

**St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran  
Church  
Aberdeen, South Dakota**



**1888 — 1988  
A Century of Grace**



**ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, ABERDEEN, S. DAK.  
A CENTURY OF GRACE**

Go ye therefore and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Matt. 28: 19-20.

Shortly before He ascended into heaven, the Savior gave His disciples His last command. The disciples obeyed and went into all the world and preached the gospel of salvation for all men through faith in Christ Jesus; and by God's grace, it has also come to us.

**A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

ALMIGHTY AND ETERNAL GOD, we give you humble and hearty thanks for the many and innumerable blessings which you have bestowed on this, ST. PAUL'S EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH OF ABERDEEN, SOUTH DAKOTA, for these 100 years.

We thank you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life, but above all for your inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ; for the means of grace and for the hope of glory.

We pray, O heavenly Father, to continue Thy mercies unto us; to preserve among us the precious treasure of Thy Word and Holy Sacraments; cause us to increase in faith and love and to be a witness to them that are without your Word.

Abide among us, O God, with Thy Word, Thy Light, Thy blessing, Thy protection and Thy love that we may be received into your heavenly kingdom, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. AMEN.

## St. Paul's Centennial History

Before beginning the history of our St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Aberdeen, it would seem appropriate to mention a few Lutheran milestones in what was then Dakota Territory. The first Lutheran pastor in Dakota Territory was Emil Christenson who was working in the Southeastern part in 1867. As immigrants moved further west, they settled in and near what is now Yankton in 1874. A congregation was formed in Freeman in 1876. The area covered 400 miles and in 1879, two men were assigned to the area. The population moved westward and northward; a flood of homesteaders located in the northeastern part of the state. The Missouri Synod's Northwestern District resolved to send missionaries to this territory to serve the special needs of these pioneers. Because many of these new workers drove buggies to remote areas to hold services and some rode horses, they were called 'circuit riders'.

The Rev. F. Pfothauer, who later became president of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod accepted a call to Odessa, Minnesota and was instructed to visit congregations in this vast territory. It is interesting to note that a member of this historical committee, Mrs. Victor (Eva Mews) Loomis, remembers hearing of his work in the Odessa area which was her original home. It was from this influx of people into the Aberdeen area that the congregation of St. Paul's was founded.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO, a small group of Lutherans made their home in Aberdeen, but they had no church home or minister to proclaim the Word of God to them. In 1887 these Lutherans met in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Herman Janecke to consider the possibility of persuading a Lutheran pastor to come to serve them with God's Word and the Holy Sacraments. The Rev. George Fischer, a pastor of the Missouri Synod, who was stationed at Mansfield, was contacted and asked to come and serve the Lutherans in Aberdeen. He agreed to come and on the third day of March, 1887, the first service was held in the Janecke home. Sixteen hearers were present.

## St. Paul's Centennial History



(Mr. & Mrs. Herman Janecke)



(The Janecke Home)

On January 5, 1888, a congregation was organized, calling itself the evangelical Lutheran St. Paul's Congregation, with five voting members. The men who signed this first constitution were Herman Janecke, Anton Wagner, Carl Waack, Andrew Kindschi and Henry Schroeder. Distressing times were to befall this small congregation and within a year, Mr. Waack and Mr. Kindschi severed their connection and Mr. Schroeder was called to his eternal home.

But the Lord did not abandon his small flock and very soon four new members were added. For eleven years services were held in the Janecke home. Then services were held in the Wesleyan Methodist Church; then the building of the congregation of the Iowa Synod was used; and, finally, the congregation found a place to worship in the Norwegian Church. The Rev. Fischer and Student Schwanke served for six years; the Rev. Ferber and Student Sell for three years and the Rev. F. Kiess and the Rev. Luebke for four years. Then, the Rev. Maas of James served the congregation for two years. After the Rev. Maas was called to a new field in Iowa, the Rev. F.J. Graeber who was located thirteen miles southwest of Aberdeen was asked to serve.

When Pastor Graeber began serving St. Paul's from St. John's rural Aberdeen, the congregation numbered 12 voting members. The members of the congregation felt that the lack of a church home was retarding the growth of

## St. Paul's Centennial History

the congregation and, therefore, at a meeting on January 25, 1903, it was decided to buy lots on which to erect a church. Two lots were purchased on Seventh Avenue Southwest for the price of \$200.00. With great courage and faith, the small membership undertook the construction of a church building. Mr. Froehlich and Mr. Henry Parsch were the builders, assisted by other members as time permitted them. A gift of \$200.00 was received from St. Matthew's Lutheran Church of New York, the oldest Lutheran Church in the United States, and where Pastor Graeber had been confirmed.

On the 18th of October 1903 the congregation dedicated their new house of worship to the Triune God with joy and rejoicing. Gertrude Parsch, the child of Mr. and Mrs. Gust Parsch, was the first baby baptized in the new church. Soon after the church had been dedicated, Pastor Graeber received and accepted a call to Alexandria, Indiana. For one year thereafter the congregation was served by Student Tobert who was paid \$20 per month and room and board. The Rev. Waack of Highland Township also served for a short time.



(PASTOR GRAEBER)

The members of the congregation realized that they should have a full time pastor and so a call was extended to Pastor Graeber which he accepted. In October 1904, he was installed and became the first resident pastor.

## St. Paul's Centennial History

Pastor Graeber served the congregation for 47 years and the Lord blessed his efforts. During his pastorate he officiated at 612 baptisms; 519 were confirmed; he conducted 439 marriages; and there were 143 Christian burials. The first class confirmed was on the 10th of April 1905 and consisted of 10 children.



(CONFIRMATION CLASS OF 1925)

An interesting side light may be inserted here. Pastor Graeber was given the opportunity to minister to a killer. In a recent communique from Emma Waack, daughter of the Rev. Waack, we learn that the Rev. Waack and the Rev. Graeber both ministered to the killer who was Emil Victor, a young man of 19 years who killed a couple and their daughter and another boy who was staying with them. Both pastors accompanied him to the gallows and officiated at his burial. This was the only execution ever to take place in Aberdeen.

