

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday  
and today and forever.

Hebrews 13:8

Lord Jesus Christ, the Church's head,  
You are her one foundation;  
In You she trusts, before You bows,  
And waits for Your salvation.  
Built on this rock secure,  
Your Church shall endure  
Though all the world decay  
And all things pass away.  
O hear, O hear us, Jesus!

Lutheran Service Book #647

Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

Christians are by nature future-oriented. We are sojourners and exiles in this world looking forward to an eternal promised land. Scripture is filled with every encouragement to look above and beyond the life which we now live.

The following texts encourage us in that way:

“For we are strangers before you and sojourners, as all our fathers were. Our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no abiding.”

– 1 Chronicles 29:15

“For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.”

– 1 Corinthians 13:12

“For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” – 2 Corinthians 5:1

“But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

– Philippians 3:20

Christ came once for all to set us free from our sins by His own blood. He died on the cross to conquer death, to grant us life, and prepare for us a future. He has risen from the dead assuring us that death has been defeated. Our salvation is accomplished entirely by Christ, and we look forward to eternity in His Heavenly Kingdom.

We recall the past not too long for better days, nor glorify an age which we do not fully understand, but we remember the years before us in order to give thanks for all the blessings God has bestowed. Our gracious Lord has caused the rain of the Gospel to fall in this place for 175 years, and He has kept a faithful remnant to the current day.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews commends those who have gone before us in

faith saying, “These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.”

We thank God for the many faithful saints who have gone before us in this very place. Here, in this little congregation, hundreds, even thousands, have lived and died in the faith and received the inheritance prepared by Jesus’ cross and resurrection. God has visited this place with His life-giving Word and Sacraments to gather to Himself a people. He has granted us a faithful confession and has promised to remain with us to the very end of the age.

Those who have gone before us were faithful not by their own power, but by the power of Him who has subdued all things to Himself. We remember the 175 years of history God has granted this congregation in light of the Grace of God at work among us. All glory be to God alone!

We know that no matter what age of history we find ourselves in, we have a God who never changes, but who is always there for us in His Word and Sacrament. Yes, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”

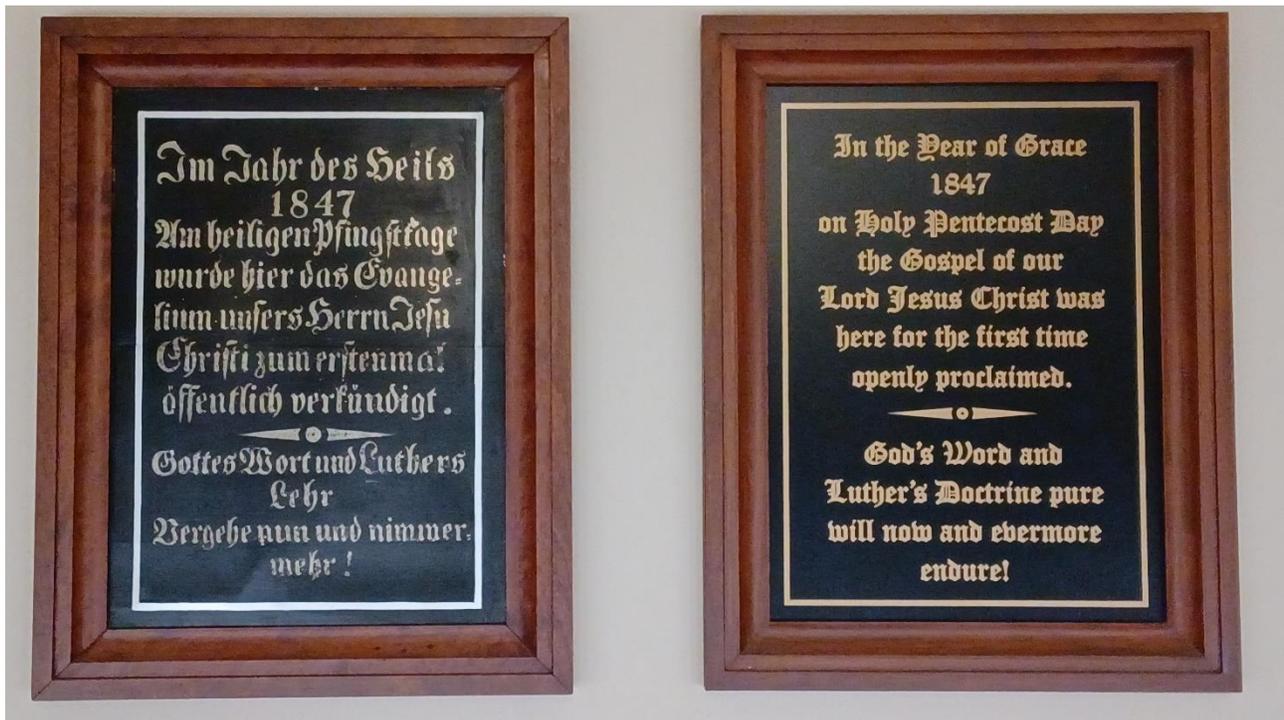
It is the Word of God and the Book of Concord of 1580 that unites us as a Christian family. May God keep us faithful now and for all the generations yet to come.

In Christ,

Pastor Zahner



Rev. Douglas Zahner – Pastor of Immanuel (2010 – Present)



God's Word and Luther's Doctrine pure will now and evermore endure!

## THE HISTORY OF OUR CONGREGATION

The following history was written by Mr. Werner Steinbach on the occasion of our congregation's 150th Anniversary.

The history of our congregation is not only interesting but also very special in many ways. It is particularly special as we think back that 150 years ago God caused a small group of families to leave their homeland in Germany to come here to America to plant His church in our community which we now call our home. It is also special when we reflect back on how God has preserved and blessed this little flock for 150 years. It is special when we think back on the strong religious convictions our forefathers must have had to leave their homeland in order to come to this country to have the freedom to worship their God as they pleased. It must have taken a great deal of courage and a strong faith, particularly by the women, to sell their possessions, say good-bye to relatives and friends, and then go on a long and dangerous ocean voyage into a land which for the most part was still a wilderness. Although fellow Lutherans had gone before them just a few years earlier to settle in a far away land called America, the decision to leave must have still been difficult.

Our history is also very interesting. The land and conditions that existed when our forefathers came into this community were far different than they are today. Although the region known as the Wisconsin Territory was claimed by the U.S. government, it had not yet attained statehood. The Indians who had once lived here had been driven further West. Only a few still roamed through the countryside. At the time our forefathers arrived in 1846, the southern part of the state was being settled mostly by people of English descent from the eastern part of the country. Some German immigrants had settled in Milwaukee and the surrounding areas. Milwaukee and Green Bay were just beginning to develop into cities. Watertown and other small towns around the southern settlements were being established. The little villages of Mayville and Theresa had come into existence a year or two earlier with perhaps no more than

half a dozen settlers. But for the most part the state was uninhabited and the land was unclaimed. It could be purchased from the U. S. government for \$1.25 an acre. Most of the land in our neighborhood was covered by trees. None of the trees had ever been cut down, no ground had ever been plowed, and no stones had ever been removed to plant crops. There were no roads, just a few old Indian trails. There were no bridges to cross the river and of course there were no houses or barns on the land.

The first settlers who founded our congregation were German Lutheran immigrants from the provinces of Brandenburg and Pomerania in Prussia. Prussia was comprised of what today we know as northern Germany and extended east into Poland. The capital of Prussia was Berlin and was ruled by the Kaisers. The province of Brandenburg included Berlin and the surrounding territory while Pomerania made up the northern and eastern part of the empire bordering the Baltic Sea.

At the time of the Reformation, most of the German lands accepted the new Lutheran doctrine. However, as the years passed, most of southern Germany reverted back to Catholicism.

After the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, which in essence gave each region the right to choose its own religion, many Lutherans now living in southern Catholic states moved further north into states which were either Lutheran or tolerant to both religions. Some of these Lutherans resettled in Prussia (Preussen). This region had remained Lutheran. But through the years the Reformed faith had also gained a strong following in Prussia. As had been the custom in Europe for centuries, the church was under the control of the state. Ever since the Reformation, the differing religious beliefs caused divisiveness among the people. From

local disputes this often led to open warfare. This also proved to be a problem for a ruler in his respective state, particularly for the defense of his country in time of war.

After Prussia had been overrun by Napoleon, Kaiser Friedrich William III made every effort to better unite his people to defend himself from future attack. Being a noble man, himself of the Reformed faith and his wife a Lutheran, he thought it possible as well as expedient to unite the protestants into one state church. So in 1817, in observance of the 300th anniversary of the Reformation, he decreed that the Lutheran and Reformed Church be united into one church – Die Unierte Kirche. This meant that people of both faiths now had to worship together. An entirely new agenda for the church service and church order was drawn up which was to be used by pastors of both faiths. Being fully aware of the feelings of its people, the government moved very slowly to enforce this law. After receiving objections from both sides, the Kaiser met with his advisers and the theologians to work out a compromise acceptable to both sides. However, some Lutherans could still not comply with the Kaiser's orders. Their main objections were to the liturgy and the Reformed view on the Lord's Supper. They continued to worship by themselves in small groups in their homes and in some instances in barns. This was in open defiance of the law and led to bans and restrictions.

Another factor which prevented these Lutherans from worshipping together was the religious climate in general. In the previous century, known as the Age of Enlightenment, many scientific discoveries had been made useful to man. This also introduced the Age of Reason or Rationalism.

Before any fact could be accepted, it had to be reasoned out. The rules of science were now also applied to the Bible. Biblical truths that can only be accepted by faith were now doubted or often rejected entirely. As a result other theological thought and doctrine developed which was not consistent with God's Word.

From the higher schools of learning including the theological schools, this philosophy filtered down from the pastors into the pulpits. It was in this environment that these Lutherans found themselves in the years preceding their departure.

Gradually the government took more drastic measures to force the remaining Lutherans, found mostly in the eastern part of the kingdom, to join the Union. The pastors and leaders of these groups were arrested and fined. Continued resistance led to imprisonment. They became known as 'Alt-Lutheraner' (Old Lutherans) because they held to the old Lutheran doctrine and Confessions. By the middle of the 1830s these Lutherans felt conditions were intolerable and made plans to emigrate. They heard of countries such as Australia and America where they would have religious freedom. In 1837 a sizable group left with their pastor for Australia. In 1839 a large group set sail for America, some of which settled in Buffalo, N.Y., while others continued on to Wisconsin to settle in Milwaukee. Part of this group went on to found the community of Freistadt. In 1841 Kaiser Friedrich William III died and his son, Friedrich William IV, succeeded him. He immediately lifted the ban on the Lutherans and allowed them to form their own church. However, they were still denied certain rights and privileges afforded other citizens. Lutherans who left the State Church to join the 'Old-Lutheran Church' were treated with disdain and resentment. There were also certain pastors who opposed the form of church government in their own Lutheran church. These factors together with the attraction of good cheap land in America caused the immigration movement to continue. In 1843 several more sizable groups left to come to America. While some of these stayed in New York, the majority came to Wisconsin to found the communities of Kirchhayn and Lebanon. Throughout these years many other Lutherans left as individual families or in smaller groups and settled in these established communities.

On June 11, 1846, about 20 families left a small village (Dorf), called Nahausen, near the

Oder River in Brandenburg, Prussia, to come to America to join fellow Lutherans in Lebanon. After a long ocean voyage of 55 days, nearly two months, they arrived in New York. Then they continued their journey on to Wisconsin. They came to Lebanon on September 29, 1846. The entire trip took a total of 111 days, almost 4 months. Upon their arrival, they found most of the government land already claimed in that vicinity. So about 13 families decided to settle in a place where government land was still available and a Lutheran community could be established. They found a location suitable to them here in Town Theresa, just a few miles east of the little village of Mayville. Now being fall, the men immediately set out to file land claims. Forty acres bordering the Rock River were purchased for a church and school in the name of Friedrich Jagow. In early November the men came here to clear land while the women and children stayed with friends and relatives in Lebanon. A log cabin was immediately built so the men would have a shelter. This was their abode that entire winter as they went about each day to cut down trees, clear land, and build log cabins for their families. It should be noted that these men conducted divine services every Sunday in their little cabin. Though we have no available record, this log cabin was probably located in the vicinity of our present church.

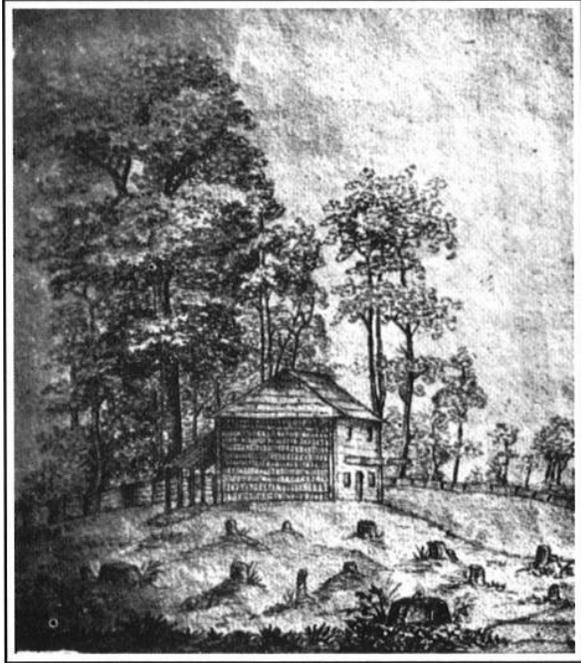
In the spring of 1847, the men returned to Lebanon to get their families to move into their new homes. A group of Pomeranian families also joined them. Together, with Pastor Geyer from Lebanon, they organized as a congregation on second Pentecost Day, May 24, 1847. Services were conducted every Sunday in the home of Friedrich Jagow. An agreement was made with Pastor Geyer to serve them with Word and Sacrament every 8 weeks. It was the first Lutheran church or congregation in the entire community and was indeed "Die Erste Evangelische Lutherische Emanuels Gemeinde". We have no record of the organizational meeting or a list of the charter members of the congregation but from land claims filed in October of 1846, we find the following names: Friedrich Jagow, Johann Friedrich Fellwock, Michael Saase, Sr., Carl

Jesse, Friedrich Schwann, Friedrich Kuehl, William Braasch, Gottlieb Braasch, Friedrich Christian, Carl Schwantes, Christlieb Schwantes, Michael Zimmermann, Michael Budahn, Wilhelm Milbrot, and Carl Bannenberg.

As more immigrants settled around them, they soon realized the need for a church. So in the spring of the following year, a log church was built which was also to serve as a school. This building was dedicated on Pentecost Day, 1848.

It is hard for us today to imagine the primitive living conditions of these early pioneers. Their home was a one-room log cabin. There were no electric lights, no radio, no television, no telephone to call the neighbor or doctor if one was sick. There was no chain saw to cut down trees, no backhoe to remove the stumps, and no tractor to plow the ground. And then there were all those stones! There was no car to go shopping or take them to church. The nearest town to get supplies was Watertown some 30 miles away. This distance had to be covered either with horse and wagon, on horseback, or on foot. Despite these conditions and the physical hardships they had to endure, the Lord protected and provided for them.

The small congregation was soon beset by turmoil and dissension. Because Pastor Geyer had to travel a distance of over 25 miles, they now tried to acquire their own pastor. A man named Boehm appeared in their midst who claimed to have been sent by the well-respected Pastor Wilhelm Loehe in Germany to minister to the Lutherans in America. With this credential he became their pastor. But after a short time, Boehm, who also taught school several days a week, was dismissed because of unsound doctrine in his preaching and other misconduct. A split resulted when a minority of members wanted to retain him. Boehm continued to serve this group while the other group held services by themselves. Eventually Boehm had to leave.



*Log Church, built in 1848*

Now a man named Leonard came to them from Nahausen, Germany, who was known by some of the members. He had been an assistant pastor in their home parish and had left the Union Church for the same reasons they had. He seemed to be qualified so he was installed as their next pastor. It is recorded that he was welcomed and had the confidence of the entire congregation. But before long they discovered that he too deviated from Scripture in his preaching and was released on the basis of false doctrine. Again a split was caused when a minority of members retained him. Before long, however, this group also dismissed him.

Once more the two groups came together and decided to approach Pastor Geyer again to see if he would serve them, perhaps on a more regular basis than before. Pastor Geyer agreed to serve them on the condition that they make certain concessions to him which had resulted in splits over disputes he had experienced in his congregation in Lebanon. This a number of members, composed mainly by the Brandenburg founders, refused to do. This group then went ahead and asked Erdmann

Pankow, now the pastor of a group that had split from Geyer's congregation, to be its pastor. The other group, consisting mostly of Pomeranians from the eastern part of the parish, yielded to Geyer's demands and was served by him. Needless to say, the split was now real. Once again the division between the two groups was along the same lines as the previous ones had been. Just how long the two factions functioned in this manner we do not know.

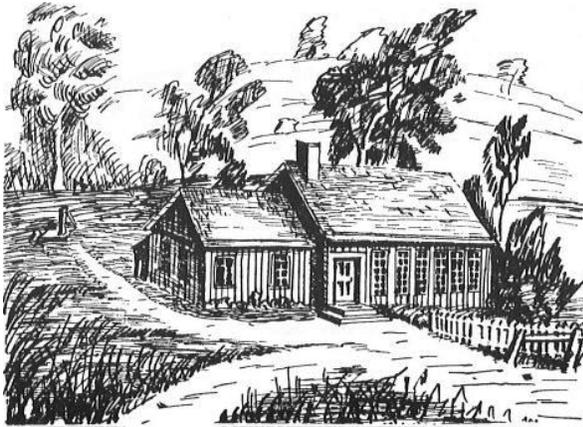
The group served by Geyer now placed a call for a pastor with the Missouri Synod, most likely because of Pastor Geyer's affiliation with it. The group which was still served by Pankow did not take part in the call. So it happened that young Martin Stephan, Jr., having just completed his studies at the St. Louis Seminary, accepted his first assignment to become pastor here. Pastor Stephan arrived in 1853. In 1854 his group, now consisting of 26 families, requested and was granted its release from the mother church to form its own congregation. They built their church, which also included a residence for the pastor, on a high hill several miles east of the mother church. Under Pastor Stephan's guidance and able leadership, the split was soon healed and he went on to serve both congregations.

Both congregations were named Immanuel and were distinguished from each other by being referred to as the 'upper church' and the 'lower church'. Later on they became better known as Hochheim and the River Church. Throughout the following years, one pastor continued to serve both congregations while residing at Hochheim.

The upper church immediately opened a Christian Day School in 1854. The lower church started one a year later in 1855. In both cases, the church building was used as school. The upper church joined the Missouri Synod several years after its organization while the lower church did not join the Missouri Synod until 1937. Both congregations actively supported Synod and its mission programs over

the years since it provided them with pastors and teachers.

