

BY GOD'S GRACE,
NOT A TYPICAL CONGREGATION.

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Senior Church History
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Introduction

The story of Trinity Lutheran Church in Jackson isn't really all that special to the neutral observer. Like so many churches at that time it grew from primitive log cabin existence to the brick-and stone stability it occupies today. In that way it's basically just another old church.

What's important is not the physical growth of the church plant itself. Much more precious is the pure Word of God that's existed since time immemorial, and that will last forever. For a church to claim this priceless and ageless commodity as part of its heritage is really significant. For the history of that church to show that Word nourishing and strengthening children and adults, this is indeed notable.

That's why Trinity's history is remarkable. We'll see God's hand guiding and directing the people and events that come into contact with this congregation. The Lord's gracious will was done. At a time when a pastor from any Lutheran or Reformed affiliation was welcomed by spiritually starved frontier settlers, God saw to it pure Scriptural teaching prevailed.

The early pastors who ministered to these people surely influenced their doctrinal stance. Here God blessed the young church. And in this way he prepared it for a much more difficult stance it would have to take in the future when the church body it had allied itself with slipped from the sure hold it had on God's Word.

So then, much more than seeing a church's activities, we would discover more of God's good dealings among his people.

The Habel Era

When the first group of Lutheran immigrants arrived in Milwaukee, most of the territory of Wisconsin was a wilderness. The settlement itself, at the mouth of the Milwaukee River, was but a small village of 1200 inhabitants. In June of 1838 the dividing of the territory of Wisconsin took place and the western boundary was fixed at the Mississippi River. As a result of the Black Hawk War, most of the Indians were driven from the southeastern part of the state. In the treaty of 1833, the lands along the Milwaukee River were ceded by the Indians. Only a few small Indian villages remained in the state.

The Lutheran pioneers were drawn to this area along the Milwaukee River by the good land which was said to be available. In Milwaukee a government land office was opened for the sale of public lands. Such favorable publicity soon began to attract an ever increasing flow of immigrants, including many German Lutherans.

When these Lutheran families came to Milwaukee, they set up temporary housing; and sent out exploration parties to find land for suitable settlements. Land at that time was available for \$1.25 per acre, --\$50.00 for 40 acres. When the exploration parties returned, they filed their land claims and bought the desired land from the government. As the settlers pushed northward, they established new settlements and new congregations were organized: David's Star, Kirchhayn, 1843; Immanuel, Town Jackson, 1847. The area around the church we are considering, Trinity, Town Jackson, was settled in the early 50's. The immigrants were mainly Pommeranians, with some Saxons and Prussians.

The Trinity congregation was organized by Pastor Ludwig Habel in January of 1856. It was given the name "The Lutheran Community of the Triune God." Dr. Roy Suelflow, in his history of the South Wisconsin District of the Missouri Synod, called Walking with Wise Men, grades Pastor Habel as one of

the most interesting Lutheran preachers to have set foot on Wisconsin soil.¹ And indeed this enterprising man did set his feet on quite a bit of virgin Wisconsin soil. He was the first Lutheran pioneer in Columbia, Sauk, and Dane Counties.

Originally from Prussia, he was said to have had newspaper experience there. He came to study at Ft. Wayne 1847-49, and was then pastor of the Missouri congregations in Pomeroy, Ohio. He seems to have had ability, for he was elected Secretary of Synod in 1850. But he felt Missouri was too hard on the Buffalo Synod, and thus he soon resigned his membership. By fall of 1854 he was in Madison, as a free lance missionary. He lived in Cottage Grove where he started Immanuel congregation. He also started work in many other places in the three counties named. All the work which Habel started was turned over to the Iowa Synod in the mid-1850's, that period of time when Grabau of the Buffalo Synod was working on an alliance of Buffalo and Iowa against Missouri. Gradually Pastor Habel worked his way east to the Jackson area where he organized the Trinity congregation.

The original immigration group of Prussians who had settled in Kirchhayn and formed the second oldest Lutheran church in the state, David's Star, had lost their first and only pastor. This was Pastor Gustav Kindermann, who had come to America with these members and helped them to organize in 1843. David's Stern-Gemeinde called Pastor Habel. He accepted and was installed in the summer of 1857. David's Star at that time was affiliated with the Buffalo Synod.

Pastor Habel and David's Star left Buffalo in 1862. Pastor Grabau had demanded one cent per communicant for his own support as Senior Ministerius. A dissension arose over this agreement and Habel took a stand against Buffalo. A small minority of David's Star members did not want to sever aF-

¹Roy A. Suelflow, Walking With Wise Men (Published by the South Wisconsin District of the Lutheran Church- Missouri Synod, 1967), p. 89.

filiation with the Buffalo Synod. They withdrew and organized an opposition church, called "St. John's Church." It's still in existence, one mile west of David's Star on County Trunk G.