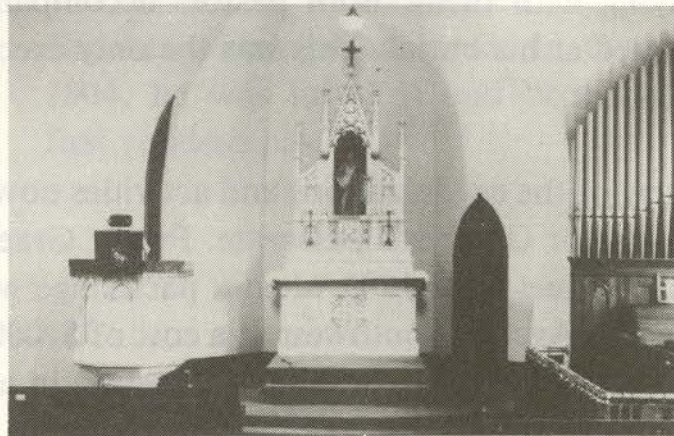
Many of the organizations and activities now in place at St. Paul's began during Pastor Graeber's pastorate. Pastor Graeber lived on Eighth Avenue near Third Street until 1905 when a parsonage was erected next to the church on Seventh Avenue Southwest at a cost of \$1000.00, the members and the pastor doing most of the work. Mrs. Graeber, in addition to raising a family of six children, was a great helpmeet to pastor in the ministry of the congregation and did much, especially, in the areas of Saturday School and choir, as well as being organist for a number of years.

## St. Paul's Cenntennial History

Pastor Graeber reminisced about an experience that he and two fellow pastors had in 1906 in a small feature article that he submitted to the **Lutheran Witness**. "In 1906, when rail transportation was very poor, we three pastors F. Leyhe, H. Luebke, and F. J. Graeber decided we would drive by horse and buggy to a conference to be held in Wentworth. Pastor Luebke and I drove from Mansfield to Wolsey where Pastor Leyhe lived. The roads were in poor condition and we got as far as Tulare where we stayed overnight. In the morning we had breakfast in a small hotel in Bonilla. Here we met shredded wheat biscuits for the first time in our lives and we ate them, not by pouring milk over them, but with butter spread on top of them. We then drove to Pastor Leyhe's home and he hitched his fine pair of horses to his buggy and off we went, Pastor Luebke and I sat on the seat and Pastor Leyhe on a sack filled with hay between us. We hoped to get to Wentworth by evening but when we got to the little town of Esmond it was dark and we decided to stay there overnight at a small hotel. Pastor Leyhe and I had a room together and Brother Luebke another room near by. At midnight a typical South Dakota storm, with wind and hail broke, and we feared the hotel would be blown into the next county. We arose and went to Pastor Luebke's room and found him on his knees praying. The storm finally blew itself out and the next morning we decided we had enough, so we went back home again. In all we had gone 220 miles and the conference was held without us. Those were times of hardship but God was with us and we suffered no harm."



(FIRST CHURCH)



(CHANCEL)



## St. Paul's Centennial History

In January of 1909, only six years after building the first church, the congregation decided to erect a larger church which would provide space for a Christian Day School. The two lots on the corner of South Third Street and Seventh Avenue Southwest were purchased at a cost of \$2500.00. A quote from Pastor Graeber at that time: "Now a time of sore trial began. Some of the members opposed the building of a new church and persuaded others to sign a petition which condemned the building of a church as a step which would lead to the ruin of the congregation. Many meetings were held during one of which the President of the District, The Rev. Breihan was present. Finally eight members left the congregation predicting that inside of a year, the pastor would be forced to leave and no church would be built, but these men proved to be false prophets".

In November of 1910, the new church, located on the corner of South Third Street and Seventh Avenue Southwest measuring 32 X 50 feet was dedicated to the Glory of God. Two thousand dollars was borrowed from Synod's Church Extension Fund. The old church was moved to 218 Seventh Avenue Southwest and was converted into a parsonage. The old parsonage, together with a 50 ft. lot, was sold. The 50 ft. lot on which the first church stood was next to Adams School and was sold to the Aberdeen Independent School District.

In September 1911, a Christian Day School was started with about 20 children enrolled. Pastor Graeber taught the school for one year. Pastor Graeber held a degree in education from Northern State Teachers College of Aberdeen. Mr. R. F. Lenthaeuser was 'schul-lehrer' for the next three years. He accepted a call to Milford Center, Ohio. The congregation then obtained the services of a student, Mr. E.J. Schmidt. After a year of teaching, he qualified as a Christian Day School Teacher and was called and installed in the fall of 1915. A home was erected in 1916, right behind the church at 617 S. 3rd Street. Despite the fact that the teacher changed his name from Schmidt to Smith, the school was closed during World War I due, at least in part, to anti-German feeling. The teacher's dwelling was rented out for many years.

## St. Paul's Cenntennial History

BY THE GRACE OF GOD and in the course of years, St. Paul's found itself sufficiently prosperous in 1927 to purchase and install in their church an excellent Moeller pipe organ. Wm. H. Luehrman was the primary donor of this instrument but he never did get to hear it, as the organ was used for the first time at his funeral, a few days before it was dedicated.

In 1948 St. Paul's was confronted for the third time in its history with a major church building project. The teacher dwelling at 617 S. Third Street was sold to Mr. John Kushman for \$3500.00 and moved away to make room for an addition to the church. On January 16, 1949, the congregation was not only privileged to observe its 61st anniversary but also to rededicate its enlarged and remodeled church. Sixty feet were added to the church, making its size 32 X 120 feet, including the narthex. This project, including a full basement, a kitchen and a forced-air furnace with a stoker, cost in the neighborhood of \$35,000.00. Loans were made from the South Dakota District Extension Fund and from various members of the congregation. New pews, many of which were purchased as memorials, were added soon thereafter. A fund for stained glass windows was started at this time.



(REBUILT CHURCH)



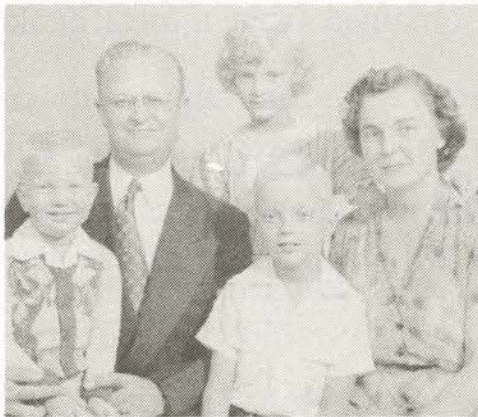
(CHANCEL)

## St. Paul's Cenntenial History

Pastor Graeber served St. Paul's faithfully for 47 years and encountered many a 'storm'. In recognition of his untiring service and out of gratitude to God for providing such a faithful servant, the congregation celebrated both his 40th and 50th years in the Holy Ministry. On the last Sunday of May, 1951, Pastor Graeber preached his farewell sermon. The Rev. and Mrs. Graeber moved to Modesto, California, where they lived until their deaths. At the 75th anniversary of St. Paul's, he sent this message "We are happy to know that St. Paul's, by God's Grace, has grown during the years to be a strong and progressive church. May God in His Grace continue to bless you in the future as He has in the past."

Mrs. Graeber left this life on Nov. 9, 1967; and Pastor Graeber left this life on March 23, 1970. Memorial services were held for Pastor Graeber here at St. Paul's on March 29, 1970.

