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THE ROLE OF ST. PAUL'S EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH
IN THE FOUNDING OF
THE CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF THE NEBRASKA DISTRICT -
PRIMARILY THE YEARS OF AUGUST RAASCH

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When I was a boy I had the privilege to hear history on a first-hand basis upon my great grandmother's lap. Although her knowledge was limited, she was able to relate to me how life was when she was a child. She told me how things I had read in history books related to her life. To her, the civil war wasn't just an account in a history book. It was just as real to her as the Vietnam War was to me. My interest in that era of history is to a great degree related directly to her. She made history come alive with her real life stories. I will always be grateful to my 96 year old great grandmother, who has long since been taken to her Maker.

While vicaring last year in Norfolk, Nebraska, last year I had a similar experience. Prior to my installation at St. Paul's congregation, I had read all about the organizing of the congregation in 1866. It was an interesting account. Yet it was only book knowledge. It wasn't until I met Darius and Clara Raasch that the history of St. Paul's congregation came alive. They were part of my shut-in calls. During the visits they would often talk about Norfolk's early beginnings. They were particularly equipped for the task since Darius was a son of one of the Pioneers who made the long journey in 1866. At the young age of 94 years, Darius made the history pages come to life with his real life stories. It is chiefly because of the Raaschs that I have attempted to compile the early history of our congregations in Norfolk and the surrounding communities.

Since the basic facts of the first WELS church in Nebraska is fairly well-known I would like to go into a bit more depth in that congregation, as well as to show how that congregation was either directly or partly responsible for the congregations in Stanton, Hadar, Hoskins, and a second one in Norfolk. These congregations, together with St. Paul's, make up the Central Conference of the Nebraska District of the WELS. (For obvious reasons I have excluded the congregations in Sioux City, Iowa.) The history that follows will be recorded in a different manner than most history records. Since I am deeply indebted to Darius Raasch's personal accounts of this period of history, I have chosen to tell the story as his father, August Rasch, would have seen it. So, instead of looking at WELS history through the eyes of a minister, I wish to recall it through the eyes of one of our laymen. To this end, I will retell the history of the given congregations up until August Raasch's death in 1922. Then, I will briefly outline the history of the congregations in the years that follow. Finally, I will list those who have

served these congregations along with the statistics of the official acts.

In order to obtain a proper perspective of the western growth in Nebraska we first need to return to the "Old Country," particularly to Prussia. Much of the German Lutheran immigration in the 1800's was a direct result of King Frederick William III proclamation known as the Prussian Union. Although we recognize that such an ecumenical union was not God-pleasing, it was used by our gracious Lord for the good of the Church. In Frederick's religious and political zeal to ~~unite~~^{strengthen} the Church and the State, he issued his proclamation on the 300th Anniversary of the Reformation. This false ecumenism of course, did not succeed as Frederick had hoped. Instead, people became more convicted in their beliefs and confessions. Persecution soon took place. True Lutherans simply turned to Acts 5:29, "*We ought to obey God rather than men.*" The time had come to flee their homeland. But where would they go? The answer was to the land of opportunity; to a land flowing with milk and honey; to America.

They came to America by the boat loads. They came to the "melting pot" of the world for religious freedom and to get a new start on life. Martin Raasch was no exception. This Prussian farmer, who was born in early November of 1815, was faced with the same problems that so many other countrymen were faced with. He had waited long enough. When the harvest failed and business declined in 1844, he set his mind on a new home across the Atlantic. In September of that same year, this 28 year old farmer loaded his 23 year old wife, Wilhelmina, and his 2 year old son, August, on the ship Eliza Thornton. Little did Martin realize as they set off from Hamburg that August, who was born September 2, 1842, in Konigsburg, Prussia, would help him found congregations in Wisconsin and Nebraska.

The Raaschs arrived in New York after a long journey. Prior to their arrival in America, a group of about 150 Lutherans, who had left the same port on June 20, 1843, arrived in New York City after seven stormy weeks. These people had read the newspapers in Germany and Austria about Wisconsin. The propaganda told them that they could become a citizen within a year and that they could buy good land at \$1.25 an acre and ground of poorer quality for less.

It was in New York that many of them came into contact with a salaried official of Wisconsin, who worked in New York City as an immigration commissioner. It was his job to pass out as many pamphlets which promoted Wisconsin

as possible. One such pamphlet, which advertised the Dairy State, read as follows:

Come! In Wisconsin all men are free and equal before the law. Religious freedom is absolute and there is not the slightest connection between church and state. In Wisconsin, no religious qualification is necessary for office or to constitute a voter; all that is required is for a man to be 21 years old and to have lived in the state one year.

After hearing such propaganda, this large group traveled to Buffalo and again boarded a ship for Milwaukee. They arrived in Milwaukee on September 6th. About six weeks later, another group, under the leadership of Pastor Kindermann, arrived in Wisconsin. The two groups settled in Kurchayn, Washington County and in the townships of Lebanon and Ixonia.

Upon their arrival, the Raaschs followed these German Lutherans. Realizing that the winter months, would be hard on his young pregnant wife, Martin decided to spend the fall and winter in the state of New York. In Tonawanda, New York, near Buffalo, August welcomed his baby sister, Louisa, into the world. In the spring of 1845, the family of four pushed West until they came to the gentle rolling land near Ixonia, Wisconsin. There they joined the German immigrants who had also left their Fatherland because of economic disaster and religious persecution.

Unfortunately, the religious disputes that they thought they had escaped had followed them to Wisconsin. A controversy soon broke out and part of the group followed Pastor Kindermann, who joined the Buffalo Synod. The rest of the group was left without a pastor for a whole year. It wasn't until they called candidate L. Geyer that they obtained their first resident pastor. However, with Pastor Geyer's arrival the disputes did not cease. Distance played a role in the splitting of the group but a bit of German temperament over a fence-line also played a part. In July of 1849 a group left Immanuel Lutheran Church in nearby Lebanon, Dodge County to found St. Paul's Lutheran Church near Ixonia, of which Martin was a part.

Pastor John Hoeckendorf, who had previously served as a junior officer of the German army, was called to serve at St. Paul's. It is noted that the first services were conducted in Mr. Herman Braash's home. The following were listed as the founders of this congregation in Ixonia:

Fred Wagner, Hermann Braasch, Gottlieb Roehrke, Martin Raasch, Martin Dames, Christian Huebner, Carl Jaeger, William Degner, Fred Braasch, Jno. Braasch, Carl Braasch, Carl Winter, Fred Lucas, Henry Ludwig, Fred Neumann, and Louis Neumann. (The names underlined also helped in the founding of St. Paul's

Congregation in Norfolk, Nebraska.) In 1850, this small group erected a small log church.

These German Lutherans realized the importance of a Christian education so they immediately started a school in the church building. Pastor Hoeckendorf served as the school master. The Raaschs, along with the rest, were delighted with this arrangement since Amelia, Mary, Bertha, Herman, John, and Henry were added to their family while they lived in Wisconsin. Their daughter, Maria, died in infancy. With such a large increase in population of just one family, it is not difficult to understand that in 1860 the congregation was forced to build a larger church. This structure was built of gravel, clay, and lime.

While these new settlers were arranging matters in good order, disorder and disunity were brooding over that part of the country settled much earlier. The slave issue was about to explode, tearing the U.S. in two. Although the slave problem was remote to Wisconsin, the matter of preserving freedom and their new life wasn't. When President Lincoln issued the call to arms, many German Lutherans were in line at the inlisting stations. Among them was August Raasch. On August 21, 1862, the eldest son of Martin Raasch enlisted in the Wisconsin 26th Regiment Infantry, attached to the Second Brigade, Third Division, 11th Army Corps, Army of the Potomac, in short, the Union Army. His father was proud that he had joined the Yankee cause. However, that didn't stop the fact that August had to lie about his age when he enlisted. The government stated that a soldier had to be 21 years of age. August was slightly less than 20. In a letter that he wrote to his parents shortly after he left for war, he informed them that the enlisting officer "made" his age 21 so that "my Father could not get me back."

The book titled Compendium of the War of the Rebellion by Frederick H. Dyer shows that the involvement of the Wisconsin 26th Regiment was heavy, through Gettysburg as follows:

Organized at Milwaukee, mustered in September 17, 1862. Left the State for Washington, D.C., October 6, 1862. Attached to 2d Brigade, 3d Division, 11th Army Corps, Army of the Potomac, to October 1863, and Army of the Cumberland to April 1864. 3d Brigade, 3d Division, 20th Army Corps, Army of the Cumberland, to June 1865.

SERVICE: Moved from Washington, D.C., to Fairfax Court House, Virginia, October 15, 1862. Movement to Gainesville, Nov. 2-9 and duty there till Nov. 18. Moved to Centreville, Nov. 18, thence to Falmouth, Va., Dec. 9-14. Battle of Fredericksburg, Va., Dec. 15 (Reserve). At Stafford Court House till Jan. 20, 1863. "Mud March" Jan. 20-24. At Stafford Court House

till April 27. Chancellorsville Campaign April 27-May 6. Battle of Gettysburg July 1-3.

