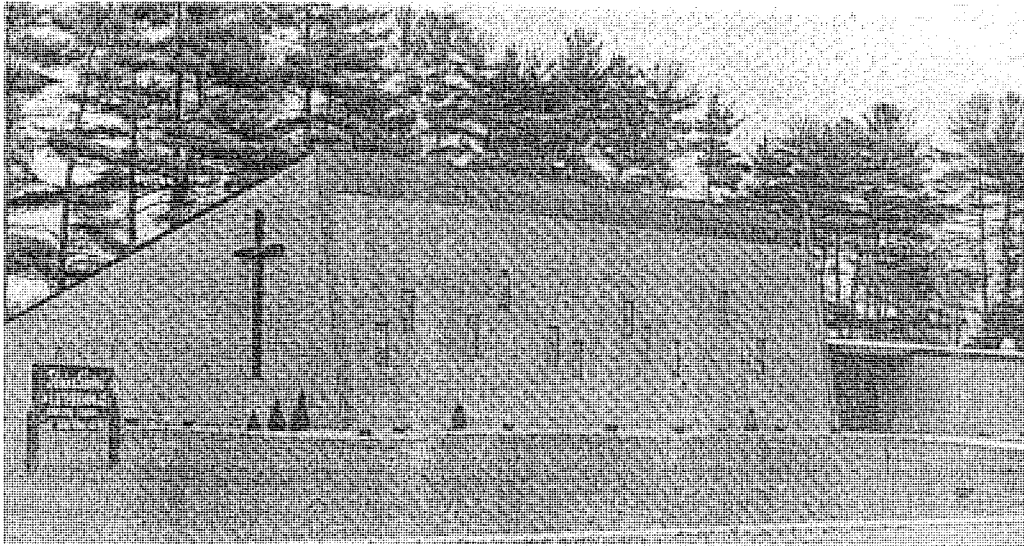


# **From Faith to Foundation: The History of Divine Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church and School, Shawano, Wisconsin.**



Justin Diestler  
Prof. Brenner  
12/07/2007  
Senior Church History

With the recent excitement over Google Earth, a website that allows people to view areas all around the globe by means of satellite technology, a town the size of Shawano may very well get overlooked, especially from countless miles away.

Nonetheless, the city of Shawano is a very special city. Even though it may not be the best vacation destination this side of the Mississippi, <sup>and</sup> it may not offer all the bells and whistles such as Milwaukee or Chicago, <sup>that</sup> it does not take away from its majesty. And no matter how the world views the city and the people that inhabit it, they can never take away from the glory that has been given it by God. The reason is simple: God sees how precious it is. This city is filled with souls for whom our Savior Jesus Christ suffered, died, rose and rules eternally. Every soul is precious to God and therefore every city where people gather from all walks of life are precious to God including Shawano, Wisconsin.

Located in this city is a building with four outer walls, windows, a roof, plumbing and heating. But there are a few distinct characteristics of this building that cannot be seen from the outside. In this building people of all ages gather throughout the week, where they see the cross, they read, hear and study the Bible, they gather together and partake of the Lord's Supper. Here is where God's chosen children gather for school, worship and various other activities. This building is Divine Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church. May God be glorified and honored as we review the history of this church from its founding days and see his loving hand that has guided and directed this congregation to the present day.

Without the establishment of the town of Shawano, there would be no Divine Savior. The town was established in 1853. "Shawanaw: A civil town in Shawano Co., created 16 Feb. 1853. Changed to Shawano, 17 May 1856."<sup>1</sup> The town name was originally given it by the Menomonee Indians who traveled west of Green Bay hoping to find a body of water good for fishing. About 30 miles west and south they found Shawano Lake as it is called today. Because it was at the southern boundary of the Chippewa tribal territory they called it "Shawanaw" meaning, "to the South."<sup>2</sup>

As the note above states the name was shortly changed thereafter to its current title, "Shawano." Just as the Indians found the lake profitable for fishing, so have countless others through the years, even today. Shawano Lake has been one of great vacation destinations and continues to be. Naturally the town sees a considerable number of tourists in the warm summer months looking for fun and sun on the lake.

Aside from the lake, Shawano has been a home for younger families beginning their careers in life. It is a comfortable place to live and relatively inexpensive. For this reason, it is a town that welcomes new faces frequently. Oftentimes people make a beginning here and then move to places with more opportunities for advancement.<sup>3</sup>

But what about the religious climate? By the time the Wisconsin Synod began making headway in Shawano, all denominations were present. Missouri Synod had one of the largest if not the largest congregation in town. There was some mention that the Wisconsin Synod did not have any need to start a mission or congregation with the large

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<sup>1</sup>Wisconsin Historical Society  
[http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/dictionary/index.asp?action=view&term\\_id=8900&term\\_type\\_id=2&term\\_type\\_text=Places&letter=S](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/dictionary/index.asp?action=view&term_id=8900&term_type_id=2&term_type_text=Places&letter=S) (accessed November 26, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Frisque, Donald and Joyce, Personal Interview, October 13, 2007.

Missouri Synod congregation already established and growing.<sup>4</sup> Coupled with the religious situation in Shawano, just eight miles to the east was town of Bonduel which had a well-established Wisconsin Synod congregation. Yet God's will for the Wisconsin Synod included mission work in Shawano.

*The Early Years*

**NEW MISSION IN SHAWANO AREA**

The Wisconsin Synod has started a mission in Shawano, Wis., and the first service was held Nov. 7. The worship services are at 8 a.m. every Sunday morning in the meeting room of the Shawano National Bank. Please send names and addresses of any prospects to:

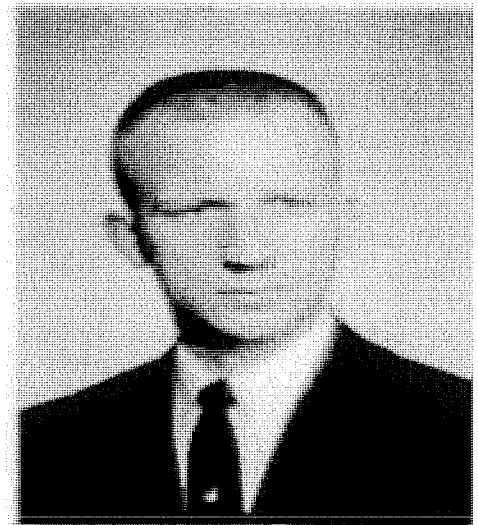
Rev. L. G. Zwieg  
Route 1, Box 51  
Bonduel, Wis. 54107

Appeared in *The Northwestern Lutheran*.  
November 14, 1965 Vol. 52 No. 23 page 415

Mission work was taking place. Such important work did not go unnoticed. Pastor Larry Zwieg was the resident pastor in Bonduel who began serving Divine Savior as a preaching station in 1965. The first service was actually held in the home of a charter member with 14 members in attendance and quickly moved to the basement of the Shawano National Bank. Under Pastor Zwieg, the congregation gradually grew from the original 14 members and on **May 24, 1966** the congregation was officially organized.<sup>5</sup> On **October 17, 1967** the congregation was officially incorporated under the constitution of the state of Wisconsin.<sup>6</sup>



L. ZWIEG



ROLAND F. ZIMMERMANN

<sup>4</sup> Zimmermann, Pastor Roland, Email to Author, October 20, 2007.

<sup>5</sup> *The Northwestern Lutheran* January 9, 1977 Vol. 64 No. 1 page 12.

<sup>6</sup> *25 Years of Proclaiming the Gospel. Divine Savior 1966-1991.* Anniversary publication May 24, 1991.

Just several years later in 1969, Pastor Zwieg accepted a call out of the area at which time Pastor Roland Zimmerman became the resident in pastor in Bonduel. God in his wisdom brought Pastor Zimmermann to serve the congregation during its beginning years. Due to his previous ministry experience he was well-equipped to serve Divine Savior in this capacity as his ministerial biography shows.

Pastor Roland F. Zimmermann was born on February 13, 1930 in Spring Valley, WI. He was baptized by his father, Pastor G.F. Zimmermann on February 23, 1930 and was confirmed by his father on June 25, 1944 at St. John's Lutheran Church, Township Ridgely, MN. He attended Dr. Martin Luther High School, New Ulm, MN, Northwestern College, Watertown, WI and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, WI. During 1954-55 he vicared at Grace Lutheran Church, Oshkosh, WI under Pastor E. Lehninger.

On June 10, 1956 he united in marriage with June Boettcher at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, WI. His father performed the ceremony. The Lord has blessed them with five children, Kathryn, Timothy, Miriam, Susan and Lisa, all married plus 10 grandchildren.

Pastor Zimmermann's first call was to Willow Lake Lutheran Church, Willow Lake, SD and Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Township Hague. He was ordained and installed by his father on July 15, 1956. An addition to the church at Willow Lake took place under Pastor Zimmerman's direction. In October 1960 he was called to start a mission, Our Savior Lutheran Church, Bismarck, ND. A church and parsonage were built during his stay there. February 1964 the call was accepted to start a mission at Great Falls, MT, Mountain View Lutheran Church. A church and parsonage were built. In May, 1969 he accepted the call to Friedens Lutheran Church, Bonduel, WI and St. Paul's Lutheran, Zachow, WI. Friedens Church built a new church during his time. During this same period he started a church in Shawano, WI, Divine Savior. After the church at Shawano was built he was relieved of this congregation [Shawano]. In January, 1973 he accepted his present call to serve Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Menomonee Falls, WI. Our present worship facilities were built under Pastor Zimmermann's direction.

Pastor Zimmermann has been a member and Chairman of the Northwestern Lutheran Academy, Mobridge, SD. He was the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-president of the Dakota-Montana District and visiting elder of the Alberta-Montana Conference. He was a circuit pastor of the Metro-North Conference, Chairman of the Milwaukee Federation of Wisconsin Synod Churches, Chairman of the Camp Philip Committee, a hospital chaplain for the Institutional Ministry and a member of the Board for Martin Luther Preparatory School, Prairie du Chien, WI, and later became Chairman. At the present time he is Chairman of the Martin Luther College, Board of Control at New Ulm, MN and Vice-president of our Synod's Board for Ministerial Education. Upon retirement he will continue to hold these two positions until his term expires in 1997.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Bethlehem Lutheran Church *A Celebration of Public Ministry and Retirement of Pastor Roland F. Zimmermann*, June 25, 1995. WLS Archives (accessed November 19, 2007).

