

The Anniversary Logo

The artwork which graces our anniversary materials and the sign on the front of the church is an attempt to reflect the simplicity and dignity of our anniversary theme and hymn. The four hands are the hands of a father (one on top), a mother (two in the middle) and a child (one on bottom). They represent the congregational family, in which we are all brothers and sisters in Christ.

The hands are raised heavenward, symbolic of giving praise to God. They also are open, reminding us that our reason to praise God comes from receiving his many blessings – both spiritual and physical.

Surrounding the hands in an oblong shape are the repeated words “glory,” “praise,” and “honor.” These are the words which are mentioned in verse one of our anniversary theme hymn. We want to give God glory, praise and honor to show our gratitude for his “matchless mercy, forgiveness and peace.”

The rich purple background symbolizes our humility and repentance as we approach our God in loving praise. The gold lettering symbolizes the fact that the one we praise is our holy King, the one who has conquered sin and death. The riches of his grace have been lavished on us all.

May this anniversary logo be a sermon in word and picture as you reflect on its significance and meaning for our anniversary year – and for our everyday Christian lives.

50th Anniversary Booklet
St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Seventh & South Washington
New Ulm, Minnesota
January 4, 1998

“Not unto Us”

God’s people are good at giving praise, because God’s people know all glory belongs to God. As a result, it is totally in keeping with this characteristic of God’s people that in our fiftieth anniversary year we have chosen to proclaim the truth that all honor and praise for reaching this milestone is “not unto us,” but to our wonderful Savior and God.

That’s exactly what the writer of Psalm 115 said, too. When he reflected on the great things his Lord had done for his body and soul, all he could say in that Psalm’s opening verse was this:

“Not to us, O Lord, not to us
but to your name be the glory
because of your love and faithfulness.”

We pray that this humble spirit of heartfelt gratitude will permeate all we say and do as a congregation this anniversary year, so that people all around us will be led to join us in giving all glory and praise to our all glorious and praiseworthy God.



Pastor Kurt Eggert was a WELS pastor who served as the project director for our new hymnal. An accomplished musician, Pastor Eggert wrote many songs and hymns. One of the hymns he wrote is the song we have chosen for our anniversary hymn. It is number 392 in our hymnal, entitled "Not unto Us." It was originally written to celebrate the 125th anniversary of our Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod in 1975.

We will sing this hymn in each of our six anniversary services. In two of the services it will be in the form of a concertato, as the choir will add to the powerful words of the song the majestic strains of a memorable refrain.

We invite you to reflect on these words and to sing them with thankful and joyful hearts, as we join our voices in giving all praise and glory "not unto us," but to the saving name of our gracious God.

*Not unto us, not unto us be glory, Lord;
Not unto us but to your name be praise;
Not unto us but to your name all honor be giv'n
For matchless mercy, forgiveness and grace.*

*Amazing grace – that chose us e'er the worlds were made;
Amazing grace – that sent your Son to save;
Amazing grace – that robed us in your righteousness
And taught our lips to sing glory and praise.*

*O faithful love – that shepherded through faithless years;
Forgiving love – that led us to your truth;
Unyielding love – that would not let us turn from you
But sent us forth to speak pardon and peace.*

*Not unto us but to your name be glory, Lord,
For grace so rich, so wide, so high, so free,
Abide with us till trav'ling days are over and done,
And pilgrim feet lead us home, Lord, to you.*

Wonderful reasons for praising God in the present become very evident as we review what he has done in the past. This can be done in the case of our St. John's congregation by reviewing the pages of historical information which follow.

This historical overview is a compilation of the six part series which was included in the August, 1997 - January, 1998 newsletters. To get an even fuller flavor of the congregation's development, ask our church office to send you a packet of information which contains the articles in this series, as well as articles from the 25th anniversary booklet (1973).

Fifty years ago this summer plans were being made to start a second WELS congregation in New Ulm. On October 19 the first service was held in the St. Paul's School gym for all who were interested in becoming part of a daughter congregation. Eighty-one were in attendance. The interest made it clear that a second New Ulm congregation could soon become a reality.

That reality didn't take very long to come to fulfillment. Less than three months later, on January 4, 1948, the official organizational meeting of St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church was held. The constitution was signed on January 7.

January 4, 1948—St. John's is officially organized as a congregation.

Congregational growth was rapid. By the end of the first year St. John's numbered 229 souls, 144 of whom were communicant members. (18 of those communicants are still members of St. John's!)¹

To serve the spiritual needs of the fast-growing congregation, St. John's called DMLC Professor Martin Albrecht to serve as a part-time pastor. It soon became evident, however, that this part-time arrangement was not sufficient. Professor Albrecht declined the call to serve as St. John's first full-time pastor. That call was then accepted by Pastor Roland Gurgel, who was serving in Rib Lake, WI. He arrived in New Ulm in the spring of 1950.