AFTER A BRIEF VACANCY OF TWO MONTHS, during which Pastor H. Krueger of Our Savior Lutheran of Aberdeen served St. Paul's, the Lord granted St. Paul's another faithful and hard working pastor in the person of the Rev. Edgar H. Streufert of Glencoe, Minnesota.



(REV. STREUFERT FAMILY)

Installation services were held on Sunday, August 5, 1951, in which the Rev. Phillip Mueller of Huron, president of the South Dakota District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod preached the sermon and a reception followed.

Congregational minutes disclose that on August 8, 1951, Saturday School was discontinued and in it's place Sunday School was introduced. In the matter of a year or two, the enrollment more than doubled. In 1952 an outdoor church

## St. Paul's Centennial History

bulletin board was purchased; a new garage was built; mid-week Lenten Services were begun; the services of a deaconess were obtained for a period of two and one-half months; a public address system, a gift of Mr. and Mrs. Orlin Schwab, was installed in the church; and the congregation participated in Synod's "Conquest for Christ" effort.



(LORNA SMITH)

The congregation also observed the 25th anniversary of Mrs. Ivan (Lorna Graeber) Smith, as church organist in 1952.

In 1953 two English services on Sunday morning were introduced and services on New Year's Eve were started. A student vicar was provided.

The church's first parsonage, occupied by the John Hughes family, was purchased for the sum of \$9,000.00 and it was used for Sunday School purposes. Once again the church owned 150 feet of the 200 feet of frontage on Seventh Avenue Southwest. A loan of \$5400.00 was obtained from a local bank to finance this project.

In 1954 beautiful stained glass windows were installed in the church. A number of windows were made possible by individual members as memorials to loved ones. Later the windows were saved and made a part of our newest church building.

The first four windows set forth the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity. The first window shows that WE BELIEVE IN THE MYSTERY of one God but three persons. The second window shows the work of God the Father—the creation; the third window shows the work of God the Son—Salvation; the fourth the Holy Spirit—Sanctification.

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(THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT)

The Mary-Martha guild commissioned the painting of a mural entitled "The Sermon on the Mount". For many years this painting was on the wall next to the pulpit. It now graces the west wall of the gold Room.

Two ladies organizations were busy working at this time. The Ladies Aid, now the Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML), met in the afternoons and the younger ladies who were unable to attend afternoon sessions organized the Mary-Martha Guild which would meet evenings while baby-sitters (Daddies) were available. They sponsored a bean supper annually and took part in social activities.

Sunday school teachers gathered each week at the church and Pastor Streufert would offer helpful instructions in teaching the next Sunday's lesson. A large Adult Bible Class was held every Sunday morning after services. Many new members were added to the Congregation.

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During this time of Pastor Streufert's pastorate and until the arrival of the first DCE, Wayne Klima, St. Paul's applied for and was assigned vicars to assist the resident pastors in the areas of youth ministry and preaching.

The vicars assigned were Tom Peterson, Carl F. Thrun, Carl Bornmann, Aden E. Loest, Frank J. Zirbel Jr., Ronald W. Seitz, Richard Orman, Keith K. Kiihne, Gary Schubert, and Daniel Canion. All of these men have completed their theological education and have graduated from the Seminary.

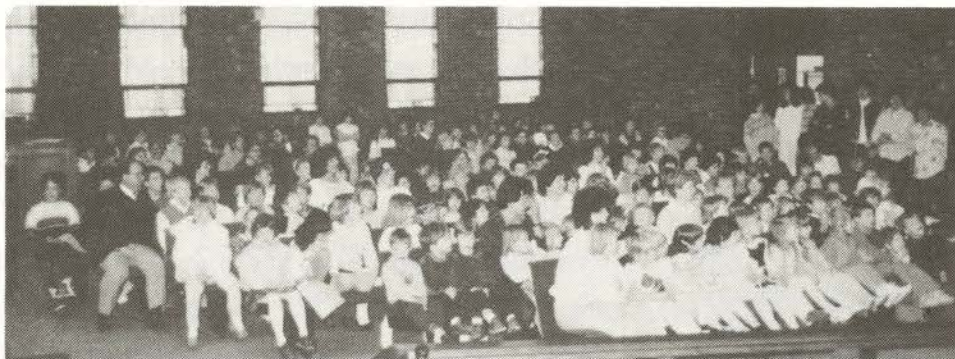
During Pastor Streufert's pastorate, he officiated at 367 baptisms, 234 children were confirmed, there were 94 marriages, and 40 burials.

In 1955 the congregation participated in the South Dakota District Golden Anniversary Thank Offering, reshingled the roof of the parsonage, appointed a committee to investigate the feasibility of building an educational wing onto the church and held the first stewardship 'cottage' or 'loyalty' meetings.

In 1956 members of the congregation made it possible for Pastor Streufert to tour the Holy Land; a scholarship for deserving students preparing for full time work in the church was started; the Ladies' Aid and the Walther League tiled the floor of the church basement; and the old house and lot across the street from the church, 215 Seventh Avenue Southwest, was purchased for \$3500.00 and used for our growing Sunday School.

After receiving a number of calls, Pastor Streufert asked for a peaceful release to follow a call to a mission congregation, St. Matthew's Lutheran Church of Minneapolis. His wish was reluctantly granted and his farewell service was held on the last Sunday in October, 1957.

## St. Paul's Cenntenial History



(SUNDAY SCHOOL)

Pastor Dommer of Our Savior Lutheran Church of Aberdeen was asked to serve as interim pastor. St. Paul's was vacant for less than six months when a call was extended to Pastor W. J. Link who accepted and was installed on April 20, 1958. The following day a committee was appointed to investigate the possibility of building a new parsonage.



(REV. W.J. LINK)

St. Paul's participated in a Preaching-Teaching-Reaching (PTR) Mission which was held at St. Paul's in the fall of 1958. An Every Member Visitation program was held in the fall of 1958 with good results.

## St. Paul's Centennial History



(PRESENT PARSONAGE)

The old house at 215 Seventh Avenue Southwest was sold to Mr. Julius Habeck for \$500.00 and was moved away. An additional ten feet was purchased from the neighbor for \$750.00. A contract for \$22,337.72, plus \$500 architect fees, was let to construct a one story, four bedroom parsonage on the 60 foot lot. A local bank assisted with a loan. On Sunday, March 22, 1959, the new parsonage was dedicated with God's Word and Prayer. The old parsonage was converted into Sunday School rooms.

In the meantime a committee had been working on a new constitution for the congregation. Several meetings were held for discussion and it was adopted on April 29, 1959, including a change in the name of the congregation from "Evangelical Lutheran St. Paul's Congregation" to "St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, Aberdeen, South Dakota." All legal documents of the congregation now contain this one name only.

