

Trinity Lutheran School – 112 Years of God's Grace

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The Fox River Valley has attracted many people and various industries to its beautiful hills. The early residents of this topographically diverse region were Winnebagos and various other Native American tribes. The Indians sold their lands to the hordes of European immigrants who came to settle along the Fox River and lakes Winnebago and Butte des Morts. Along with the rapid population growth came the occupations of the ethnically diverse people arriving from distant lands; namely, farming and industry.

The vast forests and multiple waterways were quickly utilized for the profitable and important papermaking industry. With the paper mills came the need for more workers. Compared to other types of industry in its day, making paper not only required a large work force but it was also a very stable business. And with the paper industry on the rise, the population continued to increase throughout the Fox River Valley. It is interesting to note that the Old Eagle mill in Kaukauna which was built by Col. Frambach was the first paper mill in Wisconsin to use the wood pulp method of making paper which originated in England.<sup>1</sup>

The new inhabitants who were rapidly settling along the Fox River had many needs. Some of these were met in the many occupations created by the booming papermaking industry, while the more important spiritual needs were taken care of by the Church. Wisconsin boasted the most densely Catholic populace before the 1900s among midwestern states.<sup>2</sup> And it is plain to see that the Roman Catholic influence was quite strong north of Lake Winnebago.

In 1868, a small but dedicated group of German Lutherans broke away from their ties to the fatherland. They did not want to lose their faith nor their identity by being swallowed up in a Lutheran organization whose respect for God's Word was dwindling. Strongly confessional and intent on keeping a firm stance in Scripture, these Lutherans

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<sup>1</sup> Nesbit, 188

<sup>2</sup> Nesbit, 522

sparsely dotted the Wisconsin countryside with their churches. During a time when economics were challenging for the Church and religious differences were the underlying cause of many quarrels, the Wisconsin Synod continued its humble growth.

At the centennial anniversary of the United States, the Fox River Valley, although predominantly Roman Catholic, was the host to an outreach-minded Lutheran pastor. Reverend Reinhold Pieper was serving a congregation in Wrightstown in 1876, and had been directing some attention to a group of Lutherans in nearby Kaukauna. For a while Pastor Pieper conducted the services of this little group in the house of George Hahner, the first in a long list of people who were dedicated to serving the Lord in whatever capacity they were able. As the group began to increase and larger facilities were needed, Jacob Konrad offered his building on the corner of Lawe and Wisconsin streets for a place of worship.

April 15, 1877, saw the drafting of a church constitution for the congregation which was named the "German Evangelical Lutheran Trinity Congregation, U.A.C. of Kaukauna, Outagamie County, Wisconsin." Shortly thereafter, many members, including Johann Weirauch, provided materials for the construction of a church which was built at the corner of Tobacnoir and Grignon streets. In 1879, Trinity joined the Lutheran Synod of Wisconsin and other states, which has since been shortened to the name "Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod." Due to the shortage of clergy which plagued the Lutheran churches at that time, Trinity congregation was not immediately assigned their own resident pastor. For the first few years they were served by several pastors who simultaneously shepherded other churches in the area; Pieper from Wrightstown (1876-78), William Bergholz also from Wrightstown (1878-80) and G.W. Albrecht from Woodville (1880-85).

Resolving to call their own pastor, Trinity congregation purchased land and built a parsonage in which the Reverend William Hinnenthal, first resident pastor, soon lived.

Having accepted the call on June 14, 1885, Pastor Hinnenthal persuaded the members of Trinity to build a grade school. Stressing the importance of a Bible-based Christian education, he offered to teach the children their courses, and served both as pastor and teacher for 13 years.

The school, in a similar way as the church, started out rather humbly. Trinity Lutheran School began as a one room white brick school house. A collection of \$700 made it possible for the congregation to immediately build the school on what is, at present, the site of the parsonage. Some remember the old white school house as the "German school," since classes were taught there in German for many years. Pastor Hinnenthal was the lone instructor until 1891 when the congregation called its first regular teacher.

