

GOD'S GRACE AT RISEN SAVIOR

THAD BITTER
SENIOR CHURCH HISTORY PAPER
PROF. BRENNER
APRIL 27, 1996

A BRIEF HISTORY OF RISEN SAVIOR

- October 30, 1969 - Salem congregation voted to begin a daughter congregation.
- September 1970 - Land donated at 96th and Brown Deer
- Spring 1971 - Chapel constructed. A parsonage was purchased on 98th St.
- March 25, 1973 - Pastor Tom Spiegelberg installed as first resident pastor.
- September 16, 1973 - Risen Savior congregation is organized with 111 baptized souls and 55 communicants.
- 1977 - Risen Savior stops receiving support from Salem. First parsonage is sold.
- September 18, 1977 - Pastor Fred Zimmerman is installed as new pastor.
- 1978-1979 - Land to the east is sold and the present parsonage is built.
- 1979 - Church mortgage of \$125,000 is refinanced for 20 years.
- January 30, 1983 - Pastor George Ferch is installed as new pastor.
- July 29, 1984 - Mr. Dan Whitney is installed as Minister of Education and Risen Savior teacher at Salem School.
- 1985 - Teacherage purchased on Ann St.
- Fall 1986 - New organ dedicated.
- September 1986 - Risen Savior Pre-School founded.
- August 22, 1993 - 20 years of God's Grace celebrated including burning the church mortgage.

God's Grace At Risen Savior

Sometimes even with a man's best laid plans things don't work out as he thinks best, but as God knows best. Such was the case at Risen Savior. Looking at the first 20 years of Risen Savior's history it is evident that the church did not progress as men first thought it would. Rather, the church progressed as God willed. It is only by God's abundant grace that this little brick church on 96th and Brown Deer Rd. not only grew but also flourished in it's unique mission field.

THE BEGINNINGS 1969 - 1973

Early in 1969 the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod was blessed with a great mission opportunity: Mr. Allen Retzlaff of Skyline Reality was ready to donate to the Synod a large block of land located on 96th and Brown Deer Rd. The idea of the reality company was to build a church which would serve the growing community which surrounded it. At the time it appeared to be an excellent location for a mission outreach due to a large number of apartment buildings going up direct behind and to the sides of the lot. Mr. Mark Krueger, a former President of the church described it this way,

Due to the number and size of the apartments the area around the church would in fact become the most densely populated area not just in Milwaukee, but in the entire state of Wisconsin." (Interview 4/21/96).

However, funds for the synod were tight and the Lord

directed the members of the mission board to subsidize missions in other locations. The mission board however could not overlook the tremendous mission field which existed here. Through God's grace, love and mercy the mission board was moved to approach the members of Salem Ev. Lutheran Congregation with the possibility of starting a daughter congregation. According to Mr. Kreuger Salem was more than willing to attempt a daughter.

Salem was a growing congregation, in fact the church building was no longer big enough. Salem wanted to keep its old building so the idea of a daughter appealed to them. They would start a daughter and send enough members over there so they could avoid building a new church (Interview 4/21/96).

On October 30th, 1969 Salem congregation discussed the possibility of beginning a daughter congregation. A "Daughter Congregation Committee" gave a report which in part read:

As a result of the impending growth and construction in the next 10 years of a large residential subdivision north of West Brown Deer Road by Kohls (over 6000 units), Recht-Goldin Siegel (900 units) and Skyline Realty (846 units), the Wisconsin Synod has been blessed with a great opportunity to construct a Church and Sunday School facility as an integral part of the subdivision. By the grace of God working in Christian hearts, approximately two acres of land has been donated for this purpose by Mr. Retzlaff of Skyline Realty. This land was originally offered to Pastor Kleist, chairman of the Building Committee of our Wisconsin Lutheran Child & Family Service. Since the Synod has a backlog of several projects waiting and would therefore take 3 to 4 years before Mission Funds were made available, it was suggested that Salem might possibly be interested in sponsoring a "Daughter Congregation" (Report of Daughter Congregation Committee, Salem Lutheran Church --Church Archives Vol 1).

Obviously a major concern which revolved around the possibility of starting a daughter was that of finances.

This concern was greatly alleviated when the report read:

In conjunction with the donation of land, God has also moved one of our fellow Wisconsin Synod Lutherans, Mr. Riek, to provide a loan of \$50,000 toward construction costs, repayable at an extremely favorable interest rate of 5%. A special committee was formed by the members of Salem to investigate and analyze the feasibility and costs of this proposal and several meetings were held with our Pastor Nommensen, Pastor Kleist, Mr. Riek, Mr Retzlaff, the Home Mission Board, the Executive Secretary, and others involved in the project. (Church Archives Vol 1).

Before a vote could be taken to determine if a daughter congregation was feasible several important issues were presented and discussed.

