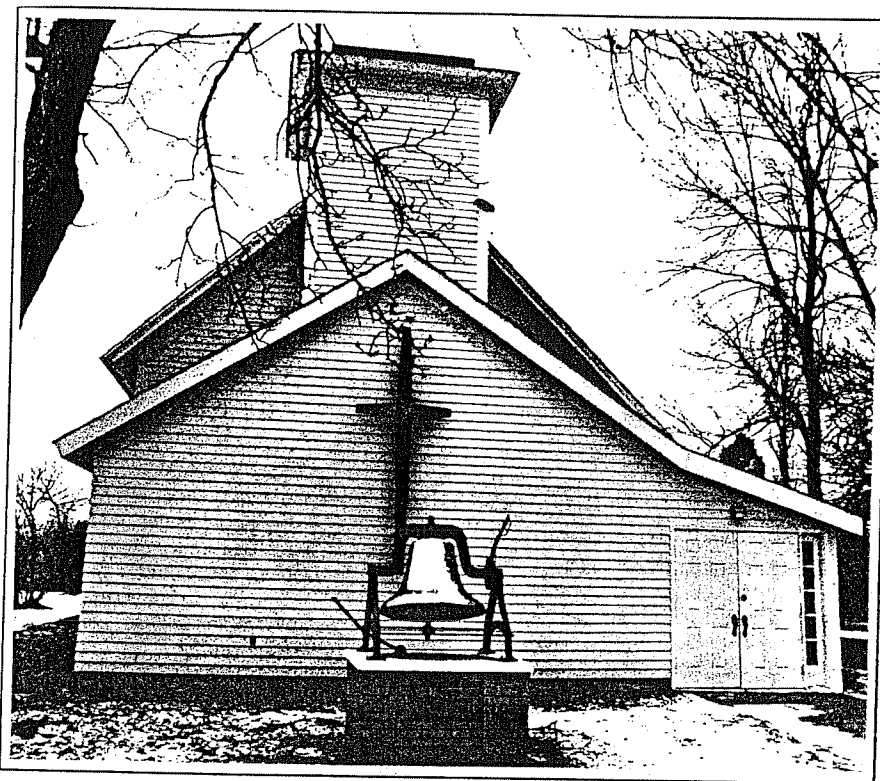


Senior Church History
Prof. Brenner
Brian Goens
A HISTORICAL SKETCH OF



St. Peter's Ev. Lutheran Church

Goodwin, South Dakota
Wisconsin Synod

"Established in 1898"

Sunday Worship 11:00 a.m.

Sunday School 10:00 a.m.

"Preaching a changeless Christ to a changing world!"

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library

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INTRODUCTION

I decided to write a history of my home congregation mainly just to find out the roots of the congregation I called my own. As I studied the documents of our congregation and the neighboring congregations it became obvious how God's abundant grace is evident in the history and life of St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church. If I have learned a valuable lesson from this paper it would be the importance of good record keeping. Many questions about St. Peter's remain unanswered, yet this brief history will give the reader a flavor of the congregation and its people. I will give a very brief historical introduction of early mission activity which led to the life of "my" congregation. A decade by decade sketch of some important events will follow. On the basis of my studies I have also made some personal observations that are included at the end of this paper.

MISSION ACTIVITY IN DEUEL COUNTY SOUTH DAKOTA

Most of the pioneers that settled in this area of South Dakota came from Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois and Michigan. The good majority of them were farmers who were attracted by the homestead acts which gave them a quarter of land. Along with them came the necessary businessmen. Life was hard on the prairie for the pioneers and for the missionaries as well.

The actual history of Wisconsin Synod Lutheran congregations dates back to 1881. Missionary activity in that area came about a decade earlier. Pioneers of German and Scandinavian descent clamored for the church services they had left behind. The Ohio, Missouri, and Wisconsin synods answered their demands. For our purposes we will only look at the early work of the Wisconsin Synod.

The Dakota-Montana District was not formed until 1920, so for many years South Dakota was served by the Minnesota District. Pastor J. Hunziker was the first general missionary. In 1876 he made ^{a trip} in to the boundaries of Dakota Territory. He declared that he was not up to the task ahead of him and requested help. Pastor Christian Boetcher was the first traveling missionary to serve this part of South Dakota. He was an energetic man to say the least! In 1878 he had 18 preaching stations in Minnesota and eight in Dakota Territory. He served these congregations traveling from his home in Minnesota, Minnesota, by the new railroad and horse. When he came to a town word was quickly spread through the countryside, "The Pastor is here." (Werner p3) He covered approximately 6000 square miles. Pastor Boetcher founded congregations in the

counties of Deuel, Hamlin, Brookings, Codington and Clark counties. He took a call in 1884, and the mission field was handled by several men in the Missouri Synod as well as Wisconsin and Ohio.

Mission preachers that followed pastor Boetcher are: Pastor Franz Johl, Pastor E.L. Luebbert, Pastor R. Volkert, Pastor G. Lahme, Pastor H. Hupfer, Pastor GM. Shoemperlen, Pastor Henry Albrecht and Pastor S. Mlotkowski (the first pastor at St. Peter's.) Many of these men served newly established congregations that spread across the country side as well as serving preaching stations. The missionaries conducted services on whatever day they arrived to a town. While they were absent young laymen taught the children and conducted Bible studies and services. The one thing all of these men had in common was the lack of comfort in their work. Roads were non-existent except for a few dirt roads that lead from town to town. Indian paths were used for the most part. Members furnished the churches with such modern luxuries as rough planks placed across empty nail barrels. But God's word carried by faithful men overcame these hardships. Congregations sprouted up on the plains of Dakota, their bell towers a reaching skyward could be seen for miles on the open plains. One such congregation was St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Goodwin, South Dakota.

THE TOWN

When we look for areas to start a congregation today we look to highly populated areas. It seems odd that a town such as Goodwin, with only a few over 100 people, could survive as the home of a congregation. How did a congregation get established in such a small town?

The size of the town did not play as an important part in deciding if a congregation could be started at the turn of the century as the inhabitants of the town. Goodwin was inhabited in a large part by people of German and Scandinavian decent with a Lutheran history. Such people did all they could to insure the fact that they would have a Lutheran service, and eventually a Lutheran congregation.

Besides the ethnic and religious background of the settlers of Goodwin the railroad brought people to Goodwin. Goodwin bustled with people in her early years. It was one of the larger cities of what is now eastern South Dakota at the turn of the century.

The town originally went by the name of Prairie Siding. A worker for the new rail line that was being built died in an accident about one and one-half miles west of Goodwin. This man's name was Goodwin and at the request of his widow the town adopted his name.

