

The following is taken from the Centennial Anniversary Book of Immanuel Ev. Lutheran Church, 1967.

IMMANUEL EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

Mankato, Minnesota



CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

1867-1967

THE FESTIVAL SERVICES

October 1: A Festival Service at 10:30 in the morning with Professor Gordon Radtke, former pastor, preaching the sermon. A service in which we recognize the grace of our Lord in preserving His Word to us these hundred years in its truth and purity.

October 4: A Festival Service on Wednesday evening at 7:45 with Pastor Daniel Fleischer, former pastor, preaching the sermon. A service in which we thank the Lord of the Church for one hundred years of uninterrupted Christian education in our parochial schools.

October 8: A Festival Service at 10:30 in the morning with Pastor Paul Albrecht, President of the Church of the Lutheran Confession, preaching the sermon and the chorus of Immanuel Lutheran College singing in this service and presenting a concert at 2:30 p.m. This is a service in which we acknowledge the grace of our Lord in preserving unto us a fellowship in which

He permits us to be active in training pastors and teachers and in sharing the Gospel with others.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF GRACE

As Immanuel Lutheran Congregation observes its centennial in 1967, it completes one hundred years in which church and Christian education have been constantly entwined.

The church and school have existed side by side, originally using the same building, since the start 100 years ago. Immanuel Lutheran Congregation has had its own facilities for education of its young right from the beginning in 1867.

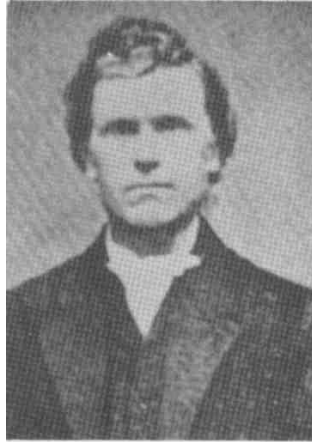
Both have grown from that small first building at the corner of Broad and Washington Streets—the church growing in stages to the present structure at Second and Spring Streets and the school expanding from a one room grade school to three rooms, then four rooms, and eventually a system including all 12 grades. During the century, the congregation started a day school, high school, college and seminary and had a hand in starting another college, a hospital, and a synod. Unique in the congregation's history has been the involvement of the pastor in both congregation and school throughout its history—seemingly a double duty but in reality a single one as he brought the Word to all of his flock, young and old alike.

The century has not been without its difficulties, problems in obtaining pastors and teachers, financial troubles, and struggles to keep what God's Word teaches. But throughout it all God allowed the congregation His grace in keeping their church and their school.

Its German origins have been strong in the congregation, services in that language remaining until the present day.

BEGINNINGS

Several years before the congregation was formed, Lutheran missionaries had looked up Lutherans that had settled in the community. Many people had left Germany after the revolution of 1848. A Pastor Rennecke and a Pastor Weiss are known to have been itinerant pastors who ministered to the Lutherans in the Mankato area as time would permit.



Pastor William Vomhof

Pastor William Vomhof

On September 15, 1866, articles of incorporation for "The German Lutheran Emanuel Church of Mankato" were drawn up by Henry Himmelman, F.H. Steuernagel, Jacob Traub, John Dreyer (or Dreher), and Simon Blume of Mankato. A lot was purchased the same year for \$500 at Washington and Broad Streets and construction started on a church and parsonage. The next year the Rev. William Vomhof of Forest Mound, Wabasha County, was called as the first pastor. He accepted the call, and entered upon his duties, September 1, 1867.

In the face of the hardships of those early days, the congregation did not choose to wait until it was well established before starting a school, but entered into that venture immediately.

Pastor Vomhof organized the congregation on September 14, 1867. The school was organized on the same date.

He also wrote out, in long hand German, the constitution, which is recorded in the first church record of the congregation. It states the confessional basis of the church, in translation: "In this Immanuel Congregation the sacred writings of the Old and New Testaments are recognized as the revealed Word of God and it accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as the standard of faith according to which all doctrine in this congregation is to be judged."