1. The design and cost of the new church building.
2. An annual operating and maintenance budget.
3. Use of Salem's Grade School as consolidated with the daughter.
4. Consider the potential for rapid growth of the daughter in a new subdivision.
5. An Evangelism Committee from Salem will solicit the new subdivision for members.
6. The Daughter Congregation would form their own Council and Committees. Until they are organized they could have representation on Salem's council, committees, and organizations. All matters are to be handled in a joint venture until daughter can operate independently.
7. Salem has the best logical potential of carrying out this Christian obligation.
8. A minimum of 50 communicant members is required before the congregation is organized. Services begin when facilities have been completed.
9. If Salem accepts responsibilities the Planning Committee will see design and construction to successful completion.

(Report of Daughter Congregation Committee - Church Archives Vol 1).

In conclusion the members of the Daughter Congregation

Committee advised that Salem proceed with beginning a daughter. They said,

A new church, rising with the subdivision and immediately available to the tenants of the subdivision, must be successful. With 6000 to 7000 dwelling units contemplated, even the most conservative Evangelism Committee percentages on prospective membership will produce a thriving congregation, and with the Lord's help, it will be so (Church Archives Vol 1).

On October 30, 1969 following the report of the committee Salem Lutheran Church voted to begin a daughter congregation. (Church Archives Vol 1).

At this time the members of Salem organized an evangelism committee and began to canvass the new apartment complexes. Members for the new daughter congregation would be drawn in two ways: The canvass of the surrounding area, and from Salem herself. After ^{the canvassing met} meeting with great success in canvassing, the land was officially donated in September of 1970. (Church Archives Vol 1).

In Spring of 1971 the Chapel building which is now Risen Savior Lutheran Church was constructed and a parsonage was purchased on 98th St. The approved building was a mission - type church of colonial design. The basement was to be 3536 square feet and used for fellowship and school purposes. The main level was to be 3373 square feet and used mainly for services. The church then as a whole would contain a Nave seating 150 people, a fellowship hall with the flexibility of being used as a Sunday School or ⁱⁿ Meeting room by use of dividers, a ⁱⁿ Mother's ⁱⁿ Room, ^P Pastor's office,

wardrobe, small kitchen, toilet facilities, outside utilities, and minimum landscaping. (Daughter report & Church Appraisal -- Church Archives Vol 1) -- [See Addenda I Cover Photo] The parsonage was purchase on 98th St. in Milwaukee. Purchase of the parsonage was executed through Salem and Atonement Lutheran Church of Milwaukee which stood as a guarantor on the mortgage note. The exact date for this purchase is not recorded.

The construction of the church, furnishings and parsonage was paid for by Salem as a loan to their daughter. Pastor Nommenson spoke of this,

Salem by way of mortgage loan contributed some 97,000 to our daughter. This was part loan and part gift as we both worked to repay it over a period of time. Salem contributed a monthly amount which varied by the amount of funds which our daughter took in during that month. (Interview 3/28/96)

When the construction of the church was completed those members from Salem who wished to change membership to the daughter did so and services began to be held in the newly constructed church with both new and mature Christians.

Pastor Nommenson commented on the "instant congregation" which a daughter produces,

With a daughter an instant congregation is produced. Members of the mother are committed to the daughter and many of those living in the vicinity of the daughter switch membership. It is not done by force or coercion, but with a loving and willing attitude. A great contributing factor was also the fact that the daughter would share in full privileges with our school at Salem. (Interview 3/28/96)

However this was not the case at Salem. Mr. Krueger stated

this saying,

In fact only two families switched to the daughter. It was not exactly as Salem had hoped. Salem was now faced with the need of building a new church for themselves and supporting a daughter. Salem contacted Lutheran Brotherhood for a loan. L.B. however was hesitant to give them a loan because they viewed the struggling daughter and their loan as a liability. So to alleviate this Atonement was asked to be a guarantor of the initial loan for the daughter. --This is how Atonement became involved. (Interview 4/21/96).

God's grace certainly abounded during Risen Savior's beginnings: Land was donated, a generous loan was given, and even though only two families transferred enough souls were found in the surrounding community to begin services.

PASTOR TOM SPIEGELBERG 1973 - 1977

During this time Professor Jeske of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary filled the preaching duties while Pastor Nommensen of Salem took the rest of the workload. Finally, in March of 1973 Pastor Tom Spiegelberg was called and installed as the first resident pastor at Salem's daughter congregation. At the time there were 67 baptized souls, 29 communicant members, 10 voters, and 15 in Sunday School. After 6 months of more canvassing, evangelism efforts, and organization Risen Savior congregation was organized with 111 baptized souls, 55 communicants, 19 voters, 45 in Sunday School, 8 in confirmation class, and 1 in Adult class. (Church minutes - September 17, 1973).