The Winona and St. Peter Railroad, a division of the Chicago and Northwestern, was key to the town's early history. It was built in 1873, and rebuilt from Gary to Lake Kampeska in Watertown after a storm in 1878. A train depot became one of the first structures of the town. This was the only depot that ran west of Gary in

South Dakota which made Goodwin a hub. People came to the town from fifty miles away to sell their grain and pick up their supplies. For the first thirty years the town saw six trains a day stopped there.

A new railroad town also brought business along with it. Goodwin had over twenty thriving business places at the turn of the century. Three hotels generally remained full to overfull from travelers. The town had the makings of a big city. At the end of the 19th century Goodwin had about the same number of people as Watertown. Today Goodwin has about 100 and Watertown has about 18,000. Better transportation, better locality for Clear Lake and Watertown, and especially the closing down of the railroad made Goodwin the small town it is today. At the turn of the century, when St. Peter's was built, it had all the makings of a thriving city. Today Goodwin has Kliegle's Garage, Toll's Care, Sher's Ship Shape Shop (a hair salon), Green's Bar, the Post Office and St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church. By God's grace that congregation was founded and by God's grace that congregation remains almost a century later.

THE BEGINNINGS AND EARLY YEARS

Most of the records of the early years of St. Peter's have been lost, or I was not good enough at finding them. Because of this very little can be said about how the congregation got its beginnings.

Several traveling missionaries served the eastern side of what is now South Dakota. As these groups grew several decided to build a church building. In 1898 the first three Wisconsin Synod congregations in Deuel county dedicated a building for the worship of God. St. Peter's was the second. The first pastor who served St. Peter's along with St. Paul's Havana Township, Zion Hidewood Valley, and St. John's Altamont was Pastor L. Mlotkowski. He had been a missionary in the area since 1894. He did not stay long as the Lord called him to Chicago, Illinois in the summer of 1899. Pastor O. Just served as vacancy pastor. He was a member of the Ohio Synod.

A building had been erected by the sweat of the members hands. The congregation was started by farmers and businessmen in the Bemis (then Palmer) and Goodwin area. Some of them were members of Hidewood, but distance was a factor. The farmers who founded the congregation hauled stones in for the foundation by wagon, and did most of the work themselves. The large bell was given as one of the first memorials. After many attempts it was finally placed in the bell tower almost seventy-five feet in the air. Now they had a church to worship in. The services were conducted in German. The last German service took place in 1937. The people who were most instrumental in the founding of St. Peter's are: Fred Behnke,

August Browotzke, E.F. Dummann, Louis Gerberding, William Gerberding, Emil Giziewski, Mike Giziewski, Emil Heyn, Otto Hogie, Herman Kleveter, W. Klippstein, Emil Lassig, H. Pobanz, Mrs. Fred Rashke, Robert Rashke, Mrs. R. Rohweder, August Tesch, Ferdinand Tesch. (75th Anniversary Booklet) A copy of the original signatures of the congregation is included. Most of the last names are still very familiar to me, and many of their descendants and relatives are members of the congregation today.

The first baptism of the congregation was on October 16, 1898, when both August Henry Anton Gerberding and Albert Michael Giziewski received the sacrament of baptism.

The first marriage happened on March 8, 1899, when Herman Kleveter and Emilia Probantz were united in holy matrimony.

After the departure of Pastor Mlotkowski St. Peter's called their own Pastor. (The other three congregations were served together by Pastor E. John.) Pastor O. Wolf served St. Peter's from 1901-1909. Pastor Wolf had the joy of welcoming the first confirmation class into the congregation in 1902. Music entered the worship service as during his ministry there the first organ was dedicated in 1901. It was purchased from an Ohio Synod congregation and much of the money was raised by the children. An interesting, hand-written note I ran across was that the congregation was a member of the Ohio Synod from early on. I found this fact published in the October, 1938 edition of the *Lutheran Messenger*, but did not uncover any official document to this fact. The congregation rejoined the Wisconsin Synod in 1910.

No doubt, having their own pastor offered stability and growth

to this young congregation. Some turbulence must have arisen, though, because several members left the congregation and a lawsuit was brought against St. Peter's. The annual meeting notes from January 3, 1910 tell us this. "Several members had left the congregation and threatened to sue the congregation, so the elders were asked to defend the congregation and protect its property. The resolution was made that the congregation would pay for all costs arising from a possible lawsuit." In February of that same year it was reported, "It was suggested that the cost of the lawsuit would be paid for by the congregation and that the three congregations together would pay for the repair work." I found no more records of this matter.

In 1910 Pastor F. Ehlert received a call to serve St. Peter's. Often mentioned is the fact that Pastor Ehlert could be easily recognized by his team of stately black horses in a time where most pastors drove nags. He had opportunity to drive them often because the congregation again became part of the previous four point parish that it started with. He had the joy of handling the mysterious lawsuit.

It seems that after the lawsuit the congregation ran pretty smoothly. Most of the annual reports talk only of elections. Money must have been a problem at this time. A lumber bill was paid on the basis of salary of each member. (1911 annual report.) At that same meeting the motion was made and seconded that "Pastor F. Ehlert should see Edwin Dumann about paying his salary or not." Stricter fellowship lines must have been being drawn at this time because Pastor Ehlert says he would not serve non-members. At the

next meeting the minutes were changed to basically say that it is up to the pastor to decide if he will serve non-members or not.

The church building had a new look as in 1918 a new altar was purchased. (One source says 1919) The old altar was donated to the student worship center at South Dakota State University in Brookings. The last confirmation class to be instructed in the German language was in 1917. In that same year worship services in German were held only once a month.

In 1915 an exciting event took place. Emil Rodweder had a power plant he used, so the church could have electric lights. Before this oil lamps were used.

Pastor E. Kolander accepted a call to serve a three-point parish in 1919. For some reason the Altamont congregation called its own pastor. It seems the three congregations must have done some squabbling over salary. A committee of C. Kopplemann, W. Klippstein, and L. Gerberding was arranged to discuss salary with the other two congregations. It seems they failed to discuss the rent (The pastor lived in Goodwin) because in the following year they report, "Concerning the house rent the congregation made no contract with Havana or Hidewood hoping that these two congregations would pay \$40 a year including 1919. It was decided to pay the pastor's salary in advance from now on." (annual report Jan 7, 1920)

The parsonage was damaged by fire sometime in 1920. The old parsonage was located south of the railroad tracks some distance from the church, so it was decided to build the new parsonage near the church building. Pastor Kolander lived with Fred Gizewski

until the new parsonage was built. The congregation had to borrow \$1700 for three years to pay for the parsonage. The money was borrowed at 9% for three years. It is interesting to note that money can be borrowed for less today.

An organization that started while Pastor Kolander was at St. Peter's was the Tabea Society. The name means "helping hands" and the organization lives up to its name.

