

Celebrating 150 Years



“Lord, Keep Us Steadfast In Your Word”

Concordia Ev. Lutheran Church

Geneseo, Illinois

1864-2014

A letter from the Pastor

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

For 150 years, the Saints at Concordia have been striving to keep the command of our Holy God and Lord, *Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy (Exodus 20:8)*, by meeting together to receive the Means of God's Grace given to us in Christ Jesus. Over those 150 years saints have come and gone, the study of Holy Scripture has taken place, groups have been strengthened together and the blessings of God in good times and in bad have abounded as God has fed His Church on earth preparing it for eternity in Paradise with Him.

While the past 150 years comprise the rich and abundant history of Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church thus far, it isn't always easy for us to remember details about our lives from the past week! Yet every episode in our lives adds to the formation of who we are. As we recall our own personal history and share it with others that they may know us better so we wish to recall for ourselves the history of our church that others may also know us better!

It is important to remember our identity and our origins. It is critical that we recall the past and what has taken place that we may learn for our present and future. Surveying the past we observe what has stood the test of time and what has failed, what has been beneficial and what has hindered, what has become the norm and what has become obsolete. Truly what Concordia practices, preaches and presents to the world this day has stood the test of time for the benefit of all people. This is solely because God's Word has been the catalyst, substance and the completion of the work. We stand on history. We live in the history of the Church on earth surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses faithful to Christ, our church families named by the Father, existing in the deeply rooted community of Geneseo. Throughout our history God has continued to give growth to the fruitful leafy tree that He planted long ago as a seed, the Church gathering in Geneseo, IL in the year of our Lord 1864. Over the years the church has grown into a sturdy and long-lasting building that still retains its earthly salvific role: *a hospital for sinners where they may receive God's grace in Christ Jesus.*

We proclaim Christ crucified and risen, striving to know nothing in the world but God and His infallible and inspired Word, in which saving faith is rooted and grown. Jesus is given in the Church where the Word is proclaimed, forgiveness of sins is assured, Baptism is administered, and the Lord's Supper, Christ's true body and blood are shared- all for the salvation of the Church. This is the historically accurate and salvific message of the Church and has been proclaimed at Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church in Geneseo, IL for the past 150 years. As God grants, we pray we will continue to proclaim and share the life of Christ to a dying world for many more years in the future.

Thank God for our history and thank God for the history of the Church. This is who we were, who we are as God has blessed us to be and what we will always be a part of, as God wills, until the Day of Everlasting Life. This publication contains collections and details of the God-blessed history of Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church in Geneseo, IL spanning the last 150 years. I pray you come to know us and what we are in Christ as you read our humble history. *I was glad when they said unto me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!" Psalm 122:1*

Peace in Christ Jesus,
Rev. Stephen M. Mueller

Our History

Many of the German people who settled in the Geneseo area were of the Lutheran faith. In 1839, the first college and seminary of the Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and other states was built near Altenburg, Missouri. However, no missionaries were active in Henry County, Illinois. Some Lutherans attended services with other established denominations, including the German Methodist Church. But not willing to give up the faith of their fathers, they remained true to Luther's teachings.

In 1859, a Pastor Markwart held services with the Lutheran people. They met above what was then the post office, located at 216 South State Street, the present site of the Geneseo Historical Museum. Pastor Markwart baptized 15 children on the first Sunday he conducted church services. The people knew almost nothing about Pastor Markwart and suddenly, for no apparent reason, he disappeared.

For about six months, a pastor named Frohwein from Davenport, Iowa, served the Lutheran congregation. In 1862, a man named F. Veitz spent four months with the congregation. He was followed by Pastor Mockwitz, with whom the struggling group was also disillusioned.



In the year 1864, the first missionary of the Missouri Synod came to the Geneseo area. Rev. Doescher, also serving the Lutheran people of Zion Lutheran congregation in Hampton Township and those at St. John's Lutheran Church in Edford Township, accepted the additional work of ministering to the Geneseo congregation. Services were conducted for several months in various locations. Then on July 7, 1864, Pastor Doescher organized these Lutherans into a congregation, taking the name of Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church.

After the inconvenience of using rented buildings, the Concordia congregation decided to proceed with a church building of their own. On July 24, 1864, the decision was made to purchase property at South Oakwood Avenue (originally Buffalo Avenue) and East North Street. At the cost of \$287.50, the land was purchased and the first church was built for \$1,308.99. The building later served as a school and then as "Concordia Assembly Hall".

On January 8, 1865, Rev. E. A. Fuenfstueck was installed as Concordia's first pastor. Under his guidance, the church's constitution was adopted in 1866. It remained in force until 1934 when it was translated and revised. Pastor Fuenfstueck conducted services every other Sunday among the German Lutherans at St. John's Lutheran Church, Edford Township. He left the congregation when he joined the Iowa Synod.

A graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, candidate Carl W. Ernst was installed as Concordia's pastor in 1868. That same year a parochial school was begun. A house was rented to serve as the school and also the pastor's residence. In 1869, Pastor Ernst accepted a call to Rhode Island.

The young congregation did not allow itself to become discouraged. They again called a candidate from the St. Louis Seminary, Rev. F. Horn. He was installed in 1869 and in turn, installed Teacher Warnecke as the school principal.

When Teacher Warnecke accepted a call to Milwaukee, Pastor Horn took over the teaching duties. He served the congregation untiringly. The congregation grew in both numbers and faith. In 1874, Concordia became a member of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Pastor F. D. Horn, serving as both preacher and teacher, was assisted for a time by a student named Mende. Teacher Mende accepted a call to Ohio in March 1875. When Pastor Horn became ill, he and the congregation hoped that an extended vacation would return him to good health. Pastor Horn traveled to Germany and while there died of a hemorrhage on September 22, 1874. In a show of love and respect, Pastor J.P. Guenther of Edford Township conducted the memorial services for Pastor Horn.



In 1875, Rev. Peter Hansen became Concordia's fourth pastor, and in 1877 the congregation decided to build a new church. The old church building was moved to a lot directly east of the church and was used as a school. The new church was built at the cost of \$4,899.11. Before the new church was completed, Rev. Hansen accepted a call to Worden, Illinois.

Pastor E. L. Mangelsdorf succeeded Pastor Hansen; the new church was completed and dedicated to the service of the Triune God on February 3, 1878. In 1879 the house adjacent to the church was purchased at the cost of \$715.00 and Rev. Mangelsdorf was the first pastor to live in this parsonage.