William Brei, Walter & Marian Plagge, Willard Tanley, Frances Hoenecke, Martha Rolloff, Olga Voecks, Gertrude Willhite, David & Gloria Morse, Leonard & Marlis Schwartz, Ruth Birkholz, Delores Hempel, Verona Johnson, Shirley Laabs, Hazel Peuser, Adalia Sievert

Professor Albrecht and Pastor Gurgel had the privilege of being part of many "firsts" for St. John's. For example, the first of 680 babies which have been baptized at St. John's was Donald Plagge. His baptism took place on February 8, 1948.

Other congregational "firsts" are found in:
Our Congregation's First... page 25
Historical Highlights page 26

The first youth confirmation class consisted of Richard Hagen and Bernice Plagge.

They professed their faithfulness to God on April 10, 1949. Since that time 791 other youths and adults have been received through public confirmation.

The first wedding took place on July 30, 1949, when Leo Filzen and Mildred Schwartz were joined as husband and wife. St. John's has seen 307 couples come together as husband and wife during these fifty years.

The first funeral was the last "first" to take place. On January 16, 1951, Mr. Emil Liebisch, Sr. was laid to rest at the age of 57. 197 other of God's children have entered glory after spending at least part of their earthly pilgrimage at St. John's.

Pastor Gurgel remained at St. John's until 1953 when another calling took him to our congregation in Belle Plaine. More growth -- and some sadness -- awaited this flock in New Ulm. . .

Pastor Roland Gurgel's successor was a pastor who had previously been serving in Sioux City, Iowa -- Pastor Rollin Reim. Pastor Reim was installed in early 1954.

These years were difficult years for our synod. As a synod we were still seeking to admonish our sister denomination, the Missouri Synod, to lovingly discipline those professors and pastors who were holding to or allowing unscriptural views about the Bible and church fellowship.

A few of our pastors, including Pastor Reim, felt in their consciences that our synod was not separating from the Missouri Synod soon enough. As a result, they formed the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC). Pastor Reim and

a number of members left St. John's to form Faith Lutheran Church. This was in the fall of 1959.²

The Lord did not allow our pastorate to stay vacant long, however. In November, 1959 he led Pastor Frederic Nitz to leave his congregation in Cochrane, WI, and become St. John's next pastor. Pastor Nitz remained in this calling until 1978.

During this time St. John's was granted many blessings:

- ✓ By 1961 the congregation's original debt was paid up.
- ✓ In 1963 the 800 S. State St. parsonage was dedicated.
- ✓ In 1966 the sanctuary of the church—the "superstructure"— was dedicated.³
- ✓ In 1970 the congregation purchased the present teacherage at 615 S. Washington and called its first Director of Christian Education, Mr. Merlyn Kruse, who is presently the principal of St. Croix Lutheran High School in West St.Paul.

By the 25th anniversary in 1973 St. John's numbered nearly 750 souls. The little daughter had grown up!



"Basement Church"



"Superstructure"

² *Historical Footnote: Pastor Gurgel also ended up joining the CLC.*

³ *For the first eighteen years the congregation had worshiped in the church basement! Many referred to it as "the basement church." There was no upstairs; only the upper part of the basement walls were visible above the ground.*

The years after St. John's 25th anniversary in 1973 were challenging and joy-filled years for its 750 members. Here are some excerpts from annual reports in the 1970's:

- ✓ Pastor Frederic Nitz's pastoral reports during those years noted that Sunday Worship averaged about 550 and that Sunday Bible Class attendance was being strongly encouraged between services during Sunday School.

One of the Bible classes specifically mentioned was "A Message in Glass." This explanation of our church's beautiful stained glass windows was written by Prof. Ted Hartwig and illustrated by Mr. Richard Schwartz.

Another entry included the request of our Synod's Commission on Worship to be part of a twenty congregation field test of a new order of service, something the congregation did for several months in 1976-77.

- ✓ DCE Merlyn Kruse rejoiced that over 75% of our students were attending St. Paul's School.⁴ Sunday School attendance was in the 30's and 40's.

Obvious blessings were highlighted in our association with St. Paul's School, as parents continued to be assisted in the spiritual training of their children. Long gone were the days of 1948 when we supported the school with a \$10 per communicant payment. By 1979 the amount had grown to \$55,000 in overall school related payments. By that time we were also granted school board representation and two teachers.⁵

⁴ Our 93 students in 1976 represented about 25% of the 400 students at St. Paul's School. Today our 135 students make up about 40% of the student body.

