

GOOD SHEPHERD - (West Bend)
35 YEARS OF GOD'S BLESSINGS ^{WI.}

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library
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The Lutheran Mission of West Bend was started in 1950 by the Southeastern Wisconsin District's Mission Board of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod because of the growth of West Bend and of St. John's Lutheran Church in West Bend, then one of the largest congregations in the Wisconsin Synod. The first service was held on June 11th in the Barton Fire Hall. Pastor George W. Boldt of St. Peter's Lutheran Church at Theresa, Wisconsin, officiated. At that first meeting there were forty-one persons in attendance.

Pastor Boldt continued to serve the mission on a somewhat regular basis. After about four months, the place of worship was changed to the Leigh-Carroll Dancing Studios in West Bend. It was here on December 20th, 1950, that the small mission's faith and determination was first tested. The building in which the mission had been holding its services was destroyed by fire. It was feared that the mission's property had also been lost. However, later searching revealed that most of the items--crucifix, candle holders, Bible, prayer books, altar table, collection baskets, hymnals, and some chairs--were found untouched or in a usable condition.

Due to the fire and the difficulty of finding a place for worship, there were no services that first Christmas. Services were conducted on New Year's Day, however, in the Veterans' Hall at 315 N. Main Street. This hall became the mission's regular place of worship thereafter until the mission erected its own church.

The ^(official) birth of Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church occurred on April 22nd, 1951, when it was organized with eight voting members:

Herbert Laleike, Richard Krueger, Marvin Wernicke, Friederich Kuschel, Emil Doman, Gustav Schrupp, Henry Geiger, and Chester Taylor. Six days later the Lord called Friederich Kuschel to himself to heaven. Friederich's was the first funeral of the congregation. He was survived by his wife, Johanna, who is at the time of this writing, Good Shepherd's only remaining charter member.

Recognizing the need of the mission for a pastor of its own, the Mission Board issued a calls for a minister. As a result, Pastor Wilbert Gawrisch, previously a professor at Winnebago Lutheran Academy and now a professor at the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, was installed as Good Shepherd's first pastor on June 17th, 1951.

A parsonage was purchased at 775 Indiana Avenue. Mr. Herbert Laleike and Mr. Marvin Wernicke financed the purchased with their own private resources until the congregation could ^{buy} it.

On August 5th, 1951, the first German service was held. Other firsts in 1951 included: Lenten services at the Walnut Street Methodist Chruch, Communion on May 13th, Sunday School in September, children's confirmation class in September, and Mission Festival on September 30th.

At the annual meeting in 1952, the subsidy received from the Wisconsin Synod was reduced to \$270.00 per month. The division of offerings was set at 15% for the Synod, 40% for building, and 45% for current expenses. Later in January the largest part of the existing church property was purchased with the aid of a loan from the Church Extension Fund for \$10,800.00.

During the next year and a half plans were made for the building of a church. On June 7th, 1953, ground breaking ceremonies were

held for the new chapel. The corner stone was laid on August 23rd, 1953. In it were placed a Bible, a history of Good Shepherd, and other historical material. Because of the need for space, services were conducted in the church before its completion, the first service being held on Christmas Eve of 1953. The new church, costing about \$30,000.00, was dedicated on May 16th, 1954. Four services were held. The 10:00AM service required the use of two auxiliary tents and was broadcasted on radio station WBKV. A new organ was dedicated in the 2:30PM service.

On April 22nd, 1956, the congregation celebrated its fifth anniversary and resolved to become self-supporting. At that time plans were taking place for the addition of a ^a parish hall and a educational facility.

Pastor Gawrisch received and accepted a call from Zion Lutheran Church in Rhinelander, Wisconsin. He left Good Shepherd in October of 1956. On February 3rd, 1957, Pastor Martin T. Bradtke was installed as Good Shepherd's second pastor.

Plans for the educational wing seem to have been forgotten after Pastor Gawrisch left. No mention is made of them in the church minutes after that. In 1959, however, these plans were renewed, and it appeared that expansion would take place. But on October 19th, 1959, a motion was passed "to discontinue building plans until better financially able."

In August of 1960, Pastor Bradtke left Good Shepherd to accept a call to Trinity Lutheran Church of Jenera, Ohio. Pastor E.A. Breiling accepted a call to Good Shepherd and was installed on September 11th, 1960.

A need for more Sunday School space caused plans for expansion to be initiated once more. In the latter part of 1961, these plans had to be dropped because a loan could not be secured. However, outside events brought the building of a school ever closer.