He spelled the congregation name "Immanuel" consistently, in the constitution, rather than "Emanuel", and it has been used in that way ever since on official documents.

The church was dedicated October 27, 1867, and the parsonage was occupied on November 1, 1867. This indicates the buildings were possibly still under construction when he was called.

In those days, the pastor was also the day school teacher. During the first 15 years of the congregation, in fact, the congregation had no other teacher for its day school but the pastor.

Starting off energetically, Pastor Vomhof organized classes for weekly religious instruction in that first year and on November 10, 1867, also started a Sunday School and a Ladies Aid Society.



Pastor Albert Kuhn

By the end of 1867, the indebtedness for church and parsonage had been reduced to \$600.

Pastor Vomhof continued to serve Immanuel until June of 1868, when he accepted a call to Davenport, Iowa. Illness of his wife had made a change in climate necessary.

Those were days of slow communications and travel, and the position was not filled immediately. A vacancy existed for almost 10 months until the Rev. Albert Kuhn was installed on April 26, 1869.

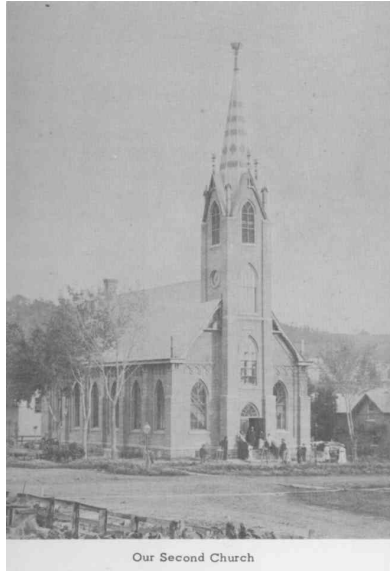
During his pastorate, Immanuel Lutheran Church acquired its Pilgrims Rest Cemetery, located about two miles north of the city. Deed for the first property, consisting of 3 1/4 acres, was filed November 18, 1872. Pastor Kuhn remained until spring of 1882 and then accepted a call to the Lutheran Church at Greenwood in Hennepin County. The vacancy wasn't filled until January 15, 1883, when Pastor Karl F. Schulze of Courtland was installed as pastor.

YEARS OF GROWTH



Pastor K. F. Schulze

Other developments also took place in the same year. Included in the rapid growth of Mankato at that period were many new inhabitants who sought membership with Immanuel Lutheran Church. This necessitated the building of a new church, and in 1883 the congregation resolved to build a new church and relocate.



Our Second Church

At this time, the Lutheran day school also grew rapidly and a Mr. C.F. Diessner was engaged as a temporary teacher to assist the pastor.

He was replaced by the school's first permanent teacher, Mr. H.D.F. Brockmeyer of St. Louis, Missouri, who began his work April 20, 1885. When he started, enrollment was 62 and in two years it had jumped to 172 which he still taught alone.

On February 20, 1887, the congregation decided to build a new school on the Broad and Washington Street sites, and it was dedicated July 3, 1887. A second teacher, Mr. W. Schreiber of Hollywood, Minnesota, was called and he began his work in August of that year.



Our Second School

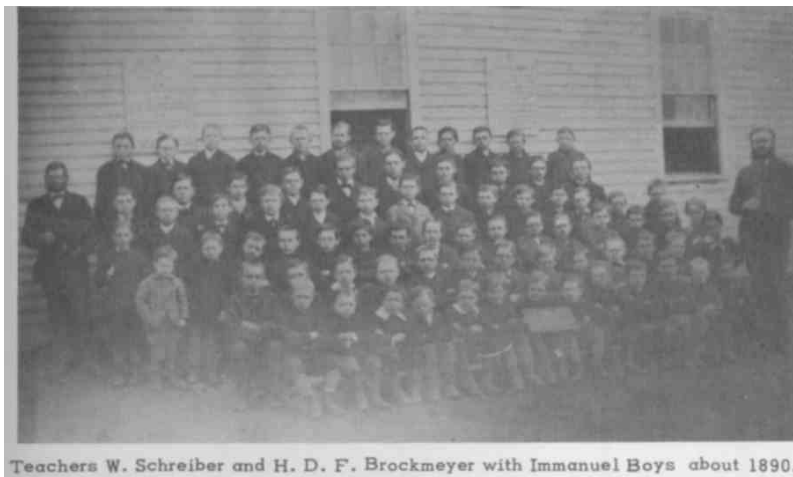
The 1890's saw a lot of turnover on the day school faculty.