What a blessing for the church and school when in August 1891 Mr. Karl Brenner accepted the call to become Trinity's first teacher. Karl Friedrich Georg Brenner was born in Michelbach, Germany, on February 24, 1845, and was trained by his father to be a wheelwright. In 1865, Mr. Brenner left Germany with several close family members to move to Oakwood, Wisconsin, where his brother Phillip was serving as pastor. Soon after, he studied for the teaching ministry at Northwestern College in Watertown, and also at the Teacher's Seminary in Addison, Illinois. Before accepting the call to Kaukauna, Mr. Brenner taught at Hustisford, Hubbard, Fond du Lac and Neenah.<sup>3</sup> Having taught since 1870, Mr. Brenner had honed many useful skills for which the young Trinity school was looking.

The one room "German school" was enlarged to two rooms the summer that Mr. Brenner and his wife and five children moved to Kaukauna. He found there a school which had an outhouse, no running water and was heated by a large wood burning stove. Drinking water, which was pumped by hand from a well in a neighbor's yard, was the

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<sup>3</sup> Brenner, 20

responsibility of the boys at school. The school building itself was surrounded by beautiful oak trees.

Until 1898, Pastor Hinnenthal and Mr. Brenner instructed the children in Trinity's two room school house. After teaching 13 years, Pastor Hinnenthal "retired" from the classroom except in the case of confirmation instructions. He was replaced by Mr. Brenner's third daughter, Anna, who assisted her father as needed. Anna Brenner (Mrs. W. Rahm) served at Trinity's school from 1898 until 1906. Anna's oldest brother, Karl Brenner, Jr., also taught whenever the school was in need of an emergency instructor.

Mr. Brenner was a valuable asset to Trinity's young school. He offered services which he had developed from his first teaching calls in addition to his talent and interest in music. Gathering together a number of young men and women, Mr. Brenner organized a mixed choir which sang the Lord's praises for many years. With the assistance of his choir members, he collected \$755 for the purchase of the congregation's first pipe organ which was installed in 1900 and was used until 1954.

On January 6, 1901, after more than nine years of faithful service to Trinity's grade school and congregation, Mr. Brenner resigned because of poor health. In spite of his ailments, from which he recovered a short while after his resignation, Mr. Brenner remained in Kaukauna with his family and served in various capacities for the church until his death in 1928 at the age of 83.

In 1902, Pastors Pieper and Bergholz returned to Kaukauna and preached for the congregation's twenty-fifth anniversary. What a celebration to see God's grace poured out on both the church and grade school. By 1907, the church had grown considerably and the ever-increasing number of students prompted a meeting at which the congregation discussed the building of a new and larger school. Plans for expansion of the grade school were withdrawn since there was tremendous fluctuation in enrollment for several years. Our nation was tottering on the brink of war and an anti-German

sentiment may have affected the growth of Trinity's little "German" school.

During these changing times, from 1907 until 1914, Mr. Karl Brenner, Jr., took charge of teaching the students to replace Mr. Henry Kahnert. Like his father, Mr. Brenner, Jr. had a great love for Christian education which is evident in the way that he took care of his pupils outside of the classroom. In 1912 he organized the Young People's Society in an effort to incorporate the youth into the church and offer them opportunities for public service, Christian fellowship and the study of God's Word. In 1919, after he had accepted a call to Beaver Dam, Mr. Brenner, Jr. founded the Junior Northwestern, the popular children's version of the Northwestern Lutheran. He served as the magazine's editor until 1954.

Some time during Mr. Brenner, Jr.'s tenure at Trinity, English services were introduced into church worship. Soon after, the grade school also accommodated English into its curriculum. For a few years the classes taught in the morning were taught in English, while in the afternoon the teaching was done in German. By 1918 English was taught exclusively in the grade school.

Trinity congregation dedicated a new worship facility on February 13, 1916. Synod president Pastor Bergemann and Professors H. Meyer and E. Kowalke preached sermons commemorating the phenomenal growth and blessings which the Lord had poured out on the church in Kaukauna. Pastor Hinnenthal celebrated this momentous occasion and was taken to his eternal rest the following year, on July 19, 1917, after 32 faithful years of service. In the years he had served the lambs and sheep of Trinity's church and school, Pastor Hinnenthal saw the building of a grade school, an addition to the school and the construction and dedication of a new church.