Pastor Zimmermann was clearly no stranger to the mission field or mission congregations. He certainly had a gift not only for organization of small groups of individuals but also was very instrumental in erecting worship facilities and parsonages wherever he served. He relates what work in a mission often involved during his early years of ministry:

“There wasn't much the Mission Board could do except in some instances they would buy the land, call a pastor to start the mission, after a neighboring pastor might hold some services in a home, meeting room, school or what have you, then call a permanent man to establish the congregation. This is what I had already done in North Dakota and Montana after beginning with an established mission in South Dakota. In all these instances you were called to be a pastor of a group of people, sometimes as few as 3 voters, to work with the group to establish a congregation and lead them along the path of self-support. During this procedure it was usually necessary to build a parsonage and church as well as organize the congregation with constitution, officers etc. which could only be done as the number of voters increased.”<sup>8</sup>

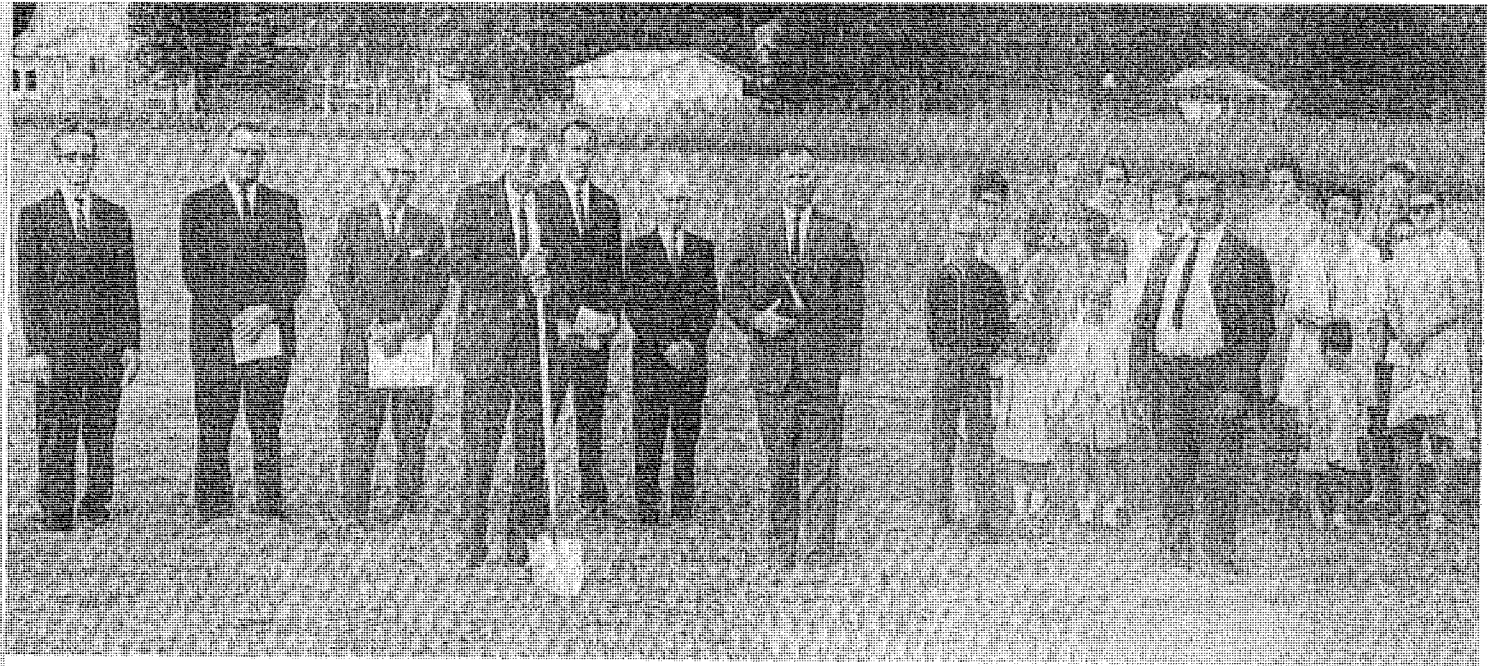
What was expected of a pastor in a mission setting was exactly what Pastor Zimmermann did in Shawano. He did not accomplish everything on his own, however. God was guiding and directing his service at all times and using his zeal and determination to accomplish his will. Besides his countless hours devoted to ministering to God's people, earlier in his ministry he also took the time to sit down and draw up the plans for the church because of the cost of an architect.<sup>9</sup> On **September 21, 1968**, 5 acres of land had been purchased in the town of Wescott by the Mission Board for \$15,000.00. And in less than two years of service to Divine Savior, on **June 23, 1970** a loan was secured for \$50,000.00 from the CEF (Church Extension Fund).<sup>10</sup> Construction started several months later on an A-frame chapel.

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<sup>8</sup> Zimmermann, Pastor Roland, email to author, October 20, 2007.

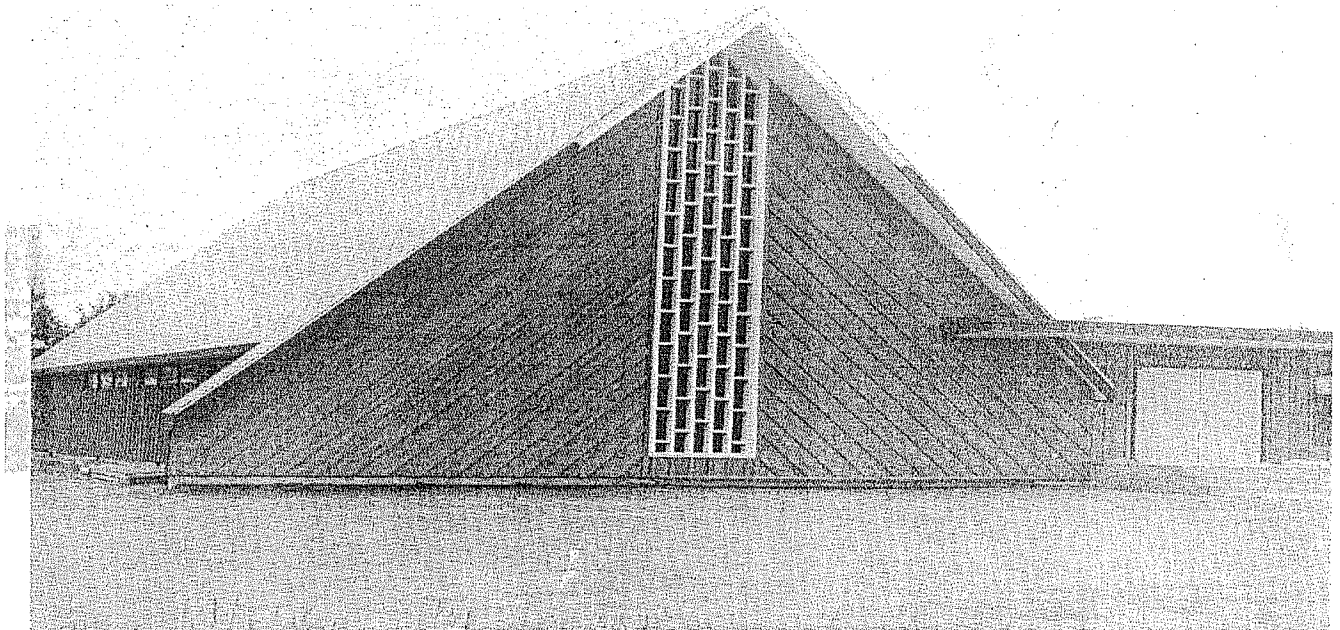
<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>10</sup> *25 Years of Proclaiming the Gospel. Divine Savior 1966-1991*. Anniversary publication May 24, 1991.



Ground was broken Sunday for the new Divine Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church to be constructed in River Heights, just north of the city of Shawano. Taking part in the ground-breaking ceremonies early Sunday morning were, from the left: Harvey Zernicke, Adolph Sperberg, Hilbert Krause, Ted Hackbarth, Richard Pfliesler, Mr. Carter, Rev. R. F. Zimmerman. At the right is Lester Simons. Construction for the 150 seat structure is expected to start soon.

11 12



The new Divine Savior Lutheran Church construction has been completed and dedication services will be held Sunday, June 13. The church is located in River Heights in North Shawano, one-half block off of Highway 13. The general contractor for the modern A-frame style church was E. G. Hintz & Sons, Inc., of Shawano. Three services Sunday at 8 a.m., 3 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. The church pastor is Rev. R. F. Zimmermann.

<sup>11</sup> *Shawano Evening Leader*. Shawano, WI. June 28, 1970.

<sup>12</sup> *Shawano Evening Leader*, Shawano, WI. June 6, 1971.

# Divine Savior Church Opens Doors Sunday, June 13th-71

The Divine Savior Lutheran Church will hold dedication services of its recently completed new church building in the River Heights district in North Shawano, June 13.

Three services will be held, one at 8 a.m. with Pastor Roland F. Zimmermann officiating; at 3 p.m. with Pastor Marvin Radtke, Eagle River the guest speaker and a final service at 7:30 p.m. with Pastor Carl Voss, Green Bay feature guest speaker.

**THE DIVINE** Savior a mission congregation of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod has been holding services in the City of Shawano for the past five years. Services during this time, including the time during the construction of the new building, were held in the basement of the Shawano National Bank building.

Construction of the new church began last fall under the direction of the E. G. Hintz and Sons, Inc., Shawano, general contractors and is of typical A-frame construction. The exterior is done in rough unfinished lumber in green, with white trim.

**OTHER** contractors were

Radtke Electric, who furnished the electrical fixtures and did the wiring; Moede and Sons, who installed the plumbing and fixtures and Knope Roofing and Furnace Works who supplied and installed the heating system.

The public is cordially invited to attend the dedication ceremonies at any of the three services.

## Divine Savior to Hold Services In New Church

The Divine Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church of Shawano is discontinuing its devotion services at the Shawano National Bank and will start holding services beginning Sunday, April 4, in their new church. The new church is located on Mill Street, north of Shawano in the Town of Westcott.

<sup>13</sup> *Shawano Evening Leader*, "Divine Savior Opens Doors Sunday, June, 13<sup>th</sup>" June 6, 1971.

<sup>14</sup> *Shawano Evening Leader*. "Divine Savior to Hold Services in New Church," April 1, 1971.



## Northern Wisconsin Shawano Dedication

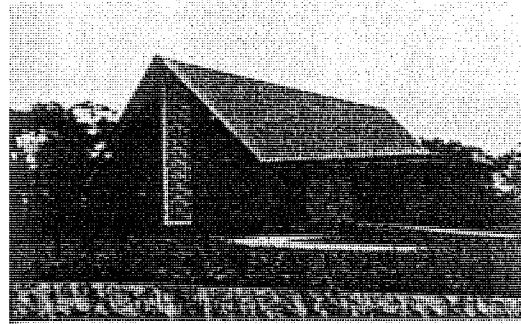
On Sunday, June 13, 1971, friends and neighbors joined the 70 members of Divine Savior Ev. Lutheran Church, Shawano, Wisconsin, in giving thanks and praise to the God of all grace for permitting this congregation to erect a church building.

In three dedication services about 500 people were encouraged to continue in the proclamation of the Gospel, the very purpose of a Christian congregation's existence, and were also led by the speakers in the worship and praise of the Triune God. Speakers were Pastor C. Voss, visiting elder, Pastor M. Radtke, District Mission Board chairman, and Pastor R. Zimmermann.

The church is a typical A-frame structure that incorporates 4,818 square feet on two levels to provide room for eight Sunday-school classes, a pastor's office, and a nave with a seating capacity of 160. A loan of \$50,000 was received from the Synod's CEF and CEI Funds.