⁵ Mr. Kruse was replaced as DCE by Craig Kitzrow in 1977. We were also granted one lower grade teacher in 1971. Serving in that capacity in the 1970's were Beth Washow, Mary Hubbard, Mrs. Eldon Hirsch and Mrs. Charles Lowry.

- ✓ Financial stewardship was healthy overall, as budgets and goals were met and as Christ-centered motivation continued to be held up before the members, seeking to enable an increasing ministry with increasing challenges to be carried out.⁶
- ✓ Fellowship revolved around youth and family activities, as members sought to keep the youth involved through YPS (renamed "ALIVE" for a while) and boys' and girls' clubs programs.⁷
- ✓ In December of 1976 the congregation celebrated the 10th anniversary of the dedication of the superstructure worship facility. The anniversary project was to enhance the church basement through the paneling of the north and south walls and the carpeting of the east and west ones.
- ✓ Even the dart ball team made an entry in the 1974 annual report, noting the 11-7 record it had compiled to that point in the season!

When Pastor Nitz accepted a call to Sun City, Arizona in July of 1978, he expressed his gratefulness to God for having been allowed to serve St. John's for nineteen years. That Gospel-motivated positive attitude would sustain St. John's during its ten month vacancy and during the area Lutheran high school and financial challenges which would soon need to be met head on.

May, 1979—St. John's welcomes Pastor Norval Kock as it's fifth pastor.

St. John's vacancy was filled in May, 1979, when the Lord allowed St. John's to welcome Pastor Norval Kock as its fifth pastor.

⁶ The 1973 budget totaled \$74,000 for home operations, missions and debt retirement all together! As noted above, St. Paul's School support alone had increased to \$55,000 by 1979.

⁷ Interesting are the comments about desiring to start and restart youth programs. This area of ministry continues to be one where regular assessment is vital and necessary!

The late seventies and early eighties were challenging years financially for our nation and for many churches. The energy shortages, double digit inflation and sky rocketing interest rates of the seventies resulted in large debts in many areas of society. Our congregation was not unaffected by this nationwide turn of events.

Added to this economic upheaval locally was the transfer of Martin Luther Academy from New Ulm to Prairie du Chien, WI, and the subsequent founding of Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School in the fall of 1979. While MLA was a synodically supported preparatory school, MVL was an "Area Lutheran High School." St. John's would join an association of area WELS congregations in seeking to get this new school off the ground.

Martin Luther Academy moves to
Prairie du Chein—Minnesota
Valley Lutheran High School is
established.

The Lord's hand of blessing remained upon St. John's in the eighties, but the above issues did contribute to difficulties with budgetary shortfalls and increasing congregational debt. Members generously helped stem the tide with "member loans" of about \$50,000⁸ to assist the day to day Home Operations Fund, which by 1986 saw a deficit of \$80,000. Understandably, a note of financial caution was sounded at regular intervals during this difficult decade.

Yet, the Lord granted continued increases in St. John's gospel ministry. Sunday School enrollment, for example, increased from 35 to 62 from 1980 to 1990. Our Vacation Bible School served thirty-two students in 1980; in 1986 there were eighty-two. The congregation itself grew 12%, with the number of souls reaching 925 by the end of the decade (There were twenty-four births in 1980 alone!). By 1983 thirty-three St. John's students were attending MVL. In 1989 we had 130 children attending St. Paul's School. Despite the financial

⁸ *These member loans are the financial notes which have been gradually reduced to their present level of \$8,000.*

challenges, the congregation decided in July, 1991, to go ahead with the purchase of a new pipe organ after four years of debate -- and after organ fund contributions reached a total of about \$65,000.⁹

1990—St. John's
adds fourth teacher
to its faculty

In addition, a fourth teacher was added to our St. John's faculty at St. Paul's School, as Miss Wendy Ristow joined our staff in 1990. She joined our DCE David Zabel, who had replaced Mr. Tod Hauf in 1989, and Mrs. Marlene Wendler and Mrs. Jean Schroeder.

Other school news included the adoption by St. Paul's and St. John's of the so-called "financial formula" in 1986. This complex work sheet determines how much we pay for the education of our children each year.¹⁰

In 1983 the congregation celebrated its 35th anniversary by observing, as did much of the United States and Europe, the 500th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther. Included as a special feature in St. John's worship that year was the presentation of the Dr. Luther's "new liturgy" -- the *Deutsche Messe*. Also that year a woman's Tuesday morning Bible Class was begun, as was the custom of having Saturday evening worship services.¹¹

In many ways the years from 1979 to 1991 were difficult years, especially from a financial stand point, but in those difficulties the members of St. John's sought to reassess the congregation's priorities and purpose, and through those difficulties the Lord made his loving presence even more clear, as his glorious gospel continued to shine through.