In 1882 the church was severely damaged by a cyclonic storm that swept over Geneseo. The steeple was blown from its foundation, landing on the roof of the church. A new steeple was built and repairs were made at the cost of \$534.35.

The next year, 1883, Rev. Mangelsdorf accepted a call to Venedy, Illinois. That same year, Rev. E. Heinemann of Kewanee, Illinois accepted the call to be Concordia's pastor. During his ministry, the church celebrated its 25th anniversary. The church was renovated at the cost of \$400.00. Pastor Heinemann directed the school until Easter, 1886. The number of pupils rose to 80 students. Several teachers assisted during these years: Mathilda Heinemann, Anna Windish, Elizabeth and Clara Fischer.

The congregation struggled with encounters with lodges and secret societies. Under the leadership of Pastor Heinemann, the congregation was able to take a stand and testify, warn, and resist the secret organizations. With God's protection and assistance, Concordia continued to grow in strength and numbers. After eight years of service, Pastor Heinemann accepted a call to Belvidere, Illinois.

After a six month vacancy, Rev. A. C. Doerffler answered the call to minister to the Concordia congregation. Along with a teacher, Mr. J. Pallmer, Pastor Doerffler assumed responsibility of the school. When Mr. Pallmer left in 1895, Pastor Doerffler served as teacher for the 89 pupils.

In 1899, dedication services were held for a new pipe organ. The organ cost \$1,030. The reed organ which had accompanied the congregation's singing was moved to the school where it continued to be used.

Pastor Doerffler accepted a call to Wine Hill, IL in May 1901. Installed in July 1901, his successor was the Rev. Christian Bergen of Chandlerville, Illinois. Under his leadership, the congregation grew and flourished and a number of improvements were made to the church property. In 1901, the old heating stoves in the church were replaced by a hot air furnace. In 1902, gas lights took the place of kerosene lamps. In 1903, the parsonage was enlarged, the old part remodeled and the old stoves were replaced by a hot air furnace. A total of \$1,664.00 was spent.

In 1903, it was also possible to make major improvements to the school property. For about \$235.00, the building was situated on a better foundation and a hot air furnace was installed.

The parochial school, organized in 1868 under Pastor Ernst's guidance, served the children of Concordia for 50 years. The German speaking school taught its students secular subjects with a Christian influence. Guided by faithful pastors and taught by dedicated teachers, the many students were blessed with a well-founded and strong Christian education. In 1917, the World War that had been raging in Europe for three years reached out to involve the United States. On January 31, 1917, the United States declared war on Germany. From that day on, all things German were suspect. The anti-German feelings extended to the German language and in Geneseo, to the German Lutheran Parochial School. Even harsher feelings were generated after many local sons were drafted into the United States Armed Services and sent to Europe to fight against Germany.

On Halloween night, October 31, 1918, a small group of vandals broke into the one room parochial school and destroyed desks, books, and much of the school property. The school trustees assessed the damage and determined that, in consideration of the strong anti-German feeling in the Geneseo community, it would not be prudent to attempt to continue the school at that time. Immediately the pupils were enrolled in the Geneseo Public Schools. The Armistice ending World War I was signed on November 11, 1918, eleven days after the school was

vandalized. Although the number of students educated in the German Lutheran Parochial School's 50 years is unknown, certainly the blessings derived from a Christian education touched many lives in the community.

During the early history of the congregation, all services and religious instruction had been conducted in the German language. In 1905, Pastor Bergen attempted to introduce English evening services. The congregation did not recognize the need for this and not until 1907 was permission granted for the occasional English service. In 1908, the congregation purchased 25 English hymnals. In 1914, one English service was held each month. In 1920, an additional 150 English hymnals were purchased and the following year saw the beginning of English services every other Sunday morning. Pastor Bergen continued diplomatically to assist his flock in making the transition to the English language.

Concordia Ladies Aid was organized in 1904 under Pastor Bergen's leadership. Their meetings were conducted in German. The group disbanded at the end of 1960. In 1919, Pastor Bergen helped organize the Concordia Ladies League, which remains as such today.

Concordia Sunday School was organized on April 7, 1918. From the very beginning, the Sunday School was conducted in English.

In 1908, the church was redecorated in oil colors at the expense of \$1,116.00. Pastor Bergen led the congregation in celebrating Concordia's 50th anniversary with festive services on July 12, 1914.

In 1924, beautiful memorial stained glass windows replaced old ones at a cost of \$2,468.55. The church was remodeled in 1925 at an expense of \$7,518.76. The wooden exterior received a coat of stucco, a new front entrance was constructed, and the interior was redecorated with oil colors.

A Men's Club recorded its first meeting on January 12, 1928. All male communicant members of the church were welcomed into membership for the purpose of providing Christian fellowship, interest members in the work of the home church, and the church at large and to help in the intellectual development of the members.

Pastor Bergen's failing health in the late 1920's was the reason Rev. Carl Hilgendorf of Edford Township first assisted and later served as Concordia's vacancy pastor. Following a hospitalization of several months and continuing poor health, Pastor Bergen resigned on May 12, 1929. He lived in Geneseo until his death on January 15, 1930.

After three calls were extended to fill the vacancy left by Pastor Bergen, Rev. Henry J. Elling of Parker's Prairie, Minnesota, accepted a call to come to Concordia on July 17, 1929. He was installed by Pastor Hilgendorf on September 8, 1929. As the congregation grew, two services on Sunday morning were introduced in 1930 one service in English and one in German.

During the 1930's, Concordia enjoyed the talents and enthusiasm contributed by the congregations orchestra. Accompanied by the piano, the director led a group of musicians that included stringed instruments, reeds, horns, drums and a flute.

In 1937, the congregation again undertook extensive repairs and alterations of the church building. The steeple was removed and replaced with a tower. The stucco was removed and replaced with brickote. A much needed restroom was added. The completed work cost \$5,640.00. A rededication service was held on Sunday, December 12, 1937. On December 16th, fire broke out and threatened to reduce the entire church to ashes. Efficient work of the Geneseo Fire Department extinguished the blaze. About one-third of the roof was destroyed. An entire new roof was required. The fire loss was completely covered by insurance.

A Diamond Anniversary celebration (75 years) was held on July 9, 1939. With the onset of World War II, German services were discontinued in 1941.