Pastor Stephan was a faithful shepherd and was loved and respected by all. Both congregations grew and prospered under his care. In addition to his own congregations, he served another congregation in the neighborhood as pastor filial. After a stay of only 3 years, to the disappointment of his members, he accepted a call to Oshkosh.



*The second church, built in 1858*

The congregations now called Pastor Peter Dicke from a Franconian congregation in Michigan. Pastor Dicke came in 1857. The following year, in 1858, the lower church built a new frame church. It also had a built-on teacherage. Again this building served as school. Pastor Dicke also served all three congregations. In addition he was very active in mission work around the area. He traveled on horseback to baptize many infants outside his parish. His travels took him all the way west of the Lake Winnebago area where Lutherans had now settled to organize congregations. During his pastorate a dispute arose in the Hochheim congregation over private confession. This resulted in a split where a number of families left to form the Zion congregation in 1863.

Another disruption in the lives of the church members occurred during the Civil War years.

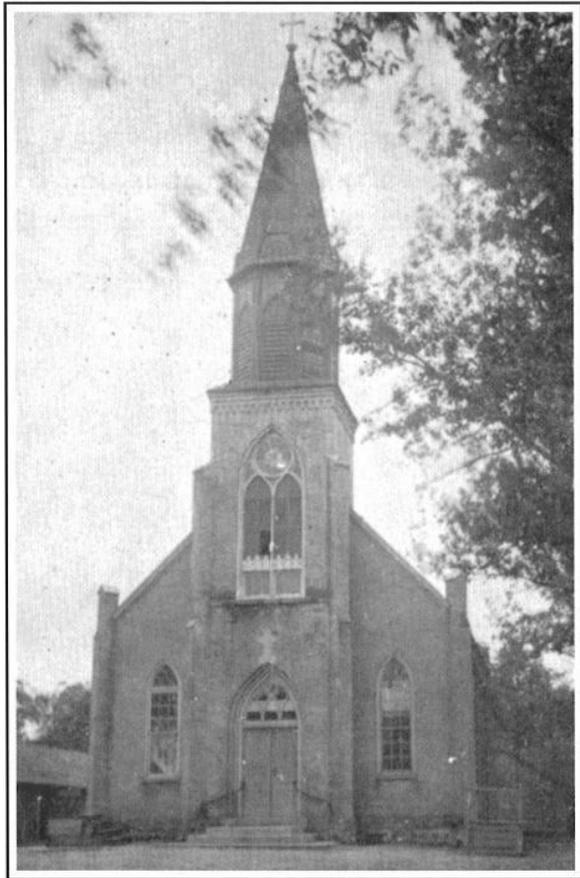
This resulted not from church matters but over political issues. It is almost inconceivable that five young men lost their lives in the War. We do not know how many other men served in the War from the two congregations. Families and neighbors were divided over the slavery issue. This caused many of the founding families, including the Saases and Fellwocks, to leave and move to Fayette County in Illinois.

An attempt was made in 1864 to reunite the two congregations. The upper congregation approached the lower congregation with a proposal to join together with them and build one church somewhere between the two parishes. After a lengthy discussion in a special meeting held by the lower congregation, no action was taken. So in 1867 the upper congregation proceeded to build a beautiful brick church, designed by Pastor Stephan. It was located in Town Herman across the road from the old church. In the year 1883, the present brick church was built by the lower congregation. In 1885, a separate school with a teacherage was built. This is the present limestone structure which stands south of the church.

While the two congregations continued to prosper in the following years, they also experienced times of sorrow. Over a period of twenty-four years, they mourned the loss of three pastors who died while in office here. They are: Pastor Dittmar Kothe in 1889, Pastor J. F. Leyhe in 1891, and Pastor Theo. Hoffmann in 1913. Teacher Adolph Schwanke (Hochheim-1903) and Teacher Richard Werning (River Church-1933) also died while in office.

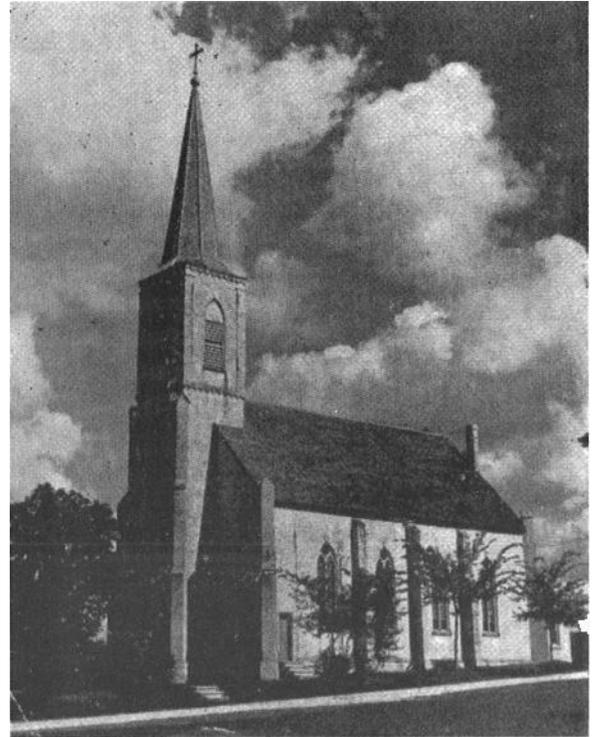
At the turn of the century the character of the congregations had not changed. They were still all German. With few exceptions, they were still all farmers. Whenever a German family left a farm, another Lutheran German family would take over. Although they were now all Americans, they still spoke German. German was preached from the pulpit and German was taught in their schools. However, as they

realized the importance of English, some English was also taught. English could also be learned in the small public schools located within the district. As the years went by, more and more English was taught in the schools and was gradually introduced into the pulpit. Starting in the 1930s, services were conducted in both languages. This practice continued until 1965 when regular services in German were discontinued.



*First Hochheim Church built 1867*

Through the years, the congregations continued to make improvements on their properties. Better heating and lighting systems were installed. In 1932 the lower church remodeled the interior of its church. This included raising the chancel area, moving the pulpit, purchasing a new altar, installing new windows and pews, in addition to redecorating.



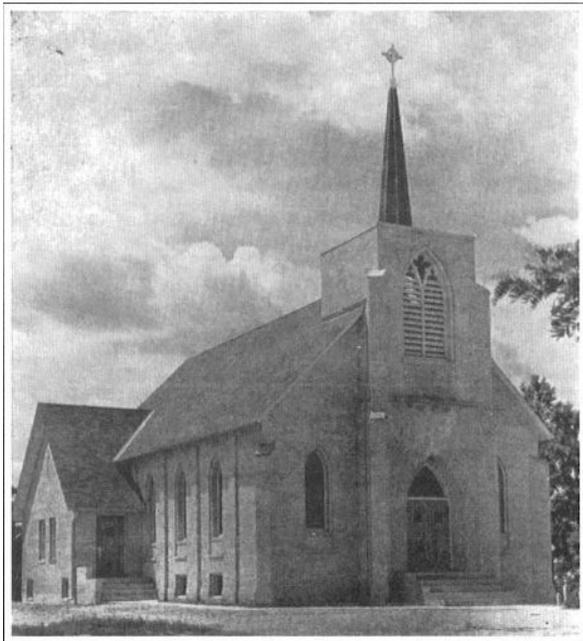
*Lower Church built 1883*

The Hochheim congregation suffered a severe loss in 1941 when its church was destroyed by fire. The small congregation proceeded to build a new church which was dedicated in July of 1942. But in 1956, this church was also destroyed by fire. The members then decided not to rebuild but to accept an invitation from the lower congregation to join them and again become one congregation. This amalgamation took place in 1957. Thus, after 103 years, the existence of the Hochheim congregation ended. It is an important part in the history of this congregation.

The united congregation now built a parsonage to accommodate the pastor at the site of the lower church. Because of the additional enrollment of school children, a classroom was added to the new brick school which had been built in 1951.

In 1965, the interior of the church was redecorated and new pews and light fixtures were purchased. The old pipe organ was replaced by a new Haase organ. In 1982 this

organ was again replaced with a new Hammes-Foxe tracker pipe organ. An extensive renovation project on the church was done in 1986. A narthex including restrooms was added to the front of the church, which altered its appearance. The entire interior was again redecorated which also included new flooring and carpeting. The entire basement was excavated at this time and the walls reinforced. This project was made possible in large part by a bequest from the estate of Anton (Tony) Jagow, a descendant of one of the founders, Friedrich Jagow. In 1991 another extensive project was undertaken which included the building of a new sacristy with kitchen facilities underneath. The church basement was completed and is now used for meetings and other church functions. At the same time, one of the rooms in the school basement was remodeled into a Preschool and Kindergarten classroom.



*Hochheim Church built 1942*

Much of the maintenance and many of the improvements made on the church properties in recent years were done by faithful members who contributed many hours of their time and labor. Their skills and talents have been a great

blessing to the congregation. Over the years the church grounds have been beautified with the planting of many trees, shrubs, and flowers. This, too, has been done by members who have spent many hours of their time not only in planting but also in the continuous care needed to keep the property looking attractive and well-maintained.

As we near the end of this century the character of the congregation has changed. Very few members still speak German. Less than half of the members are farmers. Just a few of the old family names are still found in the congregation. Many other changes have taken place. We no longer need candles or lanterns. The horses have disappeared. The landscape has changed. No doubt the forefathers and foremothers would have a difficult time recognizing the place where their church once stood. But the one thing that has not changed is God's Word, on which that first church stood and on which it must stand today.

So, as we have seen, the history of our congregation is indeed special. As our name Immanuel suggests, God has been with us and richly blessed us. Despite what appears as the devil's attempts to prevent our Lord's church from being established here, the 'gates of hell did not prevail against it'. How thankful we should be today who as members have been able to sit at the feet of its faithful pastors and teachers to learn of Him who died for us and rose again. As we look at the cross, either in church or on its high steeple, may it remind us that through it we have that blessed hope of eternal life and we will be able to meet the forefathers and foremothers who have been a part of this history. As we reflect on these present and future blessings, we cannot help but 'fear the Lord'. Yes, we cannot help but 'stand in awe of Him'! Yes, indeed,

"Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us,  
but unto Thy name give glory, for  
Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake."

*(Much of the information on the early history of the congregation was taken from articles written by J. Friedrich Fellwock. Mr. Fellwock was fifteen years old when his family came to America in 1846 with the group from Nahausen in Germany. He was one of the young men, who together with his father and other men, came here in the fall of 1846 to help clear land and build log cabins. His father, also named Johann Friedrich Fellwock, was a founder of the congregation. They settled on the former Wegner place and lived there until they moved to Illinois in 1865. At the age of 55, having been a farmer all his life, he was asked by his congregation to be its teacher in the parochial school. He taught school for over 15 years. In his later years he wrote reminiscences of his life. They were later translated by his son, Mr. P. B. Fellwock. They were submitted for publication by a nephew, August H. Saase, and appeared in the CONCORDIA HISTORICAL INSTITUTE QUARTERLY, Vol. XV. No. 3 of October, 1942, "A Chapter in the Beginnings of Lutheranism in Wisconsin", and again in April and July of 1950, Vol. XXIII, No. 1 and No. 2, "Memoirs of J. Friedrich Fellwock". We are deeply indebted to Mr. Fellwock for these illuminating and interesting recollections and for putting them down in print for us to read today. The facts and many details recorded in his memoirs are not only interesting but also give us an insight into the early life of the congregation. In tribute to Mr. Fellwock and as a reminder to us, I felt it fitting to close with the words in the final paragraph of his memoirs: "My sincere wish, hope, and prayer now, as always is that you my good children, all of you, as well as others who may read these lines, live upright, truly Christian lives and be faithful members of the Lutheran Church. That you raise your children in the fear and admonition of the Lord and send them to our Christian Day school. In this way, as well as at home, give them a thorough education in the fundamentals according to the Scriptures".)*

# THE FIRST CONSTITUTION OF OUR CONGREGATION

Transcribed and translated by Mr. Kevin Walker

*Gemeinde-Ordnung  
der evangelisch luth. Gemeinde bei Mayville  
Dodge Co., Wisc. 1852.  
Congregational order  
of the evangelical Lutheran congregation by Mayville  
Dodge Co., Wisc. 1852.*

*Lasset alles ehrlich u. ordentlich zugehen. 1 Cor. 14, 40.*  
Let all things be done decently and in order. 1 Cor. 14:40.

§1.

*Unsere Kirche und Gemeinde soll den Namen führen "Emanuel-Kirche und Gemeinde".*  
Our church and congregation shall bear the name "Immanuel Church and Congregation".

§2.

*Das Bekenntniß dieser Gemeinde ist Gottes geoffenbartes Wort, das ist, alle canonischen Bücher alten und neuen Testaments. Und weil die Bekenntnißschriften der evang. luth. Kirche die Lehre göttlichen Wortes unter allen andern Bekenntnißschriften am lautersten enthalten, so bekennen wir uns zu dieser Kirche und ihren Bekenntnißschriften, als da sind: die 3 Hauptsymbole, die ungeänderte Augsburgische Confession, derselben Apologia, die Schmalkaldischen Artikel, Dr. Luthers kleinen und großen Katechismus, die Concordien-Formel und die Visitations-Artikel.*

The confession of this congregation is God's revealed Word, that is, all canonical books of the Old and New Testament. And because the confessional writings of the evangelical Lutheran Church contain the teaching of the divine Word most purely among all other confessional writings, we affirm our allegiance to this Church and its confessional writings, which are: the 3 chief creeds, the unaltered Augsburg Confession, its Apology, the Schmalkald Articles, Dr. Luther's Small and Large Catechism, the Formula of Concord, and the Visitation Articles.

§3.

*Will jemand ein Glied dieser Gemeinde sein, so wird von ihm erfordert:*

*1. daß er getauft sei.*

*2. daß er eine Erkenntniß der nöthigsten Artikel christlicher Lehre besitze.*

*3. daß er nicht ein Glied einer geheimen Gesellschaft sei.*

*4. daß er sich zur lutherischen Kirche bekenne.*

*5. daß, wo er nicht sämtliche Symbolische Bücher der lutherischen Kirche kennt, doch den kl. luth. Katechismus und die Augsburgische Confession ihrem Gehalt nach kenne und von Herzen sich dazu bekenne.*

*6. daß er in keinen offenbaren Sünden und Verachtung göttlichen Wortes und Sacramentes lebe, sondern gläubig und bußfertig sich erweise.*

*7. daß er sich der Ordnung dieser Gemeinde in allen Stücken unterziehe, und sich verpflichte, nach Kräften die Gemeindegeldesten zu tragen zu helfen nach Lucä 10.*

If anyone wants to be a member of this congregation, the following is required of him:

1. that he is baptized.

2. that he has knowledge of the most necessary articles of Christian doctrine.
3. that he is not a member of a secret society.
4. that he affirms his allegiance to the Lutheran Church.
5. that, if he is not familiar with all of the confessional books of the Lutheran Church, he is at least familiar with the content of the Small Catechism and the Augsburg Confession and sincerely professes them.
6. that he neither lives in any open sin nor despises the divine Word and Sacrament, but rather shows himself to be believing and repentant.
7. that he submits to the order of this congregation in all parts and undertakes to help bear the congregational costs to the best of his ability in accordance with Luke 10.

§4.

*Will Jemand in diese Gemeinde aufgenommen werden, so hat er sich zunächst bei dem Prediger zu melden, und sich über die nöthigsten Stücke christlicher Lehre und über die im vorigen Paragraph enthaltenen Bedingungen, unter welchen man ein Glied der Gemeinde sein kann, versuchen zu lassen. Der Prediger oder ein Vorsteher gibt dem Aufzunehmenden eine Abschrift der Gemeinde-Ordnung zur Einsicht nach "§12", und wenn derselbe die Augsburgische Confession noch nicht kennt, auch diese zur sorgfältigen Durchlesung; darauf wird sein Begehren um Aufnahme in nächster Gemeindeversammlung der Gemeinde bekannt gemacht. Kann nichts Gegründetes gegen die Aufnahme eingewendet werden, so geschieht dieselbe, und zwar also: Er erscheint allein, oder mit den Seinigen, in der nächster Gemeinde-Versammlung und verspricht mit Hand und Mund Gehorsam gegen Gottes Wort, Fleiß in gottseligem Wandel und Vermeidung aller eigenwilligen Friedenstörungen. Wenn ein Gemeindeglied von hier wegzieht, so soll es sich vor seinem Wegzug vor versämelter Gemeinde mündlich oder schriftlich melden, und den Grund seines Wegzugs angeben.*

If anyone wants to be received into this congregation, he must first talk with the preacher and be examined concerning the most necessary articles of Christian doctrine and about the conditions contained in the previous paragraph, under which someone can be a member of the congregation.

The preacher or an elder gives the person to be received a copy of the congregational order to view in accordance with "§12" and, if he is not yet familiar with the Augsburg Confession, also this for a careful read-through; after that, his desire to be received at the next congregational meeting of the congregation is announced. If nothing substantiated can be argued against the reception, then that will occur, namely, as follows: He will appear alone or with his household at the next congregational meeting and solemnly promise obedience to God's Word, diligence in leading a godly life, and avoidance of all willful disturbances of the peace. If a member of the congregation moves away from here, then before moving he shall announce this orally or in writing before the assembled congregation and indicate the reason for his moving.

§5.

*Es stehet nie einem oder einzelnen in der Gemeinde frei, einen Prediger, oder Schullehrer oder Vorsteher zu erwählen, zu berufen, und der Gemeinde aufzudringen, sondern allein die Gemeinde in ihrer Gesämtheit hat die Macht, einen Prediger oder andere Beamte nach Stimmenmehrheit zu berufen. Prediger dieser Gemeinde kann nur ein solcher werden, welcher sich zur evang. luth. Kirche, und ihren sämtlichen Bekenntnißschriften von Herzen bekennt, und darnach zu lehren mit einem Eide verspricht, und so lange eine rechtgläubige lutherische Synode besteht, wie die von Missouri, von derselben geprüft und ordinirt ist. Und im Fall eine solche nicht mehr vorhanden ist, von treuen*

*lutherischen Predigern geprüft und ordinirt ist. Der Prediger darf auch in keinem Fall auf Jahre berufen werden.*

No one person or individuals are ever free to elect, call, and foist upon the congregation a preacher, schoolteacher, or elder, rather only the congregation in its entirety has the authority to call a preacher or other official based on majority vote.

