

## Immanuel Lutheran Church History

One mile north of Penn Church, St John's church began in 1887. A group of six families of Lutheran style beliefs got together to fill the community's need for this particular doctrine. This group organized on December 26<sup>th</sup>, St. Stephen's Day, 1895. The charter members were Joseph Zander, Frank Booth,



Pastor C. Dreyer  
1888-1900

Ferdinand Hochsprung, Frank Groth, Albert Polsfuss and William Bullert. Rev Christian Dreyer of the Missouri Synod, Glencoe, MN, came every other Sunday afternoon to conduct services at the local Congregational Church. Under the guidance of Rev Dreyer, The German Evangelical Lutheran Immanuel Church was incorporated on June 9, 1896. On February 9, 1897, the congregation purchased a small building on the second lot south of Merrill Street and east of Grimshaw Avenue (now Division and 5<sup>th</sup> Ave). Pastor Dreyer continued to serve the congregation with the assistance of theological students.

Under this arrangement, students of Theology from the Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, IL, assisted in religious instruction for a year.

Upon his graduation from Concordia, Candidate August Lange was called as the first resident pastor of Immanuel Congregation. Rev Lange was installed August 12, 1900, by Rev R Koehler of Gaylord, MN. In the following year the congregation erected a wood frame church building 30 by 50 by 18 feet, with a stone foundation, including a tower with a bell and belfry 12 by 12 by 75 feet tall. The church stood on a lot 150 by 122 feet located on the corner of Merrill and Elm streets (now Division and 6<sup>th</sup> Ave S) costing \$400. The dedication of the new church was held on November 3, 1901. In 1902, the old church property was sold for \$462.50 and the money was used to build a new school house located next to the new church. A parsonage was added in 1904. As pupil enrollment increased, a new school house was erected in 1912, located two blocks east of the church.



Pastor A. Lange

In 1904 Pastor Lange, theological students and some lady teachers taught the students. In 1913 a professional parochial teacher, Adolph Richter accepted the Call to teach the 60-70 students.

Pastor Lange served as pastor until 1903, when he accepted a call from Norwood, IL. His successor, Rev August C Bode, was installed in December of that year, and served the congregation until October, 1915. The parsonage was completed under the pastorate of Rev C Bode in 1912 at a cost of \$1600, not including the foundation. Membership at Immanuel numbered 600 with 108 voting members. An occasional English service was held. Pastor Bode was succeeded by Rev Henry Weerts, who served until 1937.



Pastor August C. Bode



Teacher Adolph Richter

During the pastorate of Rev Weerts, the Ladies Aid, under synod direction of Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) was organized in 1918. The Mission Charity Circle began in 1920, and Sunday School classes began in May of 1935.

Gradually, the services transitioned from German to the English language, fading in the 1910's, to semi-monthly in the 1920's, and eventually changed to all English.

The annual Mission Festival of Immanuel Lutheran Church was celebrated Sunday, July 17, 1919. A six piece orchestra consisting of members, Robert Zimmerman, Otto and August Spiering, Walter Prah, Walter Knick and Wm Zander led the congregational singing.

In 1919 the members of Immanuel struggled with the decision to renovate the old church building or to build a new church. The vote passed to build. By 1920 immigration to the US had reached one of the highest peaks. Membership at Immanuel increased also generating interest in the preliminary construction plans for the new church. A piece of property 100 by 300 feet, on the site of the present church, was purchased from Fred and Alwiene Zimmerman for \$6500, March 18, 1920. A house, standing on the north end of the property later became the parsonage. As the country struggled through hard times of the Depression, the members of Immanuel tabled the construction of the new church until 1923. The congregation approved a blue print of a double tower church as presented by architect A F Gauger. Construction began in April 1923, with Martin Carlstad of Litchfield the contractor, with a bid for \$30,400 for a red brick building with a white brick trim. During the construction of the church, Martin lived with the Robert Zimmerman family.