The Wisconsin Synod in August of 1961, broke fellowship with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. St. John's congregation of West Bend, in response to the Synod's actions, passed resolutions indicating that it did not want to suspend fellowship with the Missouri Synod. This action caused Good Shepherd to discontinue its long-standing practice of paying the tuition for its children attending St. John's school. Some of St. John's own members left that congregation to join Good Shepherd, and withdrew their children from the school as well. It must be noted here that relations with the Missouri Synod and St. John's had been deteriorating as early as 1955 and maybe even earlier. So when the break came it was no surprise on anyone's part. These events, combined with underlying desire to have its own school, resulted in a decision in January of 1962 to build a school at Good Shepherd with financial assistance from the synod.

A program was undertaken in October of 1963 to secure pledges for the expansion. The pledges obtained totaled nearly \$65,000.00. On April 24th, 1963, the contracts were awarded for the total amount of \$93,000.00. Ground was broken on April 28th, and the initial stage of construction was begun two days later with completion set for July 31st of the same year. Teachers were called. Mr. James Fenske and Miss Patricia Hill accepted the congregation's calls and were installed into their offices during the service on July

7th, 1963. Although the building was not yet completely finished, school began on September 4th, 1963. Fifty-five children were enrolled in the school.

The school was dedicated on October 6th of the same year. As time went on, enrollment grew steadily. On four occasions, the matter of calling a third teacher was considered, but defeated. At the annual meeting in 1966, Miss Eunice Stract was called; she subsequently accepted this call. After being served by an emergency teacher for a short time in 1968, Mrs. Robert Schultz (then Miss Jeanette Jabs) became the third teacher. In 1969, Mr. Kenneth Richmond accepted the call to be the fourth teacher. Mr. Fenske accepted a call in 1971 and was replaced by Mr. Loran Schultz. Mrs. Mark Mey replaced Mrs. Robert Schultz in 1972. Mrs. Richard Agenten accepted the call as Good Shepherd's fifth teacher in 1973. Kindergarten was also begun at that time with Mrs. Dennis Tennier serving. Miss. Joan Kulow was called to replace Mrs. Agenten in 1974, but Mrs. Agenten returned for the 1975 school year and became the seventh school teacher. Also in 1975, Mrs. Raymond Geidel became the second kindergarten teacher. This brought the total number of teachers to eight. Since 1975 three more teachers were added to meet the increasing need of the school. Only Mr. Loran Schultz, Mrs. Mey, Mrs. Tennier, and Miss Kulow remain of the original eight teachers of just ten years ago. Today there are ten full time teachers and one part-time teacher. They are Mr. L. Schultz, Grade 8 and principal of the school; Mr. G. Gray, grade 7 and is vice principal; Mr. J. Kloko, grade 6; Mrs. J. Herrian, grade 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ day and Mrs. G. Nommensen, also grade 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ day; Mrs. L. Mey, grade

4; Miss J. Kulow, grade 3; Miss M. Ungemach, grade 2; Miss P. Hill, grade 1; Mrs. A. Tennier, Kindergarten; and Mrs. J. Schultz who returned to us as our Special Education teacher.

The fifteenth anniversary of Good Shepherd, April 24th, 1966, saw the end of the pledge period that was begun in 1963. Two months later, Good Shepherd became self-supporting again for the second time. It had again received Synodical aid when the school was built.

In June of 1968, money was borrowed to pay off the outstanding debts to the Aid Association for Lutherans and the Synod's Church Extension Fund, and to purchase the teacherage from the Synod.

Pastor E.A. Breiling accepted a call in 1971, and the congregation was once again served by Pastor Gawrisch, in the capacity of vacancy pastor. Pastor Larry Pautz, then serving St. John's in Whitewater, Wisconsin, accepted the call to become Good Shepherd's fourth resident pastor. Pastor Pautz is still with us to this day but due to the needs of a growing congregation it was soon advisable to call a second full time pastor. Pastor G.D. Gibbons accepted the call in 1981. In 1985 Pastor Gibbons accepted a call to serve at Mt. Zion in Kenosha, Wisconsin. This left a large space to fill indeed, but ^{to} help Pastor Pautz during the time of calling a new pastor, a part-time vicar was called from the seminary in Mequon. Vicar R.M. Andresen served throughout the 1985/86 school year. But once again, the Lord continued to provide for Good Shepherd when Pastor J. Paustian accepted the call and is now our second pastor.