Pastor Spiegelberg, in a letter addressed to Salem

announced the organization of its daughter.

With great joy and thanksgiving we wish to announce the results of our organizational meeting held on the 16th of September. The meeting began at 5:30 p.m. with a pot-luck style meal. About 45 people were present. The actual organizational meeting commenced at about 6:45 p.m. Eleven voters were present with numerous others 'auditing' the meeting. A variety of names were offered for consideration and the name that was chosen was - "RISEN SAVIOR EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH". The name and newly revised synod model constitution was presented, discussed and adopted. It was decided by a vote to elect only a four man temporary council for the present. The function of this council would be to work out the various matters confronting our congregation such as the 1974 budget, taking on the sundry responsibilities of self government and the matter of subsidy for the next six months. This temporary council will function until the 31st of December, 1973. The men elected to this council were, Mr. Herbert Sager, Mr. Chris Doriot, Mr. Tim Schneider, and Mr. Robert Morse. Several things were discussed and commented on but one thing that stood out was an attitude of the entire assembly. It was stated that a letter should be sent to Salem Congregation expressing deepest gratitude for the support and effort offered in the past to its mission congregation now Risen Savior.

As time passed evangelism efforts continued and the Lord blessed these efforts as Risen Savior steadily grew. The first significant event to occur at Risen Savior occurred on August 23, 1976. As guarantors of the mortgage that Risen Savior had executed, the voting members of Atonement and Salem with Risen Savior approved the sale of the parsonage on 98th street to Pastor Spiegelberg. With help from the relief of this mortgage indebtedness and the continued growth of Risen Savior the daughter was finally able to become completely self-supporting, from Salem. Risen Savior would no longer receive monthly funds from Salem and would

be responsible for the total upkeep and business of a church. Risen Savior was no longer a daughter, it was now a sister. (Church Archives Vol 1).

PASTOR FREDRICK ZIMMERMAN 1977 - 1983

Soon after Pastor Speilelberg's purchase of the parsonage he received and accepted a call to serve elsewhere. Risen Savior was once again vacant. Several calls were extended until Pastor Fred Zimmerman, who was serving in Vancouver, Washington, received and by the Lord's guidance accepted the call to serve at Risen Savior. The letter calling Pastor Zimmerman, written by then President Robert Morse, indicated Risen Savior's status in 1977.

Dear Pastor Zimmerman,

As you can see, Risen Savior congregation is extending a call to you to serve as our pastor. To help you in your consideration of this matter, I offer some background information about our congregation.

Risen Savior is a daughter congregation of Salem Ev. Lutheran Church of Milwaukee. We organized in September of 1973. Until this year, we operated with a cash subsidy from Salem, but are now self supporting. Salem offers their Christian Day School to our students, free of ~~any~~ tuition, and has indicated their intention to continue doing so in the foreseeable future. Last year there were 42 of our students enrolled in the Salem day school, and we expect about that many for this year.

We are a young congregation, the average age being in the mid 30's. Attendance at our Sunday service has been about 120. During the summer months, we hold a Thursday evening service, which, last year, averaged 24 people per service. Our membership has grown to 134 communicants, with 272 souls under our care. Among our soul membership are a number of Sunday School students from families with no church ties. Reaching the parents of these

children is but one of the challenges our congregation offers you.

Our location in the far northwest side of Milwaukee is probably the fastest growing part of the city, and the opportunity and challenge for evangelism is great.

Many of our members, being the fruit of our evangelism efforts are new Christians, and in need of continuing Christian education, particularly in the area of stewardship.

Naturally, the entire scope of your ministry is needed at our church, but your experience and abilities, as explained to us by the SE WI District representative are especially needed by our congregation at this time.

We have had our vacancy pastor since the end of May, and are thankful for his services, but the need for a full-time pastor is great.

In addition to the salary as stated in the body of the call, we will provide health insurance, utility allowance, and housing. We do not have a parsonage, but are working to buy or build one, so temporary housing will be arranged until a parsonage is acquired. (Church Archives Book I).

Pastor Zimmerman indicated in a letter that he had received the call on July 16, 1977 and again by way of a letter informed Risen Savior that he had accepted the call on August 5th. Pastor Zimmerman was installed as the new pastor at Risen Savior on September 18, 1977. (Church Archives Vol 1).

The letter to Pastor Zimmerman proved to be very true in foretelling the future events at Risen Savior. The first event of change which took place occurred in 1978. The letter to Pastor Zimmerman indicated, "Salem offers their Christian Day School to our students free of any tuition and has indicated their intention to continue to do so in the foreseeable future. (Church Archives Vol 1). Since Risen Savior was now self-supporting Salem approached them with a

proposal for a joint school. The proposal stated that Risen Savior would share some of the financial burden of the school. The proposal was presented and approved as follows:

1. The support of the joint school would be determined by a combination of communicant membership and pupil enrollment from each congregation.