At 6 A.M. July 1, 1863, the order came for the 11th Corps and in 30 minutes the troops were to march. No breakfast for August and the rest of his comrades, just a supply of ammunition. The rain made the march miserable and made the thought of hand-to-hand combat even less desirable. Before noon came word the Rebels had forced the Yanks to retreat. Along with the hundreds of soldiers that weren't able to retreat was August Raasch. The Prussian immigrant laid in a deep furrow with a deep wound in his left side. He wasn't sure how long he laid there unconscience. When he finally came to, the fighting for that day was over.

According to Raasch, two Johnny Rebs approached him when they saw that he was still alive. One of them said, "Two more rounds to shoot." August then prepared to meet his Maker. The other Reb convinced his friend that there would be plenty other Yanks for his two rounds. Since August couldn't walk, they went their way. Soon there after, two more Rebs noticed him but passed him by. Finally, a lone man stopped to inform August where prisoners should go for medical attention. August finally realized that the area had been overrun by the Confederates. He also realized that his chances of survival as a badly wounded prisoner were slim.

At 6 o'clock that evening, he slowly gathered up his haversack, oil blanket, and canteen. Painfully he make his way toward the prisoners' camp. Many Johnny Rebs let him pass through, while others stopped him to take the few possessions he had left. A quick glance from fellow Reb soldiers allowed August to retain his goods. Finally, Raasch reached a group of wounded men awaiting treatment. There he spent a long, agonizing night. In the morning, two Confederate soldiers carried him to an ambulance. At a temporary hospital in a big church, his wound was cared for. Though we can't say for sure, it is believed that this field hospital was located on the campus of Gettysburg Lutheran Seminary. Ironically, this Lutheran boy finds sanctuary in a Lutheran Church. One day later, July 3, the tide of the battle shifted. Pickett's cavalry was demolished. General Lee was aware of the inevitable. He retreated and the Yankee prisoners were free.

August Raasch was taken to a hospital in Baltimore where he finally received clean clothes. Due to some oversight, he received no food for three days. Since he was to weak for food, he laid there to await the end. It wasn't until a captain, who had been shot in the throat, wrote a note to

the nurse that August finally received nourishment. Raasch then started his slow recovery; sleeping day and night.

After months in Baltimore, he was transported to David's Island, New York, on April 24, 1864. Longing for home, he applied and obtained a transfer to Harvey General Hospital in Madison, Wisconsin. There he remained from June 1864 to March 1865.

At his discharge from the hospital he was declared to be half disabled. He would always have a souvenir of the Civil War - an open, draining wound. The examining surgeon's report stated:

The ball entered on the left side of spine so near as to injure spinous process and leave a necrosed condition of bone with constant discharge of pus and passed out immediately forward of the point of enter; abscess of both extremities of passage.

While August was at war God had blessed his small congregation in Ixonia with more members each year. Within five years from his enlisting, the land had become more and more populated and expensive (\$35 to \$40 per acre). People were no longer able to live near enough to the church in order to take advantage of the Christian education offered. Something had to be done. But what? Although the fathers of the congregation were troubled at the thought of their children leaving home and their congregation, it was the only possible solution. Now the question was: "Where should they go?" Some decided to move to Minnesota. Others were about to follow, including the Machmuellers, who had their bags packed when shooting news of Indian up-risings were reported. In fact, Fort Ridgely had been burned, women and children had be dismembered at Essig, and New Ulm had been besieged. It was also reported that 42 Indians had been hanged on a single scaffold in order to put down the up-risings. Minnesota was definitely not the place to go.

Pastor Heckendorf's cousin, Mr. Steifer, who lived in West Point, Ne., sent encouraging reports of large amounts of unsettled land there. With an act of Congress on May 20, 1862, Nebraska looked all the more attractive. The Act said that any citizen of the U.S. who was the head of a family and any person of foreign birth residing in the country, who had declared his intention to become a citizen, might enter and settle upon not exceeding 160 acres of public land, and, after having resided upon it for 5 years, should receive a patent for the land. Steifer's report of the natural resources of the Elkhorn River Valley - plentiful timber, an abundance of good brick clay, fertile soil, and good water - made the mouths water of many

Ixonia residents. The congregation then voted to send three men of stern character and integrity to investigate these reports. The three men that were chosen for the task were: Herman "Father" Braasch, Frederick Wagner, and John Gensmer.

The three left in the late summer of 1865. They traveled by train from Chicago to St. Joseph, Missouri. From there they boarded a river boat which took them to Omaha. They traveled the remainder of the journey to West Point. At that time West Point was the most western settlement. The three men found that West Point was far too densely populated to accommodate their Wisconsin colony. So they moved on. Eight miles north of West Point lived Mr. T.F. Sporn. This most advanced settler transported them to the junction of the North Fork and Elkhorn Rivers. There they camped on September 15. It was just what they had been looking for. As Mr. Wagner looked over the spacious fertile ground he said, "Here will be my homestead. Here we will build a town." After scouting for several more days and meeting several hundred friendly Winnebago and Omaha Indians, they returned to Wisconsin to make preparations for the trip back the following spring.

On May 23, 1866 (Landgraf and Norfolk paper-centennial paper say they left on May 14), 42 families consisting of about 125 people began to move slowly west toward the prairies of Nebraska in three columns. This was accomplished only after each family loaded their ox-drawn wagons very carefully. Supplies for the journey and household items all had to be included. This is a list of the families who left Ixonia, Wisconsin. The heads of the families were: Herman Braasch, John Braasch, J. Buettow, Fred Boche, William Bocke, Jacob Bernhardt, Fred Dederman, William Fischer, Fred Haase, Christian Haase, Ferd Haase, Karl Hille, Jacob Kaun, William Klug, August Lentz, J.M. Machmueller, Karl Nienow, Martin Raasch, Gottlieb Roehrke, William Ruelow, William Seifert, Karl Uecker, A. Wachter, H. Wachter, Julius Wichert, Karl Wichmann, Gottfried Winter, Karl Winter, Frederick Wagner. The following single men left: Martin Machmueller, W. Braasch, F. Hoekendorf, August Melcher, August Nienow, August Raasch, Frank Wichmann. A list of the arrivals also included these added names: Louis Heckendorf, Louis Wachter, Carl Conrad, William Duhring, Fred Sporn, Fred Lehman, W. Winter. John Gensmer did not join the others on the trip. He reportedly was so frightened on the exploratory trip by the sight of the large encampment of Omaha and Winnebago Indians that he never returned to Nebraska.

A log was kept on the long journey by August Raasch. This is a translation of the German log:

Town	Miles
IXONIA, WIS.	3
BULLWINKEL, WIS.	11
JEFFERSON, WIS.	5
FORT ATKINSON, WIS. - Feed and water for cattle. Two miles from Atkinson we rented a field for the cattle to rest.	5
MILTON, WIS.	13
JANESVILLE, WIS. - Two miles from city, good pasture and water where we rested a day.	8
FOOTVILLE, WIS. - Two miles from village feed and water for the cattle.	10
BROADHEAD, WIS. - A very large hill six miles from city, feed and water for cattle.	10
MONROE HILLS, WIS.	20
WIOTIA, WIS. - Feed for stock, some hills.	21
GRATIOT, WIS. - Two miles from city on the prairie. Feed and water for cattle.	6
SHULLSBURG, WIS. - Several miles from city, prairie land and zinc mines. Sued for trespassing & fined..	12
BENTON, WIS. - Rather hilly and abundant water.....	8
HAZEL GREEN, WIS. - Excellent roads.....	5
FAIR PLAY, WIS. - Middle road.	6
DUNBITE TO DUBUQUE, IOWA.....	1
MISSISSIPPI RIVER	
Catfish, 2 mile house.....	1
4 mile house.....	6½
rather hilly, little water	
8 mile house.....	4½
12 mile house.....	7
PRAIRIE CREEK, IOWA - Good roads.....	2
WHITE WATER, IOWA - Hills.	4
CASCADE, IOWA - Rather hilly.	6
MONTICELLO, IOWA - Some hills.	10
ANAMOSA, IOWA.....	12
FAIRVIEW, IOWA.....	4
SPRINGVILLE, IOWA.....	6
MARION, IOWA.....	8
Anamosa, Fairview, Springville and Marion: level land, largely prairie.	
CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA - Sandy soil.....	5
MORINGO, IOWA - Low prairie land and rough travelling...25	
BROOKLIN, IOWA - Wooded land and excellent travelling?.....	22
GRINNELL, IOWA - 3 miles from city, spent Sunday here to rest. Baked bread.	17
NEWTON, IOWA	17
RISING SUN, IOWA.....	25
DES MOINES CITY, IOWA.....	9
ADEL, IOWA.....	25
READFIELD, IOWA - A high hill.	10
MORRISBURG, IOWA - Two miles from Readfield the highest hill yet.....	8
DALE CITY, IOWA.....	1½

Town	Miles
DOMINATION, IOWA - One mile from city, we spent Sunday here baking. (The first casualty). The gray horse belonging to Braasch died.....	14
GROVE CITY, IOWA.....	28
LEWIS, IOWA.....	10
COUNCIL BLUFFS, IOWA - Hilly.	45
MISSOURI RIVER -	
OMAHA, NEBRASKA	5
ELKHORN CITY, NEBRASKA - Spent Sunday baking bread.....	22

According to Edward A Landgraf, each family had a wagon drawn by four oxen. Each had two cows and some sheep. The men drove the oxen; the women and children herded the cattle and sheep. Only seven men had horses - the Machmuellers, the Rohrkes, the Raaschs and the Braaschs. It was also noted that August Lentz took a couple of Chester White pigs. During the course of the journey, Lentz had to enlarge their box twice.