After twelve years of faithful service, Pastor Kock ended his ministry at St. John's by retiring from the public ministry in July, 1991. He retired to Alexandria, MN, and now resides in Watertown, WI, as does Pastor Nitz.

⁹ The organ was originally suggested as the 40th anniversary thank offering project in 1988. It was dedicated in March, 1993.

¹⁰ The present "cost" per child at St. Paul's School is about \$2,000.

¹¹ The women's Tuesday class is now the general Wednesday morning class. The Saturday worship service, first approved on a trial basis, has become a fixture, some times with well over two hundred people in attendance.

The Lord did not have in mind a long vacancy for St. John's. The pastoral office was filled by the middle of August.

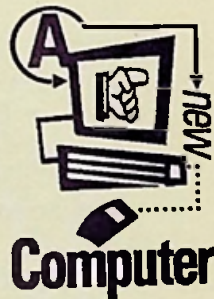
At the end of May, 1991, St. John's extended its first call to seek a replacement for Pastor Kock. That call was extended to Pastor David Kolander, who was serving at St. Paul's, Saginaw, MI. The Lord led Pastor Kolander to accept the calling. He arrived in August.

The congregation had made it clear in its call information that it hoped to consider calling a second pastor to better serve the needs of its members. That goal became a priority right from the outset, but a few other items needed attention before a serious second pastor study could be undertaken.

For example, in December, 1991 the congregation purchased its first computer, with ongoing hardware and software additions becoming part of the church's annual program. In 1993 the secretarial staff was strengthened as Mrs. Mae Tacke was hired as the church's first administrative secretary. Mrs. Ruth Birkholz continued to serve as the church's part-time secretary.

Also, the financial difficulties of the 1980's were met head on. For one thing, a cash flow contingency fund called the "Home Operations Reserve Account" (HORA) was established in 1991. This fund was also to assist in the repayment of member loans which had accumulated over the years.

In addition, numerous all member financial stewardship meetings were held in the spring of 1992. These meetings encouraged members to simplify things for themselves by dividing offerings into two types: first fruit and special gift. Members were reminded that "first fruit" offerings are for everyone who earns or receives money. Determining in advance a portion of that income to return to the Lord is offering the Lord the "first fruit" of what he has given us. "Special gift" offerings are gifts over and above our regular offerings for special needs or projects. Not everyone may be able to participate in such an offering and should not feel burdened to do so. Simply reassessing one's financial situation on a



regular basis to make sure that our first fruit offerings reflect our Lord's generosity to us is the key to God-pleasing financial management.¹²

Two events in 1993 provided an opportunity to review the privilege and the purpose of Christian worship: the installation of the new pipe organ in spring and the introduction of the synod's new hymnal in winter. The congregation's vibrant singing and heartfelt worship continue to be a hallmark of St. John's and make for a most pleasant example and experience for our many guests and visitors.

After this came the second pastor study -- also in 1993. The congregation first held another series of all member meetings to review the meaning of our personal Christian ministry and the purpose of the church's public ministry. After these meetings a committee was appointed to study the matter and make a recommendation. The committee's recommendation to call a second pastor was approved in January, 1994. The first call was made in April. Again, the first pastor called was led to accept that call. Pastor Jeffrey Bovee, then serving at St. Paul's, Menomonie, WI, was installed as St. John's first ever second pastor in June.

More changes resulted from this addition to our congregation's ministry staff. A second parsonage was purchased at 510 S. Jefferson.¹³ Two Sunday School rooms were changed into pastoral offices in the church basement. In this way the pastors' offices and the secretaries' office could be at the same location.

More worship changes also occurred in 1994. A third weekend service was added in the summer months and a fourth service was added to the weekend schedule during the school year. Since that time the congregation has also added a third midweek service to its Advent and Lent schedule. In addition, we have

¹² *The Lord has blessed this straightforward, gospel-centered approach. Offerings from 1991 - 1996 increased from \$321,000 to \$478,000. Also, to avoid confusion regarding "special gift" offerings, the congregation established an "Opportunity List" in an attempt to control the number of projects going on at a certain time in addition to the regular budgetary items.*

¹³ *The congregation presently owns four homes: two parsonages, one teacherage and the house between the teacherage and the church. At the time of the second parsonage purchase, the congregation established a "Property Fund." This fund was established to pay the parsonage mortgage payments and is to be used for any future property expansion.*

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changed our communion procedure so that twenty communicants can now be served at one time in as efficient and dignified way as possible in our present circumstances.