In the spring of 1890, Mr. Brockmeyer's health began to fail, and he was given a three-month leave of absence, during which time a student, August Hohenstein of Dr. Martin Luther College of New Ulm, taught the first class. Because of his failing health, Mr. Brockmeyer resigned on September 18, 1890, and was succeeded by the Rev. B.A. Gossweiler of Dallas, Iowa.



Immanuel Students, Teacher H.D.F. Brockmeyer, 1888.

Mr. Schreiber accepted a call to a congregation in Blue Earth October 4, 1891, and his position was taken by E. Reim of Stillwater. Pastor Gossweiler also accepted a call to Blue Earth and Mr. Reim took over the upper class. Mr. F. Mehrstedt of Good Thunder then accepted the call as teacher of the lower grades and began his work October 29, 1893.



Teacher W. Schreiber and H.D.F Brockmeyer with Immanuel Boys about 1890.

After two years, Mr. Mehrstedt was forced to resign because of illness of his wife, and teacher Reuter was temporarily engaged. He died shortly afterward, and during the vacancy, students Carl A. Dress and Carl A. Bolle helped out. Candidate Dress was called to teach the second class on March 15, 1897, and did so until called to Bremen, Indiana, in December of 1899.



Pastor Schulze and (possibly) confirmands of 1884.

To replace him, Gottlieb Taggatz of Dryden, Minnesota, was called and began as teacher of the second class at Easter time in 1900. On October 6, 1901, Teacher Reim accepted a call to Appleton, Wisconsin, and Mr. Taggatz was appointed for the upper class. Teacher H.C. Bode was called and began his work in November of 1901.



Pastor Schulze and Comfirmands of 1898.

Customs and salaries within the church have changed considerably since that period of Immanuel Lutheran Church up to the turn of the century. School summer vacations, for instance, in the 1880's and 1890's were often only one month long— July 15 to August 15 in 1892. Teacher salaries were only \$400 a year in 1890, and once when Teacher Schreiber asked for a raise he was told he was too bold in asking and the request was denied. The annual school picnic was a congregational affair and in 1887 a resolution was passed stating that no hard drinks were to be sold or given out.



Pastor A. F. Winter

Pastor A. F. Winter

The health of Pastor Schulze, serving the congregation since 1882, began to fail in the spring of 1902 and on September 21, 1902, he resigned. His successor was the Rev. A.F. Winter of Stillwater, who was installed November 23, 1902. Pastor Schulze died March 23, 1903.

NEW CONSTRUCTION

The year 1903 saw another step forward in school expansion with erection of a new building on the site of the old building, in bad condition by then. School was conducted in the church basement during the construction period and on September 20, 1903, the new four-room school was dedicated. It cost \$9,500.

The Immanuel Ladies Aid was organized on April 16, 1903, when Pastor Winter drew up a constitution for that group. At first the business meetings were held on Sunday afternoons, but due to objections from the husbands, the meeting date was changed to Thursday. The organization had many projects of assistance to the church as well as fellowship gatherings over the following years. The Ladies Aid, primarily a German speaking group, continued until January of 1958, when it dissolved the society and joined the Ladies Auxiliary as a division.

John Gieschen of Stillwater was called as a third teacher and was installed November 1, 1904. It was reported on December 4, 1905, that Mr. Bode was accepting a call to Willow Creek. In June, 1906, Mr. Taggatz accepted a call to Gaylord.

William H. Seltz of Henderson was called as successor to Mr. Bode on October 15, 1906, for the second class. Miss Ida Sperling, the first woman teacher on the staff, was called to teach the lower grades the same year.