The building site of the church was a swampy pond with a history of quicksand pockets. Ducks and wildlife were often seen in the swamp before construction began. Horse pulled land scrappers were used to dig the basement, with a near disaster when the team owned by Ed Hochsprung got stuck in the quicksand. Many of the congregational members offered their help instead of a cash donation. Loads of hard rocks hauled in by horse and wagon were dumped into the quicksand pockets to build up support. John Zieman (Leila Klabunde's brother) remembered being employed during the construction of the church and running on the roof like a spider. All the glass for the church was purchased from Foreman Ford & Co for a cost of \$1472. An order was placed with A R Yeshick for wiring, but switches and fixtures were not included. Mr A Zaske, from Brownton, hauled bricks from the railroad drop site to the church site. The total of \$2330 was spent to purchase furniture for the church; the altar \$415, the pulpit, \$255, and the seating pews \$1660. The furnace cost \$1100. Two toilets, one for the women, and one for the men were installed. On April 2, 1924, an eight stop organ was installed by Schulke Organ Co of Milwaukee, WI, for \$2400. Interior decorating for the church was approved for \$1600.

The cornerstone was laid on Sunday, July 1, 1923 by Rev Weerts before a large assembly of people including many visitors. The old altar and pulpit were donated to Rev Krull, Pastor of the Peace Lutheran Church in Cosmos.

The charter officers of the church were; Deacons, F W Booth, Frank Groth; Trustees, William Bullert, Joseph Zander, Albert Polsfuss; Treasurer, William Bullert; Secretary, F W Booth.



Pastor Henry Weerts

The original ledgers recorded the first Baptism; Frederick Zander, son of Mr & Mrs Joseph Zander born August 16, 1896; First marriage; Robert Zander and Louise Hochsprung on June 25, 1897; first funeral Richard Ostermann, son of Mr & Mrs August Ostermann June 1896; first Confirmation class, Amalia Bullert and Emma Ostermann on April 24, 1898.

The official dedication of the church was celebrated on Dedication Sunday, March 9, 1924. As the congregation marched from the old church to the new church, they sang "*Macht Hoch Die Tur Die Tor Macht Weit* (Lift Up your Heads Ye Mighty Gates), accompanied by the City of Brownnton Band. "*Behold the king of glory waits; The King of kings is drawing near, the Savior of the world is here. Life and salvation He doth bring. Wherefore rejoice and gladly sing: We praise Thee, Father now, Creator, wise art thou.*" The vision filled the congregation's souls, even though the weather was cold and blustery. Consider the excitement of the march, the vision of Majestic Heavenly Gates of Salvation as they would contemplate a new, strong, religious future. Captured by words in the hymn and the sight of the majestic brick building you feel a strong German faith. The service consisted of several hymns, Scripture readings, and the sermon followed by the Creed, gathering of the offerings and the closing hymns. This service was entirely in German. A chicken dinner was served in the church basement. After the dedication ceremony at two o'clock, which was half German and half English, coffee and cookies were served. It was celebrated as an extended family day, with many visitors who were relatives of the congregation families. The evening service was entirely in English.

The speaker system in the new church consisted of six dry cell batteries, which operated hand held ear phones, and were placed every three to four pews throughout the church. You could see the choir, because it was located at the front of the church and it was composed of male members only. Teenagers of the congregation with the help of the Ladies Aid purchased the first organ. The stained glass windows were part of the original blue print, and were paid for by individual donations from Frank Groth, Herman Rickert, Mrs Wm Rathke, Alfred Schatz, Otto Schatz, Fred Zimmermann, Alwiene Zimmermann and Mrs Carl Rickert. (Not all windows have donor plaques.)

The original bell, cast in 1906 in St Louis, Missouri, inscribed with "EHRE SEI GOTT IN DER HOHE EV LUTH IMMANUELS GEMEINDE, BROWNTON, MN (Glory to God in the Highest) was moved from the old tower in October of 1923 and installed in the new tower. There are no records of how they accomplished this heavy lift. The bell would be rung before the worship service, a change from the old bell ringing which rang before and after each service. Fredrich Kujas was the first custodian of the new church. During the construction period, Herman Rickert served as the Treasurer. Mrs Otto Spiering played a role in organizing the Sunday School. Elsie Booth, the Ladies Aid Secretary, recorded the meeting minutes in both German and English. She also encouraged female voices be part of the church choir. In June, the church picnics were held in the Elmer Schatz woods, located east of the City Cemetery.



There were many difficult decisions to be made. The issue of language, German or English troubled many, as did the seating arrangements in the church. Do the men continue to sit on the west side of the aisle and the women and children on the east side, or would combined family seating be acceptable?

When members arrived for service it was customary for them to say a silent prayer before sitting down. Most members sat in the same pew each Sunday, close to the front of the church, so if you did not attend, everyone knew. Communicants knelt before and after Communion to pray. By 1931-1933 the Pastor's salary was \$1200 per year, while the teacher's salary was at \$1000 per year.