Early in 1960, a set of Individual Communion ware was donated to our church by a family in the congregation. On April 11, 1960, the Voters' Assembly appointed a six man Educational Planning and Promotional Committee to draw up plans for an Educational building. In September of 1960 a new two unit oil burning furnace was installed in the church, one to heat the church Nave and the other to heat the basement at a cost of \$2300.00.

By the end of 1961 the debt on the new parsonage combined with the remaining debt on the old houses was paid. On April 27, 1962 the congregation voted to build a new Educational building. Arrangements were made with the AAL insurance company for financing this project.



## St. Paul's Cenntenial History

The Hughes residence known as Parish House No. 1 was sold to Mr. Julius Habeck for \$1025.00 and the old Parish House No. 2 was sold to Mr. Delbert Dahme for \$1126.00. By June of 1962, the lots were cleared and ground breaking ceremonies were held.

The Educational Unit (Youth Center) is of Norman Brick construction and encloses an area 95 X 70 feet with an extension to the south of 40 X 34 feet. The Assembly-Gymnasium, now known as the Gold Room, has a seating capacity of over 400 and measures 43 X 78 feet with a stage. The 20 Sunday school rooms range in size from 10 X 12 to 16 X 16 feet. The building is heated by a zoned hot water system. The natural gas burning furnace and lavatories were arranged that they could also serve a future new church building. The cost of the Youth Center exclusive of furniture was \$121,104.13. Approximately \$30,000.00 of this amount had been raised by the congregation before the building was completed.

During this busy period of construction, the congregation paused to observe the pastor's 25th anniversary in the Holy Ministry. The Rev. G. Bohn of Plankinton, South Dakota, a son of the congregation, delivered the sermon on this occasion and the Rev. Alva Pingel, Jr., Pastor of Our Savior Lutheran Church of Aberdeen was in charge of the social hour that followed.

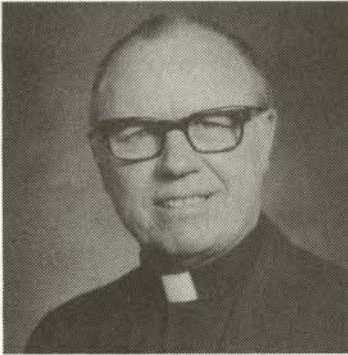


(EDUCATIONAL UNIT)

Throughout the planning and construction of our Youth Center and Educational Building, the members of the congregation, by the Grace of God, worked together in a harmonious and peaceful spirit.

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Pastor Link received a call to Redeemer Lutheran Church of Shreveport, La which he accepted and was given a peaceful release. During his pastorate at St. Paul's, he performed the following official acts: Baptisms 245, Confirmed 222, Marriages 111, and Burials 69. Pastor Link left this life on August 17, 1972.

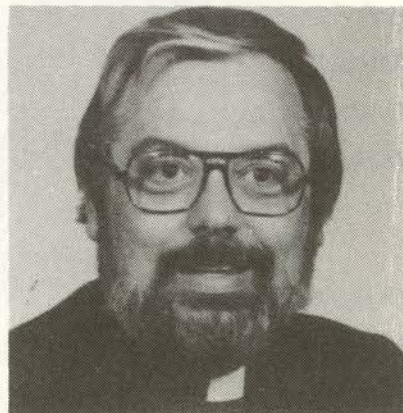


(REV. BRACK)

After a short vacancy a call was extended to the Rev. Orlett D. Brack of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in San Diego, California. The Rev. Alva F. Pingel, Jr. of Our Savior Lutheran Church in Aberdeen was interim Pastor during this vacancy.

On September 6, 1964 the Rev. O. D. Brack was installed as Pastor of St. Paul's, and on that same Sunday, Vicar Daniel Canon was placed into office. The Rev. O. D. Brack received a call to Faith Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls in 1967 and was given a peaceful release. During his pastorate in Aberdeen he officiated at 74 baptisms, confirmed 117 children, performed 41 marriages, and 25 burials.

A call was extended to the Rev. Raymond A. Giese in December of 1967. He was serving a dual parish at Chickasha and Apache, Oklahoma. He accepted the call and was installed as Pastor of St. Paul's on February 4th, 1968. He had two sons, R. Matthew, Mark and a third son, Michael, was born on March 21, 1970 here in Aberdeen.



(REV. R. A. GIESE)

## St. Paul's Cenntenial History

UNTIL THIS TIME, St. Paul's had only part time help in the office and much of the office work was done by the pastor. A full time Secretary was hired. One of the first projects was to start a newsletter and it became "The Voice of St. Paul's" in 1968. It has been published on a monthly basis since that time.

In May, Pastor Giese began his first Adult Inquiry Class which is for the purpose of instructing anyone who is interested in becoming a member of St. Paul's or for those who wish a refresher course of their confirmation vows. This course is made available two times each year, once in the spring and once in the fall.

The use of acolytes was also initiated in 1968 and students in the confirmation class are instructed to assist the pastors in the distribution of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. A MISSION FAIR under the guidance of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League was held in November.

In March of 1969, we were informed by the Placement Office for Concordia Teachers College of River Forest, Illinois that we would receive a Director of Christian Education (DCE) intern, in the person of Wayne A. Klima about March 1. The prevailing question was—What is a DCE? A Director of Christian Education was to work in all phases of education and to assist the Pastor when necessary. The Klimas arrived in our midst during a big blizzard. A pot luck and grocery shower was held to welcome them. After completing his internship, Mr. Klima was installed as a regularly called DCE on June 1st, 1969. In addition to working with the educational ministries of the congregation Mr. Klima was very active in youth ministry. He worked with the young people of the congregation and also served with the South Dakota District Youth Ministry Task Force. Gamma Delta was a group of Lutheran students who were attending Northern State College. This group later became known as the God Squad. They met at the church under the direction and guidance of Pastor Giese and DCE Wayne Klima.

## **St. Paul's Cenntennial History**

In June, the worship schedule of services at 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. with Sunday School at 9:15 a.m. was established and still prevails. The 'HIS TOO CRUSADE' for the handicapped was conducted during the summer of 1969 and a gift of \$773.81 was presented to the Crusade Director. In August, the long range planning committee began discussing with the congregation a new building or extensive repairs to the old church building. Discussions continued to be held on a regular basis. The first pictorial Directory of the congregation was begun in September of 1969, the purpose being to acquaint members of the church with each other.

AN EVANGELISM WORKSHOP was hosted in May of 1970 with Dr. Theo. Raedeke as the featured speaker. This was a three day event and was well attended. A LUTHERAN HOUR RALLY was held in the Civic Arena on November first. Dr. Oswald Hoffman was the guest speaker. This event was well attended by the public. The use of Lenten and Advent Folders was introduced in 1970 and has continued throughout the years. These funds are dedicated to a special purpose.