In 1920 the Dakota-Montana District ^{was} formed and St. Peter's ^{became} becomes a member of the district.

The Sunday School was organized in 1923, with Martin Schmidt as superintendent, who along with Mrs. Alma Dummann, Mrs. Louis Gerberding, and Mrs. Gerhard Schmidt, were the first teachers. (75th Anniversary Booklet) Alma Dummann was my first Sunday School teacher. She also served several years as the church organist. She continues to serve her Lord by taping and delivering the services to nursing homes with the help of her son. They had Sunday School classes before this, but they must have been held sporadically as the need came up, or perhaps this was the first lay staff to teach Sunday School.

Pastor Kolander saw many changes in his four years at St. Peter's. In 1924 Pastor H. Lau came to St. Peter's and yet a different multiple parish was set up. Pastor Lau was already a pastor at Gary, South Dakota in 1923. In 1924 he came to St. Peter's in Goodwin and at this time the Altamont congregation joined them again. He remained until 1931.

Pastor Lau was urged to stay on here in 1926 when he received another call.

Also in 1926 it was decided~~to~~ that St. Peter's would celebrate its own mission festival instead of a joint mission festival with the other two congregations. Many of the mission festival services were held outside in the groves of Hermann Kleveter and William Boerner or at Twin Lakes Park.

Electricity ^{came} comes to the congregation in 1927 when Northwestern Public Service was installed. Also in 1927 apple trees were planted on the church property. Quite often boxes of apples, canned sauce, jelly, and even pies were sent to the academy at Mobridge. (75th Anniversary Booklet)

In 1929 the stock market crash marked the beginning of the great depression. That along with severe drought made life in South Dakota as well as St. Peter's difficult.

Ein Gemeindeführer

1. Friedrich Lammberg
2. August Engelbrecht
3. Hermann Lammberg
4. Peter Fack
5. August Fack
6. Heinrich Lammberg
7. Gustav Lammberg
8. Charles Matzke
9. Hermann Lammberg
10. August Fack
11. Gustav Fack
12. Heinrich Gerberding
13. Joh. Lammberg
14. August Müller

THE "DIRTY" THIRTIES

When Pastor Lau left in 1931 the Lord blessed the congregation with Pastor D. Rossin. Pastor Rossin also served the tri-parish of Goodwin, Altamont and Gary at first. In 1932 Gary called its own Pastor, Pastor Reuter, and Pastor Rossin went to the new congregation started at Clear Lake. Pastor Reuter was replaced by Pastor Rutz in that same year. To add to the confusion in 1933 Pastor Rutz went to Clear Lake. If I have this worked out right, Pastor Rossin then served a dual parish of Goodwin and Altamont.

Pastor Rossin served for most of the depression years. He must have been a man of extreme patience and trust in the Lord, because in most all of the annual reports the congregations were behind in his salary. Pastor Rossin seemed to realize that the congregation indeed was giving as the Lord gave to them in these tough times. He kept very good records, and along with Pastor Rutz published *The Lutheran Messenger* for many years. In this publication they wrote devotional material as well as the business agendas for the four congregations. An excerpt from an annual report will help give the reader a feel for this man.

Another year of our church has passed. In many ways it was a year of hard times. Most of our members are farmers or depend upon farmers for their living. The scanty harvest last year, the extremely low prices---in many cases the lowest that any of us have experienced and in some cases the lowest price in history---for this year's otherwise good crop, the general depression over the whole world causing lack of work, and other things have made it difficult or impossible for many to make expenses. Because of the times many churches have had to close or at least cut down their work. But God by His grace has permitted us to have our regular services and to meet expenses as well as in times past. This we attribute to God's goodness in making the people willing to give and sacrifice as seldom before. WE hope that the envelope system whereby everyone was given an opportunity to give whatever he could and the information and encouragement given through the parish paper have also helped. (Annual report 1932)

Throughout the entire depression Pastor Rossin's words remained encouraging. God did continue to bless the congregation through one of the bleakest periods of our nation's history. It was also in 1933 that the synod sent a letter to every congregation encouraging offerings to meet ongoing expenses. A copy of that letter is included at the end of this chapter.

We who live in the rich, materialistic society of the 90's cannot even begin to fathom just how difficult times became in the depression. At one point in St. Peter's history the members could not offer money, so they gave goods. I do not know if it was to Pastor Lau or Pastor Rossin, but sometime during the depression the salary was paid as follows.

During the depression many could not pay salary in cash, but gave instead: set one hen and sell the hen and chickens (she hatched twelve chicks), set a setting of duck eggs, plant a bushel of potatoes and sell what they produce, one hog weighing 100 pounds or more, one-half dozen roosters, Plant one acre of corn and sell it, roosters raised from five settings of hens, one month's sale of cream, two bushels of carrots, and one week's wages. A cash bazaar fellowship was held at the parsonage. In 1934 he received only \$10 salary for December (his salary was \$40/month). He received \$355 from Goodwin for the year. (Historical Collections of Deuel County Vol I p81)

In the 1930's the Young People's Society was formed. They along with the Sunday School played a major part the Christmas Eve service as well as other services during the year.

I also found records of the choir's activities for the first time in the 30's, but whenever the choir is referred to I get the impression that it had served the congregation already for a number of years. In the 1930's under the direction of Mrs. Irene Rossin the choir performed an Easter cantata that found air time on the radio. God's praise was heard over the air by the mouths of St.

Peter's members.

Pastor Rossin left in 1937. The congregation was then served by Pastor Meirs in a vacancy. Gerhard Ehlert, the son of former Pastor F. Ehlert, came to the area to work before his final year at the seminary. He helped ease the load of the vacancy pastor by donating his time. Pastor W.F. Dorn accepted the call to St. Peter's, Goodwin and St. Paul's Havana Township. So we see St. Peter's ebbing toward the end of the depression decade in still another dual parish situation late in the year 1938.

Pastor Dorn continued to be a member of the staff of *The Lutheran Messenger*. In the early editions after his arrival we see some he got right to his duty. He held a Sunday morning Bible class. He also had the voters agree to hold mid-week Lenten services. He tried to get right at his every member visits, but the winter weather held him up as he arrived in late January.

By the Lord's abundant grace St. Peter's made it through the depression and was carrying the cross of Christ onward into the next decade. Often mentioned in the records of this trying decade are the efforts and financial assistance of The Ladies' Aide.

An alle Gemeinden unserer Wisconsin-Synode.

Fond du Lac, Wis., den 1. Februar 1933.

Liebe Mitschriften!

Wie in den Synodalblättern angezeigt war, so hat sich das Board of Trustees am 24. Januar versammelt. Zwei Tage haben die Verhandlungen zur Erledigung der vorliegenden Geschäfte in Anspruch genommen.

