

**Grace Ev. Lutheran Church:  
Preaching God's Word Through Difficult Times**

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12/6/07  
Church History Paper  
Prof. Brenner

A lot can happen over 125 years. In 1882, Thomas Edison created the first string of Christmas lights, 10,000 people marched in the first Labor Day parade in New York City and former President Franklin D. Roosevelt was born. It seems so long ago. 125 is more than a lifetime for us. The year 1882, marked an important occasion in the history of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church as well. This was the year the congregation began. Grace Congregation has just recently celebrated 125 years as a congregation. Just as in history, Grace has also seen many changes over the years. Buildings, pastors and teachers have come and gone over the past 125 years. One thing has remained the same. Grace has continued to proclaim the true gospel message to many souls in the Oshkosh area.

It is hard to write about 125 years of a congregation's history. So many things have happened. So many changes have taken place. This paper will give a brief history of the beginnings of the congregation. It will then focus on the fiftieth anniversary and the building project done in the 1930's for a new church. Grace has been a church which carries out its work despite difficult times in the world.

Grace was not a "new" church in the true sense of the term. Members of Grace splintered from another church. A disagreement arose on the doctrine of predestination in a local congregation. Controversy over this doctrine caused trouble for many congregations in the Synodical Council. The question centered on the term *in intuitu-fidei*, saved in view of faith. The idea of merit and works seeped into some people's understanding of this term, which was meant to denote nothing but pure grace.<sup>1</sup> The discussions were heated. The controversy took a huge toll on a local congregation in Oshkosh.

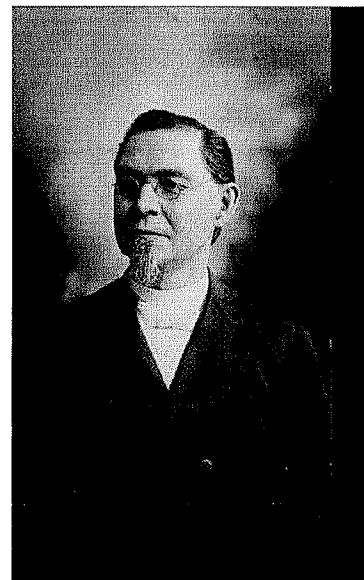
In 1882, Oshkosh was a relatively young city. The main church in town was simply known as the Eighth Street Church. It was this church, which would endure a heated battle over

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<sup>1</sup>John Hildebrandt, *Gnadenwahlstreit* (WLS Essay Files, May 1992), p. 2

the doctrine of predestination. Two members, Pastor Dowidat and Mr. Gruber, attended the <sup>Wisconsin Synod's</sup> Synodical Council's meeting in LaCrosse on this issue. The two came back with differing opinions. Mr. Gruber believed in election in view of faith. Pastor Dowidat believed in election unto faith. Pastor Dowidat remained committed to the scriptural truth of this doctrine; however the church was split between the two opinions.

This split caused great controversy in the church. It basically split into two groups. The local newspaper captured the problems this caused, "German Lutheran Evangelical Church on Eighth Street which has a serious aspect at present and



*Pastor Dowidat*<sup>2</sup>

promises to be quite a sensation."<sup>3</sup> The whole city had its eyes on what was going to happen to the church on Eighth Street. Pastor Dowidat came back siding with the findings of the Wisconsin Synod. He came to a congregation with a different view, "A majority of them, however, rebelled against the innovation, denouncing the doctrine of predestination and demanded that Dowidat should either cease preaching his new creed or leave the church."<sup>4</sup>

Pastor Dowidat faced a predicament. He could either continue to follow the truth or stay as pastor and betray his conscience. The church formed a commission to see what the church would do. The commission did not accomplish much. It turned into a war of words, but the congregation had no interest in hearing about the correct teaching of predestination. It came down to a vote to see what the church would do. "The vote to secede from the Synod was carried by about 200 to 30, the 30 sticking to Dowidat who protested against the action and insisted upon

<sup>2</sup> Picture taken from [www.graceoshkosh.com](http://www.graceoshkosh.com) (October 2007)

<sup>3</sup> "A Religious Row". Oshkosh Northwestern, Thursday August 8, 1882.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

the preaching of the new gospel in the church.”<sup>5</sup> One thing to keep in mind with the newspaper’s quotation is this was not a new gospel. The doctrine of election has been taught for centuries, this was just a clarification of terms. One saw how God still makes sure the truth is taught.

The congregation split, and it was not even to a close vote. This caused bitter resentment by some members of the church. Fights broke out and bloodshed was expected by some members of the congregation.<sup>6</sup> You can easily imagine tensions ran high at this point. Nobody wanted to give up their position. The members, who voted to secede from the synod, wanted to make sure that Dowidat did not come back to the church. The members, who stayed with Dowidat, wondered what would become of their church. This turmoil even caused some people to go crazy and have to be hospitalized for that reason.<sup>7</sup> Dowidat would not give up his church without a fight. Pastor Dowidat still held the keys to the church, and he would not give them up. The majority demanded that the keys be turned over. Dowidat claimed he still had the authority to hold meetings in the church.<sup>8</sup> Pastor Dowidat and others met at the church and tried to come up with articles which showed that the property of the church was the possession of the society holding to the teachings of the synod.

