

A HISTORY OF
CHRIST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
COCHRANE, WISCONSIN
“FORWARD IN CHRIST BY THE GRACE OF GOD”
1902-1998

CHURCH HISTORY 331
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The planning for Christ Lutheran Church of Cochrane, Wisconsin began on one of those dates that so many Lutheran endeavors begin on. On Reformation Day, October 31, 1900, a group of Lutherans from the village of Cochrane and the surrounding area met to make plans for the first Lutheran Church in the village. J. M. Rohrer, Sr. presented the assembly with a donated deed of three lots for the building of a church. Those meeting there on that historic occasion organized a committee to make plans for the construction of a church building. Those elected to serve as officers on the committee: Gottfried Klein, President, G. M. Rohrer, Treasurer and John Meifi, Secretary. Those chosen to serve on the building committee: J. B. Hofer, Gottfried Klein, G. M. Rohrer and John Meili. These men chose a design for the new church that would resemble that of Cream Lutheran Church of nearby Town Lincoln. The dimensions of this church would be 30 by 50 feet and -18 feet high, with a 72 foot tower. The total promised for the building of the church to be paid from 1900 to 1903 was \$1862.59. The total cost of the building actually came out to be \$2499.51. Thus the church started out in debt, with a debt of \$636.92.

On February 9, 1902 the new building was formally dedicated. Pastor F. Wendt from Alma was the first pastor. This date marks the beginning of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church. From all indications they began holding regular worship services from this time on. Almost immediately the ladies of the congregation were joining together in Christian fellowship in the form of a Ladies' Aid Society. That society continued until 1965.

A few years after construction of the church, that 72 foot tower was blown down. In its place they built a shorter tower. In 1907 a bell was installed in the tower. That same

bell can still be heard today ringing out to call worshippers to church and to ring at certain hours of the day. A year later the congregation celebrated its first Mission Festival on September 27, 1908.

During this period of time Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church was served by: F. Wendt (1902-1905), E. C. Kielgas (1905-1906), Arnold Schultz (1906-1908), Carl W. J. Aeppler (1908-1912), and G. Bradtke (1912-1920). There are no records from this period of time so not a lot is known about these men and their congregation. Since we don't have any record of bad news during this time, I would like to believe that these men faithfully served their congregation with Word and Sacrament.

In the fall of 1914, the Lord led the congregation to begin making plans for a parsonage in Cochrane. The parsonage in Alma was to be sold. Pastor G. Bradtke moved into the newly completed parsonage on May 14, 1915. On Rogate Sunday, May 16, 1915, the parsonage was dedicated to the glory of God. The cost for this parsonage was \$4569.67. This amount was almost double what they had paid for the church building only fifteen years before. By 1917 the debt on the house was completely paid for. That parsonage is still standing today next to the old church building. This parsonage built in 1915 was used by the pastors of this congregation until 1985.

In the year 1915 the ladies of the congregation began a second group for fellowship called the Dorcas Circle. This ladies group, which until recently met in the evenings, merged with the Ladies Aid just within the last two years. This merged group of ladies continues to meet together for fellowship and Bible study once a month in the evenings.

In the next few years improvements would be made to the church. In the cold month of January 1919 it was resolved to wire the church. During 1922 and 1923^{by} an almost unanimous vote an addition was approved to be added to the church building. This addition would provide a separate chancel, sacristy, indoor stairway to the basement and a large meeting room in the basement. The cost of this addition would be \$4680.28. In February 1925 the ladies groups sought to beautify the inside of the church. Ladies' Aid bought the altar and the pulpit, and the Dorcas Circle gave carpets and coverings for the Church.

Between the years of 1921 and 1925 Pastor C. H. Auerswald was serving four congregations located in Cochrane, Buffalo City, Nelson and Alma. In 1925 Christ Lutheran Congregation and Dr. Martin Lutheran Congregation of Buffalo City formed a dual parish with their own pastor, separating from the Alma and Nelson congregations. The pastor who came to serve Christ Lutheran Church of Cochrane and Dr. Martin Luther Church of Buffalo, City was H. R. Zimmermann. He would serve these two congregations until 1931.

In January 1926, the congregation decided to try the envelope system for offerings on a trial basis for a year. After that year was over they decided they would continue using the envelopes – a practice that has continued till today. It was also decided at the same time to have an annual printed treasurer's report and that the minutes were to be printed in English.

On October 6 1928, Zion Congregation of Cream asked to be served by the pastor from Christ and Dr. Martin Luther Congregations. ¹ At that time the congregations also decided to permit the pastor to preach in German or English.

The congregation of Christ seemed to take good care of their called workers. On January 15, 1932 they moved to have water and a bathroom built into the parsonage. At this time they also upgraded the parsonage by refurbishing the front room. This work on the parsonage may have coincided with the arrival of Christ's eighth pastor. C. F. Kurzweg took over the pastoral duties in 1932 and would serve until 1949.

The members of the congregation also cared greatly about their worship facility. In 1936 the Lord permitted the congregation to install stained glass windows in the church building. In this way the congregation was trying to give their best to God and to instruct the people through the arts. At the same time He led them also to redecorate the Church interior. While they were carrying out these projects in the interior of the church they also were enlarging and weather-proofing the old garage at the back of the church. These projects cost about \$1000.