From the days of Rev Lange until 1945 the church enjoyed a flourishing growth in membership, recorded as 804 baptized members and owning \$6000 in physical facilities.

The current church, brick structure, was built in 1923-1924 at a cost of \$45000. A 3000 pipe organ was installed shortly after the completion of the building. In 1929 the interior of the church was decorated at a cost of \$2000, and in 1931 the Ladies Aid Society donated \$800 to finish the basement. Pastor Bode struggled with preaching in the German or English language. December 25, 1929 the first Christmas program was performed in English. In 1930 the congregation resolved to hold English services on two Sundays a month, in addition to the offered German services. With the approval of the congregation, Pastor Weerts organized a Sunday School on May 19, 1935, with an enrollment of 55 children. After serving 22 years of faithful ministry, Pastor Weerts resigned due to increasing physical disability, on June 20, 1937, and with his family moved to Wentworth, SD. Rev Alfred Streufert of Glencoe served as interim pastor.

At a Special meeting July 11, 1937 the congregation elected and called Pastor Gerhard Schmidt of St



Paul's Church at Blue Earth, MN and Teacher M F Noennig of Young America, MN who succeeded Teacher Bonnin, who had resigned at the end of the school year. Both men accepted their call; Teacher Noennig was inducted into office August 29 and Pastor Schmidt on September 5.



Teacher M. F. Noennig

One of the requirements established by the congregation for the new pastor was that services be held in both the German and English languages on every Sunday to accommodate all members of the church.

Late in the fall of 1937, a Young People's Society was organized by Lilly Polzin-Seeland-Schwarzrock. A year later the group divided into a Senior and a Junior Society. As the enrollment of students increased by 1939, the congregation employed lady teachers under yearly contracts, to support the male teachers.

In 1941 Teacher Noennig accepted a call from Emmanuel Congregation of Hamburg, MN His successor E G Kalb, Teacher and Organist, had taught sixteen years at Immanuel School Plainview, MN. He accepted the call and was inducted August 30, 1942.

Property owned by the church at this time included the parsonage, the teacher's residence, a frame structure built in 1912 used for Day School and a spacious cemetery located at the south edge of the Village of Brownton. Officers of Immanuel Church at the time of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary were as follows:

Pastor Schmidt

Chairman; Herbert Timm, Secretary; Teacher E G Kalb, Treasurer; August Maass, Board of Deacons; Otto Rickert, Fred Schmidt, Theo Zimmermann, Edwin Rickert; Board of Trustees, A A Redmann, Herbert Timm, Ernst Hardel, School Board; Albert Spaude, Henry Krohn, Gustav Witte. Membership included 804 Baptized members, 166 voting members, 610 Communicants, 63 children in Day School, and 92 Children in Sunday School.

All four preceding pastors, Rev August Lange, Rev A C Bode, Rev Henry Weerts, and Rev Gerhard Schmidt attended the celebration in 1945.

In 1945 Teacher E G Kalb took a call to Cleveland, OH, and during his vacancy interim organists were paid \$1 for each service they played. In 1946 Mr W O Nurnberg accepted the call to teach at Immanuel for \$1800 per year. In 1947 the teacher's salary increased to \$2100 per year as did the Pastor's salary increase to \$2300 per year. W O Nuernberg resigned in 1947 and a call was made to Mr Winfried Clasen who accepted the call at a salary of \$2400 per year. Pastor Schmidt's salary increased to \$2600 per year.

In 1948 all members of the church, as seated, were ushered to Communion which was a change from prior years when male members always received before female members. The Constitution of the church was translated into English. The parochial school received a new sewer system for a cost of \$1467.

Pastor Schmidt's firm and courageous leadership served the congregation well, as it recovered from The Depression, and endured the trials of World War II. After 12 years of ministry, Pastor Schmidt accepted a call to Leaf Valley, MN in 1949. He was succeeded by Pastor R W Koepp, who served



Pastor R W Koepp

Immanuel for 34 years. The Schultz property, adjacent to the church was purchased and in 1949 a new parsonage was built on the church property. During the construction of the parsonage, Pastor Koepp and his family lived in the Melvin Abraham's home on the Spiering farm north of Brownnton. The Otto Spiering family shared their home with their daughter and her family (Mrs Melvin Abraham) leaving her home for use by Pastor Koepp. The church budget for the year was \$9500 with Mr Theodore Zimmermann serving as

Chairman of the congregation. English services were scheduled at 9 am; German services at 10:30 am. Sunday School classes were offered in the summer of 1950. Pastor Koepp was allowed two Sunday's off as vacation with additional time if he needed. The church building was shingled in 1951 for \$1980 and a telephone was installed in the church basement.