Resolved, That in case of disharmony between the members of our society named above the Orthodox Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Wisconsin and other States shall decide and define which part of the Society is in the right and which part of The Society is in wrong and that after such a decision that part which is sentenced by The said Synod of Wisconsin and other States be in right shall have hold and keep The property of our Society as Church Schoolhouse, and every other things belonging to The Society named above and that The other part or every other part which is sentenced to be in wrong by said Synod of Wisconsin and other States shall subject itself to the decision of said Synod of Wisconsin and other States or if no willing to do so shall forfeit and lose every right or claim to the property belonging to the Society named and incorporated as The German Evangelical Lutheran Grace Church of The unaltered Augsburg Confession of The City of Oshkosh.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Articles of Incorporation, [www.graceoshsoshkosh.com](http://www.graceoshsoshkosh.com) (October 2007)

The young congregation lost the battle to stay at the church, so they drew plans to build a church on Ninth Street and Nebraska Street. The church was built for a total of \$4448.75.

Dedication of the building took place on December 18, 1882.



10

Grace was now a confessional church in membership of the Wisconsin Synod. The congregation remained true to the Word of God. They took this responsibility very seriously. They realized that they needed to build a school in which to continue to train up young boys and girls in the truth of God's Word. In 1905, they received a contract to build a new school. The school provided the congregation with the opportunity to educate the young. The church also realized this was how to continue to grow in the future. They did not want their members to grow stagnant. The recent election controversy proved that a firm basis was needed for the congregation. The school has been in operation since that time. The building has undergone changes. Yet, the central message taught in the school remained the same, Jesus Christ.

<sup>10</sup> Drawings of plans for Church. [www.graceoshkosh.net](http://www.graceoshkosh.net) (October 2007)



11

This Agreement, Made this 5<sup>th</sup> day of July  
 A. D. Nineteen Hundred and five by and between Fred Floppe  
 \_\_\_\_\_ of the City of Oshkosh  
 County of Winnebago, and State of Wisconsin, Contractor, party of  
 the first part, and the Trustees of the Lutheran of the Grace Church  
 of Oshkosh, County of Winnebago, and State of Wisconsin  
 Owner, party of the second part, in these words: The said party of the first part covenants and agree  
 to and with the said party of the second part, to erect, build, and furnish all such materials as  
 specified: A Schoolhouse on Nebraska street  
in the aforesaid City of Oshkosh Winnebago County  
and state of Wisconsin  
to be Completed on or before the first day  
of October Nineteen hundred and five, {1905} <sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Picture of first school building in built in 1905. [www.graceoshkosh.net](http://www.graceoshkosh.net) (October 2007)

<sup>12</sup> Agreement to Build School Building. [www.graceoshkosh.net](http://www.graceoshkosh.net) (October 2007).

The church continued to grow for the next fifty years. The rough start for the congregation did not deter the members. They would not sit back and relax. Grace continued to preach the gospel message for years to come. The year 1932 brought the fiftieth anniversary of the congregation. The congregation celebrated with two special services on December 18, 1932:

Arrangements have been made for three services, two to be held in the morning and another in the evening. The morning services will be at 9 o'clock and 10:30, respectively in German and English.

Prof. Frederick Brenner of the Wisconsin Theological seminary of Thiensville will be the speaker at both morning services. In the evening at 7:45 o'clock Rev. R. E. Ziesmer of Mount Olive Lutheran church of Appleton will deliver the sermon.

13

The congregation certainly had good reason to rejoice. God has watched over them. He blessed them in times of controversy. They stood firm in the Word of God in the face of opposition. This was the main message of the two sermons preached at the anniversary services. Prof. Brenner based his sermon on II Thessalonians 2:13-16, which reads:

<sup>13</sup> But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. <sup>14</sup> He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>15</sup> So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.

<sup>16</sup> May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, <sup>14</sup>

The main message of the sermon was how the congregation followed the will of God, and this was the reason for the progress of the congregation. <sup>15</sup> Pastor Ziesmer's message was similar in the evening. He preached how the church did not follow the ways of man, but followed the will of God. <sup>16</sup> The congregation must keep this mind for the years to follow it. Despite been outvoted by a majority resulting in a split, despite having to find a new church and despite starting out so small the congregation needed to be reminded of what is truly important. Following the desires

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<sup>13</sup> 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Announcement. [www.graceoshkosh.net](http://www.graceoshkosh.net) (October 2007)

<sup>14</sup> *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. 1996, c1984 (2 Th 2:13-16). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

<sup>15</sup> "Golden Jubilee Celebration is Held By Church" Oshkosh Northwestern, Monday Evening, December 19, 1932.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

of men is not important. Going with the majority is not important. Doing God's will is what is important. Grace built themselves on this principle. This is what they must continue to do in the future years.



*Picture of the First Church Building<sup>17</sup>*

The following year was a very important time in the history of the congregation. Grace was in need of a new church building. The membership continued to grow. Opportunities to spread God's Word abounded. As the previous fifty years exhibited, Grace was not a congregation to sit back and let opportunities pass them by. In 1933, the congregation decided to build a new church building.

This was an interesting time to build a new church. The 1930's was not a particularly good time to build. The Great Depression held the country in its grip. Work came at a premium. People were tight with money. Building a church would be an expensive undertaking. Many

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<sup>17</sup> Taken from [www.graceoshkosh.net](http://www.graceoshkosh.net) (October 2007)



might wonder why spend money on a church, when there are so many other places to put the money? People would ask how can a congregation afford a building project at this time? Will offerings keep up with an increased debt? When a congregation goes through a building project today, these questions go through the building committee's mind. No doubt, these questions weighed heavily on the minds of Grace's building committee.