Pastor Habel then tried to organize a synod of his own; he also started a seminary to train students for the Ministry. As far as is known, three men were graduated, serving churches in the former Iowa Synod.² Habel served David's Star until 1870. It was then he was called to Cedarburg and helped to organize Immanuel Lutheran Church (ALC). At that time these Lutherans in Cedarburg had withdrawn from the Missouri Synod. They are not to be confused with First Immanuel of Cedarburg, a Missouri church at the same time period. This church had close ties with Trinity of Jackson.

Before we close the Habel age in this area, some facts need to be brought out about the complex Lutheran situation here. In those days, one could find five Lutheran churches within a surprisingly small radius of each other. David's Star is of course the original church founded by Kindermann's group in 1843. Immanuel, about two miles northwest of Kirchhahn on Mill Road, is the congregation which was organized by a group of David's Star members who bolted the Buffalo Synod in 18~~57~~⁴⁵, when Kindermann was still there. This congregation soon joined the Missouri Synod. For many years Trinity, Jackson was considered a "branch" of Immanuel. They shared pastors for quite a few years.

Now the story line thickens. Part of the Immanuel church, which, by the way, stands only as an historical landmark now, split at one time and left the Missouri Synod. The part which split from Immanuel was called Zion, and joined the Missouri Synod. All that is left of this Zion church is the cemetery on the Miske farm, two miles directly south of Trinity on highway 60. Zion later disbanded and rejoined Immanuel, which also rejoined the Missouri Synod.

² The 125th Anniversary Festival Publication Church History of David's Star, put together in 1968, p. 18.

The actual location of three of these churches almost forms a straight line over a five mile length, with Trinity north, Zion in the middle, and David's Star south. Trinity was two and a half miles north of Zion and David's Star was two and a half miles south of Zion.

Trinity's first pastor, Ludwig Habel, served the church in Cedarburg for several years. He was killed in an accident there and his body buried in the cemetery at Cedarburg.

Rapid Growth for the New Church

Much work had to be done to get the young congregation on its feet. They needed a place to call their own, where they could set up worship facilities. So they wasted ^{no} time in acquiring one. On January 14, 1856 they bought their first parcel of land. It comprised the area of the present day parsonage. A log building was erected on the corner, which served both as a house of worship and a school.

Members were to contribute one long log (30 feet plus) as well as two short logs (20 feet plus) for every 40 acres of land they owned. By the fall of 1856 everything was ready. The services of a lady teacher were engaged and the important work of schooling for the children was begun. Apparently this teacher, whose name has been lost, was active in the school until about 1880.

Although the church was without any synodical affiliation until 1858, services were held regularly four times a year: a worship service in the morning and Bible study in the afternoon. Remember, Trinity did not get its own resident pastor until 1878. For this work the pastors who served were paid \$20.00 annually. On the intervening Sundays one of the elders or trustees would conduct a Lesegottesdienst. One of the men, a Mr. Fred Gauger frequently served in this capacity. He also officiated at several funerals.

Church records for this "Lutheran Community of the Triune God," the official name they kept until 1866, show that after Pastor Habel left in 1857, Pastor Ottomar Fuerbringer of Freistadt did some work here. He was pastor at Trinity, Freistadt, which by now had left Buffalo and joined with Missouri. Pastor Fuerbringer's duties also included serving the Missourians who had earlier broken off from David's Star and formed Immanuel.

In the work this man did among them, Trinity, Jackson was indeed blessed by the Lord. For here was a Missouri pastor of great importance during those early years. To see the force of his orthodoxy we need to examine the earlier years of his life.

He was born in Gera, Germany in 1819, making him 38 when he served Jackson's churches. When he was not yet 18, he entered the University of Leipzig. There all but two of the professors were said to have been rationalistic. Besides theology, young Fuerbringer also studied pedagogy, psychology, and psychiatry. In his second year at the university, he was brought to a conservative Christian faith when he joined a small circle of believing students. Through a shoemaker named Goetsching, who was well acquainted with Luther's writings, these students were introduced into sound theology. Through this man also, they got to meet Martin Stephan.

In 1831 Fuerbringer met Pastor Loeber, who would later be one of the pastors, along with Walther, of the Missouri Lutheran immigrants. He stayed at Loeber's house for seven years. In the first year of his stay he took his examination for the ministry. Although he passed with a perfect score, he was told that because he was too conservative he could not expect to receive a charge.

After Fuerbringer had worked under Loeber two years, he met Stephan personally. As a result of Fuerbringer's association with Stephan, Loeber

was also admitted to the inner circle. Fuerbringer and Loeber were on the same ship in the immigration. They stayed in St. Louis by order of Stephan, till a little after the deposition of Stephan, when they went to Ferry County. There Fuerbringer was one of those candidates who undertook the construction of the log cabin seminary.