Pastor Paul Th. Oehlert was installed as the new shepherd of Trinity Lutheran Church and School on September 23, 1917. Like his predecessor, he was a strong advocate of Christian education, and supported the lambs of the congregation for many

years. Beginning in 1918 a graded Sunday school which was under the pastor's supervision was organized to teach catechism instructions and Bible history. In addition, in 1920, a Bible class was started for the confirmed members of the congregation which offered opportunities for spiritual growth and Christian fellowship.

The school at this time consisted of a very small number of students who needed the use of only one of the two available classrooms. Mr. Wicke taught from 1914 until his resignation in 1919 when Mr. Theodore Boettcher, a recent graduate from Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm, was called. A few years later he married Eva Grebe, the granddaughter of Mr. Karl Brenner.

Mr. Boettcher came to Trinity Lutheran School at a time when there was a lull in the enrollment. Two years later, the Lord saw fit to bless the little school with additional students which made it necessary for the vacant classroom to be used again. The Meyer sisters taught the primary grades during this period of sudden growth; Miss E. Meyer (Mrs. Wm. Carnot) succeeded her sister (Mrs. Arthur Treptow) in 1922.

Memories of those who attended the little white school offer insight on some of the activities inside the classroom and outside. In those early years, there was a dress code of sorts: girls wore dresses and boys wore shirts and slacks. The atmosphere of the classroom was one of propriety. The unruly or inattentive child was reprimanded by the teacher with or without the consent of the parent.

The task of the teachers at Trinity Lutheran School has always been to educate the pupils in the three R's and to nurture their faith in God's Word. The children were grounded in religion, learning what was right and wrong. They studied the commandments, Luther's catechism and the reason why being a Lutheran in a denominationally diverse nation is important.

Learning was a serious undertaking, however, playing encouraged both exercise and the development of social skills. Sledding, hockey, throwing marbles, singing and

stoking the wood stove were some of the activities in which the children participated.

Trinity was known for its strict discipline and challenging studies, but the children enjoyed their grade school. They knew what it meant to respect those in authority and they cherished the opportunities to grow and make lasting friendships with other Christian children. A common conception of the parents and children alike was that attending Trinity's grade school was not an option; no one even considered attending another educational institution beside their church school.

The church benefited greatly from the education of their children. Many of the youths were involved in church activities and even participated in community service. The Young People's Society was quite active and after they had gathered a substantial amount of money, the group purchased a three acre grove of hickory trees along the bank of the Fox River for \$2310. The grove was presented to the church in 1921 and became a park which was used by both the church and school.

The "roaring twenties" are remembered as a wild time in our nation's history. While commerce and industry in our nation was exploding, Kaukauna was growing and so were the needs of the town. At the same time, the student population at Trinity hit the roof. The little white brick "German school" was packed with eager students. By 1923 it was absolutely necessary to construct a new school building. The cornerstone was laid on August 19, 1923, and the new school was dedicated on February 24, 1924. The project cost about \$45,000, including all the equipment. It was a magnificent change from the humble two room school house which served the children very well for nearly 40 years.

The new school not only offered more space for classrooms, it was equipped with some "extras." Trinity was the first school in town built with a gymnasium. However, it was a novelty that was not immediately put to use. Some remember the days when the children were not allowed to play in the gym; it was used as a storeroom for a while. In



the future, such activities as basketball, school plays, graduation and other special services would utilize this largest of rooms in the new school building. In the mean time, the students played outside. They rode the merry-go-round or the swings, played ball, made leaf houses or slid down the hill in the park on makeshift sleds.

In addition to the gymnasium, or activity portion of the school, there was also a kitchen. What is presently the kindergarten room at one time served as a coatroom, an office and a kitchen. The hot lunch program, which was started in the 20's, is still active today.

The room next to the kitchen was the pastor's confirmation instructions classroom. Reverend Paul Th. Oehlert taught there. In order that the children were properly trained in Luther's catechism, Pastor Oehlert insisted that they attend Trinity's school during the 7th and 8th grades. (This rule was enforced until the school board overturned it in the early 60's.) His dignified air and constant striving to be a perfectionist was evident in every aspect of his life, particularly in his teaching. The children were required to memorize about 300 Bible passages, and on examination Sunday, they were expected to know the catechism perfectly.