Divine Savior began as a preaching station six years ago with services

THE NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN



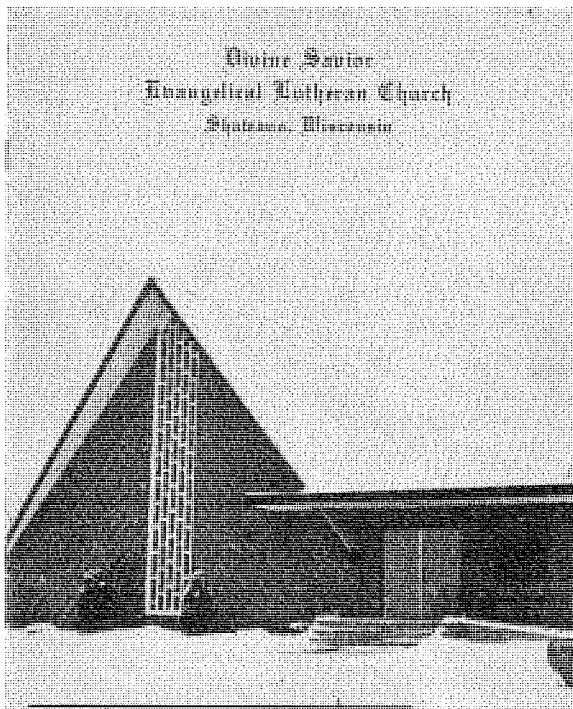
Divine Savior at Shawano, Wisconsin

conducted in a meeting room of a local bank. Pastor Roland F. Zimmermann served the mission from Bonduel, Wisconsin, until July 18, 1971, when the congregation received its first resident pastor in the person of Seminary graduate Ronald Muetzel.

Once again the Lord in His infinite wisdom has seen fit to bless the gifts and work of sinful hands that His "will be done." In this new church His name is being "hallowed" and His "kingdom" is continuing to "come" to such whom He has chosen in the Shawano area. All glory to the God of salvation!

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16



<sup>15</sup> Wisconsin Ev. Luth. Synod. "Northern Wisconsin: Shawano Dedication" *The Northwestern Lutheran*, 58, no. 18 (1971): 288-289.

<sup>16</sup> Pictures taken from Divine Savior Ev. Lutheran Church Directory, 1973.



**REV. R. MUETZEL**

Rev. Ronald Muetzel will be installed as Pastor of the Divine Saviour Lutheran Church, Wolf River Heights on Sunday, July 18.

The public is invited to attend these services which will be held at 3 p.m. at the church.

REV. Muetzel is a recent graduate of the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon and was formerly from New Ulm, Minn. He also attended Northwestern College, Watertown and spent one year as a Vicar at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Wisconsin Rapids.

Rev. Muetzel and his wife Lois will live at 829 E. Green Bay St., Shawano.

With the construction of worship facility, the congregation now had a visible presence in the community. Unfortunately, Pastor Zimmermann would not carry out much ministry in the new building. Now that the congregation had a permanent place to worship, they requested to have a resident pastor to serve the congregation. Their prayers were granted in the graduating class of 1971. The calling board selected Pastor Ronald Muetzel to serve as the first resident pastor at Divine Savior.

With a permanent worship chapel and a name in the community, Pastor Muetzel began organizing within and reaching out to the community. As with any ministry, spiritual growth is the first and primary concern and only happens through the diligent and<sup>17</sup> faithful use of the Word and Sacraments. God

certainly blessed the congregation spiritually through the means of grace, but also physically. Looking back on his years of service, Pastor Muetzel remarked at how God blessed the congregation with key people throughout its history.<sup>18</sup> Pastor Zimmermann was proof of this and Pastor Muetzel would be no different.

Upon arrival he was told there were about forty members. The church council consisted of just three individuals. From the start the Mission Board had the mindset that

<sup>17</sup> *Shawano Evening Leader*. "New Pastor at Lutheran Church," July 11, 1971.

<sup>18</sup> Muetzel, Pastor Ronald. Personal Interview. October 5, 2007.

building a church would be the only way for the mission to succeed.<sup>19</sup> The early years are a testimony to their plan and wisdom in accord with God's will. By the end of 1971 the congregation was home to 93 members.<sup>20</sup> The congregation had more than doubled in large part due to the building of the church.

There was another factor that impacted the congregation's growth. On **February 19, 1974** a significant event occurred at the Concordia Seminary in St. Louis Missouri, Missouri Synod's seminary. This date was known as the "Seminex walkout." The majority of faculty and students walked off campus and into exile over several significant religious and theological issues. In the years to come a move to a liberal approach to ministry and theology took place in Missouri Synod congregations across the country, including the large Missouri Synod congregation in Shawano. Disgruntled members left St. James and some became members of Divine Savior. Some remain members to this day.<sup>21</sup>

The following years were further proof of God's blessings. From 1970 to 1973 the congregation grew from 40 members to 176. 1973 was a significant year for several important reasons. In light of the overwhelming growth of the congregation, on **July 15, 1973**, "The voting members of the congregation decided that it was possible for the congregation to assume full financial responsibility. Divine Savior became a self-supporting congregation. The congregation also voted to establish a Christian Day School as soon as possible."<sup>22</sup> This was a huge step forward for the congregation and the synod as a whole. One member expressed it best, "The congregation felt that they had

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Schultz, Lewis and Janice. Personal Interview October 13, 2007.

<sup>22</sup> *25 Years of Proclaiming the Gospel. Divine Savior 1966-1991.* Anniversary publication May 24, 1991.

ample support to go on their own and also to help other congregations and allow them to benefit from the Synod's aid."<sup>23</sup> The members of Divine Savior were truly grateful for the financial assistance from the Mission Board and wanted to see other congregation benefit in the same way. It may go without saying that many were surprised at how quickly this mission congregation had achieved a self-supporting status. And that was just part of their story.

On the same day the congregation made a resolution to start a Lutheran Elementary School as soon as possible. Soon was certainly the key word. The bulletin from Sunday, **February 17, 1974** reported the work and planning that had been in the meantime:

**SCHOOL REPORT:** This information about the planned Christian Day school is provided in order to help the members of the congregation decide when the school ought to be opened. The Board of Education reports that if the school opens this fall, there would be 14 children in attendance (definite commitments). The breakdown according to grades would be as follows: grade 8 - 2; grade 7 - 1; grade 6 - 2; grade 5 - 2; grade 4 - 3; grade 3 - 1; grade 2 - 1; grade 1 - 2. Seven of the children would be from our congregation. Seven would be tuition students from other congregations in our fellowship. The Church Council is busy preparing the way for a school opening in 1974 if this is the desire of the congregation.

**ATTENDANCE:** Last Sunday - 137 (one year ago - 115)

24

Less than one month later on **March 10, 1974**, the congregation voted to open a Christian Day School in the fall. One sentence in the bulletin read: "This decision will vitally affect the work and life of the congregation in the years to come."<sup>25</sup> During the first week of classes the following letter arrived from Board for Parish Education:

*Dear Brethren:*

*Recognizing the great importance of thorough Christian education and training for the children in your congregation, you have established a*

<sup>23</sup> Schultz, Lewis and Janice. Personal Interview October 13, 2007.

<sup>24</sup> Divine Savior Ev. Lutheran Bulletin. Sexagesima Sunday, February 17, 1974 – Vol. IV No. 15.

<sup>25</sup> Divine Savior Ev. Lutheran Bulletin. 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent – March 3, 1974 – Vol. IV No. 20.

*Christian day school in your midst. "The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad." Psalm 126:3*

*May your Christian day school always be considered a special treasure from a most gracious God. In this Christian school your children will receive daily instruction and guidance in accordance with God's holy Word. Here they can live, work and play with and under the direction of fellow Christians. May the Lord fill your hearts with continued zeal for the cause of Christian education. May you never grow weary in this important task.*

*We rejoice with you, and in the name of the Board for Parish Education extend to you our heartiest congratulations. May the Lord continue to bless Divine Savior Congregation, its Christian day school, its pastor, its teachers, and its children.*

*Your in Christ,  
Wisconsin Synod Board for Parish*

*Education*

*Signed: Adolph Fehlawer, LeDell Plath, Pastor William E. Fischer*

It certainly would impact the congregation in the years to come, but its impact began in the days to come. The pieces of the puzzle just seemed to fall into place. A member of the congregation saw an ad in the local paper regarding a Missouri Synod in congregation in Mayville <sup>which</sup> who was giving away desks and other miscellaneous items for a school. Several members of the congregation made the trip shortly thereafter and brought back the supplies.<sup>26</sup>

Now that the congregation had the furniture for the school, they needed a qualified teacher to instruct the students. After issuing a call for a principal and teacher, on **August 4, 1974**, Mr. Ernie Knobloch was installed as the first principal and teacher. Along with him his wife, Janet and Joyce Frisque, a graduate of Doctor Martin Luther College who had recently moved to town with her husband and family, were also inducted as part-time teachers.<sup>27</sup> Along with their installation a short biography of each teacher was distributed:

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<sup>26</sup> Schultz, Lewis and Janice. Personal Interview October 13, 2007.

<sup>27</sup> *25 Years of Proclaiming the Gospel. Divine Savior 1966-1991.* Anniversary publication May 24, 1991.

## OUR TEACHERS

Mr. Ernie Knobloch --- Mr. Knobloch was born January 6, 1952 in Chicago, Illinois. His parents are Mr. and Mrs. Walter Knobloch of Tinley, Park, Illinois. He attended Carl Sandburg High School in Orland Park, Illinois. On June 7th of this year he graduated from Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota. He spent part of his senior year practice teaching at St. Peter's Lutheran School, Helenville, Wisconsin. One month ago, on July 5th, he married the former Janet Huebner. They are living at 612 River Street in a home rented by the congregation. The telephone number is 526-6798. Mr. Knobloch will serve as the principal of the new school. His teaching responsibilities will be in the grades 4 through 8.

Mrs. Janet Knobloch --- Mrs. Knobloch was born April 9, 1952 in Mobridge, South Dakota. She is the daughter of Prof. and Mrs. Lloyd Huebner of New Ulm, Minnesota. She is a graduate of both Martin Luther Academy and Dr. Martin Luther College. Her practice teaching was done at St. John's Lutheran School in St. Paul, Minnesota. She has volunteered to teach the following subjects in the new school: Music, grades 1-8; Social Studies, 1-4; Language, 1-4; Spelling, 1-4; Religion, 1-3; Science, 1-3 and Mathematics, 4.

Mrs. Joyce Frisque --- Mrs. Frisque is originally from Manitowoc, Wisconsin. She graduated from Dr. Martin Luther College in 1963. Two years later she was married to Mr. Donald Frisque. They have two children---Debbie and Paul. She has taught at three Wisconsin Synod Christian Day Schools---St. Philip, Milwaukee; Atonement, Milwaukee and St. Paul, Lake Mills, Wisconsin. Mrs. Frisque and her husband have lived in Shawano since last fall. She has volunteered to teach Mathematics, grades 1-3, and Reading, grades 1-3, in the school. The Frisques live at 604 East Division St. Their telephone number is 526-5157. 28

Starting September 3, 1974, the first official classes were held at Divine Savior

Evangelical Lutheran School in the basement of the school.<sup>29</sup>



*Our 1st Faculty*

<sup>28</sup> Divine Savior Ev. Lutheran Bulletin Insert. August 4, 1974.

