adjacent to the church lot. It was decided to purchase this property at a cost of \$715, and the money was borrowed to pay for this. Now the congregation owned its own parsonage. This was in 1879. Pastor



SECOND CHURCH 1878





FIRST PARSONAGE 1879

Mangelsdorf was the first pastor to live in this parsonage. In the year 1882 the church was severely damaged by the storm that swept over the city. The steeple was rooted up from its foundation and thrown upon the roof of the church. The damage was quickly repaired, and a new steeple built at a cost of \$534.35. In the year 1883 Pastor Mangelsdorf accepted a call to Venedig, Illinois.

In 1883 Pastor E. Heinemann of Kewanee was called and accepted the call to become pastor of Concordia. During his ministry the congregation observed its 25th anniversary. The church was renovated and the congregation bore the \$400 expense involved. Pastor Heinemann directed the school until Easter in 1886. The number of pupils enrolled rose to 80. Miss Mathilda Heinemann assisted as teacher and the old school was set aside for the lower classes. She gave up teaching in 1888, and Miss Anna Windisch took her place. She was followed by the Misses Elizabeth and Clara Fischer, the later teaching only a short time.

Congregational life did not flow along smoothly during this time. At various times the congregation found itself deeply disturbed. The congregation was not spared the encounters with the lodges and secret societies. At various times the congregation had to take a stand and testify, warn and resist these secret organizations. But with God's protection and assistance the congregation grew in spite of these difficulties.

After a ministry of eight years Pastor Heinemann accepted a call to Belvidere, Illinois. The congregation experienced a six month vacancy, from October 1892 to April 1893. During



PAROCHIAL SCHOOL 1898

this vacancy students H. Dahl and N. F. Jensen conducted the school. After many fruitless calls had been extended, they finally obtained a pastor, Pastor Doerffler. Pastor Doerffler took over the supervision of the school in 1893, when Mr. J. Pallmer was installed as teacher. But he took a call to New Gehlenbeck, Illinois in 1895. The school went without a teacher for a long period of time. The Pastor again had to teach school. This was no mean task, for the enrollment had risen to 89 pupils. After many fruitless calls, the congregation received the services of a teacher in the person of candidate Richard Held, installed in 1895. In the meantime, the congregation was laboring under a debt, and it was thought that an effort should be made to liquidate this debt. The effort was crowned with success. In the year 1899 the reed organ was replaced with a fine new pipe organ, purchased at a cost of \$1030.00. The dedication of the organ represented for the congregation a great achievement.

In May of 1901 Pastor Doerffler accepted a call to Wine Hill, Illinois. At this time teacher Richard Held accepted a call to Quincy, Illinois. His successor was teacher E. M. Kirsch. In June of 1901 the Rev. Christian Bergen was installed as pastor of the congregation.

In the earlier years the congregation found itself facing the task of making many necessary improvements to the church property. But as the congregation became stronger and stronger, it found itself in the position of not only being able to take care of the necessary repairs, but also to make needed improvements to the church property. In 1901, the old heating stoves were taken out of the church and a new hot air furnace was installed. In 1902 the gas lights took the place of the oil lamps. In 1903 the parsonage was enlarged, the old part of the building was remodeled, and a hot air furnace was installed. These improvements amounted to \$1664.00.

In 1903 it was decided to make many major improvements to the school property. The school was situated on a better foundation and equipped with a hot air furnace. This cost about \$235.00. In 1904 Teacher Kirsch accepted a call to Bethesda Home in Watertown, Wisconsin. Mr. August Haack, inactive for a time, was called to serve until May 1906. He was followed by Teacher Herman Dornseif who taught until 1909, when he accepted a call to Indianapolis, Indiana. In the fall of this same year Teacher G. W. Karsten was installed. In 1913, the school was renovated. At the beginning of 1913, the school had 51 pupils. Teacher Brothagen was the last teacher.