Grace decided to go through with the building plans. These questions mentioned above could not outweigh the pros of building the church. Grace knew that a new church was needed right now. The project also helped out the community during difficult times. Terms of the contract required that as far as possible the labor was to be done by men in the congregation, who were out of work.<sup>18</sup> This idea solved two problems. It gave hurting families work. Also, it provided members with the feeling of being involved in the building process. Not to mention the work it provided for the local businesses, who were also given preference for their bids.<sup>19</sup>

The building was going to be of a Gothic structure and in the clerestory type.<sup>20</sup> This building serves as the present day church also, along with a few additions to it. The final cost of the church was estimated at a total of \$65,000.<sup>21</sup> Remember, this was during the Great Depression. The cost today would be around a million dollars.<sup>22</sup> This undertaking proved to be a great cost. The congregation did not want to take any shortcuts. The thought never entered their mind to build for their own glory. This building was built to glorify God in everything. They put forth only the best for the sake of proclaiming the gospel message. No expense was spared.

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<sup>18</sup> "Oshkosh May Soon Have a New Church". Oshkosh Northwestern, Saturday Evening, February 11, 1933.

<sup>19</sup> "To Break Ground on Palm Sunday For New Church". Oshkosh Northwestern, Saturday Evening, February 18, 1933.

<sup>20</sup> "Oshkosh May Soon Have a New Church". Oshkosh Northwestern, Saturday Evening, February 11, 1933.

<sup>21</sup> "To Break Ground on Palm Sunday For New Church". Oshkosh Northwestern, Saturday Evening, February 18, 1933.

<sup>22</sup> Inflation Calendar. [www.westegg.com/inflation](http://www.westegg.com/inflation)

Plans were put into place. Contractors hired. Groundbreaking took place on Easter Sunday, April 16.<sup>23</sup> After this date, the work began in earnest. Neighbors heard the daily roar of construction equipment. The church would go up at a furious pace. The building committee which consisted of Pastor Ben Schlueter, Walther Nimmer, Adolph Grohskreuz, Jacob DeTroye, Karl Hagene, Albert Eggers, Theodore Frank and John Kaspar saw their hard work in motion as the fellowship hall was the first addition to be finished.<sup>24</sup> Construction continued at a relentless pace. It was originally planned that services would be held in the fellowship hall. However, it was found that this would impede progress, so the congregation worshipped at the Star Theatre for awhile until the whole church was completed.<sup>25</sup> The old building served well. It soon gave way to a new building erected in 1933.



26

The time came for the new church building to be dedicated. A letter went out to announce a series of special services for the dedication of the new building.

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<sup>23</sup> "Cornerstone of the New Church to Be Laid Sunday" Oshkosh Northwestern. The Daily Northwestern, Friday, April 21, 1933.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> "Last Service in Old Church Will Be Held Sunday", Oshkosh Northwestern. May 6, 1933.

<sup>26</sup> Picture of Pastor Benjamin Schlueter. [www.graceoshkosh.net](http://www.graceoshkosh.net) (October 2007)

December, 1933.

To the Members of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Congregation:-

"Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

On Sunday next, the 17th of December, 1933, our new church is to be dedicated to the service of the Triune God.

Four special services have been arranged to fittingly commemorate this day. At 9:00 A.M. special dedicatory exercises are to take place, after which the Rev. S. Jedele of Wilmot, Wisconsin, will preach in the German language. At 10:30 A.M. the Reverend Paul Dowidat of Minneapolis, son of the founder and first pastor of Grace Church, is to bring a special message to us. The afternoon service, beginning at 2:30, will present the Reverend Walter Gieschen as guest preacher. In the evening at 7:45, the Reverend Arthur Tacke of Zebaoth Church, Milwaukee, is to address the congregation. Special music by the choir and soloists, as well as organ selections by Mr. Groth are to be rendered at all services.

This is the day we all have been looking forward to with joy. It marks another chapter in the history of our congregation. Every chapter, covering the 51 years of its existence, speaks to us of the Grace of God in Christ Jesus. Our fathers did well when they chose the name Grace for our congregation. It was the Grace of God that guided them and made them willing to sacrifice in the dark days when our congregation was founded. It is the Grace of God that has sustained our congregation and made it possible for us to build the present House of Worship.

Let us therefor show our appreciation of this Grace by not only thanking our Lord and God in song and prayer for the blessings He has showered upon us, but let us also prove the sincerity of our thankfulness by setting aside a substantial sum as a dedicatory offering.

For your convenience we are therefor attaching a special envelope. Kindly write the amount of your gift on the space designated for that purpose and deposit your envelope on the collection plate on the day of dedication.

Your servants in Christ,

THE BUILDING FUND COMMITTEE  
THE BUILDING COMMITTEE

27

It was an exciting time in the history of the congregation. Fifty-one years ago many of the members probably would not even imagine this day would be possible. A beautiful new building had been built. Membership continued to grow. Opportunities to spread the Word of God throughout the city of Oshkosh were numerous.

<sup>27</sup> Church Dedication Letter. [www.graceoshkosh.net](http://www.graceoshkosh.net) (October 2007)

The letter also shows the whole purpose for this building project. It was all done to glorify God. The name Grace truly is fitting. It was God's grace which brought the congregation through these last fifty-one years. It will be God's grace which will bring the congregation through the many years to come. Along with a building project came the opportunity to express their love with a gift. The congregation has taken on a major debt during the Great Depression. Members could give a special gift to help alleviate some of the debt. What a great show of love for the members. They understood offerings needed to be collected to pay for the building.