The wagon trains moved slowly. On Sundays they paused to worship with the services conducted by "Father" Braasch. He also served as the leader of the entire caravan. Once a week they stopped to allow the women to do the necessary washing, ironing, and baking.

Landgraf tells how the Wisconsinites had hoped to reach West Point on the fourth of July. Their hopes were shattered when they were unable to find the town since it consisted in little more than a saw mill, a store built of perpendicular slates, and a few huts. After they asked a lone homesteader for directions, they turned back and finally reached West Point. The pioneers also had problems forging various streams and creeks. One of which was the Humbug Creek (Humbolt). It proved too muddy to risk fording so they spent 4 days constructing a bridge. They cut trees, hewed them into logs, laid them on sills of mud, and laid split willows for a floor. The nails they used were whittled out of ash wood.

According to Landgraf and the Centennial issue of the Norfolk paper, the caravan of German settlers reached their destiny of their pre-chosen site at the junction of the Elkhorn and North Fork Rivers on July 17, 1866.

This was two months and three days after leaving Ixonia. The Centennial booklets of St. Paul's congregation in both Ixonia and Norfolk state that the wearied travelers arrived in the area of Norfolk on July 12, 1866.

Regardless of the date, it is well documented that immediately upon arrival of their new home, the Raaschs and their fellow Pioneers fell on their knees and gave thanks and praise to their Lord. They had been blessed

by a safe journey; save the death of Mr. Braasch's gray horse. Although the last places are not listed on August Raasch's log, a note on the page informs us that 612 long miles had been recorded by him.

This group of Lutherans realized that as soon as they would reach their chosen land, they would have no time to organize a congregation nor instruct their children in the Christian truths. For that reason, a congregation was organized before they had left Ixonia. This congregation would be served by the teacher in Wisconsin, "Father" Braasch. He would lead this small group in Scripture readings and prayer. Pastor He³ckendorf confirmed all the children that could be instructed before the trip so that they could help their parents set up home. The first place of worship, their church, was a small she along the river which had been abandoned by some squatters who had returned to Illinois. Branches of trees formed the roof. Hay covered the floor. This structure was their place of worship for the remainder of the summer.

So that no one could complain about selecting a homestead, the group decided to cast lots for the land after the fashion by which the Children of Israel divided their Promised Land. Those drawing sites north of the township line '23' had to make a trip 75 miles northeast to Dakota City to establish their claims. Those south of the line travelled to Omaha to establish their claims. Since the elders (Frederick Wagner, Herman Braasch and Gottlieb Roehrke), felt it more advantageous to live close together in case of Indian trouble or prairie fire, they built their homes near the river. This also afforded easy access to water. The families lived in their wagons until their sod houses, dugouts, or log houses were built.

October of 1866 was a delightful month for the inhabitants of the newly formed community. October was the first time the government had made a survey of the area. But more importantly, October was the month in which Pastor John Hoeckendorf joined them after serving St. Paul's, Ixonia, for 17 years. Pastor Hoeckendorf had received the call to serve the pioneers before they had left on their journey. He attended to the duties of his call, both a pastor and a teacher, as soon as he arrived.

The Raaschs and the other immigrants then settled down to wait out the long hard winter. As the winter cold got stronger they longed for the trees which were so plentiful in Wisconsin. But this was only a foretaste of the winters that laid ahead. (For example, during the blizzard of '88, one family is reported to have sat out the blizzard by getting their cow into

their dugout and allow her to provide warmth and food for the family.) Spring finally arrived to the joy of the pioneers. They once again thanked God for the many blessings He had bestowed on them and for the fact that everyone had survived that first, long, cold winter. Spring was also the time when husbands, fathers, older brothers and sisters came home from their winter jobs in Omaha and Fremont. They brought home money and much needed supplies. There was no time for vacation for these people. Spring planting needed to take place.

The group soon realized that the homes of Father Braasch and Pastor Hoeckendorf were too small for their worship services. In the fall of 1867, the pioneers purchased about 12 acres of land to build their first church. The building was 24' x 30'. It was built out of pine logs which Herman "Father" Braasch purchased for \$40. The pine was bought in Fremont and cut at the sawmill near West Point. The church members used nearly 200 oxen to pull the logs from Battle Creek to the church site in Norfolk. The floor was made of native willows and covered with straw. The roof had loose green willow branches covered with sod. This church contained no altar or pulpit. The benches were boards laid on blocks of wood. When the congregation arose, the boards would often slide off the blocks and cause much noise, which would disrupt the church service. The building also served as a school. Pastor Hoeckendorf was the teacher and it was open to the public. The German language was the medium of instruction.

This 24 x 30 church and school building was the first of any kind in Madison County and the first Lutheran church in the state of Nebraska. The nearest church at that time was at West Point. This first structure built by the pioneers was located at the corner of 11th St. and Georgia Ave., the present location of St. Paul's Church. The first wedding of Norfolk and the county took place in this building in 1867.

The group of German farmers was well enough established by the spring of 1868 that they pronounced "North Fork" their permanent post office address. Samuel H. Thatch suggested "Norfork" as the name because it was the simplest compounding of "North Fork." Postal authorities, thinking the word had been misspelled, changed the spelling to "Norfolk." August Raasch was commissioned as the first postmaster of Norfolk on June 4, 1868. The first election took place in the same year. Madison County was organized a year earlier in 1867. August served on the committee which organized the county.

Some of August's other offices were assessor, county commissioner for his district and deacon of St. Paul's Lutheran Church for over 20 years.

In 1868, the congregation gave Pastor Hoeckendorf assistance with his teaching load. Miss Hoeckendorf, E. Heilman, H. Klaus, and W. Zutz became his assistants. This situation lasted until 1870 when Mrs. Kidder, the wife of the congregationalist minister, taught classes in the building of St. Paul's school. The German school - Bible History, German and Catechism - was taught in the morning by Pastor Hoeckendorf. The English School - the secular subjects (the 3 R's) - was taught in the afternoon by Mrs. Kidder. The two Hoeckendorf girls served as interpreters since they could speak both German and English.

August Raasch was married to Maria Rohrke on June 6, 1873. Miss Rohrke was born on January 15, 1852, in Ixonia, Wisconsin. Her father, Gottlieb Rohrke, was a German immigrant like August's father. He was born in Oderbruch, in Brandenburg, Prussia, in 1815. He and his family had arrived in Lebanon, Wisconsin, in 1844. The Lord blessed the union of August and Maria with eleven children: Sarah, Obed, William, Agnes, Ernest, John Martin, Hedwig, Darius, Hugo, Ella, and Leona.

In August of 1876, the congregation incorporated with the state of Nebraska under the name: THE GERMAN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SAINT PAUL'S CONGREGATION OF THE UNALTERED AUGSBURG CONFESSION OF NORFOLK, NEBRASKA. Prior to this, strife broke out concerning lodge membership. Some of the members, not seeing the Biblical basis for not being lodge members broke away from St. Paul's congregation and built a church of their own about four miles east of town. In the same year, St. Paul's became incorporated, they came back to town and held services in the Congregational Church. In 1878, this German congregation erected the St. Paul Grace Lutheran Church, a framed structure, at a cost of \$3,000.

1876 was also a big year for St. Paul's congregation. Besides the fact that they became incorporated, the congregation bought 12 acres of land from Pastor Hoeckendorf at \$10 an acre. Then, they hired Karl Uecker to build a parsonage on that land. The size of this parsonage was 16' x 26" with a wing 14' x 16'. This new parsonage would only serve Pastor Hoeckendorf for less than a year. In 1877, Pastor Hoeckendorf was called to his eternal rest after a long and painful illness. Pastor Hoeckendorf had served his Lord faithfully for 28 years for many of the pioneers of Norfolk.

It became quite evident that the church built in 1866 was too small for the growing congregation. When the Lord's Supper was celebrated many

were compelled to stand outside for lack of room. The situation demanded a new church. In April of 1878, the 50 voting members decided to build a new framed church measuring 36' x 50' at a cost of \$1,405. This church was completed in August of the same year.

After an eight month vacancy the congregation called candidate M. Pankow to be their pastor. He accepted the call and was installed on August 18, 1878, by President Dr. Erst of Northwestern College. Dr. Erst first had to submit to a colloquy before he could install M. Pankow. On the same day St. Paul's congregation also dedicated their new house of worship. Pastor E. Pankow, a brother of their new pastor, delivered the sermon for the dedication.