In January 1942, the decision was made to create a building fund by setting aside the offering received on the last Sunday of the each month. Government savings bonds were purchased. The church's organizations also assisted by buying savings bonds.

In 1946, the Lutheran Women's Missionary League was formed. This organization's purpose was and continues to be to promote mission awareness among the women of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and to finance mission projects.

Pastor Elling served Concordia faithfully and well for almost 25 years. In October of 1953, he resigned due to poor health but continued to serve the congregation during the vacancy, until January 1954. Under Pastor Elling's guidance, Concordia had grown and changed, no longer being predominantly German.

On January 24, 1954, Rev. Steve Persa, formerly of Plankinton, South Dakota, was installed as Concordia's tenth pastor. In April of 1954, it was decided that because of the crowded conditions in both the church and the Sunday School, consideration should be given to building adequate facilities. After studying several options, it was decided to erect a new church. Recognizing the church's needs, a congregational fund-raising drive collected the actual sum of \$32,000.00 in one October Sunday afternoon in 1954. A three year building fund collection program was set in operation in January of 1955. In January of 1957, the building committee submitted architect's plans. They were approved; bids were let and ground broken on May 5, 1957.

Pastor Persa and his family moved into a rented house. The old Assembly Hall was torn down and Sunday School and various organizations' meetings were held in the parsonage.



On October 5, 1957, corner-stone laying services were held. Construction on the new church now proceeded rather swiftly. By June 1958, the work on the new church had progressed to the point where the nave could now be used for holding Sunday services. On Sunday June 29, 1958, the congregation had its farewell service in the old church. As construction progressed, plans were made to remove the old church building.

On July 1, 1958, a contract was signed for the sale of the old church for \$450.00 calling for the removal date of August 23, 1958.

On Sunday October 5, 1958, the new house of worship was dedicated to the service of the Triune God. It was completed at the cost of \$216,000.00

Building plans included the construction of a new parsonage. The old parsonage was sold to the Trinity Episcopal Church in Geneseo and moved to South Center Street and West North Street. Construction of the new parsonage began in May of 1959, was completed at the cost of \$25,000.00 and was dedicated on December 6, 1959.

On December 31, 1962, it was announced that the church and parsonage were paid for and the congregation was debt free. In 1963, a piece of property diagonally across from the church was purchased to serve as a parking lot or for future expansion needs.

In April of 1969, Pastor Persa accepted a call to Audubon, Iowa. He had faithfully served Concordia for 15 years. During the vacancy, Pastor John Stuebe and Pastor Emeritus Edwin Wuehle filled the pulpit.

On May 3, 1970, Pastor Robert Kuhn was installed as Concordia's 11th pastor. Later that year, a Junior Youth League was formed to provide Christian fellowship for the 7th and 8th grade youth.

A group of young married couples formed Friendship Circle in February 1971. The group held social meetings for nine years. While active, Friendship Circle sponsored and assisted with a number of service projects, including recovering the pews with red velvet in 1977.

The parish newsletter, "The Fortress" began on February 27, 1971. Including a letter from the pastor, reports from various organizations' activities, congregational members' birthdays and anniversaries, and a monthly calendar, it continues to be published monthly.

Attempting to bring God's Word to the Geneseo Community, a half hour radio broadcast on Sunday morning services began on June 6, 1971. In 1981, a decision was made to stop "The Living Word" broadcasts and a tape ministry for Concordia's shut-ins quickly developed.

On September 8, 1971, Week Day School was started. Including youth in second through eighth grades, it meets on Wednesday afternoons during the school year. It is currently called Kids of our Lord (KOOL).

One mentally handicapped member of Concordia, meeting with a dedicated teacher, was the inspiration for the Special Education Sunday School that began in the fall of 1972. Initially the class had five students. As it grew, it included mentally handicapped adults from Hillcrest Home. With support from the community and involved parents, it was still an ongoing ministry in 1989.

As Minister of Christian Education, Mr. Donald Wilke was installed on June 3, 1973. He helped to extend the growing congregation's desire to emphasize continuing Christian education for all ages. Anticipating the housing needs of a second full-time church worker, the congregation built a home at 508 E. South Street where Mr. Wilke and his family lived. He served Concordia for one year.

In the summer of 1973, a two-story addition was begun on the south side of the church. It included a large basement youth room, ground floor meeting room, classroom and three offices and a second floor restroom facilities with eight additional classrooms. Air conditioning was installed in the new addition and in the Sunday School rooms on the second floor of the existing parish hall. Dedication ceremonies were held on November 10, 1974 for the newly constructed education wing. The approximate construction cost was \$232,000.00.

Mr. David Groll was installed as the Director of Christian Education on September 15, 1974. Mr. Groll and his family lived in the parsonage. The E. South Street house was purchased by Pastor Kuhn and he and his family moved there.

Project Phillip began in the fall of 1974. Working with the World Home Bible League, copies of the Bible were distributed by Concordia members to hospitals, motels and jails. Along with the Bible distribution was a correspondence course, "Phone-a-Story" for children and "Dial-a-Devotion" for adults. For nine years, Project Phillip touched many lives with the message of God's sure salvation through Jesus Christ.

In July of 1977, Pastor Kuhn accepted a call to serve as Development Officer at Concordia College, River Forest, Illinois.

Late in 1977, a large cross was installed on the outside east wall of the new education addition.

Desiring to re-establish their expected new pastor in the parsonage adjacent to the church, the congregation began building a home at 727 Hummingbird Court. It was completed at a total cost of \$69,664.16. Mr. Groll and his family moved into the home in the spring of 1978.

Rev. Jack Heino was installed as pastor on June 18, 1978. He and his family moved into the parsonage south of the church.

The Voter's Assembly minutes of July 12, 1981 reflect Concordia's willingness to support a mission church in the Green Rock/Colona area. Financial aid for an August Vacation Bible School, the assistance of Pastor Heino at Sunday evening services, and help with record keeping were all part of that early commitment. Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, Colona, held an ordination and installation for their first pastor, Rev. Gary Grasmick on July 11, 1982.

Mr. Groll moved in November 1982 to Harbor Beach, Michigan, where he assumed the position of parochial school principal and teacher for Zion Lutheran Church.

New blue hymnals, titled Lutheran Worship, replaced the older red ones in the fall of 1982.