In 1937 the A. Fetting family gave a statue of Christ to be placed on the altar. It was a very fitting gift for a congregation named after Christ and built on him as its cornerstone. Although the congregation continued to make improvements in the interior and exterior of the church building along with the parsonage it seems that the debt from the church addition project of some thirteen years ^{before} ago was still hanging around until this time. Maybe this was the original plan to pay the debt off over the course of a number of years. Whatever the case might be, the thirteen year old debt on the church addition was finally paid off.

¹ This tri-parish arrangement lasted until 1970.

After reading through all of the projects carried out at Christ, one might not even remember that much of this occurred during the "Great Depression." Here is a description of those times:

Though the thirties, were for the most part years of the "Great Depression," the Lord was very good to his congregation here as we noted in the blessings He gave to the congregation. In 1938, the Lord permitted the congregation to purchase a new Hammond electric organ (what was at that time state of the art electronics). The organ cost \$1,420. That organ served the congregation for many years. Perhaps it is also noteworthy that the organ was installed on October 31, the Festival of the Reformation, 38 year after the first group of Lutherans decided to build a church in Cochrane.²

Over the next few years the congregation would continue to take good care of the pastor and the parsonage. In the summer of 1939 the parsonage's roof was shingled. In 1943 they took spring cleaning to a new level and remodeled the kitchen of the parsonage.

During Pastor Kurzweg's ministry at Christ the biggest or perhaps biggest event in the history of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church took place. On the momentous occasion of January 16, 1944 the Lord led the congregation to formally apply for voting membership in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The church at Cochrane was richly blessed by having Wisconsin Synod pastors serving their congregation all of these years. In the resources that I have looked at I have not found any reasons for why they did not join the Synod earlier. It may just have been their rugged individualism that kept them from doing this earlier. This attitude of individualism would be typical of a town nestled in the Mississippi River Valley and located along a railroad line. This is not to say however that Christ Lutheran Church was opposed to helping the synod. The

congregation had a record of supporting the Synod throughout the years. For instance in 1930 they had contributed money for the building of the Seminary in Thiensville. In 1937 they also contributed money to help reduce the Synod's debt.

In 1947, the congregation installed an oil-burning furnace in the church at a cost of \$1,692.86. The Dorcas Circle paid for a stoker to be used in conjunction with that furnace. The Church members continued to work on giving God their best for his house. In 1948 the church was redecorated at a cost of \$875. At this time the floor was also sanded and waxed with money from the congregation and a donation by the Dorcas Circle.

One ^hundred years after the founding of the state of Wisconsin, Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church founded a Young Peoples Society. This Young Peoples Society founded in 1948, helped with ushering in the church and in providing bulletins for the congregation. Undoubtedly this Young Peoples Society helped to train up Christian young men and young ladies for future service in God's Church.

In 1949 a new pastor would replace C. F. Kurzweg. The new pastor was J. B. Erhart who would serve until 1954. With the arrival of a new pastor it would mean it was time to do some work on the parsonage. The parsonage was repaired and painting done to the amount of \$988.17. Of course if the congregation was going to undertake one repair and maintenance job then it might as well go ahead and do some other work. The church was also repaired and painting done for the amount of \$449.14.

At the half-way point in the century people must have been thinking of the future. In 1950 the Dorcas Circle and the Ladies' Aid each gave \$40 to bring their Church into

² Werner, P. J. "A History of Christ Lutheran Church, Cochrane, Wisconsin 1902-1992" (Unpublished) P. 2

the technological age. These ladies groups helped the church in purchasing a wire-recorder. The people of Christ were concerned about the shut-ins. Thus they bought this wire-recorder in order to bring the church services to the shut-ins. The ladies groups continued to put their money to good use by providing shades for the parsonage windows.

Also in 1950 the congregation continued its work on the parsonage by insulating the attic of the parsonage, repairing its chimney, adding screens, a storm sash and an extension ladder.

As far as Church practice goes there were special efforts being made to introduce the Synodical magazines to the membership. And since Christ was a member of the Wisconsin Synod they wanted to get in line with the policies of the Synod. At this time then connections with the various lodges were severed.

The congregation continued to upgrade the parsonage and the Church. In 1951 the congregation added a new brick garage to the parsonage at a cost of \$871.33. Inside the Church new black altar and pulpit hangings were hung by The Dorcas Circle. The next year saw the Ladies Aid, Dorcas Circle and the Young People's Society re-equipped the main floor bathroom and refinished it, and also added a half bath upstairs. In addition they installed a new kitchen sink in the parsonage and refinished the meeting room in the church.

At this point it would be good to insert the summary statement of the first fifty years of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church's history:

Due to the lack of a Christian Day School and the fact that pastors of Cochrane have had to serve one or more other congregations with Cochrane, opportunities for much instruction in the Word of God have been limited. As a result, the congregation had to pass through many

troublesome situations that meant loss in the expected growth. However, God in His grace and mercy has patiently supplied the Word to Christ Church for 50 years and permitted much fruit to come from it, so that now at the Church's Golden Jubilee, the congregation can enjoy a golden age of purity of doctrine and faithful practice according to it, as was urged by the Word of God in the beginning 50 years ago, and by the founding fathers in the Constitution which they made the basis of this congregation.

"Praise to Thee and adoration, Blessed Jesus, Son of God, Who, to serve
Thine own creation, Didst partake of flesh and blood.