The church was dedicated on December 17, 1933. The first service was in German.

Kirchweihe, d. 17 Dezember, 1933.

1. Tut mir auf die schoene pforte, fuehret mich in Zion ein  
Ach wie wird an diesem Orte, Meine Seele froehlich sein!  
Hier ist Gottes Angesicht, Hier ist Lauter Trost und Licht.
2. Ich bin, Herr, zu Dir gekommen, Komme Du nun auch zu mir,  
Wo Du Wohnung hast genommen, Da ist lauter Himmel hier,  
Zieh doch in mein Herz hinein, Lass es Deinen Tempel sein.

LITURGIE.

1. Dreifaltig Heiling grosser Gott, Schau doch von Deiner Hoehe,  
Wie hier vor Dir, Herr Zebaoth, Dein armes Hasuflein stehe;  
Merk auf das Seufzen und Gebet, Das wir von dieser Heil'gen Staett  
Vor Deinem Tron Dir bringen.
2. Der Grund ist selber Jesus Christ, Apostel und Propheten,  
Ihr Wort der Pfeiler Grunfest ist, Darauf in allen Noeten  
Wo hoch die List der Feinde geht, Die Gottesstadt doch lustig steht  
Mit ihrem Zionsbrunnen.
3. Wir haben dieses Gotteshaus, Gebauet Deinem Namen,  
Mit Dir ist es gezieret aus, Dass wir sammt unsern Samen,  
Die heill'ge Satzung and Dein Wort, An diesem Dir geweihten Ort,  
Zue Seelen Heil anhoeren.
4. Hier wollen wir in wahrer Reu' Auf tiefgebognen Knieen  
Die Suenden beichten ohne Scheu Und hier zum Kreuze fliehen  
Abbitten die blutrote Schuld, Vergebung suchen Gnad' und Huld  
In Christi Blut und Wunden.

PREDIGT: Psalm 122, 1-4 Pastor S. Jedele, Wilmet, Wisconsin.

CHORGESANG: Gloria in Excelsis - Demetrius Bortnianeky.

OFFERTORIUM: Kollekte fuer den Kirchbaufonde der Gemeinde.

LITURGIE.

SCHLUSSVERS: Lob, Ehr und Dank und Herrlichkeit sei Dir,  
O Herr, gesungen,  
Dass bei der letzbetruetzten Zeit,  
Es uns soweit gelungen  
Gieb, dass, was wir jetzt fangen an,  
Nicht eher Ende nahmen kann,  
Bis Erd und Himmel brechen.

Gott allein die Ehre! Amen!

28

There was a second service later on in the day. This service was conducted in English. This service showed where the trust of the congregation was during the building project.

<sup>28</sup> 1933 German Dedication Service. [www.graceoshkosh.net](http://www.graceoshkosh.net) (October 2007)

## DEDICATORY SERVICE, DECEMBER 17, 1933.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN: Jesus, Thou Everlasting King. Burney.

## LITURGY.

1. The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ our Lord  
She is His new creation by water and the Word;  
From heav'n He came and sought here, to be His holy bride;  
With His own blood He bought her, and for her life He died.
2. Elect from every nation, yet one o'er all the earth,  
Her charter of salvation one Lord, one faith, one birth;  
One holy name she blesses, partakes one holy food,  
And to one hope she presses, with every grace endued.
3. Though with a scornful wonder, men see her sore oppressed,  
By schisms rent asunder, by heresies distressed;  
Yet saints their watch are keeping, Their cry goes up, "How long?"  
And soon the night of weeping shall be the morn of song.
4. 'Mid toil and tribulation, And tumult of her war,  
She waits the consummation of peace forevermore;  
Till with the vision glorious her longing eyes are blest,  
And the great church victorious shall be the church at rest.
5. Yet she on earth hath union with God the Three in One,  
And mystic sweet communion with those whose rest is won;  
O happy ones and holy! Lord, give us grace, that we,  
Like them, the meek and lowly, on high may dwell with Thee

SERMON: The Reverend Paul Dowidat, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

CHOIR: Make a Joyful Noise Unto God (fr. 9th Symphony) Beethoven

OFFERTORY. (Offering for Church Building Fund.)

## DEDICATORY PRAYER.

LORD'S PRAYER in unison.

RECESSIONAL: On What Has Now Been Sown. - L. Mason.

CONGREGATION: Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise him all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

BENEDICTION. Congregation: Amen

29

This would have been a beautiful service to be at. The congregation joined in singing the famous hymn, "*The Church's One Foundation*". This hymn confesses where the true cornerstone is laid. It was not the corner stone of the building. The basis did not come from the building committee. The great basis was not on the offerings collected by the congregation. The basis was God's Word. God would grant success to the church for the many years to come.

The congregation had the opportunity to assemble once again in the afternoon for a special service.

DEDICATORY SERVICE 2:30 P. M. Dec. 17th, 1933.

