

Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church

Zumbrota, Minnesota

by

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A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

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CHRIST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Zumbrota, Minnesota

"Where in the world is Zumbrota?" "It sounds like some place in Africa." These and many more are the questions one can expect to hear whenever he mentions this name. Few people know about this town in Minnesota, to say nothing about the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Church which we have there. So I hope that through my research into the beginning of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church and its history thereafter many will benefit.

It was at first my intention to find out why Christ Ev. Lutheran Church became a congregation of more than 800 souls and 600 communicant members when there are 4 other W.E.L.S. congregations within 6 miles of Zumbrota and 4 more less than 10 miles away. In addition to this there are several other Lutheran Churches in the area. One could understand how this could be if it was in an area like Milwaukee or St. Paul, but in Zumbrota, a town which numbers around 2000 people in a rural community. So I began my study of the W.E.L.S. congregation of Christ Ev. Lutheran Church in Zumbrota, Minnesota.

About 50 miles from Minneapolis and halfway between Rochester and Red Wing in Southeastern Minnesota lies Zumbrota. Skirting the banks of the Zumbro River, Zumbrota presently numbers around 2,000 people. A little over 125 years it was nothing more than a valley with a few Indian trails cutting through the plains and woods. It was originally a New England Colony. It's earliest history goes like this:

In the autumn of 1855 Reverend H. N. Gates, a missionary who had been laboring in Iowa, went back to his home in Stafford, Connecticut, where he had formerly preached, and proposed among his friends to organize a company and establish a colony in the west, with the view of carrying the religious and educational institutions of New England to a new home. The first meeting was held in Stafford. At this time, the company was organized, and Albert Barrett was chosen

as president. Notices of the meeting were published in the papers and soon after parties in the other New England states became interested in the movement, and met the following January in the city of Palmer, in Massachusetts, and perfected the organization with a capital stock of \$30,000, subscribed. Officers were elected, and committees were appointed to transact business.

In April of 1856 the exploring committee went westward to search out their Garden of Eden. Arriving at Dubuque, Iowa, they set out to explore the country for wild lands and unimproved townships. After exploring the prairies for some weeks without coming up with anything they returned and decided to disband. Shortly after a number of the company being unhappy with the results of the exploration party organized another company and headed west. These people divided into several parties to cover more territory. By August after being exposed to the hardships of pioneer life many were ready to return to New England. One such party consisting of Bailey, Goddard and Chafee was headed back to their base of exploration which was in Red Wing. Fortunately their path took them through the beautiful valley in the middle of which was the Zumbro River. Reporting this to the others of their company, they returned only to agree that they had found their promised land.

They had found a place ideal for a town. There were scarcely any inhabitants there. The road from St. Paul to Dubuque if straightened would pass through the middle of the valley. The road from Red Wing also would hit the middle of this valley. This was to be their town. They put into motion all the works of buying and dividing the land. The next year many people began their new life in Southeastern Minnesota.

The only thing that remained was the naming of the town. I am told that this question brought much discussion. The name Zumbrota was the common name of the river which flows through the valley. It is a corruption of its French name "Embarrass", which means obstruction,

and it was named so because the boats of the early French traders were impeded and obstructed by the brush and timber which had fallen in the river and by shoals and rapids. The French word Embarrass sounded like "Umbro" when it was spoken rapidly by the French traders to the Indians. The first settlers added a "Z" to the word and so it became Zumbro. At the first meeting in August of 1856 it was voted on and Zumbrota became the name of this new town site. However at the next meeting which was held in September of 1856 it was moved to change it. It was moved that the new site be called STRAFFORD-ON-THE-ZUMBRO. This was voted down and Zumbrota it remains. Zumbrota is the only one in the world and her people are proud of it as we are told, "The friendly village of Zumbrota is the only Zumbrota in the world and her people do not believe that this just happened but that it is but one of numerous and deserved distinctions."²

In the fall of 1856 we are told this about their first religious worship:

The first sabbath spent in this new land by these descendants of the Puritans was observed by holding religious services. Quote from a manuscript written by T. P. Kellett on The Founding of Zumbrota: "On the first sabbath a number of us, enough to claim a blessing, held a meeting in a small log shanty about eight by ten feet square. And judging the feelings of others by my own, I must say that our worship was not in vain - and from that time to this with but few if any exceptions, some sort of religious services has been held every sabbath."³

Many traveling missionaries crossing this new territory devoted their efforts to these pioneers, but the first known sermon preached to the village is that of Reverend Charles Shedd in August of 1857. Otherwise the sermons were read by members. Rev. Shedd organized this congregation in June of the same year. In the fall of 1861 they built their worship building which still stands today. This is the First Congregational Church of Zumbrota.