Immanuel Hospital in 1906

Under the leadership of Pastor Winter, Immanuel Congregation had a role in establishing Immanuel Lutheran Hospital, now Immanuel Hospital, in 1906. Congregational minutes of that period are sketchy. A historical summary from Immanuel Hospital of today says Immanuel Lutheran Church started the hospital in 1906. However, a 1909 booklet of the church indicates the hospital was formed by an association which apparently included members of Immanuel Congregation. The board of directors included several southern Minnesota pastors, and the president was Pastor Winter of Immanuel.

First reference made to a hospital in church minutes was November 13, 1904, when the pastor reported that several pastors had purchased "Tourtellotte" Hospital for \$1,800. The pastor stated that it was his opinion that a hospital association should be founded. Several of the members said they felt this was a good thing and that a meeting of the delegates of the other congregations should be called to consider this matter, and only after the organization of an association would monies be collected for the hospital. The congregation then passed a resolution declaring itself in favor of establishing an Evangelical Lutheran Hospital in Mankato.

The next time any reference was made in minutes to a hospital association was on March 11, 1906, when the congregation gave the hospital association permission to lay its radiators for the hospital next to the church.

On October 13, 1906, the hospital association was granted permission by the congregation to use the church and the school buildings for dedication of the hospital. The same permission was granted on July 11, 1909, when the building was enlarged.

In later years, the hospital severed its church connection and is now a non-denominational facility although it still carries the name of the congregation with which it was once associated.



Bethany Ladies College as planned in 1911

Immanuel Congregation also had a part, largely through Pastor Winter, in the start of the school which is now Bethany College. That early school was the Bethany Ladies College, founded September 6, 1911, by the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association, a corporation formed by pastors and lay members of the Synodical Conference. Pastor Winter was president of the board in those first years. This was the first school of its kind in the Synodical Conference, 3,000 congregations then, although not officially operated by the Conference.

Close cooperation with Bethany Ladies College is indicated in Immanuel Congregation minutes. On April 10, 1910, it was reported that since Candidate Edwin Sauer had been called as teacher to the college, Pastor Winter suggested that he be also called as assistant pastor here without remuneration. This was done.

On October 8, 1910, the congregation permitted the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association the use of our church for two services on the day of the cornerstone laying, the collection to go into the treasury of the association.

The association undertook a massive building program which saw the two main buildings of the present Bethany College—administration building and classroom building—constructed. A music building, matching the classroom building on the opposite side of the administration building, was planned but never got beyond the foundation stage.

Having its financial problems, the association reorganized in 1919 as Bethany College, Inc., with a larger board for a broader corporate base. It continued until June 1, 1926, when it was transferred to the Bethany Lutheran College Association, as association of pastors and laymen of the Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church. Pastor Winter was president of the faculty, teaching Christianity, shortly before transfer of ownership.

Returning to the history of Immanuel Congregation itself in the early 1900's, Mr. Gieschen accepted a call in October of 1907 to Root Creek, Wisconsin, and was succeeded by Hugo Frey of Hadar, Nebraska, who began his work on November 25, 1907, as teacher of the first class. It was reported that on March 14, 1911, Miss Sperling had quit teaching and a student Meyer and a Pastor

Manz helped out for a time. The Rev. W.C. Nickels accepted the call as assistant pastor on August 6, 1911, his primary duties to teach the lower grades in school.



Dedication of Present Church in 1913

Because of continued growth in the congregation, the old church was torn down and a new one, the present structure, dedicated on December 7, 1913. Also in 1913, Pastor Nickels accepted a call to Smiths Mimll, and on July 6, 1913, the congregation engaged Mrs. Lena Seifert as teacher for the lower grades.

It was reported to the congregation on November 11, 1917, that Mr. Frey had had an accident and needed a rest. Pastor Nickels helped out in the school in his place.