<sup>29</sup> Divine Savior Ev. Lutheran Church Archives. Shawano, WI (accessed November 22, 2007).

## Divine Savior to Open Christian Day School



First School Year  
1974

30 31

### Divine Savior of Shawano, Wisconsin

"The Lord bless you," is a portion of the benediction which the members of Divine Savior Lutheran Church in Shawano, Wisconsin, have heard at the end of every service they've attended. Of course, "The Lord bless you" is always a true spiritual promise of our loving God. But what a wonderful thrill when we are allowed to SEE the Lord bless in visible ways!

This has been the privilege enjoyed by a congregation of God's people located on the southern edge of Wisconsin's summer and winter vacationland. Established in 1966 as a WELS mission in an area heavily concentrated with people and churches of other Lutheran fellowships, Di-

THE NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN

(article continued on next page)

In a special meeting of the congregation on Sunday, March 10th, Divine Savior Lutheran Church of Shawano decided to open a Christian Day School for the fall term.

It was an important step for the young congregation and climaxed months of planning. The decision is sure to influence the development and work of the congregation for many years to come.

DIVINE SAVIOR began holding services in Shawano late in 1965. The first services were held in a private home, but arrangements were soon made to use the basement meeting room of the Shawano National Bank. The congregation made use of this facility until the spring of 1971 when it was able to move to a newly completed chapel located on a 5 acre tract just two blocks north of the Shawano city limits in the Town of Wescott.

The church was dedicated on June 13, 1971. One month later the congregation received its first resident pastor. A new parsonage was constructed near the church and occupied late in the fall of 1972.

During the last 3½ years the congregation has experienced rapid growth in membership. In that period of time it has increased from a group of 15 communicant members to a congregation numbering 145 communicants and nearly 200 souls.

The rapid growth has made it possible for the congregation to meet all of its financial obligations. In the summer of 1973 it assumed complete responsibility for its financial support. Up until that time, the congregation had received considerable assistance from the Mission Board of the Northern Wisconsin District of

the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

THE RAPID growth has also made it possible for the congregation to expand its work. In the fall of 1972 it began to participate in a regular Sunday morning radio ministry on WTCH-AM, "God's Word — Our Heritage", which it sponsors jointly with Friedens Lutheran Church, Bonduel, and St. Paul Lutheran Church, Zachow.

Now the blessing of growth in the congregation has also made it possible to establish a Christian Day School. The school will be opened in the fall of 1974. Classes will be held in the basement area of the church which has been modified to meet state standards for elementary schools. The congregation expects the basement area to serve as a temporary facility until a larger building becomes necessary.

The school will open with all eight grades. At the present time 14 students have committed themselves to attend the school. A male teacher will be called to act as first teacher and principal of the school. The meeting at which the congregation will extend the call is scheduled for March 24th.

The congregation is also fortunate in this that Mrs. Joyce Frisque, an experienced Christian Day School teacher and a member of Divine Savior, has volunteered to assist with the teaching of grades 1-4.

As might be gathered from the "Christian" in Christian Day School, the school will include in its course of instruction the regular study of God's Word, the Bible, and its teachings about Jesus Christ, our Savior. In addition, all the other subjects will be taught from a Christian and Biblical perspective.

DIVINE SAVIOR LUTHERAN Church is a member of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod which lists more than 250 such schools among its member congregations. Divine Savior was encouraged in its establishment of a school by the fact that ten other Wisconsin Synod congregations opened schools this past year.

Members of the congregation's Board of Education who were deeply involved in the planning for the school were Charles Buettner and Lewis Schultz. The pastor of Divine Savior is the Rev. Ronald Muetzel.

The members of Divine Savior ask God's blessing on this new undertaking.

<sup>30</sup> Picture taken from archives at Divine Savior Ev. Lutheran Church.

<sup>31</sup> *Shawano Evening Leader*. "Divine Savior to Open Christian Day School," March 17, 1974.

## Visible Proof of God's Blessing

vine Savior from its beginning has been blessed by the Lord with the marvelous Gospel of Jesus Christ drawn from God's inspired Word.

By 1970, Divine Savior was a five-year-old, still-struggling congregation of 15 communicants that received permission to build a chapel. The Lord blessed Divine Savior with a CEF-financed worship facility and immediately added to that blessing by giving the congregation its first resident pastor, Ronald Muetzel, who continues to serve the congregation at present.

Suddenly the young congregation found its membership increasing

rapidly. Adult confirmands, doctrinally-concerned Lutherans, and transfers from other WELS congregations contributed to the growth. Within four years the Lord blessed Divine Savior so greatly that its communicant membership rose from 15 to 160.

One visible blessing brought with it another. In the summer of 1973 Divine Savior was able to become self-supporting. The Lord blessed the congregation with financial stability and a membership sincere in their stewardship efforts.

And now, another visible blessing of God. On September 3, 1974, Divine Savior Lutheran School began holding classes in the basement of the church. Visible for all to see were two

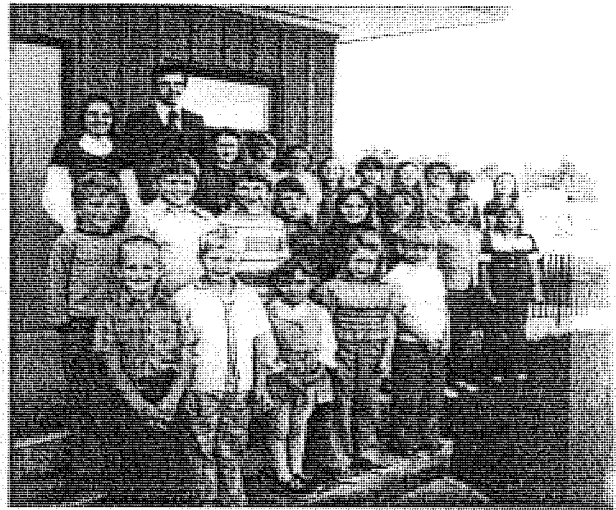
well-equipped classrooms, 22 eager students, and three faithful teachers.

In every way this new Christian day school has to be considered a blessing of the Lord. The classrooms are furnished with more than adequate teaching tools. While an early estimate projected an enrollment of five students, the Lord blessed the school with an opening enrollment of 22. Divine Savior had planned to open its school with all eight grades in one classroom taught by one teacher. The Lord blessed the school with that one teacher and principal, Ernest F. Knobloch, a 1974 graduate of DMLC. The Lord also multiplied His blessing when He moved Mrs. Janet Knobloch and Mrs. Joyce Frisque voluntarily to assume responsibility

for grades 1 to 4, making it possible for the children to be taught in two classrooms.

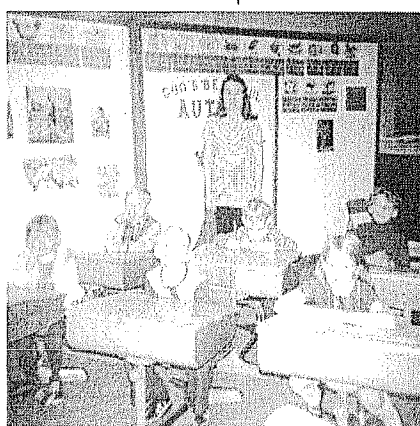
The comment has frequently come from those of the "original 15" who are still members of Divine Savior: "Who would have guessed that the Lord could bless as richly as He has!" It is certainly proper that all the members of Divine Savior as they reflect on the Lord's past blessings will also look to the future with the confidence that the Lord will continue to bless. He has made that promise. In the brief history of Divine Savior He has given visible proof of that promise.

Pastor Ronald M. Muetzel



Mr. and Mrs. E. Knobloch and pupils.

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<sup>32</sup> Wisconsin Ev. Luth. Synod. "Divine Savior of Shawano, WI," *The Northwestern Lutheran* 61, no. 22 (1974): 362-364.

<sup>33</sup> Pictures taken from first school year (1974-74) left: grades 1-2; right: grades 5-8



Classes ran smoothly the first year of the school, but the facilities for conducting classes were not holding up. The school was originally opened under a conditional use permit for up to a four year maximum. As the temporary permit was running out, several issues arose. A firewall would become mandatory in the basement.<sup>34</sup> When the cement floor was originally laid, it was poured when the ground was frozen which caused the floor to become cracked and uneven. Even though the contractor came and carpeted the basement, the floor was still an item of concern.<sup>35</sup> On top of the structural concerns, there was the issue of a growing congregation and limited space.

In light of these factors, a Building Committee was appointed to plan for a future construction early 1975. The committee wrestled with two options: 1) make an addition to the existing structure, or 2) sell the existing facility and look for land to construct a new structure. Option 1 had several strikes against it. The church was on the northeast corner of the lot, and to the west was the parking lot and west of that was the parsonage. If they went south, they would have encountered difficulty with a raised channel.<sup>36</sup> Several factors made option 2 very inviting. A land developer named Clara. Kleeman wanted to start a development just kiddy-corner across the highway from the current church location and was in contact with Pastor Muetzel. She strongly encouraged the congregation to consider purchasing and building to help jumpstart the development. In the meantime on October 20, 1975, the voters unanimously decided to offer the church for sale to an interested church group.<sup>37</sup> During this time Pastor Muetzel was corresponding with Reverend E.E. Mains from the local First United Pentecostal Church

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<sup>34</sup> Muetzel, Pastor Ronald. Personal Interview. October 5, 2007.

<sup>35</sup> Schultz, Lewis and Janice. Interview October 13, 2007.

<sup>36</sup> Frisque, Donald and Joyce. Interview. October 13, 2007.

<sup>37</sup> *25 Years of Proclaiming the Gospel. Divine Savior 1966-1991.* Anniversary publication May 24, 1991.

*which was*  
who were worshipping in a rented facility downtown. He had taken a tour of our facility and with the current growth in his own church body he thought our church would serve their purpose well. Their correspondence never went public at the request of the Rev. Mains. They continued to correspond by means of letters such as this offer:



*First United Pentecostal Church*

REV. R. E. MAINS  
PHONE: 526-6332

407 East Division Street -- Shawano, Wisconsin 54166

December 24, 1975

Rev. R. Muetzel  
Divine Savior Lutheran Church  
120 Mill St.  
Shawano, Wis.

Dear Pastor Muetzel & Congregation of Divine Savior;

In reply to your letter of Dec. 22, 1975, concerning the purchase of your church building and property.

Due to the fine gentleman ways you have been conducting this transaction, we felt that we would let you make the final decision of purchase agreement.

We offer to you two programs, that we are willing to work with. You can make the decision which one of these you like, and then that is how we will draw up the option of purchase.

Plan 1. A purchase price of \$70,500.00, which includes, church building, parking lot, total land of about one and one third acres, altar furniture, organ and speaker and standard real estate transactions.

5 per cent down 30 days after option to purchase is signed by both parties. Remainder of monies on closing with occupancy of Sept. 1, 1976.

Plan 2. For purchase price of \$68,500.00, includes church building, parking lot, total land of about one and one third acres, altar furniture, and standard real estate transactions.

5 per cent down 30 days after option of purchase is signed by both parties, and remainder of monies on closing, with occupancy Sept. 1, 1976.