These worship service additions, plus the growing perception that we do not have adequate space for Sunday School rooms, fellowship areas, church offices and our new church library, together with our lack of handicap accessibility, parking and future expansion potential, led the congregation to establish a "Worship/Facilities Planning Committee" in 1995.

After more all member meetings and survey work, the congregation in the summer of 1996 approved the committee's recommendation to work toward the purchase of both properties on either side of the teacherage at 615 S. Washington. In December the first property (617 S. Washington) was purchased. It is presently used for some of our Sunday School classes. This allows the Sunday Bible class, which had been meeting in the St. Paul's School gym, to meet in the main part of the church basement.

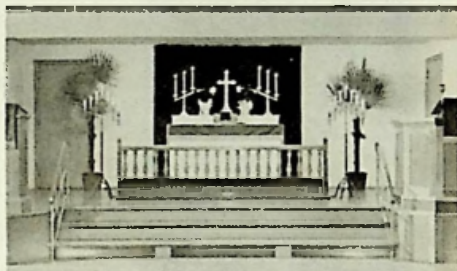
Still more all member meetings in 1997 led the congregational leadership to the conclusion that the members are now waiting for specific expansion plans and suggestions to which to react. Meeting this facility space challenge will certainly be a top priority as the congregation begins its next fifty years of existence.¹⁴

***"Not to us, O Lord, not to us
but to your name be the glory
because of your love and faithfulness."***

¹⁴ Other challenges continue, as well. Those which receive most attention are the desires to make use of more of our members' gifts and talents in congregational and worship life, to find ways to aid families with young children (nursery, children's sermon, better place to sit, etc.), to seek fellowship opportunities so members can know each other better (something which has been hurt by having four worship services) and to implement an ongoing adult Bible study curriculum.



Worship Schedule—ca 1955



Basement Church Chancel



Laying the Cornerstone of
the Superstructure



New Bell for the Superstructure



Pastors Kock & Nitz—1988



40th Anniversary Fellowship



Reroofing the
Bell Tower



Our Pastors and Teachers



Sunday Adult Bible Study



Our Secretaries at Work



Senior Choir Sings Praise



Worship Schedule-1998

The Anniversary Schedule

Our anniversary celebration will not be a one-time event. Rather it will be made up of six worship services which will allow us to keep our anniversary thoughts in front of us from January through November. Our first special service on January 4, will be a way of "kicking off" the celebration.

Schedule of Anniversary Services		
January 4	Epiphany	Anniversary Kick-Off Service → President Karl Gurgel, Preacher → Prof. em. Bruce Backer, Organist (Played for the first services 50 years ago) → Youth and Adult Choirs
March 8	Lent 2	Reflection on Need for Means of Grace → Youth and Adult Choirs
May 10	Easter 5	Christian Education → Youth Choirs, MVL Choir
July 26	Pentecost 8	Fellowship and Service in the Body of Christ → One Service in the MLC Auditorium (9:30 a.m.) → Congregational Catered Meal Following (11:15 a.m.)
September 27	Pentecost 17	Missions and Worker Training → Pastor Tom Trapp, Preacher (1 st baptized son of the congregation in the preaching ministry) → MLC Choirs, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Choir
November 22	Last Sunday of the Church Year	Final Service of Praise → Children's and Adult Choirs

The Anniversary Banners

Note: The anniversary chancel banners may not be available by the time of the January 4 service.

The anniversary banners prepared by the Altar Guild are designed to hang on the chancel wall. There are four banners. Two will hang on each side of the cross.

The colors of the banners reflect the blue and red hues of the sanctuary's stained glass windows. The theme of the banners represents four key areas of Christian life.

The first banner depicts the *Means of Grace*. The Means of Grace are the tools God uses to give us faith and to keep us in faith. On the banner are pictures of the Bible with the sword of the Spirit through it, a communion chalice and a baptismal shell.

The second banner represents the *Fruits of the Spirit*. The hour glass, the treasure bag and the musical design make us think of the Christian's response to the gospel message.

The third banner displays *Missions*. The gospel is a message to be shared. The picture of the eagle stands out, as it takes the word of salvation to people all over the world. The eagle is also the animal which was used by earlier Christians as a "mascot" for the apostle John, for whom our congregation was named.

The fourth banner speaks of *Life Everlasting*. The open tomb and the symbol of the phoenix lead our thoughts to our life in heaven which will not end. There we will be forever united with all those who have heard and believed the gospel of our Lord.



The Anniversary Offering

Since November, 1997 we have been providing monthly anniversary thank offering envelopes. These envelopes will continue to be distributed until November, 1998, the last month of our anniversary celebration.

The first portion of the offering will be used to cover the anniversary expenses. These include monies needed for two guest preachers, special music, guest choirs, banners, booklet materials, postage, publicity and assistance for a congregational fellowship dinner. [For the sake of information the amounts of expenses will be publicized once they become known.]