1879 ushered in the temperance movement in Norfolk, although there were discussions on the issue as early as 1874. Word has it that the Germans paid little attention to the movement. They believed that it was one's own business if he wanted to enjoy a drink or not. They seemed to understand Christian liberty as it is set forth in the Bible and the Lutheran Confessions.

Pastor Pankow's youth and vigor brought new life to the congregation. St. Paul's grew both inwardly and outwardly. The number of school children grew to such an extent, that in 1883, the congregation was faced with the joyful task of calling a full-time teacher (Mr. Eiselmeyer). They were also faced with a space problem. The voters decided to build a new school. This 22' x 40' school was built on the property owned by the congregation.

The following year, a teacherage was built. Originally, it was 16' x 24'. Later on it was enlarged. 1884 also saw mass improvements in their house of worship. Herman Braasch donated the altar and the pulpit while the rest of the congregation responded by purchasing the pews. A pipe organ was also dedicated to the glory of God. This organ served the congregation until 1921.

God had installed a great mission zeal in the young Pastor M. Pankow. It was during his ministry in Norfolk that the Lord added to His flock by the opening of congregations in Stanton, Hadar, and Hoskins. Although Pastor Pankow was not responsible to the organizing of Grace, Stanton, in 1872, he was called to serve them as a joint parish with St. Paul's in 1879. He served them until Pastor Brandt was installed as their regular pastor in 1882. Pastor Pankow was responsible for the congregations in Hadar and Hoskins.

In April of 1892, Pastor Pankow received a call to Lake Mills, Wisconsin. With deep regrets the members of St. Paul's released their pastor.

They and the rest of the congregations in the area said good bye to Pastor Pankow and wished him "God's Speed."

On the same day on which Pastor Pankow delivered his final sermon in St. Paul's congregation, the members called Pastor A.F. Seigler of Two Rivers. He accepted the call and was installed on Ascension Day of 1892, by Pastor Brandt of Stanton.

In the year 1895, St. Paul's decided to build an addition to the parsonage. It was a two-story building 22' x 33' with a building 16' x 16' which connected the new part with the old part. Mr. Karl Zuelow served as head carpenter. Pastor Siegler lived in this new structure until he received a call to Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, in October of 1899.

On October 8, 1899, Pastor Ph. Hoelzel was call to serve St. Paul's. On November 12, he was installed. He became ill shortly after he arrived in Norfolk. He was taken to his Savior on August 10, 1904. Yet during his short ministry at St. Paul's, a milestone took place. In 1903, the congregation was moved to join the Nebraska District of the WELS. This was a victory over the spirit of pietism; which raised its head already in Wisconsin. Prior to this the members did not want to be tied down confessionally. It had been a long and at times a bitter battle which involved name calling and ridicule. Nevertheless, God himself receives all the glory as St. Paul's joined themselves with thousands of Christians in the WELS who believe the same as they do.

On April 1, 1904, Martin Raasch, August's father, died. The Norfolk Daily News had this to say about the 89 year old pioneer:

A member of the Wisconsin colony of Germans who converted fertile valleys into the profitable farms in this vicinity is dead...The sons who survive are...all well known and substantial men of this vicinity.. He leaves a large number of friends, among the pioneers and is favorably known to many of the people of Norfolk who have followed in the wake of the early colonists.

Mrs. Martin Raasch had preceded her husband in death the previous December.

A new era began at St. Paul's in 1904. It is what is known as the "Witt Era." On May 22, 1904, Pastor John Witt was called by the congregation to serve them as Pastor. He accepted the call and was installed on July 3. During this same year the congregation decided to extend Georgia Avenue past the south side of the property. Their property could now be arranged along this street.

In the very next year after Pastor Witt became settled, things began to take a different shape. The constitution of the congregation was revised and a constitution for the school and the cemetery was added. This was due to a greater interest in beautifying the cemetery and also in making the

school more efficient. With the large increase in the school enrollment, St. Paul's had the privilege to call a second full-time teacher.

Already in 1906, plans were in the making to provide more room for school purposes. It seemed reasonable to remodel the church into a school and build a new brick church. On January 21, 1907, the voters of the congregation made these plans final. Architect Stitt drew the plans and specifications for the new 13th century Gothic style church while Kellner and Worth served as contractors. The cornerstone was laid in August of 1907. The structure was dedicated to the glory of God on May 3, 1908.

The Norfolk Weekly of May 8, 1908, carried the following excerpts on the structure and the dedication of the new church of St. Paul's congregation:

It is a far step from the crude log church, Norfolk's first church, the first church of this section, built back in the sixties, and the modern beautiful church that is to be dedicated Sunday (May 3, 1908).

There is no finer church in this section of the state than the new St. Paul church. Norfolk people who take advantage of the services of dedication day, the morning and afternoon services in German and the evening service in English, to visit the new church will be surprised at the style and quality of the new building. On the exterior it is a building of Gothic style, symmetrical and impressive. The interior is equally pleasing and the fine art glass calls for instant admiration.

Back two-score years ago on nearly the same site the first log church was erected. There were no finely finished pews but cottonwood boards laid across sawed logs. Representing the transition period between the log church and the church of pressed brick is the present frame church built in 1878.

The new church cost a little over \$22,500. What a terrifying sum of money these figures would have represented to that sturdy band of pioneers who founded Norfolk and formed the first congregation of St. Paul's church. Out in the wilderness of the northwest prairies 42 years ago they had nothing to form a prophetic picture of the beautiful house of worship that is now to be dedicated.

The structure was initially equipped with a private gas plant to be used for lighting. However, it was also wired for electric lights in anticipation of the future extension of the city system.

Although the total cost of the Gothic structure and furnishings was \$24,000, it was completely paid for three years after its dedication. As soon as the debt on the church had been paid, it was found necessary to either rebuild the old parsonage or to erect a new one. The voters decided that the latter was the best way to go. The total cost of the parsonage, which still serves as the parsonage, was a little over \$4,000.

A number of events in St. Paul's congregation took place during this

new era. The Ladies' Aid was organized in 1908. 1913 ushered in a male chorus which sang praises to God during their services. The Lord works in mysterious ways. The fact that He used the resentment stirred up by the First World War against the German language to encourage the congregation to use the English language in their worship services is another example. In 1914, English services were conducted once each month in the evening. In the following year, the voters decided to build a second teacherage. Braasch and Klug did the construction work. This teacherage cost the congregation \$2,000.

Having experienced so many blessings from a gracious God during the past 50 years, St. Paul's decided to celebrate the 50th anniversary of their congregation. This took place on July 16, 1916. For this occasion, the congregation decided to have the interior of their eight-year-old church redecorated by Carl Reimann of Milwaukee; at a cost of \$1,100. Three services in German and English offered praise and thanks to God for His gracious love and untold blessings. During those 50 years, 1,398 were baptised, 761 were confirmed, 290 marriages were performed and 401 were buried. St. Paul's listed 760 souls and 559 communicants.

The electric lights were finally lit in the church, parsonage, and two teacherages in 1918. Now the evening services could be held without the fear that the gas lights would go out. In the following year, 1919, three German and one English service per month were established by the voters. In that same year, a third teacher needed to be called to teach on a part-time basis. Pastor Witt and his family also had a new change in their lives in that same year. Running water was installed in the parsonage.

In the year before August Raasch died, the congregation dedicated a new pipe organ to the glory of God (June 27, 1921). The organ cost \$8,850. It still serves St. Paul's congregation to this day. It was overhauled in 1947 at a cost of \$1,097. In 1956, it was completely overhauled and a new console and the Grand Chest was purchased. The total cost was \$7,075.

August Raasch lived on his farm west of Norfolk, which was located near the log cabin of his parents, until he was 70. He finally was forced to move to Norfolk because of declining health. At one point, his condition was so bad as to be described in the following manner in an affidavit supporting a request for an increase of an Invalid Pension. The following was signed by two neighbors:

He requires regular aid and attendance of another person to dress said wound for him as it is a running sore. Also he is prevented from performance of manual labor completely and is completely prostrated and confined to his house at all times.

Despite all this, August was a devoted family man who managed and directed a prosperous business.

On December 8, 1922, his Lord took him out of this vale of tears. In an article on his death, these summary statements of his life appeared in the Norfolk Daily News:

Coming to this country a lad fresh from the war and driving his ox team which broke the first trails of the pioneers, Mr. Raasch had lived to see the community of his choice grow into one of the richest in the world. He lived to raise a fine family of sons and daughters. All of his sons followed in his footsteps as prosperous farmers and land owners...Several years ago he bought a beautiful home on North 11th Street and retired but never grew accustomed to retirement, constantly pining for the pioneer days on the beautiful homestead overlooking the rich Elkhorn Valley on the west outskirts of Norfolk.

It is true that the community of Norfolk and the congregation of St. Paul's were saddened at his departure, but life went on. St. Paul's congregation grew and prospered. The following is a summary of what took place in the years that followed his death as his son, Darius, would see it.