Selbstverständlich war die Deckung des Budgets, so wie es sich infolge der Reduzierungen gestaltet hat, der Punkt, um den sich schier alles drehte. Und darüber machen wir Euch folgende Mitteilung.

Vom 1. Januar 1933 bis zum 1. Juli 1933 müssen \$150,000.00 durch Kollekten aufgebracht werden. Das sind \$94,925.00 weniger, als das angenommene Budget dieses Bienniums für sechs Monate fordert. Ihr werdet es verstehen, wenn wir sagen, daß wir nach obiger Feststellung erleichtert aufatmeten.

Es sind hauptsächlich zwei Umstände, die es ermöglicht haben, daß wir mit obiger Summe von \$150,000.00 auskommen. Einmal die Every-Member Canvass-Kollekte. Zum andern die bereits angezeigte Reduzierung aller Gehälter, die sich die davon Betroffenen um der Sache des Reiches Gottes willen gern haben gefallen lassen. Erwähnt soll freilich auch werden, daß in dem Haushalt unsrer Anstalten die äußerste Sparsamkeit geübt wird.

Wenn wir nun bedenken, daß trotz der drückenden Zeit Gottes Werk in unsrer Mitte keine Einbuße hat erleiden müssen, daß wir es in seinem ganzen bisherigen Umfang haben weiterführen dürfen; und wenn wir nun hören, daß es mit Deckung eines Budgets, das diesen Zeitläuften angepaßt ist, weitergeführt werden kann, so muß uns doch Gottes gnädiges Walten mit herzlichem Dank erfüllen und uns willig machen, unsere Reich-Gottes-Kollekten so zu bedenken, daß die erforderliche Summe von \$150,000.00 in diesen sechs Monaten aufgebracht wird.

Wir halten dafür, daß selbst in diesen schweren Zeiten diese Summe durch Kollekten gesichert werden kann und gesichert wird, wenn jede Gemeinde wenigstens drei Kollekten in diesen sechs Monaten erhebt.

Passionszeit, Ostern, Pfingsten bieten besondere Gelegenheiten und Veranlassungen, unsere Kollekten diesen Anforderungen entsprechend zu bedenken.

Jesus Christus, der Gefreuzigte und Auferstandene, ist zum Vater gegangen und hat uns vom Vater seinen Geist gesendet, daß wir gesinnet seien, wie Jesus Christus auch war (Phil. 2, 5), und so haben wir Christi Sinn (1. Kor. 2, 16). Und das ist vornehmlich Opfersinn. Der gibt nicht nur vom Ueberflus, der ist bereit, sich selbst zu verleugnen und von der Armut zu geben (Mark. 12, 44). Und weil wir alle Christi Sinn haben, so wollen wir alle in diesem einen Sinn unsre Gaben und Opfer bringen.

Er, der gehorsam ward bis zum Tode, ja zum Tode am Kreuz, verkläre in uns sein Bild, daß auch durch uns entstehe die Erleuchtung von der Erkenntnis der Klarheit Gottes in dem Angesichte Jesu Christi (2. Kor. 4, 6).

Hier könnten wir dieses Rundschreiben schließen. Und wir würden es tun, wenn wir nicht aus Erfahrung wüßten, daß hie und da gefragt wird: Wie viel sollte denn von unserer Gemeinde beigetragen werden? Wir wissen, daß diese Frage gestellt wird in dem Sinn: Wir wollen reichlich und überreichlich geben, damit nicht andere unsern Mangel ersetzen müssen, sondern damit wir durch unsere Gaben das ersetzen, was infolge von Armut nicht gegeben werden kann.

Das Board of Trustees hat deshalb beschlossen, nach den bisherigen Berechnungen jeder Gemeinde ihre Quota anzugeben. Und hier ist die Quota für Eure Gemeinde: \$77.00. Wir sind überzeugt, daß Euch dies eine erwünschte Mitteilung ist.

„Gott gebe Euch viel Gnade und Friede!“ (1. Pet. 1, 2b).

Im Namen und Auftrag des Board of Trustees.

G. E. Bergemann.
E. Benj. Schlueter.
S. A. Michler.
E. Reim.

To all Congregations of our Wisconsin Synod

Dear Fellow-Christians:

Fond du Lac, Wis., February 1, 1933.

As you may have gathered from the announcement in our synodical publications, the Board of Trustees met January 24. Two days were spent in discussing and disposing of the many items of business.

The question of course that required most attention, and upon which almost all other matters depended, was that of meeting the requirements of the budget in its present reduced form. On that we have the following to report.

For the period from January 1, 1933 to July 1, 1933, the sum of \$150,000.00 must be raised by collections. That is \$94,925.00 less than the originally accepted budget required for a period of six months. You will understand when we say that we heard these figures with a sigh of relief.

The fact that we shall be able to manage with this sum of \$150,000.00 is largely accounted for by two things. The one is the Every-Member Canvass. The other is the general reduction of salaries that we have already referred to, a reduction which they who have been affected by it have accepted in the finest of spirits for the sake of the Kingdom of God. It should likewise be mentioned that the most rigid economy is being practiced in regard to the household expenses of our institutions.

If we consider that in spite of the pressure of the times the work of our Lord as we carry it on in our midst has not been curtailed, that it has been possible to continue to this day in every activity to which we are committed; when we now hear that it can be kept up by meeting a budget which is in keeping with the times, surely our hearts must be filled with gratitude by this proof of the mercy of our God, and we become willing to bring such offerings in support of His cause that the \$150,000.00 required in these six months will be supplied.

We believe that even in these trying times this amount can be raised, and will be, if every congregation will arrange for at least three offerings in the course of these six months.

The Lenten Season and the festivals of Easter and Pentecost are especially opportune for gratified hearts to show their appreciation of the gifts of God in a measure commensurate with the needs of His Church.

Jesus Christ, crucified and risen again, has ascended to our Father on high and has sent us His Spirit, so that this mind be in us, which was also in Christ Jesus (Phil. 2, 5). Thus "we have the mind of Christ" (I. Cor. 2, 16). And that is above all that mind which shows a willingness to bring a sacrifice. He who is so minded will not merely give from a surplus; he will be willing to deny himself and to give even from "want" (Mc. 12, 41). Having this mind of Christ, let us all bring our offerings in this spirit.

May He who became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross glorify His image within us, so that through us also there may be given the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4, 6).

Here we could close this letter. And we would if we would not know by experience that some will ask: How much should our congregation contribute as its part? We know that this question is asked in this sense: We are determined to give enough and more than enough, so that it will not be necessary for others to make good our shortcomings, but rather that we help to supply that which some in their poverty have not been able to give.