Mr Stuart Firnhaber accepted the call to serve as Teacher in 1952 after the resignation of Teacher Clasen. In 1953 many line item budget projects needed attention; the parsonage and picket fence needed painting, the problem of the sound system in the church needed attention.

Pastor Koepp stressed the need for more Mission money, purchase of a new organ discussions, interior redecorating of the church, and remodeling of the chancel were ongoing.

The church building itself received constant attention through renovation, remodeling and redecorating. In 1955 a new organ was installed costing \$10596 as the congregation celebrated the 60<sup>th</sup> year of its founding. A new teacher, Theodore Aufdemberge, came in mid-August of 1956, replacing Teacher

Firhaber, who had resigned. In January of 1957 the house, located on the north exit of the parking lot, belonging to Henriette Schmidt was purchased for \$4500. July 12, 1957 the City of Brownton celebrated 100 years with a parade. A rented float from the Men's Club of Peace Lutheran Church of Hutchinson, MN represented Immanuel church of Brownton. The Lutheran synod recognized 100 years of Christian Education in our country on November 10, 1957. In 1958 the school was closed due to declining enrollment. The school building and lot were advertised in the local papers, with bids accepted by two-thirds ballot majority ruling. All bids were rejected and a majority favored a property value of \$1250.

In July of 1959 Mr Edward Schamber was called as Director of Education and Organist. Many discussions were held regarding the building; location, and a cost estimate of the Education Building for the project to include heating, plumbing, electrical wiring and electrical fixtures. A Finance Committee was appointed and asked to report on the preliminary financial survey at a special meeting. Mr. Ed Pinske of Plato was awarded the contract for \$63114.70, with additional changes of \$3186.30 added and accepted at a special meeting held for congregational vote. The Trustees were authorized to sign the contract, and the Financial Committee presented their plan for fund raising. It was accepted.

The Education Building was erected in 1959-1960, to better serve Sunday School and Release Time student classes. The two story structure was designed with a Chapel room, church office, Director of Christian Education (DCE) office, pastor office, and individual classrooms for Elementary students. Sunday School enrollment reached 137 students; Communicant members numbered 600. The public address system, a carillon, carpet and air conditioning for the Chapel were smaller projects. On January 1, 1961, Theodore A Wacker accepted the position as Minister of Christian Education and Music. With the completion of the new Education Building, the Sunday School program flourished and Release Time classes for grades 1-8 offered a full schedule of religious instruction.

Immanuel Lutheran was blessed by the settlement gift of the farm Estate of Mr Otto Sell. In February of 1963, the newly formed Board of Trustees, were authorized to sell the Otto Sell farm for \$200 per acre; stipulated that after the cash settlement, the principle Trust Fund remained in Trust, and only the yearly interest payments could be spent; 60% to the church, 30% to the cemetery, and 10% to the Ladies Aid Society. A separate Treasurer was appointed to manage the Trust Funds and Memorials account.

A study of the church Constitution and By-Laws articles pertinent to the congregation were to be discussed at voter meetings, however, interest in the articles waned by 1963. A weekly envelope system began that same year.

The parking lot was black topped in 1963 for \$1095. In 1964, the church was redecorated to cover the exposed beams of the ceiling. In January, Ed Pinske was contracted with expectations to complete the project by Lent, adding new lighting and fixtures to be installed.

The exterior brick walls were also tuck pointed. It was reported the decorating fund was running out of money. A review of the membership was done with the Deacons appointed to visit each non-contributing member, to ask them to contribute funds to the church, or have their names removed

from membership. The Concordia Retirement Plan was adopted for Ministers of Religion (ordained and commissioned) of the synod.

In 1967, the 450<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation was celebrated in Europe. Pastor Koepf's graduating class was celebrating their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary by traveling to Europe to recognize the milestone celebration. A unanimous vote was cast by the members of Immanuel in favor of paying for the trip so the Koepf's could join in the celebration.

Several committees within the church congregation suggested improvements for voter approval; Individual Communion service by the Ladies Aid passed, a monthly donation to the missions for \$1000 passed, purchasing the Kucera property failed, Cathedral Mass Chimes for the organ passed, carpeting the church basement by the Ladies Aid passed, with left over dollars used to purchase tables, and a rail and shield across the front pews passed and was installed by Robert Streseman in 1969.