A preacher of this congregation can only be someone who sincerely affirms his allegiance to the evangelical Lutheran Church and all of its confessional writings, and promises with an oath to teach in accordance with them, and, as long as a right-believing Lutheran synod exists, such as the one of Missouri, is examined and ordained by the same. And in the event that such a synod no longer exists, he is examined and ordained by faithful Lutheran preachers. The preacher must by no means be called for [a limited number of] years.

*Schullehrer kann ebenfalls nur ein solcher werden, welcher sich zur evang. luth. Kirche und ihren sämtlichen Bekenntnisschriften von Herzen bekennt, und darnach zu lehren mit Eide verspricht. Ist er von einer rechtläubige Synode oder Pastor noch nicht geprüft, so wird er von dem Pastor öffentlich geprüft. Auch von den Vorstehern wird verlangt, daß sie die sämtlichen Bekenntnisschriften der lutherischen Kirche dem Inhalte nach kennen, und wo sie dieselben noch nicht kennen, allen Fleiß anzuwenden versprechen, sie kennen zu lernen, und sie fleißig zu ihrer Erbauung zu lesen. Ihr Amt besteht in Besorgung äußerlicher Angelegenheiten, als: Armen und Krankenpflege, Führung der Seelenregister und Comunikanten-Liste, Beaufsichtigung der Gemeindelasten (Länderei und Gebäuden) Rechnung vierteljährig, Erhaltung der Zucht, Ruhe und Ordnung beim Gottesdienst und den Gemeindeversammlungen, Besorgung des Alters, insonderheit, wenn Comunion gehalten wird. u. s. w. Um als Vorsteher gewählt werden zu können, dazu gehört außer einen guten Beispiel von Gottseligkeit und christlicher Weisheit, daß man wenigstens ein Jahr zur Gemeinde gehört habe, und nicht mehr unter die Jüngeren zu rechnen sei, es wären dann solche Dienste, dazu gutes Lesen, Schreiben und Rechnen nöthig wäre. Daß, wer ein Amt in der Gemeinde führt, auch vor der Welt unsträflich gelebt haben müsse, ist männiglich nicht außer Acht zu lassen.*

Likewise, a schoolteacher can only be someone who sincerely affirms his allegiance to the evangelical Lutheran Church and all of its confessional writings, and promises with an oath to teach in accordance with them. If he has not yet been examined by a right-believing synod or pastor, then he will be publicly examined by the pastor. It shall also be required of the elders that they be familiar with the contents of all the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church, and if they are not yet familiar with these, that they promise to exert all diligence in familiarizing themselves with them and to read them diligently for their edification. Their office consists in taking care of external affairs, such as: taking care of the poor and sick, keeping a register of souls and list of communicants, overseeing the accounting of congregation's expenses (land and buildings) on a quarterly basis, maintaining discipline, peace, and order during worship and the congregational meetings, providing for the elderly, particularly when communion is celebrated, etc. To be able to be elected as an elder one must not only be a good example of godliness and Christian wisdom, but also have belonged to the congregation for at least one year and no longer be reckoned among the younger [people]; the services, then, would be those for which good reading, writing, and calculating are necessary. Thus, anyone who holds an office in the congregation, who also must have lived blamelessly before the world, is not to be left out of consideration.

§6.

*Wie eine christliche Gemeinde die Freiheit hat, sich ihre Beamten selbst zu erwählen, so hat sie auch die Freiheit, sie in christlicher Ordnung ihres Amtes entsetzen zu können. Gegründete Ursachen zur Absetzung von Prediger, Schullehrer und Vorsteher sind: beharrliches Festhalten an falscher Lehre, ärgerlicher Wandel und muthwillige Untreue in der Amtsverwaltung. Die Ordnung, nach welcher solches geschieht, ist Matth. 18 angegeben. In denjenigen Fällen, wo die Ursachen zur Absetzung eines Predigers nicht deutlich aus Gottes Wort und den Bekenntnißschriften unserer Kirche können nachgewiesen werden, und die Gemeinde deßhalb nicht einstimmig ist, soll die Sache der evang. luth. Synode von Missouri, und im Fall dieselbe selbst nicht mehr treu gegen die Bekenntnisse der luth. Kirche vorgefunden und überwiesen worden ist, andere treuen lutherischen Lehrern zur Untersuchung übergeben werden, damit Gott nicht durch eigenmächtige Amtsentsetzung eines falschen, den man zu behalten verbunden war, zum Zorn und Ungnade über die Gemeinde gereizt wurde.*

As a Christian congregation has the freedom to elect its officials itself, so also it has the freedom to remove them from their office in Christian order. Substantiated reasons for the removal of a preacher, schoolteacher, and elder are: persistent adherence to false doctrine, vexing lifestyle, and willful infidelity in carrying out the office. The order according to which this occurs is given in Matthew 18. In those cases where the reasons for removal of a preacher cannot be clearly demonstrated from God's Word and the confessional writings of our Church, and the congregation is therefore not unanimous, the matter shall be handed over to the evangelical Lutheran synod of Missouri, and in the event that the same itself found to be no longer faithful to the confessions of the Lutheran Church, [the matter shall be handed over to] other faithful Lutheran teachers for examination so that God might not be stirred to show wrath and disfavor to the congregation due to its unauthorized removal from office of a [supposedly] false [teacher] whom it was bound to retain.

§7.

*Weil zur Erhaltung der Gemeinde außerhalb den öffentlichen Gottesdiensten auch Gemeindeversammlungen nöthig sind, so ist ein jedes männliche Gemeindeglied verpflichtet, diese Versammlungen regelmäßig zu besuchen, und nicht ohne Noth zu versäumen. Diese Versammlungen werden mit Gesang und Gebet angefangen, und mit einem Vaterunser geschlossen. In denselben haben nur diejenigen Recht zu sprechen, welche wirklich Glieder der Gemeinde sind und das einundzwanzigste Jahr erreicht haben. Was die Mehrzahl der anwesenden Gemeindeglieder beschließt, und nicht wider Gottes Wort ist, bindet alle, denn der Apostelschrift Eph. 5, 21: "Seid unter einander unterthan in der Furcht Gottes." Sachen der Lehre und des Glaubens werden nur nach Gottes Wort, äußere Angelegenheiten aber und Kirchengebräuche nach Stimmen-Mehrheit entschieden. Was in den Versammlungen besprochen und beschlossen worden ist, wird in ein besonderes Buch geschrieben, und am Schluß der Versammlung (oder am Anfang der nächsten) der Gemeinde vorgelesen.*

Since congregational meetings are also necessary for preservation of the congregation aside from the public worship, every male member is obligated to visit these meetings regularly and not miss them without need. These meetings are begun with song and prayer and closed with the Lord's Prayer. The right to speak at these meetings is held only by those who are actually members of the congregation and have reached age twenty-one. What the majority of the present members of the congregation resolves and is not contrary to God's Word shall be binding on all, for the apostle's letter Eph. 5:21 [says]: "Be subject to one another in the fear of God." Matters of doctrine and faith are decided only based on God's Word, but external affairs and church customs are decided based on majority vote.

What is discussed and resolved at the meetings is recorded in a special book and read to the congregation at the end of the meeting (or at the beginning of the next one).

§8.

*Ein jeder Hausvater und jede Hausmutter in der Gemeinde ist gehalten, die Kinder zur Schule zu schicken oder wo dies nicht geht, sie wenigstens zu Hause zu unterrichten. In der Schule, sowie zum häuslichen und öffentlichen Gottesdienst dürfen nur rein lutherische Bücher benutzt werden.*

Every father of a family and every mother of a family is obligated to send their children to the school or, if this is not possible, at least to instruct them at home. In the school, as well as for home and public worship, only purely Lutheran books may be used.

§9.

*Der öffentliche Gottesdienst, sowie der Unterricht in der Schule, soll nur in deutscher Sprache gehalten werden.*

Public worship as well as instruction in the school shall be held only in the German language.

§10.

*Wenn Jemand öffentliches Ärgerniß giebt, so ist er schuldig, sobald als möglich seine Reue öffentlich zu bezeugen und es abzubitten. Verschiebt er es von Monat zu Monat und weigert sich trotz aller Ermahnung, so ist er von der Gemeinde auszuschließen.*

*Wenn Jemand sonst in Sünde fällt, so hat derjenige oder diejenigen, denen die Sünde zunächst bekannt wird, dieselbe brüderlich zu strafen, aber die Sünde nicht öffentlich zu machen. Hört der Sünder bei aller Erweisung christlicher Liebe u. Geduld nicht, so wird er vor das Kirchenggericht geladen. Dieses besteht aus dem Prediger und den Vorstehern. Bleiben auch da alle Ermahnungen fruchtlos, so muß der Sünder oder die Uneinigen vor der Gemeinde erscheinen. Stellt er sich nach wiederholter Einladung nicht, so ist das ein Beweis, daß er sich nicht mehr einen Bruder nennen lassen will und sich selbst ausgeschlossen und gebannt hat. Erscheint der Sünder, und will doch von seiner offenbaren Sünde nicht ablassen, sondern verharrt in seiner Unbußfertigkeit, so spricht der Prediger von der Kanzel im Namen der Gemeinde den Bann über einen solchen muthwilligen Sünder aus. Gleiche öffentliche Abkündigung des Bannes findet auch bei dem statt, welcher sich selbst gebannt hat. Nie kann aber der Prediger allein, oder die Vorsteher allein, oder beide zusammen den Bann ausüben, sondern die ganze Gemeinde mit und durch den Prediger nach Matth. 18.*

If anyone causes a public offense, then he is responsible for publicly attesting his contrition and apologizing for the offense as soon as possible. If he puts this off from one month to another and refuses to do it despite every admonition, he is to be excluded from the congregation.

If anyone otherwise falls into sin, then the person or persons who first become aware of the sin must reprove the sin in a brotherly manner, but not make the sin public. If the sinner does not listen despite all the Christian love and patience that are shown, he will be summoned before the church court. This consists of the preacher and the elders. If all admonitions in this case also remain fruitless, then the sinner or the dissidents must appear before the congregation. If he does not appear after repeated invitation, then that is proof that he no longer wants to be called a brother and has excluded and excommunicated himself. If the sinner appears and yet does not want to desist from his apparent sin but rather persists in his unrepentance, then the preacher speaks the excommunication over such a willful sinner from the pulpit in the name of the congregation. The same public announcement of the excommunication also takes place for one who has excommunicated himself. However, the preacher

alone, or the elders alone, or both together can never carry out excommunication, but instead the entire congregation [does this] with and through the preacher in accordance with Matthew 18.

§11.

*Jeder Ausgeschlossene, sowie Jeder, der sich an eine falschgläubige oder gar keine Kirchengemeinschaft anschließt, kann in der Gemeinde weder das heilige Abendmahl genießen, noch bei einer Taufe Gevatter stehen, noch Theil haben an dem nähern freundschaftlichen Umgang, den Brüder unter sich haben.*

*Ausgeschlossene, und solche die sich von der Wahrheit zum Irrthum gewendet haben, sollten billiger Weise auch nicht zu solchen Mahlzeiten eingeladen werden, welche zu Ehren der Taufe, oder einer Trauung oder einer christlichen Beerdigung angestellt werden, nach 2 Joh. 10, 11.*

Everyone that is excluded, as well as everyone that joins a false-believing church community or no church community at all, can neither receive the Holy Supper in the congregation, nor serve as a godparent at a baptism, nor take part in the closer friendly interaction that brothers have among themselves.

It is right that excluded people and those who have turned from the truth to error also should not be invited to meals that are held in honor of the baptism, or of a wedding, or of a Christian burial, in accordance with 2 John 10–11.

§12.

*Diese Gemeinde-Ordnung wird Jedem, der sich der Gemeinde anschließen will, vorgelegt. Ist er in die Gemeinde aufgenommen, und sein Name in die Gemeindefisten eingetragen, so hat er sich auch verpflichtet, solche Ordnung zu halten. Zu gleicher Ordnung ist auch innerhalb der Gemeinde jedes mündig gewordene männliche Glied verbunden, nachdem ihm diese Ordnung vorgelegt, und sein Name in die Liste der Stimmberechtigten eingetragen ist.*

This congregational order will be presented to everyone who wishes to join the congregation. If he is received into the congregation and his name is entered in the congregation lists, then he has also obligated himself to adhere to this order. Also within the congregation, each male member that has come of age is bound to the same order after this order has been presented to him and his name is entered in the list of people with a right to vote.



## The Visitation Articles

The original Constitution of our congregation indicated that the members committed themselves not only to the official Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord of 1580, but also to the Visitation Articles. The Visitation Articles were a separate statement of faith made by our Lutheran forefathers in Saxony in 1592. They expose the false doctrine of the Calvinists and affirm the true Scriptural teaching of our Lutheran Church on four points of doctrine. This is an example of the zeal for the pure doctrine manifest by our Lutheran forefathers. Since the Visitation Articles are not found among our official confessions, we include them here for our edification:

### **Visitation Articles in the Entire Electorate of Saxony, together with the Negative and Contrary Doctrines of the Calvinists, and the Form of Subscription, as Presented to be Signed by Both Parties.<sup>1</sup>**

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#### **Article I.**

#### **Of the Holy Supper.**

The pure and true doctrine of our churches  
concerning the Holy Supper:

I. That the words of Christ: *Take, eat, this is My body; drink, this is My blood*, are to be understood simply and according to the letter, as they read.

II. That in the Sacrament there are two things which are given [tendered] and received with one another: one earthly, which is bread and wine; and one heavenly, which is the body and blood of Christ.

III. That this [union, tendering and taking] occurs here on earth, and not above in heaven.

IV. That it [what is tendered and received] is the true natural body of Christ which hung, on the cross, and the true natural blood which flowed from the side of Christ.

V. That the body and blood of Christ are received not only by faith spiritually, which can also occur outside of the Supper, but here with the bread and wine orally, yet in an inscrutable and supernatural manner [and that] for a pledge and assurance of the resurrection of our bodies from the dead.

VI. That the oral partaking of the body and blood of Christ is done not only by the worthy, but also by the unworthy, who approach without repentance and true faith; nevertheless, with a different result: by the worthy for salvation, by the unworthy for judgment.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a translation of the original title from 1592 as found in Friedrich Bente's *Historical Introductions to the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, p. 192, which is published together with the source of the text of the following articles in *Triglott Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church, German-Latin-English* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), pp. 1151–1157.

**Article II.**  
**Of the Person of Christ.**

The pure and true doctrine of our churches  
on this article concerning the Person of Christ:

I. In Christ there are two distinct natures, the divine and the human. These remain to eternity unconfused and unseparated [inseparable (or undivided)].

II. These two natures are personally so united with one another that there is only *one* Christ, [and] *one* person.

III. Because of this personal union it is rightly said, and it is so also in deed and truth, that God is man, and man God, that Mary bore the Son of God, and God redeemed us with His own blood.

IV. Through this personal union and the exaltation that followed upon it, Christ, according to His flesh, has been placed at God's right hand, and has received all power in heaven and on earth, and has become partaker of all divine majesty, honor, power, and glory.

**Article III.**  
**Of Holy Baptism.**

The pure and true doctrine of our churches  
concerning this article of Holy Baptism:

I. That there is but *one* Baptism and *one* washing [ablution]—not such as is wont to remove the filth of the body, but [such as] washes us from sins.

II. Through Baptism, as the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, God saves us, and works in us such righteousness and cleansing from sins that he who perseveres in this covenant and confidence unto the end is not lost, but has eternal life.

III. All who are baptized into Christ Jesus are baptized into His death, and through Baptism are buried with Him into His death, and have put on Christ.

IV. Baptism is the washing of regeneration for the reason that in it we are born anew, and sealed with and graciously [by grace] given the Spirit of adoption.

V. Except a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. However, this does not refer to a case of necessity.

VI. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and by nature we all are the children of God's wrath, for we are begotten of sinful seed and are all conceived in sins.

**Article IV.**  
**Of Predestination and the Eternal Providence of God.**

The pure and true doctrine of our churches  
concerning this article:

I. That Christ has died for all men, and as the Lamb of God has borne the sins of the whole world.

II. That God created no one for condemnation, but will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. [Therefore] He commands all to hear His Son Christ in the Gospel, and

promises by it [through such hearing] the power and working of the Holy Ghost for conversion and salvation.

III. That many men are condemned [perish] by their own guilt, who are either unwilling to hear the Gospel of Christ, or again fall from grace, [whether] by error against the foundation or by sins against conscience.

IV. That all sinners who repent are received into grace, and no one is excluded, even though his sins were as scarlet, since God's mercy is much greater than the sins of all the world, and God has compassion on all His works.

### False and Erroneous Doctrine of the Calvinists **Concerning the Holy Supper:**

I. That the words of Christ cited above are to be understood in a figurative way, and not as they read.

II. That in the Supper there are only bare signs, the body of Christ, however, being as far from the bread as the highest heaven is from the earth.

III. That Christ is present there only by His power and working, and not with His body, just as the sun is present and efficacious here below on earth by its brilliancy and working, while the sun itself is above in the sky.

IV. That it is a *typicum corpus*, a figurative body, which is only signified and prefigured [by the bread and wine].

V. That it is received by faith alone, which soars [elevates itself] into heaven, and not orally.

VI. That only the worthy receive it; the unworthy, however, who have not such faith as can ascend into heaven receive nothing but bread and wine.

### False and Erroneous Doctrine of the Calvinists **Concerning the Person of Christ,** which conflicts especially with the Third and Fourth Articles of the pure doctrine<sup>2</sup>:

I. In the first place, that the expression, "God is man," and, "Man is God," is figurative.

II. That the human nature has communion with the divine not in deed and truth, but only in name and words.

III. That it is impossible for God, with all His omnipotence, to cause the natural body of Christ to be at the same time [simultaneously and instantaneously] in more than one place.

IV. That by His exaltation Christ, according to His human nature, has received only created gifts and finite power, and neither knows nor can do all things.

V. That Christ, according to His human nature, rules absently, just as the King of Spain rules the new islands.

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<sup>2</sup> This refers to paragraphs III and IV in Article II above.

VI. That it is damnable idolatry if the confidence and faith of the heart is placed in Christ not only according to His divine, but also according to His human nature, and the honor of adoration is directed to it [to both natures].

### False and Erroneous Doctrine of the Calvinists **Concerning Holy Baptism:**

I. That Baptism is an outward washing of water, whereby an inner washing [ablution] from sins is only signified.

II. That Baptism neither works nor confers regeneration, faith, the grace of God, and salvation, but only signifies and seals these.

III. That not all who are baptized with water, but only the elect, receive therewith the grace of Christ or the gift of faith.

IV. That regeneration occurs not in and at [with] Baptism, but not till afterwards in adult years, and in some [many] not until old age.

V. That salvation depends not upon Baptism, and accordingly emergency baptism [baptism in case of necessity] should not be permitted in the Church, but if the service of the Church [of the ordinary ministry of the Church] cannot be obtained, the child should be allowed to die without Baptism.