Teach me that I never may From Thy fold or pastures stray, But with zeal
and joy exceeding Follow where Thy steps are leading."

"Jesus, lead Thou on till our rest is won Heav'nly Leader, still direct us,
Still support, control, protect us, Till we safely stand in our fatherland."

And so the forefathers of Christ Lutheran Church sang this hymn of praise to God for the first fifty years of grace that God showered upon this congregation. What do the next fifty years of God's plan for Christ Lutheran Church have in store?

In January 1953 the congregation introduced individual communion cups. Also ^{at} ~~At~~ this time the congregation decided to have the three trustees and the treasurer count the offerings periodically and purchased a used iron safe. The congregation adopted these practices in order to make sure that everything was done without a hint of any kind of misappropriation of funds.

In October 1953 the congregation replaced the old coal burning furnace in the parsonage with a new oil burning furnace. The oil burning furnace it seems did not do as well as was hoped. During that winter there were some heating problems in the church. In November 1953, the congregation decided that in winter it they would not use the balcony. During the winter months the pews were moved from the balcony and it was not used. In 1953 it is sad to report that a few acts of vandalism occurred. The microphones for the public address system were stolen.

In 1954 after Pastor J. B. Erhart left, the congregation had a rather lengthy meeting discussing whether to retain the Tri-Parish arrangement of Christ-Cochrane, Dr. Martin Luther- Buffalo City and Zion- Cream. The three congregations voted to retain the current Tri-Parish arrangement. Pastor F. Nitz was called as pastor of these three congregations and was installed on February 20, 1955. Pastor Nitz would serve Christ and the other two congregations through 1959.

As is standard operating practice for Christ when a new pastor comes, things happen. In 1955 the eager new pastor is going to be able to use the new mimeograph machine which was purchased. ~~During this year a new tape recorder was also purchased for the congregation.~~ In June, the parsonage gets its next makeover. Several men from the congregation installed water and sewer lines. The Dorcas Circle welcomed the pastor and his family to the parsonage with carpeting for the front hall and main stairway. In November 1955 a new tape recorder was purchased for the congregation.

The buildings of the congregation always seemed to be an item for discussion in the church. During 1956 there was a series of meetings to decide whether to add an addition to the north side of the church building on the side towards the parsonage. A decision was reached to go ahead with this project in May of 1956. But for some reason the church never did the carry out this project. The plans for this addition called for building a full basement, rest rooms and a new side entrance.

In February of 1957, the congregation having not carried through on the former plans changed its mind and decided instead to add a new front entrance, a new stairway and rest rooms in the church basement. The work was begun immediately and finished in March of that year. That seems like quite a project for the month of March, but by the

grace of God they were able to complete this project. While these things were being done the ceiling in the church was tiled and new cupboards were installed in the basement. For the second time in their history the congregation had the floor sanded. A month later, after bathrooms had been installed in the church, they held another meeting and decided to remove the old out-house from the property. Also on the floor at this meeting interest was expressed in purchasing the Florin property behind the church. Mr. Emil Florin later that year donated the land behind the church and parsonage.

In 1957 the congregation dropped what was once a common practice, that of having a free-will offering at the celebration of Holy Communion. The work on Christ's 57 year old church continued as church was re-roofed and was also the rear porch of the parsonage.

In February -1960 the church basement was widened. Some old thick foundation walls were removed and replaced with a narrow wall. During this process however, some jacks slipped which caused some wide cracks to open up in the main wall along the side of the pulpit. This was an unfortunate occurrence.

The Church it seems continued to go through "growing" or "building pains." In March 1963 the congregation was again discussing adding on. The proposal was to add two '10' by 15' rooms and a new entry to the front of the church. They also discussed changing the interior by either paneling it or redecorating it. These discussions led only to the congregation deciding to paint the interior of the church. During these few years from 1960 through 1963, the congregation was served by Pastor K. H. Neumann. He was succeeded by Th. Kuske who served Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church from 1964-1970.

In February 1965 Mr. and Mrs. P. Rohlik of Eau Claire, Wisconsin, gave an automatic bell ringer to the church in memory of Lt. Everell Knospe. This gift of an automatic bell ringer was purchased at the cost of \$1,000. What a wonderful gift to this congregation in thanks for the grace that God had poured out on the Rohlik's and on Everell Knospe and thanks to Christ Evangelical Church for sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with the people of Cochrane. The automatic bell ringer along with the calling the faithful to worship rings out at 7:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m., and 5:00 p.m. daily and still does to this day.

1965 proved to be an interesting year in the church's history. Pastor Kuske and his family had to temporarily leave the parsonage because of a flood. Because of the flood the furnace in the parsonage needed to be replaced. At the height of the flood, about a foot of water covered the parsonage and church lawns. The flood affected the congregation in another way. In the process of cleaning up the property around the church and parsonage around the church organist Mrs. Emil Florin, scratched herself and died from tetanus. Mrs. Florin was also at that time the president of the Ladies' Aid. After her death, the Ladies' Aid chose to disband. The money left in the treasury of the Ladies' Aid was given to St. Michael's Lutheran Home at Fountain City³ and to the Church Extension Fund.⁴

The Church continued to do improvements on their building during the years of 1965 and 1966. The parsonage received a new roof. The congregation worked to improve the sound in the church by installing acoustical tile in the church basement fellowship hall and they also completed some work on the church bell tower. The Dorcas Circle

³ \$84.77 was given to St. Michael's Lutheran Home

⁴ \$71.40 was given to the Church Extension Fund

continued to provide amenities for the church when they placed new coat racks in the church basement.