A 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee was organized in 1969 with appointed members, Herb Zaske, LeRoy Hedtke, Darrel Radke, Lester Alsleben, and Burton Zimmerman. The proposal of printing an anniversary pictorial book passed. At this time the Synod convention in Denver sent a recommendation that Immanuel declare their attitude toward pulpit and altar fellowship between LCMS and ALC. Another Synod resolution proposed regarding the right of women to vote and to hold office resulted in no discussion or motion to the resolution. Immanuel properties continued to be repaired, including the leak in the bell tower, the cracks in the parking lot, and a proposal for an addition to the south end of the church. The elected church council members were as follows; Chairman, Lawrence Rickert; Secretary, LeRoy Hedtke; Treasurer, Neil Katzenmeyer; Trust Fund Treasurer, Gust Witte; Deacons, Donald Huebert, Orville Rickert, Wm Pinske, Herbert Zaske; Board of Education, Ray Lindeman, Clarence Schatz, Lee Henke, Orel Ziemann; Trustees, John Sommer, Paul Schatz, Lester Lindeman; Head Usher, Donovan Fischer; Assistant Head Usher, Rufus Draeger; Cemetery Board, Ervin Muchow, Alfred Kurtzweg, Henry Hedtke, Elmer Maass, Ervin Raeth, Martin Lindeman, Henry Streich, Walter Radke.

98 students attended Release Time Classes and the congregation applied for a Tax Exempt number for relief of sales taxes.

The 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrated October 11, 1970, with 1610 members and visitors attending. Morning services were led by Rev Victor A Ostermann, and Rev Koepf; afternoon services by Rev Leslie A Weerts (Grandson of former Rev Henry Weerts), Liturgist, Rev Robert Alsleben (a son of the congregation), Organist Mrs Milfort F Noennig, and Choir Director Theo Wacker with Trumpeters, Curtis Kloempkin and Frederick Bipes. A noon meal was served at the Brownston School Gymnasium, with 900 plates served.

In 1971 many issues were resolved; purchase of a snow blower, repair basement windows, plant shrubbery, an offer to purchase Fred Kucera property, tabled, funds for the Parish Renewal and the Mission Life Program, rental of a safety deposit box at First State Bank, Brownston, an appeal to support Lutheran Social Services, formation of a committee to celebrate 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Synod.

After one year it was resolved to discontinue Mission Life material in Sunday School, and change to The Life of Christ series. Communicant members were encouraged to become voting members. Property

maintenance included; sewer assessment, bids to install a new furnace, awarded to Heuer Plumbing & Heating, Winthrop, MN, consider a bid for the purchase of the former parochial school, request from the Ladies Aid Society to remodel the kitchen into the east furnace area, and in 1974, the parsonage was re-sided with Masonite Color Lok siding. M Wacker resigned as Organist and Director of Christian Education (DCE); William Kessler filled the vacancy in August of 1975. Architectural blue prints were presented for the addition on the front south side of the church and in March of 1976 the Narthex addition was awarded for \$99159 including a skylight to Soeffker Construction. In July women gained the right to vote at church meetings by one vote. Brick tuck pointing, and stained glass windows were repaired.

In 1983 Ken Tatkenhorst and family arrived to fill the DCE position; a new piano was purchased, and Pastor Koepp retired in June. Pastor David Anderson accepted the call to fill the vacancy. Leola Schmidt was hired as Pastor Anderson's secretary. The DCE and Pastor Anderson led the Youth Group in the performance of a live Passion Play, starting a tradition that followed for many years.



Ken  
Tatkenhorst



Pastor  
Anderson



Leola  
Schmidt

Ken

Outdoor services were held in Lake Marion Park during the summer months, and the Fellowship Club traveled to Mackinac Island in July. Pastor Anderson accepted a call to Peace Church in Hutchinson, despite the plea of the congregation to stay and serve Immanuel. In the absence of a pastor, Tatkenhorst taught eight grade Confirmation classes and Dawn Wolter did the same with the seventh graders.