VI. That children of Christians are holy before Baptism and from their mothers' wombs; yea, that while still in their mothers' wombs they are [established] in the covenant of eternal life; otherwise holy Baptism could not be administered to them.

### False and Erroneous Doctrine of the Calvinists **Concerning Predestination and the Providence of God:**

I. That Christ died, not for all men, but only for the elect.

II. That God created the greater part of men for eternal condemnation, and is unwilling that they be converted and saved.

III. That the elect and regenerate cannot lose faith and the Holy Ghost and be condemned, even though they commit great sins and crimes of every kind.

IV. That they who are not elect must be condemned, and cannot attain salvation, even though they be baptized a thousand times and daily go to the Lord's Supper, and also live in as holy and irreproachable a way as ever possible.

## **A REMINDER FROM OUR FATHERS AS WE GIVE THANKS FOR 175 YEARS OF GOD'S GRACE**

### **A CONGREGATION CAN LOSE THE GIFT GIVEN TO HER**

As with individual Christians, so it is with congregations or associations of congregations. An orthodox congregation and synod can only come about in this way: that God helps His truth to triumph in many people. But just as the congregation receives the divine truth in the same way as the individual Christian, she can also be lost in the same way. If the pure gospel gets lost in her, then the only reason for this in the congregation is that Christians in the congregation have made room for their Old Adam, who is always devoted to error and sin in a manner hostile to God.

When members of the congregation begin to despise preaching and the sacrament, surrender to the sinful pleasures and merrymaking of the world, and seek fellowship and brotherhood in lodges, then at the same time the possession of the pure Word of God is endangered for the congregation. If the congregation then fails to counteract such a danger to life and teaching through instruction, admonition, warning, chastisement, and the exercise of God-mandated church discipline, if she instead observes the ways of the world that are spreading around, yes, if she even begins to approve, justify and favor such sinful beings themselves, then such practice contrary to Scripture actually shakes the divine truth, the sole principle of faith and life of a Christian congregation.

Even if the truth is still publicly available in sermons, magazines and books in such a congregation or fellowship, God's Word is in fact denied and abandoned by a congregation to the extent that in practice she persistently tramples upon it for love of the flesh. And probably even more quickly than is usually the case with individual members of a congregation, such a congregation, if she does not repent, will also outwardly reject the truth that inwardly has already become alien to it and has become a dead letter. She will no longer tolerate a preacher who wants to take seriously doctrine and practice. If they allow it to happen that he preaches according to the Scriptures, they do not allow him to practice according to the doctrine in the congregation. Soon she will also expect him to remain completely silent about such things in which the congregation no longer wants to conform to God's Word, and finally demand and demand that the preacher base his teaching on the life and existing views in the congregation instead of — as God wills — directing and evaluating the life of the congregation according to God's Word. But once the precipitous path contrary to the Scriptures has been entered, once a congregation has gotten used to disregarding God's Word and its power in a number of points, then there is soon no stopping her. In rapid succession she will abandon one piece after the other in practice and doctrine, and the flood of error will have its gates and doors open. Once the Old Adam has mastered the life of the congregation, it usually does not take long before he has brought the pulpits, professors, typewriters, and presses into his service.

A fellowship only needs to give consistency to false, carnal practice, and then it already lies in the arms of indifferentism and rationalism, the religion of the Old Adam. Although the God-pleasing life of Christians does not first lead to the knowledge of the truth, but rather the other way round, only pure preaching leads to a holy life, yet false teaching, although it itself leads to a sinful life,

only too often has its origin in a carnal way of life. After all, every heresy is basically an attempt on the part of man to gain recognition and justification for his godless position in heart and life.

Although it is not in the power of man to give himself the pure gospel, because the truth is a gift of God's grace, man still has the ability to reject pure doctrine, and Christians and Christian fellowships can also lose the truth they have been given by placing themselves again under the bondage of their flesh that is hostile to God and His Word.

- An excerpt from "What Is the Reason When a Church Fellowship Loses The Pure Truth of The Divine Word?" by Rev. Friedrich Bente. Published in Lehre und Wehre: Volume 43, Issues 4-5 (April-May, 1897)



# “FARM LIFE: THE QUILT BLOCKS OF MEMORIES”

## PREFACE

The selected historical information is from “FARM LIFE: THE QUILT BLOCKS OF MEMORIES” book, copyrighted in 2020 by Diane Boehm (narrator and editor). Diane has granted permission to use information pertaining to **Johann Frederick Christian**, who was among a group of early immigrant families to settle in the Town Theresa area. Johann Frederick was part of the group of immigrants who helped establish Immanuel congregation. The wealth of research and careful tracing of family histories by Rob Bowe, the Christian Family archivist, provided the basis for much of the Christian Family’s early history in America. Some information is duplicated from a previous anniversary book and other details have been added to this presentation.

## FROM PRUSSIA TO WISCONSIN

When people leave behind their homeland and come to America, they dream of a better life. In search of that dream, they are ready to sacrifice the familiarity of home and the certainty of knowing where they belong. Driven by ambition, frustration, persecution and hope, they take great risks in search of new possibilities, something more, something better than the life they would leave behind. That was how our family came to Wisconsin. Our branch of the Christian family emigrated in 1843 from Pommern (now called Pomerania), a province bordering the Baltic Sea in the state of Prussia (the name of this region before the North German Confederation was formed in 1871). This agricultural area east of the Oder River was at that time almost entirely German-speaking and Protestant.

Pommern, like other Prussian provinces, had been greatly influenced by the Reformation three centuries earlier. Lutheranism had taken root in Pommern already in 1525, when Martin Luther’s teachings were adopted. Eight years later, in 1533 the Lutheran Church of Pommern had been established, and a Plattdeutsch (Pomeranian dialect) version of the Bible was printed. In 1536, the dukes of Pommern had accepted the Lutheran faith. Martin Luther had advocated compulsory schooling so that all people would be able to read the Bible, so

Pommern literacy rates were high. This Lutheran heritage was deeply embedded in our ancestors.

In the rural countryside, most people lived in small villages, usually clustered around large land estates. Villages were often within walking distance of each other. A majority of the villages had one church with an adjoining cemetery. Social activities centered around family, church and community.

These communal villages not only provided security for the residents but also facilitated easy access to the fields that radiated outward from the village. The villagers’ days were consumed by long hours of hard work tending fields and animals. Even children were required to work at an early age; in 1839 the Prussian government had set a minimum age of nine for working children.

The dialect in the region was Plattdeutsch (now often called “low German,” with similarities to Dutch): this dialect was used in the home, though the more formal “high German” was used by the wealthy educated citizens and by the clergy in their preaching, teaching, and writing. Plattdeutsch would decline in use after the German Empire was formed in 1871, when “high German” became the standard in schools.

Pommern in the 1840s was a land filled with deep tensions, both religious and economic. It had become clear to many Pomeranians that there was no way they could find profitable employment in their district or acquire land for farming. Low grain prices and England’s high tariffs on imports caused economic distress for landowners and workers alike.

Religious turmoil greatly heightened their distress, as the church that was at the heart of their community was facing intense religious pressures. Prior to 1817, the Lutheran church had been considered the “national” church of Prussia. But religious oppression began under King Frederick Wilhelm III (who ruled Prussia from 1797 to 1840). His goal was to merge the Evangelical Reformed Church founded by John Calvin with the Lutheran church of his wife, thereby establishing a single

state church, the Evangelische Kirche. Most rural Pommern residents at the time were Lutheran, while the more educated and aristocratic citizens of the larger towns tended to be Reformed. Unifying all the Protestant churches and standardizing their liturgy and organization would establish fully centralized royal control over all the churches in the Prussian Union of Churches.

This Union was now declared the church of record in all civil matters as well. People were required to attend the nearest church. Eventually it became unlawful for Lutherans to worship in public, and all baptisms, confirmations and marriages were required to be performed by Union ministers to be valid. If a child was born into a marriage of Lutherans and not baptized by a Union church minister, the child was considered illegitimate. If a Union minister did not confirm a young person within the established church, he could not secure a work permit. Dissenting "Old Lutherans" were now persecuted and sometimes jailed by the Prussian government.

When his efforts at unification failed, Wilhelm III outlawed the Lutheran church in 1831: church buildings were seized, Lutheran church services were banned, and Lutheran schools were closed. In the religious and political turmoil that followed, many Lutherans suffered loss of jobs and systematic discrimination. This set the stage for the waves of "Old Lutheran" emigration, beginning in 1837. Though "the old tyrant" Wilhelm III died in 1840 and was succeeded by his son Wilhelm IV, who lifted the sanctions placed on Lutherans, economic opportunities for the Lutheran farm laborers in rural areas remained bleak. Emigration fever began to take hold.

Letters from the first Prussian emigrants to America about the economic opportunities and religious freedom they had found fed the fever. So in the 1840s many more set sail for Australia, Canada and America, in search of religious freedom and better economic opportunities, establishing faith based communities in their new homelands.

In the first wave of Pomeranian immigrants in 1837 about 60 families had settled in the Territory of Wisconsin, which had been created by the US Congress. Some 40 "Alt Lutheraner" families had

come to Milwaukee two years later in 1839. Lands in the territory of Wisconsin were being advertised in Europe. Nowhere in Pommern could you buy farmland at the price of \$1.25 an acre as letters from the first immigrants had written was possible in America. Nowhere in Pommern could they enjoy the religious freedom they desperately sought.

In the year our ancestors emigrated, 1843, a total of 15 ships sailed to America: most of the passengers were from Pommern.

That is how our Pomeranian ancestors came to this region in Wisconsin. Our great-great-grandfather **Martin Frederick Christian** was born in 1793 (1793-1876). So in the late spring of 1843, **Martin**, age 50, his wife **Dorthea**, age 40, and their ten children, together with neighboring families left their homeland and sailed to America. The cost of passage for a family of 12 was the then-princely sum of \$500. They arrived in New York on July 24, 1843. From there they traveled up the Hudson River on steamboats to Albany. From here they traveled on packed boats via the Erie Canal system. From Buffalo they sailed across Lakes Erie, Huron and Michigan arriving at Milwaukee. From Milwaukee, the family traveled for ten days by wagon on poorly hacked trails through thick woods, following Potawatomi Indian trails to the town now known as Lebanon.

Quickly they cleared a small amount of land near Lebanon and built a cabin before the winter of 1843. The next year, using the name **Frederick Christian, Martin** filed a request and was granted an 80-acre tract in the Town of Lebanon. Though Martin had now become a landowner, there was no adjacent land available in the area for all the sons. Thus in 1846 **Martin's** second son (**Johann Friederick**, now age 23 and his brother, **August**, then age 17, joined a group of 1846 immigrants traveling through two townships, settling in the third, Theresa Township where land was still available. Having found and purchased available land in Dodge County, **Johann Friederick Christian** and his brother **August**, and other immigrants were determined to build a new life in spite of many challenges. By the 1850 US Census, Theresa Township had a population around 7,000, where (**Johann Friederick** and **August** now owned 764 acres of land.

One of the immigrants' first priorities had been to build a church. In the fall of 1846, Friedrich Jagow, **(Johann) Friederick Christian**, and Friedrich Fellwock had put up money to purchase 40 acres of land bordering the Rock River, to build a church and a future school. This property was located at what is now the corner of Allen Road and County Highway AY.

Once property had been acquired, a log structure was erected by men of the community, and was dedicated on Pentecost Sunday in 1848. The (River Church) had several name changes through the years.

According to the Title and Abstract before 1850 it was called the Lutheran Church of the Town of Theresa. June 7, 1850 (River Church) was incorporated as the First Emmanuel Society of the Town of Theresa. March 12, 1894 the (River Church) was incorporated as the First Evangelical Lutheran Immanuel Congregation, of the Town of Theresa. Again in 1953 when land was deeded to Dodge County for Hwy. AY relocation the name of (River Church) is recorded as Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church. In March 25, 1957 a resolution was passed to merge and consolidate Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church, Hochheim and Immanuel Lutheran Church, of Town Theresa into one new religious corporation to be known as Immanuel Lutheran Church. Immanuel Lutheran Church became a member of the Missouri Synod in 1937, as they observed their 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Having established themselves in the community, **(Johann) Friederick** and **Friederike** began to build their future together in the Theresa Township. They would have ten children who lived to adulthood (three died as infants), six daughters and four sons, including **Johann Herman Christian** known as Herman was the first to be born in America 1848, and also was the first child to be baptized in Immanuel Lutheran (River Church). **Herman** grew up in Theresa Township, working the land with his father.

As the families put down roots, the Lutheran tradition continued to bind this rural community together. Having come so far to practice the faith that had brought them to this place, establishing the

Lutheran religion was paramount for them. The immigrants' first priority after settling had been to build their church and find a pastor. The first log church had been built in 1855, when **(Johann) Herman** was 7 years old. Seven years later, the members established Immanuel Lutheran day school, holding classes in the church. Immanuel School is one of the oldest continually operating elementary schools in Wisconsin. In the early years, frequently the pastor was called upon to be the day school teacher as well. The school building was constructed near the church in 1880. The school building had a home for the teacher above the classroom. The school was built at a cost of \$4,858.84 and paid off in one year. In the early years teaching was done in German, the language of the settlers. With an eye toward the future, classroom instruction soon was provided in both German and English.

The pattern of self-sufficiency would continue. A new brick church building would be constructed in 1883, with much of the labor again performed by the hardworking men of the congregation. Timbers were cut from nearby tamarack trees: because tamarack lumber does not rot, these timbers would stand the test of time.

**Herman Christian** was serving on the church council as a trustee in 1883 when the frame and brick church was constructed.

The church was remodeled in 1932 and again remodeled and expanded in 1986. In 1967 the congregation issued a Quit Claim Deed for the sum of One (\$1.00) Dollar for property located South of the school buildings to retired teacher William H. Luehring and his wife Margaret T. Luehring. A house was then built for the Luehring retirement years.

In 1951, a new brick one classroom school was built with basement and kitchen facilities underneath. In 1957, an additional classroom was added with the basement extended to accommodate the extra children from Hochheim, a sister church which had burned down; after the fire the two congregations had merged. In addition to now having 2 classrooms, the school had a library and basement with a kitchen, which could now be used

by the Ladies Aid for many church functions and funerals.

Worship services were characterized by hearty congregational singing, led by the large pipe organ built in the church balcony. Immanuel also has a men's and women's choir which continue to add their gifted voices to the worship services.

In 1986 extensive renovation took place by adding a narthex with rest rooms and the basement also was dug out for space for a fellowship hall. Again in 1991 a new sacristy was added to east end of the church and basement also dug out to accommodate kitchen facilities. Also one of the rooms in the school basement was remodeled for a Pre-school and Kindergarten classroom.

In recent years, it had been determined that there was a great need for a Day Care for the many households that have both parents working.

The voting members of Immanuel were committed to providing a Christian education, so the plan was to continue education classes in the large classroom while the other classroom and library area and one room in the basement could be used for the Day Care. The library had also been used for the church/school secretary. The office had been relocated to the old school building classroom.

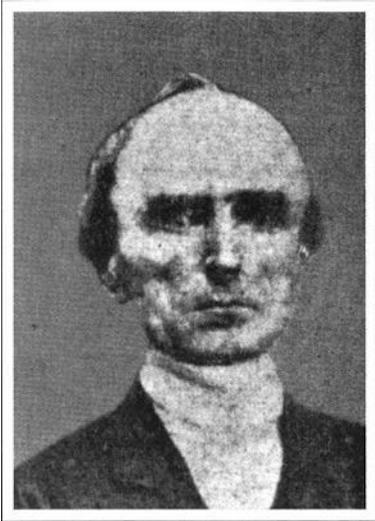
Looking back at the events that have taken place over the past 175 years, we see that the Lord has blessed Immanuel in many ways for Immanuel to provide worship services for its members and visitors while also being able to provide a Christian-based education for the children.

- Annotated by Norman Kamrath



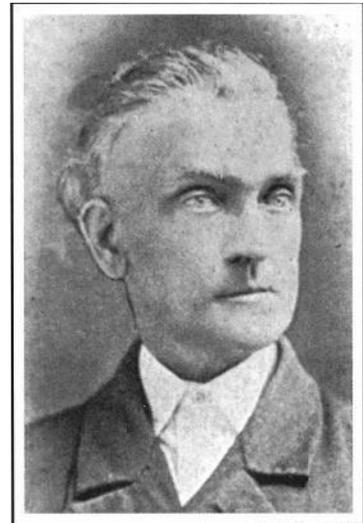
1908 Church and School

## THE PASTORS WHO SERVED THE TWO CONGREGATIONS



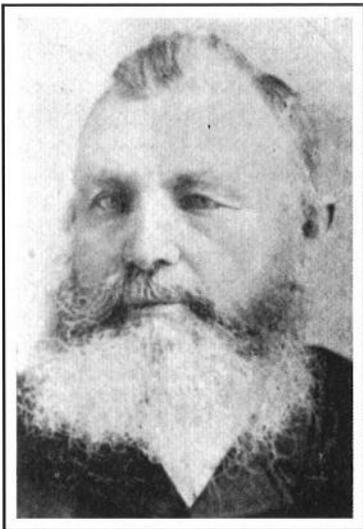
**C. L. GEYER**  
(1847 – 1853)

Carl Ludwig Geyer came to America with the Missouri Saxons in 1839 as a Candidate of Theology. He taught school for one of the Saxon congregations until he accepted his first call as pastor of the Immanuel congregation in Lebanon in 1844. On second Pentecost Day, 1847, he came here to organize our congregation. Very likely he observed Pentecost Day with his congregation on Sunday, May 23, and then came to organize our congregation on Monday, May the 24th. Pastor Geyer served our congregation every six to eight weeks until Boehm came. Later on he served again during two vacancies.



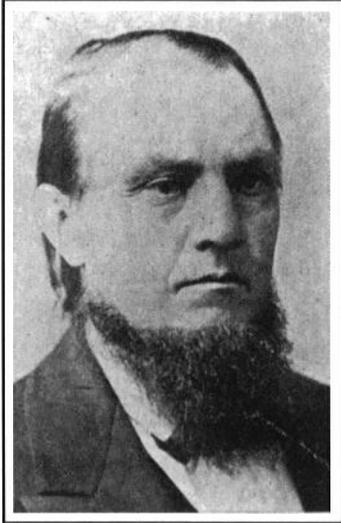
**MARTIN STEPHAN, JR.**  
(1853 – 1856)

Martin Stephan, Jr., a son of the Saxon leader, came to this congregation as a Candidate of Theology and was ordained and installed on Rogate Sunday 1853. Besides being a good faithful shepherd, he was also a church architect. Having studied architecture in Germany, he designed many churches, including the Hochheim Church. During his pastorate the Hochheim congregation was organized on June 6, 1854. Pastor Stephan became the first resident pastor. He left in October 1856.