Concordia's Constitution was amended in July 1984 to allow "...women who have reached the age of eighteen to hold voting membership in the congregation and serve as officers and as members of boards and committees..."

The congregation ordained and installed Donald E. Storrud as Associate Pastor on June 12, 1983. He shared pastoral duties with Pastor Heino until moving to Casey, Illinois, to serve as pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in July of 1986.

Pastor Heino served Concordia until November 1988. He accepted a call to Immanuel Lutheran Church and School, East Dundee, Illinois. Pastor David R. McClean of Beautiful Savior, Colona, served as Concordia's vacancy pastor until June 1989.

On June 11, 1989, Concordia's 13th pastor was installed. Rev. Dean A. Dummer had previously served as campus pastor for a student congregation in Laramie, Wyoming.

This same year (1989) Concordia celebrated its 125th anniversary. As a part of the 125th anniversary, a new pipe organ with 12 ranks and 720 pipes was completed and dedicated on May 20, 1990. The location of the organ was moved at this time to the balcony area.

During Pastor Dummer's ministry at Concordia, Rev. Robert Yount, a member of Concordia was contracted by the congregation to serve as Assistant to the Pastor. He served in this capacity from 1999 until 2001, when he signed a contract to serve as pastor at Faith Lutheran Church, Kewanee, Illinois.

On April 24, 1998, a new granite church sign was erected on the west side of the building directly in front of the large stained glass window.

Pastor Dummer and his wife Susan hosted monthly dinner parties for small groups at the parsonage. These included members of the congregation: sharing food, fellowship and family devotions with their guests.

In June of 1998, Pastor Dummer accepted a call to Grace Lutheran Church, Oak Creek, Wisconsin.

On January 3, 1999, Rev. Daniel A. Olson was installed as pastor of Concordia, coming from a dual parish in Minnesota.

In May 2000, a new sound system which served both the nave and the fellowship areas was installed. On August 21, 2000, Concordia Preschool opened its doors with an enrollment of 10 students in the three-year-old class and 10 students in the four-year-old class. Carmen Foster, a Lutheran teacher was hired as the director/teacher and served in this capacity until May 2003. Stephanie Hagaman followed Carmen as teacher beginning in August 2003 in this preschool known as "the preschool with the message of Jesus". Mrs. Hagaman continues as teacher to the present time.

In October 2002, new pews were installed after painting and refinishing of the interior of the church had been completed.

Under Rev. Olson, a vicar training program was initiated in 2003 until 2008, welcoming seminarians Daniel Provost, Kevin Wendorf, Nick Buchholz, Brandt Klawitter and Kevin Roop.

In November of 2003, a wood/glass wall was built between the narthex and the fellowship hall. This replaced the folding vinyl curtain. A new furnace and air conditioning system were also installed.

A playground was assembled by congregation members and installed in 2006.

In July 2008, Rev. Olson accepted a call to St. John's Lutheran Church, Buckley, Illinois.

In 2008, Emilie (Wiegler) Glaw accepted a call to be the Director of Music and Education at Concordia and began her duties on July 6, 2008. In November 2012, she completed her Director of Christian Education degree and continues her service at the present time.

In June 2009, Rev. Dr. John C. Wohlrabe Jr, a recently retired Navy chaplain after many years of service accepted the call to be Concordia's 15th pastor.

In 2012, the stained glass windows in the church were repaired and new ventilated protective coverings replaced the old plexiglass to allow the beauty of the windows to be more clearly seen and appreciated. The fellowship hall and the library were renovated during this time also. Rev. Wohlrabe retired in June 2012 and moved to Wisconsin.

In June 2012, Rev. Stephen Mueller accepted the call to be Concordia's pastor from St. James Lutheran Church, Quincy, Illinois. Rev. Mueller continues as Concordia's pastor to the present.

Organizations active at Concordia-2014

Altar Guild

The Altar Guild was formally organized in 2001 under Pastor Olson, and makes a valuable contribution to our worship services. This group has twelve members and each pair of ladies serve two months out of the year. They are responsible for making sure the communion ware is set up and cleaned up every Sunday. They also enhance the worship services by tending to the altar flowers, paraments, banners and candles.

Bell Choir

The bell choir was organized in the spring of 2007 under the direction of Stephanie Hagaman. The bells were purchased with memorial money. Emilie Glaw began directing the bell choir in the fall of 2008 and this group continues to enhance the music of Concordia's worship services.

Concordia Ladies League (CLL)

On November 13, 1919 nine ladies from Concordia met to form a "junior society". Their purpose was to foster society relationships among the ladies, to help in the endeavor of improving the church property and practice charity, especially in numerous charitable institutions of our church and synod. The first meetings were held in a member's home each month and dues were 15 cents a meeting. They decided to call the group Concordia Ladies League. By 1921, the group had 21 members. It is noted that in 1944, CLL had a membership of 91 ladies. Membership dropped during World War II. This organization continues to provide support for improvements at Concordia, Vacation Bible School, Adopt-A-Student program of the seminary and many other church and community programs. CLL is celebrating 95 years in existence in 2014, the oldest of any society at Concordia.

Concordia Lutheran Preschool

Concordia Lutheran Preschool is "A preschool with the message of Jesus". It was begun in the fall of 2000 for the religion-based education of 3- and 4-year-old students of the church and surrounding community. Carmen Foster was the preschool's first director/teacher and was instrumental in getting this program off to an exceptional start with 20 students the first year. Stephanie Hagaman followed Carmen as preschool teacher in the fall of 2003 and continues to provide excellent Christ-centered education for the students.

Concordia Men's Club

This organization, which was formed earlier in Concordia's history and disbanded in 1936, was reorganized in 2010 under Pastor John Wohlrabe. This group of about a dozen men meets on a monthly basis for Bible study and fellowship but they work on projects throughout the year helping members of the congregation with needs such as home improvements and yard work. They are also willing workers for big and small projects at Concordia such as clean-up days in the spring and the fall, painting Sunday School classrooms, carpet removal in the fellowship hall when it was renovated and set-up and take-down of tables and chairs for events at church. They have even been known to be a moving service for incoming pastors!