This letter is not a legal and binding document as you know, so as soon as you let us know which one of these two plans you have chosen, we will ratify it by our congregation, and draw up the legal option of purchase, and mail it to you for signing.

*R. E. Mains*  
Rev. R. E. Mains

In light of these factors, the Building Committee submitted the following recommendation that was accepted unanimously by the voters:

## REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

of the

### PLANNING AND BUILDING COMMITTEE

The Committee recommends that WE PURSUE NEGOTIATIONS with the Community Baptist Church for the sale of our church building and parking lot (1.32 acres). The Committee bases its recommendation on a number of factors:

- 1 - FACILITY NEEDS      Divine Savior's immediate need is classroom space. The Committee has determined that a building with sufficient floor-space for 4 classrooms ought to be constructed. But Divine Savior has grown rapidly. In 1970 - 25 communicants. In 1971 - 66 communicants. In 1972 - 100 communicants. In 1973 - 134 communicants. In 1974 - 154 communicants. In 1975 (so far) - 177 communicants. As the membership has grown, attendance at services has also increased. Five more years of growth like the last five would cause the church building to burst its seams. Three and even four services a weekend would be necessary. Even if the congregation grows at a slower rate --- say, 15 communicants per year --- it might be ten years before a new church building would be necessary. That is not a very long time either. The Committee considers it unrealistic to imagine that a new school addition will solve our problems. A larger church building looms large on the near horizon.
- 2 - OUR CHURCH      The building we are now using presents problems of its own. Very simply, it was not designed for expansion. It was not located on the property with expansion in mind.
- 3 - INTERESTED PARTY      The Committee has been in contact with representatives of the Community Baptist Church which holds services in a rented hall on East Green Bay Street. They have toured our building and are interested in purchase. An appraisal on the value of our property has been obtained. Sale of the church building at a price near the appraised value would enable Divine Savior to pay its present loan in full. We would be debt free.
- 4 - A NEW FACILITY      The congregation could then build a church-school to suit its needs for more than 5 or 10 years. The Committee is thinking in terms of a church building with seating for 300 plus and a school with four classroom areas.
- 5 - SYNOD PARTICIPATION      The Wisconsin Synod holds title to our building. Representatives of the Synod have been contacted and have reacted favorably to this proposal. Preliminary indication has been that we might very well be able to finance a new church-school through the Church Extension Fund @ 4% interest. Such financing would be necessary to make a building project of this size possible.

#### QUARTERLY VOTERS' MEETING

Monday, November 20, 7:30 p.m.

This issue will be presented and discussed thoroughly at the meeting. Additional information, costs, and figures will be available. Male members over 18 years of age are considered voting members. Wives and other female members are welcome to attend

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<sup>38</sup> Divine Savior Ev. Luth. Church Archives, Shawano, WI. Recommendation presented to congregation October 20, 1975.

On the same day this recommendation was approved, Pastor Muetzel submitted the following request to the General Board for Home Missions highlighting the need, the plan and the request for assistance to purchase land and build a new facility.

DIVINE SAVIOR EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
(Wisconsin Synod)

100 MILL STREET

SHAWANO, WISCONSIN 54166

October 20, 1975

Northern Wisconsin District Mission Board  
Rev. Marvin Radtke, Chairman  
Box 98  
Eagle River, Wisconsin 54521

Dear Friends:

God's blessings have been very evident in the brief history of Divine Savior, Shawano. Recent events have again convinced us that He is leading in the direction which is best for the congregation and the preaching of the Gospel in this area. We are asking for your cooperation.

This is the situation. In 1974 Divine Savior established a Christian Day School. Classes are being held in the basement of the church. The temporary use permit granted by the state expires after the 1977-78 school year. For this reason and because we feel that the school and congregation would benefit from having an above ground classroom building a school is considered essential to our program. A Planning and Building Committee has been developing plans for such a building.

But a classroom building does not really solve the congregation's building problem. A chapel was built in 1971 with a capacity of 160 people. Since then the congregation has experienced very fine and steady growth. The growth is best shown by the increase in number of communicants since 1971:

January 1, 1971 -	25 communicants
1972 -	66
1973 -	100
1974 -	134
1975 -	154
October 1975 -	177.

The continuing fine growth gives us reason to believe that the chapel will not meet our worship needs for many years more. We already have two services year round and are contemplating a third service during the summer vacation season. Top summer Sunday attendance hit 287. Even in the offseason attendance is always near 200. Even a modest growth rate during the next 5 years would make the construction of a new worship facility mandatory.

Needless to say, two additional building projects would place an almost unmanageable financial burden on the congregation. It might be argued that the congregation will stop growing. The record for the past five years indicates otherwise. Nor is it our purpose or intention to remain at 177 communicant members.

Ronald M. Muetzel, Pastor  
Parsonage Phone: 526-6870

Ernie Knobloch, Principal  
Church (School) Phone: 526-6880

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At the same time that the Lord places these problems before us, it seems He also is offering us a solution to the dilemma. The congregation has been approached by the Community Baptist Church of Shawano. It is a new congregation which is holding services in a rented hall. Their people are interested in purchasing our church building. Our property has been appraised at a fair market value of \$79,000. This includes the church, the parking lot and the land on which they are located (1 1/3 acres). There is reason to believe that the Baptist group will be willing to pay the appraisal price or at least a price very near it.

Not only would this make it possible for Divine Savior to pay off its entire CEF loan of approximately \$77,000. It would also allow the congregation to dispose of a building which for various reasons has become more of a liability than an asset. 1) Those who are familiar with the structure would agree that it was built with no thought given to future expansion. No good plan for expanding the building has been developed. 2) A further complication is that the building was placed on a corner of the property thereby limiting any expansion possibilities. 3) It will be difficult to find any practical use for the building if and when the congregation erects a new school and a new church. 4) The building was constructed inexpensively (under \$50,000) and the quality of construction reflects the price. In the first four years it has already been necessary to replace two exterior doors and the entryway floor.

If the building can be sold it would be possible for Divine Savior to erect a facility that would meet its needs for the foreseeable future. The Planning Committee feels that we ought to have a church building with seating for 300 plus. Even with a building that size it would probably be necessary to have two summer services before very long. We are quite certain that such a building could be built (with a basement fellowship area) for under \$160,000.

We would also need a classroom building with space for four classrooms. The school (24 children) is already divided into two classrooms. With an above-ground building the school's potential for growth should increase considerably. We are quite certain that this part of the building would run under \$100,000. In order to double up on entryway space, lavatory plumbing, etc. preliminary plans are to have the two units constructed as one building not to exceed \$260,000.

Of course, the Synod holds title to our church property and would have to give its approval for any of this to materialize. Even more important, Divine Savior will never be able to manage a project of this size if it must obtain financing on its own. It will be possible only if the DMB, the GBHM and the Board of Trustees agree to finance the entire project with CEF monies. We use the \$260,000 as a maximum cost. We would agree to remain within that figure for the entire project. We also pledge to reduce the figure in as many ways as possible: raising local funds, sale price of church, avoiding any luxuries in construction, volunteer labor. Since Divine Savior is not in a position to receive interest subsidy, a reduction in total project cost would be very desirable from our point of view. Very frankly, if a congregation knows that the DMB is going to pick up interest payments, a congregation may not be particularly interested in total cost. But if the congregation is responsible for all interest payments there is a much greater motivation to work at cost reduction.

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We are asking for approval from the DMB and GBHM which would allow us to negotiate for the sale of our building and would also assure us of full cooperation in funding the new construction at a figure not to exceed \$260,000. Without this, the congregation will be forced to drop any plan for sale of the church building. It would also appear that Divine Savior will face serious financial problems in the near future. The building needs described above are realistic expectations. Without CEF assistance the congregation will hardly be in a position to finance them.

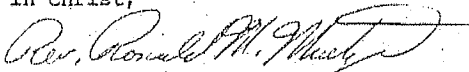
We ask that you take into consideration the needs of Divine Savior, the fine growth of the congregation, the obvious opportunity to solve a serious problem and the good stewardship performance of our members (\$210 per communicant last year, even higher this year).

It should be mentioned that the new building could be erected on the remaining 3 2/3 acres of our Mill Street property. One disadvantage is that it would only be about 200 feet down the street from the Community Baptist Church. Another disadvantage is that it would be removed farther from the highway and would be "the second church down the road."

Another opportunity given by the Lord! A woman who is sympathetic to our cause and who is also developing a new subdivision in the area has made a generous offer to the congregation. For the sale price of four lots on our Mill St. property (110ft. x 270ft. @ 4,500 - 5,000 per lot) she has offered about twice as much land in the new subdivision. The property would have over 600 feet of frontage on Highways 47 and 55, the only route which enters Shawano from the north. We would be able to remain in the neighborhood where we have become established and yet, we would have property with some very obvious advantages. 600 feet of highway frontage in a new subdivision has got to be a choice location in anyone's book. We would also be a little closer to Shawano (actually within the city limits) on the east side of the highway instead of the west.

All things considered, we are convinced that the Lord has placed before us a golden opportunity and a solution for our problems. We pray that He will move you to cooperate with us so that these plans may materialize.

In Christ,



Rev. Ronald M. Muetzel, Pastor

cc Rev. Norman Berg, GBHM

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This was a very unique situation for Mission Board. The congregation was still paying on the loan for their current chapel and seriously considering selling and building

<sup>39</sup> Divine Savior Ev. Luth. Church Archives, Shawano, WI. Letter presented to the General Board for Home Missions, October 20, 1975.

elsewhere, which would require a larger loan from the CEF.<sup>40</sup> The situation was unique, but in a good way. The Synod was pleased and excited about the request and on **December 21, 1975** the congregation was notified that, "Assurance has been received that a Church Extension Fund loan not to exceed \$260,00 would be granted."<sup>41</sup> Not long after, on **January 2, 1976** the congregation accepted an offer \$69,500 for the church and parking lot from the First United Pentecostal Church. And on **March 22, 1976** 5 acres of land were purchased from Clara Kleemann for \$17,000.00<sup>42</sup> On **May 27, 1976** this was the joyous scene:



Ground-breaking services for the new Divine Savior Lutheran Church were held Thursday night in the new Alpine Shores subdivision. Construction will begin immediately and is expected to be completed in the fall. Witnessing the shoveling were the church council and

building committee from left: Ernie Knobloch, Don Anderson, Vilas Klevesahl, Don Frisque, Everett Jensen, Jim Kohn, Scott Kraft, Jim Gehler, Pastor Ronald Muetzel, Quentin Andrews, Otto Lehrengel and Duane Wendt. (SEL Photo)

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<sup>40</sup> Muetzel, Pastor Ronald. Personal Interview. October 5, 2007.

<sup>41</sup> *25 Years of Proclaiming the Gospel. Divine Savior 1966-1991*. Anniversary publication May 24, 1991.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*,

<sup>43</sup> *Shawano Evening Leader*, May 28, 1976.

# Divine Savior breaking ground for new building on Thursday

SHAWANO—Divine Savior Lutheran Church will break ground for its new Church-School on Thursday evening as a part of its Ascension Day Service.

The congregation will move from its present location in Wescott Township to a new site which has been purchased in the city of Shawano's Alpine Shores subdivision. Construction is expected to begin this week.