**PETER H. DICKE**  
(1857 – 1863)

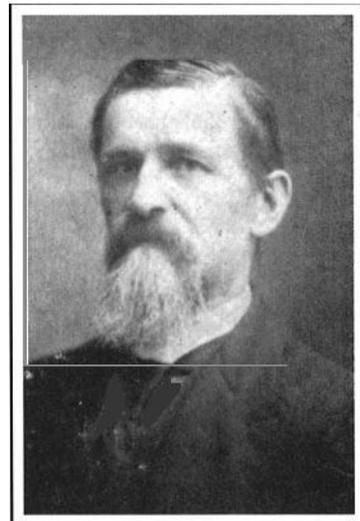
After a vacancy of seven months, Pastor Stephan was succeeded by Pastor Peter H. Dicke, who came in 1857 from the Franconian congregations in Michigan. During his time, the second church, a frame structure was built by the lower congregation, which also served as school and the teacher's dwelling. Pastor Dicke was a born missionary. Already during his pastorate here, other congregations were organized by him. In all he did pioneer work for forty-one years and organized twenty-four congregations. He left here for Shawano County in 1863.



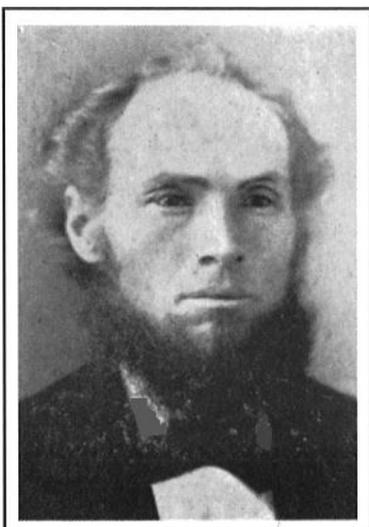
Philip Wambsganss came in the same year Pastor Dicke left. During his ministry, the Hochheim Church was built in 1867. In 1873 Pastor Wambsganss received and accepted a call to the Sherman Center congregation in Sheboygan County, which in the course of years became the mother church of three others.

**PHILIP WAMBSGANSS**  
(1863 – 1873)

Six months after Pastor Wambsganss left, the congregation received another pastor in Claus Seuel in 1874. In 1880 the Immanuel congregations prevailed upon Pastor Seuel to decline a call from Zion congregation of New Orleans, but in 1882 he was granted a peaceful dismissal to accept a call to Portage, Wisconsin.



**CLAUS SEUEL**  
(1874 – 1882)



**DITTMAR KOTHE**  
(1883 – 1889)

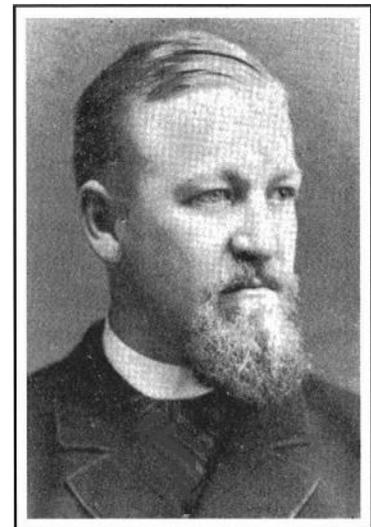
Pastor Kothe came from Silo, Minnesota. He was installed in January 1883 and served until his death from tuberculosis in 1889. His body was taken to Illinois for burial. Pastor Kothe was the first pastor to die in office here. During his pastorate the present church and limestone school were built by the lower congregation.



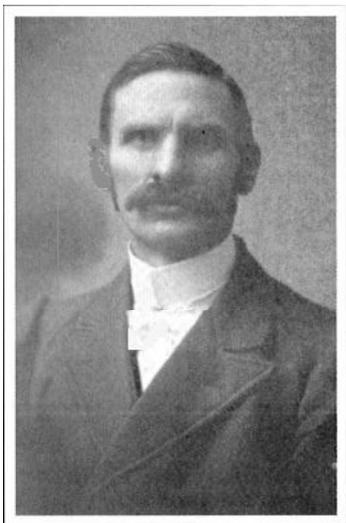
The ministry of our next pastor, J. F. Leyhe, was of short duration. He came here April 22, 1890 from near Wisconsin Rapids. For only nine months the congregations were privileged to have this man of God in their midst. He died January 16, 1891 and was buried in Madison County, Illinois. His family remained living here and sixteen years later his widow was laid to rest in the Hochheim cemetery.

**J. F. LEYHE**  
(1890 – 1891)

Pastor Ernst Baese succeeded Pastor Leyhe July 12, 1891 and served until July 2, 1899. Pastor Baese was a gifted artist. For many years a large painting portraying the Birth of Jesus was displayed during the Christmas holidays. He engraved a large tablet which commemorates the five men who lost their lives in the Civil War. He also engraved a smaller tablet with the words: “Im Jahr des Heils 1847 am heiligen Pfingsttage wurde hier das Evangelium unsers Herrn Jesu Christi zum erstenmal öffentlich verkündigt. Gottes Wort und Luthers Lehr vergehe nun und nimmermehr!” Both of these works are on display in our church.

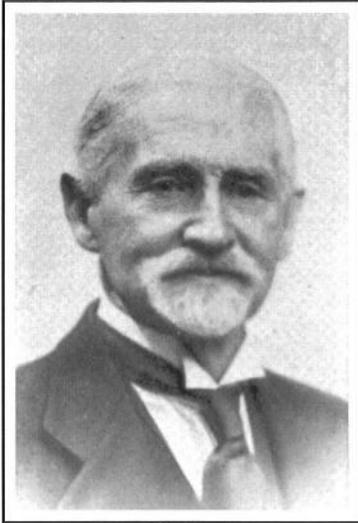


**ERNST BAESE**  
(1891 – 1899)



**THEO. HOFFMANN**  
(1899 – 1913)

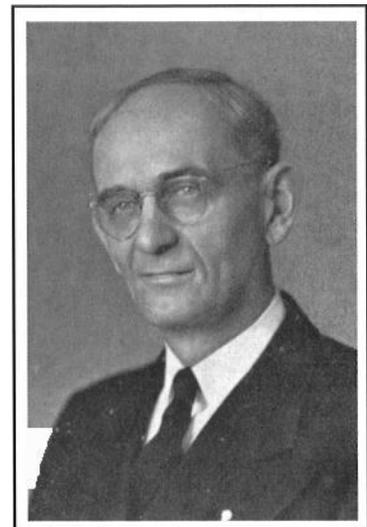
Pastor Baese was followed by Pastor Theodore Hoffmann who came here from the neighboring St. Peter’s congregation of the Town of Theresa. He served our parish for 13 ½ years until his labors were ended by his death on April 4, 1913. Pastor Hoffmann died after an illness of only five days and his mortal remains were laid to rest in the Hochheim cemetery.



From April until August, the congregation had to be served by vacancy pastors. On August 3, 1913, Pastor C. P. Thusius from Groton, South Dakota was installed as the new shepherd. He served until October 24, 1927 when because of old age, Pastor Thusius resigned and moved to Watertown, Wisconsin.

**C. P. THUSIUS**  
(1913 – 1927)

The longest term of service in the pastoral office belongs to Pastor Herman H. Laabs, who came here from Ringle, near Wausau, Wis., in 1927. In addition to his pastoral duties, Pastor Laabs also taught school for quite a few years. During his pastorate, the Young People's Bible Class and the Ladies' Aid Society were organized. After the Hochheim Church was destroyed by fire in 1941, a new church was dedicated on July 12, 1942. Pastor Laabs also conducted the first English services. After twenty-one years of service, he accepted a call to Parkers Prairie, Minnesota.

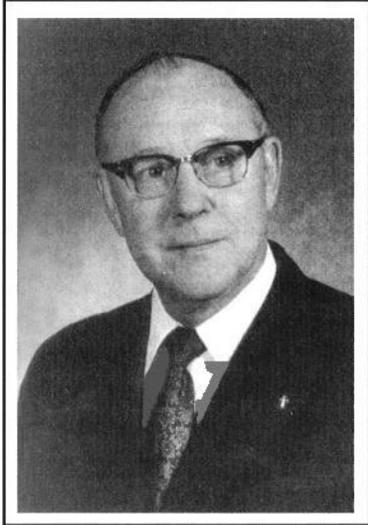


**H. H. LAABS**  
(1927 – 1948)



Pastor Wm. A. Lauterbach came from Granton, Wisconsin, to be our next pastor. He was installed in January 1949. It was during his pastorate that the Hochheim Church was destroyed by fire a second time and the congregations were again reunited in 1957. Pastor Lauterbach always had the confirmands well-prepared for Examination Day as he went through the Catechism with them. Rev. Lauterbach had a Doctor's degree and wrote various devotional materials for publication. He was the last pastor to conduct services in both the German and English languages. Rev. Lauterbach and his wife both taught in the Hochheim school. He accepted a call to Neshkoro, Wis., in March 1965 after serving here for sixteen years.

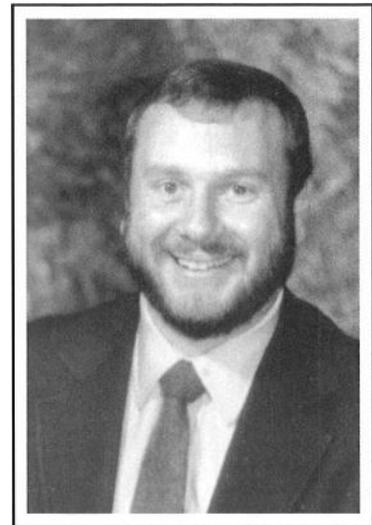
**WM. A. LAUTERBACH**  
(1949 – 1965)



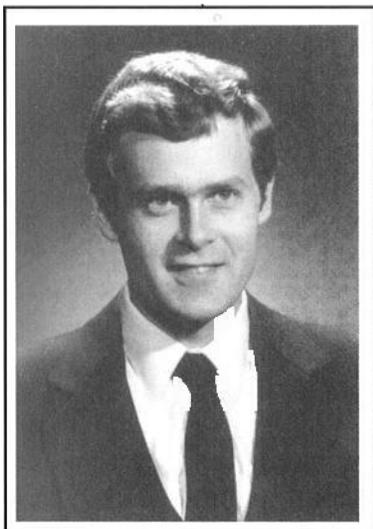
**OTTO T. SCHREIBER**  
*(1965 – 1978)*

After placing nine calls, the congregation again received a faithful shepherd in Pastor Otto T. Schreiber, who came from Immanuel, Brookfield, in Milwaukee. He was installed in December 1965. Pastor Schreiber's first sermon was based on 1 Cor. 2:1-3. He promised us that just as St. Paul had addressed the Corinthians, he too was 'not coming with excellency of speech but was determined to preach nothing but Christ and Him crucified'. This he did faithfully Sunday after Sunday for thirteen years. He also steadfastly reminded his members to support missions so others would learn of this crucified and risen Christ. When his health forced him to give up the full time ministry, he and his wife retired in Mayville where he served St. John's congregation part-time. Rev. Schreiber also served as communion assistant at Immanuel.

Our next pastor was Dennis R. Schueler, who was installed in March 1979. He came from Zion Lutheran Church in Bethalto, Illinois. During his pastorate two Sunday services were begun with a Saturday evening Communion service once a month. He accepted a call to Platteville, Wisconsin, in January 1985.



**DENNIS R. SCHUELER**  
*(1979 – 1985)*



**PETER E. PREUS**  
*(1985 – 1989)*

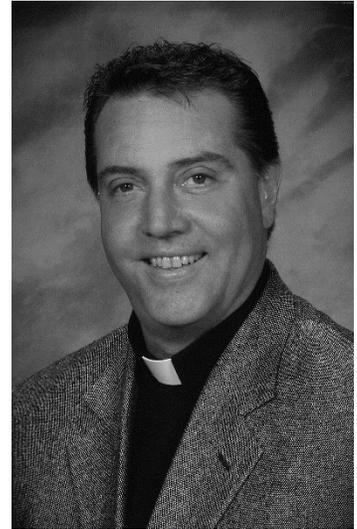
Pastor Peter Preus was installed on April 21, 1985. He came from St. John's Lutheran Church in Casey, Iowa. During his ministry the church interior was renovated and a new narthex was added. In 1989 he accepted a call to Sanford, Michigan.



**ELDOR J. HARMANN**  
*(1990 – 2001)*

Pastor E. J. Harmann came from Janesville, WI, and was installed on February 4, 1990. During his ministry the new sacristy was built and the church basement was completed; also the Preschool and Kindergarten programs were begun in our school. Many of our elderly members became no longer able to attend church. These shut-ins Pastor Harmann served regularly and faithfully in addition to performing his regular duties in the congregation. Pastor Harmann retired to Texas in 2001.

Pastor Mark Berlin was ordained and installed as pastor at Immanuel on July 7, 2002. Pastor Berlin is a graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana. In 2010, Pastor Berlin accepted a call to Redeemer Lutheran in Interlochen, Michigan.



**MARK BERLIN**  
*(2002 – 2010)*



**DOUGLAS ZAHNER**  
*(2010 – present)*

Pastor Douglas Zahner was ordained and installed as pastor of Immanuel on October 3, 2010. Pastor Zahner is a graduate of Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary in St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada. Pastor and his wife, Tricia, have been blessed with seven children. The six youngest Zahner children were born in Immanuel's parsonage.

## THE CHRISTIAN DAY SCHOOL

When the German immigrants settled in this country, they were very concerned about the education of their children. In virtually every congregation's early history we find that with the beginning of a church they also opened a school. In many places where no other settlements had taken place, there were of course no other schools yet in existence. The parents fully realized the importance of having their children taught in the secular subjects but their main concern was that they were taught in religion. The three 'R's could be learned in the public school but the big 'R', religion, could only be taught in the parochial school. In the early years there were very few trained teachers and so in many cases the pastor was asked to teach school. Later on when teachers were trained in Synod's schools, it was taken for granted that the teacher would play the organ in church and direct the choir as well as teach music in school. Another inherent duty of the teacher was that he served as the church's secretary and church custodian. Students were divided into grades but progressed at their own pace. It was not uncommon for the parents to keep their children home, particularly the boys, to help with the spring work and harvest in the fall.

The Christian education of the children was also important to the founders of our congregation. We note that its first pastor, Boehm, also taught school several days a week. We have no further mention of a school until the year 1855 when a parochial school was established here. Most likely this was due to the unsettling circumstances that existed within the parish prior to that time. Immanuel – Hochheim immediately opened a parochial school when it organized in 1854. School was conducted in the church. This particular building served as their school for the entire 103 years of their existence. At Immanuel – River Church, school was also conducted in the church building. This was the log structure built in 1848 and then the frame church built in 1858. This building also had a built-on teacherage.

We also have records that indicate that a public school existed within the district in the early years. This school was located at the corner of AY and

Zion Church Road. The records show that the school board and other officers were members of the congregation. The attendance records show that it was attended by children from the congregation. How these two schools functioned and coexisted we do not know. We do know that in later years children who attended the Christian Day School went to the district public school in summer to learn English.

After the River Church built a new church in 1883, a separate school with a teacherage was built in 1885. This is the limestone building still in use today. It served as a one-room school until 1951 when a new brick school was built. The new school had one classroom and a basement that was used for meetings and served the congregation in many other ways. Then in 1957, another classroom was added to this building to accommodate the increased enrollment with the merger of Hochheim. Beginning in 1955, the old school was again utilized to serve as another classroom and for confirmational instruction until 1970. In 1991, one of the basement rooms in the new school was remodeled to serve as a Preschool and Kindergarten classroom. This entire project was accomplished through the efforts and work contributed by members of the Board of Education and other members of the congregation.

Throughout their years of existence, both schools have been served by many dedicated teachers. Precise teacher records from the early years are extremely sketchy and reticent, providing little information other than names. While during the first decades only men served as teachers, both men and women served the school in more recent years. Pastor Laabs took over the teaching duties at Hochheim in 1927 and taught until 1948. In some of these years he was assisted by vicars and student teachers. Then Rev. and Mrs. Lauterbach assumed the teaching duties from 1949 – 1952. The final years at Hochheim were 'filled in' by student teachers. It was a one-room school throughout its existence accommodating all eight grades.

Here at the River Church, Mr. W. H. Luehring, who came in 1934, taught all eight grades in the limestone school until 1951 when the entire enrollment was moved into the new school. Beginning in 1953, Mrs. Luehring assisted in the school in various ways. As the enrollment increased, a second full-time teacher was employed in 1955.

In 1991, the Preschool and Kindergarten program was begun. In 2012, childcare was added.

In recent years, our school has returned to a more traditional style of instruction, often referred to as Classical Education. We provide students

with solid, lasting content which offers a foundation for perceptive thinking and productive life in this world. Unconstrained by educational theory intended to lead children away from important supernatural realities, we look to the Word of God as the ultimate source of knowledge for every generation. By using time-tested resources in an atmosphere saturated with the Word of God, our hope is to lead children to reach their full potential and discover a clearer picture of what is good, true, and beautiful.



Teacher A. Sohn (1895 – 1932)

## Classical Lutheran Education – An Overview

By Mrs. Deborah Tauschek

The students at Immanuel Lutheran School receive a classical Lutheran education. What does that mean? Classical Education is based on seven liberal arts - the Trivium (three arts of language) and the quadrivium (four arts of mathematics). These seven liberal arts have been around for thousands of years, when education meant searching for wisdom and eloquence.

The Trivium consists of three different stages. The first, or grammar stage, includes our youngest students up to middle school. They read and hear good literature while looking at the eloquence and wisdom of those scholars before them. The students in the classroom memorize great poetry, math facts, historical events, and scientific laws and principles. They also practice handwriting skills by copying the works of great authors.

The second, or logic, stage includes middle school. These students take the information they memorized and learned from the grammar stage and synthesize it. They start to make sense of what they've memorized and make connections between ideas and topics. They use formal and informal logic to reason and make sense of all the facts they previously learned.

The third, or rhetoric, stage includes the high school student. These students logically present the foundational information from the grammar stage in clear, elegant language. They take the why's they learned from the logic stage and originally defend their worldview.

Lutheran Education is one based on a Lutheran worldview – *simul iustus et peccator* (simultaneously saint and sinner). A worldview led by the five Solas: *sola gratia*, *sola fide*, *Solus Christus*, *Sola scriptura*, and *Soli Deo Gloria*. In other words, we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone as revealed by scripture alone to the glory of God alone.