In 1966 Christ Lutheran and Dr. Martin Luther joined their Sunday Schools together in order to better use the resources available to them. The combined Sunday School met in Cochrane.

In 1967 after joining their resources together for Sunday School, several meetings took place for the purpose of promoting closer fellowship between Dr. Martin Luther Church and Christ Congregation. The congregations even considered the possibility of future consolidation. Some of the main considerations included building one new building for both congregations so that they would avoid the continuing maintenance work that was required to keep up their buildings. At this time consideration was also given to the possibility of starting a Christian Day School. This is what was suggested by a joint committee in December 1967, "the two congregations unite into one congregation, and one constitution, that there be services at least every two weeks at Dr. Martin Luther Church until there was a building for the two congregations to worship together and to purchase land for such a church building."⁵ At the annual meetings of 1968 both congregations approved the idea with the understanding there would be no consolidation until a suitable land site was selected. However as in the past it seems that they found no agreeable building site. The plan to do this was dropped.

In 1968 the congregation was renting a room in the former high school annex for Vacation Bible School and Sunday School. The next year the congregation thought about purchasing the former Cochrane High School and site. At this juncture the voters rejected this proposal. The trustees choose to come up with a plan for a four-room school

building on the church's present property. This proposed Sunday School build would cost \$36,500. This plan also was unsatisfactory to the congregation. To complicate matters, at about the same time the congregation had purchased the property just north of the parsonage for possible building purposes. During the congregation's continued attempts to try ^{to} and address the issue of rooms for Christian Education, Pastor Kuske accepted a call away from the parish.

In October 1970 Pastor C. Weigand of Fountain City began serving as vacancy pastor at Christ. After the second call was returned, ~~Pastor Weigand~~, and while Pastor Weigand was serving all four congregations he suggested that the four congregations realign themselves. The Tri-Parish agreement of Cochrane-Buffalo City- Cream was to end with Zion of Cream being served from St. Michael's Lutheran Church of Fountain City. Christ and Dr. Martin Luther Congregations would call for their own pastor. In the realignment plans there was also a suggestion to start a school supported by all four congregations located in Cochrane. St. Michael's of Fountain City, very interested in opening a Christian Day School, but without anywhere to build one, ^{was} offered to invest \$30,000 in the new building interest free as long as it was used to house a Christian Day School. In December of 1970 ^a All four congregations approved the plan.

During the months that followed some thought this plan might be carried out by replacing the current building. A school plan proposed by the Synod's architectural service was considered. The Synodically drawn plan would have provided the school they wanted for \$75,000. On April 18, 1971, as so often seemed to happen, no decision was made.

⁵ Werner, P. J. "A History of Christ Lutheran Church, Cochrane, Wisconsin 1902-1992" (Unpublished) p.5

A month later on May 16, 1971, Rev. W. L. Beckendorf was installed as the new pastor of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church and Dr. Martin Luther Church. Finally, in September 1971 the congregation decided on a course of action. The congregation purchased the old Cochrane High School property. The very next month the voters authorized the removal of the old high school. Five men were appointed to a planning committee and later to serve as the building committee. The five men chosen were: Willard Blank, chairman, Clifford Stuber, Donald Thaldorf, Melvin Lorch and Loyley Seifert. In July 1972 the plans drawn up by W. Ward of Wayne Smith Architectural Services of Winona, Minnesota, were chosen. The plans drawn up were for a church building and an educational wing. The price of this project was \$122,000. The resulting vote on this project was overwhelmingly in favor of the project by a vote of 25-9. In March a committee was established to find out if the congregation would be able to financially support this project.

Later that month on July 30 at a special meeting the committee reported that the financial support for the building was there. The resolution to build passed by a vote of 17-8. On September 28, 1972 bids were opened. As part of the mission festival service held on October 15, 1972, they broke ground for this new church and education facility. The guest preacher for that service was Rev. Marvin Putz. Construction proceeded on schedule so the congregation was able to move into the new church on August 5, 1973. On this day in 1973 God's grace on his congregation in Cochrane was demonstrated again as they worshipped in their new church building.

Buffalo Lutheran School began its first year of operation in the new building on August 27, 1973 under the direction of the newly called principal, Mr. Ralph Miller.

On November 11, 1973 Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church's new church and school building were dedicated. Two services were held that day. Former Pastor of this congregation Pastor F. Nitz preached in the morning dedication. In the afternoon service of "Praise and Thanksgiving" Pastor Theodore Kuske was the guest preacher.

In September 1972 the Lord permitted ladies of the congregation to once again have a second ladies group in the congregation - a Ruth Circle. "This Circle was intended especially for those who either work or could not make it to the afternoon meetings of the Dorcas Circle."⁶

In 1973 the first son of the congregation was ordained as a minister in the Wisconsin Synod. David Haeuser was ordained and commissioned at Christ on June 17, 1973. He was commissioned to serve the Synod's San Juan Spanish Mission in El Paso, Texas.

On August 28, 1977 the congregation celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary. The guest preacher for that occasion was not one of the former pastors, but appropriately enough as Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church celebrates God's continued grace to them, ~~that~~ the only son of the congregation to become a pastor ^{preach} on this historic occasion. Missionary David Haeuser, returned home on this day and led his home congregation in praising God and proclaiming his Word.