The congregation has decided to make the change because of the needed classroom space for its Christian day school and because of rapid growth in membership, Pastor Ronald Muetzel said.

In a series of meetings over the past nine months the congregation has unanimously approved all phases of the project from sale of its present facility to construction of the new Church-School.

The new buildings will be constructed at the intersection of North Main Street and Northridge Drive. The church building will provide seating for 300 to 350 people. It will be contemporary in design and will be attached to a larger classroom and fellowship building. Space will be provided for four classrooms. The two buildings will be joined by a spacious entryway.

Divine Savior is a relatively new church in the Shawano area. Services were first held in 1966 in the basement meeting room of Shawano National Bank. Pastor Larry Zwieg, then of Bonduel, conducted the first services. He was followed by Pastor Roland Zimmermann, also of Bonduel.

During Pastor Zwieg's ministry, land was purchased in the Town of Wescott. During Pastor Zimmermann's ministry construction of a chapel began. Divine Savior's first house of worship was dedicated on June 13, 1971. One month later the congregation received its first resident pastor. Rev. Ronald Muetzel was ordained and installed on July 18, 1971. He continues to serve the congregation at present.

When a decision was made to erect the first chapel Divine Savior numbered only 15 communicants and 20 souls. During the past six years the congregation has increased to 185 communicants and about 220 souls.

A Christian day school was established in 1974. The school is in its second year of operation. 28 children in eight elementary grades receive a complete education which is

centered around Christ and God's Word. Principal of the school is Ernie Knobloch. Other teachers are Joyce Frisque and Janet Knobloch. Classes have been held in the basement of the church.

A year ago the congregation appointed a Planning and Building Committee consisting of: Carl Sorcic, Chairman; Kent Dzurick, Vilas Klevesahl, Scott Kraft and Lewis Schultz. The Pastor, Principal, Quynin Andrews, former president of the congregation, and Everett Jensen, current president, have also served on the Committee.

Initially the Planning and Building Committee set out to meet the primary need of the congregation — classroom space for its school. The Committee had also been instructed to consider the long-range needs of the congregation. When the opportunity presented itself to sell the chapel, the Committee recommended sale and the construction of a new Church-School. It is hoped that the building will serve Divine Savior's school and its increasing membership for many years to come.

The present church building has been sold to the United Pentecostal Church of Shawano with occupancy scheduled for September 1st. Divine Savior's parsonage will be retained until such time as a parsonage can be built in Alpine Shores near the new Church-School. Four residential lots to the west of the present parsonage are in the process of being sold.

Divine Savior is affiliated with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The message it proclaims is the Good News that Jesus died and rose as our Substitute so that we have forgiveness of sins and eternal life as a free gift of God. The members of Divine Savior, like the 400,000 other members of the Wisconsin Synod, believe that the Bible is the inspired source for our faith and the inerrant guide for our lives.

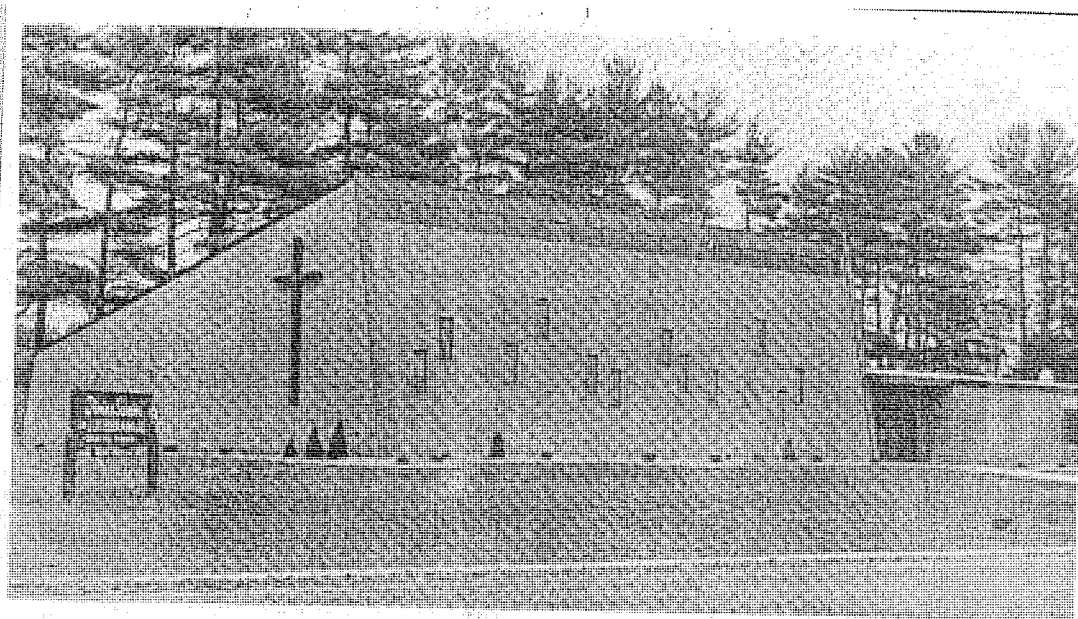
With its services at 8:00 and 10:30 a.m. every Sunday, with its Christian day school, Sunday school, educational programs and fellowship gatherings Divine Savior offers people of this area the opportunity to live and grow in Jesus Christ.

The Ascension Day Service will begin at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday evening, May 27th. Groundbreaking will follow the service.

<sup>44</sup> *Shawano Evening Leader*, "Divine Savior breaking ground for new building on Thursday" May 26, 1976.



The builders got to work immediately. In just several months the building was standing and furniture was moved into it. The congregation now had ample space to serve the growing membership and a safe and spacious environment in which to instruct the children of the day school. They had a well-established pastor and several capable teachers.



Nearing final completion is the new Divine Savior Lutheran church and school. The new, spacious facility is located north of the local Shawano Lake outlet and is of all new, modern construction. Final landscaping is being completed at the present time. (SEL Photo)

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Unfortunately having a new building did not eliminate all the problems of the previous church. Chief among them was problems with the roof. Of all the days to discover there was a leaky roof, the opening day of school enrollment was not it. As people gathered to register their children for the upcoming school year in the new building, water suddenly came pouring in through the windows while ceiling tiles gave way to the weight of water. While the teachers were dealing with the parents, students and leaks on the inside, Pastor Muetzel was trying to cover the windows with plastic on

<sup>45</sup> *Shawano Evening Leader*. "Nearing Final Completion" October 8, 1976.

the outside to keep more water from pouring in.<sup>46</sup> The leaky roof was a reality for many years to come as Pastor Kassulke discovered.

“The roof was troublesome from the beginning. As I researched the records of the building committee, it was very interesting to notice how the congregation dealt with one builder for a lengthy time in developing the project. As the cost grew beyond what the CEF was going to lend to the congregation, suddenly the minutes of the building committee cease, another builder is engaged who says they can build for the cost the congregation can afford and the project is begun. When we tried to pursue the builder on account of the problems in workmanship, we found that the company had folded and we were left no recourse except to make repairs <sup>on</sup> ~~in~~ our own, as we were able.”<sup>47</sup>

The leaky roof certainly made for an interesting school year in the new building. The next year would pose challenges of a different nature. Principal Knobloch accepted a call to serve elsewhere leaving just one teacher, Joyce Frisque. The congregation sought to call a principal to serve in the upcoming school year, but to no avail. After many talks and suggestions the following plan was adopted:

SCHOOL STAFFING: The Church Council accepted the recommendation from the Board of Christian Education to extend a Call to Mrs. Joyce Frisque to teach grades 1-8 in our Christian day school. Also to hire Mrs. David (Jeanette) Diestler as a full-time Teacher's Aid and Church-School Secretary. The Pastor will be teaching the upper grade religion classes and the phy-ed class. 48

Through a congregational effort, the plan sufficed for the entire school year. As Mrs. Frisque was teaching in one classroom, Mrs. Diestler would correct papers, answer questions and keep watch over the other classroom. Throughout the year, various mothers of the congregation came in and taught art.<sup>49</sup> This school year was no doubt a testimony to the love and faithfulness of Mrs. Frisque to her Lord and her church whom

<sup>46</sup> Frisque, Donald and Joyce. Personal Interview. October 13, 2007.

<sup>47</sup> Kassulke, Pastor Peter. Email to Author. December 3, 2007.

<sup>48</sup> Divine Savior Ev. Luth. Church Bulletin 10<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity – August 14, 1977 – Vol. VII. No. 47

<sup>49</sup> Frisque, Donald and Joyce. Personal Interview. October 13, 2007.

she served faithfully as a called teacher until her retirement in 2004 and who still currently serves with her time, talents and treasures.

What amazing things God had done for this congregation in just 10 years time: Two building projects, two CEF loans, three pastors, 3 teachers and a membership that was growing spiritually and physically. But things were about to change.

On **March 19, 1978**, Pastor Muetzel addressed a letter to the congregation informing that through much prayerful consideration he had decided to accept the call to serve Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church, South Windsor, Connecticut. In his letter he expressed a deep love and concern for the privilege he had been given to serve at Divine Savior:

*“Nearly seven years at Divine Savior have been filled with much joy and satisfaction. Close ties exist with the entire congregation. There is still much opportunity to do the Lord’s work among the people of Shawano. Though we are assured that a new principal will be here for the next school year, the position is vacant at the time. All these factors combine to make leaving a very difficult thing to do. I ask that you respect my decision as one directed and worked by the Holy Spirit. We don’t know from one day to the next what He plans for our future. But we trust that He works effectively for the welfare of His church and His churches.”<sup>50</sup>*

Just as the letter stated, a new principal did arrive for the upcoming school year. Since Pastor Muetzel was leaving in early May, the congregation also called for a pastor. God blessed the congregation two-fold. On **July 9, 1978** both Pastor Peter Kassulke and Principal Terrance Greening were respectively ordained and installed.

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<sup>50</sup> Divine Savior Ev. Luth. Church Archives, Shawano, WI. Pastor Muetzel’s Letter to congregation acknowledging he had accepted a call to serve in Connecticut dated March 19, 1978.



Peter Kassulke

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Peter Richard Kassulke was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 2, 1952, the son of Mr. & Mrs. Richard Kassulke. His family has been life-long members of Christ Ev. Lutheran Church on Milwaukee's south side. Pastor Kassulke attended Christ Lutheran Grade School from kindergarten through eight grade. He graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran High School in 1970 and Northwestern College in 1974. During his Vicar year (the third year of his Seminary training) he served a new mission in Plymouth, Wisconsin. He is a 1978 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Pastor Kassulke has 3 brothers and no sisters.

On June 14, 1975, Peter Kassulke and Rebecca Ann Sebald were united in marriage. Becky is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Sebald, also of Milwaukee. She was born May 15, 1954, in Michigan, where her father taught in a Lutheran Grade School until he accepted a call to Wisconsin Lutheran High School as Librarian in 1966. She is a 1972 graduate from WLHS and received her B.A. from Cardinal Stritch College of Milwaukee in 1976 with a major in Biology and Special Education.

Pastor and Mrs. Kassulke have one son, Jeremy Peter, who was born on December 20, 1976. The Kassulkes are getting settled in the parsonage, are anxious to get to know everyone, and are looking forward to living in Shawano. May God bless their stay among us.