A classical Lutheran education brings together the Trivium and the five Solas. It is an education modeled after Martin Luther and the early reformers. It is an education that seeks and studies all that is true, good, and beautiful.



2022-2023 Day School Class with Teacher, Mrs. Deborah Tauschek



2022-2023 Preschool Class with Teacher, Mrs. Carriane Pauer

## The teachers who have served the two schools over the years are as follows:

### **Immanuel (River Church School)**

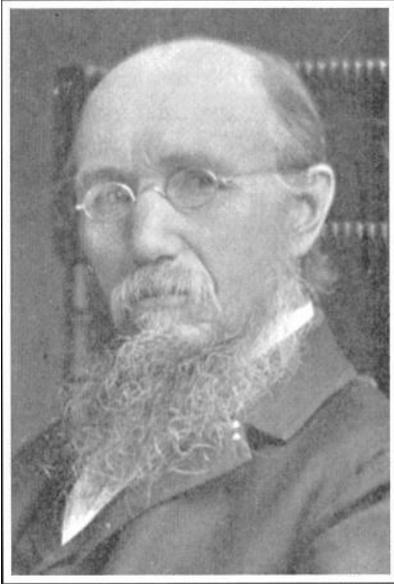
Ludwig  
John Mueller  
Dreyer  
J. J. Schmidt  
G. Schulz  
Herm. Albrecht  
Richter  
Aldach  
Grewing  
Christian Arndt (1873-1881)  
Drewer (1881-1883)  
P. G. Schaus (1883-1890)  
C. A. Wilsky (1891-1895)  
A. Sohn (1895-1932)  
Richard Werning (1932-1933)  
R. Finke (1933-1934)  
William H. Luehring (1934-1966)  
Mrs. W. H. Luehring (1953-1966)  
Mary Jane Justinger (1955)  
Joyce Nolte (1957-1959)  
Yvonne Schuettpelez (1959-1960)  
Mrs. Waldo Laabs (1962)  
Mrs. Mildred Karl (1964)  
Richard Lutz (1964-1965)  
Albert Maier (1966-1967)  
Mrs. W. A. Lauterbach (1960-1964)  
Mrs. Connie Steinbach (1966-1968;  
1970-1971; 1975-1996)  
Ronald Rennegarbe (1968-1970)  
Mrs. Ronald Rennegarbe (1968-1970)  
Mrs. Connie (Hadley) Becker (1970-1973)  
Mrs. Delores (Giese) Rosin (1970-1974)  
Mr. William E. Postel (1971-1978)  
Miss Ramona Doehling (1973-1974)  
Mrs. Susan Ernst (1974-1975)  
Miss Barbara Huehn (1974-1976)  
Mrs. Pamela (Utech) Muther (1976-1978)  
Mr. Alvin E. Lutringer (1978-1995)  
Miss Cynthia Fitzner (1980-1982)  
Mrs. Ruth (Bruss) Craft (1982-1984)  
Mrs. Tamera (Wietenhagen) Giese (1985-1987)  
Mrs. Barbara Lutringer (1988-1995)  
Mrs. V. Kay Koenitzer (1991-2012 )  
Mrs. Tracey Hackbarth (1995)  
Mrs. Carolyn Sayles (1995-1996)  
Mrs. Barbara Zimmermann (1996-2006)  
Mr. James Violette (1996-1997)

Mr. Jerry Papanek (1997)  
Mr. Robert Bennett (1998-1999)  
Mr. Brian Elmhorst (1998-2010)  
Mrs. Lori Elmhorst (2000-2001) (2004-2009)  
Mrs. Tamera Giese (2002)  
Mrs. Valarie Macdonald (2003)  
Mrs. Jodi Paplham (2010-2011)  
Mrs. S. Shive / Miss C. Poritz (2011-2012)  
Miss Sarah Mueller (2011-2012)  
Miss Anna Kugler (2012-2013)  
Mrs. Kimberly Link (2012-2013)  
Miss Natasha Weiss (2012-2013)  
Mr. Darren Kitsch (2013-2014)  
Miss Emily Peterson (2014-2018)  
Mrs. Mandy David (2013-2016)  
Mrs. Rachel Bartel (2016-2019)  
Miss Laura Laubenstein (2018-2020)  
Mrs. Naomi Cina (2019-2022)  
Mrs. Deborah Tauschek (2020 - )

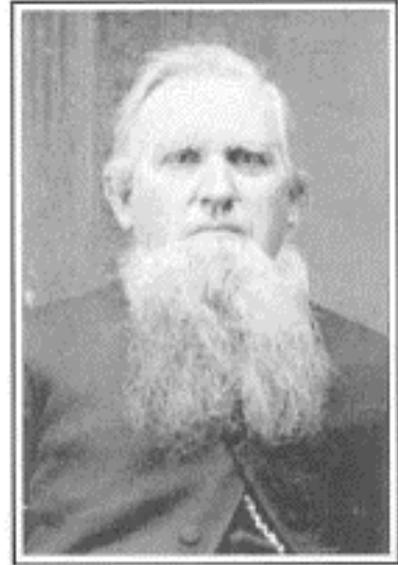
### **Immanuel (Hochheim)**

Haack  
Albrecht  
Hoppe  
Ahde  
Becker  
Benz  
Adam Brandenstein (1865-1891)  
John Brandenstein (1891-1892)  
Wilhelm Nickel (1893-1898)  
Adolf Schwanke (1898-1902)  
Herman Martin (1903-1906)  
F. W. Malinowsky (1906-1909)  
Christian Roediger Sr. (1909-1913)  
Christian Roediger Jr. (1913-1927)  
Rev. H. H. Laabs (1927-1948)  
Assisted by Fred Meyer, Ernst Laabs, Anton  
Warneke, Reinhold Krueger, John Ricker, John  
Scholz, Clifford Schack  
Rev. W. A. Lauterbach (1949-1952)  
Mrs. W. A. Lauterbach (1949-1952)  
Donald Pfaff (1952-1953)  
Milan Vano (1953-1954)  
John Brehm (1954 -1955)  
Ronald Steinbach (1955-1956)  
Leonard Mirly (1956-1957)

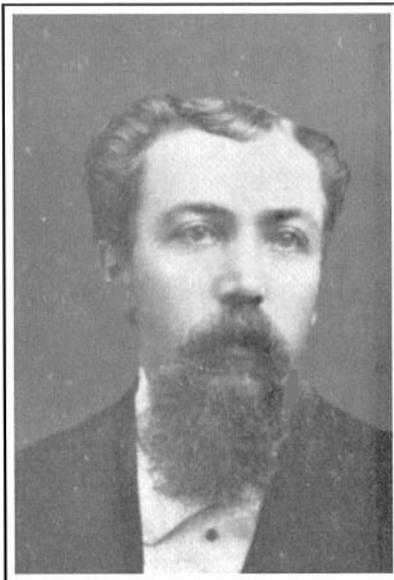
*Since we do not have pictures of all the teachers, the following are some of the teachers who served the two congregations*



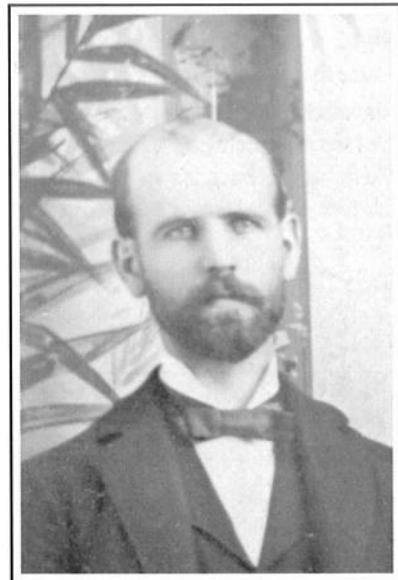
**Christian Arndt**  
*River Church (1873 – 1881)*



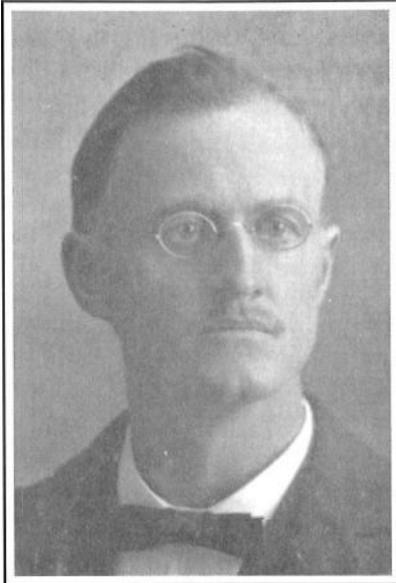
**Adam Brandenstein**  
*Hochheim (1865 – 1891)*



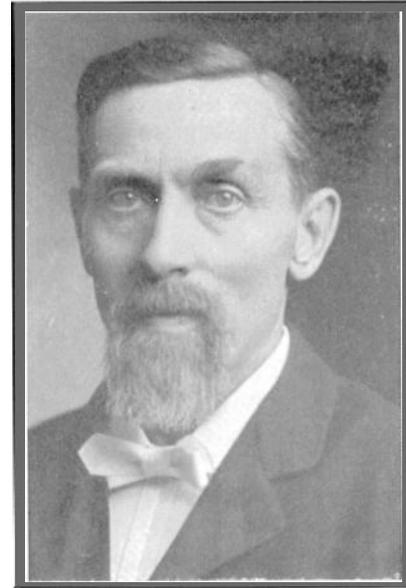
**P.G. Schaus**  
*River Church (1883 – 1890)*



**William Nickel**  
*Hochheim (1893 – 1898)*



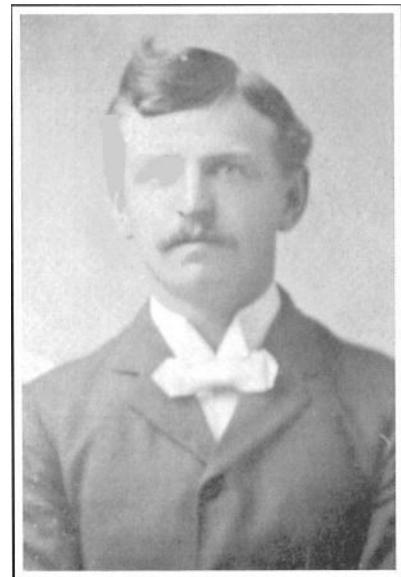
A. Sohn  
*River Church (1895 – 1932)*



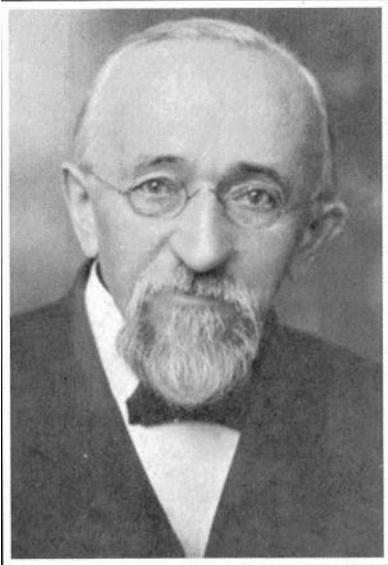
A. G. Schwanke  
*Hochheim (1898 – 1902)*



Richard Werning  
*River Church (1932 – 1933)*



Herman Martin  
*Hochheim (1903 – 1906)*



Christian Roediger, Sr.  
*Hochheim (1909-1913)*

Teacher Roediger served at Hochheim from 1909 to 1913. Mr. Roediger was born in Germany and became an orphan at an early age. Mr. Roediger was a man of small stature resulting from mistreatment from his godparents. After coming to America, he attended the teacher's college at Addison, Illinois. He taught school for 35 years before his health forced him to resign in 1913. He was widely known as the 'Rätsel Onkel' for his gift of writing Christian puzzles and German 'Gedichte'. He composed many poems and verses for birthdays, weddings, etc., not only for individuals but also for publication.

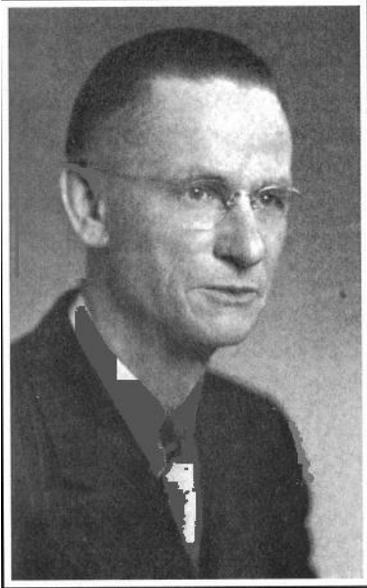


Christian Roediger, Jr.  
*Hochheim (1913-1927)*

Christian Roediger Jr. followed his father as teacher at Hochheim in 1913. Mr. Roediger was an outstanding teacher who had an excellent handwriting which he passed on to many of his students. Mr. Roediger was also gifted in music. In addition to playing the organ and teaching music in school, he wrote many arrangements for the male choir and mixed choir. Mr. Roediger also mastered the art of photography. He left in 1927 to accept a call to Lebanon.



Thy Word Is a  
Lamp



W. H. Luehring  
*River Church (1934 -1966)*

Mr. Luehring arrived in 1934 to become the teacher at the River Church. Mr. Luehring not only taught his students thoroughly in the secular subjects but also in religion. This was evidenced every year by the responses of the confirmation class on Examination Sunday. The students from our school also distinguished themselves both in character and scholastically as they went through high school. It is noteworthy to mention that after placing such a high percentage of students on the honor roll year after year, the principal of the local high school inquired of Mr. Luehring about his teaching methods and procedures. Mr. Luehring also maintained a high level of singing in the congregation. In addition to playing the organ and directing the choirs, he taught the children music and how to sing. In the last 15 years of his ministry, the school children sang in beautiful 3-part harmony which was unequalled. Mr. Luehring never took any credit for his accomplishments but instead always gave credit to the children and the parents and his God. Mr. Luehring never took a vacation since he felt he had to 'be on deck', to be on the organ bench every Sunday. Mr. Luehring served as teacher for thirty-two years. During this time he also served as church secretary and church custodian. After retiring from the teaching ministry in 1966, he still continued to play the organ and direct the choirs for several years. He died at the age of 94 years and is buried on our cemetery.



William Postel  
*(1971 – 1978)*



Alvin E. Lutringer  
*(1978 – 1995)*



Brian Elmhorst  
*(2000 – 2010)*

## IMMANUEL'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

In 1979, Barbara Lutringer, wife of the new principal, Alvin Lutringer, saw a need at Immanuel for teaching young children Bible lessons on a regular basis that would include their two preschool daughters. Mrs. Lutringer played organ part-time for worship services which posed a problem for her to implement Sunday School. Instead, Monday School began for children ages three to five years old. Classes were held from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., consisting of singing, prayers, lesson, activity, and snack time

After the first successful year, it was discovered that the rural kindergarten children could not participate because they attended public school in the morning. To solve the problem, Thursday School was created. Classes were held from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

The Monday/Thursday School was used as a transition to Sunday School, which was first provided for children ages 3 to 5 years old. Class was held between worship services from 9:30 to

10 a.m. The first teachers were Gloria Christian and Gail Christian.

In 1991, another blessing was realized at Immanuel when the congregation determined to include Prekindergarten and Kindergarten in its Day School program. As a result, in the following year, a Sunday School staff was in place to offer Christian training to all children 3 years old to 8th grade. At the time, the Sunday School met between worship services from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Today, Sunday School meets at 8:30 am before the 9:30 am Divine Service. Teachers are Carrie Wiggins and Tricia Zahner.



**SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS:** Mrs. Carrie Wiggins and Mrs. Tricia Zahner

## CHURCH COUNCIL



**CONGREGATIONAL OFFICERS:** (left to right) *Chairman, Matthew Grulke; Secretary, Matthew Harvey; Financial Secretary, Norman Kamrath; Treasurer, Lawrence Zimmel*



**BOARD OF ELDERS:** (left to right) *Eugene Grulke, Allan Bogenschneider, Gordon Giese*  
(Not pictured: *Jason Schneider*)

## CHURCH COUNCIL



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES:** (left to right) *Lloyd Giese, Tom Steinbach, Larry Giese, Chad Benter, Lyle Giese* (Not pictured: *Joshua Giese*)



**BOARD OF EDUCATION:** (left to right) *Kevin Walker, Richard Christian* (Not pictured: *Charlie Tesch, Alban Thaci*)

## THE HISTORY OF IMMANUEL'S CHOIRS

Through the years Immanuel's congregations have gained the reputation of being churches where people love to sing. At the "River Church", this is supported by the fact that not only is music taught in the school, but that our school children sing regularly in the worship services. After two generous bequests, a children's tone chime choir was introduced in the mid 1980s. Immanuel also has two adult choirs - the Mixed Choir and the Male Choir. They rehearse weekly and sing for many divine services throughout the church year. The purpose of these choirs is to proclaim God's Word in song, to lead congregational singing, and to sing hymns of praise and thanksgiving to God, thereby helping to beautify the worship services.

Early teachers such as A. Sohn and Richard Werning helped to establish choral singing here at Immanuel. With the coming of teacher W. H.

Luehring in 1934, more emphasis was placed on choir singing. In 1957, after Immanuel and Hochheim merged to form a new congregation, Teacher Luehring recruited a number of male voices and organized Immanuel's Male Choir.

Upon Mr. Luehring's retirement in 1968, the directing of the choirs was passed on to teacher Connie Steinbach. Mrs. Steinbach, having graduated from Seward with a degree in music, proved to be most capable and a blessing to Immanuel's music program.

Besides singing for worship services, the choirs have also produced an album and several commercial tapes, along with numerous shut-in tapes, thereby witnessing and bringing messages of hope and comfort to many people.



**ORGANISTS:** *Lawrence Zimmer, Connie Steinbach*



**MIXED CHOIR:** (left to right) Front row: *Connie Steinbach, Lois Benter, Carolyn Thompson, Deb Zimmel, Tricia Zahner, Cordelia Zahner, Gloria Christian*  
Second row: *Eugene Grulke, Larry Giese, William Steinbach, Lloyd Giese, Marvin Steinbach, Lyle Giese, Lawrence Zimmel, Gordon Giese*



Church & School Secretary, Kim Kamrath

## IMMANUEL LUTHERAN LIGHTS (LUTHERAN WOMEN'S MISSIONARY LEAGUE – LWML)

On March 9, 1947, Rev. Herman Laabs made an announcement that, in the following week, he would have an organizational meeting at the Hochheim Church, inviting the ladies from both congregations to join him in Bible study. The goals of the group were to build a closer bond of fellowship between the two congregations and to be a great help to their respective churches as well. So, on March 12, 1947, at 2 p.m., thirteen ladies met, anxious to begin a growing organization, to assist the congregations and people whenever and wherever they could. The charter members were: Ella Bartsch, Louise Benter, Amanda Bogenschneider, Irma Brandenstein, Selma Budahn, Marianne Christian, Minna Christian, Helen Dobberpuhl, Loretta Giese, Meta Jagow, Bertha Keup, Erna Koepsell, Marie Laabs, Margaret Luehring, Emma Nickel, and Gertrude Zimmermann.