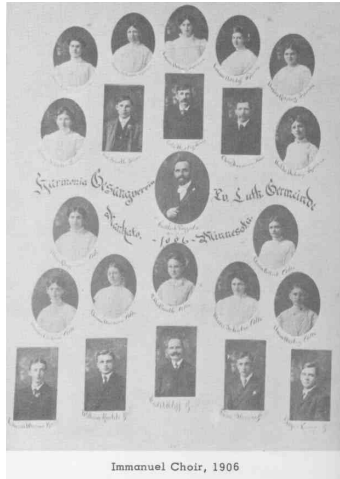
Mr. Seltz was appointed teacher of the upper class at the same meeting and Mr. Herbert Ehlen of Northrop was called for the middle class. He was installed January 6, 1918.

An attempt was made to add a fourth teacher and start a kindergarten in the 1913-14 school year but was only of a few months duration and terminated when the teacher, Miss Anna Schulze, quit over a disagreement on the method of teaching reading. The school board wanted her to teach the whole word method and she preferred the phonetic method.

Day school enrollment fluctuated considerably in those pre-World War I days of the early 20th Century. It was at 191 in 1902, up to a high of 221 in 1904, and down to 152 in 1916.

SHIFT TO ENGLISH

The shift from the dominant German language to English in the congregation was also being felt in those days. On July 7, 1919, the school board discussed the question of whether religious instruction should be in German or English, but no decision was reached. In 1902, a Negro boy attending the school had been excused from religious instruction because he could not understand German.



Immanuel Choir, 1906

It wasn't until August 10, 1919, more than half a century after the church and day school were founded, that the congregation resolved to begin teaching English grammar in the 7th and 8th grades of the school. The same year, it was resolved to conduct "Christenlehre" in connection with the Sunday School in the English language. The children's Christmas program in church is believed to have started about 1907 when the school board made such a recommendation to the congregation.

Church records are unclear as to the continuity of Sunday School in the first half century. There had been no reference made to it in congregational minutes since the time of the first pastor and it is believed to have died out early in Pastor Schulze's ministry. It was not mentioned again until January 8, 1908, in minutes of a school board meeting, and Sunday School received increasingly more attention after that.

In 1920, Sunday School had an enrollment of 263 pupils and a staff of 21 teachers. The Sunday School staff requested the congregation to elect a superintendent and an assistant superintendent on February 13, 1921. Teacher Frey was elected superintendent and Teacher Ehlen assistant superintendent. On December 11, 1921, Teacher Ehlen was elected superintendent and Teacher Seltz assistant superintendent.



Pastor A. Ackermann

Pastor Winter resigned from the pastorate April 2, 1922, and was succeeded by the Rev. A. Ackermann of New Ulm, installed June 25, 1922.

TEACHER SHORTAGE

In June of 1923, the day school lost its entire three-teacher staff of several years standing when Mr. Seltz, Mr. Ehlen, and Mrs. Seifert resigned for a variety of personal reasons. Several calls were sent out and returned, and at the opening of the school year, the congregation faced a new term without teachers.

In some way, the congregation received information to the effect that Mr. Theo. Pelzl, father of the present congregation president, James Pelzl, would teach the upper grades for one year. Similarly, C.H. Cutkosky was also chosen to teach the lower grades for one year. Those two were the school staff for 1923-24. Mr. Pelzl was called for another year and his brother taught with him in the school year 1924-25 in the place of Mr. Cutkosky.

Mr. Pelzl declined another year and Mr. Otto Hellermann and Miss Frieda John were called, beginning their work as teachers of the upper and the lower grades, respectively, on August 1, 1925.

More of a swing toward use of the English language was evident in the early 1920's. The school board minutes of September 2, 1922 stated that all religious instruction should be largely in the English language.

In October of 1922, the congregation adopted the resolution: "Since children are more familiar with the American language, it was voted to give religious instructions in the parochial school principally in that language."

The starting of a kindergarten in the day school was considered in the mid-20's, but apparently did not materialize at that time.

On March 2, 1926, the congregation resolved to call a third teacher for the school, and Miss Gertrude Dye, a student at Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm, started as teacher of grades four, five, and six on November 2.

The following school year, Gertrude Gieschen succeeded Miss John as teacher for the lower grades, and on February 27, 1927, the congregation called as permanent teacher for the intermediate grades, Mr. Edwin Born, who accepted.