The biggest expenses will be for the dinner and for the anniversary booklet. The goal of the dinner is to have no charge for attending, but to have a free will offering. Money needed above the free will offering receipts will be taken from the offering. In this way we hope that every single member who wishes to attend will be able to attend.

The main part of the offering will be used to give assistance to three main projects: our Property Fund (70%), our Organ Fund (15%) and our shared work in MVL's "Expanding the Mission" and our WELS mission program (15% divided in half for each).

The *Property Fund* is the fund which receives monies to pay on the mortgages of the parsonage at 510 S. Jefferson and the "Sunday School" house next to church at 617 S. Washington. It also is designed to be the "seed fund" for possible future expansion.

The *Organ Fund* is the fund set up for the payment of our organ installation cost. The initial cost of our contract (about \$143,000) was paid up in 1993. What remains to be installed are three sets of pipes which were provided for when the organ was built, but were left unfinished until money became available. The first of these three sets of pipes was installed this past November.

MVL's "*Expanding the Mission*" project was the building addition which was dedicated in 1996. The *WELS mission* portion of our offering will be designated for the general mission fund of our synod.

Our hope is that members will first determine if they are able to participate in this offering over and above their regular first fruit offerings. Then they will need to see if they can share an offering on a one-time or ongoing basis. Gifts large and small which reflect our gratefulness to God will be a fitting way to give glory "not unto us," but to our dear Lord and Savior.

The Anniversary Project

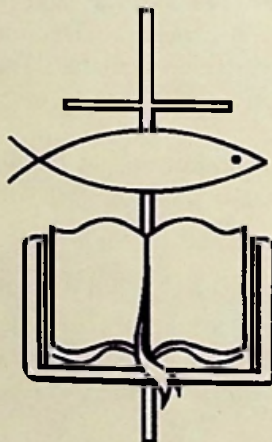
The entire reason for coming with praise to God is because he has come in his love to us. He comes to us by giving us his Holy Word. We receive the benefit of everything the Bible offers when we listen to it, read it and study it.

What we hope will be a much appreciated aspect of our anniversary celebration is a Bible reading project which will allow every single member of the congregation to highlight the main points of the entire Bible. In this way all of us "together" can see how the Lord worked out his salvation history by promising and sending Jesus.

The goal is twofold:

1. Commit yourself (or with your friend, spouse or family) to take part in this Bible reading project.
2. Commit two time periods per week over the 45 week period from January 11 to November 22 to read the selections provided for you. The amount of material for each period is usually about one to one and one-half Bible chapters.

The ninety readings are listed on the pull-out sheet of this booklet. May the Lord bless you individually, and may he bless us as a congregation, as hundreds of our members, we pray, join in this soul-enriching project of reviewing our Lord God's salvation history.



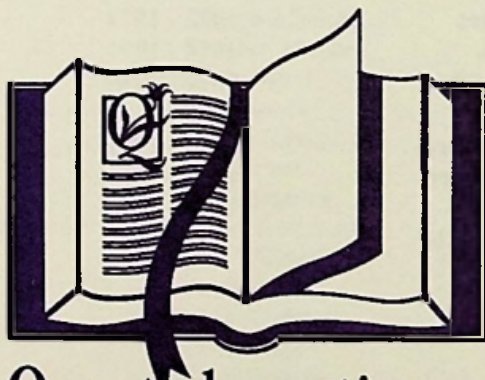
The Anniversary Bible Class

A special feature of our anniversary celebration will be our midweek Bible study. The course will be a six week study of St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians. It will be entitled "Not unto Us." The book of Ephesians is an excellent book to highlight the amazing grace of our God – and to provide opportunity for discussion on a variety of topics.

For example, as we study this six chapter letter, we will address topics such as:

- predestination,
- decision theology,
- prejudice,
- church fellowship,
- the husband-wife relationship, and
- the world of the supernatural.

The class will be held at its normal times of 10:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday's, beginning January 14. In addition, earlier information sought to determine if we would be able to have a "Breakfast Class" and a "Mother's Class," as well. Details on these additional classes have either already been passed on, or soon will be.



Our study continues...