His first charge from there was as pastor in Elkhorn Prairie, Illinois. Things got rough there when Fuerbringer tried changing their use of rationalistic catechisms and hymnals. Someone even threatened to end the pastor's life, and once thugs were hired to beat him up. But soon his group grew, and in 1847 he went to Chicago to help organize the Missouri Synod.

Soon he accepted this call to serve at Freistadt and Kirchbayn, Wisconsin. In Freistadt a split threatened over the use of the old Fommeranian Catechism. Fuerbringer was able to prevent this. In 1854 when Synod was divided into four districts, he was elected president of the Northern District, in which capacity he served until 1872. As one of four district presidents he was in a position of real leadership in the synod. In 1858 he accepted the call to serve as pastor in Frankenmuth, Michigan.

About Fuerbringer, Dr. Suelflow says,

Fuerbringer was not only a scholar and theologian of great ability, but what is more, he was thoroughly evangelical in his approach as a parish pastor. . . He had a charismatic gift by means of which he was able to make a beginning at solving some of the tortuous and frustrating problems which faced Lutherans in the period of resettlement on the American frontier . . . (He) was a most capable preacher and missionary in a very critical area.³

Pastor Friedrich A. Ahner from First Immanuel of Cedarburg also served the members of Trinity, Jackson at this time. He was born in 1835, in Buegstedt, Saxony, making him 33 at the time he assisted in Jackson. He came to St. Louis in 1839, and studied at the Altenburg College. He was sent to Rock Island, Illinois, where he was ordained in the summer of

³Roy A. Suelflow, op. cit., p. 51.

1856. He worked in Rock Island only a few months. We suddenly find him working in Grafton and Cedarburg already in 1856, although he was not installed there till December 6, 1857.⁴ He worked at First Immanuel for seven years, and then took a call to Frankentrost, Michigan in 1863.

It was evidently under Pastor Ahner that Trinity, Jackson affiliated itself with the Missouri Synod. For the 1857 congregational statistics for the Northern District show Ahner with two churches, but the '58 edition of the Northern District Proceedings shows him serving three churches.⁵

It was after this that Trinity and Immanuel of Jackson were considered almost a dual parish. Immanuel would call the pastor and he would have his parsonage on Immanuel's property, but he would always share his services with the congregation at Trinity. This situation existed from 1858-1872. In 1859 Immanuel called Pastor Heinrich Jox. In 1855 as a young candidate of theology, Jox had been sent to serve St. John's church Maple Grove, Manitowoc County. He developed work in Manitowoc and in Town Morrison, and also founded St. Peter's congregation, Town Easton. But he could not hang on there. Soon his health began to break under the trying labors. The negative response he met in his congregations and the competition from the Wisconsin Synod forced him to resign in a few years.⁶

There was a considerable gain in membership during his pastorate. Jox served faithfully until 1865. Then for nearly two years both Immanuel and Trinity were without a pastor.

The year 1866 marked several milestones in the congregation's history. The first baptism was recorded in January. The constitution was drawn up on February 22nd. Even the congregation's name was changed from "The Luth-Community of the Triune God" to the rather lengthy "First Evangelical Luth-

⁴Northern District Proceedings, 1858, p. 10.

⁵Ibid., 1858, p. 38.

⁶Ibid., 1859, p. 13.

eran 'Dreieinigkeits' Congregation of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession at Cedar Creek." One can almost sense here a much more strict adherence to Scriptures and a greater commitment to the Lutheran Confessions than previously. One must remember that the congregation itself put this name together without the aid of any pastor. It seems they had learned the lessons the Bible and such early pastors as Fuerbringer had left with them. It is something they treasured and would later not let go of.

Rev. Alex Stamm accepted the call to serve Immanuel and Trinity in 1867. The young pastor was born in 1847 in Switzerland. During his pastorate a second parcel of land, which now includes the "old" cemetery was purchased in 1867. Stamm served for three years until 1870. In 1872 he died of small pox at the age of 25. Rev. P. Boeling served the churches from 1870-72.

Afterwards Rev. John Henry Meyer took over as pastor of both congregations beginning in 1872. He was born in 1833 and graduated from Fort Wayne practical Seminary in 1861. From there he served parishes in Michigan and Illinois. In 1877 he left Immanuel and Trinity to take a call to Indiana. A large number of baptisms for those days, 83, in fact, took place during his tenure.⁷

The first time a male teacher is mentioned in the church records is in 1876, where it mentions Teacher Schlachet's name. Little more is known, other than the fact that Trinity's forefathers considered a Christian Day School to be a prime necessity for the spiritual growth of their children.