Pastor Kitzmann accepted the call and was installed July 19, 1987. Ken Tatkenhorst was released to Cape Girado, MO, but left a donation of bible study tapes in memory of his daughter Carolee, who had passed away. The 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary was celebrated with the printing of a new pictorial directory with an updated history of the church. In 1988 a new elevator was installed in the Narthex, and Burt Kucera volunteered to replace Jack Stresemann as custodian. A German service was held on October 23, 1988 with Pastor Kitzmann officiating. A sound system committee raised \$8851 to replace the sound system and Saturday evening services began. In April, 1989 the stained glass windows were repaired at a cost of \$6800. In June at a special meeting, the Hennessey property, located on the east side of the Education Building, was purchased.



Pastor  
Kitzmann



Burt  
Kucera

January of 1990, Robin Geidel, Intern DCE and Director of Music was installed. The Lily Schwarzrock Memorial funded the costs for a preschool religious program. Furnace replacement and request by the Ladies Aid Society to remodel the kitchen were given the go ahead. Twenty two children registered for the pre-school with Marsha Scheetz employed as the teacher.



Robin Geidel

In 1990 the school census recorded 108 students in Sunday School, 60 students Release Time Classes and 24 students in Preschool.

In January of 1992 the presidents of all the church committees formed a Centennial planning group to plan the agenda for the celebration; Dawn Wolter, memorabilia, cookbooks, plates, Christmas ornaments



for sale; Kay Husfeldt, quilt design and construction, Annette Zimmerman, pictorial and church history Directory. The Anniversary dates were scheduled as follows; December 26, 1994 Organ concert with Ken Tatkenhorst and church choir; April 23, 1995 Music Festival Concert; July 30, 1995 Main Summer Event, a Confirmation/Wedding Banquet and Anniversary dinner; October 29, German Dinner; December 25, 1995, Christmas Cantata, 'The Birth of a King' and Christmas Carols.

Immanuel Church continued to make improvements and renovations to the property, including furnace installation, landscaping with shrubs and rocks around the Narthex, parking lot repair, and attention to the St John's Cemetery. Elsie Karg donated \$5000 for the air conditioner in the church kitchen. An Evangelism/Stewardship task force, with Mark Mathwig, Kay Husfeldt, Dale Schuman, Bryon Kohls, and Eleanor Lietz was organized to welcome new members, with packets of information focused on 'Bring Back the Family' to interest folks in joining the family of Immanuel. Helen Henke of the Anniversary committee, requested display items such as Wedding dresses, photos, memorabilia, and certificates such as Baptism, Confirmation and Marriage.

In 1994 Release Time Classes changed their schedule from Wednesday morning to 1 pm to 3 pm, in the afternoon with 50 students enrolled; 90 students were enrolled in Sunday School, with 23 students enrolled in Preschool. 206 families were photographed for the Centennial pictorial directory. In 1995, Mavis Smith was installed on Rally Sunday as the DCE and Director of Music, replacing Robin Geidel.



The church officers for the Centennial year were as follows; Chairman, Darel Henke; Vice Chairman, Todd Albrecht; Secretary, Marlene Timm; Treasurer, Carol Winterfeldt; Trust Fund Treasurer, Neil Katzenmeyer; Deacons, Robert Heil, Rodney Schwarze, Roger Draeger, Mark Mathwig, Daniel Rickert, Dean Zimmerman; Trustees, Clyde Zieman, Wayne Templin, Jim Sondergaard, Larry Husfeldt; Board of Education, Doug Benson, Dale Schumann, Brian Dressel, Gerald Zaske; Head Usher Jeremy Sondergaard; Assistant Head Usher, David Paehlke; Cemetery Board, Wallace Grochow, Ray Schuette, Vernon Rickert, Rufus Draeger, Martin Winterfeldt, Harvey Henke, Clarence Hedtke. Harold Stressman volunteered to serve as secretary of the church for 1994-1995, during the Centennial preparation.

In 1995, Diane Harbarth accepted the position as secretary of the church and she continues to serve in that position. Church membership records reflect 765 Baptized, 623 Communicants, 583 voting members and 80 students enrolled in Sunday School.

January of 1996 the balance of the special anniversary fund was transferred to the stained glass window project, which was budgeted for \$36632. The Grunewald bequest of \$16000 read at the voters meeting stated the yearly interest of the Trust would be equally divided between church missions, building fund, and scholarship funds. The stained glass window project was completed in October, and a Window Restoration plaque, recognizing any donation over \$400 was inscribed. The plaque was donated to the church by Larry and Kay Husfeldt. In 1998 the German Dinner progressed to a German Festival including favorite Old Time songs adapted to church hymns. The music continued for 23 years as a 'Living Memorial' to Herman and Esther Husfeldt, parents of Larry Husfeldt.