*Terrance Greening*

Terry Greening was born in Madison, Wisconsin, November 10, 1953. He was raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he attended the Christian Day School of St. Luke's Lutheran Church. Mr. Greening is a graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran High School of Milwaukee and of Dr. Martin Luther College of New Ulm, Minnesota. Upon graduation in 1975, he was called by Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church of St. Paul to teach the Sixth Grade at St. John Lutheran School, also of St. Paul. At Trinity, Mr. Greening served as head organist, choir director, Sunday School Superintendent and Y.P.S. Advisor. At St. John, he taught the Sixth Grade and served as the Athletic Director. He now begins serving as the Principal of Divine Savior Lutheran School. May God bless his ministry here at Divine Savior.

<sup>51</sup> Bulletin from *The Ordination and Installation Service of Pastor Peter Kassulke and Principal Greening*, July 9, 1978, Divine Savior Ev. Lutheran Church, Shawano, WI.

# Changes abound at Divine Savior

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SHAWANO — The Church Planning Council of Divine Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church of Shawano chose as the theme for the coming year Rev. 21:5, "Behold, I make all things new." They chose a theme which is particularly fitting. After a new location and new building project, completed less than two years ago, one might think that there is not much left that can be new.

The church is experiencing many new things, however. The internal structure of the congregation is new. An entirely new approach has been taken by Divine Savior. The congregation is now following Abdon's "Parish Leadership Training". The whole purpose of this project lays stress on the church's teaching of the universal priesthood of all believers. Divine Savior has adopted a structure of six boards and a Church Planning Council in order to get more people involved in carrying on the work of the church. Besides the Planning Council, there are the Boards of Lay Ministry, Evangelism, Christian Education, Stewardship, Church Property, and Parish Relations.

Each board controls the planning and funds designated for its specific area of concentration. The voters' assembly still has the final say on what is or is not to be implemented.

The title of the article really says it well. The leadership of both the church and school were being headed up by two new faces. The article also highlights one very important change that took place near the close of Pastor Muetzel's service. It was the implementation of "Abdon's Parish Leadership Training."

Pastor Muetzel had taken the congregation through a major study of the priesthood of all believers and then adjusted the administrative structure of the congregation accordingly. He leaned heavily on material from Don Abdon and his Parish Leadership Seminars. The material was weighted to bring good management principles into the congregational setting. It did achieve its objective to a degree, but at the same time required a great deal of time and energy to manage and coordinate.<sup>53</sup>

The changes were not just internal, they were also abounding externally. The Alpine Shores development was beginning to open up and houses were being built. Younger families began moving into the subdivision and some chose Divine Savior as their church home for worship and educational

<sup>52</sup> *Shawano Evening Leader*. "Changes abound at Divine Savior," August 17, 1978.

<sup>53</sup> Kassulke, Pastor Peter. Email to Author. December 3, 2007.

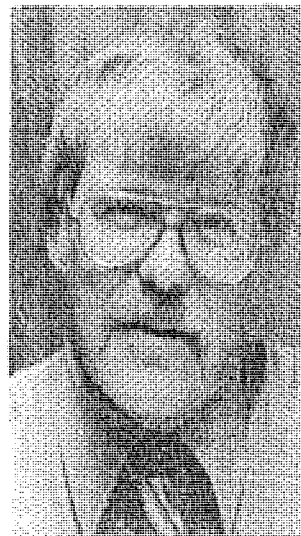
home for their children. During the close of this decade the congregation had reached a membership of over 250 souls.

There was also a change that was taking place within the school. Divine Savior was the first school in the area to implement an open classroom concept. This was a different school environment that attracted some individuals.<sup>54</sup> By 1980 the school enrollment had reached 40. The promise of a growing school enrollment led the congregation to call Helen Dobberpuhl to serve as the kindergarten teacher. On **August 22, 1981**, she was installed as the Kindergarten teacher. Two days later she began classes with four students. She also served by helping any students with special needs.<sup>55</sup>

After three years of faithful service, Principal Greening accepted a call away from Divine Savior for the '82-'83 school year. Once again God provided for his people. On **August 29, 1982**, David Nelson was installed as Principal.<sup>56 57</sup> During his years of service the school continued to grow.

### **New principal at Divine Savior School**

SHAWANO — David Nelson, a teacher with 14 years' experience, has assumed the post of principal at Divine Savior Lutheran School in Shawano.



David Nelson

Nelson, a Brillion native, taught the last four years at the Pilgrim Lutheran School in Menomonee Falls. At Pilgrim, he served as principal and upper grades teacher.

He previously taught at the Zion Lutheran School in South Milwaukee for 10 years.

Nelson is a 1968 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minn., and is a 1964 graduate of Fox Valley Lutheran High School in Appleton.

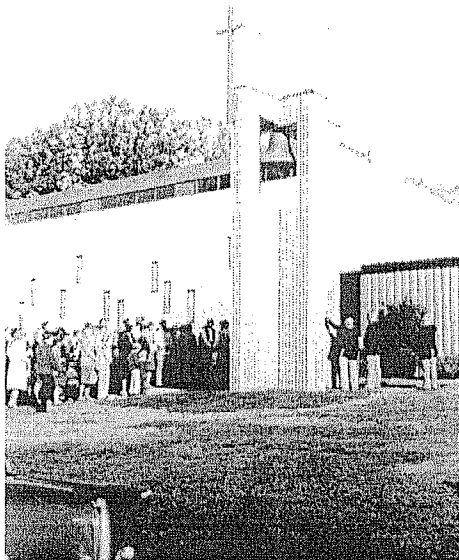
<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *25 Years of Proclaiming the Gospel. Divine Savior 1966-1991.* Anniversary publication May 24, 1991..

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *Shawano Evening Leader.* "New principal at Divine Savior School," August 29, 1982.

There were even changes taking place to the exterior of the congregation. The roof continued to take physical and financial resources from the congregation that could have been used in other various ministry endeavors.



But it was not all bad news. Several years before Pastor Kassulke ever arrived at Divine Savior, a church bell was acquired from a local catholic church with the intention of constructing a bell tower for its display and use. Finally, enough money was raised for the project and ground was broken on **August 8, 1982**. Just a little more than a month later, the tower was dedicated to the glory of

God on **September 19, 1982**.<sup>58 59</sup> This was indeed a happy day for the congregation due to the time, talents and treasures that were devoted to it. The bell is still used to this day.

The following year introduced more change to school. With an enrollment above 50 students, the husband of current teacher Helen Dobberpuhl, Darrel, was installed to teach the intermediate grades to allow Mr. Nelson more time to carry out his duties as principal. During his first year he taught as a volunteer for a nominal salary and the following year he became a called worker and was fully salaried<sup>60</sup> This was no doubt a wonderful sign to the congregation of God's blessing upon them. Just five years ago the school was operated with just one teacher and a full-time teacher's aid. Now there were four qualified, called workers to nurture and feed God's little lambs with the gospel truths day in and out.

<sup>58</sup> *25 Years of Proclaiming the Gospel. Divine Savior 1966-1991*. Anninversary publication May 24, 1991.

<sup>59</sup> Divine Savior Ev. Luth. Church Archives. Shawano, WI. 1982 (accessed November 22, 2007).

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

As the children grew spiritually, so did the adults. One of the key highlights of the ministry of Pastor Kassulke was his Crossway project which was a reading and studying of all the books of the Bible over a two year period.<sup>61</sup> Of course two years is in no way sufficient for a complete and thorough study of the Bible, in fact not even a lifetime, but it was a tool to build relationships among members and most importantly to build and strengthen the relationship of the members to their Savior.

After leading the congregation for six years, Pastor Kassulke received and accepted a call away from Divine Savior. God led Pastor James Naumann to accept the call to serve in his stead and on **January 6, 1985**, he was installed as the third resident pastor at<sup>62</sup> Divine Savior.

SHAWANO — Pastor James F. Naumann accepted the call to serve Divine Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church of Shawano.

Pastor Phillip Geiger of Bonduel performed the rite of installation for Pastor Naumann in an evening service on Jan. 6.

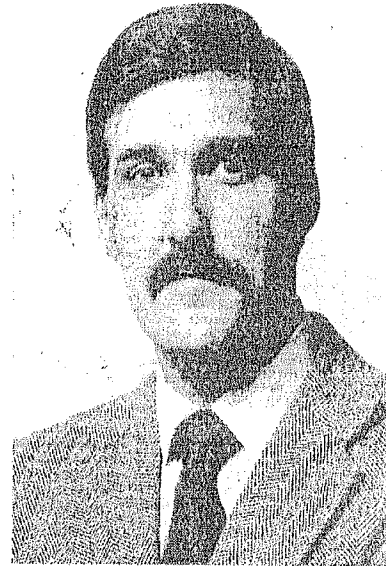
Pastor Naumann is the son of the late Pastor Fredrick Naumann of Kenosha.

Naumann attended grade school at Bethany Lutheran School in Kenosha, then began his training for the ministry at Northwestern Preparatory School in Watertown. He went on to receive his bachelor of arts degree at Northwestern College in Watertown. A master of divinity degree was attained after graduating from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon in 1975. He graduated with high honors at both Northwestern College in Watertown and at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

His first call to serve was as assistant pastor at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Algoma, where he served until 1978. He was then called to St.

Andrew Lutheran, a new mission congregation in Middleton. The congregation achieved self-support status during his pastorate.

He and his wife Bonnie and their three children reside at the church's parsonage at 120 Mills St.



James F. Naumann

Pastor Naumann and his family <sup>were</sup> warmly welcomed to the congregation upon his arrival. The friendliness of the congregation made a positive impression on him from the start. And after coming from a larger town, the smaller town was a nice change of

<sup>61</sup> Kassulke, Pastor Peter. Email to Author. 12-3-07.

<sup>62</sup> Divine Savior Ev. Luth. Church Archives. Shawano, WI. 1982 (accessed November 22, 2007).



pace for him and his family.<sup>63</sup> Whether small town or not, his dedication to his Lord and his congregation remained steadfast. Upon his arrival the membership numbered nearly 400 souls.

With a thriving congregation and active school, the congregation moved forward and opened the first preschool in Shawano on **October 16, 1989**.<sup>64</sup> The preschool was a natural addition to the ministry at Divine Savior. It served to provide a solid Christian education to young children and also served as a feeder to the grade school.

With such a growing ministry, congregational support was a key factor. And yet during the close of decade and into the early '90s the support for the ministry at Divine Savior seemed to have reached the ceiling. During these years the congregation was supporting a called pastor and four called teachers. No doubt this is a testimony to the high value the congregation<sup>65</sup> placed on the spiritual

**AD HOC TO STUDY PROGRAM AND MINISTRY:**

The Stewardship Committee has formed an Ad Hoc Committee to address the issue of continuing to staff our Christian Day School at the same level with a reduced income. This committee will be studying alternative methods of staffing our church and school with an eye on reducing the overall cost. They will be consulting with resource people from our Wisconsin Synod Board for Parish Education and from our Teacher Training School, Dr. Martin Luther College, in New Ulm. The members of this committee are:

Les Schultz, Chairman  
Everett Jensen  
Sandy Smith  
Chuck Robley

The fact that our congregation continues to remain in financial difficulty, facing an expected \$6,000 deficit of needed budget amounts by year's end has caused us to take this very serious look at our current program and the continuation of it. Records show that at this same time last year, we had received more in envelope contributions and had less members than we do now, as we compare last year to this.