It was decided to be one society with each congregation having its own president and treasurer, but one secretary to serve both congregations. Dues were 25 cents per month in 1947. Today they are \$10 per year. The meetings consisted of Bible study, topics from Quarterlies, or studies prepared by our pastor of 21 years. The meeting sites alternated, once in the Hochheim basement, the next time, in the River Church sacristy.

In the summer of 1947, the Centennial of the River Church was celebrated. Dinner was served

by the Ladies' Aid from "the old school". It was the only facility available, but with everyone helping along, all went quite well. By December, 1947, the Ladies' Aid had thirty members and kept growing in number. In 1958, the two congregations merged, due to the fact that the Hochheim Church was destroyed by fire. A parsonage was built in 1958, and Pastor and Mrs. Wm. Lauterbach moved into their new home next to the River Church.

Our anniversaries were observed every five years, with special celebrations for the 25th, 50th, and 75th years. Throughout these seventy-five years, much financial and prayer support have been given to mites, seminarians, Indian Missions, LCMS World Relief, Orphan Grain Train, LCMS World Missions, and various other charities. The ladies have crocheted plastic bags into sleeping mats and have made many quilts for those in need. In recent years, as many as 100 quilts have been made by the women of our congregation in the winter months for donation to those in need.

Present Ladies' Aid officers are: Marsha Roskopf and Stephanie Justmann, Co-Presidents; Lisa Warriner, Vice-President; Gloria Christian, Secretary; and Diane Kamrath, Treasurer.

We praise our Lord for all the blessings Immanuel LIGHTS has received and shared these seventy-five years.



## THE LUTHERAN LAYMEN'S LEAGUE

The Lutheran Laymen's League (LLL) was organized in 1967 under the leadership of Rev. Otto Schreiber. Gerhardt Christian was asked to undertake the mission work of the LLL at Immanuel. For thirty years, he was the representative of the LLL at Immanuel and served as President. At the beginning of this group, there were three members. In less than one year's time, membership grew to thirty-five members.

During the past fifty-five years, different programs were begun to raise funds for supporting various missions. "Mission Acres for Christ" was one such program which was very successful for several years. The objective of this program was for farmers of Immanuel to volunteer to set aside a specific acreage of land on which corn was grown, which in turn would

be sold and the proceeds used for designated missions.

Non-farmers supported "Mission Acres for Christ" by donating monies to help pay for some of the seed and fertilizer. Another successful fund raiser was the Chicken Barbecue dinner which was held annually from 1981 to 2016. From 2017 to 2019, the annual dinner was changed to a Pig Roast. The largest ongoing Mission program that Immanuel LLL presently supports is the broadcasting of "The Lutheran Hour" on WTKM radio.

The LLL officers are Gordon Giese, Lyle Giese, Allan Bogenschneider and Norman Kamrath.



**LLL OFFICERS:** Allan Bogenschneider, Gordon Giese, Norman Kamrath, Lyle Giese

## HISTORICAL EVENTS

- 1846 – A group of about twenty families from Germany emigrated to America and arrived at Lebanon on September 29, 1846. From here the men came to this area in November and built a log cabin for shelter while clearing land and building homes for their families.
- 1847 – After bringing families over from Lebanon, they organized as a congregation, Immanuel Lutheran Congregation, Town Theresa, on second Pentecost Day, May 24, 1847. Services were conducted in the home of Friedrich Jagow.
- 1848 – First log church completed and dedicated on Pentecost Day.
- 1854 – Twenty-six families leave mother church to organize Hochheim. Build own church with a pastor's residence. Hochheim also opens Christian Day School, using church.
- 1855 – River Church establishes Christian Day School.
- 1865 – A number of founding families leave to settle in Fayette Co., Illinois.
- 1867 – Hochheim builds a second church, a brick church designed by Pastor Stephan, at a cost of \$3,827.02, leaving balance of \$33.15 in building fund.
- 1883 – River Church builds third church, the present brick building, including bells, at a cost of \$4,858.84.
- 1885 – River Church builds new school with teacherage, present limestone building at a cost of \$1,321.51. A Schuelke pipe organ was installed for \$1,000.00.
- 1887 – Bell purchased by Hochheim congregation.
- 1888 – Church steeple rebuilt to provide for bell chamber at Hochheim.
- 1896 – A new teacherage was built at Hochheim. (Later served as parsonage.)
- 1897 – River Church observed 50th anniversary on Pentecost Day. Church steeple was adorned with new cross, the interior of the church was painted and a new carpet laid.
- 1900 – A Post Office was established at Hochheim with Teacher Schwanke as the first postmaster.
- 1904 – A new pipe organ was purchased by Hochheim from Hinners and Co. for \$517.00.
- 1905 – Hochheim discontinues the practice of private confession.
- 1922 – The 75th anniversary is observed on Pentecost Day by River Church.
- 1928 – Hochheim installs electric lights, also electric blower on organ.
- 1929 – Basement dug out at River Church for hot air furnace; electric lights also installed.
- 1932 – River Church renovates interior of church including raising chancel area, new altar, new windows, new pews, and redecorating.
- 1933 – First service conducted in the English language in River Church.
- 1935 – A Young People's Bible Class was organized by joint congregations.
- 1937 – River Church becomes member of Missouri Synod; observes 90th anniversary.
- 1940 – Regular services conducted in English language at Hochheim.

- 1941 – Hochheim Church destroyed by fire on September 21.
- 1942 – Hochheim dedicates new church on July 12.
- 1947 – River Church observes 100th anniversary during the week of June 8-15. A Ladies' Aid Society was jointly organized with Hochheim.
- 1951 – A new brick school with one classroom and basement was built by River Church.
- 1952 – Last instruction in the German language at Hochheim.
- 1953 – Immanuel deeded land to Dodge County for relocation of Hwy AY.
- 1954 – Hochheim congregation observes 100th anniversary.
- 1956 – Hochheim church burns a second time on November 24.
- 1957 – Hochheim congregation decides not to rebuild but accepts invitation from River Church to merge again into one congregation. Parsonage built at the River Church. Another classroom was added to the brick school for the additional enrollment of school children from Hochheim.
- 1957 – Voters approved eliminating the large Christmas tree to make room for more seating on Christmas Eve.
- 1958 – The envelope system was introduced.
- 1960 – The kitchen of the teacherage was remodeled at the River Church and a new study was built at the cost of \$5,400.00. The school enrollment for the 1960-61. school year reached an all-time high of 82 pupils in three classrooms.
- 1961 – An Adult Bible Class was organized.
- 1965 – A new Haase pipe organ was installed. The church was redecorated; new light fixtures, new linoleum floor, and new carpeting, along with new pews were purchased. Also a new heating system was installed.
- 1967 – Immanuel built house for teacher Mr. Luehring on south property.
- 1968 – A 1952 ruling that no liquor except wine is allowed at anytime on church property will continue. Voters agreed to let this ruling stand as is.
- 1968 – Scholarship Fund established to aid students preparing for full-time church work.
- 1972 – The 125th anniversary was observed by the congregation.
- 1980 – Immanuel Parent Teacher League was organized.
- 1981 – Immanuel Rangerettes Group was begun.
- 1982 – The Haase pipe organ was replaced by a new Hammes-Foxe tracker pipe organ.
- 1986 – Extensive renovation project in front of church including narthex with rest rooms. Also excavated basement.
- 1991 – Another extensive project on church which included new sacristy completion of church basement with kitchen facilities. Also one of the rooms in school basement was remodeled for a Preschool and Kindergarten classroom.
- 1997 – The 150th anniversary of the congregation was observed.

2012 – A childcare center was opened at Immanuel providing extended care for school-age children and full day care for younger children.

2013 – Immanuel Music Academy begins offering violin and piano lessons.

2022 – The 175th anniversary of the congregation is observed.



Church Bell in Steeple

## OLD CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

1. Before they had instruments, a 'Vorsänger' would lead the congregation in singing, usually someone on 'pitch' with a strong voice.
2. Before the automobile, church services were held alternately at one church in the morning and the other church in the afternoon. Later on both services were conducted in the morning.
3. Christmas Eve services were also held alternately between the two congregations, one on the 23rd and the other on the 24th. Before electricity the church was lit by huge 'Kronleuchter' (chandeliers) with candles. Also the Christmas trees were lit by candles. The lighting of the candles was the responsibility of the elders.
4. The German liturgy did not include the confession of sins. After private confession was discontinued, a confessional service called the 'Beichte' was held before the regular service when the Lord's Supper was celebrated.
5. The first hymn sung by the congregation during the distribution of the Lord's Supper was always "Isaiah, Mighty Seer in Days of Old".
6. Mission Festival Sunday was always a special day. It was observed with a morning and afternoon service. Members from one parish would invite families from the other parish for dinner between services depending on where the afternoon service was held. There was always great interest in the amount of the mission festival collection.
7. Men sat on left side of church. Women sat on right side with the small children. Children of school age sat together in the front bench. Boys on left side. Girls on right side. The elders always sat near the front in back of the boys. After confirmation, the boys sat together in the balcony. The girls usually sat with their mother. Women always wore hats.
8. Before sitting down in the pew when coming to church, members would say a silent prayer to prepare for worship.
9. 'Christenlehre' (lesson from Catechism) was conducted every Sunday in church service for school children.
10. The bells were always rung one hour before each service.
11. The ringing and tolling of the church bells when a member passed away dates back to before the turn of the century.
12. Members left the church in silence on Good Friday as the church bells tolled commemorating the events of the Day.
13. The hymn "This Body in the Grave We Lay" was always sung at the gravesite before burial.
14. During Pastor Laabs' ministry, the hymn "We All Believe in One True God" was sung every Sunday. This was in place of confessing the Creed orally. Pastor Laabs also had "Lamb of God, Most Holy" sung in every Lenten service.
15. The custom of playing "I Am Jesus' Little Lamb" during Baptism was begun by Mrs. William Keup at Hochheim.
16. Before a hymn was sung, the organist always introduced the melody in a softer tone and then hit a 7th chord to alert the congregation to get ready to start singing.
17. Until the middle of the 20th century, the annual business meeting was presided over by the pastor.
18. Church dues were divided into two funds; Gehalt and the Baukasse. Gehalt was for salary of the pastor and teacher while the Baukasse was for running expenses. A minimum amount was set for each member. A renter had to pay less than a land owner. Dues were given directly to the treasurer. Special collections, including mission festival, were taken at the door by the elders.
19. In the early years, every member was expected to provide the pastor with a certain portion of oats for his horse. After the automobile came, this practice continued in the form of 'Hafergeld' or oat money given directly to the pastor. This practice continued well into the 1940s.

20. It was also customary for the pastor and teacher to have a cow and a few chickens to provide them with milk, butter, and eggs. Here at the River Church, the cemetery hill provided grass and hay for both horse and cow. The present barn was used to house the animals as well as store the hay for the winter.
21. Sheds were located at each church to provide shelter for the horses during the church service.
22. Up to the time the oil furnaces replaced the wood stoves and furnaces, every member was obligated to furnish a certain amount of wood every year to heat the church and school. If he was unable to come up with wood, he could pay for it with cash instead.
23. Before electric blowers were installed, the bellows on the pipe organ were pumped by hand.
24. The custom of handing out bags of nuts and candy to the children on Christmas Eve dates back many years and is still practiced today.



Immanuel's Hammes-Foxe Tracker Pipe Organ

## Immanuel's Cornerstone

During early construction of the Narthex addition it became necessary to remove the original cornerstone from the church wall where it had been placed at the time the church was built in 1883. Examination of its contents revealed that it contained the following: 1) an early printed periodical, perhaps a counterpart to our present Lutheran Witness; 2) a handwritten document, appearing to be a constitution, dating back to the early days of our congregation; 3) a handwritten history of our congregation from the time it was founded in 1847 until the cornerstone was laid in 1883.

Although these documents were badly deteriorated, parts of them were still legible and able to be translated. Because of their fragile condition, and in order to preserve them for future generations these documents were taken to the State Historical Society for processing. The following is a list of articles which were placed in the new cornerstone: 1) present constitution; 2) present membership list; 3) Centennial Anniversary booklet; 4) the English translation of the original account.



## HISTORY OF IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

The following is a translation of one of the documents originally written in German, taken out of the cornerstone of our church, which was placed there at the time it was built in 1883.

### HISTORY OF OUR CHURCH

This congregation was founded in the year 1847 by German immigrants, namely from Pommerania and Brandenburg. It was first served by Pastor Geier (Geyer) from Town Libanon (Lebanon) who belonged to the Missouri Synod.

(NEXT SECTION MISSING, NOT LEGIBLE)

These congregations then called Pastor Stephan who belonged to the Missouri Synod. He also served the parish in Town Herman (Zum Kripplein Christi) as pastor filial. He was a faithful shepherd to these congregations for four years. After this the congregation called Pastor Dicke of the Missouri Synod. He lived at the upper church which at this time joined the Missouri Synod. After he received a call and moved away in 1863, and the Town Herman congregation now called its own pastor, the upper and lower Immanuel congregations extended a call to Pastor Wambsganss. He accepted and served these congregations until the year 1873. On February 4, 1873, the congregation was incorporated under the laws of the State of Wisconsin.

(NEXT SECTION MISSING, NOT LEGIBLE)

A call was now sent to Pastor Kothe in Minnesota who accepted the call and was installed in the spring of 1883 on the Cantate Sunday.

Since the congregation had seen the need to build a new church for quite some time, a meeting was finally held on January 22, 1883 for this purpose. The result of the vote to build this year was unanimous. It was also decided to build a structure of frame and brick. A committee was now elected to be in charge of the Building Project (Bau). The members of the same were:

(NEXT SECTION MISSING, NOT LEGIBLE)

The officers of the congregation at this time were:

Pastor: D. Kothe

Elders: Carl Steinbach and Fr. Christian

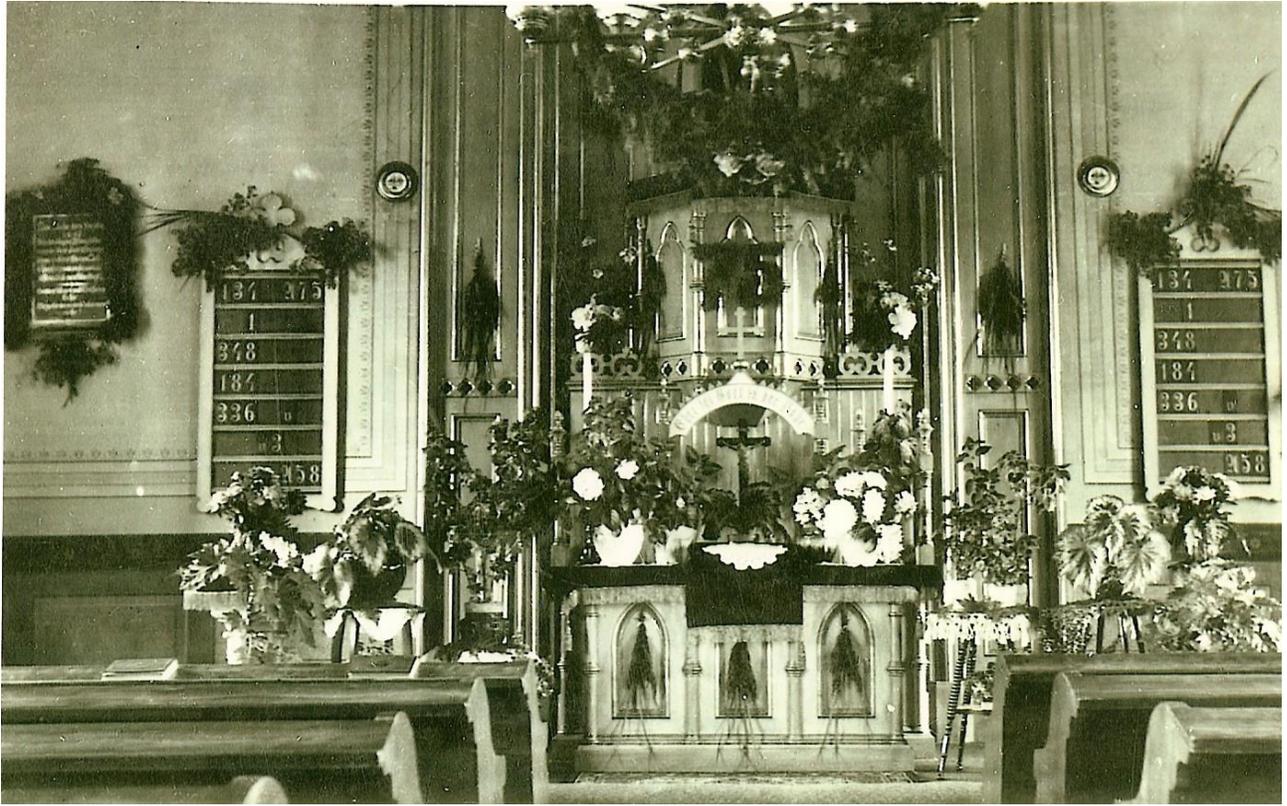
Teacher: F.A. Drewer

School Board Member: W. Moericke and Fellwock

Trustees: D. Hohenstern, Herm. Brummond, Ferd. Radke, Herm. Christian, W. Moericke

The Lord has helped us hitherto and may he graciously help us in the future!

(FINAL SENTENCE NOT LEGIBLE)



Immanuel's Pulpit-Altar in 1922 on the Occasion of the Congregation's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.



River Church before 1929

Dodge County Pionier

Mayville, Wis., Thursday, June 15, 1922.

### **Diamond Jubilee of the Lower Immanuel Congregation**

*(Translated from the German by Mr. Kevin Walker)*

**1847–1922,**

**75 [years].**

Three quarters of a century! What thoughts are produced by such a span of time in everyday life! How rich and meaningful they can have been and can still be for a community, for an entire land, for whole peoples! Our life hardly lasts 70 years if there has been toil and labor—only few reach such an age. But what a blessing can have been provided in the spiritual or ecclesiastical realm in such a period! It is beyond expression, for it wells over into eternity.