The Board of Trustees has therefore decided to inform each congregation of what its quota will be, applying former calculations to the changed conditions. This will be the quota for your congregation for these six months: \$77.00. We are sure that you will be glad to have such information.

"Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."

By request of the Board of Trustees,

G. E. BERGEMANN
E. BENJ. SCHLUETER
H. A. MICHLER
E. REIM

THE 1940'S WAR AND TRUE PEACE

Actually the title of this chapter is very deceiving because I never found any information on the members of St. Peter's who served in WWII. (The same was true for any other wars.) I would think such information should be possible to obtain, but I did not. I guess that means I will be forced to concentrate on the true peace.

With the 40's came some prosperity again. The members of St. Peter's showed their appreciation for God's blessings in many ways. The church building needed work, and work it received. In 1941 an outside chimney was built, a basement dug, and a furnace installed. How happy the members were to get rid of the long stove pipes, ashes, wet fuel, and water in the furnace. (75th anniversary booklet)

The true peace of God would be proclaimed clearly with the liturgy and hymns of the new hymnal. The congregation agreed to buy the new hymnals in the summer of 1942. The members were encouraged to buy their own copies early. The price of an early order was \$1. If you waited you would have to pay a staggering \$1.50. I hope that means our new hymnal will be fifteen times as good!

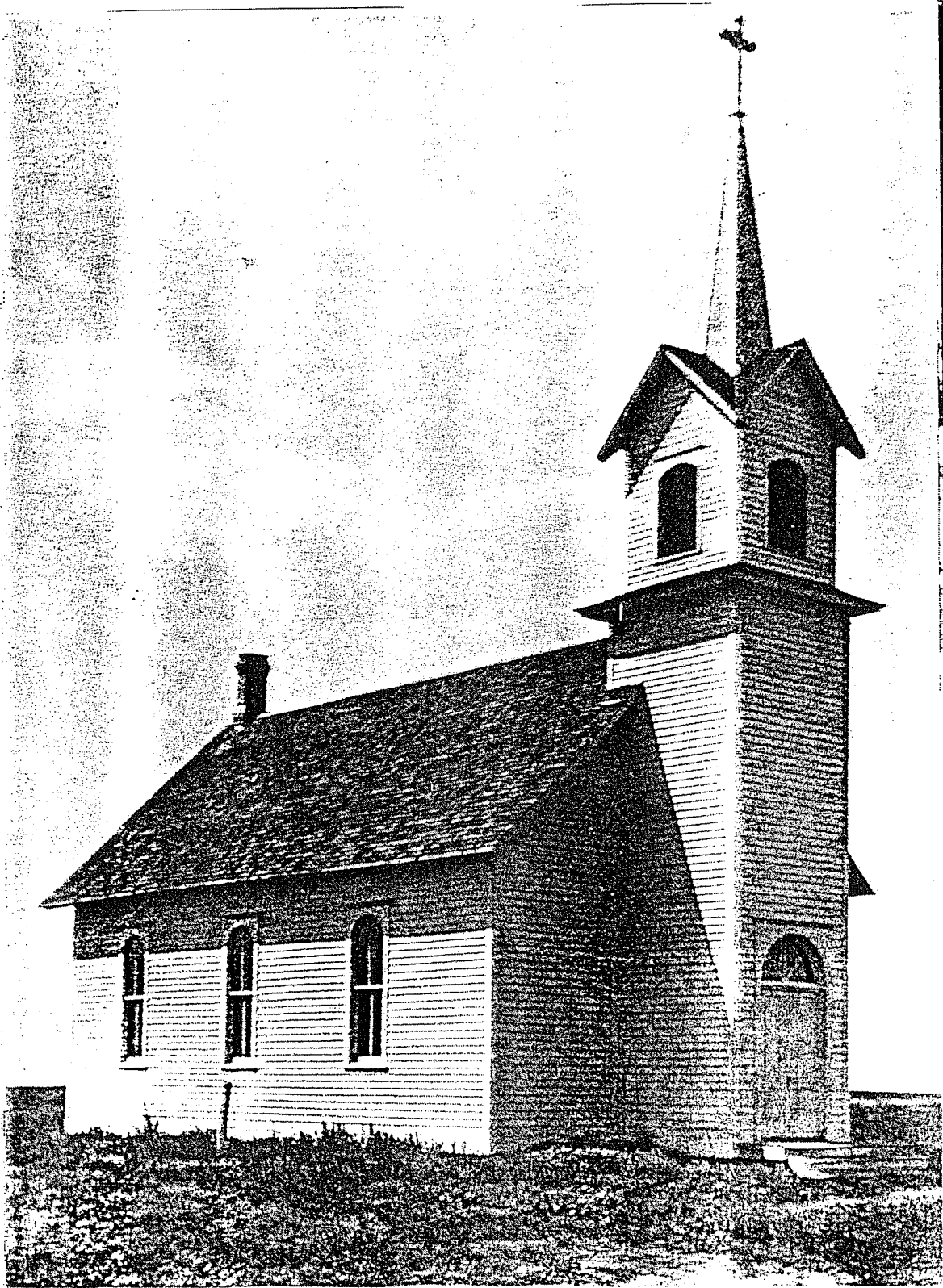
The June, 1948 edition of *The Lutheran Messenger* says that a new electric reed organ donated by the Tabernacle Society was to be dedicated on June 6. As of the Thursday previous the organ had not yet been delivered! The cost of the organ was \$550.

In 1948 St. Peter's celebrated 50 years of God's grace. Pastor Dorn, who left in 1944, was the guest pastor.

It was Pastor A.A. Hellmann that led God's flock at St. Peter's through the last half of the 40's. The congregation enjoyed growth during his ministry.

Another interesting story about this period of history focuses our attention on the altar. The center of the altar holds a captivating picture of Jesus knocking on the door of the temple. This portrait was painted by Pastor Found who lived at South Shore at the time. The Tabea Society bought the portrait from him and placed it into the altar. His art work decorates several altars in South Dakota.

Not many records are left of this period of history for the congregation. A picture of how the building looked at this time is included at the end of this chapter.



THE 1950'S

The Reverend E. H. Seme/nske led the congregation of St. Peter's into the 1950's. The congregation continued to grow, and had 146 members in 1954.

In his first year the congregation dug a new well at the cost of \$177. Once again the Tabea Society picked up the tab. During his pastorate a difficult decision about the church appearance was made. The bell tower was in need of repair, and in 1952 the decision was made to tear it down. The bell was placed in a wooden stand on the ground and is still used. The landmark of the church steeple that became the mark of the country church was gone.