Our Pastors and Teachers

Years at St. John's

Pastors

Prof. Martin Albrecht	1948 - 1950
Pastor Roland Gurgel	1950 - 1953
Pastor Rollin Reim	1953 - 1959
Pastor Frederic Nitz	1959 - 1978
Pastor Norval Kock	1979 - 1991
Pastor David Kolander	1991 -
Pastor Jeffrey Bovee	1994 -

Directors of Christian Education

Mr. Merlyn Kruse	1970 - 1977
Mr. Craig Kitzrow	1977 - 1980
Mr. Tod Hauf	1980 - 1989
Mr. David Zabel	1989 - 1997

Teachers

Miss Beth Washow	1971 - 1972
Miss Mary Hubbard	1972 - 1974
Mrs. Gwen Hirsch	1974 - 1979
Mrs. Marcella Lowry	1979 - 1980
Mrs. Jean Schroeder	1980 -
Miss Diane Falkenberg	1982 - 1985
Mrs. Marlene Wendler	1985 -
Miss Wendy Ristow	1990 -
Mrs. Jeneane Thiesfeldt	1997 -

During the past fifty years many sons and daughters of St. John's have entered the public ministry of the church as pastors and teachers. Through these ministers of the gospel St. John's certainly has made an impact in our churches, missions and schools all over our nation and world.

Listed below are "children" of St. John's who at one time during their school years were members of our congregation. Our apologies to any we may have missed. In addition, we presently have several students studying at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and Martin Luther College.

Pastors

Martin Janke
 Ronald Muetzel
 Clark Sievert
 Louis Sievert
 John Trapp
 David Luetke
 Jonathan Schoeneck
 Jonathan Nitz
 Mark Hirsch
 Edward Fredrich III
 Daniel Luetke
 Thomas Trapp
 Ronald Mehlberg
 James Oldfield
 James Huebner
 Daniel Nitz
 Joel Luetke
 Marcus Manthey
 David Huebner
 Philip Hirsch
 Gregg Schoeneck
 Timothy Schoeneck
 Kevin Raddatz
 Mark Wessel
 Paul Koelpin
 Stephen Raddatz
 Paul Hirsch
 Daniel Borgwardt

John Koelpin

Keith Wessel

Michael Borgwardt

Teachers

Richard Brei
 Elizabeth Brown
 Barbara Duehlmeier
 Ellen Albrecht
 Jerry Gronholz
 Elizabeth Albrecht
 Bruce Heckmann
 Carla Hoenecke
 Thekla Hoenecke
 Janet Albrecht
 Kathryn Albrecht
 Gretchen Manthey
 Gloria Nitz
 Myra Rohde
 Jerome Scheitel
 Lois Sievert
 Karen Stoering
 Naomi Heckmann
 Ruth Willhite
 Naomi Voecks
 Marley Zahn
 Lois Lindke
 Carol Hartwig
 Dale Stelter

Wilbur Beckendorf

Philip Janke

Marianne Albrecht

Steven Bilitz

Elizabeth Brown

Lois Brick

Margaret Brown

James Duehlmeier

Gene Gronholz

John Gronholz

Katherine Hartwig

Gerald Heckmann

Mona Hoenecke

Fredrick Janke

Beverly Just

Grace Luetke

Shirleen Mehlberg

John Oldfield, Jr.

Annemarie Backer

Carolyn Schmidt

David Stoering

Joan Trapp

John Tjernagel

Ruth Heckmann

Christine Zahn

Janet Huebner

Paul Hartwig

Susan Hartwig

Lenette Stoltenburg

Teachers (cont'd)

Christine Tews
Janice Braun
Margaret Nitz
Kristine Hirsch
Paul Luetke
Rachel Gerlach
Rebecca Schroeder
Warren Backer
Jon Hall
Kimarie Tacke
Susan Blaaid
Theresa Yanz
Eric Paulsen
Grace Wessel
Claire Wessel
Martin LaGrow
Julia Braun
Gregory Schibblehut
Martha Krueger
Bethany Kuster
Matthew Doering
Michelle Steinberg

Lois Schoeneck
Richard Schwartz
Kathleen Boerneke
Ruth Luetke
Beth Wessel
Lin Tacke
John Hartwig
Karen Stoltenburg
Ruth Denninger
Mark Koelpin
James Braun
Andrew Plocher
Barbara Miller
Kelly Paulsen
Pamela Lenz
Peter Micheel
Jennifer Hermanson
Sarah Lawrenz
Jodi Hermanson
Carolyn Olsen
James Dretske
Robert Willhite

Timothy Schroeder
Lee Boerneke
Kathleen Hirsch
Rachel Luetke
Mark Tacke
Susan Yanz
Jean Boerneke
Rachel Borgwardt
David Schroeder
Gregg Birkholz
Thomas Libka
Andrew Willems
Nathan Raddatz
Kristin Paulsen
Michael Plocher
Heidi Schneider
Mary Hussman
Jonathan Plocher
Theodore Olsen, Jr.
Deborah Shilling
Beth Schneider
Thomas Schwartz



"The Mission"

Our Congregation's First ...