1. Open now Thy gates of beauty, Zion let me enter there.  
Where my soul in joyful duty, waits for him who answers prayer;  
Oh, how blessed is this place, filled with solace, light and grace
2. Yes, my God, I come before thee, come Thou also down to me,  
Where we find Thee and adore Thee, There a heaven on earth must be  
To my heart, oh, enter Thou, Let it be Thy temple now.
3. Here Thy praise is gladly chanted, here Thy seed is duly sown;  
Let my soul where it is planted, bring forth precious sheaves alon  
So that all I hear may be fruitful unto life for me.
4. Thou my faith increase and quicken, let me keep Thy gift divine  
Howsoe'ver temptations thicken; May Thy word still o'er me shine  
As my pole-star through my life, as my comfort in my strife.
5. Speak, O God and I will hear Thee, let Thy will be done indeed  
May I undisturbed draw near Thee whilst Thou dost Thy people feed  
Here of life the fountain flows, Here is balm for all our woes.

LITURGY

SOLO: Praise To The Lord - Alliston. By Viola Huebner

SERMON: Haggai 2,4-10 The Reverend Walter Gieschen, Green Bay, Wis.

OFFERTORY: Offering for the Building Fund.

PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER in unison.

CLOSING HYMN: Grant us thy peace throughout our earthly life  
Our balm in sorrow and our stay in strife;  
Then, when our voice shall bid our conflict cease,  
Call us, O Lord, to Thine eternal peace.

BENEDICTION            Congregation: Amen!

30

Once again the service points to where all of glory lies. It is in God and his blessings of the church. The opening hymn is a beautiful proclamation of the gospel message asking God to come and enter and give his blessings to the church.

Another service brought the dedication day to a close. This service was in English.

<sup>30</sup> 1933 Afternoon Dedication Service. [www.graceoshkosh.net](http://www.graceoshkosh.net). (October 2007)

## DEDICATORY SERVICE 7:45 P. M. DEC. 17th, 1933.

1. Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;  
Holy, Holy, Holy! merciful and mighty!  
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!
2. Holy, holy, holy! all the saints adore Thee,  
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;  
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,  
Which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.
3. Holy, holy, holy! though the darkness hide Thee,  
Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see,  
Only Thou are holy: there is none beside Thee,  
Perfect in power, in love and purity.
4. Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
All Thy works shall praise Thy name in earth, and sky and sea!  
Holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty!  
God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!

## LITURGY.

SOLO: The Lord is Mindful Of His Own.--Mendelsohn, Miss Lillian Lehnigk

SERMON: The Reverend Arthur Tacke, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

SOLO: Praise The Lord With Exultation--Grant-Schaefer-- Richard Eilers

OFFERTORY: Offering for Church Building Fund.

PRAYER: Lords prayer in unison.

ADDRESSES by visiting Pastors.

DOXOLOGY: Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

BENEDICTION                      Congregation: Amen!

31

This service provided for close to a day filled with festivities. It gave the congregation another opportunity to offer up their thanks to God on this special day.

One might think that now the hard part was over. The church was finished. The countless meetings of the building committee were adjourned. The festive dedication day came to an end. Now, the congregation could sit back and take it easy, right? The hard part might just be starting. The congregation now had to make sure the means were there to continue to provide for the

<sup>31</sup> 1933 Evening Church Dedication. [www.graceoshkosh.net](http://www.graceoshkosh.net) (October 2007)

church. Thought would come of how can they do this during the Great Depression? Times are hard enough already. Now, the congregation took on an added expense of building a church.

RECEIPTS

Transferred from savings account \$75,110.00

DISBURSEMENTS

Hugo C. Haeuser - Architect fees	\$3,300.00	
C. R. Meyer & Sons Co. - Gen. Contr.	41,042.40	
Robert Gunz - Heating	3,632.20	
Halquist Lannon Stone Co. - Stone	3,090.00	
W. F. Schram - Plumbing	2,221.00	
Valders Lime & Stone Co., - Stone	1,746.25	
Aug. H. Meyer Co., Wiring	1,318.95	
Svoboda Church Furn. Co. - Furniture	3,260.00	
Gavin Mirro & Art Glass Co. - Windows	2,653.00	
Brant & Nielsen - Caulking	80.00	
Millies Bldg. Spec. Co. - Stalls	184.80	
Chas. Uttech - Weatherstripping	218.00	
Badger Ornamental Plaster Co.	25.00	
S. L. Heller Elevator Co. - Dumb waiter	130.93	
Boeder & Steckbauer - Carpeting	223.13	
Turner Resilient Floors - Floor tile	758.80	
Wangerin Organ Co. Organ	4,510.00	
Banner Iron & Wire Works - Screens	170.00	
Electrical Fixtures	675.25	
Miscellaneous expense- not covered by contracts		
Sidewalks, sod, gravel, etc.	266.41	
Equipment: Chairs, safe, etc.	285.40	
School: Painting class rooms, repairs	46.50	
Stationery & Printing	63.65	
Insurance- Builders Risk and bonds	452.66	
Light bulbs, rubber mats, drapes hardware,	313.85	
Dismantling old organ	50.00	
Abstracts	33.90	
Bibles and prayer books	20.99	
Preliminary expense, corner stone and dedication service expense	26.08	
Current church expenses paid	3,300.00	
Interest paid	654.24	
Total Disbursements	74,753.39	
Bank Balance	356.61	
		\$75,110.00

ITEMS PAID FOR BY BUILDING FUND WHICH SHOULD NOT CHARGED DIRECTLY TO THE BUILDING

Wangerin Organ Co. (Donated by Ladies Societies)	\$4,510.00
Current church expenses paid	3,300.00
Work in school - Painting walls	46.50
Interest paid	654.24
Repairs on School heating plant	300.00
School ground sidewalk, gravel and screening	196.41
Chairs and safe	285.40
Abstracts	33.90
Bible & Prayer books	20.99
	\$9,847.44

These items are all included in the \$74,751.39 total listed above



The building of the new church came at a steep price. If one adjusts for inflation the cost in 2006 would be \$1,072,740.05.<sup>33</sup> The members of the building committee knew every penny was well worth it. It brought many people to get to the finished product. Now the congregation had to figure out how to repay the huge debt of the building.