Pastor W. L. Beckendorf served Christ from 1971 through 1979. On November 4, 1979, Pastor Paul J. Werner was installed as the pastor of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church. Pastor Werner would serve Christ through 1998.

⁶ Werner, P. J. "A History of Christ Lutheran Church, Cochrane, Wisconsin 1902-1992" (Unpublished) p. 6

Even after the new church was dedicated the bell of the original church building continued to ring from that sight. Eventually when the church building was sold the bell had to be removed. For a number of years it remained in storage while efforts were made to build a bell tower on the sight of the current church building. In January 1980 the congregation was ready to move ahead with this project and appointed a "Bell Tower" Committee for this purpose. Willard Blank serving as the chairman of the Bell Tower Committee presented two plans to the voters on April 27, 1980. The voters at that meeting selected the structure that now serves Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church today. The work on the Bell Tower did not begin until July 1981. The Bell Tower was dedicated to the glory of God on September 13, 1981, and once more rang out to call the faithful to service and to ring daily at 7:00 a.m. 12:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. The Dorcas Circle and various other people donated plants for the flower boxes that are part of the Bell Tower. As history seems to repeat itself in building projects, it also continued to repeat itself in discussing matters that were relative to both parishes of the dual parish arrangement of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cochrane, Wisconsin and Dr. Martin Luther Church of Buffalo City, Wisconsin. It was decided in the fall of 1980 to have at least one annual Joint Church Council meeting to discuss these matters. Also in 1980 the congregation installed coiling fans in the church.

During 1981, two of the stained glass windows from the old church building joined the church bell in the new church building. These two windows are the only remain' windows from the old church. They were mounted in shadow boxes by Mr. Neil Keller and placed on the chancel wall. The windows are "Jesus Knocking at Heart's

Door' and "Jesus Praying in Gethsemane." These newly mounted windows were rededicated in the new church on September 13, 1984.

In 1981 old patterns resurface again. The congregation installed a new furnace in the parsonage. And they brought themselves into a newer age of technology when they purchased a new electronic typewriter for the office.⁷

For some twenty years there had been discussion about replacing the 1938 Hammond Electronic Organ that was now sorely out of date. In September 1981, the congregation once again chose to continue to try and improve the quality of worship at Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Church Council approved an Organ Committee with Rodney Rohrer as the chairman. Other members of the committee included Mr. Merlin Haeuser and Mr. Lennard Punke the ~~then~~ principal of Buffalo Lutheran School.

After looking into several different options it was narrowed down to a proposal:

that the congregation replace the present organ with a custom designed pipe organ, engage Dr. E. Meyer of DMLC as consultant and recommend an organ of no less than four ranks with options for two more. The congregation approved the first two recommendations and asked the committee to check into costs of organs from 4-8 ranks. On February 28, 1982, at a special voter's meeting the organ committee presented their findings. The decision of the voters was to purchase a five rank Wicks custom designed pipe organ at a cost of \$29,800 and see if we could do some of the work ourselves. The Lord was good to the congregation, moved some people to include the congregation in their will, and moved the council to place this money into the organ fund. As of the eightieth anniversary of the congregation one-half of the organ was paid for.⁸

Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church celebrated its eightieth anniversary on September 26, 1982, with the theme "Behold The Works of the Lord." Pastor Theodore

⁷ Dr. Martin Luther Church also helped pay for the electric typewriter

⁸ Werner, P. J. "A History of Christ Lutheran Church, Cochrane, Wisconsin 1902-1992" (Unpublished) p.

Kuske was the guest preacher for the anniversary service. The thank offering was given 2/3 to the organ fund and 1/3 to Buffalo Lutheran School.

During 1982, the Church Council worked on revising the Church Constitution of Christ. The flat roofed portion of the Church building was repaired. In June Christ's Congregation continued its efforts to work with those who are disabled or are not able to get into church by putting up handicapped parking signs for the benefit of those members and visitors who are handicapped. The Dorcas Circle continued to work hard in the service of the church by purchasing more forks and spoons for the church kitchen. The Church Council sensibly adopted the formal policy that while members may use the fellowship hall with permission, there are to be no alcoholic beverages used. Mrs. Myron Schwanke refinished many of the church tables. In the fall Dr. Martin Luther Church began their own Sunday School program ending many **years** of joint Sunday School. The Dorcas Circle, that group that had been and continued to be faithful servants and helpers in the church revised its constitution and by laws. For the sake of good order and wanting to give God their best Christ began the practice of having a church decorating committee for Christmas.

On January 9, 1983, the new five rank Wicks organ, designed by Dr. Edward Meyer of Dr. Martin Luther College was dedicated in the morning service. In the afternoon Dr. Meyer presented a dedicatory recital. The members of Christ had shown that they wanted to give ^{God} good their best in worship through the purchase of this organ for worship. The congregation, after working at a revision, adopted a revised constitution and by laws. In February 1983, the congregation decided to meet together with Dr. Martin Luther Church to discuss the energy efficiency of the parsonage. In other words

they were meeting together to decide if the parsonage was worth putting more money into or not.