In June of 1927, Mr. Born accepted another call and Miss Alma Darge accepted the call to teacher grades four, five, and six. On May 2, 1929, the school board was informed that Miss Gertrude Gieschen would not teach next year, and Miss Gertrude John accepted the call to succeed her.



Immanuel School Baseball Team City Champions of 1926 and 1927

Standing, left to right: Theodore Zernechel, Walter Kunst, Reuben Hintz, Clarence Neubert, John Schulz, and Walter Affolter.

Kneeling: Harold Trager, Marvin Mussell, Robert Hellerman, and Sanford Kenke.

Miss John resigned November 5, 1934, and was followed by Miss Lacorda Schimmelpfennig. The day school teacher situation remained quite stable for the rest of the 30's with no further changes in that decade.

Day school enrollments in the 1920's were lower than in the pre-World War I days, ranging from a high of 122 in February of 1922, to a low of 77 in 1923. Enrollment bobbed around the 100 mark in the following years, in 1936 getting up to 116.

In February of 1937, the Rev. Adolph Ackermann, who had served the congregation as pastor alone since 1922, received help when an assistant pastor was called, Candidate Manfred Lenz.

KINDERGARTEN STARTED

Another event of significance in 1937 was the starting of a kindergarten in the day school. The additional load was handled for the first four weeks by primary teacher Miss Schimmelpfennig alone, and then daily assistance was received from volunteer Bethany College students.

An attempt in the direction of manual training in the day school was made February 11, 1938, when the church council decided to change a basement room into a workshop for the boys. For the girls, an after-school sewing club was organized. However, both projects died out after a short period.

Also in 1938, a fire escape was placed on the school building, by request of the Minnesota State Fire Prevention Association, and a good deal of equipment donated to the school playground by several individuals and organizations.

During this period, it was customary for the Bethany Congregation to send some of its children to Immanuel School, although a definite agreement on arrangements had never quite been worked out. The beginnings of a cooperative school were also in the making, but never materialized.



Pastor Emil F. Peterson

In 1939, Assistant Pastor Manfred J. Lenz accepted a call to Monticello and Candidate E.L. Mehlberg was chosen to succeed him. He remained here for a few months and then accepted a call to Faith, South Dakota. His successor was Candidate Emil F. Peterson, who arrived in Mankato February 14, 1940, and was ordained August 4, 1940.

The first day school faculty change in several years came in August of 1940, when Miss Schimmelpfennig accepted a call from Jefferson, Wisconsin. To fill the vacancy, Edmund Hellman, a graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, was engaged to teach the primary grades for one year. The following year, Miss Myrtle Pagenkopf became primary grades teacher.

Looking ahead, the congregation on January 10, 1943, set up a "New School Building Fund".

FACULTY ENLARGED

In April of 1944, the congregation acted to open the fourth room of the day school and obtain a fourth teacher. That same spring, Miss Pagenkopf had given notice she no longer desired to teach,

so calls went out for two new teachers. They were filled by Miss Carol Gieseke for primary grades and Miss Helen Kohlmeyer, a Bethany College student, for the 1944-45 school year.

One of the financial problems which came to a head during the early 1940's was the matter of tuition for students. For many years, Bethany Congregation and other Synodical Conference churches had been sending children of their congregations to Immanuel Lutheran School without a definite financial arrangement. On December 8, 1944, a scale was adopted by the church council with specific fee amounts for the Synodical Conference churches so they should carry their full share of expense involved in giving their children this type of education.

Favorable letters were received from St. Paul's and St. Mark's Congregations, but Bethany Congregation never responded. On February 24, 1945, the board of education was notified that Bethany Congregation would open its own school in the fall and withdraw some 20 pupils from Immanuel School.

School enrollment at the time had been showing an upward trend, going from 116 in 1939 to 143 in 1944. After Bethany withdrew its students, enrollment was down to 119 pupils in October of 1945. Miss Eunice Bode was engaged to teach grades three and four in 1945, succeeding Miss Kohlmeyer.