For example:

Salem has 940 communicants, Risen Savior has 130. Total 1070. Salem has 87.9% of total communicant strength, Risen Savior has 12.1%.

Salem has 205 pupil, Risen Savior has 35. Total 240. Salem has 85.4% of pupils, Risen Savior has 14.6%.

SALEM - 87.9% + 86.7% = average 86.7%
 RISEN SAVIOR - 12.1% + 14.6% = average 13.3%

If the total cost of running the school is \$130,000 Salem would pay 86.7% or \$112,710 and Risen Savior would pay 13.3% or \$17,290.

2. We propose giving Risen Savior 3 years to grow to full support of the school, beginning with the school year 78-79: Thus beginning in Sept. 1978 they be required to pay a minimum of 1/3 of \$17,290 or \$5736.33 for a year, a total of \$480.28/month. The next year it would be \$11526.66 or 960.55/month.
3. As soon as they begin regular support they would be granted 1 voting rep. on the Board of Education. When they achieve full support they would be granted a 2nd rep. on the Board. They^{ca} could not have a greater number on the Board than Salem.
4. As soon as their support equals the salary plus fringe benefits of a teacher, one teacher would be assigned to Risen Savior congregation to call. He or she could be given duties at Risen Savior such as organ playing etc.

(Study proposals for joint school - 1978
 Church Archives Vol 1)

Risen Savior was growing in its field of responsibility. The church had become more involved in supporting a school, and was subsidizing a full-time pastor.

As it was indicated in the call letter Pastor Zimmerman lived in rented housing upon his arrival. This began to change in 1978 - 1979 when the voting assembly approved the sale of the land directly to the east of the church and voted that the present parsonage be built with the funds from the land sale. The land was sold on June 6, 1978 to Robert Adams for the sum of \$52,000. With the money now in hand several locations were suggested for the new parsonage.

Addresses ranged from 96th St., to Brown Deer Rd., to 95th St. Finally it was decided to built directly east of the church with the driveway entering from the current church parking lot. Construction of the new parsonage began in 1979. Bielinski Builders were contracted for their services. (Church Archives Vol 1). The design of the parsonage was explained in a church appraisal in July of 1979.

A three bedroom, 1 & 1/2 bath ranch with attached garage. Home is about 1340 square feet plus 24 by 20 garage. Front exterior is brick veneer and balance of home is aluminum siding (Church Archives Vol 1).

Upon completion Pastor Zimmerman moved in as the parsonage's first resident.

With the added cost of the school and the parsonage the church council made a decisive move on July 2, 1979 by adopting the following

resolution:

To recommend to the voting membership adoption of the following resolution: "to refinance the present church mortgage for a period of 20 years for the amount of \$125,000 and to empower the officers of the congregation to execute the necessary documents..." (Church Archives Vol 1).

With these things in place the church proceeded with its work as normal - evangelism efforts continued and the Gospel was preached. All seemed to be in place until a June 7th, 1982 church council meeting addressed a problem which was known but had been left unattended while it grew. Church records for the past 3 years indicated that Risen Savior seemed to have "fallen behind" in meeting some of its financial commitments. It had been indicated in Pastor Zimmermann's call letter that stewardship of gifts was a major concern at Risen Savior. This proved to be true as offerings at Risen Savior were falling far below their commitments. The minutes from the June 7th council meeting read:

Our unpaid commitments continue to grow. Our mortgage schedule remains one month behind (bordering on two months). A surprisingly large gas bill needs attention...Northwestern Publishing House has not been paid in 18 months and our bill has surpassed \$ 850.00...

Mr. Krueger in fact informed this writer of the deep financial problems the church had fallen in which are not recorded in church records.

Risen Savior's financial problems reached the point where bills were not being paid. Gas, water, electricity were being shut off and the bank even had a representative at a voters meeting to inform us of an impending foreclosure if things were not corrected. After a time we even considered asking the Seminary to use Risen Savior as a "practice church" for it's students instead of having a full-time pastor. Yet just when things seemed to be at their worst a check would come in the mail from a member or elsewhere which would pull us through when we really needed it. (Interview 4/21/96).

This is clearly another example of God's grace at Risen Savior.