In 1905 Pastor Bergen tried to introduce English services in the evening. Up until this time all services and religious instruction had been conducted in the German language. The congregation at that time, however, felt that there was no call for English services. The language question came



11

CONCORDIA LADIES LEAGUE 1964



CHOIR 1964



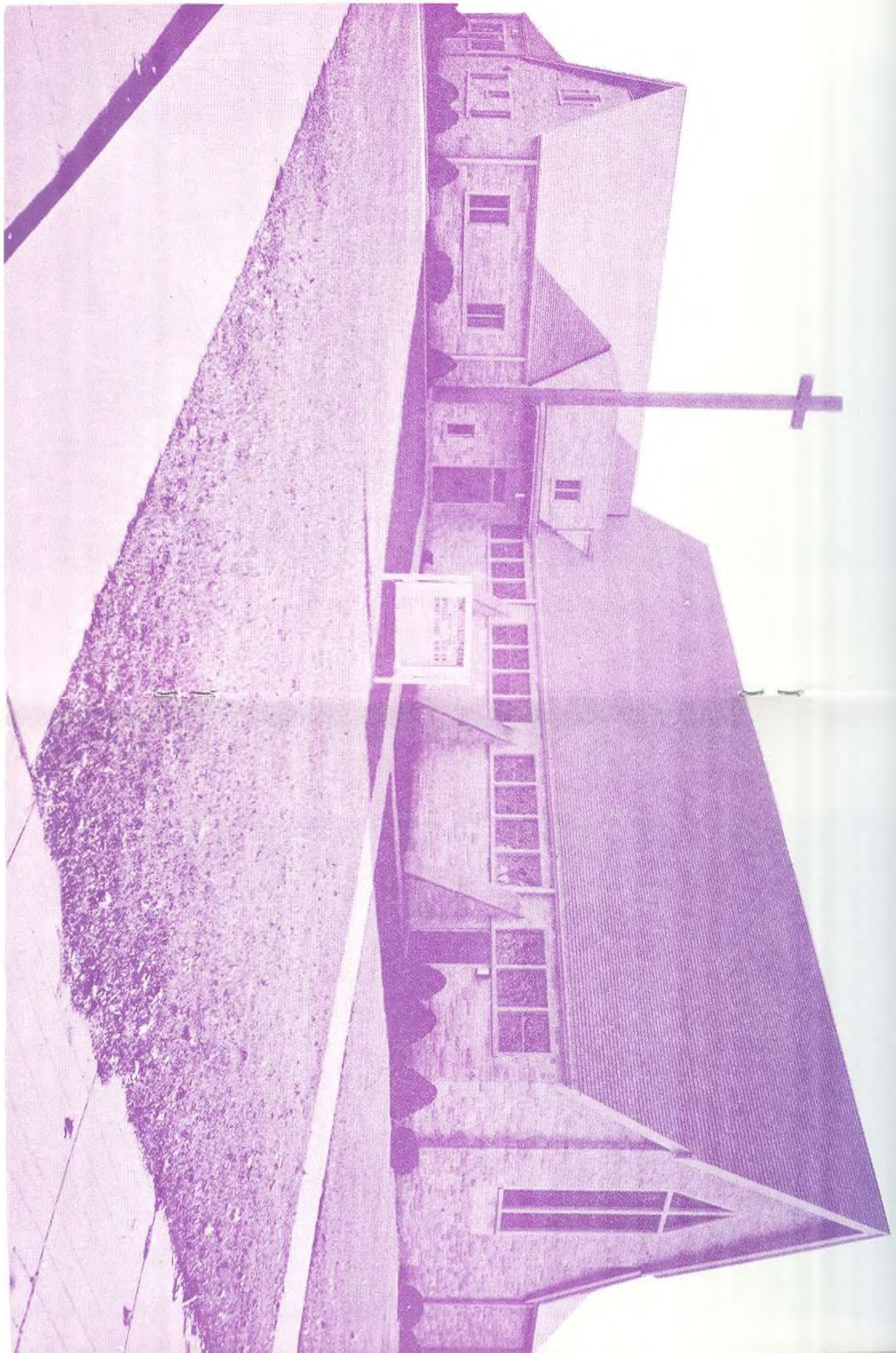
CONCORDIA WALTHER LEAGUE 1964

up again on July 7, 1907, and permission was given now and then to have an English service. By 1908 it looked as if English services were here to stay, for at this time 25 English hymnals were purchased. In 1908, the church was redecorated in oil colors at a cost of \$1116.00. The congregation now had a church they could be proud of.



INTERIOR REDECORATED 1908

In 1914 the Pastor was granted permission to have one English service a month. In 1920 an additional 150 English hymnals were purchased, and on January 30, 1921, the decision was reached to have English services every other Sunday morning. During this very critical period when the language question was receiving much consideration, the transition to English was diplomatically achieved under the leadership of Pastor Bergen. But the need for more English services was felt, and in 1930 double-header services were introduced. German services were discontinued in the year 1941.