Beginning in February of 1973, there began a series of events outside of the congregation but were close to hearts of many of its

members. Various meetings were held which led to the formation of the Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School in Jackson, Wisconsin. Mr. Richard Tharman, a member of Good Shepherd, became president of the executive board in February of 1974. In April of 1974, Good Shepherd realizing the importance of Christian education on the secondary level, joined the Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School Federation. The first classes were held in September of 1974 in rented facilities with 35 students, of whom six were from Good Shepherd. Mr. J. Fenske once principal at Good Shepherd, became the principal of the high school in October. Due to the tremendous growth and interest, land was purchased for a permanent site and plans were initiated for building on that site, which now has been completed and is in full operation. As of the twenty-fifth anniversary Good Shepherd had 16 students enrolled in either the 9th, 10th, or 11th grades at Kettle Moraine High School. Today there are 237 students at KMLHS of which Good Shepherd accounts for a large percentage of the students. Once again we see God's hand in the continued growth of our schools.

By the early 70's Good Shepherd began to run out of room. A committee reported that the present facilities would soon become overcrowded. The overcrowding became a reality as the congregation continued its growth. Following a recommendation of its Study Planning Committee, the congregation, in April of 1973, purchased three available lots of Eastern Avenue. With almost five full acres of land, the congregation then had sufficient space upon which to expand its facilities for future needs. Project '75 was undertaken

in August of 1973 to pay off the debt of approximately \$67,000.00 on the facilities. It was evident that the debt would have to be eliminated to permit the needed future expansion. In December of 1975, the mortgage dating back to the congregation's early history was paid off. Only \$12,000.00 in private notes remained. The effort of Project '75 had borne its fruits.

Due to the continued growth a third regular service was introduced in September of 1973. And with the growth of the school's enrollment, the Fellowship Hall on the lower level of the school was partitioned off for class rooms.

In October of 1974, a master plan was adopted. It called for the building of a larger parsonage on Eastern Avenue and future expansion of the church. In August of 1975, bids were approved for the building of the new parsonage. Also on October of 75 nine men were appointed to a committee to plan for the church expansion. They began their work by visiting various churches in the area to study architecture for ideas and suggestions.

1976 was designated as a year of celebration for Good Shepherd in observance of twenty-five years of God's grace. Goals of gratitude were established as our congregational gifts to God for these twenty-five years of blessings. Thoses goals were, increased monthly attendance at the Lord's Supper by all communicants, increased average weekly worship attendance, and increased Christian Day School enrollment.

The twenty-fifth anniversary service was held on May 2, 1976 in West Bend's High School auditorium. The mortgage was burned. Also this occasion was marked with the publishing of a church pictorial

directory. Open house was held at the parsonage this day also. Actual dedication of the new parsonage took place on May 23rd. Also for this special day Good Shepherd was able to have all of its past and present pastors present. Which unfortunately cannot be for the thirty-fifth anniversary due to the deaths of two of our past pastors, Pastor Boldt and Pastor Bradtke.

A solicitation committee was organized in the fall of 1976 for the purpose of soliciting commitments from the members of the congregation for the anticipated building project. These commitments had three purposes: to provide information to be used in determining the size of the building project, to show the lending institutions the sincerity of the congregation, and to encourage participation by the membership. A program was developed and called "Feed My Lambs, Feed My Sheep". Commitments from this program and *monies* received amounted to over \$250,000.00 for four years.

In the meantime, the Facility Expansion Committee was interviewing architects for the proposed building project. Thern Associates of Waupaca, Wisconsin was chosen. A questionnaire was devised and distributed to the members to determine their opinions and suggestions regarding the expansion. 1976 ended with the results of the questionnaires indicating approval of the expansion project.

1977 was a year full of activities for the congregation of Good Shepherd. The Facility Expansion Committee was finalizing the schematic drawing phase of the program. Approval was given by the voters meeting in April that full working drawings be made from these preliminary drawings. Concentration was now given to the formulation of the drawings, specifications, and evaluation of

various design concepts in the areas of electrical, plumbing, mechanical, and building construction. Other efforts were directed towards the consideration of the committee acting as the general contractor and issuing purchase orders for most of the materials to realize a saving of funds.

During the summer of '77 the Board of Education carried out among our members an extensive program of recruiting for our school. We were blessed yet again with another enrollment increase which brought the enrollment to 213 children. Thus ~~by~~ ^{was evident} the need for more help, and the call went out ~~to~~ which God graciously filled.