- 1924 - City water installed in the church parsonage and teacherage.
- 1925 - The envelope system for offerings was introduced.
- 1927 - No third teacher in the school until 1950 although the enrollment often reached over 100.
- 1928 - English and German services every Sunday.
- 1930's - Very little repairs on property and salaries were continually decreasing during drought years.
- 1939 - Men's Club was organized.
- 1943 - Pastor W. Gieschen was installed on June 20th.
 - "The Lutheran Hymnal" was adopted.
 - The minutes of the congregational meetings were to be taken in the English language.
- 1947 - Pastor E.J. Dreyer installed on June 8th.
 - Extensive repairs were made on the parsonage.
 - The church was re-decorated at a cost of \$3,000.
- 1950 - The new school was dedicated on June 4th. The total cost was about \$102,000.
 - A third teacher was called.
- 1953 - Voted on September 2nd to insist that children must attend instruction class during the 7th & 8th grades.
 - Pastor Hugo Fritze installed on December 8th.
- 1954 - Two English services to be conducted on each Sunday.
 - The constitution was revised and adopted.
- 1962 - Pastor Elwood Habermann was installed on August 19th.
- 1967 - Pastor Milton Weishahn was installed on October 1st.
- 1970 - New teacherage was purchased to replace the old one.
- 1974 - The church was redecorated and renovated.
- 1976 - The Vicar program started.
- 1978 - Pastor M. Weishahn resigned; Pastor R. Schlieue of Hadar served vacancy.
- 1981 - Pastor Philip Zarling was installed on March 1st.
 - Tuckpointing of church

St. John's, Stanton, NE.

The beginning of St. John's, Stanton, is much like that of St. Paul's, Norfolk. Pioneers from southern Wisconsin loaded their wagons and made the long journey to the prairies of Nebraska. Some of the reasons for their departure were already discussed in connection with St. Paul's, Norfolk. The noted dissimilarity between the founding of St. Paul's congregation in Norfolk and St. John's congregation in Stanton is that St. Paul's was founded by transplanting a large number of members from Ixonia, Wisconsin. This cannot be said of St. John's. The latter congregation's early beginnings seem to be due particularly to one family.

According to the records, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Schwartz, Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Biehle, Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Rogge, Mr. and Mrs. William Werbelow, and a Mrs. Toelle came by covered wagons in 1865. Mrs. Schwartz, Mrs. Biehle, Mrs. Rogge, and Mrs. Toelle were all sisters of Mr. Werbelow. These sisters and their brother, along with their spouses, camped the winter of 1865-66 with a relative at the Rock Creek settlement near Beemer in Cuming County, Nebraska. Since Mrs. Toelle was a widow, she decided that it would be best for her to remain at Rock Creek. Her other travel companions left for Stanton county in April of 1866. The Stanton county records say that Frederick Biehle, Frederick Rogge, and William Werbelow made homestead entries in that county in the fall of 1865. Carl Schwartz's entry was recorded in May of 1867.

These four families formed the nucleus of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Unaltered Augsburg Confession, in Stanton county. Three other families also made entries for homesteads in the county in 1867 and 1868. They were the families of Frederick Koch, Ludwig Lehmann, and Ludwig Belz. These families joined the other four families at St. John's. I have no idea if Martin or August Raasch knew any of these men and women. If they didn't meet before, they undoubtedly met later as St. Paul's and St. John's congregations became united in Christian fellowship; especially during the ministry of Pastor Pankow of Norfolk.

One thing is certain during the first years of this infant congregation in Stanton. The lack of proper spiritual care was felt by them. Several contracts were drawn up with the Lutherans at the

Rock County settlement near Beemer. However, this settlement didn't have a pastor, either. It wasn't until January, 1868, that the Rock County Lutherans petitioned the LCMS for a truly Lutheran pastor. Candidate Adolph William Frese was assigned to that small community. He was ordained in January, 1868, and arrived in Rock County in early February. Pastor Frese, being young, ambitious and mission-minded, made a canvass of Stanton County in 1869. On August 24 of that same year, the first worship service was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Schwartz; four miles east of Stanton. During this service, Pastor Frese baptised two children, one of which was Henry Schwartz. Henry later became the first son of the congregation to enter the ministry.

Pastor Frese continued to serve this group of Lutherans in Stanton until July of 1871. At this time, Pastor Kasper Rupprecht was installed at Christ Lutheran Church in Norfolk (LCMS). Pastor Rupprecht attempted to serve the Stanton congregation, but his busy schedule and the distance involved made it a poor situation. During this time, the Stanton group grew so much that they were forced to meet in the Koch School, District 2, for their worship services.

St. John's Lutheran Church had much to celebrate in 1872. On July 28, Candidate George J. Burger was installed as their first resident pastor. During this same year they also built their first church, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles east of Stanton. The structure was 20' x 32' x 10'. A partition at one end of the building provided living quarters for the pastor. The cost for the building was \$366.47.

The congregation held their first recorded congregational meeting on February 16, 1873. William Wobbermin served as chairman and Pastor Burger served as secretary. During this meeting the first six paragraphs of the proposed congregation were discussed. Since it was late, they voted to discuss the remaining paragraphs on February 21. The constitution was then accepted at the end of this meeting. In a meeting held in June, the constitution was signed by the following men. (The first nine men were charter members.)

1. William Werbelow
2. William Wobbermin
3. Ludwig Lehmann
4. Fred Prawitz
5. William Luebke
6. G. Kochler
7. Ludwig Belz
8. Carl Schwartz
9. August Oertwich
10. Mr. Leitzke

Pastor Burger received and accepted a call to Hampton, Nebraska, in November, 1875. The congregation was somewhat shocked that he accepted the call since they promised him they would make room in the attic of the church for storage, to bring hay for the pastor's use and to repair the kitchen so that it would not snow in nor rain in anymore.

Pastor Rupprecht of Norfolk served as vacancy until Pastor August Leuthaeuser was installed in May, 1876. On January 17 of the following year, St. John's Lutheran Church was incorporated. During this same month, Frederick Koch donated an acre of land to the church for a cemetery. In November, the congregation voted unanimously to build a parsonage in Stanton.

When Pastor Leuthaeuser left in June, 1879, he left the church with strife and dissention. The congregation was torn apart due to some remarks he allegedly had made. At the same time, an epidemic of diptheria hit Stanton. It was troubled times for this newly established congregation. An appeal was sent to Pastor Pankow of St. Paul's, Norfolk, to serve their spiritual needs. With the same youth and vigor he used to serve St. Paul's and establish the congregation in Hadar and Hoskins, Pastor Pankow eagerly gathered their straying flock. While Pastor Pankow served here, he recorded the official acts of St. John's congregation in the record books of St. Paul's. He continued to serve St. John's to the best of his ability until the new pastor arrived.

During the time of this vacancy, the congregation appointed Claus Schumann, a member of the congregatio well-versed in Scripture, to instruct the children. He taught in 1880 and 1881. Prior to this the resident pastors instructed the children in the Word of God and Luther's Small Catechism, and taught them hymns of the Lutheran Church. These were all taught in the German language.

On May 23, 1882, Herman Brandt was installed as pastor. In September of that same year, construction began on a new church building located in Stanton. It measured 26' x 50'. Total cost of the structure was \$1,900. (This figure includes the repairs that were necessary after a storm on the night of June 21 damaged the building.) This new church was also used as a school until 1885.

St. John's during the 1800's mothered a congregation. Shortly after Pastor Brandt arrived in Stanton, he set up two preaching stations. "Am Humbug" was started in 1882 or early 1883. "Zu Pilger" was started in the summer of 1887. In 1890, the two preaching stations merged. On April 7, 1890, the "Humbug" station organized as the St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church

Unaltered Augsburg Confession, in Stanton County, Nebraska. Pastor Brandt continued to served this congregation until his departure in 1896. At this time Pastor Gruber of Trinity, Hoskins, took over as their shepherd. He served them until September of 1902.

On April 6, 1902, St. Paul's split because of traveling distance. The offshoot congregation was called Bethlehem Ev. Lutheran Church. However, both congregations were served by the same pastor. The following pastors served these congregations:

E. Zaremba	1902-21
W. Sefeldt	1921-23
A.F. Krueger	1923-26
E.E. Prenzlou	1926-30

After Pastor Prenzlou left in 1930, St. Paul's was served by Pastor Frey of Trinity, Hoskins. Bethlehem was served by Pastor Klaus of St. John's Stanton.

In the fall of 1937, Bethlehem disbanded. They sold their church to Zion Ev. Lutheran Church at Valentine, Nebraska. The church was moved piece by piece to its new site in Valentine. A few months later St. Paul's also disbanded. The members of the two congregations were then absorbed into the membership of the surrounding Lutheran churches.

Getting back to St. John's in Stanton: in 1885 they built their first school. It was built at a cost of \$450. The dimensions were 20' x 32' x 10'. Pastor Brandt served as the teacher until January of 1889. At this time Herman Seidel, the first called teacher, arrived.