However even before the idea of the town of Zumbrota was conceived, Lutheranism had its beginning in this area. The early pioneers in this area were from Scandinavian countries and in this particular section were from Norway. Since religion was compulsory back in the homeland, these pioneers sought a parochial education for their children also. On June 25, 1855 the first Norwegian Lutheran service in the Zumbrota community was held in the home of Mathias and Ingeborg Ringdahl. This service was conducted by Reverend Nils Brandt, who was one of several pastors sent to America by the mother church in Norway to bring the message of the Gospel to the Norwegian immigrants who had settled in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois and Iowa. This service, according to the records, was the first Norwegian Lutheran service conducted in Goodhue County. The next recorded service was that of Rev. Lars Larson who visited the settlement around the Zumbrota area in 1857 and 1858. He conducted services at Ole and Erick Swenson's home.

It was during this time (1857) that St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church was established at Poplar Grove about 5 or 6 miles southeast of Zumbrota. We don't know whether Rev. Larson was the organizer or not. We do know that it existed in 1857 for we are told:

The first log house used as a pastor's residence was about 40 rods north of the present site. Services were held there but not too much is known. The present site was deeded from Henry Ahneman and wife to Charles Mathias, Henry Ahneman, and August Money, trustees of the St. Peter's Ev. Lutheran congregation on March 26, 1857. After getting the land a log building was used for church services and the upstairs used for the pastors living quarters. This building was put up on the site of the present church. Later a frame addition was added for the church services. Charles William Pierau (Perry) was one of the pioneers of this section and one of the founders of Poplar Grove St. Peter's Ev. Lutheran Church.

Although the pastor of 1857 is not known we do know that the Norwegian pastor Reverend J. B. Muus came to serve the congregation at Holden as its settled pastor. This congregation is about 12 miles northwest of

Zumbrota and he did conduct services at St. Peter's of Poplar Grove. Since this group was too small to have their own pastor, area pastors served this congregation alternately. The congregation affiliated with the Minnesota synod in 1865. The first Ev. Lutheran pastor to preach God's Word to the members of St. Peter's was Johannes Herzer (Herzig) of Rice Lake. In 1868 Pastor Bahr accepted the call and became the first resident pastor.

After a couple other pastors (Robert Weise, 1869-71 and Christian Meyer, 1871-75) served this congregation Pastor Wilhelm Lange was installed and served until 1877. It was during this time that the formal organization of a sister congregation, St. John's of Minneola Township took place under the guidance of Pastor Lange. German Lutheran families of this area about 3 miles northwest of Zumbrota requested the services of the pastor from Poplar Grove. Worship was held in the homes of these families until in 1875 they organized as a congregation and built their own church. Pastor Weise of Poplar Grove was said to have started these services and Pastor Christian F. Meger of Pine Island continued them until 1875. The exact dates of organization are unknown because the records were destroyed by fire.

With the coming of the 1880's many things now need to be taken into account. First of all that town of Zumbrota which was non-existent some 25 years earlier had grown considerably. It had increased in population from less than 200 around 1860 to more than 700 people, an increase of more than 200%. With this increase in population, there was an increase in the number of German Lutherans who were headed out each Sunday to either St. John's to the northwest or St. Peter's to the southeast. Another fact which must be taken into consideration is that back then they didn't have a car (horse) for each member of the family. In fact if there was

one horse for the family it was considered to be pretty good and well off. Taking all these things into consideration, those members of these two churches requested Pastor Karl Boerneke to conduct services in town in 1886. The account of the early organization of the congregation as compiled by Mabel Lohmann goes like this:

In the 1880's Zumbrota, but a hamlet surrounded by a fertile farming area, was rapidly being settled by German, Norwegian, and Swedish emigrants.

The settlers of German stock, in and around Zumbrota, found it necessary to go to Minneola or to Poplar Grove for Lutheran services in their native tongue. Although the rural families had the means of transportation, the families in the village were not so fortunate.

Rev. Karl Boerneke was in charge of the Poplar Grove and Minneola congregations at that time. One day in 1886 he stopped at the store, owned by Louis Starz in Zumbrota, to warm up, before continuing his journey to Minneola. The question of conducting services in Zumbrota came up for discussion. Edward Lueck, a clerk at the store, and one of Rev. Boerneke's parishioners at Poplar Grove, made the suggestion that services be held in Zumbrota on the Sunday afternoons when Rev. Boerneke had services in Minneola in the morning. The Pastor readily agreed and arrangements were made.

The earliest services were held in the homes of Edward Lueck and Louis Schleicher. Soon arrangements were made to use Roger's Hall for the services. It was more convenient and accommodated more people. Services were in the German language, and held every two weeks, in the afternoons when roads permitted the pastor to travel.

The earliest record of the congregation is a treasurer's report, dated the 11th of September in 1887. It records the amounts paid to the pastor each quarter.