Pastor Rueben Reimers took the shepherding role in 1954. He also served St. John's in Altamont. St. Paul's was left vacant and decided to close her doors in 1955. Once again God's grace showed itself in continuing to supply pastors to St. Peter's through dual parishes. In his statistical reports we see that although the numbers in the congregation remained about the same, giving went up. This especially shows up in the money sent to synod.

Pastor Thierfelder came to St. Peter's, Goodwin and St. John's Altamont in 1957. He again enjoyed seeing the fruits of his members increase. In the three years he served the membership went from 132 to 146. In that same time general offerings increased from \$2255 to \$5740. Money sent to synod went from \$972 to \$1454. God's grace obviously showed itself in God's people.

The most interesting story of this period of history involves the desire to build a parish hall. In short the congregation decided to buy one of the abandoned public school houses when the

school system consolidated. The notes on how this came about are at the end of this chapter. I heard from a member that at one point in the moving of the building the contractor threatened to dump the school house where it was and leave it there. No doubt the project took months of hard effort, but the parish hall was finally completed. The first Ladies' Aide meeting was held there on November 12, 1959. At the same time the congregation built a new furnace room and installed two new furnaces. Most of the labor was done by members.

At the end of the 50's the congregation again had a new look. Membership was growing. God's word continued to bear fruit. I also noticed from bulletin inserts that the pastors took special care to make sure the membership was kept up to date on the talks with the LCMS.

Goodwin, South Dakota
November 25, 1958

Dear Friends in Christ:

In our regularly scheduled October quarterly meeting, the voting membership of St. Peter's went on record to expand our building facilities. The suggestion was made that perhaps we could purchase a vacated school building that would suit our needs. About two weeks ago an ad appeared in the Clear Lake paper offering the acceptance of sealed bids on a number of such school buildings in the Astoria area. Our council (the pastor and three of the five council members) investigated and found one of the buildings to be, in their estimation, the very thing we were looking for. It is a very solid building, about 28 x 30, kept in excellent repair, and one that does not appear to offer any special difficulties for moving.

In a brief meeting after church on Sunday, November 16th, the council reported their findings. Another meeting to discuss the matter further was scheduled for the following evening. Because of a snow-storm the attendance at that meeting was very poor, and because of the urgency of the matter (the bids were scheduled for opening three days later) those present discussed the matter and arrived at the idea of submitting a \$600.00 bid. Since there were so few at the meeting, however, it was felt that we should get the opinion of more of the members, both regarding the bid, and whether or not they were willing to support the venture financially. A spot-check of our membership was made. (Had there been more time we would have contacted all the members.) Since everyone seemed to be very much in favor of the idea, the pastor and council went ahead and submitted the \$600.00 bid.

It turned out that we would not have had to bid that high. (The next highest bid was \$305.00). There were a few who had some misgivings about the whole venture when they heard this. However, those of us who saw the building would like to point out that another building which, although it was six feet larger in one dimension, was not nearly in as good a condition and would have required a lot more expense to move and get into a usable condition -- that building went for \$606.00, and, as we have said, in our estimation was not nearly as good a buy. Therefore we feel that we were justified in going as high as we did, and are still confident that we have gotten a bargain.

The most reasonable bid for moving the building has, thus far been for \$575.00. If this bid is accepted, and figuring perhaps \$200.00 for a foundation and \$125.00 for REA and Telephone wire crews during the moving, we should have a building for around \$1500.00. Then, roughly figuring around \$500.00 for paint, a furnace, and remodeling the halls and cloak rooms into a kitchen, and the like, the whole project completed should run around \$2000.00. (The estimate on materials alone for a new building four feet narrower than ours, without inside finishing, wiring, or kitchen ran around \$2500.00. Since the building we have purchased is -- rafters, walls, window frames, floor and all -- as solid as the day it was built, and since it was constructed of materials far better than any we would put into a new building today, we of the council are confident that we really have a building that will last for ages.)

Now we must consider the matter of financing the project. There are about 35 families on our membership list (including widows, retired, and semi-retired families). We feel that if anywhere from 2/5ths. to one-half of our membership will, over the next two years, contribute a total of as high as \$100.00, and the rest of the families will do what they can, we will have fairly well taken care of the project in that period of time. Of course, any funds which are not on hand at the time they are needed, will have to be borrowed. To save as much interest as possible, we hope that we can and will do everything we can right now to get our building fund soundly on its feet. (Almost immediately, we will need the \$600.00 to pay for the building). Therefore we are proposing a building fund drive, a special collection, for which your family's envelope is enclosed in this letter. We ask that you return your envelope as soon as possible with a generous contribution -- a contribution, incidentally, which will be expanding the facilities for, among young and old, more effectively growing in the knowledge of our beloved Savior.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

W. W. Bierfelder
Your pastor.

THE DECADE OF THE 60'S

Pastor Tierfelder felt that the time was right for a Christian Day School to be started. Since he had been there he baptized 5, 9, 11, and 5 children (in order of the years of his service there) in Goodwin alone. After several meetings this proposal was abandoned, but a car pool was organized to take six children from Goodwin and one from Altamont, to the day school in Watertown. The families and the pastor continued this car pool driving approximately 60 miles each day for seven years until reorganization and regular busing changed the situation. (75th Anniversary Booklet). The love for religious education must have been strong to keep up such an endeavor.

For my own personal history October 2, 1960, stands as one of the most important days in St. Peter's history. "Mr. and Mrs. Harlan Goens made application for membership in St. Peter's congregation, and having been found in doctrinal agreement with us, will be officially accepted at the next quarterly meeting. In the meantime, we extend them our welcome, the hand of fellowship, and pray that God will make us a blessing to one another." (Bulletin insert)

Pastor Tierfelder went to another call and Pastor J. Schneider accepted the call to St. Peter's. One of his first duties was to educate the congregation on the split with the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. He showed his concern in a bulletin announcement on August 27, 1961.

By now most of you know that our Synod has decided to suspend fellowship with the Missouri Synod. It is well that we keep further decisions on this matter in mind. We stand ready to resume discussions with the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod with the aim of

re-establishing unity of doctrine and practice and of restoring fellowship relations. We are not passing judgment on the personal faith of any individual member of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. We are ready to continue our support of the joint projects carried on by the Synodical Conference and by groups within the Synodical Conference until we can adjust to the new conditions. We call upon all our members to manifest the understanding, consideration, and patience of love during this period of change and adjustment. These are all points that all of us should not forget. More detailed information concerning this matter as well as all other action at the convention will be found in the forthcoming issues of the Northwestern Lutheran.

In the 60's many new donated fixtures decorated St. Peter's. A new lectern and baptismal font were donated in 1962. A new pulpit in 1963. The old pulpit was given to the Student Center at Brookings. In 1969 a brick bell stand was made. Other gifts too numerous to mention were given in this decade.