Assistant Pastor Peterson's responsibilities were expanded on July 31, 1945, when he was appointed by the congregation as director of Christian education—supervising and directing together with the congregation and its officers the program of Christian education in the day school, Sunday School, all catechetical instructions, and all the auxiliary organizations.

Pastor Peterson also undertook in 1947 the monumental task of writing the congregation's history for its 80th anniversary book from which much of this account to this point is drawn.

He concluded that work with the words "...the future pages of the historical development of an overall elementary educational program for Immanuel Congregation will be left in the hands of future...historians."

Miss Darge presented her resignation to the board of education on February 22, 1946, to be effective at the end of that school year, giving failing health as the reason.

ORGANIZATIONS IN THE CHURCH

Several organizations were active at this time in the church—the Concordia choir, the Ladies Aid which was organized April 16, 1903, the Immanuel Lutheran Ladies Auxiliary, which was organized January 29, 1919, the Immanuel Lutheran Men's Club which started on December 1, 1937, the Parent and Teacher's Association organized in 1928, the Senior Walther League which was organized March 28, 1924, the Junior Walther League which dates back to 1926, The Lutheran Women's Study Guild, which was organized November 15, 1945, and the Lutheran Choral Society.

On April 14, 1946, the congregation passed a resolution to change the quarterly congregational meetings from Sunday afternoon to Monday evening.

Mr. Armin F. Rauschke of Lake City was called as a day school teacher on June 10, 1946, and accepted. Miss Eunice Sauer replaced Miss Carol Gieseke for the 1946- 47 school year.

In a meeting called to consider living quarters for the junior pastor, the congregation on November 18, 1946, voted to purchase the Gust Schmidt property at 407 North Second Street for \$7,500.

Miss Ruth Westcott was hired for the 1947-48 school year on April 14, 1947. Miss Helen Schinschke also joined the faculty in the fall of 1947. On October 13, 1947, the congregation accepted the resignation of longtime teacher Mr. Otto Hellerman as principal of the school. Armin Rauschke was appointed the new principal.

Active in the post World War II years, the Senior Walther League in 1948 conducted a drive for clothing for European relief.

Joining the teaching staff in the 1948-49 school year were Donald Peterson and Miss Eleanor Hookstead.



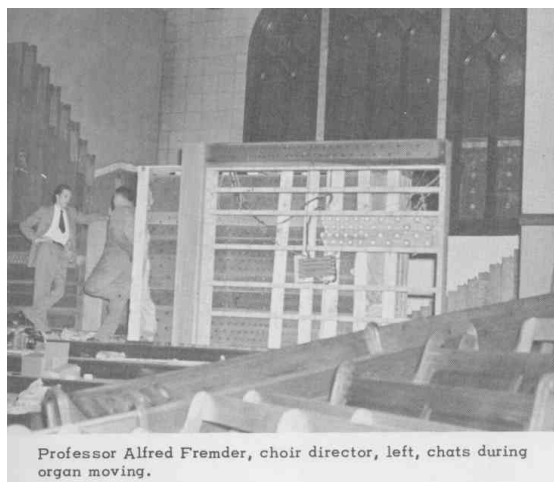
Pastor G. W. Fischer

Pastor G. W. Fischer

Pastor Peterson was granted a release January 10, 1949, to accept a call to St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. James. The Rev. G.W. Fischer of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was called as assistant pastor on March 20, 1949, and accepted.

Miss Eleanor Hookstead was granted a release as day school teacher April 11, 1949, to accept a teaching position at Waukesha, Wisconsin.

Remodeling in 1949 saw some extensive changes in the balcony, including moving of the organ and plastering in of the space it had formerly occupied.



Professor Alfred Fremder, choir director, left, chats during organ moving.

Professor Alfred Fremder, choir director, left, chats during organ moving

On August 15, 1949, the Choral Society and the Concordia Choir were discontinued and a new choir organized under the name of Immanuel Lutheran Choir. Professor Alfred Fremder of Bethany College was called as the first director of the reorganized choir.

A motion that the two pastors be recognized as co-pastors was defeated October 10, 1949.