On April 24, 1983, the congregation hosted a Mission Fair involving the ladies groups, the Youth League, the classrooms from Buffalo Lutheran School and several other groups. As Christ had done so many years earlier when they joined the Synod and promoted synodical publications, they were now getting the whole congregation interested and excited about mission work.

In July of 1983 the ladies groups began having a joint picnic together with the ladies of Dr. Martin Luther Church. The first picnic was hosted by the ladies of Dr. Martin Luther. During the year some of the original sidewalk was repaired and woodwork on the outside of the church was painted. The two circles, Dorcas and Ruth continued in their generous giving for projects in the parsonage. These two groups gave money for a new linoleum floor in the parsonage kitchen. At this time the ladies also began to provide cookie and fruit baskets to shut-in members at Christmas time. The two ladies groups also had their eyes open for ways that they could show their Christian love toward their brothers and sisters. The congregation installed a railing on the steps to the parsonage in the interest of safety.

At the January 1984, Annual Voters' Meeting the congregation decided to try something new and have Saturday evening services in the summer on a trial basis. Because of a number of business people and others who would go away on Sundays an alternative service was requested. "The congregation also approved the objectives, policies and procedures of both the Committee of Elders and the Maintenance Committee. They established the practice of celebrating the Lord's Supper at the first

Lenten Service each year. Another milestone was that the congregation adopted its first annual budget at this meeting.”⁹ In March of 1984 the Dorcas Circle voted to purchase a new "Fair Linen" for use on the Altar because ⁺The old one was in disrepair. The cost of \$185 for the Altar linen was also supplemented by ⁺The Ruth Circle. also contributed to the purchase.

In June 1984, the Dorcas Circle decided to subscribe to the People's Bible Commentary published by Northwestern Publishing House. This is just another way that the Dorcas Circle continued to show their concern also for people's spiritual welfare. These People's Bible^s were to be placed in the Church Library for congregational use. The ladies from the Circles also painted the fellowship hall and placed a hedge by the parking lot on the north side of church..

On July 29, 1984, at the first regular Semi-Annual Voters' meeting, the men of the congregation decided it was wiser to proceed with plans to build a new parsonage. They chose to put the old parsonage up for listing. The Church Council at this time set up committees to look into construction and bring forward a proposal for final approval. The congregation also established a fund for black-topping the parking lot that at this time was gravel. On September 23, 1984, at a special voters meeting, the congregation officially decided to put the old parsonage up for sale. The members on the Parsonage Building Committee from Christ were: Neil Keller, Lester Plank, Merlin Haeuser, and from Dr. Martin Luther: Ronald Tamke and Clifford Burmeister.

At the January 1985 annual meeting a parsonage fund was begun. New green paraments were given to the church. Also in 1985 the Buffalo Lutheran School principal was asked to assist in serving Holy Communion.

⁹ Werner, P. J. "A History of Christ Lutheran Church, Cochrane, Wisconsin 1902-1992" (Unpublished) p.9

Plans were progressing for the new parsonage. On March 3, 1985, the floor plan for the new parsonage was adopted. The next month the furnace in the old parsonage was repaired in order to make a quicker sale. On May 10, of that same year an offer was made and accepted to purchase the 215 South Main Street parsonage.¹⁰ On May 19, a special joint meeting of the voters of Christ Lutheran Church and Dr. Martin Luther Church awarded a contract for construction of a new parsonage to Blank Budders. The electrical contract was awarded to Seitz Electric. On May 30, work began on the new parsonage on a portion of the property owned by and next to Christ Lutheran Church. The Parsonage would again be next to the church as they had been at the first church building and parsonage of Christ Lutheran Church. On June 9, the papers were signed for the sale of the old parsonage. Temporary residence of the pastor was rented at 233 North Main Street. The contents of the parsonage were stored in the classrooms of Buffalo Luther School during the summer months. The pastor used the small classroom for an office.¹¹

Building a parsonage was not enough. The Ladies Circles had received some memorials and continued to be a blessing to the congregation by adding cabinets to the kitchen at Christ. Melvin Lorch, a member of the church built the cabinets. Also in July the ladies groups decided to start the Cradle Roll program for new born and young children.

By the end of August, the new parsonage was far enough along that things stored in the classrooms could be moved to the garage of the new parsonage so that they would not interfere with classes. On October 1, the pastor and family moved into the new

¹⁰ The house was sold and Pastor Werner and family moved out of the 215 S. Main St. parsonage to a temporary house until the new parsonage was completed.

Parsonage. The Parsonage was dedicated in the services on November 9/10, with an open house the afternoon of the November 10. The Pastor was pleased to report that Sunday School this year was the largest in a number of years.

indent In 1986 work on the grounds around the parsonage continued. A sidewalk was poured and a slab under the deck. During this time sod was also donated and laid at the parsonage. In June/July new shelves were constructed for the church library. In the summer of '1986, another group of Christian women established the Altar Guild.

Also during 1986 in the area of Christian Education Christ started using slides in the Lenten services to illustrate the Passion History. In September, the Church Council decided, to extend Saturday evening services to year round, subject to voters' approval.

On October 13, 1986, the long dormant Lutheran Pioneer and Luther- Girl Pioneer programs restarted. In November the Church Council decided to always have the Lord's *Supper* celebrated on New Year's Eve or New Year's Day, whichever service we had that year in rotation with Dr. Martin Luther Church. During November/ December a TV/VCR stand was built from memorial funds and a television and video cassette recorder also received.