In the year 1924 the beautiful memorial windows replaced the old ones at a cost of \$2468.55. In 1925 the church was remodeled. The exterior was given a coat of stucco, a new front entrance was built, and the interior was redecorated in oil colors at an expense of \$7518.76. Pastor Bergen served the congregation until May 12, 1929, when he resigned because of failing health. He was called to his eternal reward January 15, 1930.



REMODELED CHURCH 1925

On July 17, 1929 the call was extended to the Rev. Henry J. Elling of Parkers Prairie, Minnesota. Pastor Elling accepted the call and was installed by the Rev. Carl Hilgen-dorf on September 8, 1929. In 1937 the congregation again undertook extensive repairs and alterations on the church building. The steeple was removed and replaced with a tower. The stucco also was removed and the exterior finished





LUTHERAN WOMEN'S MISSIONARY LEAGUE 1964



CHURCH COUNCIL 1964



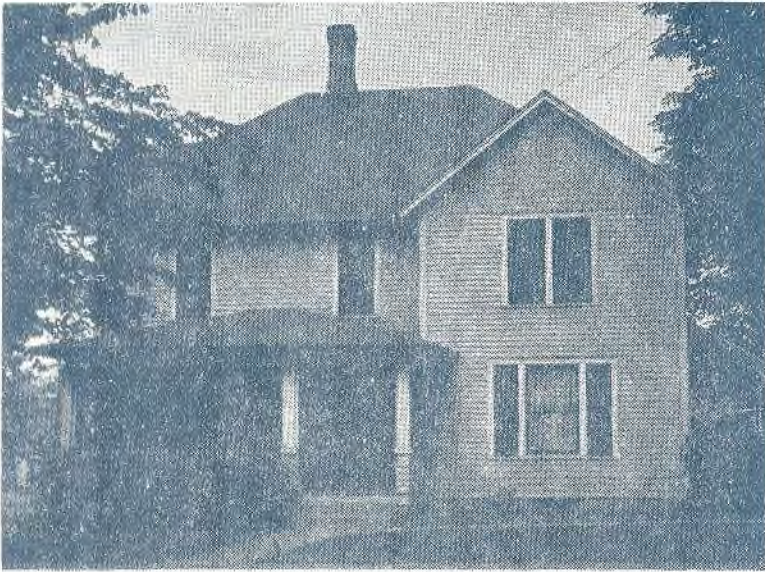
CONCORDIA MARRIED COUPLES CLUB 1964

with brickcote. A much needed rest room was added. The work was done at an expense of \$5640.00. A rededication service was conducted on Sunday, December 12, 1937. On Thursday morning, December 16th, fire broke out and threatened to reduce the building to ashes. When the fire was extinguished through the efficient work of the fire department of the city, about one-third of the roof was burned away. An entire new roof was put on the church. The fire loss was completely covered by insurance.