In July 1998 a committee was formed to celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church building with members; Herman Miller, Robert Heil, DuWayne Paelhke, and Roger Draeger. A congregational pictorial directory was printed.

Constant repair and upkeep of the property continued; the Education Building roof, the Narthex skylight and the parking lot demanded immediate attention. The teacherage was in need of extensive repair costing \$21350; the Trustees suggested it possibly should be sold. The church roof also needed shingling. A committee was appointed to research the cost and maintenance of an air conditioning system for the church. Pastor & Mrs Koepp celebrated Pastor's 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his ordination and their wedding anniversary with recognition from the Board of Deacons.

Constitutional amendments voted by a two thirds majority permitted a member over the age of 21, and one year membership would be eligible for a board position. The church secretary would also be considered as a member of the church council. The Cemetery Board suggested combining the secretary and treasurer offices to be served by one person, hopefully allowing a position for a woman to serve. The Cemetery Board would remain as seven members. March 14, 1999, the 75 year Rededication of Church Building Organ Concert was scheduled for 1:30, featuring organist Reverend Kenneth L Tatkenhorst, accompanied by Trumpeter, Paul Tatkenhorst, featuring Piano Prelude on Jesus Loves Me, by Fred Bock, played in loving memory of Immanuel's ministry to Carolee Joy Tatkenhorst.

At the annual voters meeting in 2000, the church air conditioning system was put on hold, and a memorial fund was established to consider an addition to the north end of the Education Building to add a state approved room for preschool students. FAITH (Females Assembled In True Hope) started a monthly Bible study to focus on how to apply the Bible to daily living challenges.

In 2001 Deb Zellman filled the custodial position and she continues to keep God's House clean. Church properties continued to need repairs; the furnace, street assessments, siding and windows for the teacherage, and flashing for the Narthex roof. Myron Schuette Construction won the bid to repair the teacherage at a cost of \$16965. In July the Treasurer reported a need for funds to cover the continued repair costs and for the installation of the new furnaces for the church and Education Building for \$33000, contracted by B & R Plumbing and Heating of Wintrop.

The Alleluia Bell Choir performed at many public events, including the Relay For Life in Hutchinson, the McLeod County Fair, and Rally Sunday services.

The Preschool committee reported they had met the voters' requirement of raising 75 percent of the needed funds for the construction of the preschool addition. By Ballot vote, the project moved forward, with a committee formed to continue to raise the remaining 25 percent of needed funds. The groundbreaking ceremony was held April 21, with hopes of completion by August enrollment time. Pastor and Mrs Kitzmann accepted the invitation from our sister church Luther Kirche in Radebeul, near Dresden, Germany to attend the 110<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of their church building. The council decided to pay the flight costs for the Kitzmanns to represent our congregation.

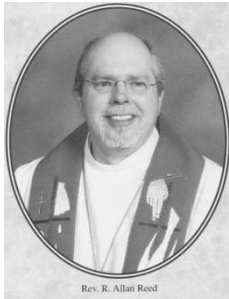
Dedication of Noah's Ark Preschool was held September 2, 2002. Pastor Kitzmann and Marsha (Scheetz) Jahr orchestrated the service.



Preschool Board members were; Chairman, Michele Waltz; Vice Chairman, Trisha Schuette; Treasurer, Lori Cacka; Secretary, Carolyn Weide, non-member. The Florence Hovda property located east of the parking lot was purchased. In 2003, Pastor Kitzmann started the 'Coffee Time' Wednesday morning Bible Study, replacing the downtown coffee shop closing. The ladies in the congregation organized themselves into Kitchen and Dining room groups to serve at funerals, in addition to making 63 quilts for the missions.

In December Dr Lane Seitz spoke to the voters about the process to call a pastor. A Farewell and Retirement party for Pastor and Lois Kitzmann was held February 1, with his official retirement scheduled for February 4, 2004. During the vacancy Pastor Gerhard Bode, Pastor Eric Goodwin of Peace Lutheran Church, Hutchinson and Pastor Herman Hannemann, who started serving Immanuel as a new interim pastor, conducted Sunday services. While the congregation waited for a permanent pastor the service in the park was cancelled. At the Annual voter's meeting, it was decided non-members will not be allowed to rent the church basement for weddings.