Concordia Vocal Choir

Concordia's vocal choir has been in existence for many years under the direction of a number of dedicated directors. Many members of Concordia have enjoyed singing praises to our Lord throughout the church year and they continue to sing "His praise in the assembly of the saints". Psalm 149:1

Concordia Youth Group

Concordia's youth group exists to educate, support and encourage our middle school through high school students in their Christian faith. Through Bible study, fellowship, servant events, retreats and fun activities our young people grow spiritually and socially in a Christian environment.

Kids Of Our Lord (KOOL)

Kids of our Lord serves the purpose of enhancing the Christian education of our young people from kindergarten through sixth grade. KOOL meets Wednesdays after school during the school year teaching children about Jesus through the use of Bible stories, songs and activities.

Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML)

Concordia's LWML was organized on October 24, 1946 with 16 members. It was received into membership with the national LWML of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod on June 17, 1947. The LWML is a Recognized Service Organization (RSO) of the LCMS with its goals of Gospel outreach, mission education and mission service. Concordia's current LWML group has 18 members. Friends in Faith is an evening LWML group that meets four times a year for Bible study and fellowship.

Matched For Life

Started in October 2013, Matched for Life is a group for "young" married couples, meeting once a month to provide an opportunity for these couples to enrich and strengthen their marriages and families through the study of God's Word and fellowship.

Sunday School

Concordia's Sunday School was organized April 7, 1918. With the dedication of countless volunteer teachers and helpers, the Sunday School's mission was, and continues to be, the instruction of preschoolers through high schoolers in the Gospel message of the Bible and the doctrines of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

CONCORDIA'S PASTORS

Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church has a long line of faithful pastors providing the Means of Grace - Word and Sacrament - to sinners and saints in this place, Geneseo, Illinois. For each generation, they have been and are preaching and teaching the proclamation of forgiveness, life, and salvation to a dying world. This proclamation has gone out from Concordia into Geneseo and the world for 150 years.

These pastors have not only faithfully served Concordia, but have also served in pastoral, district and synodical roles before, during and, after serving Concordia. Two former pastors served in the US Navy, attached to US Marines as battlefield chaplains bringing forgiveness, life, and salvation to those standing in the hell of combat surrounded by certain death. Two of Concordia's former pastors have served as synodical vice presidents, and one as president of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.

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On July 7, 1864 **Rev. Doescher**, an LCMS missionary stationed at Hampton, IL organized Lutherans in Geneseo, IL to form Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church.

The first called pastor was **Rev. Ernest August Fuenfstueck** born December 18, 1840 in Sachsen, Germany. Pastor Fuenfstueck graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO in 1864, and served Concordia from August 1864 to 1868. In 1868, he resigned from the LCMS and joined the Iowa Synod. He died on February 8, 1920 in Wausau, WI and is buried in Pine Grove Cemetery, Wausau, WI.

Rev. Carl W. Ernst was Concordia's second pastor beginning June 14, 1868. He served Concordia until he accepted a call to Providence, RI in March 1869. He resigned from the LCMS in 1872. His date of birth, place of birth, date of death, and place of burial are unknown.



Rev. Ferdinand David Joseph Horn was Concordia's third pastor, having recently graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary. He was ordained and installed at Concordia on April 18, 1869. He was born in Hamelspringe, Hannover, Germany on November 28, 1839, son of Heinrich Philipp Horn, who was a teacher. Rev. Horn immigrated to the United States in August 1867. He resigned from the LCMS in May 1874. He died from a hemorrhage in Germany on September 22, 1874 and was buried in Germany.

Rev. Peter Hansen was ordained at Concordia on July 25, 1875, having recently graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO. Rev Hansen was born May 16, 1846 in Kolkerheide, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, and immigrated to the United States in 1873. He served Concordia until September 1877, having accepted a call to Trinity Lutheran Church in Worden, IL. He retired from the ministry on May 9, 1915 in Saginaw, MI, died December 31, 1932 and is buried in Bethlehem Lutheran Cemetery in Saginaw, MI.



Concordia installed her fifth pastor, **Rev. Ernst Ludwig Mangelsdorf** on October 28, 1877. He served Concordia until December 1883 when he accepted a call to St. Salvator Lutheran Church in Venedy, IL. Pastor Mangelsdorf was born on December 2, 1837 in Calwe an der Saale, Germany to Karl Wilhelm and Christiana Dorothea (Jordan) Mangelsdorf. His father's occupation is indicated as "Lawyer-farmer". Pastor Mangelsdorf immigrated to the United States in 1846 with his parents. He had one brother, Karl Wilhelm, Jr. and two sisters, Anna Dorothea and Maria. He attended Trinity Lutheran Elementary School, St. Louis, MO, graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary in 1861, and was ordained at Zion Lutheran Church, Belleville, IL on April 28, 1861. He married Katherine Wildemuth on July 19, 1863 at Rock Island, IL. Pastor Mangelsdorf and Katherine had nine children. He resigned from the

LCMS several times for health reasons. He died from a stroke on May 3, 1908 in St. Louis, MO and is buried in Concordia Cemetery, St. Louis, MO.

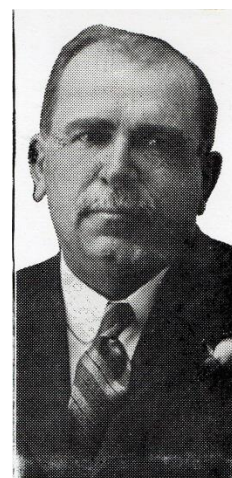
Rev. Ernst Heinemann became Concordia's sixth pastor on February 3, 1884. He was born January 18, 1860 in Crete, IL. His father, William Heinemann, was also a pastor. Rev. Heinemann attended Concordia College, Ft. Wayne, IN, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO, and was ordained at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Kewanee, IL on July 23, 1882. He married Christine Swensen on November 8, 1882, in St. Louis, MO and had five children. In October 1892 he accepted a call to Immanuel Lutheran Church, Belvedere, IL where he remained until retirement; he served there a total of 29 years. After his retirement, he served as Assistant Pastor at Beardstown, IL and Chicago, IL and served as a Professor at Walther College, St. Louis, MO. He died March 3, 1927 in Belvedere, IL and is buried there.