About 1893 services were held in the Synod church at Zumbrota. For a nominal fee the Norwegian congregation offered the use of its church on the afternoons of the days they had services. The organist of the Norwegian congregation, Miss Selma Strom, offered her services as organist without compensation for the first year.

The ladies, of those families attending church, got together about this time as an informal Ladies' Aid. They did so to help raise funds to augment the amount paid the pastor, and to assist the congregation as best they could. They felt too, that the organist deserved some financial remuneration for her work.

The fall of 1895 found Rev. Boerneke leaving Poplar Grove, and Rev. Paul Hinderer of Grace and St. John's congregations, Goodhue, took charge of this group. Organization of the congregation was under discussion. On January 2, 1896 the congregation met for formal organization. The following is a literal translation of the minutes of the meeting:

The organization meeting of the congregation was held on January 2, 1896, in Zumbrota. It was announced in three previous church services. The meeting was opened by Rev. Hinderer with a Scripture lesson and prayer. Rev. Hinderer was named chairman. Present were: Theodore Stecher, Edward Lueck, George Heitmann, Louis Schleicher, Fred Sova, Ben Hamman, Henry Hinz, Fred J. Lohmann, John Bode, Ferdinand Lohmann, John Biersdorf, John Brunckhorst, Charley Stumph, Peter Bredehoft, Carl Miller, Carl Grimm, and Henry Schmidt.

Edward Lueck was chosen secretary. The name "Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church of Goodhue County, Minnesota", was chosen. A constitution consisting of twenty paragraphs and based on the unaltered Augsburg Confession was adopted. Three trustees were elected: Theodore Stecher, who was also to serve as Treasurer for a three year term; Edward Lueck, who was also to serve as Secretary for two years, and George Heitmann for one year.

The building of a church was discussed, and all present were in favor. It was decided to procure a building lot, and to circulate a list for subscriptions toward the building. Construction was not to begin until \$600 had been subscribed. The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

The first resolutions of the congregation provided a three month school and hired a teacher to provide religious instruction for the children. The first confirmation was a private one on April 11, 1897, and the first class of eight was confirmed on August 29, 1897. Their first church was an old Baptist church which was moved onto their lots. It was remodeled and dedicated on July 10, 1898. The guest preachers were Rev. Christian Bender of Red Wing and Prof. John Schaller of D.M.L.C. of New Ulm. The Ladies' Aid which informally began in 1893, provided funds for the furnishing of the church.

In 1899 St. John's of Minneola suggested that the two parishes be combined and that a pastor of their own be called. Pastor Rudolf Jeske was called and installed on October 7, 1900.

Over the next eighty years Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church grew in number and continued to carry out the Lord's work. It now numbers over 800 souls. It was my original intent not only to show its beginning, but also to show that this congregation grew at the expense of the neighboring rural congregations. The following chart pretty well destroys that hypothesis.

MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

	1927		1940		1950		1965		1980	
	soul	comm	soul	comm	soul	comm	soul	comm	soul	comm
Christ Ev. Lutheran Church, Zumbrota	420	300	600	375	749	525	745	561	828	633
St. Peter's Popular Grove	100	87	70	50	49	34	89	68	53	42
St. John's, Goodhue Minneola Twp.	185	119	206	138	191	142	165	125	140	118
Grace Lutheran Church, Goodhue	268	226	202	134	190	161	190	137	209	155

As we can see there is no real decline in the membership of any church which would give Christ Ev. Lutheran Church an increase of 400 members. St. Peter's of Poplar Grove has declined by about 50 members and the others about the same but you still don't come up with that large of an increase in the membership at Zumbrota. Perhaps the growth of Christ Lutheran can be attributed both to the switch of members from rural congregation and to the growth of the town of Zumbrota also. But no matter where that growth comes from like the Apostle Paul we must always give thanks to God who works in the hearts faith so that we do see an increase. He gives us His promise, "My Word will not return unto me void", and this we can see in His church in Zumbrota.