The church again saw moderate growth and in 1963 the membership was up to 157. Pastor Schneider continued to serve the dual parish until 1965. When he left Pastor Werner, who was serving a congregation at South Shore, South Dakota accepted the call to Goodwin. After a year's vacancy the congregation in Altamont decided to dissolve and its members were encouraged to join Goodwin or Clear Lake.

With the arrival of Pastor Werner St. Peter's became involved in yet another dual parish. This dual parish continues to this day. Because of this dual parish the congregation sold its parsonage in 1966.

The sixties saw many changes for our synod as well as for St. Peter's, but God's mercy kept the congregation going and growing into the 70's.

THE 70'S 75 + YEARS IN GOD'S GRACE

The church building again received numerous "face lifts" in the 70's. In 1970 the Tabea Society celebrated its 50th anniversary. Red carpeting and a new organ decorated the building in that year also.

In 1971 a new awning was built over the church entrance.

In 1972 new Plastiglass windows were put in the church and new kitchen cupboards were installed.

In 1973, the parish hall and kitchen were repainted.

The congregation continued to increase in its labors and gifts of love during this period of its history.

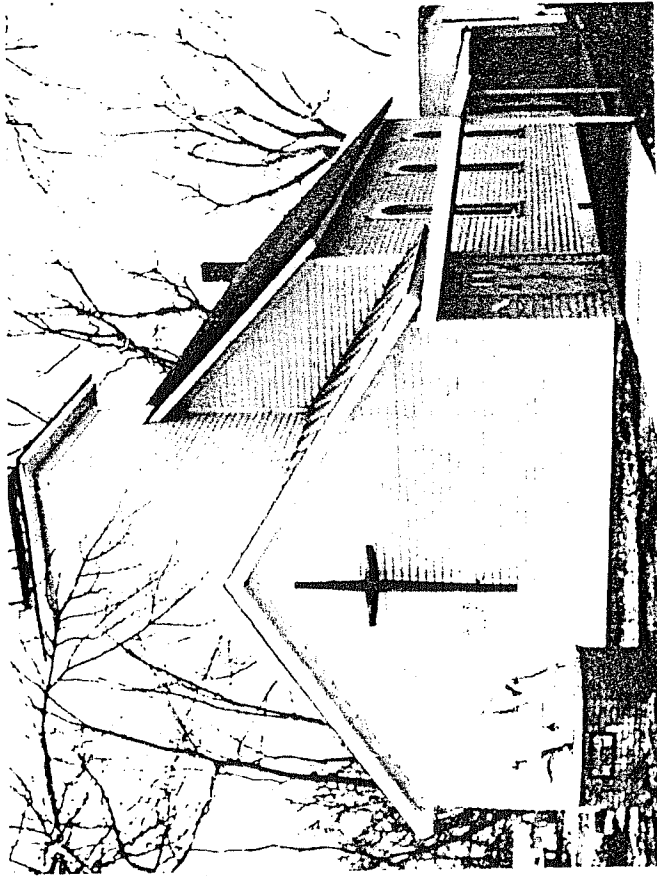
God also blessed the congregation with continued growth. Many members came to the congregation from Altamont. These plus other new members put St. Peter's membership at 130 communicants. (All other membership numbers are total members.) No doubt the big event in this decade was the celebration of St. Peter's 75th anniversary. A copy of the two services as well as a picture of the congregation at that time can be found at the end of this chapter.

As closely as could be calculated the total number of baptisms in St. Peter's at the time of their 75th anniversary was 347. Confirmation Rites 298. Weddings 100. Burials 82. I did not figure the numbers after this, so this will be the last accurate counting in my paper.

The decade of the 70's was in general a prosperous time for farmers. Again the congregation responded to God's blessings with constant improvement on the building dedicated to worship him.

ST. PETER'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

ORDER OF SERVICE



MORNING

Hymn of Invocation — 1
Liturgy — Page 5
Epistle Romans 12 : 1 - 12
Gospel John 10 : 22 - 30
Hymn — 473
Sermon — "The Tabernacle of God is with Us" — Rev. 21 : 3
Hymn — 639
Prayers
Hymn — 644
Announcements

AFTERNOON

Hymn of Invocation — 44
Liturgy — Page 5
Epistle I Corinthians 3 : 6 - 11
Gospel Matthew 13 : 16 - 23
Hymn — 475
Sermon — "Our Church the Shrine for the Perfect Gospel" — Ex. 20 : 24 - 25
Hymn — 53
Prayers
Hymn — 207 v. 6
Announcements

"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God."

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.
Amen.

INTO THE 80'S

The 80's saw the same type of visible improvements of the structure, but this decade also marks the beginning of the decline in membership numbers. With fewer families farming larger farms, together with the smaller size of families, St. Peter's numbers began to decline.

As the numbers declined the improvements to God's house continued. The members continued to show their trust in their Risen Savior.

In 1980 St. Peter's Was taken in a whirlwind of modernization. A new kitchen was built. Far more important than this two bathrooms were installed and St. Peter's outhouses were put out of commission for good!

In 1983 and 1984 a major remodeling changed the look of our worship area. The narthex wall was knocked out to add additional worship space. To compensate for the loss the exterior sidewalk with the awning over it was walled in and turned into the entryway. The balcony grew several feet, and a spiral staircase ^{now} lead up to it to provide more room on the main floor. Pastor Werner decorated the front of the church with beautiful woodwork around the altar. The chancel area was shortened to add two more pews to the front of the church. New carpeting was installed wall-to-wall. (Don't tell Prof. Tiefel.) The remodeling allows for much more seating room in the congregation which has been a real blessing especially for weddings. The members did most of the work and the entire project was done for about \$15,000.

The congregation continued to add to the beauty and comfort of

their worship facility with ceiling fans in 1984 and 1985. In 1987 oak plant stands for the flowers were donated. An eternal flame also decorates the front of the church.

The decade of the 80's also brought an exciting development for the congregation's growth and contact with the synod's worker training system. Because Pastor Werner served as The Dakota-Montana's district president the dual parish of South Shore - Goodwin received a vicar.

The first vicar God blessed St. Peter's with was Dan Seargent. He arrived in August of 1986. Andrew Baur followed in the fall of 1987. Vicar Philip Malchow filled his shoes in September of 1988. The last vicar St. Peter's had was Howard Molke who came in the fall of "1989 and took us into the 1990's.

The blessings of the vicar program gave the congregation were appreciated. The benefit of actually being a part of the training of future pastors cannot be overemphasized. The training these men received in St. Peter's and Our Savior's helped train them for work around the world as three of them are foreign missionaries.