On July 19, 1890, tragedy hit the congregation in Stanton. A bolt of lightning struck the church and the structure went up in flames. This proved extremely costly since their insurance had lapsed on the building. Rather than mourning in their misfortune, they united together to build another house of worship. The new church, which was built on the ashes of the former one, was dedicated to the glory of God only five months later, in December.

In 1894, the choir was organized, making it the oldest organization of the congregation. (It was reorganized in 1917.)

On February 15, 1896, Pastor Brandt accepted a call. Pastor A.F. Siegler of St. Paul's, Norfolk, served as their vacancy pastor for 13 months. On March 15, 1896, Pastor August Vollbrecht was installed as pastor. During that year, the congregation built a new parsonage at a cost of \$1,390. The former parsonage then became the teacherage. Pastor Vollbrecht's ministry in Stanton ended in September of 1900. October 14, 1900, Pastor Carl Siegler was installed.

In 1902, the congregation saw the need of a new teacherage and so they constructed a fine home. (This structure is the present teacherage.) On October 2, 1902, ten charter members adopted the constitution to form St. John's Lutheran Ladies' Aid Society.

Pastor Siegler's tenure at St. John's had some rough times. Friction developed between him and the teacher. The lodge question caused many problems in the congregation. In July, 1907, the Lord moved Pastor Siegler to accept a call to Wisconsin. During the short vacancy, Pastor Zaremba of St. Paul's and Bethlehem churches, north of Stanton, served them. Three months later, Pastor Philip Martin was installed. During his tenure, St. John's constitution was revised (in 1909) and a school constitution was adopted (in 1916).

Due to hostilities toward the German-speaking Lutherans during World War I, the congregation instructed Teacher Trettin to teach all subjects except religion in the English language as of January, 1919. He was permitted to instruct the children in the German language until the Palm Sunday confirmation service.

The last noteworthy incident which happened prior to August Raasch's death in 1922, was another tragic event. In 1919, fire destroyed the first church building used by St. John's. This was not so bad in and of itself. However, Albert Lehmann, the secretary of the congregation, lived there. Along with the memories of those early pioneer days, the record book of St. John's congregation was destroyed.

These are some events which took place in St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church, Stanton.

- 1922 - The Young People Bible Class was organized.
- 1926 - Sunday School was started.
- 1928 - Pastor E.A. Klaus was installed April 15th.
- 1930 - Church constitution translated from German into English.
- 1931 - The present school was built at a cost of \$8,130. On July 23, a fire damaged the nearly completed building. This time the church had insurance. The school was rebuilt and dedicated on August 30th.
- 1936 - The church's interior was remodeled and a chancel was added.
- 1937 - Pastor Herbert Hackbarth installed on October 3rd.
- 1941 - A new Hammond Electric organ was purchased at a cost of \$1,595.
 - "The Lutheran Hymnal" was introduced.
- 1950 - The school constitution was revised and translated from German into English on May 1st.
 - On December 4th, at the annual meeting, it was decided to join the Wisconsin Synod. Prior to this the congregation had remained independent of any synodical affiliation, although they had always called their pastors and teachers from them and supported

- their financial drives. At this meeting, it was also decided to stop having regularly scheduled German services.
- 1951 - The congregation changed the name of the church from "The German Evangelical St. John's Congregation," to "St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church" on April 22nd.
 - 1954 - The one-room addition of the school, which cost \$18,000, was dedicated on October 10th.
 - 1956 - Kindergarten classes were started.
 - 1960 - First hot lunch at school was served in October.
 - 1962 - Ninety-seven communicant members requested withdrawal of their membership from St. John's to form their own congregation affiliated with the LCMS on March 2nd. This was the result of lively and heated debates from the previous year.
 - Pastor G.H. Frank of Hoskins served as vacancy May to June.
 - Pastor Edward Lindemann was installed on June 17th.
 - Adult Bible Class was started in the winter.
 - 1963 - The final payment on the school was made in September.
 - 1964 - A second teacher was called due to increasing enrollment.
 - 1965 - A scholarship program was started to encourage the young people to enter the preaching or teaching ministry.
 - 1967 - The church constitution was revised and added the words "Wisconsin Synod" to the name of the church.
 - 1968 - The new church was dedicated on October 20th. The total cost of the church was \$124,695.46.
 - 1969 - Pastor James Humann was installed on January 19th.
 - Pioneer Group was organized.
 - Sunday Club for young adults was organized.
 - 1974 - Pastor Ray Beckman was installed on July 7th.
 - 1981 - Pastor Paul William Bader was installed on July 12th.

Immanuel, Hadar, NE.

The settlement of what is known today as Hadar is a direct result of the wagon trains which settled Norfolk in 1866. That is not to say that they all came on the same wagon train. They didn't. Some did, but others, who followed their footsteps, soon came and settled in this little village about five miles northwest of Norfolk.

The German Lutherans refused to be without a church, much less a Christian school for their children. Shortly after they set up their homesteads in 1866, they called Pastor Estel of St. John's congregation east of Pierce (LCMS), to conduct their worship services. In those early years they gathered to worship their Lord in a small school house located $\frac{1}{4}$ miles north of Hadar. Pastor Estel accepted their invitation to serve them but this arrangement soon proved impractical since Pastor Estel was already serving 11 other congregations in Pierce county. The Lutherans looked for another solution.

They decided to ask Pastor Pankow of St. Paul's, Norfolk, to come to

their aid. This seemed to be the most sensible solution, since some of the people had formerly belonged to St. Paul's. Pastor Pankow accepted their challenge. He and Pastor Estel changed off conducting the regular Sunday services. When Pastor Estel left Pierce in 1882, the full responsibility of the flock in Hadar fell into the hands of Pastor Pankow. Immanuel Ev. Lutheran Church became a reality. The following is an excerpt of the minutes of the meeting that was conducted to organize the congregation:

Minutes of a meeting of the German Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of the vicinity of Hadar, County of Pierce, and the State of Nebraska, held on the 24th day of September A.D. 1883.

The German Ev. Lutheran Congregation of the vicinity of Hadar met at the School House in School District No. 15 in Pierce County and the State of Nebraska in the afternoon of the 24th day of September A.D. 1883, which meeting was called in the manner customary in said congregation that is: upon notice given by the warden of said congregation immediately after divine service.

The majority of the members of said congregation entitled to vote were present at the said meeting which had been expressly called for the purpose of electing Trustees and becoming incorporated according to the law. The following named members entitled to vote were present, to wit: F. Conrad, M.G. Rohrke, Carl Voecks, C.F. Braasch, A. Schwichtenberg, A.J. Huebner, Carl Lichtenberg, F.F. Wichman, August Filter, Carl Gehm, Wm. Huebner, Fred Lehman, Carl Rohrke, David Rohrke and others.

Secretary, Carl Gehm

This young congregation felt the desire to train their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They also desired a Christ-centered education in the secular subjects for their children. Their dream became a reality in 1884. Pastor Pankow taught confirmation class in the public school that Immanuel had rented. These confirmands were then confirmed at St. Paul's, Norfolk. A teacher by the name of Mr. Zelow taught the secular subjects in the light of Holy Scripture. The main subject was religion, but the 3 R's were also taught.

Three years later, in 1887, the congregation had grown to such an extent that they called Pastor F. Koch to be their first resident pastor. By the time Pastor Koch had arrived, the congregation had built its first church. (This structure was the Christian day school from 1902-1962.) One of Pastor Koch's many duties was that of a teacher. The church was turned into a school during the week. During the early years, classes were conducted only four days a week to allow for the pastor to prepare for his Sunday sermon. The medium was the German language. It is interesting to note that up until the year 1915, religion was taught all morning. In the after-

noon, the secular subjects were taught as time permitted.

In 1891, Pastor Koch accepted a call. In the same year, Pastor E. Stephan accepted the call from Immanuel. During his tenure, he was instrumental in organizing the congregation in Winside. Pastor Stephan served Hadar for four years.

In 1895, Pastor Kluge was installed. Instead of conducting instruction class in the church, he conducted it in the study of his home. This allowed his daughter, Alma, to teach the lower grades. Pastor Kluge was also noted as a doctor in the area, since he used homeopathic medicines. In June of 1901, the Lord called Pastor Kluge to Himself.

Pastor Philip Hoelzel of St. Paul's, Norfolk, served as vacancy pastor until Pastor Theo. Braeuer arrived on November 3, 1901. On January 6, 1902, the congregation was faced with a delightful problem. Their church was too small. They decided to build a new house of worship. On October 5, 1902, the building was dedicated to the glory of God. It was 84' x 44' x 20' with an 84' steeple. The total cost of the church with its furnishings was \$9, 500. (This church is still their place of worship.) Four years later, a pipe organ was purchased at a cost of \$1,200.00.

In August of 1903, Immanuel Congregation became a member of the Nebraska District of the Wisconsin Synod.

Up until 1905, the pastors had conducted a part-time Christian Day School in the old church building. This became unpractical. On August 20, 1905, Mr. Hugo Frey, a graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, was called as a full-time teacher.