Several drug seminars were held in 1971 for our High school youth and the Gamma Delta members.

In March of 1972, Wayne Klima accepted a call to an experimental cluster project in southwestern South Dakota and requested a peaceful release to follow that ministry. He left St. Paul's on March 15th.

Also in 1972, an Easter dinner, hymn singing and Communion Service was held by the Good Cheer Circle of the LWML for the homebound and senior Citizens of the congregation and is a tradition that has been followed since that time. A similar event is held just prior to Christmas. All Senior Citizens are invited to partake of these dinners.

Many meetings were being held relative to the building of a new church seeking input from all members. Herges & Kirchgasser were engaged as architects, and a floor plan was presented for approval by the Voter's Assembly. A

## St. Paul's Centennial History

model of the new church building was made by Mr. Hanko H. Poppen and was on display for the congregation. In April the Voter's Assembly approved the floor plan for the new church.

NEW ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION AND BY LAWS were written up for the congregation. At this time we changed our form of church government to a 'corporate type' government. The election of the first new Board of Directors was held in May.

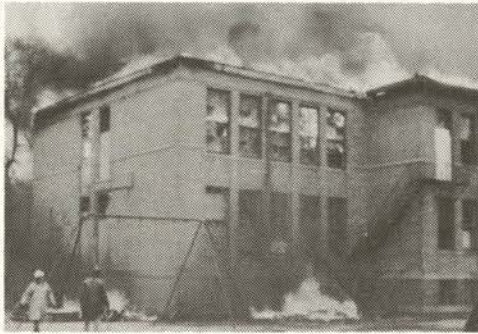
In July 1972, Merlin Molke of Eau Claire, Wisconsin accepted a call St. Paul's as Assistant Pastor. He was installed on July 30, 1972. His priority was with the youth of St. Paul's, together with assignments made by the Senior Pastor. In November of 1973 Pastor Molke announced that he would be leaving St. Paul's for a new parish.

THE MORTGAGE OF \$22,000 on the Youth Center was paid up in January of 1973. Bids for construction of the new church were let in February of 1973. Several meetings were held regarding the organ and it was decided to have the Moeller organ in the old church rebuilt and enlarged for the new church. In April of 1973 contracts were awarded to Schull Co. of Watertown for the building; Risager for plumbing and heating; Ell's Sheet Metal for ventilation; and Preston's for electrical. A loan of \$300,000 was approved from the South Dakota District Extension payable in 30 years. During the time of construction, services were held in the auditorium or Gold Room. An auction was held to dispose of items that would not be used in the new church which netted about \$2,000.00. The last service in the old church was held on April 1, 1973.

The altar, the baptismal font and lectern were given to a mission church in Iowa; and the pulpit and a leaded window of Martin Luther's seal from the old church were donated to the local museum for display. The other windows were all used in the new building.

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Through the years and working side by side, we had a very cordial relationship with the Adams School. While the school was in operation, they had used our gymnasium for their Physical Education Classes and held some of their programs and activities there. When the school was condemned and had to be demolished, St. Paul's entered into an agreement with the Aberdeen Board of Education, whereby, we would lease the Adams School property for a period of 20 years with an option to renew at the end of that time for an additional ten years with the terms subject to future negotiation, and this property became our parking lot.



Under the supervision of the Aberdeen Fire Department, the Adams School was burned in August 1973, as a training event for the fire-fighters.

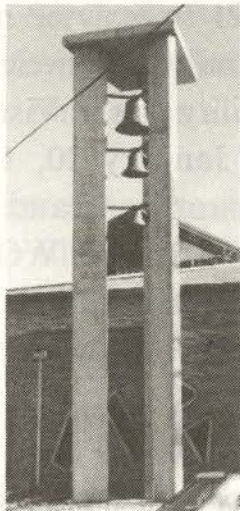
(BURNING OF ADAMS SCHOOL)

After Pastor Molke left, a call was extended to the Rev. Richard A. Hardel and he was installed on December 2, 1973. Pastor Hardel worked with the youth in Christian Education and conducted workshops and courses for Vacation Bible School and Sunday School Teachers. A youth planning workshop was held for the circuit in 1974. The youth had a back-packing trip to Colorado and had many bicycling trips in and around Aberdeen. In addition to his work with us, Pastor Hardel was very active in youth ministry at the District and Synodical level. He was involved in the planning of the New Orleans Youth Gathering and several young people from St. Paul's attended.

When the new church was built, a repository box which was made by Mr. George Fratzke was placed in the cornerstone. This box contained copies of the church and LWML constitutions; also, various mementos and happenings in the church's history. Dedication of the new church was set for March 24,

## St. Paul's Cenntennial History

1974. Services were held at 9:30 with the Rev. Edgar Streufert, preaching, and A. J. Crosmer, the president of the South Dakota District, bringing greetings in behalf of the district; Services at 3:30—Praise and Thanksgiving with the Rev. Orlett D. Brack, preaching; Services at 7:00 p.m.—Folk Service with the Rev. Richard V. Loomis, preaching. A noon meal was served at 11:30 with an open house following the afternoon service.



(TOWER)

**ABOUT THE TOWER**—the shortest leg of the tower weighs 17,600 lbs; the other two legs each weigh 18,000 lbs, and the cap weighs 9000 lbs, making a total of 62,000 lbs or 31.3 tons. The largest of the bells has a diameter of 40 inches, the next is 29 inches and the smallest of the three is 20 inches in diameter. The tower is wired for an electric carillon which was installed.

In 1975, Pastor Giese received a special recognition award from Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Illinois. The Servus Ecclesiae Award (Service to Christ's Church,) is awarded annually for effective ministry among God's people. As a part of the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee resettlement program, a Vietnamese family was brought to Aberdeen under our sponsorship. St. John's of Columbia also assisted in this venture. This was a very interesting learning experience. A second pictorial directory was planned and completed in 1975. A wedding policy and manual was set up for couples planning marriage in St. Paul's facility.

In 1976 due to the shortage of pastors and economic conditions, St. Paul's entered into a joint-parish agreement with St. John's in Rural Aberdeen. Under the terms of the agreement, St. Paul's supplies the pastoral services and sermons and St. John's, in turn, pays St. Paul's a monthly stipend and sup-

## St. Paul's Centennial History

plies a parsonage for the assistant pastor, keep their church in repair and maintain their own identity. The parish was then called 'St. Paul's-St. John's' parish and the name of the Newsletter was changed to 'The Voice of the Saints.'

In May 1976, Pastor Hardel announced that he had accepted a call to Florida and would be leaving St. Paul's.