In October of 1941, some consideration was given to the thought of building a new church. This resulted in a decision on the part of the congregation in their January meeting of 1942, to set aside the offering of the last Sunday of each month for the purpose of building. The organizations in the meantime also decided to assist through the purchase of government savings bonds. These government savings bonds were purchased with the proceeds from the monthly offerings.



REMODELED CHURCH 1937



REMODELED PARSONAGE

Pastor Elling served the congregation faithfully and well during the following years until October of 1953, when he tendered his resignation because of ill health. His resignation was regretfully accepted by the congregation. During the latter years of his ministry in Concordia, the complexion of the congregation also underwent a change, no longer being predominantly German. Pastor Elling continued to serve the congregation during the period of its vacancy, until January when the new pastor was installed. Pastor Elling was called to his eternal home February 5th, 1961.

In December of 1953 a call was extended to the Rev. Steve Persa of Plankinton, So. Dak. This call was accepted and on January 24, 1954 Pastor Persa was installed as Pastor of Concordia Lutheran Church.

In April of 1954 it was decided that because of the crowded conditions, faced not only by increasing church attendance, but also in the enrollment in the Sunday School, some serious consideration should be given to the building of adequate facilities. Two things were under consideration: either the addition of an annex to the old church to solve the problem of space, or the construction of a new church with adequate educational facilities.

When investigation revealed the folly of building an annex to the old structure, it was decided to erect a new building. Accordingly, plans were set in motion to gather the neces-

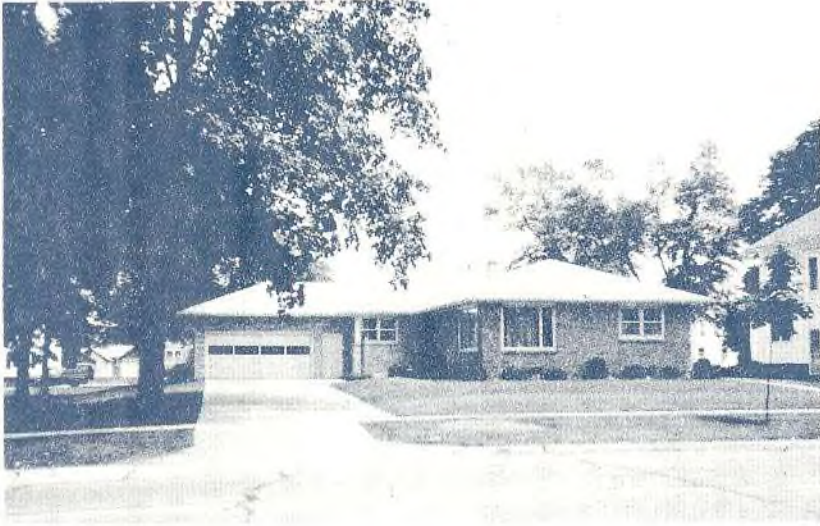
sary funds to make this new building a reality. After having acquainted the congregation with the needs faced by the church, a drive was made for funds. Under the direction of the building finance committee a canvass was made in October of 1954, in which in one Sunday afternoon, the actual sum of almost \$32,000 was collected. That such a sizeable amount of money was received revealed the congregation's understanding of its needs and its willingness to meet those needs. A three year building fund collection program was set in operation in January of 1955. The Building committee which had been appointed faithfully carried out its duties and by January of 1957 had brought before the congregation the plans drawn up by the architect. These plans were adopted and bids were let. At this time the building fund amount stood at \$106,000.

Ground for the new building was broken on Sunday, May 5, 1957 after the regular Sunday morning service. Actual construction began two weeks later. Certain adjustments now had to be made. The Pastor and his family moved to a house rented by the congregation. The old Assembly Hall was torn down, and the meetings of the Sunday School and the various organization now adjusted themselves to meeting in the parsonage. Fortunately the rooms in the parsonage were of such a size and so arranged that there was very little inconvenience in conducting Sunday school for the lower classes and meetings for the organizations.