THE 90'S AND BEYOND; GOD'S GRACE CONTINUES

The early part of the decade brought still more building changes as a storage shed was added to the building. The budget, which always seems to be a sore spot on some congregations, has been in good shape. The synod mission offering continues to grow, and in addition the congregation set a goal of \$7800 for Lift High The Cross. \$3405 has already been raised. Economic times are tough in rural areas, yet God continues to bless his people with the ability to support his work. That is amazing grace in action.

All too often God's grace shows forth the brightest during hard times. Hard times fell on Saint Peter's when Pastor Werner had to resign from the ministry for legal reasons in June of 1990. The hard burden of holding a congregation confused and divided was handled admirably by Vicar Howard Molke and Pastor Carter, who served the vacancy.

God did not let his sheep in Goodwin and South Shore without a Shepherd for long. The Holy Spirit called Pastor Dennis Lemke to fill the vacancy and he was installed in August of that same year. He has served as the pastor since. (I did not get a picture of him to include. The members who read this know what he looks like, and Prof. Brenner can look at his class composite in the hallways.) Continued comfort and encouragement from God's word by this man has held the congregation together and helped the healing.

Pastor Lemke has started efforts to reach out to straying members. With help from members a complete list of membership has been drawn up and efforts to reach those who seem to be straying have started. We pray that the Holy Spirit will bless these

efforts.

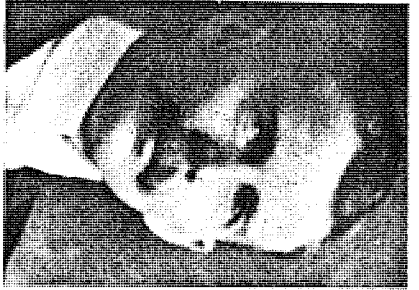
Continued outreach in the community is also necessary for the congregation to grow. There are unchurched even in such small towns as Goodwin. Pastor Lemke keeps the goals of a Christian in front of the congregation in his newsletters. In January of 1993 he summed them up like this:

- Never forget who saved you from sin, death and hell, and reflect on all that Jesus did for you.
- Commit yourself and your family to faithfully hearing God's holy Word in his house every Sunday.
- Eagerly come to the Lord's Supper to receive the very body and blood of your Savior which He gave into death to save you for an eternity.
- Continually ask your Savior what you can do for Him.
- Set time aside each day for reading His Word in order to grow in your faith.
- Tell others about who saved you and the He saved them too.

If the members of Saint Peter follow those simple directives God will bless the congregation far into the future.



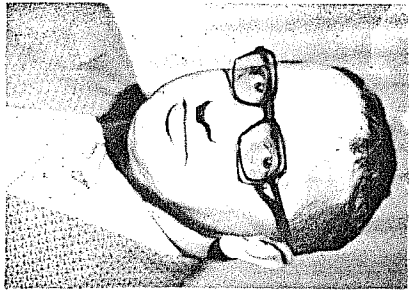
Rev. E. Kolander
1919 — 1924



Rev. F. Ehlerz
1910 — 1919



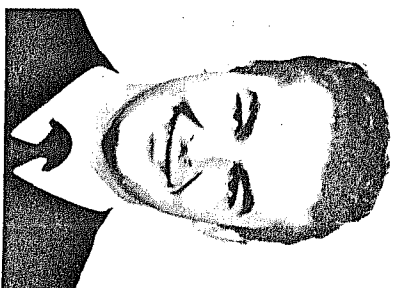
Rev. O. Wolf
1901 — 1909



Rev. E. Werner
1965 —



Rev. J. Schneider
1961 — 1965



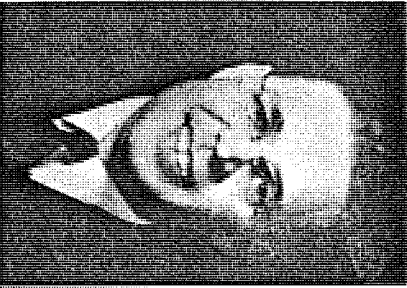
Rev. V. Thierfelder
1957 — 1961



Rev. H. Lau
1924 — 1931



Rev. D. Rossin
1931 — 1937



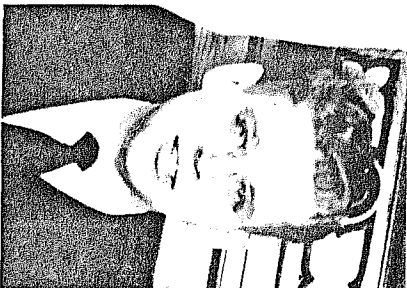
Rev. W. F. Dorn
1938 — 1944



Rev. A. A. Hellmann
1944 — 1949



Rev. E. H. Semenske
1950 — 1954



Rev. R. Reimers
1954 — 1957

The Lord called the men pictured on this page to serve the families of the congregation as their resident pastors.

Pastor L. Motkowski served in 1898 and 1899

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

God's blessings on St. Peter's congregation have been marvelously great over the years. Several of the congregations that started at the same time have been forced to close their doors, but God's grace has kept St. Peter's open for 95 years. By God's grace the congregation will have the privilege to celebrate 100 years in His service and beyond.

The congregation has returned at least five people to the full time preaching or teaching ministry. Miss Clara Schmidt served as a nurse in our Apache mission. Miss Ethel Giziewski taught in our schools in neighboring states. Pastor Ehlerts son became a pastor. Susan Riediger (Goens) taught for several years in Milwaukee. If God blesses me with a call (and if I get all my papers done) I will enter the full time ministry soon. Other than these I read, "A number of our young people have attended our synod's schools at New Ulm and Northwestern Lutheran Academy at Mobridge." (75th anniversary Booklet.) I did not find exact numbers of how many joined the ministry.

The people in the history of the congregation continue to impress me. Whenever work needed to be done most of it was done by members. Trusting in God's promise they have always been able to support the work of the congregation even in the toughest times. The number of memorials and gifts are a joy to read about.

The organizations have done their work eagerly and the congregation has been blessed by them. Throughout the history of the congregation we hear of the Ladies Aide coming to the rescue. (It seems as though the Tabea Society and the Ladies' Aide are

synonymous, and you find different names used at different times in their history.)

With diminishing population the future may seem shaky for this congregation. But if the members follow God's directives in his Word and strive to share that word with others I am convinced that the congregation can not only survive, but by God's grace grow in the 1990's and beyond. St. Peter's motto says it all, "Preaching a changeless Christ to a changing world." The beginning.

WORKS USED

Historical Selections of Deuel County Volumes I and II

Fifty Years of God's Blessings In The Dakota-Montana District

Seventy-Fifth Anniversary St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Numerous annual reports, bulletins, letters, and the like.

**Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library,
11831 N. Seminary Drive, 65W
Mequon, Wisconsin**