In an effort to make better use of the gifts of Risen Savior Pastor Zimmerman moved that the church engage in the Synod's Stewardship Program. This motion was passed. (Church Archives Vol 1). Risen Savior and Pastor Zimmerman proceeded to follow the necessary steps in applying for the program. Having raised funds and having applied for financial aid Risen Savior was approved to begin the Stewardship program starting October 23, 1982. (Minutes June 7, 1982 Church Archives Vol 1). In a letter Pastor Zimmerman expressed the two -fold goal of the program for Risen Savior:

- 1.) To increase the awareness of our entire membership concerning the mission of the congregation. - i.e.: the sharing of the Gospel with each other; the sharing of the Gospel with the neighborhood, nation, and world; ongoing Christian education through Sunday School, Bible Class, Christian Day School, and Area Lutheran High School; fostering Christian fellowship through various organizations and activities.
- 2.) To increase the participation and support of our entire membership in our mission together as a Christian congregation. (Church Archives Vol 1).

In the intervening months before the stewardship program began Risen Savior's financial woes continued and by August they had some \$6101.08 in unpaid commitments (Church Archives Vol 1). A look through the church records and minutes show two general reasons for this "falling behind". One reason is obviously a lack of stewardship of gifts among the members. This problem was addressed by the stewardship program. Another reason which probably contributed to "falling behind" was that of a steady membership loss which started in 1977. As indicated by the letter to Pastor Zimmermann there were 272 souls under the care of Risen Savior when he was called in 1977. This number had steadily declined by 1979. The annual report for 1979 from Risen Savior listed

the number of souls as dropping to 182 (January 8, 1979 Annual Report).

So why the decline? Church records are scarce and do not indicate why there was this dramatic drop in soul membership. One reason may be obvious as this writer looks at the community which surrounds Risen Savior. When Risen Savior was built it was thought that the surrounding area and apartment complexes would become a residential, middle income neighborhood. This area along Brown Deer Rd. was thought to be "ideal community living". People were suppose to move in and stay. However this is not how it turned out. Over a period of years in the late 70's - early 80's the housing units behind the church began to slowly deteriorate. The deterioration was due to poor management of the housing facilities (absentee landlords), and a move toward low-income housing. On account of these two factors the area became a revolving door for people. (Today the average tenant lives there 3 years). This area along Brown Deer Rd. did not become the residential neighborhood which it had been projected to be. Some of the long time owners with whom I have spoken ~~with~~ call this "White Flight". (This term refers to people from the inner city moving in and middle to upper income caucasians moving out.) Because of the ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity which now existed, and the simple fact that people did not stay in the area, Risen Savior was faced with a difficult situation. The church needed to keep its moving members and gain the new short-term residents. Risen Savior suddenly became a different type of mission then first thought.

It was at the beginning of this transitional period in ^{the} early 80's

that the Lord moved men to build a retirement complex on the outer edges of this area. The complex was named Luther Haven. Once again Risen Savior was presented with a new and wonderful mission field. Mr. Kreuger commented on the building of Luther Haven simply by saying, "Luther Haven saved Risen Savior. From Luther Haven came many bequests in wills and an increase in membership" (Interview (4/21/96). Again God's grace can be seen at Risen Savior. During this difficult period of financial and membership concerns God in grace and mercy caused Luther Haven to be built in this somewhat unusual location and Risen Savior began to stabilize.

It was at this time that a committee was formed to evaluate what needed to be done to accommodate the Luther Haven residents. The committee consisted of Bruce Schram, Mark Krueger, and Chuck Stender. They gave the following report and recommendations:

- A. Set up procedure to invite women to visit and join our ladies fellowship.
- B. Set up procedure, with approval of resident manager, to call on new residents, give them a Bible, introduce our Church and invite them to visit us.
- C. Start an additional 8 AM Sunday service on Sunday Jan 2, 1983.
- D. Usher teams to submit new 2 service ushering schedule for 1983 first quarter at December Council Meeting.
- E. Trustees be instructed to erect additional coat racks in the basement for children and overflow.
- F. Build a ramp for the west entrance of church.
- G. Purchase more hymnals.

The motion to approve these recommendations was passed and Risen Savior began to work in this new mission field. (Church Archives Vol 1).

It was during this period that the Lord called Pastor Zimmerman to St. Bartholomew, Kawkawlin, MI. Details of the call are not recorded in church minutes, but it is know that he left in late 1982 (Oct-Dec).

Risen Savior was again without a pastor. At a special call meeting on Dec. 5, 1982 6 pastors were considered. Eventually a motion was made to take a unanimous vote to call Pastor George Ferch. The motion was seconded and all present accepted it. (Church Archives Vol 1). However during this interim period Risen Savior found itself to be without the service of any pastor. To alleviate this situation a special voters meeting was called on Dec 26, 1982. Here a motion was made, seconded, and passed to accept a seminary student, under the guidance of Pastor Nommenson, to assume the responsibilities of the classes. Pastor Nommenson himself would find substitute pastors for services. The student vicar who was called was a member of Risen Savior, A.J. Kunde. (Church Archives Vol 1). Vicar Kunde's services, however, were only need for a short time as Pastor Ferch accepted the call and his installation was scheduled for January 30th. God's grace was again evident at Risen Savior as a full-time pastor was quickly found. Church records indicate that at the time of Pastor Ferch's call membership stood at 206 souls and 137 communicants (Church Archives Vol 1). In an annual report Vicar Kunde also spoke of the stewardship program and it's successful results.