Under Pastors Stamm and Meyer, the congregation continued to grow in the log church. In 1875, there was considerable interest in building a more modern church building. After investigation, it was reported that a suitable building could be built of field stone for \$503.00, or of white brick for \$853.00. That was September 19, 1875. The congregation

⁷Trinity's 125 year Jubilee Booklet (Printed in 1981), p. 15.

decided to build with field stone.

The building was not started right away. On June 5, 1876, a meeting was held in which the motion was made to repair the old building instead of building a new church. No second was recorded, but a delay followed. By 1878, the cost of building with bricks had risen to \$1,000.00. Now, however, the congregation was ready to get on with the project.

The bricks were purchased at Port Washington and brought by the members to the church site by horse and wagon. The trip took one full day. Since the walls of the church are solid brick about $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet thick, many a stout back, but more importantly, many a pious heart was required to get the job done.

Besides the building of its brick ediface, Trinity was also blessed with another first, its first resident pastor, Rev. W. G. Polack, in 1878. Rev. Polack was born in Weisseichen, Ohio, in 1853. He graduated from St. Louis in 1875 at age 22. He served Dreieinigkeits Lutheran for one year. According to the records he resigned twice from the ministry and seemed to serve congregations for a very short time; he had four parishes in an eleven year career. He resigned for the last time in 1889 and died in 1912 at age 59.

The church building, with a Christian Day School on the lower level, was dedicated some time during 1879. No record of the dedication has been found, perhaps because Rev. Polack was forced to resign due to his failing health. The building may have been dedicated during a pastoral vacancy and therefore not recorded in the church records.

The next resident pastor was Rev. George W. Mueller who served the congregation from 1879 to 1884. Pastor Mueller was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1858. He graduated from St. Louis in 1879. This was his first parish and from here he went to a professorship at Concordia, Milwaukee. He retired there in 1936 and died in Milwaukee at age 91 in 1949.

An interesting sidelight in Trinity's history is the story the great dedication of one of the congregation's first resident pastors. Apparently at one time Trinity's pastor also served the Zion church two and a half miles directly south on what is now highway 60. It's said that on a certain winter Sunday a particular pastor got lost in a snow storm while crossing the Jackson Marsh. The marsh, a swampy area between Trinity and Zion, can be hard to find one's way out^{of} even in good weather. The man nearly lost his life before finding his way out. After that the congregation refused to let their pastor serve other congregations in Jackson during inclement weather.

Rev. Carl Baumann, born in Jazel, Germany, in 1859 was pastor of Trinity from 1884 to 1904, 20 years. During his ministry there the teacherage and five acres of land were purchased in 1887 for the price of \$500.00. The house was remodeled before the next teacher, P. E. Albert was installed.

In 1889 it was noticed that the walls of the church were settling outward. To correct this, tie rods, one and a half inches thick were installed at several places both across the width and the length of the building.⁸ The ends of some of these rods are visible on the outside walls. Also during this time, in 1895 specifically, the present parsonage was built.

That same year the only son of the congregation to enter the ministry, Walter Seidensticker, was born. He went to school at Concordia, Milwaukee, and from there to the seminary at Springfield, Illinois, graduating in 1919. During his lifetime in the ministry, he served mission churches in Oklahoma and Alberta, Canada. Later he became public relations director for Bethesda Lutheran Home of Watertown. Serving throughout the United States, he served in that capacity until 1960, when he moved to Bethel, Maine. He was called to his heavenly home on August 25, 1969.

⁸Ibid., p. 7.

The congregation was proud of its fine band which was formed in 1898. Like other congregations in the area at that time, the band sometimes would lead the congregation in service music. A pipe organ was built in the choir loft in 1905. Neither the old log church nor the new church was equipped with an organ in the early years. Singing was led by a Vorsanger elected by the congregation.

Church records show that in 1905 an additional three acres of land, which are presently the "new" cemetery and park, both across the street from the church, were purchased.

Rev. August Mueller, born in Theresa, Wisconsin, in 1882, served the congregation from 1904-1908. He was followed by Rev. V. T. Destinon who served until 1910 as vacancy pastor.

The Otto Years

Rev. Ferdinand Otto, born in Germany, in 1879, came to serve the congregation in the spring of 1910. He remained at the church for 44 years. If there is one pastor who seems to be synonymous with Trinity, Pastor Otto would have to be the man. He was clearly and dearly loved by the people. It is interesting to note, regardless of what the congregation's official name was, during the first half of the 20th century, the congregation was better known as "Rev. Otto's church."

In 1930, Trinity had a chance to return the favor Immanuel had shared with them for so many years. With the consent of the Trinity congregation, Pastor Otto accepted an additional call to serve Immanuel Ev. Lutheran Church of Jackson. He served both congregations until his retirement in 1954. Trinity later granted him an honorary membership in the congregation.