At the Annual Voters' Meeting on January 25, 1987, year round Saturday evening services were approved except during Lent. It was also decided to open the back folding doors for the congregation to exit through the middle into the fellowship hall.

In June and July of 1987, there were repairs to the Church siding. In July the parking lot and parsonage drive way were black-topped. The congregation added additional lighting for the parking lot. Also in July the Ruth Circle purchased a doormat for the main church entrance. In September the Dorcas Circle purchased a complete set of the Bible on cassette tapes for the Church Library. In November the Church Council

¹¹ At Christ, the Pastor's Office has always been in the parsonage.

decided to make 90 minutes the maximum allowable time for council meetings. The woman's groups continued to shine as bright lights in the congregation, this time by sending out special invitations to Easter and Christmas services. For first time Christ held Candlelight and Holy Communion Service on Christmas Eve.

In January 1988, the congregation received a \$20,000 loan to help with mortgage payments. This loan was interest free. Also in 1988 the ladies began serving the first of their annual Senior Citizen's Dinners. In July the congregation adopted a Mission Statement for the congregation. Now the congregation had something to build on. One way they built on this mission statement was by forming a small group who started working on evangelism in a formal sharing of the gospel.

In May 1989 the elements struck Cochrane again. There was severe hail damage to Christ Church and the parsonage. The roofs on the Church were replaced as well as siding on the west side and some windows. The parsonage received new siding on the south and west sides, as well as some other repairs. The congregation continued to try to offer their best in worship. On July 15/16, 1989, the congregation was pleased to have C. Bonow present his new service concert "God's Word is our Great Heritage." In November the church sign was repaired. Mr. Lorch and Mr. Plank constructed a cabinet for storing the banners. In December the old Hammond organ that served Christ from the fall of 1938 to the fall of 1982 was moved to Living Water Lutheran Church in Dawson, Minnesota. Living Water is a mission congregation who would benefit from having this organ. Living Water Lutheran Church is being served by Pastor J. Schlawin, a grandson of Christ Congregation.

At the January 1990 annual voters meeting Christ Lutheran Church continued in its support of the synod's work by passing a resolution that would make ^{up} of the difference of the mission subscription if the congregation fell short ~~with money~~ with money from the general fund – providing there were sufficient funds in the general fund to make it up. With the Pioneers back on their feet the first annual Pioneer Sunday was celebrated in February. In June of that same year Lennard Punke, member of Christ and principal of Buffalo Lutheran School for 11 years, left and moved to Milwaukee. In July 1990, Mr.

Michael Wilde accepted the call to serve as the new principal of Buffalo Lutheran School and was installed in August, 1990. In September 1990 a speaker was placed in the fellowship hall for occasions when not all would fit in the church or for mothers who took their children out during the service. In December the Church Council decided to publish a Church Handbook shortly after every annual meeting.

In an ironic way the church building experienced similar problems that had been seen in the first church building of Christ. For some time there had been some problems with the oil furnaces in church, as well as a concern that the state would make the church remove the buried oil barrel. In January 1991, the congregation voted to replace the six old oil furnaces with five new pulse furnaces. Also at the annual meeting the congregation approved the statement of purpose of the Evangelism group. Here is reason to praise God when we see his Word working in the hearts of his people. In February Mr. Lorch and Mr. Plank put additional shelving in the parsonage study. In April the congregation continued looking into new ways to educate its members. It began in that month by starting to use Children's bulletins on a trial basis. During that month it was announced that the Lutheran Home: Belle Plain had purchased the Cochrane Community Based Residential Facility where Pastor Werner had been leading weekly devotions. In April many men gathered to care for the church. These men removed broken concrete and prepared for new side walks, prepared for the new LP gas tank and did some painting. In May some of the men dug the trench for the fuel line, repaired the church sign with a new top, sealed the parsonage deck, poured sidewalks and finished the sidewalk from the parsonage to the parking lot. Additional money for the furnace

replacement came from a member loan in the amount of \$9,300, with 6.5% interest to be paid quarterly with the non-interest bearing loan to be paid first.

On June 23, 1991, there was a special service at Christ Church for the dedication of the Lutheran Home: Cochrane. Pastor R. Schlicht, the C.E.O of the Lutheran Home: Belle Plaine preached for the service. Pastor J. Zeitler, director of spiritual services for the Lutheran Home, read the rite of dedication. The Lutheran Home had an open house in the afternoon.

On October 7, 1991, the Martin Luther Prep School choir sang for our Christian Education Sunday, as well as the children from Buffalo Lutheran School. Here was an opportunity for the congregation to encourage those students in the grade school to think about going on to school to be pastors and teachers and also for the members of the congregation to encourage the members of the choir to keep working for that same goal.

In January 1992 the congregation decided to join the Lutheran Home Association. On April 12, Palm Sunday, there was a special organ concert by two organists from St. Michael's in Fountain City, Mrs. Beverly Thaldorf and Mr. Dale Hampton. Christ continued to try to encourage excellence in worship by encouraging their members in the area of worship. The ladies groups continued to be lights and encouragers in the congregation. They decided to add to their regular entertainment at St. Michael's Lutheran Home in Fountain City also stops at the Lutheran Home: Cochrane.