Another change which can be seen as having taken place during this year is the greater concern and commitment toward stewardship at Risen Savior. The Holy Spirit through the efforts of our Synod's Stewardship Program, moved the hearts of the members of Risen Savior to commit themselves to greater financial support of their congregation. (Church Archives Vol 1).

PASTOR GEORGE FERCH 1983 -

Upon his arrival Pastor Ferch [Addenda I Page 1 Photo] seemed to once again put a greater emphasis on evangelism. At a February 7,

1983 Council ^mMeeting it was approved that the Stewardship Committee begin an Evangelism Committee. As a result of this, visitation groups were formed and evangelism packets were distributed. (Church Archives Vol 1). Pastor Ferch also had to continue to deal with Risen Savior's stewardship concerns. In an effort to keep the congregation informed Pastor Ferch began to prepare a monthly statement of cash received and money dispensed to be put in the news letter. (Church Archives Vol 1). In an interview Pastor Ferch talked about the stewardship situation at Risen Savior.

When I arrived there were some financial concerns. Synod Mission Offerings were way behind -- or I'm not even sure they were budgeted. We decided to make the commitment to Synod first. Maybe we had been too concerned about ourselves. (Interview 4/22/96)

With this renewed emphasis on giving to God the firstfruits, slowly but surely the deep and dire financial problems which Risen Savior had experienced disappeared. Risen Savior had been reminded that instead of relying upon ^{themselves} ourselves they needed to rely upon the Lord. Ps 55:22 assures us that God will care for us and deliver us. "Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall." God certainly sustained Risen Savior and by his grace they did not fall.

A great change had taken place at Risen Savior over the past few years -- A parsonage was built, there were stewardship concerns, the community changed, Luther Haven was built, Pastor Zimmerman left, and Pastor Ferch arrived. Sometimes during such change things get overlooked, such was the case at Risen Savior. Many repairs needed to be made. The organ, church doors, parking lot, typewriter, bathrooms,

pews, and chancel furnishings needed repair and painting. At this time these things were considered and work began. (Church Archives Vol 1 - Minutes 1983). During this time Risen Savior experienced some growth as figures were up from the previous years. Thanks in part to Luther Haven, "transfers in" were generally reported each month while "transfers out" were very low. (Church Archives Vol 1 - Minutes of 1983). By the end of 1983 membership stood at 248 souls and 172 communicant members. Risen Savior was now having two services per Sunday and Wednesday services during Lent. A communion Sunday was added and now communion was held in both services twice per month - 1st and 3rd Sundays. (Church Archives Vol 1, Council Meeting 1-10-84). Pastor Ferch, in the 1983 annual report, spoke of the grace of God at Risen Savior:

Risen Savior has grown outwardly (up to 248 souls) and continues to grow. A new youth group was formed... An adult fellowship was born... Church attendance is up... Improvements to the buildings and grounds... Pastor and people for the most part enjoyed good health and blessings... We sing with Moses, "Who among the god's is like You, Lord? Who is like You - majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?" (Church Archives Vol 1).

God's grace had certainly been evident at Risen Savior yet concerns still existed. Pastor Ferch went on to point out that although the average giving per communicant had increased it remained a very small amount. He also stated that communion attendance was down, Sunday School and Bible class ^{WLS?} was not where they should be, and the support of Salem school & WLHS was "way below what it should be". (Church Archives Vol 1).

Like 1983, 1984 also proved to be a year a new beginnings at Risen Savior -- the first Minister of Education was installed. In a

March 13, 1984 Council Meeting Pastor Ferch gave a presentation concerning the education of Risen Savior's children. The basic point of the presentation stated that the situation at Salem is such that without Risen Savior supporting an additional teacher the Christian education of Risen Savior's children was in deep jeopardy. The number of students at Salem was 283 in 1983, 35 of which belonged to Risen Savior. Salem required another teacher in the middle grades but could not afford to pay another. Several options were presented:

- 1.) Calling and subsidizing a teacher for Salem School.
- 2.) Transferring Risen Savior's children to Pilgrim Lutheran School.
- 3.) Transferring Risen Savior's children to St. Mark's Lutheran School.

After exploring the options, council discussion on the matter led to the following motion: "That the council recommend calling a teacher to Salem Lutheran School." The motion was seconded and passed by vote. A special meeting was scheduled to present the matter to the entire congregation. On March 19, 1984 a special meeting was held and by vote it was determined to call a teacher. At (Church Archives Vol 1 - March 13 & 19, 1984).