On October 6th, 1957 corner-stone laying services were held. Construction on the new church now proceeded rather swiftly. By June of 1958 work on the new church had reached the stage where the auditorium part of the new building could now be used for holding Sunday services. On Sunday, June 29, 1958 the congregation had its farewell service in the old church. By the grace of God the old church building had served its members well.

For the next three months services were held in the new church building as yet incomplete. In the meanwhile, plans were almost completed for the day in which the new Church was to be dedicated to the glory of God. On Sunday, October 5, 1958, a happy day for the members of Concordia, the new house of worship was dedicated to the service of the Triune God. It had been completed at a cost of \$216,000.

In May of 1959 work was begun on the construction of a new parsonage which the congregation had also included in its building plans. The old parsonage, which had served the congregation so well during the time of the construction of the new church, was sold to the members of Trinity Episcopal church in Geneseo. It now serves as the rectory, or parsonage, and is located at S. Center and W. North. The new parsonage was dedicated Sunday, December 6, 1959. Its cost was \$25,000.



PARSONAGE 1959

In 1963 it was decided to purchase a piece of property which was diagonally across from the church to serve as a parking lot, or for further expansion, if the need should arise. It was on December 31, 1962 that the announcement was made that the church and parsonage were paid for and the congregation was debt free. We believe that this was possible in so short a time only because the people had the willingness to make the necessary sacrifices not just for the building of a church, but for the continuation of the Lord's work in their midst, thinking not only of themselves, but of those who were still to come after them, for whom the Word of God would be an eternal necessity.



Concordia Sunday School was organized on April 7, 1918. The Sunday School over the past years has been served and is still being served by members of the congregation who give of their time and energy in order to instruct the young in the Word of God. At the time of this writing, the enrollment numbers 150, served by a teaching staff of the following individuals: Mrs. Lyle Kemmis, Mrs. Maurice Kane, Miss Ellamae Krinjob, Mrs. Richard Nowers, Mrs. Edwin Buechler, Mrs. Wilbur Floming, Mrs. Oliver Joseph, Mrs. LaVerne Reschke, Miss Veryl Fredericksen, Mrs. Lucille Mowery, Mrs. Marguerite Hohenboken, Mrs. Harvey Hopkey, Mr. William House, Mrs. Helen Combs, Mr. George Furstenu, Mr. Alwin Reschke, and the Pastor.



SUNDAY SCHOOL 1964

Concordia also had two Ladies' societies, the Concordia Ladies' Aid, organized in 1904 and disbanded at the close of 1960; and the Concordia Ladies' League, organized in the year 1919 and still growing and active. The present officers of the Concordia Ladies' League are Mrs. George Sears, president; Mrs. George Dodge, vice-president; Mrs. Richard Nowers, secretary, and Mrs. Everett Gernant, treasurer. There is also a Married Couples' Club, organized in 1942 and still active. The Concordia Walther League was organized February 20, 1932 and still in existence. Concordia Lutheran Church is also fortunate at present in having two able and qualified organists Mrs. Everett Gernant who had served for 35 years and Mrs. Peter Kuchirka who has served 13 years.

The present officers forming the Church Council are Maurice Kane, president; Melvin J. Wiltamuth, vice-president; Walter Hannewald, secretary; Orville Granada, treasurer; Herbert Bergen, George Dodge, Wilbur Floming, George Furstenau, Elmer Roehrs and Clifford Rahn, deacons; Anthony Michels, Lyle Henry, and Arthur Kane, trustees; Roger Struss and Charles Matteson, financial secretaries; Alwin Reschke, Denver Haase and Rolland Rahn, Board of Education.