Pastor Oehlert, as an undershepherd of the Lord, expected that his work received the proper respect. Obedience and propriety were the standard rather than the exception in his classroom. In the event that a child misbehaved or was unprepared, Pastor Oehlert did not hide his feelings. The pounding on his desk, the swinging of his pocket watch on the end of the chain, the shuffling of his feet left the impression that he did not put up with any guff from his pupils, and he did not. Nevertheless, his staunch support of Christian education and the deep love for the children he taught was well known. Pastor Oehlert always met with the Young People's Society for their meetings, leading them in Bible study. It is even said that when one of his confirmands died before examination Sunday, Pastor Oehlert left one seat empty, in memory of the boy and out of respect for

the family.<sup>4</sup>

For the first time in its history, Trinity Lutheran School had grown so large that in 1924 the students were separated into three classrooms. The three teachers were Mr. Boettcher, who was the principal, Mr. Ihlenfeldt, a student of the New Ulm teacher's college, and Miss E. Meyer. At the end of the first school year in the new building, Miss Loraine Radder (Mrs. Arthur Look) accepted the call to teach the primary grades. At the end of the second year, Mr. Vergin filled in to teach the secondary grades for one year, only to be succeeded by Mr. Martin Hoffman in 1926. (Even though German was no longer a part of the curriculum at this time, Mr. Hoffman taught the children "Stille Nacht" and offered German lessons after school for 5¢.) Miss Esther Dommer (Mrs. Emil Trettin) instructed the primary grades in 1927, and was replaced by Miss Ida Conradt (Mrs. A. Fuerstenau) in 1929. In 1931, with our nation rapidly falling into the Great Depression, student enrollment dropped severely. With the loss of children and a shortage of funding, Trinity could no longer support three teachers, so the staff was cut to two. The principal, Mr. Boettcher, taught the older children and Mr. Hoffman instructed the pupils in the first through fifth grades. This was the teaching situation for 13 years until Mr. Hoffman accepted a call to Dale.

Mr. Boettcher and Mr. Hoffman were both remarkable men who contributed greatly to Trinity Lutheran School. Both were talented musically, playing the organ for worship on Sundays. (Mr. Boettcher gave piano lessons to his students after school.) Both were excellent teachers and stern disciplinarians. Their love for the teaching ministry was shown in the way they led their classes. Their former students fondly remember these dedicated teachers and the enjoyable activities they prepared for the children, including the study of Luther's life and Friday hymn singing.<sup>5</sup>

Mr. Hoffman made many impressions on both students and parents alike. His no

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<sup>4</sup> Bowman, personal interview

<sup>5</sup> Beahm, personal interview

nonsense teaching sometimes caused a few quarrels with parents. He was not afraid to snap the ears or use a ruler on the hand of a student who was not paying attention. Mr. Hoffman's strict discipline was further accentuated by his attire. He wore a suit and tie to class every day. He was known for his near perfect penmanship, which he demanded also of his students. His sternness, however, was evened out in the way he cared for his students. Mr. Hoffman took great care explaining the lessons to his pupils. He helped each child and even made himself available after school for those in need of extra attention.

In addition to his music skills and his careful instruction in the classroom, Mr. Hoffman was also involved in the lives of the students apart from the school day. He taught German to anyone who was interested. He was the director of the drama club. Mr. Hoffman would help the students with their productions, involving them in all aspects of the stage. (Mr. Edward Kaphingst was in charge of the lighting while he was a student at Trinity.) Perhaps one of the most lasting memories of the students were the Christmas services in which they participated.

In 1944, in order to fill the position vacated by Mr. Hoffman, Miss Ida Reinke was called to teach the lower grades. The following year, Miss Jeanette Kaeding replaced Miss Reinke as the second teacher and she remained on the staff until 1949. By 1948, after a large influx of students, it was necessary once again to call a third teacher. Miss Catherine Behm (Mrs. Richard Albert) taught the intermediate grades until she resigned in 1951.