In January of 1977, the Rev. Chas. A. Lade and family were welcomed into the congregation. The Rev. Lade's area of responsibility was in Visitation and Evangelism. The Rite of Installation was held on January 20, 1978 at St. Paul's and also at St. John's Rural on that day. Pastor Lade and his family resided in St. John's parsonage. An annual EVANGELISM WORKSHOP was begun during Pastor Lade's ministry among us; it is held in January and gives practical aids and tools to members to enable us to witness more effectively for our faith in Jesus.

The youth had been without a professional leader since pastor Hardel's departure and in April of 1977, John W. Emslie, Jr. of Mobile, Alabama accepted a call to St. Paul's to serve as Director of Christian Education. Installation was held on June 5. Many events involving the youth of the congregation were planned, such as, scavenger hunts, camping trips and the like. One event was a retreat to Rockerville in the Black Hills area in 1978. During Mr. Emslie's stay in Aberdeen, he was given time off to attend the Seminary in St. Louis through the colloquy program. He was assisted financially by both St. Paul's and St. John's congregations. He completed the colloquy program in St. Louis in 1984 and was assigned to St. Paul's in Topeka, Kansas, where he now serves. A farewell party was held for him on June 24. He had to complete a one year vicarage before being ordained into the Holy Ministry. In May of 1985 John Emslie was ordained and Pastor Giese preached the sermon at his ordination. Several members of St. Paul's Aberdeen, attended his ordination in Topeka.



## **St. Paul's Centennial History**

CHILDREN'S SERMONS were introduced in 1980 and are well received. They follow the reading of the Gospel and precede the regular sermon of the day. They are informative and are enjoyed by young and old alike. Children come forward to the altar and greet the Pastor and hear a message of Jesus and his love.

In October of 1981 the new hymnals were introduced. Our supply was received for Lenten Services of 1982. Several seminars were held to introduce the congregation to its use. In January, Pastor Lade announced that he would be leaving St. Paul's for a new pastorate in Sherwood, Ohio.

The position of Assistant Pastor had been vacant until July 1982, when Monty Dell, a lay minister, accepted the call to St. Paul's, Aberdeen. He, his wife LaDonna and four children, David, Terry, Joanna, and Lanette, came to us from Minnesota and reside in St. John's parsonage.

INDIVIDUAL CONFIRMATION INSTRUCTION (ICI) was introduced in 1980. Each student works at his or her own pace and when all materials have been completed and approved by the instructor, he or she is ready to be confirmed in the presence of the congregation. It is normally a three year course divided into study levels. When a student has completed one level, he can begin the next level. Generally five or six students are ready for the rite of confirmation at one time. After he is confirmed, he is a communicant member of St. Paul's congregation.

In February of 1983 Pastor Giese and Lay Minister Dell attended a Stephen Ministry Workshop in Kansas City. This is a sharing-caring ministry enabling lay persons to minister to those who are in need. It requires 50 hours of training. Those who complete the course are then be commissioned into active caring ministries. Pastor Giese conducts the training course and it is carried out by lay people.

## St. Paul's Cenntennial History



(VIOLA KUECHLER)

Our first full-time secretary, Mrs. Paul (Viola) Kuechler, retired after nearly 17½ years of faithful service on December 31, 1984. She is a woman of many talents. She helped to organize the church office into an efficient and well-run operation.

It was not uncommon for a neighboring pastor or even the President of the South Dakota District to call and ask for the “boss”—meaning Vi. She gave selflessly of her time and talent. After an intensive search we were blessed with another dedicated secretary, in the person of Mrs. David (Beverly) Borchard. Bev has taken hold and brings her own unique gifts and talents to our office staff.



(Current staff members)

## **St. Paul's Centennial History**

**NEW STAFF POSITIONS WERE CREATED:** After Mr. Emslie left our parish, it was determined to divide his responsibilities among several part time and some volunteer workers. As a result of that decision the congregation established the office of Director of Volunteer Ministries; Coordinator of Christian Education; and, Coordinator of Christian Music.

Mrs. Lyle (Trudy) Schaunaman is our Coordinator of Christian Education. Under her leadership our entire Christian Education ministry has grown back to the vigor of former years. We rejoice that every available space in our facility is currently being used for Sunday School and Bible Class on Sunday morning. Our Vacation Bible School is also well attended. A few years ago we discovered that it would be easier to get well qualified teachers and helpers if we conducted our Vacation Bible School during the evening hours. Our current goal is to add at least one new Bible Class or Bible Study opportunity each year.

Our first Director of Volunteer Ministries was Mrs. Leila (Dohman) Geisler. Our current Director is Mrs. Mark (Audrey) Reis. She is involved in conducting our Spiritual Gifts ministry. Spiritual Gifts Workshops were begun in 1984, the purpose of which is to find the spiritual gifts given to the members of the church and to enable them to discover their special gifts with which they can best serve the church and its members. As a part of her work in spiritual gifts, Mrs. Reis actively contacts potential volunteers and recruits them for specific tasks within the congregation. She is a valuable asset to our standing committees. In addition to this she is our chief computer operator (The congregation received a Xerox computer as a gift in 1984). She maintains the congregational master data-base and address files.

Our first Coordinator of Christian Music was Mrs. Randy (Holly) Hedge. She was the spark plug that helped our church take a big musical leap during 1986. There are now five different groups providing music, which are: The 'Senior Choir' which is made up of adults; 'Singspiration' involves Kindergarten through Grade 2; 'Inspiration' is made up of Grades 3 through 6; 'Jubilation' is made up of Teens; and, the 'St. Paul's Singers' made up of young adults

## St. Paul's Cenntennial History

with guitar accompaniment. In addition, we have solos and duets all of which enhance the services. An Easter Cantata was presented on Good Friday in 1987. It was well attended and very much appreciated. Mrs. Hedge left our employment to move to Fargo where Mr. Hedge is now employed.

In 1987 we added a new part-time staff position. We have a Director of Youth Ministry in the person of Mr. David Hahn. Mr. Hahn is a 'Tent-Maker', which means that he supports himself partially by the work of his ministry and partly by means of other employment. He is working with the young people's groups within the congregation and also helping with the confirmation and music programs. He directs the children's and young people's choirs.



(Missionary Borchard and family)

**THE PERSONALIZED MISSIONARY PROGRAM** was begun and is to help a missionary who is working in a foreign field. Our missionary is the Rev. Terry Borchard who is working in Papua, New Guinea and is translating the Bible into the language of the inhabitants of this area. St. Paul's contributes nearly \$5,000.00 per year directly to the Synod to assist him in his work.

**THE TAPE MINISTRY** is carried out by volunteers who deliver the Sunday Sermons to shut-ins. This is a very time consuming project and we truly appreciate the efforts of all who work so faithfully to get the tapes out, especially Mr. Duwain Larson who chaired this program and kept it functioning smoothly.

**A CONGREGATIONAL PICNIC** is held each year and is sometimes combined with the Vacation Bible School Picnic. This is a potluck picnic held at one of the parks in Aberdeen.