In April of 1911, it was decided to lower the pulpit. This, however, was not completed until 1944. On June 6, 1911, the steeple was struck by lightning. The Chronicle stated: "Lightning struck the Northwest corner of the steeple, but thank the Lord that it wasn't more serious."

In January of 1919, the church put in electric lights. Pastor Braeuer retired from the ministry after 50 years of service to the Lord on July 18, 1920. He did continue to preach until Pastor G. Tiefel arrived in February, 1921.

This ends the highlights of Immanuel Congregation up until August Raasch's death. The following took place in the years that followed.

1930 - Electric lights were put in the school, parsonage and teacherage.

1937 - Decided to have all meetins in English.

- Pastor L. Tessmer was installed on October 3rd.

1939 - The church constitution was translated into English.

- 1940 - Voted to have English service every Sunday and German service every other Sunday in July.
- Voted to have German service every Sunday and English service every Sunday in October.
- For a number of years it jumped back and forth, depending what language the person spoke who made the motion.
- 1942 - "The Lutheran Hymnal" was adopted.
- 1943 - Pastor H. Spaude was installed on August 22nd.
- Young Peoples Society organized on September 24th.
 - The Ladies Aid Society was organized on December 8th.
- 1944 - The interior of the church was redecorated at a cost of \$1,200.00
- Sunday School was started in August.
- 1956 - The Parent-Teacher Committee was organized on December 10th.
- 1957 - Pastor G. Frank of Trinity, Hoskins, served as vacancy pastor, as of February.
- 1959 - Pastor Gerald E. Free was installed on January 11th.
- A second teacher was called.
- 1963 - A new school (60' x 76') was dedicated on August 25th. The total cost of the school was \$ 33,383.52.
- 1965 - Pastor E. Lindemann of St. John's, Stanton, serves as vacancy pastor, as of March.
- New parsonage was built from the lumber of the old school house.
- 1966 - Pastor H. Russow was installed on July 17th.
- 1971 - Pastor Humann of St. John's, Stanton, serves as vacancy pastor, as of July.
- 1972 - Pastor Richard Schlieue was installed on July 9th.
("This is the first time we have had a brand new pastor," a member remarked.)

Trinity, Hoskins, NE.

Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church's beginning is somewhat similar to that of Immanuel, Hadar. They both were founded by Pastor Pankow of St. Paul's, Norfolk. They are different in the fact that the first services were conducted by Pastor Pankow in Hoskins. But, Pastor Pankow didn't do it entirely on his own. William Zutz, a layman in the Hoskins area, was also important in the founding of Trinity.

Lutheran services were first conducted in Hoskins in the early fall of 1886. On December 6, a meeting was held in the home of William Zutz, in which Trinity Lutheran Church was organized. Services were then conducted twice a month on Sunday afternoons in the Hoskins Public School. Already at the organizational meeting, plans were being made for the building of their own church. On November 13, 1887, their first church was dedicated to the glory of God. It measure 22' x 44' with a 50' tower. This building served the congregation for 17 years.

During the first 10 years of its history, Trinity was supplied with services by pastors of St. Paul's, Norfolk and St. Paul's, Winside. In July, 1896, this new congregation received their first resident pastor, in the

person of Pastor John Dowidat. He was followed by Pastor R. Gruber in 1898. During his tenure a new church was dedicated to the service of the Lord on October 30, 1904.

Although the records don't indicate when Trinity joined the Nebraska District of the Wisconsin Synod, one might guess it was in 1904, together with St. Paul's, Norfolk and Immanuel, Hadar.

Pastor J. Aaron replaced Pastor R. Gruber, in 1908. During these early years of Trinity, the resident pastors not only provided instruction class but also conducted a Christian Day School. This kind of attitude may have rubbed off from the time Pastor Pankow conducted instruction class. Miss Martha Zutz was engaged to teach the other secular subjects since Pastor Pankow's time was limited.

In the years 1918-1919, Trinity was served by Pastor John Harms. Pastor F. Brenner then replaced him in 1919.

The following is a summary of the events which took place in Hoskins after 1922.

- 1922 - First called teacher.
- 1925 - School was dedicated to God. Total cost \$6,500.00.
- 1930 - The church was seriously damaged by a windstorm on April 29th.
- 1939 - Pastor R.F. Bittorff was installed.
- 1944 - There was no school until Fall of 1945.
- 1946 - Pastor W.F. Sprengelr was installed.
- 1947 - A new Hammond electric organ was purchased.
- 1952 - Building and dedication of the new parsonage.
- 1954 - Pastor G.B. Frank was installed.
- 1956 - Teacherage given to the congregation in memory of Mr. & Mrs. Carl Buss.
- 1957 - Became incorporated with the state of Nebraska.
- 1961 - Called a second teacher.
- 1965 - Pastor J. Linqvist was installed.
- 1970 - New church and school dedicated on August 23rd. The church measured 52' x 84'. The school measured 52' x 72'.
- 1971 - Pastor A. Domson was installed.
- 1976 - Pastor W. Bruss was installed.

Shepherd of Peace, Norfolk, NE.

Although this congregation wasn't around during the days of August Raasch, it is around during the days of his son, Darius. Like the rest of the congregations mentioned in this paper, Shepherd of Peace has connections with St. Paul's, Norfolk. In fact, St. Paul's is the mother church of this mission congregation. Like most breaks, there was some strife involved when eight families formed the nucleus of this congregation in 1975. The eight

original families were: Gerald Bunkowski, Walter Dryer, Merlin Green, Richard Hasse, Jon Habermann, Orvall Kuester, Rodney Maas, and Dale Pohlman.

Here are some of the highlights that have taken place in the short history of this congregation:

- 1975 - First exploratory service held on July 6th.
 - Pastor Schlieve of Hadar served as vacancy pastor with help from Pastor Beckmann of Stanton.
 - Services held at Washington Public Grade School.
- 1976 - Services held at Johnson-Stonacek Funeral Chapel in April.
 - Mission status granted by WELS in May.
- 1977 - Darius Raasch donates 5 acres of land to build on in May.
 - Put up church sign on property on October 8th.
 - Manpower was granted also in October.
 - Began to call for resident pastor.
- 1978 - Pastor Dennis Lemke installed as the first resident pastor on June 11.
 - Services held at the Nebraska Veteran's Home Chapel in November.
- 1979 - Parsonage dedicated to God on October 7th.
- 1980 - First worship service held in new church on June 1st.
 - Church dedicated to God on July 6th.

* * * * *

There are various ways to explain the Lord's history. There are various ways to explain the growth of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod in the state of Nebraska; particularly the Norfolk area. One of the ways that I would like to explain it is by looking at St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church, in Norfolk. It may be true that it wasn't directly responsible for St. John's Stanton. It did, however, help in a time of trouble when that congregation was still struggling to get on its feet. It was also there when St. John's needed aid later on.

It can be pointed out by historical fact that St. Paul's was responsible for Immanuel, Hadar; Trinity, Hoskins and Shepherd of Peace, Norfolk. Various men, such as Pastor Pankow, labored tirelessly doing the Lord's work. It would be impossible to say all that there could be said about the called men and women who served these congregations of the Central Conference of the Nebraska District. Likewise, it is impossible to mention all the laymen and women who were and still are involved in doing the Lord's work.

I only hope that you have found this paper to be interesting reading as it portrayed a young German immigrant and his family as they crossed the ocean and half the U.S. to worship their gracious God. It is simply amazing that a congregation so small could grow so large while helping others grow, also. It certainly wasn't easy. There were more than enough hardships and

trials. Yet, at the same time there were abundant blessings from the Lord.

One can only assume that August Raasch knew and became friends with many of his fellow Christians in the surrounding congregations. I would like to think that he did. I would like to think that beyond the devil's snares and temptations, those early pioneer Christians shared and rejoiced in each others blessings. I would like to think that those German Lutherans joined together as they withstood the fierce elements of Nebraska. I would like to think that because of those men and women, we can rejoice in our Central Conference of the Nebraska District. And I can only say that I look forward to meeting them in heaven.

May we never forget to praise and thank our gracious and loving God for the rich blessings he has bestowed and continues to bestow upon these congregations. To Him belongs all the glory!