The resignation of Miss Kaeding left a vacancy for the large primary grades. The school needed another teacher. The Baby Boom turned out to be a blessing for Trinity. There were too many students in grades 1 through 3 to teach together in one classroom. At this time, however, there was a shortage of teacher candidates from New Ulm. Miss Norma Korthals (Mrs. James Ring), after completing only one year of college, accepted

the emergency call to Kaukauna. She had expected to teach one year and return to the teacher's college the following year to complete her studies, but the supply of teachers was still low and the need for teachers remained high. Miss Korthals continued to teach from 1949 until 1954, during which time she married Mr. James Ring of Trinity's congregation.

After 31 years of service as principal and teacher, Mr. Boettcher accepted a call to Menasha. Mr. Fred Bartel was installed as the new principal in 1950. In 1952, Mrs. Bartel instructed the intermediate grades after Miss Behm's resignation. That year, the 75th anniversary of Trinity Lutheran Church, the enrollment at the grade school had grown to 93 students. In the following year Mrs. Calvin Spice became the first teacher to instruct the kindergarten children at Trinity.

The next few years were somewhat unsettling for the 70 year old school because many teachers came and went. Under Mr. Bartel's five years as principal the following women taught: Katherine Sperling, Janet Drews, Elaine Look, Shirley Nolan and Phyllis Bittner. In 1955, Mr. Frederick Mueller, a graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Thiensville, was installed as principal and teacher of the 8th grade. That same year Miss Elizabeth Buss (Mrs. Ewald Ring, Jr.) also joined the faculty. In spite of the many changes in the teaching staff, the school grew by leaps and bounds. In 1955 there were about 180 students. The following year, 1956, Mrs. Arnold Meyer, Miss Cynthia Lehman and Mr. Wilbert Luehring accepted calls to teach Trinity's children. (Mr. Luehring had been teaching for eight years in Michigan before he came to Kaukauna. In addition to his teaching duties he directed the choir and was a church organist.) For several years the student body numbered around 160 and 170. The classrooms were filled beyond comfortable capacity and an expansion project was in the works.

Realizing the desperation of the classroom situation, the school board initiated a building project in 1957 which would add two classrooms and modernize the building.

Meanwhile, the Kindergarten was held in the church basement and the gymnasium was used for classrooms. A large curtain was hung from the ceiling, separating the room into two classes. One side was occupied by Mr. Luehring's 5th and 6th grade students during the construction. After the \$80,000 improvements were completed in 1958, Trinity could more easily accommodate its large enrollment.

The changes in the faculty continued after the new addition was finished. Miss Barbara Dahms taught during the 1958-59 school year. Mr. Arnold Breitung accepted Trinity's call in 1959 and Miss Gloria Beckman in 1960. At this time there were six faculty members. Due to the large number of students and the difficulty of keeping a steady principalship, teachers were shifted around. They instructed different classes from year to year, but never instructed more than two grades at a time. When Mrs. Spice resigned from teaching the Kindergarten in 1963, Miss Lois Rupprecht filled the void. Mrs. Ewald Ring, Jr., resigned in 1965 and was succeeded by Miss Mary Schoeneck.

The church also went through some changes in 1965. On February 28, Pastor Oehlert, resident Bible scholar, retired. He had faithfully served Trinity's church and school for 47 years. Pastor John Mattek of Fond du Lac was installed soon after, on March 14, 1965.

In 1966, Mr. Mueller, who had married Lois Rupprecht, accepted a call into the preaching ministry for which he had formerly studied. Mr. Luehring then became the principal, and Mr. Ronald Schmidt, a student from Dr. Martin Luther College, accepted the emergency call to teach in Mr. Mueller's vacancy. Mrs. James Ring returned that year after a ten year absence, the mother of four children, and began to teach the Kindergarten class.

Teaching methods were going through a transitional period around the nation. Mrs. Ring, who had studied at the university in Oshkosh, brought some of these new techniques into her Kindergarten class. Teaching focused on the visual and auditory

senses of the children, which reinforced learning. Props in the classroom, such as a life sized teepee and flannel boards promoted an added interest in learning. Field trips were introduced as effective tools for teaching the students and applying their studies practically. It was also becoming apparent that children learned in different ways and at differing levels. The special needs of the children in the classroom was a topic which was quickly receiving a lot of attention during this time. Volunteers from the congregation, working as teacher's assistants, gave personal attention to children who required more help than the teachers could offer in the classroom.