## **St. Paul's Centennial History**

THE RAINBOW BUS was purchased and is used to transport members to services and also for Sunday School children. It is also used for sight seeing trips, for Youth Ministry, and Senior Citizens and will accommodate about 30 passengers.

USHERS' TRAINING WORKSHOPS are held periodically.

A PRAYER CHAIN was organized and is active in prayer offerings for the ill and needy. It is as active as members make it by requesting prayers. These activities are a ministry of the Spiritual Life Committee of the congregation.

PAIRS AND SPARES CLUB was organized in 1985. This is mainly a social club for fun and Christian fellowship.

REFORMATION SERVICES have been held at St. Paul's on the last Sunday of October each year in conjunction with the Aberdeen-Groton Zone of the Lutheran Laymen's League.

FESTIVAL SERVICES are held on Thanksgiving Day at 9:30 a.m. and members are asked to bring canned goods or non-perishable gifts for the needy. These are gathered in by the children and placed at the altar for later distribution. A special service of Scripture and Song is held on Christmas Eve which involves the congregation in singing Christmas songs. And special festival services are held on Christmas Day. The Sunday School presents a Christmas service.

CHILDREN OF THE CONGREGATION IN CHRISTIAN SERVICE: The Rev. Gustav Bohn, now retired, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Bohn; was the first son of St. Paul's congregation to enter full-time Christian service. The Rev. Richard Loomis, son of Mr. and Mrs. Victor Loomis, graduated from the Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Ill in 1973. He was ordained into the Holy Ministry of the church on June 17, 1973 at St. Paul's. He presently has a pastorate in Katy, Texas. The Rev. Galen Sollie, son of Mr. Virgil Sollie and Mrs. Louis Krueger, graduated from Concordia Theological

## St. Paul's Centennial History

Seminary Fort Wayne, Indiana in 1978. He was also ordained here in his home congregation, and is now serving in Winnebago, Minnesota. DCE Roland Feickert, son of Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Feickert, graduated from Concordia Seward, Nebraska and is now serving St. Paul's Amityville, New York. Mrs. Ron (Charlotte) Udy, pastor Streufert's daughter, graduated from Concordia Teachers College, River Forest, Illinois, and currently teaches at St. Paul's Lutheran School, Ogden, Utah. Mary (Driscoll) DeBlock served as a Youth Staffer in the Southern District. After her service as a Youth Staffer and her marriage to Dan (now Army Chaplain, DeBlock) she completed her training as a DCE at Concordia St. Paul. Rene (Zito) Griswold is a Christian Day School teacher at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Edina, Minnesota. The Rev. Dennis Napton serves as a pastor of the ELCA in Wisconsin. In addition to those who are serving in full-time ministries of the church we are privileged to have two couples who are using their 'retirement years' to serve the Lord in special ways. Mr. & Mrs. Leonard Feickert and Mr. & Mrs. Harry Preston are 'Laborers for Christ' who go around the Synod and help construct new church buildings for mission congregations. Mr. & Mrs. Feickert are also 'Mission Support Personnel' for Lutheran Bible Translators; constructing buildings for missionaries in Sierra Leone. We thank and praise our God for the gifts He has given to the whole church through St. Paul's congregation.

In 1987 our efforts are largely concerned with celebrating the "Century of Grace." We are overjoyed to know that Pastors Streufert, Lade, Hardel, Loomis, Brack, Napton, and Emslie will be with us during this 1988 year and will be a part of our observance.

During Pastor Giese's tenure among us, we have grown to 1109 communicant members and we have over 1400 baptized members. During this time we have confirmed 385 juniors and 158 Adults; there have been 573 baptisms, 343 weddings, and 212 funerals. (He has been assisted by Mr. Wayne Klima DCE, The Rev. Merlin Molke, The Rev. Richard Hardel, The Rev. Charles Lade, Mr. John Emslie DCE, and Mr. Monty Dell-Lay Minister.)

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IN CLOSING THIS PART OF OUR HISTORY, we offer the following hymn (No. 170 LW) in prayer:

Triune God, be our stay;  
Oh, let us perish never  
Cleanse us from our sins, we pray  
And grant us life forever!  
Keep us from the evil one;  
Uphold our faith most holy,  
And let us trust you solely  
With humble hearts and lowly,  
Let us put God's armor on,  
With all true Christians running  
Our heavenly race and shunning  
The devil's wiles and cunning  
AMEN, AMEN. This be done;  
So sing we, "Alleluia."

# Auxiliary and Special Ministries of St. Paul's

THE LADIES AID (Now the Lutheran Women's Missionary League). St. Paul's Ladies Aid was organized on March 5, 1905 with thirteen members. Early members who were active in the organization and were charter members but have now gone to eternal rest were Mrs. Schwandt, Mrs. Valentine and Mrs. Kuechler.

During the 50's, the Mary-Martha Guild was organized. This consisted of younger members many of them unable to attend the afternoon sessions of the Aid and they met evenings. This group later disbanded. They began an annual bean dinner and donated the picture of the Sermon on the Mount which is now in the Gold Room (the gym). The LWML is divided into seven circles, each with a specific form of church work to perform. Circles meet each month and have a Bible study or topic at each meeting. Circles take turns in serving weddings, funerals, anniversaries, open houses, and various other events as assigned to them by the LWML President.

Duties of the seven circles could be briefly described as follows:

CHANCEL - care of communion ware, altar, banners

CHRISTIAN LITERATURE - Sales of Christian Literature, cards, gifts

GET ACQUAINTED - new member visitations, etc.

GOLDEN AGE - Ladies 70 and over

GOOD CHEER - Senior Citizens events

PUBLICITY - Assist with Congregational mailings

REACHING OUT - Cradle Roll, Mother-Daughter event

The LWML makes contributions to various charities throughout the year. An annual potluck dinner is held on the first Sunday in December. In August of 1968, the LWML began plans to hold a Mission Fair. This was a big task, since it was a new venture and much work and planning went into it. India, Japan, Brazil and Africa were chosen for display along with special ministries. It was a congregational venture and they proved themselves to be true missionaries of God. Booths had to be constructed and much planning had to be made to provide space for all displays. The date of November 17th was set. A



supper was served with one food from each country represented in the displays. Waitresses were in costume. It was well attended and enjoyed.

PAPER PEACE CORPS is another LWML project begun in 1969 with Mrs. Henry Risch as Chairman. This involved collecting literature, such as, Portals of Prayer, religious greeting cards, old or new Bibles and Christian material in general and it was then packaged and mailed to missionaries overseas. This was continued until postage rates made it prohibitive.

In February of 1969, the first Valentine luncheon was held which was open to the public. This was very well received and continued for about 15 years when it was dropped. Circles had taken turns in hostessing this event.