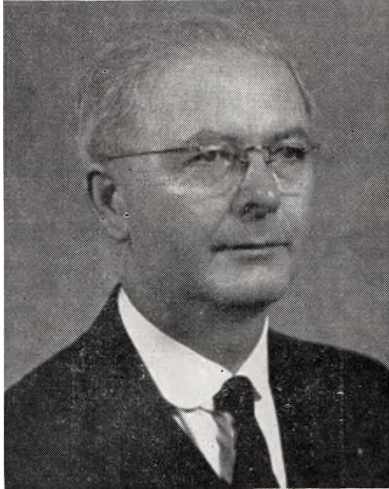




Rev. Alfred Carl Doerffler was Concordia's seventh pastor, being installed May 7, 1893 and serving until May, 1901 when he accepted a call to Wine Hill, IL. He graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, IL. He vicared at St. John Lutheran Church, Hubbard, IA 1880-1881, and was ordained there on July 9, 1882. He was born December 25, 1858 in Celle, Hannover, Germany and immigrated to the United States in 1874. During Rev. Doerffler's pastorate, a pipe organ replaced the reed organ which had been used for many years. Pastor Doerffler returned in 1914 to preach the sermon at the morning service celebrating the Golden Jubilee of Concordia. His text was Psalm 126:3, "The Lord has done great things for us." The sermon was quoted extensively in the Geneseo Republic newspaper. He died November 28, 1945 at Gogglier, IN and is buried in St. Peters Lutheran Church Cemetery, Ft. Wayne, IN.

On July 14, 1901, Concordia installed her eighth and longest serving pastor, **Rev. Christian Bergen**. Pastor Bergen was born on December 17, 1868 to Rev. Jacob and Margaret (Mank) Bergen in St. Louis, MO. He was baptized at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, St. Louis, MO, graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, IL in 1890 and was ordained at St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Benoa (Shelby), MI on September 14, 1890. He, with the congregation's permission, brought English language services to Concordia in 1907 and continued the expansion of more frequent English language services throughout his pastorate. He served Concordia until May 12, 1929 when he was forced to resign his call due to health reasons. He died on January 15, 1930 in Geneseo from a stroke and is buried in Oakwood Cemetery, Geneseo, IL. His funeral was conducted at Concordia. Pastor Bergen was so well loved by the congregation that nine years after his death, the Diamond Anniversary Celebration booklet states, " We respectfully dedicate this diamond anniversary booklet to the memory of the sainted pastor, Rev. Christian Bergen."

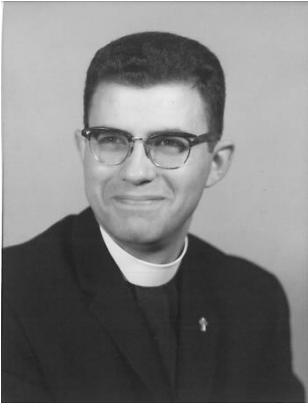




Rev. Henry John Elling became Concordia's ninth pastor on September 8, 1929. Pastor Elling was born on February 1, 1888 of Henry H. and Sophia (Sprengler) Elling. He attended seven years of parochial school, graduated from Concordia College, St. Paul, MN in 1909, Concordia Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO in 1914, vicared at Stony Plain, Alberta, Canada, and was ordained at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada on May 24, 1914. He married Emily Suzanne Brauer on July 9, 1915 in St. Louis, MO and had five children. He also served Immanuel Lutheran Church, Brightview, Alberta, Canada, and Immanuel Lutheran Church, Parkers Prairie, MN before coming to Concordia. He served as Central Illinois District LCMS Visitor from 1933 to 1938. Pastor Elling continued the expansion of the frequency of English language services at Concordia, resulting in English language services being available every Sunday. The growth of the congregation during his pastorate resulted in Concordia no longer being a predominately German congregation. German language services were discontinued in 1941. He retired in 1954 and died on February 5, 1961 in Geneseo, IL. He is buried in Oakwood Cemetery, Geneseo, IL.

The tenth pastor at Concordia was **Rev. Steve Persa**, who was installed on January 24, 1954. He was born December 7, 1910 to Steve and Wilhelmina (Banfi) Persa. He attended eight years of parochial school, graduated from Concordia College, Milwaukee, WI in 1930, graduated Concordia Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO in 1934, and was ordained at Redeemer Lutheran Church, Philip, SD on April 19, 1936. On May 4, 1937, he married Harriet Aldrich in Mardo, SD and had one child, Steve, Jr, born June 1, 1942. He served six churches in South Dakota prior to coming to Concordia. He accepted a call to St. John, Audubon, IA in April 1969. He served as Business Manager of the South Dakota District Lutheran Witness Supplement from 1946 to 1954 and Secretary of Education for the Central Illinois District of the LCMS in 1955. He retired to the Oklahoma district with Emeritus status in 1977. He died on November 3, 1991 at Bethany, OK.

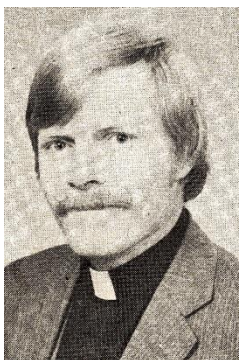
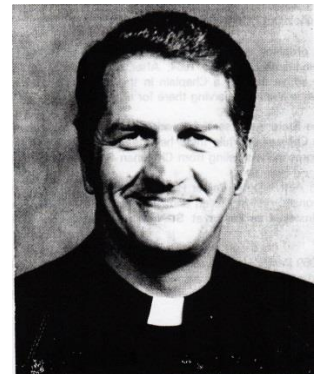




Rev. Robert T. Kuhn became Concordia's eleventh pastor, installed on May 3, 1970 and serving until July 1977, when he accepted a call to become the Assistant Director of Development at Concordia University, Chicago, IL. He was born April 5, 1937 to Walter Gust and Evelyn Anna (Buss) Kuhn. He married Judith Ann Mittenzwey on June 8, 1963. His education is as follows: Public school grades 1-8, Synodical High School grades 9-12, Concordia College, St. Paul, MN 1955-1957, Concordia Senior College, Ft. Wayne, IN 1957-1959 graduating from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO 1963. He vicared at Bethany Lutheran Church, Parma, OH 1961-1962, and was ordained at St. Peter Lutheran Church, St. Paul, MN June 30, 1963. He also earned a Doctor