<sup>63</sup> Naumann, Pastor James. Phone interview. 11-26-07.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Divine Savior Ev. Luth. Church. *The Divine Messenger*. Shawano, WI. January, 1990.

education of both young and old alike. At the same time this placed a great responsibility upon the congregation, especially with respect to finances.<sup>66</sup> The Lord was testing his people and leading them to ask the hard questions and evaluate their current situation.

Beginning in January of 1990 the evaluations began.

### CONGREGATIONAL MEETING!

January 21st will be a Sunday on which every member of Divine Savior will want to be in attendance. The Worship service on this Sunday will be abbreviated to allow a special report from the Ad Hoc Committee on School Staffing. The Committee will present their findings and the possible options the congregation may exercise in 1990. The congregational leadership will be asking all members to indicate the option they prefer. The Board of Stewardship and the rest of the leadership realize that the immediate and long-range implications of this decision make it a decision far too important to be made by a few men or even a few voters.

A similar report will be given at an inter-congregational meeting on Jan. 23rd. Members and leaders of our sister congregations - St. Martin's, Belle Plaine; Friedens, Bonduel; St. Paul's, Clintonville and St. Paul's, Zachow will be meeting at Divine Savior on that evening to hear the report and discuss the options which will also affect their families.

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### FUTURE MEETINGS CRUCIAL FOR THE FUTURE OF DIVINE SAVIOR LUTH. SCHOOL

Three upcoming meetings will help chart the course for the future of our school. Financial realities have forced Divine Savior Lutheran church to take a hard look at its programs and ministry. A special ad hoc committee was appointed to study the staffing of our Lutheran school. This committee found that there are basically four options available to Divine Savior.

1. Close the school.
2. Staff with two teachers and two aides
3. Staff with two teachers and limit the enrollment to Divine Savior members only
4. Make no staff changes.

Option number one is not very likely to happen, and option number four isn't realistic unless ways can be found to fund our present program.

Divine Savior's members will meet in congregational meetings on Jan. 21 and Jan. 23 to act on this report. A special meeting will be held at Divine Savior on Jan. 23. to discuss this matter with members and leaders of our sister congregations. We pray that all those involved in these meetings will be guided by the Holy Spirit as they discuss the ministry of our churches, and the important part that our school has in carrying out that ministry.

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<sup>66</sup> Naumann, Pastor James. Phone Interview. November 26, 2007.

<sup>67</sup> Divine Savior Ev. Luth. Church. *The Divine Messenger*. Shawano, WI. January, 1990..

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*.

After numerous discussions, the congregation decided to continue to carry out the ministry as was. In fact, there was even an offer from Mrs. Dobberpuhl to teach without salary for a time.<sup>69</sup> Sadly, this debate and the decision that followed was a dividing point in the congregation. Those on the one side were fond of all the staff and did not want to see any of them leave or give up their positions. On the other side were those who were simply looking out for overall good and health of the congregation and saw that due to financial constraints a hard decision was necessary. There were members who expressed their disagreement with the decision; some did so by leaving the congregation.<sup>70</sup>

But God in his wisdom was guiding and directing the events of history. Prior to the start of the 1991 school year, Mr. Nelson took a call to serve St. James in Milwaukee. Instead of calling a principal in his stead, Mr. Dobberpuhl was installed as principal and taught grades 6-8. The school now had a new arrangement.

"So, how are things going this year?" The question has been asked often, and it is no wonder. There have been many changes. Mr. Nelson, who served as principal for nine years, accepted a call to St. James in Milwaukee. I, who had been teaching in the middle grade room for eight years, was called to be principal and teach the upper graders. Mrs. Dobberpuhl, who had been teaching kindergarten for 10 years, kept kindergarten, but added grades 4 and 5. Mrs. Prisque, who had been teaching grades 1 and 2, is now teaching 1, 2, and 3. So, where to begin?

#### IN THE CLASSROOMS:

Though I think our heads were still spinning as we entered this school year, it didn't take long for us to realize that our duties may have changed somewhat, but our real work had not changed. We still have children who need to hear about the love of their Savior, and I praise God that he has given us the privilege of sharing that Good News with the children in our classrooms.

#### IN WORSHIP:

Our children have already had the opportunity to glorify God in song as they sang for Divine Savior's 25th anniversary. The different classes and Jr. Choir will often be heard this year, and a select group from the Jr. Choir will be asked to sing at other congregations as well. The teachers have already begun preparing for the children's Christmas Eve Service.

#### IN CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:

Thanks to the help of some of our parents and other members of

<sup>69</sup> Naumann, Pastor James. Phone Interview. 11-26-07.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

Many changes, and yet, no change. No change because our goal continues to be just what it has been in the past, to assist Christian parents in instructing their children in all areas of education in the light of God's Word and -God willing- to be used as a tool for outreach to children and their parents who still need to learn about God's saving grace.

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The last paragraph above is really a wonderful summary of the not only the school, but the ministry of the congregation. There were changes yet to take place. In the **summer 1996**, the leaky roof was finally repaired to the glory of God and joy of the congregation. In the following **summer, 1997**, the parking lot in the rear of the church was paved. In **2002** Mr. & Mrs. Dobberpuhl left for one year to teach in China during which Heath Dobberpuhl and Rachel Traudt taught in their absence. During these years and, at times, challenging days, Pastor Naumann remained the faithful shepherd of the flock.

In the following year, **2003**, the Board for Parish Assistance was invited to come and evaluate Divine Savior. After several months of work and a thorough examination of the congregation and the community, they presented their finding to the congregation. They compiled a very lengthy, in-depth report. In summary, they found several key items upon which the congregation could consider. The first item that deserves mention is the excellence in which the congregation scored in their biblical knowledge and theology.<sup>71</sup> What a blessing this congregation has had in faithful pastors who have taught the whole counsel of God. Building on that solid foundation, the committee sought to expand the horizons of the congregation to utilize their knowledge and share it with others. There seemed to be a general level of comfort at Divine Savior, especially in the area of outreach. The congregation now has a new outlook on outreach. They are

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<sup>71</sup> Divine Savior Ev. Luth. Church. *The Divine Messenger*. Shawano, WI. November, 1991.

<sup>72</sup> Naumann, Pastor James. Phone Interview. November 26, 2007.

seeking to meet people where they are at. It all starts with relationships.<sup>73</sup>

Another notable item was the demographics of Shawano. The number of children and young families is not growing as substantially as it once was. The numbers of enrollment have been a testimony to this fact. Also around Shawano Lake there are a considerable number of retired individuals. These two factors combined have led the congregation to consider offering more ministry opportunities to people of that age group.<sup>74</sup>

In light of this evaluation, changes have taken place. One change worth noting is that the congregation has changed its internal structure to a church council with the council members forming ad hoc committees as they see fit. This has been a good way to help streamline ministry and get more people doing ministry instead of simply talking about doing ministry.<sup>75</sup>

The most recent changes following the Board for Parish Assistance evaluation was the beginning of ESL (English as a Second Language) classes in **March of 2005** and the beginning of Jesus Cares Ministry. The congregation receives assistance from Pastor Tim Flunker in conducting the ESL classes and building relationships. This is one change that is partially a product of the background of Mr. & Mrs. Dobberpuhl. From their year in China, they have made contacts in the area and are helping local Chinese residents learn English.

The Jesus Cares Ministry has just begun in the fall of this year. This ministry is not here to take special needs people away from their churches, but offer them worship

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<sup>73</sup> Naumann, Pastor James. Phone Interview. 11-26-07.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

that they cannot get anywhere else through whatever means available and then to see where and how God blesses the efforts

### *Conclusion*

So where has Divine Savior been? In 1966 only eleven members organized the congregation. As of September 3, 2002, the congregation had 394 souls and 294 communicant members. There have been many changes and yet no change. The recommitment statement voiced by the congregation at the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the congregation states the mission of the congregation well:

**“On this day of celebration we recommit ourselves to you, O Lord, for time and for eternity. We put our trust in you because we know you are faithful to all that you have promised. Lead us to respond eagerly to your commission to spread the gospel, and move us by your love to support the work you have called us to do.**

**Overwhelm our hearts with your grace and glory, O Holy Trinity. Keep compelling us with your love, so that we do not rest until the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ has been light high and has been seen by every eye in the world.”<sup>76</sup>**

Looking back at the years of the congregation, one cannot help but see the guiding hand of a loving and gracious heavenly Father. He was the one who brought to this church at his appointed time the individuals who would bear his name and carry the gospel to many others. It is he who will direct this precious flock in the days and years ahead.

So where is Divine Savior going? Will they move forward and help establish a congregation in Menomonee County, the only county in the state that does not have a WELS congregation? God alone knows. But every member has the promise that their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday,

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<sup>76</sup> Taken from Bulletin celebrating 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Divine Savior Ev. Luth. Church. Sept. 29, 1991.

today and forever will be with them always. That promise he sealed with his very own blood on the cross.

*Special Note of Thanks*

Thank you to all those who contributed of their time and talents for this project. I would especially like to thank the following: Pastor Zimmermann, Muetzel, Kassulke and Naumann; Louis and Janice Schultz, Donald and Joyce Frisque, David and Jeanette Diestler; John Doran. There are so many individuals who were instrumental in the history of Divine Savior. To all members, past and present, a special thank you for your time, talents and treasures in service to your Savior and His church. Below several individuals are recognized for their role in the history of the congregation:

*Pastor Larry Zwieg* – conducted first service with 14 members

*Pastor Roland Zimmermann* – Served the congregation in the early years during which the first church building and parsonage were built.

*Pastor Ronald Muetzel* – Served faithfully during the initial years of growth. During his service a new building was built and dedicated, the congregation became self-supporting and a Christian Day School was established.

*Pastor Peter Kassulke* – Served faithfully during the growing years. During his time the bell tower was built and dedicated.

*Pastor James Naumann* – Served faithfully during the years of financial challenges. During his time the preschool was opened, the roof was repaired and parking lot was paved.

*Ernie and Janet Knobloch* – Both of them served faithfully during the first three years of the school. Ernie served as principal and his wife, Janet assisted with grades 1-4.

*Donald and Joyce Frisque* – Joyce served the congregation as school teacher for 30 years from the opening of the grade school until 2004. Don was a key figure in promoting and researching the feasibility of the Christian Day School.

*Jeanette Diestler* – Served the congregation as secretary for over 20 years.

*Terrance Greening* – Served the congregation faithfully by leading the grade school as principal.



*David Nelson* – Served the congregation faithfully by leading the grade school as principal.

*Darrell and Helen Dobberpuhl* – Served faithfully in our grade school for over 20 years and serve as teachers still.

*John and Nancy Doran* – Nancy served as the congregation's first preschool teacher. John currently serves as the congregation's secretary.

*Charles Buettner* – He has served the congregation faithfully as organist since the early years and continues to serve still. He and his wife were also instrumental in the organization and opening of the Christian Day School.

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