The Lower Immanuel Congregation in the town of Theresa is able to talk, sing, and speak of this. On Pentecost Monday on June 5, 1922, it was able to look back with joy on a period of 75 years of its existence. In two solemn services on the second day of Pentecost, therefore, with praise and thanks to God and with great joy it celebrated the day of its foundation, the growth it has experienced, and its existence to date. In both services the church was filled with listeners, since the congregations in Hochheim and Mayville were invited to the celebration, and a good number participants from out of the area also attended. The interior of the church was splendidly decorated with all kinds of floral wreaths and bouquets of green and beautiful flowers. With the latter, particularly the altar was beautifully decorated, while the number 75, made of greenery, was displayed on the pulpit. Mr. Chr. H. Rödiger, teacher, served as the festival organist at the morning service and skillfully coaxed powerful tones and lovely, gentle music out of the church organ in beautiful alternation. On the part of the large congregation, the house of God resounded with fervent choral singing. The festival preacher at this service was Pastor C. F. Dietz from Milwaukee. In a wonderful sermon he pointed to the grace and love of God shown to this congregation thus far—to the foundation and preservation of a Christian congregation and a Christian congregational school according to God's pleasure, and to the faithful preachers and teachers granted thus far. Through what means? Solely through the Holy Gospel. With well-spoken words, therefore, the festival preacher urged the congregation to thank, praise, and glorify God on this, their day of honor, for all the spiritual benefactions He has shown, as well as saying that we should place all our trust in Him alone, in the sure confidence that the arch-Shepherd of the Church wants to and will preserve His Holy Gospel among us also in the future. The singing of mixed choir of teacher Rödiger from Hochheim deserves special mention. The battle hymn of the Christian Church, Psalm 46 ["A Mighty Fortress is our God"], wonderfully set to music by composer Georg Kessel, was energetically and impressively sung by the skillful singers under the direction of their competent director. After the usual conclusion of the morning

celebration, a collection was taken for the General Interior Mission. That amounted to \$61 and cents.

After the guests in attendance had been most excellently hosted by the members of the jubilee congregation in their homes, the afternoon celebration began at 2 o'clock. This started out with cheerful, joyful singing of the schoolchildren. In joyful tones they freely and confidently sang the beautiful hymn "Holy God, We Praise Thy Name". The festival organists for this service were Mr. O. Gersmehl, teacher, and Mr. Theiss, student, from Mayville. Both colleagues showed that they are at home on the church organ, the queen of instruments, by the festive music flowing forth from their hands. The large festival congregation again sang beautiful, powerful, substantive chorales in joyful sounds rising up to heaven. The festival preacher for the afternoon celebration was Mr. Barth, director of Concordia College in Milwaukee. His sound, sober, solemn sermon was based on Psalm 119:43: "And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth, for my hope is in Your rules." With powerful, striking words, the eloquent festival preacher pointed to how our fathers once professed this word, abided in it, and edified themselves with it. Second, his earnest exhortation that we, the current congregation, might likewise hold so firmly and faithfully to the eternal word of truth as our forefathers had done in their day, also cut to the heart. The excellent sermon was preceded by a choir piece, which was likewise sung by the mixed choir from Hochheim.

The magnificent composition "*Jauchzet dem Herrn alle Welt*" ["Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth" (Psalm 98:4 and 100:1)], a festival hymn from Blessin, was performed, as the piece in the morning, well, correctly, and effectively. After the sermon the schoolchildren sang the fine hymn "*Lobe, Zion, deinen Gott!*" ["Praise your God, Zion!" (not in our hymnal)] just as excellently as before the sermon with their lovely, cheerful children's voices. After this, Pastor Thusius read the congregational history of the past 75 years, which will be reported on below. At the conclusion of this festival, a collection was taken for mission work in heathen lands, amounting to \$65 and cents.

May the dear Lower Immanuel Congregation also continue to blossom, thrive, and grow until the end of days. This will surely happen when what was heard from the two excellent sermons is taken to heart, in accordance with the words of the psalmist: "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, [...] God is in the midst of her, therefore she shall not be moved" [Psalm 46:4-5].

Glory to God in the highest!"

\* \* \*

### **Historical information, arranged chronologically, and statistical information of the Lower Immanuel Congregation:**

In the year 1846 the Pomeranian and Brandenburgian Lutherans living in the town of Theresa, Williamstown, and Herman came together and held worship assemblies, reading services, in the house of the late Friedrich Jagow. In the year 1847, in which the Missouri Synod was founded, this congregation built a log church and called Pastor C. E. Geyer from Lebanon to

be its curate of souls, who held the first public sermon in the log church on the second day of Pentecost in this year. Since Pastor Geyer was unable to serve regularly, in 1849 the congregation called Pastor Böhm, but because of teaching false doctrine he was dismissed after one year. Likewise, and for the same reason, this is what happened to Pastor Leonhardt, who came in 1851. Pastor Geyer helped out in the interim. In 1852 a separation took place, in which a number of members went over to the independent Pastor Pankow.<sup>3</sup> In 1853 those who remained with Pastor Geyer called the candidate Martin Stephan, who was a faithful servant of the Word. In 1854 some of the members were peacefully released and founded their own congregation in what is now Hochheim. Both congregations, however, were served by one pastor, as is still the case now. In 1855 those who separated in 1852 returned to the mother congregation through the efforts of Pastor Stephan. In the following year Pastor Stephan was called away, and after seven months Pastor Heinrich Dicke from the Franconian colonies of Michigan was called to the congregation here. He was a hardworking laborer in the Lord's vineyard. During 40 years of pioneering work he founded 24 congregations in this state. Under him, this congregation's second church, a frame building, was also built. Through his diligent work all three congregations (this one, the one in Hochheim, and Pastor Töpel's) became stronger such that they were able to hire their own teachers. The following teachers were active here until 1863: Ludwig, Johann Müller (assistant), Dreyer, Schmidt, Schulz, Albrecht, and Richter. After Pastor Dicke's departure, in the same year, 1863, Pastor Phil. Wambsganss was called. During his ten-year activity, teachers Aldach (drowned in the Rock River), Grewing, and Arndt served in the school. In 1874 Pastor Seuel, future vice-president and president [of the Missouri Synod Northern District], was called. After he was called away in 1882, Pastor D. Kothe became his successor in office in 1883. Under him, the current, beautiful brick church was built in the same year and the two bells still in service were also purchased. In 1885 the current teacherage was built next to the school site. At the end of 1889 Pastor Kothe died from laryngopathy. During his time, teachers Drewer and Schauss served in the school, the latter until 1890. In this year Pastor J. F. Leyhe was called, but already after nine months he died from intestinal inflammation. In the same year, teacher Schauss was also taken away by an insidious illness. In 1891 Pastor Bäse was called. After a period of eight years in office, he submitted his resignation. He is the only one of the pastors who served at this congregation still alive, with the exception of the current curate of souls. He now lives in St. Louis. Both congregations have him to thank for beautiful Christmas banners. Teachers Wilsky and J. A. Sohn served in the school during his time in office. In 1893 the congregation purchased a new church organ for \$1000. On the second day of Pentecost in 1897, the congregation's 50-year jubilee was festively celebrated. In 1899 Pastor Hoffmann was called. After a richly blessed activity of 13½ years, he died after only five days of being ill with pneumonia, on April 4, 1913. In 1907 the church was newly renovated and the congregation's 60-year jubilee was celebrated with a large number in attendance. The preachers were Pastors Hanser and Rathjen. The celebration was beautified by a choir (Hochheim) and children's singing. In 1913 Pastor C. P. Thusius accepted the call from these two Immanuel congregations and is their current curate of souls. In November of 1920 the Lower Congregation celebrated the

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<sup>3</sup> [More information on Pankow and Geyer is on pp. 6-7 of [http://www.watertownhistory.org/Archived\\_Digital\\_Reference\\_Files/St.%20Peter's%20140th%20Anniversary%20Booklet.pdf](http://www.watertownhistory.org/Archived_Digital_Reference_Files/St.%20Peter's%20140th%20Anniversary%20Booklet.pdf)]

25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of teacher J. A. Sohn being in office (at this location) in a festive service. Currently he is still teacher in this congregational school. This congregation was deeply shaken by the sad news that one of its younger members, Otto Jagow, fell in the Battle of Argonne in the World War on October 22, 1918. On the second day of Christmas in 1920 both congregations held a solemn commemorative service in his honor with a large number in attendance. Although the membership of this congregation has grown somewhat smaller due to people moving away and joining sister congregations, inwardly it is indeed strengthened and fortified, and together with its congregational school it still stands firmly and steadfastly on the bedrock upon which it is built.

Statistics: In the past 75 years, 648 children were baptized, 410 were confirmed; 238 couples were married; 152 people died. The current status of the congregation is: 184 souls; 45 voting members; 127 communicants; and 29 (today 31) schoolchildren.

To God alone be the glory!

J. A. Sohn.



## FROM THE ARCHIVES

The following was published in our bulletin in June of 1990.

Did you know that –

We do not have a list of the names of those early settlers that founded our congregation?

It is unfortunate that we have no record of the charter members of our congregation. We note that of the 20 families that left Germany together, only 13 decided to settle here.

It appears that these 13 families were all farmers. Many of the people that left Germany knew other trades and so they often settled in cities along the way using their skills to make a living in another occupation. Of these 13 families, there were several Fellwock and Saase families. We can name two of these as Johann Friedrich Fellwock and Michael Saase, Sr. Together with Friedrich Jagow they appear to have been the leaders of our group. Being in their late 40's or early 50's, they each had grown children accompany them. We must give special references to Friedrich Jagow. The recorded history we do have states that it was in his home that divine services were held regularly that first year until a church was built. It was also in his name that the 40 acres set aside for church property were first deeded.

We also have an indication of who these pioneers were by checking our government's records. From the State Historical records we find land grants made in October 1846 to the following men:

<i>Friedrich Jagow</i>	- ( <i>Bill Muche farm</i> )
<i>Johann Fr. Fellwock</i>	- ( <i>Ray Wegener farm</i> )
<i>Michael Saase, Sr.</i>	- ( <i>Lloyd Kamrath farm</i> )
<i>Friedrich Schwann</i>	- ( <i>Reinhardt Grulke farm</i> )
<i>Michael Budahn</i>	- ( <i>Leonhard Budahn farm</i> )
<i>Friedrich Christian</i>	- ( <i>Scott Christian farm</i> )
<i>Gottlieb Braasch</i>	- ( <i>Ed Steinbach farm</i> )
<i>Carl Jesse</i>	- ( <i>part of Steve Grille's farm</i> )
<i>Carl Schwantes</i>	- ( <i>Hechimovich farm</i> )
<i>Gottlieb Schwantes</i>	- ( <i>Neighbor to Carl</i> )
<i>Michael Zimmermann</i>	- ( <i>Gordon and Lyle Giese farm</i> )
<i>Friedrich Kuehl</i>	- ( <i>Lee Reklau farm</i> )
<i>Wilhelm Milbrot</i>	- ( <i>Paul Frank farm</i> )
<i>August Bannenber</i>	- ( <i>Neighbor to Milbrot</i> )

So we can assume that many of these men, if not all of them were the founding fathers of our congregation. Many others joined them in the summer and fall of 1847 so that in a short time the entire community was settled by fellow Lutherans.

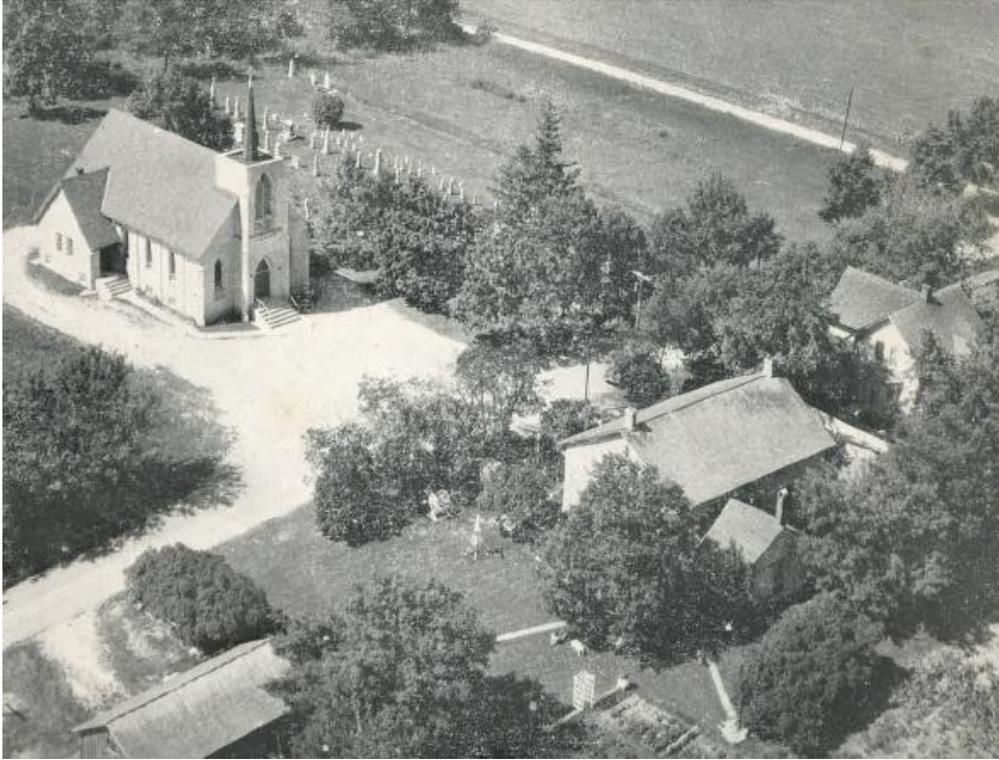
Much of the information was taken from the MEMOIRS of J. FRIEDRICH FELLWOCK. We are indebted to him who as a young boy of 16 came along with the rest of the men from Lebanon. It was his father, Johann Friedrich (same name), who was one of the founding fathers.

Near the end of his life he decided to write his autobiography for which we are truly grateful. I am personally indebted to Mr. Julian Kratzner, Flora, Ill., who forwarded this information to me. It was through researching family history that we got in contact with each other. I certainly appreciate the enthusiastic response I have received from many of you members.

*Werner Steinbach*



Re-shingling of Steeple Roof – October, 1966



Second Hochheim Church dedicated 1942 after the first church was destroyed by fire.



Hochheim destroyed by fire a second time on November 24, 1956

## Early Building Sketches

In 2020, Immanuel was notified by Laib Restoration in Oshkosh that they had possession of two sketches of our church building. It was expressed that they would be happy to return them to us with the “promise” to display them and not let them collect dust in a corner. It was then that Eugene Grulke volunteered to head the project to construct frames for display. The farm that Gene grew up on had been owned by the Lehman family, which had moved the 2<sup>nd</sup> church building from AY & Allen Road to the farm on Zion Church Road, to be used as a machine shed. That former church building had fallen into disrepair some years earlier. Several beams were salvaged and cut in quarters, to be used to make the frames. The larger frame pieces were cut from 1 beam, which was oak. The smaller frame top and bottom pieces were cut from a tamarack beam. (135+ growth rings counted.)

Church records indicate that the post and frame building was built in 1858, and that the Lehman family moved it around the time that the present church was built in 1883.

We believe that the sketches are the work of one of our first pastors, Rev. Martin Stephan, who served this congregation from 1854 – 1857. (The first church at Hochheim was drawn by him, that is documented.)

- Eugene Grulke and Richard Grulke



# Pictures from Vacation Bible School 2022



## Pictures from Vacation Bible School 2022





Pictures from the First Day of School – 2022



2022-2023 Catechism Class Picture – August Giese, Liam Clark, Madison Fink, Teresa Zahner, Cole Geiger, Ivy Rodriquez, Gabriella Wiggins (Not Pictured: Brianna Wiggins)



2021-2022 Day School Classroom at Immanuel



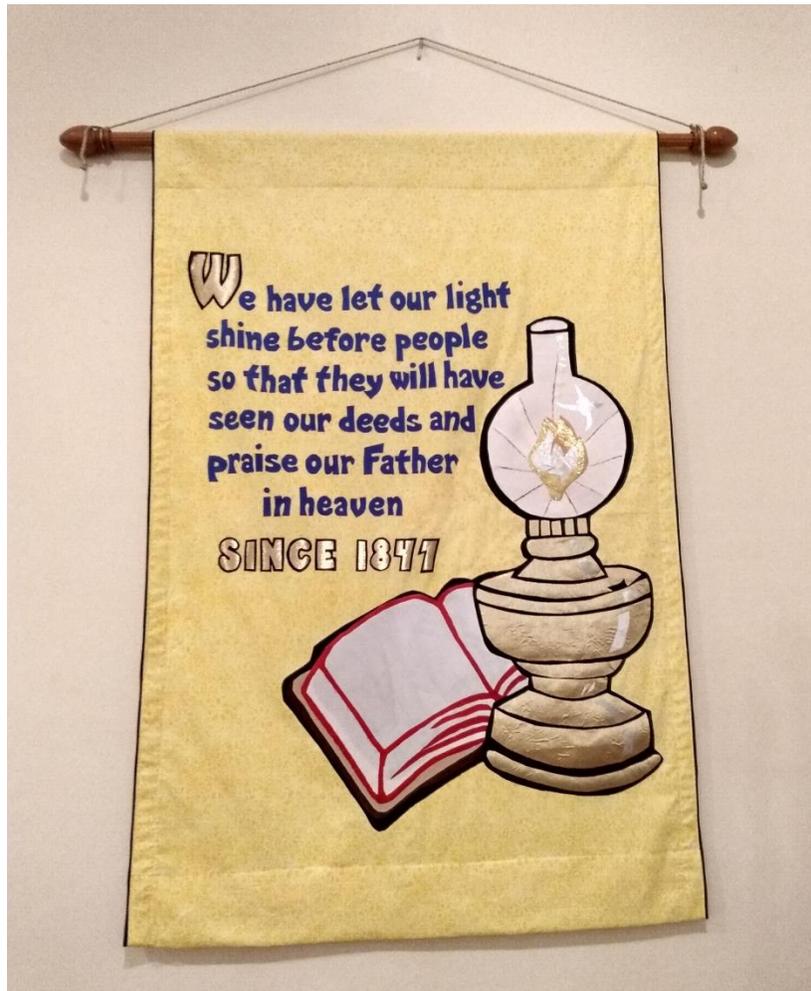
Daycare Director Beth Chanto and Teacher Amber Pomplin with Children



Immanuel's Altar at Christmas – Circa 2019



Christmas Eve Service 2021



Banner made by Lois Benter in honor of our 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year.

### **Acknowledgements**

We thank Immanuel's 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee for the planning and preparation which went into our 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. Committee members were Paul Christian, Richard Christian, Gordon Giese, Norman Kamrath, Jason Schneider and Pastor Zahner.

We also thank Eugene Grulke, Richard Grulke, Kimberly Kamrath, Deborah Tauschek, Kevin Walker and Pastor Zahner for submitting materials for publication in this book and/or assisting with the formatting and printing of this volume.