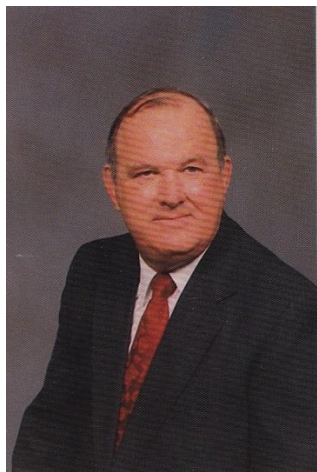
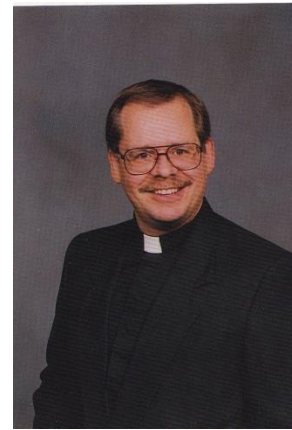
of Divinity at Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN in 1988. He served four congregations in Illinois, including Concordia. In addition, he was Assistant Director of Development at Concordia University Chicago from 1977 to 1979. He served the Central Illinois District of the LCMS as Circuit Counselor from 1968 to 1972, was a member of the Board of Directors from 1972 to 1976, and 1982 to 1985, served as Vice President of Central Illinois District of the LCMS from 1976 to 1982, and as President Central Illinois District of the LCMS from 1985 to 1995. He has also served the LCMS as a member of the Board of Directors from 2001 to 2013, including nine years as chairman, 1st Vice President of the LCMS from 1995 to 2000, and President of the LCMS in 2001. He was elected sixth Vice President of the LCMS in 2013.

Rev. Jack Heino became the twelfth pastor at Concordia on June 18, 1978 and served until November 1988 when he accepted a call to Immanuel Lutheran Church, East Dundee, IL. Rev. Heino was born in Rebecca, MN on December 17, 1937 to William and Esther Heino. He graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, IL in 1964. He married Mary Linda Daily in 1959. Rev. and Mrs. Heino had four daughters. Prior to coming to Concordia he served churches in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa. He served as Circuit Stewardship Representative, Circuit Lutheran Laymen's League Counselor, and the Public Relations Committee of the Minnesota South District of the LCMS. Rev. Heino was a US Navy chaplain from 1967 to 1970. He was assigned to the Marines and served in Vietnam at the battles of Con Thien and Khe Shan.



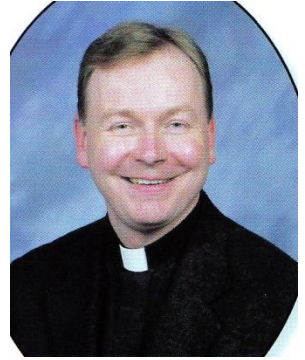
Rev. Donald E. Storrud was ordained and installed as an associate pastor at Concordia on June 12, 1983. He served until July, 1986 when he accepted a call to Trinity Lutheran Church, Casey, IL. He was born in Omaha, NE on November 16, 1948. He married Kay Rosenberger and they had five children. Rev. Storrud served seven years active duty in the US Air Force. He worked as a hard rock miner in Montana, New Mexico, and Wyoming. He became an adult convert to Lutheranism while working in Butte, MT and entered Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN in 1979, graduating on May 27, 1983.

Rev. Dean A. Dummer was installed as Concordia's thirteenth pastor on June 11, 1989. He was born in Milwaukee, WI on May 24, 1953 to Don and Lois Dummer. He attended the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, then transferred to Concordia College - St. Paul, MN, graduating in 1977. In 1981, he graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary in St. Louis, MO. He vicared at Grace Lutheran Church, Fallon, MT. He was ordained in his home congregation, Berea Lutheran Church in Milwaukee on June 21, 1981 and was installed in his first parish, Grace Lutheran in Greybull, WY on July 19, 1981. While there he also served the deaf ministry in Billings, MT, conducting monthly worship services and Bible Studies for a group of deaf people at a Lutheran Congregation. He served St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, campus church for the University of Wyoming at Laramie. During his eight years of service in the Wyoming District of the LCMS, he was the District Counselor for the Lutheran Women's Missionary League, Youth Chairman on the District Parish Services commission, Chairman of the District Pastoral conference, and served as District Director of two Thankoffering appeals. He married Susan Heltman of Naperville, IL on May 16, 1987 in Milwaukee. Two years prior to coming to Concordia, they provided foster care in their home, caring for three children for various periods of time - the longest one for 7 months. While at Concordia Pastor and Mrs Dummer were blessed with a son, Jonathan. In June 1998 Pastor Dummer accepted a call to Grace Lutheran Church, Oak Creek, WI.



One Sunday morning, a visitor to Concordia attended the Divine Service and Bible class. On subsequent Sundays members of the Bible class asked, "Who is this guy with such knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures? He and his wife run a pizza place in Prophetstown; how can he have such knowledge?" After some weeks it was discovered that **Rev. Robert E. Yount** was an LCMS pastor who had moved from California to Prophetstown, IL after retirement. Prior to studying for the ministry, he was a district sales manager in charge of a number of stores. He became an adult convert and was baptized into Christ. When asked why he decided to go to seminary, he would say, "This Christian life is so wonderful that I had to tell others about it, and becoming a pastor was the best way." Pastor Yount graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, IL in 1967. He served congregations in Canada, Wisconsin, Iowa, and California prior to retiring from the fulltime ministry in 1988. Pastor Yount became an Assistant to the Pastor at Concordia on January 1, 1991 and served Concordia until 2001 when he accepted a contract to be pastor of a new congregation, Faith Lutheran Church in Kewanee, IL. He subsequently retired to Minneapolis, MN.

The **Rev. Dr. Daniel A. Olson** became Concordia's fourteenth pastor on January 3, 1999. He was born May 1, 1969, to Pete and Valerie Olson in Spooner, WI and was baptized on Whitsunday, May 25, 1969 at Peace Lutheran Church in Antigo, WI. He is the youngest of eleven children, having five brothers and five sisters. His father's job with the railroad resulted in the family moving from Antigo to Spooner, to Wausau, back to Antigo, and finally back to Wausau. Pastor Olson decided to study to be a pastor when he was quite young and followed that course of study. He was confirmed on Ascension Sunday, May 15, 1983 at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church in Schofield, WI. He graduated from Concordia University, Mequon, WI in 1991 with a BA in Pastoral Ministry and Theological Languages. In 1995, he graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, IN. He vicared at a dual parish consisting of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Red Bluff, and Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, Corning, CA. He was ordained June 18, 1995, at Rib Mountain Lutheran Church in Wausau, WI. He served the dual parish of Immanuel Lutheran Church Potsdam, MN and St. John's Lutheran Church, Hammond, MN before coming to Concordia. He served the Minnesota South District of the LCMS as Circuit Counselor 1997 to 1998. In 1997, he served as a short-term Theological Educator in Kazakstan (part of the former Soviet Union) through LCMS World Mission. During his pastorate at Concordia, he earned a Doctor of Divinity degree. In September, 2000 Pastor Olson married Katie Russell. The wedding was celebrated at Concordia. They were blessed with three daughters in addition to the son and daughter Katie brought to the marriage. Pastor Olson accepted a call to St. John's Lutheran Church in Buckley, IL in July 2008.