In April 1992, Mrs. Eleanor Mutterer, for 13 years the lower grade teacher at Buffalo Lutheran School, announced her retirement. The Buffalo Lutheran School Board called Miss Patricia Bratz through the Synod' Assignment committee to become the new lower grade teacher.

As the 90th anniversary History of Christ Lutheran Church ends with a note about Buffalo Lutheran School, Pastor Paul Werner leaves this history with thoughts of Christian Education and the blessings of 90 years of God's grace in these words:

Christian Education has always been an important part of Christ congregation. Over the past few years there have been a number of efforts to find the best time and setting for Vacation Bible School. Though the **Youth** League faded away, it has not been forgotten and there are attempts to revive it. As the congregation moves on towards its Centennial ten years down the road, there are many things to be thankful for. We celebrate ninety years of God's Amazing Grace and Mercy. "Christ Is Our Cornerstone" was the theme chosen for this ninetieth anniversary observance. May that ever remain the foundation on which we build and the one with whom we line up what we teach and preach. Then we can go forward to the future with confidence and joy that He will be with us and bless us. All thanks and praise be to Him for all He has done through us and permitted us to accomplish for Him.¹²

God continued to shower his grace upon Christ in 1993. Just as the congregation has bought a mimeograph years ago, the church needed some new equipment to publish all its materials. Christ together with Dr. Martin Luther purchased a Risograph machine. The Risograph saves time and money. Once again there were changes at Buffalo Lutheran School. Principal Wilde accepted a call to serve Eastside in Madison, Wisconsin. In July the Synod's assignment committee assigned Susan K. Schachtschneider to teach in the upper grades. This meant that in effect Pastor Werner became principal of Buffalo Lutheran School. In November Christ observed the 20th anniversary of the current church building they are worshipping in. And the transition to the new hymnal *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal* went smoothly after using the sampler for some time. The traditional version of the Lord's Prayer was retained.

¹² Werner, P. J. "A History of Christ Lutheran Church, Cochrane, Wisconsin 1902-1992" (Unpublished) p. 13

In 1994 relations between Dr. Martin Luther and Christ became closer as they shared the Lenten shares at one location and then at the other. As happened in the past the two churches will join^{ed} in a joint Sunday School. The Vacation Bible School was organized and run completely by lay people. Certainly a blessing to give thanks to God for. Buffalo Lutheran School has a new lower grade teacher. Mrs. Marjean Conradt, wife of Pastor Conradt of Fountain City accepted her call to teach the lower grades. Repairs were made on the church: the exterior of the building was painted and the parking lot was sealed. And in a smaller replay of the great flood in Cochrane, the water cooler froze and it burst a pipe and water ended up flooding the fellowship hall and some of the church's carpet. Thankfully nothing was damaged in that small flood.

In 1995 ~~T~~^rhe two churches continued with the joint Vacation Bible that was again completely arranged and carried out by lay members. In a effort to help those who have trouble seeing the congregation purchased two large print hymnals for worship services. Buffalo Lutheran School added Mrs. Marion Erickson as a part-time preschool and substitute teacher. And its always good news when you can say you have paid off your loans. This year both churches finished off paying for their loans on the parsonage.

During the years of 1996-1997 the two churches continued to work together in the area of Christian education. Christ held an outdoor service in the park and has^{begin}~~begun~~ a once a month fellowship Sunday. The church is also working to get its name out into the community. One way they did this was by building a float for the fourth of July parade. During 1997 a children's choir was begun under the direction of Miss Susan Schachtschneider.

Pastor Paul Werner accepted the call to the Lutheran Home in Belle Plaine in 1998. In May of 1998 the Synod's assignment committee assigned Reed Degener to Cochrane and Buffalo City. Pastor Deegener was installed on July 12, 1998.

Once again in the history of the church there is only one ladies group that meets at night. The Bible Class, which had been meeting on Tuesday nights, is now meeting on Sunday mornings. On October 18, 1998 an Education Committee was formed. I believe and Pastor Deegener agrees that this is a step in the right direction for the members of Christ. They are beginning to become more and more involved in the work of the church and making it their own. The *ChristLight* Sunday School material has been implemented and well received by the Sunday School teachers.

Christ Lutheran Church along with the rest of our Synod is gearing up for *Forward In Christ*. One of the main focuses in this celebration of God's grace on our Synod for 150 years for Christ is a full scale canvassing of Cochrane and Buffalo City with the goal of bringing the prospects to a Family Vacation Bible School in August. As the members of Christ enter the third millenium and in 2002 reach God-willing their 100th anniversary one can see again and again God's grace being poured out this congregation as they go forward in Christ.

Pastors of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church

1902-1905	F. Wendt	1949-
1954	J. B. Erhart	
1905-1906	E. Kielgas	1954-
1959	F. Nitz	
1906-1908	A. Schultz	1960-
1963	K. H. Neumann	
1908-1913	J. Aeppler	1964-
1970	Th. Kuske	

1913-1921	G. Bradtke	1971-
1979	W. L. Beckendorf	
1921-1925	C. Auerswald	1979-
1998	P. J. Werner	
1925-1931	H. Zimmermann	1998-
	R. Degener	
1931-1949	C. F. Kurzweg	

YEARS	SOULS	COMMUNICANTS
1942	250	150
1952	300	232
1962	335	230
1972	313	247
1982	259	221
1992	297	254
1998	275	238

* = THEY NO LONGER KEEP THOSE STATISTICS

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