During these years a first major addition to the church was undertaken. Built on were the wood frame sanctuary, sacristy and furnace room on the north end of the building. This addition was completed in 1927.

Part of the church property at that time included what was called the "instruction house." The instruction house was a small building located on the southwest corner of the parsonage lot. The pastor would meet here with the confirmation class each morning to give instruction on the Catechism. Students would walk from the school in the church basement for an hour of instruction and then return for regular classes. Warm Indian Summer mornings, a fresh winter snow fall, or a balmy spring day tended to lengthen the time it took to traverse the short distance.

For many years the church, instruction house, and school were heated by wood-burning stoves and furnaces. A Fuel Committee was appointed by the congregation to collect \$2.00 from each family. This money was used to purchase wood locally and was then hauled to the church and sawed by members of the congregation. The woodshed, which once stood on the site of the present school, now serves as a lunch stand in the church park.

In 1936, the English language made its first inroads on the traditional German. Divine services were held in English approximately once a month.

1943's significant event touched functioning of the Christian Day School. Because there was no teacher available, the school was closed for that year.

Until 1945, all church records were kept in German. The minutes from the annual meeting in January of that year were the first to be written in English. In the same year the parsonage and teacherage were modernized by the installation of a water system.

In order to eliminate the need to have elders personally collect contributions, the envelope system was developed in 1946. Perpetual Care was added to the cemetery that year, and also further remodeling was done in the parsonage.

One afternoon, in November of 1948, the teacher and school children were stunned by a tremendous thunderclap during an unusually late autumn thunderstorm. Lightning had struck the church steeple. By the grace of God there were no injuries. However, damage to the cross, steeple, and other parts of the building were extensive. After much deliberation, with some thought given to removing the steeple, the congregation decided to replace the cross and repair the steeple. The present neon lights were added to the cross in 1969.

Also in 1948, a Wurlitzer electric organ was purchased to replace the pipe organ which had been used for 43 years. Already back on January 7, 1945 an organ fund had been started. A committee had also been selected to look into the possibility of purchasing a used organ. A year later, "the organ question was discussed but no action taken."⁹ At a special meeting on February 15, 1948, it was reported that the organ was in very bad shape and that the repairman refused to work on it anymore. The Trustees were then asked to gather information and figures on a new organ. On April 4th the Wurlitzer was placed in church for a two week trial and two weeks later the organ was purchased for \$4,100.00. May 30th was the date selected to dedicate the organ with services in the morning and evening.

School children carried drinking water to the school from either the parsonage or cemetery pump until 1952. This era ended when a well, water-system, and restrooms were added to the school and church.

Through the Lord's blessings, enrollment in the school increased to the point where it became necessary to add a part time woman teacher in 1953. A curtain was installed to temporarily make two classrooms out of one.

⁹Congregational Minutes of Jan. 6, 1946.

The Centennial Years

Rev. Henry Kuring, born in Wylie, Minnesota in 1896, accepted the congregation's call in 1954. In July of that year, the Trustees and Board of Education were instructed to direct the congregation in its plans for a new school building.

The Christian Day School was blessed further in 1955 when Charles Zitzmann accepted the call to become principal. Mr. Zitzmann served in this capacity for 23 years. During this time his energy, enthusiasm, and Christian dedication were an inspiration for both the school children and the entire congregation. His concern for the welfare of the congregation and his love for the pure truths God has set forth in the Bible were evidenced by his leadership during the trying days following the sudden death of then Pastor Falk. Quite a bit of his knowledge and information he had compiled were called upon to put together this paper.

On July 5, 1956, the congregation celebrated the church's Centennial with a Divine Service in the park. Also during this year, the name of the church was officially changed from "The First German Evangelical Lutheran Dreieinigkeits's Congregation of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession at Cedar Creek" to "Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church." A new English constitution was also adopted.

The congregation voted to proceed with the building of a new school in 1957. Ground breaking services were held on April 28th and the cornerstone-laying took place on September 29th. A Dedication Service for the new school was held on May 18, 1958. Former teachers and pastors, along with neighboring congregations, joined the members in the worship service. Guest speakers were Rev. Sullivan of Concordia and Rev. Brauer of the District Office.

Eight years later on May 22, 1966 the mortgage of the school was burned.

Total costs including fixtures were \$68,759.19.¹⁰ With the additional space now available, the use of the "instruction house" became part of history. It was sold later and removed from the church property in 1959.¹¹

Rev. Herbert D. Poellot, born in Huntly, Illinois in 1904, was installed as the next pastor in June of 1958. He served until August of 1961, when he took a leave of absence due to illness. Pastor W. Flischke served as vacancy pastor.