In September it was advertised in various trade and local papers, that the building project was being bid publicly. All bids had to be rejected when, to our disappointment, it was discovered that they were all too high and exceeded the guidelines which had been given to the architect. This necessitated a flurry of activities between the committee, the architect, and the two lowest bidders in each field. Modifications and deletions which would bring the price to an affordable level without seriously jeopardizing the present and future needs of our congregation were made. The goal was accomplished when at a special voters' meeting approval was given to the project by an overwhelming vote. It is worth mentioning that this meeting resulted in the largest attendance at a voters' meeting. This exemplified the memberships' concern for ~~the~~ ^{and} interest in the project. The total cost of the project came to \$867,140.00.

At this point the project received another setback. The money market had become extremely tight and the banks had either less or

no money to lend. Again the Lord was watching over Good Shepherd and answered the prayers of the congregation. An internal borrowing program called "Lending to the Lord" financed a substantial part of the building project with funds borrowed from the congregation's own members. The program involved an offering of five and eight year promissory notes of up to 7 3/4% and 8 1/4% interest respectively. The sincere and gratifying act of love from the membership led to the commitment of over \$360,000.00 in lending. This made it possible for required additional financing to be obtained from an outside source.

Good Shepherd, with our fellow Christians from our sister congregations, experienced yet another of our Lord's bountiful blessings when in the fall of 77 the newly completed permanent facility at Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School was dedicated. A year end activity was the formulation of a "Love Gift" list. This list shows items needed for a new facility and their respective cost. These items were given to the church by interested members as gifts or memorials.

1978 was a busy year for Good Shepherd. The activities started with the interviewing of two local banks which showed interest in funding of the building project. The Heritage Bank of West Bend was selected. Contracts with the various contractors were then signed and the purchase orders issued for most of the building materials. The joyous event of groundbreaking took place on Feb. 12th, 1977. Excavation for the gym/multi-purpose center was begun soon thereafter. The completion of the gym was delayed when the metal building suppliers experienced a strike.

On June 26th the former church was vacated after a formal de-commissioning. Demolition followed within a few weeks. From this time forth, all worship services were held in the new gymnasium.

The Lord continued to bless Good Shepherd, and 1978 was no exception. The church membership increased by 62 souls. A sizable school enrollment increase made it again necessary to increase the teaching staff. The staff and the students were commended for their tolerance of the conditions which existed due to the expansion program. There were more than the usual amount of disturbances, noises and interruptions, not to mention a prevailing state of untidy conditions. The fine called workers continued to maintain, operate and expand the program of Christ-centered education to the pupils who are indeed recipients of a very unique course of instruction and training.

On November 5th, a special cornerstone laying ceremony was held after the late service. The two previous cornerstones, one from the church (1953) and one from the school (1963) had been relaid. The new cornerstone was placed above these in an interior wall of the foyer of the new building. The stones were placed one on the other to denote the progress Good Shepherd had experienced in the past 27 years in doing the Lord's work and to denote further that Good Shepherd was not building anew, but upon the base, spiritually and materially, which was begun in 1953. Again, various articles of the church's history were placed in the cornerstone box.

In 1979 the congregation was able to see yet more of our Lord's unfailing love as Good Shepherd witnessed the fruits of their labors. As the finishing work in the interior of the facility was being

completed rapidly, on Easter Sunday, April 15th 1979, the congregation of Good Shepherd held their first worship services in their new worship facilities.

Since that Easter Sunday in 1979 the congregation of Good Shepherd has continued to receive God's blessings. There was not one year in its history that Good Shepherd has not continued to grow. In 1951 with only 41 persons Good Shepherd has grown to 1,534 souls. This is an average of about 43 souls per year. Not only that, but from its very beginning Good Shepherd looked to the training of its young lambs. The school as well has enjoyed the blessings of growth through the Lord. What seems more important than that is the dedication of its people to the work that Jesus Christ has given all of us and that is to spread the Word of God to all the world. Here are some numbers: average attendance is 65-70%, attendance at the Lord's Supper in 11.4 times per communicant (Communion is offered 26 times a year). Numbers are just that, numbers, but they reflect what is inside.

As I write this history of Good Shepherd all that ^I pray is that God will continue to bless this congregation and keep it from any that would destroy it. Also let ^{it} be an example to other churches within our Synod that even when one was born in adversity, that a congregation can grow through the hard work, dedication, and sacrifice of its members, but most of ^{all} when that congregation puts ^{its} trust and hope in her head Christ Jesus.

MAY THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH AND THE
MEDITATION OF MY HEART
BE PLEASING IN YOUR SIGHT,
O LORD, MY ROCK AND MY REDEEMER.

Psalm 19:14