The **Rev. Dr. John C. Wohlrabe, Jr.** was installed as Concordia's fifteenth pastor on June 28, 2009. Pastor Wohlrabe was born September 2, 1953 to John C. and Lillian Anna (Haar) Wohlrabe, Sr. and he has four sisters. His father was a medical doctor, psychiatrist. He graduated from St. Paul's Lutheran High School, Concordia, MO in 1971, and graduated Concordia College, Ann Arbor, MI in 1978. He served as an enlisted sailor on the USS John F. Kennedy from January 1974 to August 1976. He graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO in 1981 after serving as vicar at Zion Lutheran Church, in Anchorage, AK. While at Zion, he met Julie Ann Schultz who became his wife on August 16, 1980.

Pastor Wohlrabe and Julie were blessed with a daughter and two sons. Pastor Wohlrabe served in the US Navy as a Chaplain from 1987 until his retirement from active duty in May 2009. During his service, he was assigned to the Marines in Iraq during the Battle of Fallujah, and in Anbar province. Prior to his US Navy service, he was pastor at Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, Ft. Lupton, CO. In service to the LCMS, Pastor Wohlrabe has written numerous articles, was Guest Instructor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO, and Assistant Director/Archivist at Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, MO. He has also served as 3rd Vice-president of the LCMS from 2007 to 2010, and serving as 2nd Vice-president of the LCMS since 2010. He has also served as the Presidents Representative to the Board of Governors, and Editor-in-Chief, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, MO since 2009. Pastor Wohlrabe retired from Concordia in June, 2012. He and his wife live in St. Francis, WI.

Concordia's current and sixteenth pastor is **Rev. Stephen M. Mueller**. He was installed on June 17, 2012. Pastor Mueller was born in Sturgis, MI to Rev. John F. and Kathrin Mueller on July 21, 1982, the eldest of 4 children. He was baptized on August 1, 1982. In 1988, the Mueller family moved to Caseville, MI where Stephen commuted to Bach-Kilmanagh Lutheran School through the 6th grade, and then attended St. John's Lutheran School (WELS) in Berne, MI for 7th and 8th grades. His father and mother, desiring that Stephen and his sisters continued to receive Lutheran/Christian education, decided to send him to Valley Lutheran High School in Saginaw, MI. For three years they made the commute from Caseville to Saginaw until his father accepted the call from VLHS to be their "Pastor" on staff. After graduating from VLHS in 2000, Stephen attended Concordia College/University (2001) in Ann Arbor, MI, graduating in 2004. He attended Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, MO, graduating in 2008. He vicared at The Lutheran Church of St. John in Quincy, IL where he met Marifaith Schweitzer, his wife. Pastor and Marifaith were married on July 5, 2008 at Ascension Lutheran Church, St. Louis, MO where he served his seminary fieldwork. They welcomed their son, Ephraim August on November 28th, 2011. Prior to serving at Concordia, Pastor Mueller served at St. James Lutheran Church in Quincy, IL as Assistant/Associate Pastor.

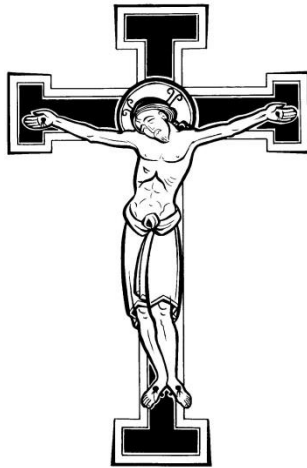


Concordia's Pastors						
Name	Title	Dates of Service	Baptism	Confirma tion	Marria ges	Burials
Rev. Ernest A. Fuenfstueck	Pastor	January 1865 to 1868	98	N/A	24	33
Rev. Carl W. Ernst	Pastor	June 1868 to Mar. 1869	33	N/A	11	8
Rev. Ferdinand D. Horn	Pastor	April 1869 to May 1874	253	N/A	36	65
Rev. Peter Hansen	Pastor	July 1875 to Sept. 1877	106	N/A	13	24
Rev. Ernst L. Mangelsdorf	Pastor	Oct. 1877 to Dec. 1883	169	200	26	37
Rev. Ernst Heinemann	Pastor	Feb. 1884 to Oct. 1892	254	107	54	55
Rev. Alfred C. Doerffler	Pastor	May 1893 to May 1901	199	131	49	69
Rev. Christian Bergen	Pastor	July 1901 to May 1929	344	326	124	126
Rev. Henry J. Elling	Pastor	Sept. 1929 to Jan. 1954	136	102	50	100
Rev. Steve Persa	Pastor	Jan. 1954 to April 1969	310	215	73	130
Rev. Robert T. Kuhn	Pastor	May 1970 to July 1977	140	167	75	64
Rev. Jack Heino	Pastor	June 1978 to Nov. 1988	161	158	56	109
Rev. Donald E. Storrud	Asst. Pastor	June 1983 to July 1986		4		
Rev. Dean A. Dummer	Pastor	June 1989 to June 1998	98	123	51	56
Rev. Robert E. Yount	Asst. Pastor	Jan. 1991 to April 2001	2		2	25
Rev. Dr. Daniel A. Olson	Pastor	Jan. 1999 to July 2008	66	111	15	69
Rev. Dr. John C. Wohlraabe, Jr.	Pastor	July 2009 to June 2012	8	18	5	12
Rev. Stephen M. Mueller	Pastor	June 2012 to present	11	6		9

Verbum Domini Manet in Aeternum



“The Word of the Lord Endures Forever”



Jesus said, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” John 8:31-32

Celebrating 150 Years
Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church
Geneseo, IL
1864-2014