The treasurer presented his report in the year following the dedication of the church.

RECEIPTS

Bank Balance Jan 1st		\$487.73	
Collections			
Envelope	\$4,599.98		
Plate	1,383.51		
Synodical	2,427.38		
Loans	1,300.00		
Misc.	<u>628.48</u>		
Total Receipts		<u>10,337.38</u>	
"	"	plus balance	\$10,825.07

DISBURSEMENTS

Salaries	4,316.58		
Electric & Gas	315.34		
Telephone	30.50		
Fuel	775.35		
Water	58.28		
Janitor supplies	62.58		
School supplies	71.36		
Interest	5.07		
Taxes	10.27		
Insurance	387.95		
Repairs	433.58		
Annual Report	29.90		
Envelopes	40.17		
Misc.	87.87		
Special Expense	95.78		
Equipment Expense	19.50		
Notes Payable paid	<u>300.00</u>		
Total expense		7,619.94	
Synodical collections paid		<u>2,580.93</u>	
Total Disbursements		10,200.87	
Bank Balance, Dec. 31st		<u>624.20</u>	
Disbursements plus balance			<u>\$10,825.07</u>

Loans made	\$1,300.00
Loans paid	<u>500.00</u>
Balance owing	1,000.00
Bank Balance Dec. 31st	<u>624.20</u>
Deficit for 1934	375.80

34

The congregation was not in bad shape. The deficit was at about \$380. Today this does not seem like a big deal. In the 1930's this was a big difference. Today, this would be a deficit of about \$5000.<sup>35</sup> This did not deter the congregation from marching on.

<sup>33</sup> Inflation Calculator. [www.westegg.com/inflation](http://www.westegg.com/inflation)

<sup>34</sup> 1934 Treasurer's Report. [www.graceoshkosh.net](http://www.graceoshkosh.net) (October 2007)

The treasurer issued his report the following year.

## RECEIPTS

Bank Balance Jan 1, 1935		\$624.20	
Collections			
Envelopes	\$4,434.04		
Plate	1,381.19		
Synodical	1,378.21		
Misc.	472.70		
Loan	325.00		
TOTAL RECEIPTS		<u>7,991.14</u>	
"	"	plus bank balance	\$8,615.34

## DISBURSEMENTS

Salaries	4,309.92		
Elec. & Gas	273.61		
Telephone	30.00		
Janitor supplies	34.36		
School supplies	61.75		
Repairs	548.11		
Water	50.62		
Fuel	700.88		
Print. & Stat.	187.02		
Insurance	386.04		
Misc.	23.66		
Special - Picnic etc.	119.30		
Equipment	341.93		
Taxes	16.37		
Interest	100.00		
Total expenses	<u>7,183.57</u>		
Synod. Coll. Paid	<u>1,378.21</u>		
Total Disbursements		8,561.78	
Bank Balance Dec. 31st, 1935		<u>53.56</u>	
Total Disbursements plus balance			\$8,615.34

Balance Jan 1, 1935 624.20  
 " Dec 31, 1935 53.56

Deficit for 1935 - 570.64

36

This year the deficit went up a little bit. Today, it would be \$8296.31.<sup>37</sup> It was not surprising that the deficit went up. Times were tough all around. The congregation had a lot on their plate. Their confidence still rested in God to provide for all the needs of the church.

<sup>35</sup> Inflation Calculator. [www.westegg.com/inflation](http://www.westegg.com/inflation).

<sup>36</sup> 1935 Treasurer's Report. [www.graceoshkosh.net](http://www.graceoshkosh.net) (October 2007)

<sup>37</sup> Inflation Calculator. [www.westegg.com/inflation](http://www.westegg.com/inflation)

During the Great Depression, it would have been easy for a church to go under. Churches could also just shut down and worry about ~~itself~~<sup>themselves</sup>. Grace was different. Grace continued to put emphasis on the outreach. The congregation would not let anything deter them. They put their faith in Christ, knowing that he is in control. The name Grace certainly fit this congregation. God's grace carried the congregation. Without the watching eye of God, the congregation would be destined for failure. Under the watchful eye of God the congregation knew that they would flourish.

The year 1937 brought about a change in the deficit. As the treasurer presented his report it was noted that a surplus of about \$150, or about \$1926 in 2006, was on hand.<sup>38</sup> God truly watched over the congregation. This showed God's amazing protection over a congregation. No one denied that times were tough. Yet, the members always found a way to continue to give to the church. In 1938, the budget surplus was \$36.28 or \$492 in 2006.<sup>39</sup> All of this surplus came on top of paying off the debt for the building project. The congregation knew it would be a slow process. They continued to give of their first fruits to the Lord.

Grace continued to grow over the years. It has been a long time since those lowly beginnings. Today, Grace has two pastors and a school. They still put their trust in God. They know that it is only by the grace of God that the church still stands. The congregation has come a long way since the days of controversy in 1882. They have undergone many building phases. They have continued to put an emphasis on reaching out even during difficult times.