On April 3, 1984 Risen Savior issued its first call for a teacher to Steve Janke. This call was returned. On April 28, 1984 Risen Savior issued its second call for a teacher to Mr. Dan Whitney. [Addenda I page 1 photo] This call was accepted. Mr. Whitney was installed as the Minister of Education and Risen Savior Teacher at Salem School on July 29, 1984. Mr. Whitney's call was two-fold. As Minister of Education he was in charge of all educational programs at Risen Savior. As a teacher he worked at Salem Grade School as a middle grade teacher which was

subsidized by Risen Savior. (Church Archives Vol 1). The arrival of Mr. Whitney seemed to finally mark Risen Savior's independence. Until this time things had progressed slowly as Risen Savior tried to establish its own identity from Salem. Pastor Ferch had already separated the confirmation class and now with their own teacher Risen Savior could honestly say they were supporting their own students and looking to the future. Pastor Ferch commented, "I worked very hard to get our own identity away from Salem. That was very important" (Interview 4/22/96).

During this time the church had continued with business as usual. The growth of the church continued and several projects were undertaken. Most notably a storage shed was built for equipment and a chain link fence was erected for privacy and security reasons along the north and east property lines. (Church Archives Vol 1- April 13, 1984). A place for the new teacher to live was also being considered. The reality of having a teacher was now present Risen Savior so a Christian Education Study Committee was formed to work with Mr. Whitney. The study committee was responsible for making solid plans for the day-school children and to consider alternatives to the present situation so that Risen Savior would be prepared to make the most of Christian education. In conjunction with this committee a group called C.H.E.E.R.S. (Christians Encouraging Education at Risen Savior) was later formed. This was to be a support group for parents and other members interested in learning more about Christian education. (Church Archives Vol 1 - July 23, 1984 - Dec 1985).

awkward sentence

The projects which Risen Savior was now undertaking continued

to increase. At an October 15, 1984 meeting a listing of current projects was submitted. There were 23 projects on the list. Along with these projects this meeting signified the initial discussions for the possibility of building a new church due to the current and projected growth of Risen Savior. Upon receiving \$10,000 for new buildings a Building Committee was formed which would work closely with the Christian Education Committee. (Church Archives Vol 1). In order to continue growth it was also approved that Seminary students be used to make evangelism calls with an emphasis on personal witnessing. (Church Archives Vol 1 - October 29, 1984). At the end of 1984 Risen Savior had 258 souls and 185 communicants.

Beginning 1985 Risen Savior had seemingly come full circle as minutes indicate that they were discussing an actual budget surplus. Over the course of the next several years 4 major events dominated at Risen Savior. 1.) A new organ. 2.) A teacherage purchased. 3.) A preschool started. 4.) Remodeling.

The first matter to take precedence in this new year centered around the organ. It seems that a new organ was badly needed. This organ was at first estimated ^{to} in cost between \$8000 and \$10,000. An organ committee was appointed to look into the matter (Church Archives Vol 2 - Jan 21, 1985). After a great deal of work and consideration it was decided that a \$15 - 25,000 organ would be purchased and funded by a pledge system. (Church Archives, Dec 9, 1985). A Dec 22, 1985 memo from the organ committee spoke of God's grace at Risen Savior. "A few years ago the funding of a new organ would have appeared to be an impossible task for us at Risen Savior, but, oh, how the Lord has

blessed us!" (Church Archives Vol 2). Finally, in a report on June 16, 1986 the committee announced that after much deliberation an organ from A.O.B. was being recommended at the cost of \$16,565. [Addenda II Photo]. The matter was presented to the voters and passed on July 7, 1986 (Church Archives Vol 2). In fall of 1986 the new organ at Risen Savior was installed and dedicated to the Lord.

The next significant event at Risen Savior came about when a teacherage was purchased for Mr. Whitney. The matter was first discussed at a August 12, 1985 council meeting when it was announced that Mr. Chris Doriot would be selling the house which the church and Mr. Whitney were currently renting. Mr. Doriot offered to sell the home to the church for the sum of \$56,000 (Church Archives Vol 2). The following months carried discussions of whether to give Mr. Whitney a housing allowance or purchase a teacherage. Finally at a December 9, 1985 council meeting it was approved that the church purchase the property which was located at 8371 N. Ann Street in Milwaukee for the sum of \$52,900. The motion the presented to the voters at a special meeting on December 22, 1985. The motion passed and the teacherage was purchased.

The third significant event involved the beginning of a preschool. At an April 17, 1985 council meeting Mr. Whitney first presented the idea of forming a preschool. During the course of the next two years this idea began to take form. At a council meeting on July 16, 1986 Mr. Whitney present five reasons for beginning a preschool:

- 1.) Many already send their children to pre-school. Why not have a Christian pre-school available for them?
- 2.) A pre-school provides the child with valuable social

learning as he works with others.