The church was redecorated in 1959. Besides repainting, other improvements were made which included the installation of the Communion rail and the removal of the west stairway to the choir loft.

On the first Sunday of September in 1962, Rev. Kenneth Roever was installed as pastor. Rev. Roever was born in the Town of Trenton, Wisconsin, in 1929. He served as pastor until accepting another call in 1965. Rev. Flischke once again served as the vacancy pastor.

Also in 1962, the old barn at the teacherage was replaced with a new garage and breeze way. During the next year the parsonage was remodeled and new siding was installed for over \$5,000.00.¹²

In 1965, Rev. Erick Falk, born in Milwaukee in 1899, began his pastoral service at Trinity. He was with the congregation until his death in 1971.

In 1967 another large amount of money (\$4,402.10)¹³ was invested in replacing the church steps and installing the present church doors. New carpeting, purchased by the Ladies Aid, was installed in the church in 1968. Improvements to the parking lot, which included black topping and a new west exit, were completed in 1970.

¹⁰Congregational Minutes of April 24, 1966.

¹¹Ibid., from Oct. 18, 1959

¹²Ibid., from Aug. 27, 1964

¹³ Ibid., from Aug. 1, 1967

The Break from Missouri

Trinity had been a loyal member and staunch supporters of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod for many years. However, many of Synod's actions became increasingly recognized as unscriptural. Trinity was patient until the Synod Convention of 1969, where altar and pulpit fellowship with the ALC was approved. After a number of congregational meetings, the church drew up a resolution of protest and concern and sent it to the Synod. As seen from below, it gives the reasons for its protest.

Whereas, In recent years the teaching and acceptance of false doctrine has received virtually no disciplinary action with the Luth. Church-Mo. Synod, Namely: 1) The inerrancy of Holy Scripture; 2) The denials of many miracles recorded in Scripture; 3) The Creation; 4) The Virgin birth of Christ; 5) The Resurrection of the body; 6) The full Deity of Christ.

Whereas, In 1967 the Luth. Church-Mo. Synod entered into the Lutheran Council in the United States of America (LCUSA), an affiliation, in which joint religious planning and action are carried on, even though there is no unanimity of doctrine and practice, plus the expenditure of \$750,000 for this purpose;

Whereas, In 1969 the Luth. Church-Mo. Synod declared itself in fellowship with the ALC despite the fact that there are wide areas of disagreement on doctrines of Scripture; This decision was made by a majority vote contrary to the Constitution of Synod: Art. VIII, J, which states: "All matters of doctrine and of conscience shall be decided only by the Word of God."

Whereas, The Luth. Church-Mo. Synod has failed to discipline the Walther League for the unChristian direction given our young people despite the many protests raised by congregations in Synod;

Whereas, Contrary to doctrine and practice of our Synod, the Luth. Church-Mo. Synod decided to allow woman suffrage, both in the congregations and in the Synod structure;

Resolved, That Trinity Lutheran Church, Rt. 1, West Bend, Wi., inform the Luth. Church-Mo. Synod that it can no longer consider Synod to be an orthodox Lutheran body;

That Trinity Luth. Church declare itself to be in a state of Confessional protest against the mentioned unscriptural actions and doctrinal stance of the Luth. Church-Mo. Synod;

That Trinity Luth. Church shall make every effort, together with other concerned congregations and pastors to bring about disciplinary action, and if necessary, expulsion from Synod, upon those who are responsible for the teaching of false doctrine and practice within Synod;

Resolved, That Trinity Luth. Church shall as of Dec. 1, 1969 use all monies, given to the Church at Large, to the glory of God by assigning it directly to a specific Mission, to an LWML project, or to Missions outside the Luth. Church-Mo. Synod;

That Trinity Luth. Church will reconsider its membership within Synod, if within a reasonable period of time there is no improvement or return to sound Scriptural doctrine and practice.¹⁴

Principal Zitzmann had taken an active stand for this protest. He himself had grown up with a strong LC-MS background, his father and grandfather being pastors. Already then he was aware of an insidious laxity in his church body. Although his plans for the preaching ministry had to be changed, he had received thorough doctrinal training under men like Dr. Becker while in college studying for the teaching ministry. So when he was called to Trinity he joined in its members' concern for Missouri's policies.

Although Pastor Falk was alive at the time Trinity filed its official protest, Mr. Zitzmann proved instrumental in seeing the action through. While Pastor Falk's support wasn't extremely vocal, his silent consent in pursuing this matter encouraged the principal.

As can be expected, Trinity soon received letters from Synodical representatives. On March 16, 1970, President J. A. O. Preus sent a letter saying,

Needless to say, I am sorry that you have passed this resolution and would urge you to reconsider. I realize that congregations ultimately have the right to make their own decisions, but I believe that your present decision is a mistake.