- 1900 - Pastor Rudolph Jeske of Milwaukee, Wis. was installed October 7th. He is to teach 3 months of Summer School, assisted by Louis Broeker.
- 1901 - First Mission Festival in Zumbrota, September, in August Perry's grove, where it was held for many years.
 - Special collection for the heating system at D.M.L.C., New Ulm.
 - Constitution and by-laws adopted for Ladies' Aid; first minutes of the Aid by Mrs. Louis Schleicher, Secretary.
 - Fred Huebner is the first recorded janitor.
- 1902 - First English services, held in the evening, once a month.
- 1903 - First Lenten services, held Wednesday evenings.
 - Balance of church building debt paid.
 - Ladies' Aid buys electric lights for church; serves dinner for the Mission Festival guest preachers.
- 1904 - Summer School is held in a room at the public school building.
 - Ladies' Aid 10th Anniversary; \$20 is donated to Building Fund at Northwestern College, Watertown, Wis.
- 1906 - A parsonage is purchased on South Main Street (now 906 S. Main).
 - A "Klingelbeutel" or "collection bag" is bought; trustees are to take up the offering during singing of the last hymn, instead of at the door.
 - Pastor Jeske accepts the call to St. Peter, Minn. Farwell Nov. 18th.
 - Pastor David Metzger is called in December. Pastor Gehm, vacancy pastor
 - Ladies' Aid buys carpeting for the church.
- 1907 - Pastor Metzger installed March 24th by Pastor A. Ackermann.
 - Ladies' Aid buys altar rail.
- 1908 - Sunday School is re-organized in September; about 15 pupils.
 - Ladies' Aid buys church bell for \$307.37.
- 1909 - A revised constitution is adopted by the congregation.
 - Ladies' Aid observes its 15th Anniversary; special service August 22nd.
- 1911 - Sunday School enrollment 30 pupils, four classes.
 - Ladies' Aid buys an organ for about \$200.
 - Fred Schleicher assists pastor with Summer School.
- 1912 - Mission Festival becomes an annual event. Prior to this it had been held at Minneola and Zumbrota in alternate years.
- 1913 - English services are increased to twice a month, evenings.
 - C. Lohmann is janitor.
- 1914 - First English confirmand, Mrs. Theo. Stiller, February 10th.
 - Summer School is shortened to five days a week.
- 1915 - Young Peoples' organization renewed (disbanded again a few years

- later)
- Two Morning English services ar held during this year.
 - Emma Biersdorf assists pastor with Sunday School.
- 1917 - Ladies' Aid buys the first English hymnals.
- Edward Starz elected treasurer (he served for 22 years).
 - Resolved: to have two regular morning English services per year.
- 1918 - Summer School classes in both English and German.
- 1919 - Committees named for construction of new church; no site specified.
- Ladies' Aid buys silver communion ware; observes its 25th anniversary.
 - Pastor Metzger accepts another call; farewell sermon October 26th.
 - Pastor H. Kuether is vacancy pastor.
 - Pastor Fred Zarling is installed December 14th. He is to conduct English and German services on alternate Sunday mornings.
- 1920 - Joint parish with St. John's, Minneola, dissolved; St. John's buys the parsonage for \$2300.
- The Frank Marvin house at 577 East Avenue is bought for parsonage for \$7000.
 - We become members of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. (at that time its title was "The Ev. Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States.")
 - Henry Bargsten is the first delegate to the Minnesota District Convention in Mankato, Minn.
 - We incorporate; John Albers, A.C. Scliep, Edw. Jeske are the trustees.
 - Luther League organized in September.
- 1921 - Offering envelopes for Home Budget are adopted.
- First delegate to the Red Wing Conference, Ed. Kolbe; Herman Yedke, alternate; meeting at Potsdam, Minn., September 20th.
- 1922 - First membership offerings list printed and distributed.
- Ladies' Aid buys English Bible and Agenda for church services.
 - Luther League buys Mission banks for Sunday School, and a piano for use other than church services.
- 1923 - Louis Starz is delegate to Synod convention at Milwaukee.
- Irma Willbrecht assists pastor with Summer School.
- 1924 - Resolved: to build a new church on lots next to parsonage; C.L. Grover is awarded contract for \$19,872. Building Committee; John Ihrke, Edw. Schleip, H. Aug. Lohmann, Edw. Starz, Henry Degener.
- Luther League, Ladies' Aid, Individuals, contribute especially for pews, art glass windows, serving tables in church basement.
 - Bertha Roepke assists pastor with Summer School.
 - Church cornerstone laid August 17th; German and English services in the city park across the street, Pastors G. Hinnenthal and T.H. Albrecht are the guest preachers.
- 1925 - New Church dedicated May 17th; morning, afternoon, and evening services; guest preachers: J. Plocher, A.C. Krueger, G.A. Ernst, E. Sauer.