- 3.) Readiness is becoming increasingly more important for success in beginning school.
- 4.) A pre-school would provide a mission outreach for the community.
- 5.) The time the child is in pre-school will provide the mother with a break.

(Church Archives Vol 2)

At a special voters meeting on July 7, 1986 another report was given by Mr. Whitney which detailed the starting of a preschool. Along with the above reasons Mr. Whitney presented Scriptural principles on education and informed the voters of rationale, name, objectives, funding, admission, transportation, Board of Education, ^aAdministrator, ^rTeacher, and ^wMaterials. Mr Whitney said of starting the school:

The initial cost of \$1000 would be required to start the preschool. The preschool would be self-supporting with a tuition of \$50 per month. The school would operate two days —> per week.... (Church Archives Vol 2).

The motion to begin a preschool was seconded and carried by vote (Church Archives Vol 2). Soon after this decision a call meeting was held and Nannette Ferch [Addenda I Page 1 Photo] (Pastor's wife) was called as the teacher. She accepted the call. Having cleared all necessary requirements with the state the preschool was open in September of 1986 (Church Archives Vol 2) [Addenda I Page 2 Photo].

The fourth event during this time of change occurred in 1987. At a voters meeting on April 13 a church remodeling report was present by Mr. Mark Krueger. The priorities of remodeling went as follows:

- a.) New lighting
- b.) Dividers and dropping ceiling in basement
- c.) Padded pews
- d.) Pulpit and lectern
- e.) New carpeting for center aisle

f.) New sound system

(Church Archives Vol 2)
[Addenda I Page 2 & 3 Photo]

The motion was seconded and carried by vote to proceed. Over a period of time these things were accomplished through grants, loans, and congregational support.

The next several years (1988-1992) in comparison were seemingly "quiet" years at Risen Savior. Church work went on as "normal": The constitution was amended to its current state [Addenda III]; Luther Haven grew and so did its support of Risen Savior; Mission efforts continued in the surrounding community; The preschool steadily grew; The church's remodeling was gradually finished; But above all God's word continued to be preached in truth and purity and His people edified. This is not to say that the church did not encounter any problem, It did. Stewardship concerns, budget deficits, membership losses, and a declining community continued to be concerns at Risen Savior. Pastor Ferch spoke of Risen Savior's ministry,

It's easy to get frustrated. I would guess that some 400 people have gone through this church. But really, when you think about it, its a blessing to be in a changing neighborhood because it gives us opportunity to bring the Gospel to many more people (Interview 4/22/96).

Through everything Risen Savior encountered one thing again was *awkward sentence* evident -- the Lord's continued grace and blessings. The church's mission statement, which was written by Pastor Ferch, serves as a reminder of God's grace.

Through His rich grace and mercy, God has provided each baptized soul of Risen Savior with His Word and Sacraments to win souls, to nurture souls and to keep souls. Our mission is to make God's Word the center of our daily lives by personally searching God's Word, and by studying His Word together with our fellow believers of all ages.

Through His loving mercy, God has given to each believer certain spiritual gifts and graces: serving, teaching, encouraging, contributing to the needs of others, leadership and showing mercy (Romans 12). Our mission is to apply these gifts and graces in the love of Christ to the particular physical and spiritual needs of our fellow believers with whom we are one in the body of Christ.

Through His gracious will, God has established Risen Savior congregation in an ever-changing neighborhood which has a broad cross section of age, racial, economic, social, spiritual and family concerns. Our mission is to meet the spiritual needs of our neighbors with the merciful love of Jesus Christ, and, to treat our neighbors with Christian charity.

(Church Archives Vol 2)

This is the mission carried out at Risen Savior each year.

Time passed and suddenly 1993 was upon the church. Risen Savior was celebrating its 20th year. In celebration and thanks to God a special offering was gathered in which hearts were opened and \$60,000 was lovingly given. In praise to God an anniversary service was held on August 22, 1993. The anniversary was fittingly called 20 years of God's Grace. Following the service the mortgage was burned as the members of Risen Savior [Addenda I pages 3-13] were given opportunity to reflect. (Church Archives Vol 3).

Risen Savior may not have turned into the "mega WELS church" which it was first projected to be -- communities change and problems occur. But through it all God is ever with his believers watching them and protecting them. Upon reflection I think it is easy to see the amazing grace that God has shown to this little brick church on 96th and Brown Deer during its first 20 years.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Church Archives Vol 1 - Minutes and original documents

Church Archives Vol 2 - Minutes and original documents

Church Archives Vol 3 - Minutes and original documents

Interviews

Mark Krueger - April 21, 1996

Pastor George Ferch - April 22, 1996

Pastor Winfred Nommensen - March 28, 1996