By March 26, a letter from H. W. Baxmann, President of the South Wisconsin District, was also received. He stated that although Trinity might find liberals in such a large body, he felt at that time Missouri was still an orthodox body.

On June 6, 1971, the congregation was shocked by the death of Pastor Falk.

¹⁴"Christian News," Vol. 2, No. 12, March 23, 1970, p. 1, 12.

While their pastor was alive, the congregation had taken no further action in this synod matter. After he died, they would not call a pastor from the Synod against which they were protesting. They did however accept the services of a Missouri vacancy pastor, Rev. Blieke from First Immanuel of Grafton. Trinity would wait until after the '71 Synod Convention on Milwaukee. Once they had seen Synod's actions there, they would know how to proceed.

During the Convention, held in mid-July, newspaper accounts from the Journal and Sentinel kept Trinity informed on the direction Missouri would take. However, nothing encouraging transpired during the convention to answer their prayers. Therefore, Trinity moved swiftly.

By August 5 a letter from Pastor R.J. McMiller, pastor of a church in Okauchee, Wisconsin, had been sent to Mr. Zitzmann. McMiller was the Secretary of the Federation for Authentic Lutheranism. This letter responded to a request by Mr. Zitzmann for "names of pastors who might be placed on the call list for the congregation." It was an inquiry that Trinity would subsequently not follow up by calling an F.A.L. man.

Six days later the congregation in a special gathering was able to question District President Karl Barth about synodical policies that had upset them. The congregation's chairman, Mr. Verlyn Krueger, another layman, Mr. Woehm, and Trinity's spokesman, Mr. Zitzmann, were the most vocal representatives of the church in voicing their dissatisfaction and inquiring about Missouri's response. But basically all Rev. Barth could do was plead with them to remain with Missouri and wait for imminent changes.

Trinity had badly wanted that meeting to settle the doubts that plagued them. But after it was finished, they saw clearly the direction they had to follow. So on August 25, 1971, by a vote of 42-12 the congregation terminated fellowship with Missouri. The resolution they drew up

is found below.

Whereas, Trinity Lutheran Congregation, on Feb. 15, 1970, entered into a state of confessional protest with the LC-MS, and

Whereas, this protest concerned itself with the lack of disciplinary action of members of the LC-MS who no longer hold to such doctrines as 1. the inerrancy of Scripture; 2. the factualness of miracles; 3. the Creation; 4. the Virgin Birth of Christ; 5. the Resurrection of the body; 6. the full Deity of Christ, and

Whereas, this protest also concerned itself with fellowship with ALC with whom we have no agreement in doctrine and practice in such critical areas as inerrancy, inspiration, authorship of the Bible, the lodge, membership in the LWF, WCC, and fellowship with the LCA, and

Whereas, this protest had many other concerns, such as LC-MS's affiliation with the Lutheran Council in the United States (LC/USA), the unChristian direction given our young people in the Walther League, and women suffrage, and

Whereas, none of these concerns have been dealt with adequately either administratively or at a synodical convention, and

Whereas, since our protest, other developments have occurred that further undermine the authority of Scripture, Synod's constitution, and even our congregation's constitution; namely: 1. in "A Call to Openness and Trust" the view expressed challenges the Lutheran doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper; 2. the Ordination of women in the ALC with whom we are now in fellowship; 3. the promotion of Mission-Life materials; 4. a Minority Mission Board report that the Milwaukee Convention did not handle in a positive manner; 5. the Early Communion-Late Confirmation option given at the Milwaukee Convention (Synod's Constitution - Article III, point five) and

Whereas, this duplicity in doctrine and practice invites constant bickering, casts judgments on men instead of the issues involved, and in general, leads to a climate that can be offensive to those within the church and also the world, be it therefore

Resolved that Trinity Lutheran Church, R.R.1, West Bend, Wisconsin (Town of Jackson) terminate its affiliation with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and be it further

Resolved To formally notify the President of the South Wisconsin District of Missouri Synod and the President of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod that as of August 25, 1971, Trinity Congregation has severed all ties with the Missouri Synod.¹⁵

The termination meeting brought in 54 of the estimated 70 possible voters, those men above age 21.¹⁶ Verlyn Krueger reported to the press

¹⁵Ibid., Vol. 4, No. 32, September 6, 1971, p. 1, 12.

¹⁶"The Milwaukee Journal," August 28, 1971.

that "the move had strong support among the church council and among the total membership of about 320 souls."¹⁷

Once the congregation had made a clean break with Missouri in this way, one big question remained. Who will be in the pulpit come Sunday? This was foremost in the congregation's mind. The day after the big meeting, Mr. Zitzmann met with President O.J. Naumann in Milwaukee. President Naumann assured him that at that point Trinity could be considered in fellowship with the W.E.L.S.