- Ladies' Aid buys carpet and altar covers for new church.
- 1926 - John Rubin is janitor. Others whom the records indicate served at various times from here to the present are: Henry J. Hinrichs, John Tiedemann, Harold Cordes, Harold Smith, Herman Yedke, William Yedke, and Elmer Schleicher.
- Luther League discontinues.
 - Ladies' Aid buys two chancel chairs, gives \$100 to new Seminary, Mequon, Wis.
 - Pastor Zarling's farewell sermon Sept. 12th. Pastor E. Sauer, vacancy pastor.
 - Pastor Paul E. Horn is installed Nov. 21st.
- 1927 - Pastor Horn teaches Summer School alone until 1930. Thereafter his children assist him.
- The constitution is translated into English; bi-lingual edition printed.
 - Church Council is to elect president of congregation; Louis Borgschatz is elected.
 - New parsonage furnace.
- 1928 - Services at 9:30 A.M., May - October, instead of 10 A.M.
- Monthly envelopes for Mission adopted.
 - Minnesota District convention here June 25 - 29, attended by 180 pastors and laymen; housed with members; Ladies' Aid serves dinners in the armory.
 - Balance of church building debt, \$7000, paid in full.
- 1929 - First ushers appointed by Church council: A.C. Schliep, H.G. Banitt, W. Banitt, W. Grimm, Sylvester Stehr, Hugo Schroeder.
- First Ladies Aid Altar Committee.
 - Red Wing Delegate Conference here September 10th.
- 1930 - Sunday School teachers meet with the pastor once a month.
- 1931 - Ladies' Aid buys altar and pulpit cloths in colors of the Church Year.
- 1934 - Luther League re-organized with 44 members on May 10th.
- 1935 - KROC, Rochester, begins "Southern Minnesota Lutheran Hour" Sunday evenings; Pastor and choir (which he began directing in 1931) participate; ended in 1942 in favor of "National Lutheran Hour".
- Luther League begins church library; helps finance choir music.
 - Ladies' Aid begins Organ Fund; Luther League and others help.
- 1936 - English services increased to three Sundays; German second and fifth Sundays of the month.
- May 25th, special service to commemorate Rose Haas's 25 years in serving our Sunday School.
 - Pastor Horn's 25th Anniversary of Ordination observed June 28th. Pastors J. Schaefer and T.H. Albrecht are the guest preachers.
 - Church Council is increased to six members; installation initiated.
 - Annual meeting moved to November.
 - Luther League begins publishing "The Parish Messenger." Mrs. Andy Ihrke is editor. The 12 monthly issues and Annual Report are bound

- and placed in the Church Library.
- Synod Debt Retirement collection by 44 canvassers; result: \$1307.50.
- 1937 - Mabel Lohmann becomes editor of "The Parish Messenger."
- Ladies' Aid buys 3 dozen tablet arm chairs for church basement; Luther League buys another dozen later.
 - Mr. and Mrs. John Ihrke give \$1000 to Organ Fund in memory of Minnie Geer. Present Hammond organ bought for \$2,145. Dedicated on March 6th.
- 1938 - Minnesota District Pastoral Conference held here April 26 - 28.
- 1939 - Offering envelopes for Home Budget and Missions obtained again.
- Ladies' Aid contributes \$200 for church basement remodeling.
- 1940 - 90th Anniversary of the Wisconsin Synod observed May 26th; on same date the 15th Anniversary of the new church, and reunion of all those confirmed in the new church.
- STATISTICS: 600 baptized souls, 375 communicant members, 146 voting members, 125 in Sunday School. Total budget - \$4595. Average per communicant - \$12.25.
- 1941 - "Sinking Fund" for future improvements begun with \$200; like amounts added in 1942 and 1943.
- 1942 - Trustees limited to two terms of three years each; Secretary, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary are elected each year.
- A stoker is bought for the parsonage.
- 1944 - Church redecorated, new ceiling, total cost - \$714.
- Pastor Horn is asked, and permission granted, to serve as Zumbrota High School band director for the duration of World War II.
 - English Services every Sunday at 10 A.M., German first Sunday at 9A.M.
 - War bonds are to be accepted for the "Sinking Fund."
- 1945 - Pastor is granted three months leave of absence for health reasons
- 1946 - Church council members limited to one three year term.
- The congregation's 50th Anniversary is observed June 2nd. Pastors David Metzger, Benjamin Borgschatz, and Gerhard Horn are the preachers.
 - Ruth Steege assists pastor with Summer School.
 - A new furnace is installed in the church.
- 1947 - John Ihrke donates four lots east of the church property.
- 1948 - Parsonage is insulated; north side of church roof re-shingled.
- Discussion about extending the church and making more room for Sunday School.
- 1949 - Repair work on brick and coping of the church.
- Luther League is given the balance of \$291 in Charity Fund to help buy a 16mm movie projector.
 - Adopted: mailing of quarterly reports to all members.