In November 2005 Pastor Allan Reed accepted the call to Immanuel. An appreciation event was held for Pastor Hannemann for faithfully serving Immanuel for 15 months, with Pastor Bode of Peace Lutheran



Church in Hutchinson as a guest pastor. In 2006 an internet website was offered, with oversight by the deacons. A new curriculum was started for Confirmation classes and a Stewardship Committee was organized. The church registered as a non-profit organization with the Secretary of State, MN. A projection screen was installed in the church in 2007. FAITH group organized a 'Walking Taco' booth to raise funds at the 150<sup>th</sup> celebration of the City of Brownston. In May, 2007, the Stewardship committee reported the financial needs of the church, operating on an annual budget of \$250000.

In 2008, a resolution passed that no longer required the reporting of congregation member names and amounts of contributions in the annual report, changing a long tradition. Also, 300 copies of the new Lutheran service Book (hymnal) were purchased for the congregation from the Trust Fund. Budget cuts were discussed at a quarterly voters meeting. Voters agreed to eliminate Release-Time teacher's salaries, reduce the secretary's hours to 10 hours per week, and to reduce the janitor's hours by one-third, totaling a cost savings of \$17532 per year. In 2008 Mavis Smith resigned from her position as DCE. This was prompted by budget concerns and a reduction of duties due in part to the closing of the public school. The congregation elected to not seek a replacement for the DCE position. With the absence of the DCE, many volunteers would be needed to take on the leadership roles in music, Christian education of the youth, Youth Group, and other areas of congregation life. (Happy to say, many have stepped forward!) A committee was appointed to present a plan for the vacant teacherage. (It was recommended to sell the house; it was listed with Edina Reality, and sold September 24, 2010 for \$63692.90 which was deposited in the Trust Fund.) The air conditioning system was resurrected and a special collection would be used for the costs, with the remainder to be paid from the General Fund.

April 2010, Marsha Jahr, gave her notice of resignation effective after the school year 2011, with an appreciation event planned at the church picnic. Vicki Hermann was hired, and welcomed with a synod guideline compensation package of \$33000, with no benefits. She began her teaching duties on July 1, 2011, and continues in that position. Other changes at Immanuel have included, Saturday evening services were moved to Wednesday evening. The organ continues to be under repair.

In 2012 Communion would be offered on the first and last Sunday's of the month as well as High Feast Days. The church picnic would be moved from Lake Marion Park to the City Park of Brownton. After a break-in at the church the Trustees recommended the purchase of a depository safe for church and preschool use. The Council recommended that the congregation budget \$3000 from the Trust Fund to be transferred to the Cemetery Board annually to cover expenses, stipulating that the amount could be changed. The church services continue to be televised on the local access network and are well received.

Repairs continued in 2013, with new carpeting in the dining room, and the replacement of one of the furnaces. The property insurance company was changed to Brotherhood Mutual for \$4.4 million coverage at a cost of \$6680 per year. The church is now serviced with natural gas, replacing the former propane. An electronic piano was purchased to supplement the use of the original organ for worship service. The roof and ceiling of the church towers were repaired, and the handbells were refurbished at a cost of \$4000. Electronic giving is now offered and the purchase of a new sound system was approved.

In October 2013, the voter's assembly, in keeping with biblical teaching, added two amendments to the Constitution By-Laws concerning marriage. This was done in response to the state of Minnesota's changes to the marriage laws. Amendment #19 states that "marriage is a sacred union of one man and one woman, not a political opinion nor cultural bias but the clear teaching of the Holy Scripture." The use of church property, for the above said, is defined in Amendment #20

In April 2016 a new preschool and "pastoral use" van was purchased, replacing the old van originally bought in 2004. The van serves as the transportation for many of the children who attend Preschool. When available, Pastor Reed uses the van to visit shut-ins and hospital visits.

The 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation was celebrated at Immanuel during 2017, culminating on October 29<sup>th</sup> with a traditional Lutheran Communion Service accompanied by many hymns of Martin Luther. The confirmation classes and Sunday School classes performed musical hymns. Invited to accompany our service was Rev Ken Tatkenhorst, former organist and DCE. In conjunction with the service, the annual German dinner was served with all proceeds going to Noah's Ark Preschool. The attendance for the dinner has increased over the years and is one of the two largest fundraisers for the preschool.

In 2017, a Church Anniversary Planning Committee, made up of volunteers, was formed to plan the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Immanuel as a year-long celebration culminating on December 26, 2020.