Since Mr. Zitzmann had also come into contact with the E.L.S. during his Bethany days, he also contacted them. The E.L.S. also assured him they too were willing to offer pulpit help "during the synodical transitional period and until the congregation calls a minister of its own."¹⁸

Meanwhile President Preus of Missouri responded to news of Trinity's actions. In a letter dated September 9, he voiced his regret with their termination and asked them to invite President Barth to speak to them again. Two days later the Milwaukee Sentinel ran an article where President Preus commented on the secessions of three southeastern Wisconsin churches, one of which was Trinity. He said,

It breaks my heart ... These congregations and their pastors are really contributing nothing to the cause of the Lutheran church and its problems. I seriously doubt that they'll find themselves any better off anywhere else than they are now.¹⁹

Trinity's synodical transitional period would not be a long one. On September 8, 1971, they held a meeting to consider future synodical affiliation. Unanimously the E.L.S. was chosen. A newspaper report read:

Rev. George Orvick, president of the E.L.S. and Rev. William Petersen of Grace Church in Madison were present for the meeting to outline their synod's confessional stance and to answer questions concerning the structure and operation of the E.L.S. ... Rev. Adolph Harstad, former chaplain of Bethesda Lutheran Home in Watertown, will serve as vacancy pastor until Trinity has installed a pastor of its own."²⁰

¹⁷"Cedarburg News Graphic," Sept. 1, 1971.

¹⁸"West Bend News," Sec. 1, August 28, 1971, p. 5.

¹⁹"The Milwaukee Sentinel," September 11, 1971.

²⁰"West Bend News," Sec. 1, September 10, 1971; p. 12.

Part of the church's decision to go with the E.L.S. was a matter of practicality. If they would have affiliated with the W.E.L.S., they'd have had difficulties having their children bussed to their Christian Day School. The problem was that other W.E.L.S. schools like David's Star and St. John's of Newburg were so close to Trinity. Some of Trinity's students lived very close to those areas. The bus service would be hard pressed to bus children from one same area, like Jackson or Newburg, and take them to a different school of the same denomination. If Trinity went with the E.L.S., they'd be recognized as part of a distinct church denomination different from the W.E.L.S. Then the bussing would be no problem.

Apparently soon after Trinity applied for E.L.S. membership, questions arose at Trinity. Some said because the church had joined that Synod, there would be major changes afoot. To quell the fears President Orvick and Pastor Harstad wrote to Trinity assuring them

membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod will not bring about any changes as regards Hymnal, Order of Service, or any other congregational arrangements that have been made at Trinity. Things will remain the same, and, of course, the doctrine remains the same as that to which Trinity has been committed through the many years of its existence. Also, the officers of the congregation inform us that cemetery rights remain as they are. No one will lose his rights in the cemetery.

On October 10, after finding out their first call to a pastor would be returned, they called Rev. Paul Anderson of the E.L.S. He was born in Beaver Creek, Minnesota in 1920, and served Trinity until 1979.

Things began to return to normal again. The congregation could relax and get on with the business at hand, preaching God's Word. They relished this work in their new environment, a conservative church body. In fact Mr. Zitzmann would be quoted in the "Lutheran Sentinel,"

It will be refreshing to work within a synodical body that still speaks God's truth with one voice. Conservatives who

remain in their liberal organizations work under the horrible dilemma of having to speak against the organization of which they are members, or worse yet, of having to deny the Lord who bought them by remaining quiet and pretending there is no problem.²¹

A new Allen electric organ was purchased by the congregation and dedicated to God's glory on April 29, 1979 with a special service. Extensive redecorating was done in the church as part of their Centennial celebration for their church building. A special Centennial service was held on May 20. During this year the custom began of using individual glasses with the common cup for Communion services. The New International Version of the Bible was approved for Scripture reading in church services.

In June of that year the present principal, Mr. Leonard Engel accepted their call to be principal and teacher of grades five through eight. In August the present pastor, Rev. Kenneth V. Schmidt was installed.

* * * * *

We look with awe at the people in the Bible who were led directly by God. We remember how God spoke to Moses and the Children of Israel. We're inspired by the insight Paul gave the early Christian churches through his God-breathed letters. But were these such extraordinary cases?

Thanks be to God, they're not. Whenever a congregation of Christians is led by the holy, inspired Word of God, the Lord is in a very real sense guiding and ruling these people himself. So also for this Trinity church. Although for all the world it seems an average church, we know better. It takes orders from God alone. He himself protects it and takes a personal interest in it. He forgives all mistakes intentional or otherwise which they might make. So then, Trinity really is, by God's grace, not a typical congregation.

²¹"Lutheran Sentinel," Vol. 54, No. 19, Oct. 14, 1971, p. 303.

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