As one looks back on the history of Grace, it is a history of overcoming many challenges. Grace always looked to God for success in all that they did. Recently, they celebrated their 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This gave the congregation a time to reflect on their past. See how God has blessed

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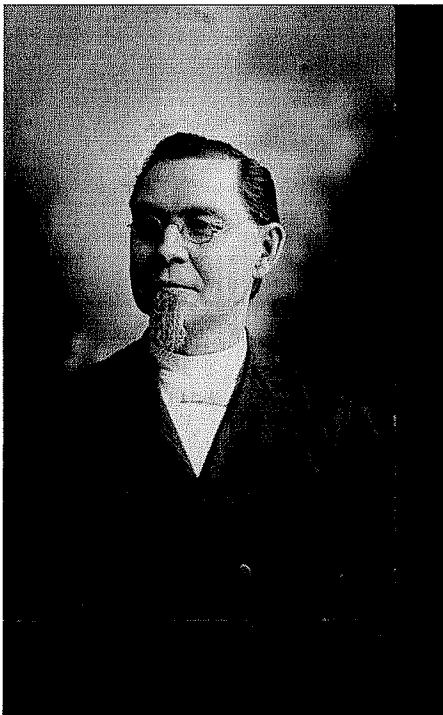
<sup>38</sup> January 1937 Treasurer Report. [www.graceoshkosh.net](http://www.graceoshkosh.net) (October 2007)

<sup>39</sup> January 1938 Congregational Meeting Proceeding. [www.graceoshosh.net](http://www.graceoshosh.net) (October 2007)

them over the years. This also gave them a time to look at the present. See what God has given them today. A strong congregation, a beautiful church building, a school and many other blessings beyond what can be counted. The anniversary gave them the opportunity to look forward. After 125 years, it is not a time to relax. The congregation ought never to think the work is done. God has placed numerous other opportunities before the congregation. There are souls to reach. Students need to be taught. Members need to be cared for.

Grace congregation endured some difficult years in its history. There is no telling what the future holds for the church. The congregation's prayer is that it will remain faithful to God and his Word. Tough times will still come for the congregation. What will be in store when difficult times come to the congregation? If you base an assumption on the past, Grace will continue to take the Word out despite any challenge which stands in their way.

Pictures of Pastors Who Served Grace



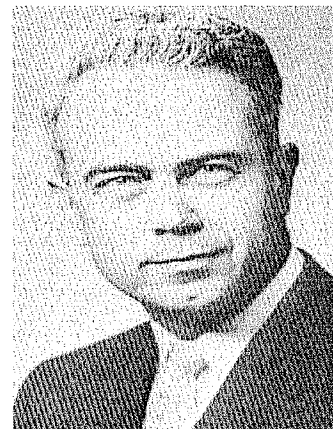
Pastor Dowidat<sup>40</sup>



Pastor Schleuter<sup>41</sup>



Pastor Lehninger<sup>42</sup>



Pastor Sauer<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> [www.graceoshkosh.net](http://www.graceoshkosh.net) (October 2007)