- 1950 - Pastor Horn accepts call to St. Mark's near Ixonia, Wis.; his fare-well sermon October 24th. Pastor Carl Mischke, Goodhue, vacancy pastor.
- Pastor Herbert F. Muenkel of Trinity, near Austin, Minn., installed December 5th. Pastor Norbert Reinke is the preacher.
 - Monies from the John Ihrke estate, given in memory of Minnie Geer, are to buy bonds to be added to the Sinking Fund.
 - A committee is appointed to study Christian Day Schools.
 - STATISTICS: 749 baptized souls, 525 communicant members, 159 voting members, 153 in Sunday School, Mission offerings - \$4042, total budget - \$12,625, average per communicant - \$24.00.
- 1951 - Parsonage re-shingled, re-wired, and painted.
- Rose Haas testimonial service May 27th for her 40 years of serving the Lord in our Sunday School.
 - Summer School teachers to be hired from among students or graduates of D.M.L.C., New Ulm. Ursel Seidl is hired. Others who served later were Alice Eichstaedt, Howard Schoeder, Phyllis Buchholtz, Elaine Voth, Mary Mathees, and Mrs. Howard Stechmann.
 - Mixed choir organized.
 - Committee appointed to study and report on doctrinal differences among Lutheran synods.
 - Sunday School teachers meet weekly with pastor; later bi-weekly.
 - Prof. Eric Sievert, District Board for Parish Education, addresses the congregation Sept. 16th in the morning service, regarding Christian Day Schools.
 - Vesper Services the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month.
 - At the annual meeting the committee to study Christian Day Schools reports; a questionnaire on this subject mailed to all members, 80 returned; 60 against, 20 for establishing a Christian Day School here.
- 1952 - "The Parish Messenger" henceforth to be mailed to every home.
- Church interior painted by group of volunteer members.
 - Church furnace explodes, replaced; Services in Armory meanwhile.
- 1953 - Luther League buys a neon-lighted church sign; Al Clemenson builds the brick mounting.
- "Christmas Gift for Jesus" collection for Synod's building program, conducted by canvassers to each home Dec. 13th; result - \$3000.
- 1954 - We begin having two services every Sunday morning.
- A building committee is appointed to see about expanding facilities
 - Storm glass is installed on the church windows.
- 1955 - Summer School assistants are Christian Day School teachers Lois Prueter, F.W. Schultz, Fern Frank, and Gloria Holst.
- A straw vote at Semi-annual meeting favors making parsonage into Sunday School rooms, building a new parsonage.
- 1956 - Church council expanded to nine members; council to elect President, Secretary, Home Budget and Mission Treasurers from its midst.
- Building committee reports two methods of expanding room, neither is adopted members excused with thanks.

- Much discussion at Semi-annual meeting regarding Synod's confessional stand on religious unionism, and the application of Romans 16, 17 - 18.
 - Children's Christmas Eve service is moved to Zumbrota High School.
- 1957 - Sunday School enrollment is 183.
- Resolved in special meeting April 14th: to proceed with construction of an educational unit on our vacant lots.
 - German services reduced to four Communion services per year.
- 1958 - Jan. 27th: plans of architects Hilss, Gilbertson, & Fischer are adopted.
- Walter Grimm elected Building Fund Treasurer.
 - 32 teams of solicitors representing about one fourth of the congregation pledge \$42,305 for the new building July 24th; set goal of \$120,000. By end of August, pledges total \$86,657.
 - Stewardship Board is established; first members: Walter Banitt, Chester Menth, Forrest Scharpen, Arnold Windhorst, and Karl Scheffler.
- 1959 - \$500 bequest from the Frank Perry estate is used to re-carpet chancel.
- Assistant (neighboring Christian Day School teacher) to be hired for Saturday School.
 - Funds borrowed from members at 4%, from Lutheran Mutual of Waverly, Iowa, at 5% for the new building.
 - Groundbreaking April 5th between church services; cornerstone Aug. 16th.
- 1960 - Sewing Circle begun in March.
- Special offering envelope for furnishing new building; cost about \$3,000. Lenten offerings and memorials also used.
 - Sunday School building dedication 2 P.M., July 17th, service in park, Synod President O. J. Naumann the preacher; open house afterward, coffee served by Ladies Aid. Total cost of building: \$142,000.
 - Building Committee: Jasper Plevke, Lloyd Tangen, Lowell Bartsh, John Bredehoft, Elmer Hovel, Martin Lohmann, Charles Sandberg.
 - Building Finance Committee: H. August Lohmann, Walter Grimm, George Fogelson, Wallace Mehrkens, Elmer Stiller.
 - Building Publicity Committee: Virgil Burfeind, C. J. Hernlem, John Ohlrogge, Millard Ripley, Rudy Stiller.
 - Mrs. Clara Friedrich is custodian of the new building.
 - STATISTICS: 748 baptized souls, 541 communicants, 140 voting members, 180 in Sunday School; Mission offerings \$6,116, total budget \$31,410; average per communicant: \$58.
 - Ladies' Aid buys altar cross and vases in memory of Pastor Horn.
- 1961 - Weekly offering envelopes adopted for Home Budget and Missions, monthly for Building Fund.
- Every-Home Visitations authorized, to be conducted under leadership of the Stewardship Board.
 - First Father-Son Banquet, April 9th.
 - James Hopmann of St. John's Lutheran School, Goodhue, assists pastor with Saturday School for a number of years.
- 1962 - Ladies' Aid Kitchen Fund established to furnish kitchen in new building.
- "The Lutheran Chapel of the Air" begun on KCUE Red Wing, Sundays, 9 A.M.
 - Ladies' Aid "canning bee" in September results in over 150 quarts for D.M.L.C., New Ulm.