* * * * *

OFFICIAL ACTS FROM THEIR BEGINNING THROUGH 1982

	<u>BAPTISMS</u>	<u>CONFIRMATIONS</u>	<u>WEDDINGS</u>	<u>BURIALS</u>
St. Paul's	3,065	2,209	592	1,211
St. John's	1,964	1,400	531	689
Immanuel	1,024	763	181	386
Trinity	943	769	221	269
Shepherd of Peace	<u>20</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>
TOTAL	7,016	5,149	1,531	2,557

CURRENT SIZE OF CONGREGATIONS

	<u>SOULS</u>	<u>COMMUNICANTS</u>
St. Paul's	891	703
St. John's	373	283
Immanuel	300	238
Trinity	311	254
Shepherd of Peace	<u>83</u>	<u>56</u>
TOTAL	1,957	1,534

The following men and women served St. Paul's, Norfolk, since it's founding in 1866:

PASTORS

J.M. Hoeckendorf	1866-77
M. Pankow	1878-92
A.F. Siegler	1892-99
Th. Hoelzel	1899-1904
John Witt	1904-1943
W.W. Gieschen	1943-46
E.J. Dreyer	1947-53
Hugo Fritze	1953-62
Elwood Habermann	1962-67
Milton Weishahn	1967-78
Richard Schlieue	1978-81 (vacancy)

VICARS

Richard Starr	1976-77
Richard Kanzenbach	1977-78
	1978-79
Mark Schroeder	1979-80
Stu Zak	1980-81
Dennis Himm	1981-82
Chris Kruschel	1982

TEACHERS

Mr. J. Eiselmeyer	1883-86
Mr. W. Henkel	1885
Mr. L. Zuelow	1886-93
Mr. F. Siegler	1893-94
Mr. Wicke	1894
Mr. W. Schroeder	1895-1901
Mr. H. Nimmer	1901-1906
Mr. J. Bartz	1906-1916
Mrs. Hamann	1906-1910
Miss Ella Raasch	
Mr. C. Quandt	1910-1916
Mr. Meinke	1916-1917
Mr. Krampien	1916-1917
Mr. C.G. Fuhrman	1917-1943
Mr. E. Eggers	1920-1951
Mr. F. Scharleman	1944
Mr. Henry Krenz	1945-1952
Miss Ione Strege	1950-1955
Mr. Raymond Brei	1951-1960
Mrs. Isaacson	1952
Mrs. Eldon Hirsch	1952-1964
Miss Ruby Herbst	1954-1960
Miss Gwendolyn Rauschke	1955
Miss Jeanette Backer	1957-1960
Mr. Robert Meyer	1960-1965
Miss Laverna Everts	1960-1980
Miss Avis Sieg	1960
Miss Faye Taecher	1961
Miss Dorothy Vogel	1962
Mrs. Linda Habermann	1963
Mr. Martin Roehler	1964-1968
Mrs. C. Swogger	1964-1966, 1968
Mr. William Nolte	1966
Mr. Gerald Bunkowske	1967-1969
Miss Beverlee Haar	1967-1971
Mrs. Joan Stuebs	1967
Mr. Kenneth Marohl	1969
Mrs. Kenneth Marohl	1969
Mr. Daniel Henning	1970-1972
Mr. James Marshall	1970-1976
Mrs. Gordon Grebe, Jr.	1970
Mrs. Ronald Schmidt	1971
Miss Jean Dickinson	1972
Mr. James Klug	1973
Miss Carol Pfeil	1973-74
Mr. Daniel Schmal	1974-1977
Miss Judy Noeldner	1974-1978
Miss Mary Strieter	1975-1977
Mr. Rodney Bollinger	1977-1983
Mr. Robert Adrian	1978-1983
Miss Nancy Enter (Zander)	1978-1983
Mrs. Kurt Swogger	1979-1980
Miss Cindy Most	1981-
Miss Susan Vetter	1981-

The following men and women served St. John's, Stanton, since its founding in 1872:

PASTORS

* A.W. Frese	1869-71 (Rock County)
* Kasper Ruprecht	1871-72
G.J. Burger	1872-75
Aug. Leuthaeuser	1876-79
M.H. Pankow	1879-82 (vacancy)
Herman Brandt	1882-96
taught	1882-89
	1890-94
August Vollbrecht	1896-1900
Carl Siegler	1900-07
Phillip Martin	1907-27
E.A. Klaus	1928-37
Herbert Hackbarth	1937-48
L.F. Groth	1948-62
E.W. Lindemann	1962-68
James Humann	1969-73
Ray Beckman	1974-81
P. William Bader	1981-

TEACHERS

Mr. Claus Schumann	1880-81
Mr. Herman Seidel	1889-90
Mr. Herman Schmah	1894-96
Mr. Henry Nimmer	1896-1901
Mr. Henry Lewerenz	1901-05
Ms. Agnes Hoyer	1905-06
Ms. Sophia Hoehne	1906-07
Ms. Johanna Meyer	1907-08
Mr. Karl Martens	1908-10
Mr. Edmund Winter	1910-16
Mr. Emil Trettin	1916-26
Ms. Esther Martin	1920-24
Ms. Erna Pliefke	1924-25
Ms. Olga Norden	1925-26
Ms. Alma Norden	1926-28
Mr. Armin Rauschke	1926-37
Mr. Raymond Brei	1937-45
Ms. Irma Zimmermann-	
Zander	1943-49
Ms. Ruth Hohmann	1945-46
Mr. Kurt Petermann	1946-50
Ms. Melda Brei	1949-54
Mr. Harold Fuhrmann	1950-55
Ms. Loma Hermann	1954-55
Mr. Otto Schenk	1955-59
Mrs. Otto Schenk	1955-56
Ms. Viola Loeck	1956-60
Mr. Robert Sonntag	1959-67
Ms. Nancy Degner	1960-62
Ms. Mary Kettenacker	1964-65
Ms. Naomi Springstroh	1965-69
Mr. Robert Stuebs	1967-69
Ms. Jean Beilke	1969-71
Mr. Dennis Niedham	1970-76
Ms. Gloria Nitz	1971-73
Ms. Barbara Petersen	1973-1981
Anna Caskey	1976
Steve Strassburg	1977-
Mrs. Mary Schmall	1977
Ms. Jane Wentzel	1981
Ms. Nancy Stelling	1981-

The following men and women served Immanuel, Hadar, since its founding in 1883:

PASTORS

* Rev. Estel-Pierce (LCMS)	1866-82
Rev. Panchow-Norfolk	1866-1887
F. Koch	1887-91
E. Stephen	1891-95
Rev. Kluge	1895-1901
Theo. Braeuer	1901-21
G. Tiefel	1921-37
L. Tessmer	1937-1943
H. Spaude	1943-57
G. Free	1959-1965
Howard Russow	1966-71
Richard Schliewe	1972-

TEACHERS

Miss Alma Klug	1895-1901
Miss Concordia Braeuer	1901-05
Mr. Hugo Frey	1905-07
Mr. Gottlieb Hofius	1907-43
Mr. Kenneth Born	1943-44
Ms. Lorraine Weishahn	1944-45
NO SCHOOL	1945-46
Ms. Lola Greve	1946-47
Ms. Janice Kuester	1947-50
Ms. Patsy Garbrecht	1950-51
Mr. Waldemer Bartsch	1951-54
Ms. Irma Kohlstaedt	1954-57
Mrs. Ernest Raasch	1957-64
Mrs. Robert Sonntag	1959-60
Miss JoAnn Radenz	1960-62
Ms. Patricia Allerhei- ligen	1962-64
Mr. John Isch	1964-70
Ms. Kathy (Krause) Block	1964-70
Mr. Robert Klindworth	1970-73
Mrs. Klindworth	1970-71
Mr. Paul Schultz	1971-72
Ms. Sharon Lettow	1972-73
Mr. Earl Heidtke	1973-
Ms. Bonnie Jaeger	1973-76
Miss Jane Price	1976-

The following men served Shepherd of Peace, Norfolk, since its founding in 1975:

PASTORS

Richard Schliewe	1975-78 (vacancy)
Raymond Beckmann	1975-78 (vacancy)
Dennis Lemke	1978-

The following men and women served Trinity, Hoskins, since its founding in 1886:

PASTORS

M. Pankow (St. Paul's)	1886-?
John Dowidat	1896-98
R. Gruber	1898-1901/08
J. Aaron	1901/08-18
John Harms	1918-19
F. Brenner	1919-29
Im. P. Frey	1930-39
R.F. Bittorff	1939-46
W.G. Sprengelr	1946-54
G.B. Frank	1954-65
J. Lindquist	1965-71
A. Domson	1971-75
W. Bruss	1976-

TEACHERS

Mr. Victor Albrecht	1922-27
Mr. C.A. Finup	1927-36
Mr. Arthur Eisman	1936-38
Mr. Philip Pohlman	1938-40
Miss Irma Zimmermann	1940-42
Miss E. McFarland	1942-43
Miss Ruth Sprengeler	1943-44
Mr. Philemon Hensel	1945-46
Miss Dorothy Prausa	1946-50
Miss Verona Buchholtz	1950-52
Miss Rhoda Kiechbush	1951-53
Mr. Marvin Busse	1953
Mr. Virgil Raasch	1953
Mr. Albert Nolting	1953-55
Mr. Harold Runke	1955-59
Mr. Marvin Meihack	1955-63
Mrs. Oscar Zander	1960-73
Mr. R. Menk	1963-69
Mrs. R. Menk	1965
Miss M. Haefer	1966-69
Mr. R. Schmidt	1969-76
Miss J. Schultz	1969-70
Miss C. Kruger	1970-73
Mr. R. Finner	1973-75
Miss J. Krenz	1973-79
Mr. D. Karnitz	1977-79
Mrs. P. Heidtke	1979
Mr. P. Bauer	1979-
Mrs. R. P. Bauer	1979-80, 81
Miss E. Priour	1980-81
Miss D. Baer	1982
Miss T. Pachop	1982-

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