STAMPS FOR MISSIONS is an activity of the LWML and is encouraged for all members of the congregation. Receptacles are placed near the Secretary's Office and stamps are then packaged and forwarded to St. Louis to assist in Mission work. Commemorative stamps are important in this activity but all stamps are acceptable.

A GIFT SHOP is maintained at the church by the Christian Literature Circle and it is possible for members to order and purchase wholesome Christian Literature, such as Bibles, Hymn books, greeting cards and gifts. It is open after services especially at holiday times.

Present officers of the LWML are:

Doris Schamber, President  
Ruth Sager, Vice President  
Doreen Strivens, Secretary  
Ruth Casanova, Treasurer  
Donna Markley, Christian Growth Chairman  
Carol Nelson, Mission Service

The LWML District officers have fall and spring workshops and an annual meeting hosted by congregations in the state.

## St. Paul's Centennial History

## Auxiliary and Special Ministries



(LWML and Circles Present membership is approximately 100.)



(MR/MRS. LEONARD FEICKERT)

### LUTHERAN BIBLE TRANSLATORS

This is an organization which enables members to volunteer their time and talents in the mission fields. The purpose of the Lutheran Bible Translators is to make God's Word available in every language and tongue. We are proud of Leonard and Alvina Feickert who have served two terms as LBT support workers.

In their first term in 1985 they went to Freeport, Sierra Leone in Africa and there Leonard used his construction abilities to build a maintenance building to house their tools, etc. It was a difficult assignment as the tools he was accustomed to working with were not available there, so they had to work with what was available. In their second term, Leonard was busy constructing a class room and a house for missionaries in Sierra Leone. Leonard says 'I can't preach, but I can sure drive nails.' Leonard's wife, Alvina, was busily working with women of the area in keeping the guest house clean and in assisting with the children. Electric power was a problem as the power would sometimes be off for three days in succession. They had a bottle gas stove for cooking. Adapting to the different cultures and different foods was a big adjustment and it was difficult to find the foods that they were accustomed to eating.

Prior to Feickert's first trip to Sierra Leone, St. Paul's had a fund raising for the Bible Translators and featured a 'hog roast'. This was a new experience. It was very well attended. The Aid Association for Lutherans assisted in this venture.

**THE CHOIR AND VOCAL MUSIC** There is little doubt that the choir is the oldest organization since there was a choir in 1903 when the first church was dedicated. During the ensuing years, St. Paul's has had a choir. The first choir was directed by Pastor Graeber with Mrs. Graeber as accompanist. Mostly we have had adult choirs but during the time of Pastor Streufert's ministry, the youth choir was organized. We have had various directors and accompanists.



**(ST. PAUL'S SINGERS)**



**(INSPIRATION)**



**(JUBILATION)**



**(SENIOR CHOIR)**

We wish to acknowledge the time, effort, and talent of Mrs. Donna (Markley) Picht who directed the choir on a voluntary basis for several years. Also, for the many solos and music that she provided. David Sueltz has also shared his talent as soloist with God's people here at St. Paul's.

**THE ORGANISTS** Through the years we have been blessed with many fine organists and pianists. We appreciate the time, talent, and effort put forth to enhance our service. We list the present and former organists of St. Paul's...Mrs. Graeber, Mrs. Ruth (Graeber) Boots, Mrs. Lorna (Graeber)

Smith, Mrs. Janeen (Trisler) Baker, Mrs. Donna (Parsch) Hess, Mrs. Donna (Maas) McLain, Mrs. Marlys (Gallipo) Bratsveen, Mr. Harold Breitag, Mr. Rod Ulrich, Mrs. Phyllis Woods, Mrs. Gerry McIntire, Mrs. Karen (Larson) Potter, Mrs. Doris Olsen, Mrs. Ruth Rowley, Mrs. Karen (Dean) Ernst, Ms. Mabe Zuber, Mrs. Evie Kienow, Mr. El Schamber, Mrs. Sheri (Wudel) Scott.

**YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS — WALTHER LEAGUE, CHRISTIAN TEEN LEAGUE (CTL), YOUTH FOR CHRIST (YFC).** The Walther League was affiliated with the national organization on July 15, 1921. A Young People's Society had been held prior to that time but no records were kept. During the depression of the '30's, interest waned and the league was disbanded. In 1950 the league again became active and continued for many years. They installed light fixtures in the basement and contributed \$100.00 to the original organ fund. They gave entertaining programs and plays to raise funds. In May of 1954, with the help of Tom Peterson, Vicar, they presented the play "Mr. Beane from Lima"; the price of admission 50 cents. This play was held in the Rialto Theatre. They have also sponsored noon day Lenten services. Neighboring congregations were invited to rallies held in the Brown County Building on the Tri-State Fair Grounds. An orchestra composed of members of the Aberdeen League supplied music for these gatherings. The League decided to sponsor a mimeographed church paper. The League took part in District Oratorical contests and later in Talent Quests. In 1933 Hilda Heidenreich, a member of St. Paul's, won first place in the State Oratorical Contest and represented South Dakota at the National Convention held in Chicago.

During the time that Mr. Klima was Director of Christian Education at St. Paul's, the Walther League was disbanded and two new youth organizations were organized — Christian Teen League (CTL) for the 10th through 12th graders and Youth for Christ (YFC) was for 7th through 9th graders and these two groups have continued since that time. Also, Confirmation Camp at Camp Wisagoma on Pickerel Lake was held for several years.

A SPLASH PARTY is held in January of each year at either the Holiday Inn or at the Ramkota. It is a fun party for the youth with games and swimming; and, adults are also invited to attend for visiting and card playing. A time for refreshments is held at the conclusion of the event.



(DARTBALL)

**THE LUTHERAN LAYMEN'S LEAGUE** In the words of Dr. Oswald Hoffman: "Whatever we say on this program, and everything that we sing on this program is just the straight forward telling about Jesus Christ, who He is and what He is able to do."

The League sponsors the Lutheran Hour and through this Gospel message an estimated 40 million persons per week are reached on over 1000 stations in 40 languages. **THIS IS THE LIFE** is also sponsored by the League. Dartball is one of the league's activities, and tournaments are held on a zone and statewide basis. They have organized into various leagues and then the winners are crowned at the final tournament. Trophies are given to the winners. **PANCAKE SUPPERS** are held annually and are sponsored by the local league. At the present time, Terry Serr is St. Paul's membership representative for the Lutheran Laymen's League.

**THE CUSTODIANS** We thank and praise the people who have so conscientiously kept our facility clean and ready for whatever activity will take place. Thanks to:

- Mr. and Mrs. Stewart Heath
- Mr. and Mrs. Bill Bohn and family
- Mr. and Mrs. Stan Markley and family
- Mr. Ernest Angerhofer, Dennis Angerhofer, and Darin Angerhofer.