Former students fondly remember this era at Trinity. The class sizes were large and friendships were many. Kids worked and played together, often building relationships that outlived their years in grade school. There were few sporting events, but extracurricular activities such as school plays taught skills that could not easily be learned in the classroom.

Mr. Schmidt returned to complete his studies in 1967. Mr. David Ebeling was installed that year and in 1969 he accepted the call to serve also as principal. In 1968, Miss Beckman, the golden-voiced third grade teacher resigned. Her coworker Miss Schoeneck left the following year, accepting a call to teach in Waukesha. She was succeeded by Miss Barbara Duehlmeier, who taught one year at Trinity. Enrollment was down for a few years, but began to pick up again in 1970. Miss Karen Eckert and Miss Elaine Ekhoﬀ joined the faculty, bringing the number of teachers back up to six.

In 1972, Mr. Luehring stepped up once more as principal, to fill the vacancy left by Mr. Ebeling who took a call to Milwaukee. Mr. Luehring served in that capacity until 1975, when he resigned. He had spent 27 years faithfully nurturing God's children in the grade schools, 19 of those years spent at Trinity. He was a strong advocate of the program which offered assistance to children with learning disabilities, and presently serves as a volunteer in that program with his wife.

Miss Eckert resigned in 1973 and was replaced by Mrs. Douglas Agenten. Mr. Douglas Agenten served from 1972 until 1974, when both he and Miss Ekhoﬀ left the faculty. Miss Carol Bauer accepted the call to teach for one year. Mr. Agenten was replaced by Mr. Lowell Prickett who instructed the eighth grade for one year and the fifth and sixth grades the following year. In 1975, Mr. Luehring, Mr. Breitung, Miss Bauer and Mrs. Agenten stepped down from Trinity's teaching staff. Pastor Mattek served as principal for a year, and Mr. Paul Schultz, a student at New Ulm, joined the faculty with Mrs. David Aderman and Miss Janelle Doersch (Mrs. David Bonson). At the end of the year, Mr. Prickett, Mr. Schultz and Mrs. Aderman resigned. (Mr. Prickett had introduced soccer during his years of service to Trinity's school.)

At the nation's bicentennial, Trinity Lutheran School called Mr. Robert Moldenhauer to be the new principal. Mr. Stephan Rodmyre and Mrs. Harold Kobin also came to Trinity that year. Mrs. James Ring, who taught the Kindergarten for 10 years, moved to the third and fourth grade classroom the same year and instructed that level for three years. (The church celebrated 100 years of God's grace in 1977. The following year, Pastor Andrew Martens accepted the call to shepherd the century old congregation and was installed on October 22, 1978.) In 1979, Mrs. Bonson was succeeded by Mr. Mark Morser and Mrs. Ring changed classrooms to teach the first and second grades. Principal Moldenhauer took a call to Watertown, Wisconsin, in 1980, at which time Mr. Rodmyre became principal and Mr. Frederick Lohmiller was called to the staff. During this time, Trinity saw another growing trend in enrollment. It was necessary to call Mrs. Michael Loescher in 1981. She served for a year and Miss Rachel Schultz (Mrs. Freiburger) filled the vacancy in 1982. When Mrs. Kobin resigned at mid term in the 1984-85 school year, Miss Schultz carried her teaching responsibility plus the Kindergarten. She was aided by New Ulm graduate Mr. Donald Linskens, Jr. Mrs. Stephan Rodmyre relieved Miss Schultz of her Kindergarten responsibility in 1985 when

she was called to teach that level.

Spring of 1984 was the beginning of a new look both inside and out for Trinity Lutheran School. An energy conservation program was started which saw the large windows bricked in and replaced by several smaller windows. The school was also insulated and the brick work was tuck pointed in preparation for the school's centennial celebration.