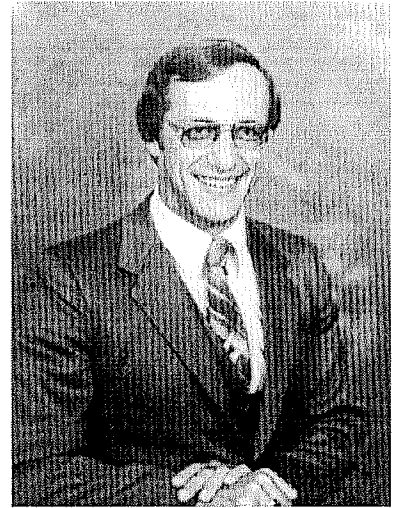
<sup>41</sup> Ibid

<sup>42</sup> Ibid

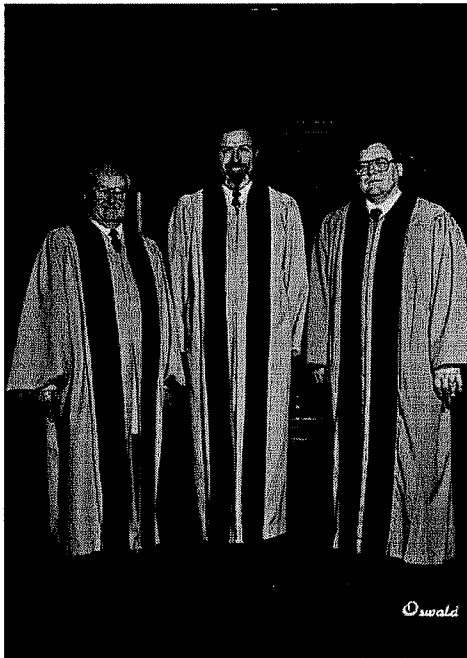
<sup>43</sup> Ibid



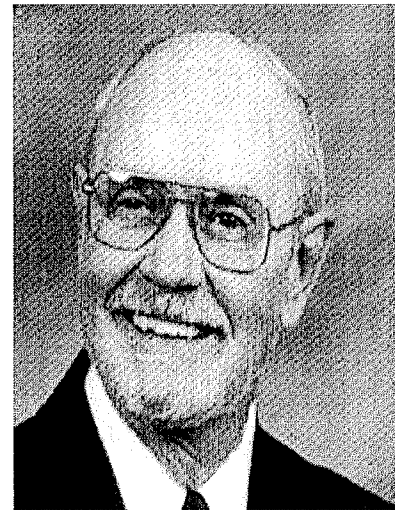
Pastor Koepsell<sup>44</sup>



Pastor Schulz<sup>45</sup>



Pastors Koepsell, Zessin & Shoeneck<sup>46</sup>



<sup>47</sup> Pastor Kaiser

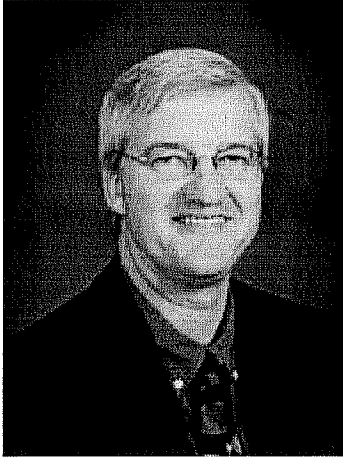
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<sup>44</sup> Ibid

<sup>45</sup> Ibid

<sup>46</sup> Ibid

<sup>47</sup> Ibid



Pastor Krause<sup>48</sup>

Pastor Graham (no picture available)



Early Church Years<sup>49</sup>

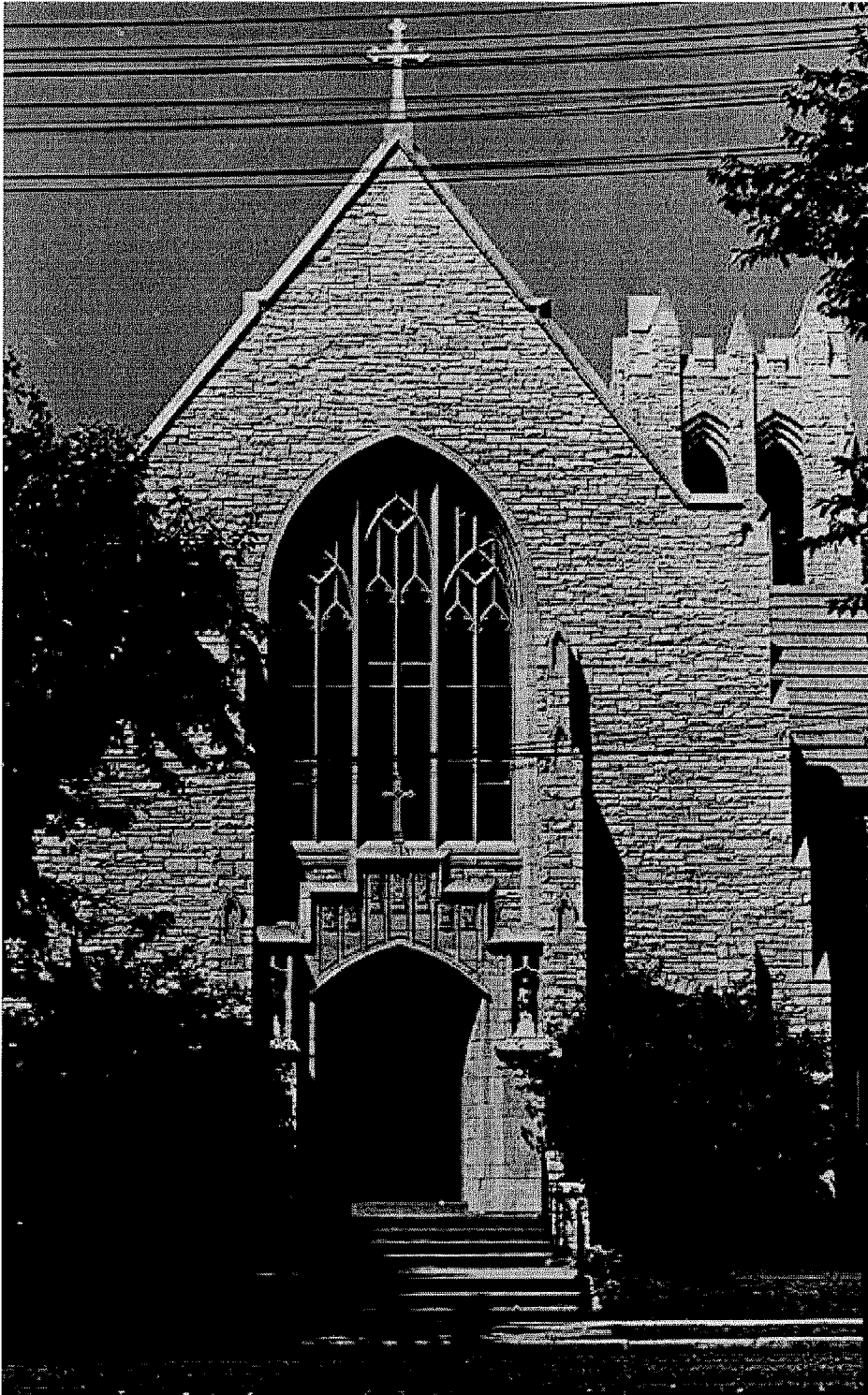


Groundbreaking for New Church in 1932<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid

<sup>49</sup> Ibid



New Church Building 1933<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid

<sup>51</sup> Ibid



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All pictures taken from, [www.graceoshkosh.net](http://www.graceoshkosh.net) (October 2007).