Chairman
Secretary
Financial Secretary
Treasurer
Deacon
Trustees

Roland Hoenecke
Alvin Rolloff (Fred Nieno)
William Brei
William Backer
Robert Kolb
Helmuth Hagen
Walter Plagge
Stanley Spangenberg

Ladies Aid

President
Vice President
Secretary
Treasurer

Olga Voecks
Alpha Vogel
Evelyn Plagge
Ruth Birkholz

Altar Guild

President
Vice President
Secretary-Treasurer

Irene Manthey
Dorothy Grams
Dorothy Westphal

Young Peoples Society

President
Secretary
Treasurer

Robert Willhite
Roger Hagen
Ruth Willhite

Senior Choir Director

Martin Albrecht

Children's Choir Director

Martin Albrecht

Sunday School Superintendent

Erich Sievert

Vacation Bible School Director

Pastor Rollin Reim

Historical Highlights

- October 19, 1947 The first service of a potential second WELS congregation in New Ulm is held at the old St. Paul's School. 81 attend. DMLC Prof. Martin Albrecht serves as the pastor.
- January 4, 1948 St. John's is officially organized as a congregation.
- Later in the same year the two present church lots are purchased for \$5,500. Ground is broken for the "basement church" in May.
- October 4, 1948 The decision is made to support St. Paul's School at the rate of \$10 per communicant.
- October 7, 1948 The first choir practice is held. Prof. Albrecht is the director.
- January, 1949 The first budget is adopted – \$5,000.
- February 13, 1949 The basement church is dedicated. A \$20,550 loan from the synod speeds the process.
- March 6, 1949 Sunday School begins. Prof. Erich Sievert and Naomi Voecks are the staff.
- Later in the year the Ladies Aid is organized.
- June 25, 1950 Pastor Roland Gurgel is installed.
- Later in the year a parsonage at 517 S. Washington is purchased for \$14,000.
- Also later in 1950 the Young Peoples Society is established.
- On December 24 the first children's Christmas Eve service is held.
- February 10, 1952 A used pipe organ is purchased from the Ernest Vogelpohl Organ Company for \$2,500.

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|-------------------|--|
| March 7, 1954 | Pastor Rollin Reim is installed. |
| July 13, 1954 | Vacation Bible School meets for the first time. |
| January 4, 1958 | The congregation's membership at its Tenth Anniversary numbers 538 souls. |
| November 1, 1959 | Pastor Frederic Nitz is installed. |
| June 9, 1963 | The parsonage at 800 S. State, erected on donated lots, is finished at a cost of \$20,300. |
| December 11, 1966 | St. John's "superstructure" is dedicated. The cost is \$160,000. |
| | In 1967 congregational offerings surpass \$50,000. |
| | In 1968 the Altar Guild is formed. |
| | In 1970 the 615 S. Washington teacherage is purchased for \$21,000. Mr. Merlyn Kruse becomes the congregation's first Director of Christian Education and teacher at St. Paul's School. |
| October 17, 1971 | The congregation resolves to produce its first pictorial directory. |
| March 18, 1979 | St. John's becomes a member of the new Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School Association, formed soon after Martin Luther Academy moves to Prairie du Chien, WI. |
| June 3, 1979 | Pastor Norval Kock is installed as pastor. |
| January 23, 1983 | St. John's becomes part of the Twin Cities Lutheran Institutional Ministry (LIMA) to make use of our WELS hospital chaplain (since expanded to Rochester hospitals and to the Twin Cities and Mankato college campuses). |
| | In 1985 an organ committee is appointed to study the possibility of making a new church organ the congregation's fortieth anniversary project. |

- August 18, 1991 Pastor David Kolander is installed as pastor.
In December the church's first computer is purchased.
- March 7, 1993 The church's new pipe organ is dedicated.
- August 1, 1993 St. John's hires an administrative secretary, Mae Tacke, to work in addition to its part-time secretary, Ruth Birkholz.
- October 31, 1993 "Christian Worship," the new WELS hymnal, is used for the first time.
- June 26, 1994 Pastor Jeffery Bovee is installed as St. John's first second pastor.
In November the congregation purchases a second parsonage at 510 S. Jefferson for \$88,000.
- February 16, 1995 Facilities Planning Committee meets for the first time.
- September 1, 1995 The Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service (WLCFS) opens an office in New Ulm.
- December 23, 1996 The house at 617 S. Washington is purchased for \$92,000.

50 Years—Our Congregation's Growth

Year	Souls	Communicants	Pastoral Acts	
1948	100	84	Baptisms	685
1958	538	349	Youth Confirmations	677
1973	750	529	Adult confirmations	116
1998	1101	867	Weddings	307
			Funerals	198