- 1962 - First Mother-Daughter banquet, January 21st.
 - First Sunday School Teachers Appreciation banquet, April 29th.
 - Lenten offerings divided equally between Missions and property improvement.
 - Vacation Bible School reduced to three weeks. Mrs. Dennis Swenson and Arlene Fandrey assist pastor.
 - AAL calendars with church schedule adopted.
 - Our Mission pledge is \$8,000 for fiscal 1963.
 - Ladies' Aid joins the DMLC Ladies' Auxiliary.
 - Dec. 16th: pastor is asked by vote of 62 to 2 to return call to Tawas City, Michigan.
- 1963 - Pastor is directing a Girls' Chorus; later a Mixed Choir again.
 - Matthees Construction Co. installs new kitchen cabinets in Sunday School building.
 - All German Services discontinued.
 - George Fogelson is our delegate to Synod Convention, Milwaukee, Aug. 7th.
 - Luther League contributes \$100 toward individual Communion cups; the Church Council, with prior approval, buys them.
 - We pledge \$9000 for Missions in next fiscal year.
- 1964 - Church interior painted by group of member volunteers.
 - First special offering for "Lutheran Free Conference" \$78.73.
 - Couples' Club begun March 22nd with 16 couples.
 - Individual Communion cups used the first time Good Friday.
 - We host the Minnesota District Pastoral Conference April 7-8.
 - We host the Red Wing Delegate Conference August 25th.
 - Pastor Muenkel's 25th anniversary of Ordination and marriage is observed, in special service October 11th, 2 P.M. Pastor T.H. Albrecht preaches.
 - Luther League sponsors a rally here Oct. 25th, attended by 130.
- 1965 - We begin using every-Sunday bulletins January 3rd.
 - Ladies' Aid joins Lutheran Women's Mission Society (LWMS).
 - Luther League joins Zumowatha Lutheran Youth League.
 - Wm. Yedke hired as janitor of church.
 - We give \$200 to building of Religious Activity Center, Rochester State Hospital.
 - We adopt Scholarship Fund to aid those preparing for preaching or teaching ministry in our Synod; Beverly Clemenson first beneficiary (graduated DMLC, New Ulm, 1969, teaching at Clatonia, Neb.).
- 1966 - "Missio Dei" (God's Mission), Synod's 4 Million dollar building program, is introduced. We set our pledge for this at \$17, 445 (2 years).
 - Luther League's canvass for subscribers to "The Northwestern Lutheran" results in new high of 144.
 - We officially endorse having our own Baccalaureate Services, to uphold thereby the principle of separation of church and state, and to obey the Lord's will that we avoid religious fellowship with those who "teach otherwise than God's Word teaches."
 - Christmas Eve offering for Church Extension Fund adopted.
 - June 19th open house for the new parsonage kitchen.
- 1967 - Ladies' Aid hosts the Hiawatha Valley circuit of LWMS April 7th.
 - We rent two classrooms to Zumbrota High for the next two years.
 - The Luther League hosts Zumowatha Lutheran Youth League April 23rd.
 - Kathy Borgschatz and Beverly Clemenson assist with Vacation Bible School.