The members of the Centennial Committee are the following: George Furstenau, chairman; Mrs. William Pinks, secretary; Mrs. Maurice Gernant, Miss Veryl Fredericksen, Arnold Taube, Orville Granada and Alwin Reschke.

	Baptism	Confirmations	Marriages	Burials
Rev. Fuenfstueck	98		24	33
Rev. Ernst	33		11	8
Rev. Horn	253		36	65
Rev. Hansen	106		13	24
Rev. Mangelsdorf	169	200	26	37
Rev. Heinemann	254	107	54	55
Rev. Doerffler	199	131	49	69
Rev. Bergen	344	326	127	126
Rev. Elling	348	281	116	258
Rev. Persa	164	148	49	96

The congregation now numbers 504 Communicants and 687 baptized members.

Front Cover Design — Miss Veryl Fredericksen

Front Cover Art Work — Don Beck

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OUR PRESENT ALTAR 1964

# *Centennial Services*

*July 12, 1964*

## **MORNING SERVICE 9:30 AM**

Hymn — Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken

Hymn — God the Father, Son and Spirit

Hymn — The Church's One Foundation

Speaker.....The Rev. W. Harry Krieger, DD.,  
Ann Arbor, Michigan  
President, Michigan District

Liturgist.....The Rev. Steve Persa, Pastor

Organist .....Mrs. Everett Gernant

Offering — Lutheran Medical Missions

The Dinner arranged by The Lutheran Women's Missionary League of Concordia and served by the Ladies of St. John's Lutheran Church, Geneseo

## **AFTERNOON SERVICE 2:30 PM**

Hymn — Christ is Our Corner-Stone

Hymn — For Many Years, O God of Grace

Hymn — I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord

Speaker.....The Rev. Edwin E. Pieplow  
Hales Corner, Wisconsin  
Interim — Lutheran Hour Speaker

Liturgist .....The Rev. Steve Persa, Pastor

Organist.....Mrs. Everett Gernant

Offering — Lutheran Medical Missions

## **EVENING SERVICE 8:00 PM**

Guest Organist.....Henry A. Elling, Wheeling, Illinois

Guest Soloist.....Mrs. Vernon Hollatz  
St. John's Lutheran Church, Geneseo, Illinois

Guest Soloist.....The Rev. Thomas W. Wilson  
Zion Lutheran Church, Hampton, Illinois

I WILL EXTOL THEE, MY GOD, O KING; AND I WILL  
BLESS THY NAME FOR EVER AND EVER.  
EVERY DAY WILL I BLESS THEE; AND I WILL  
PRAISE THY NAME FOR EVER AND EVER.  
GREAT IS THE LORD, AND GREATLY TO BE PRAISED;  
AND HIS GREATNESS IS UNSEARCHABLE.  
ONE GENERATION SHALL PRAISE THY WORKS TO  
ANOTHER, AND SHALL DECLARE THY MIGHTY ACTS.  
I WILL SPEAK OF THE GLORIOUS HONOUR OF THY  
MAJESTY, AND OF THY WONDROUS WORKS.  
AND MEN SHALL SPEAK OF THE MIGHT OF THY  
TERRIBLE ACTS: AND I WILL DECLARE  
THY GREATNESS.  
THEY SHALL ABUNDANTLY UTTER THE MEMORY OF  
THY GREAT GOODNESS, AND SHALL SING OF THY  
RIGHTEOUSNESS.  
THEY SHALL SPEAK OF THE GLORY OF THY  
KINGDOM, AND TALK OF THY POWER;  
TO MAKE KNOWN TO THE SONS OF MEN HIS  
MIGHTY ACTS, AND THE GLORIOUS MAJESTY OF  
HIS KINGDOM.  
THY KINGDOM IS AN EVERLASTING KINGDOM, AND  
THY DOMINION ENDURETH THROUGHOUT ALL  
GENERATIONS.

PSALM 145,1-7;11-13.