One hundred years old! Trinity had made a lot of history in its one hundred year life. Built in 1885 as a tool for educating the congregation's children in God's Word, the teachers on the faculty at the centennial still sought the same goal. The staff at this time were Mr. Rodmyre, principal, Mr. Lohmiller, Mr. Morser, Miss Schultz, Mrs. Ring and Mrs. Rodmyre. The following year brought more changes to the teaching staff. Mr. Lohmiller and Miss Schultz accepted calls to other schools, while Mr. Edward Schroeder came to teach the fifth and sixth grades. Mr. Eric Troge was called to serve as principal after Mr. Rodmyre took a call to Washington state in 1987. Mrs. Susan Punke replaced Mrs. Rodmyre who had taught Kindergarten, and also instructed the third grade in the afternoons. She served in this capacity until 1991.

Pastor Martens took a call on December 4, 1988. During the two and one half year pastoral vacancy that followed, Trinity congregation was served by Pastors Ronald Szep and Mark Neitzel from neighboring churches. Pastor Ronald Raddatz has faithfully shepherded the flock in Kaukauna since his installation on July 29, 1990. Miss Janice Altergott (Mrs. James Luebke) joined the school faculty in 1989. She filled the vacancy left by Mrs. Ring who retired from the teaching ministry in 1989. Mrs. Ring had faithfully served her Lord and his lambs at Trinity for 28 years. Her love for the classroom and for the sharing of God's Word still pours out today on the children she helps at school. In addition to the time she spends at the grade school, Mrs. Ring also serves in many ways at the church.



Preschool was taught by Miss Laurie Zachow (Mrs. Penterman), who accepted the call in 1991. The following two years saw her teaching both preschool and Kindergarten. In 1992, Miss Altergott left the teaching profession. She still serves both the school and church in many ways, including volunteer work and sharing her various musical talents. Miss Patricia Bodi accepted the call to teach the first and second grades in 1992. The following year Mrs. Leon Theimer joined the faculty as the new Kindergarten teacher. Mr. Schroeder resigned in the summer of 1995. Miss Diane Wernicke instructed the fifth and sixth grade for one year, until 1996, when Miss Jane Price accepted a permanent call to that position.

Today, one hundred twelve years after Pastor Hinnenthal requested a grade school for the children of Trinity Lutheran Church, the Lord's blessings continue to shower on the staff and students at Trinity Lutheran School. Present staff include: Mr. Eric Troge, 7-8 and principal, Miss Jane Price, 5-6, Mr. Mark Morser, 3-4, Miss Patricia Bodi, 1-2, and Mrs. Cheryl Theimer, preschool and Kindergarten. Seventh and eighth grade religion classes are taught by Pastors Raddatz and Paul Fanning and Vicar Andre Frandle. (The author served as vicar during the 1995-96 school year.) In addition to the teachers listed above, there are a number of volunteers who assist the teachers and students inside and outside of the classrooms.

Today there are some challenges that face faculty and students alike at Trinity. Is the school meeting all of the children's needs? Are parents involving themselves with the education of the next generation? Does the curriculum properly prepare the students for the life ahead? In a time when families can't seem to settle in one place, it's important to have something stable in their lives. The church and Lutheran grade school offer an answer in God's Word. The teachers at Trinity instruct the pupils on the Law and Gospel of the Lord. They are taught what is right and wrong, and in Jesus, they find motivation to do what is good in God's sight. Instruction in the Bible comes first and foremost.

Children have other needs that are met in their Lutheran grade school. Special assistance comes in the way of volunteers that tutor the students who have difficulty in certain subjects. The children find many opportunities to grow and to sharpen mental and physical skills in extracurricular activities. Piano lessons improve certain skills. "Music is really nothing more than problem solving."<sup>6</sup> The students learn organizational skills by breaking down challenges and attacking them in individual pieces. Forensics offers children the opportunity to develop and share their personality in public literature readings. The availability of computers in the classroom presents a remarkable wealth of information for the students at the touch of a button. Athletic activities provide physical training and teamwork among participants. Trinity offers a wide variety of activities, in an attempt to meet the spiritual, mental and physical needs of every student.

In summary, Trinity Lutheran School exists to prepare young Christians for a life of service to the Lord. That was its purpose 112 years ago and that remains its chief purpose today. In providing a solid base in Scripture and a well rounded grade school education, Trinity equips its students with many skills which benefit them greatly in their adult lives. God grant many more years of Christ-centered education to the lambs who enter the doors of Trinity Lutheran School.

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<sup>6</sup> A.Troge, personal interview

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