- Mabel Lohmann is hired on regular salary to do secretarial work, mimeographing, etc., previously recognized with an annual appreciation gift.
 - The 450th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation is observed with a special Service at Zumbrota High auditorium Oct. 29th, 8 P.M. Our area sister congregations and their choirs take part. Pastor John Parcher is the preacher. Attendance 609, offering for CEF \$322.
- 1968 - Couples' Club buys flagpole and flag for Sunday School grounds.
- Special offering for tornado victims at Charles City, Iowa.
 - We host the DMLC Choir April 17th.
 - March 20th special meeting, pastor is unanimously asked to return the call to St. Matthew's, Marathon, Wis.
- 1969 - Alley and parking lot blacktopped.
- We host a Conference Music Workshop for organists, choir directors, etc., on November 30th.
 - Single-pocket executive size offering envelopes adopted.
 - Our seventy-fifth anniversary plans begin.
- 1970 - Larry Rude and Nancy Clemenson assist with Summer School teaching.
- July 12th, unanimous vote that pastor return his call to St. John's of Bowdle, S.D.
 - "Big Step Forward" Mission pledges adopted, for 1971 - \$20,000; for 1972 - \$22,000.
 - Mrs. Howard Stechmann currently assists with Saturday School and has done so for a number of years.
 - STATISTICS: 797 baptized members, 626 communicants, 140 voters, 151 Sunday School pupils, Mission offerings - \$20,349; total budget: \$52,351. Average per communicant: \$95.03.
- 1971 - Our seventy-fifth anniversary is celebrated.
- June 20th: Worship at 8:45 and 10:30 A.M. Pastor Gerhard Horn, St John's Lutheran, Red Wing, the preacher.
 - Fellowship dinner served by Ladies' Aid at Noon
 - Worship at 2:30 P.M. Pastor Benjamin Borgschatz, St. John's Lutheran, Bloomer, Wis., the preacher.
 - Publication of Anniversary Pictorial Directory.
 - Issuance of a keepsake plate with picture of church and school.
 - Liquidation of the remaining debt on our school building.
- 1972 - Another strong pitch is made for a Christian Day School
- A new Rogers M.110 organ installed in Church.
 - Day School is voted down 41-35 at annual meeting.
 - Mission goal \$22,000 over-subscribed.
 - Started vicar program; first one, Jerome Enderle.
- 1973 - A new two-car garage built onto the parsonage.
- Hired Mrs. Fred Lueck as our financial secretary to replace the old system of assistant treasurers. She is to do all the book work, envelopes, and co-sign treasurer's checks.
 - Special meeting in October to vote on Day School, ended in 41-41 tie. Again voted down in the annual meeting (Nov.) 56-41.

- 1974 - New pews in the church balcony.
 - Mission pledge of \$25,000 exceeded
 - Study and drawings for add-on front entrance to church voted down after considerable discussion.
- 1975 - We set goal of \$6,000 for Synod's 125th Anniversary offering. "Grace-125".
 - Parsonage kitchen remodelled.
 - Pastor Muenkel's 25 years of service to the congregation celebrated Dec. 7th, service in ZHS auditorium.
- 1976 - Church basement remodelling studied.
 - Mission goal set at \$28,000.
 - Another Day School committee appointed
 - Our float wins 3rd place in Zumbrota Bicentennial parade.
- 1977 - Church sanctuary carpeted and pews padded.
 - Special meeting in April adopted Day School 55-47.
 - Dawn Skovsted, 1977 graduate of DMLC called as first teacher of our Day School; started with grades K-6, 22 pupils.
 - Mabel Lohmann honored by the congregation for 40 years of service as Parish Messenger editor, and secretarial work.
 - All funds consolidated into two: Home Budget and Missions.
 - Study begun on church basement improvements.
- 1978 - DMLC Choir concert in March.
 - Day School presents the play "Hansel and Gretel" in April.
 - James Hennig called as principal of our school.
 - 31 pupils in our school.
 - Mission goal set at \$34,000.00.
 - Church basement remodelled.
- 1979 - Raasch house north of the church is bought for \$40,000.00.
 - Congregation celebrates Pastor Muenkel's Anniversary in the Holy Ministry on Sept. 16, 1979.
 - Five students in synodical schools: 2 at DMLC, New Ulm; 1 at Northwestern College, Watertown; 2 at Martin Luther Preparatory School, Prairie du Chien.
 - Mission goal raised to \$38,000.00 and exceeded.
- 1980 - Day School opens with 36 pupils.
 - First Easter Sunrise Service, 6 A.M., in addition to regular services.
- 1981 - A series of 7 movies by Dr. Dobson on "Focus on Family" were shown at 5 evening gatherings in Jan.-Feb.
 - Vicar Mark Barenz and our teacher Dawn Skovsted are married in June.
 - Miss Debra Schultz is called from the DMLC graduating class to replace Miss Skovsted.
 - Our first congregation picnic at the fairgrounds with worship in the 4-H building.
 - 45 students in our Day School.
 - Mission goal raised to \$41,280.00.

- 1982 - Mrs. Kenneth Ebert called to teach Kindergarten in our Day School
 - Enrollment in our school: 52, 10 in Kindergarten.
 - We vote to join the Hiawatha Valley Lutheran High School Association.
 - Communion membership: 636.
 - Mission goal for 1983: \$46,300.00.
- 1983 - Start two Lenten Services, 6:30 and 8:00 P.M.

E N D N O T E S

¹Zumbrota - The First 100 Years, (Zumbrota, Minnesota, 1956), p. 15-16

²ibid. p. 12

³ibid. p. 22-23

⁴ibid. p. 377-378

⁵Mabel Lohmann, "The History of Christ Ev. Lutheran Church" (1943) p. 1-2

⁶ibid. p. 2-3

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Golden Jubilee History of The Minnesota District of The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and its Member Congregations 1918-1968, Minneapolis, MN. 1969.

Zumbrota - The First One Hundred Years 1856-1956, Zumbrota, MN. 1956.

Lohmann, Mabel. "The History of Christ Evangelical Luther Church" 1943.

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