

A Brief History of Immanuel Lutheran Church
Medford, Wisconsin

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One hundred and ten years have passed since a small group of German immigrants banded together to found a tiny Lutheran congregation in Northern Wisconsin. In this paper we intend to demonstrate that the growth of that congregation from a tiny nucleus of shepherdless people to a 1000+ member organization was one fraught with unimaginable difficulty and hardship. Especially the history of Immanuel's first 31 years stand as a monument to the incredible sacrifices and hard work of both pastor and parishioner alike. In this paper we will focus more attention on those early years, demonstrating how they serve as the foundation of all the accomplishments which followed.

Fortunately, numerous resources exist from which information can be gleaned. In addition to the complete set of congregational minutes, three anniversary booklets are extant, providing references from still other documents. Unless otherwise stated, all dates and historical facts will be taken from the congregational minutes.

Already in 1875 the Lutherans in Medford and vicinity were served once in a while with Word and Sacrament by Pastor Schilling from Stevens Point. Pastor Schilling's name appears in

the 1885 issue of the Gemeinde Blatt Kalender, where he is listed as a pastor in the Missouri Synod. George Meyer was the man to whom the task of preparing a centennial booklet fell. In that connection, he directed a letter of inquiry to the Concordia Historical Institute, Department of Archives and History. He received a reply from the director of the Historical Institute, which stated that Pastor Schilling "served as a traveling missionary from Stevens Point along the railroad line to Ashland (Wisconsin Central Railroad, now the Soo line) and that at one time he had some fourteen preaching stations." His biographical record follows:

Pastor Schilling was born on August 21, 1843, at Berdorf, Waldeck, Germany and immigrated to the United States in 1860 at the age of seventeen years. In 1874, he graduated from the Lutheran Seminary in St. Louis and was assigned to serve three Lutheran congregations in Wisconsin as pastor, namely: St. Paul's in Stevens Point, where he was ordained on July 26, 1874 by Rev. J. J. Hoffmann, and St. John's at Almond and St. Paul's at Amherst, where he was installed on July 27th. He also served preaching stations at Junction City, Auburndale, Spencer, Colby, Greenleaf, Dorchester, Medford, Butternut, Ashland, and other places while he was pastor of these congregations. On September 11, 1887, he was installed as pastor in Woodland, Wisconsin. Two years later, on November 24th, he began to serve the Zion Congregation in Green Isle, Minnesota and on May 23, 1893, he was installed as pastor in Loganville, Wisconsin. From 1900 to 1906, he also served as Mission Director of the Wisconsin District to the Missouri Synod. Because of deafness, he resigned as pastor in 1914 [1].

Without question, Pastor Schilling's schedule must have been a busy one during those thirteen years in North central Wisconsin. He is given considerable credit in the Medford minutes for assisting in the establishing the congregation. Barely two years after his installation in the Steven's Point area he officiated at the initial meeting which signaled the founding of Immanuel.

That organizational meeting took place on the 27th of September, 1876 at the home of W. Seeger. Present at that first meeting were Pastor Schilling, W. Seeger, C. Frank, C. Rabenau, J. Arndt, A. Hardtke, and Charles Faude. The name they selected for the infant congregation was, "Deutsche evangelish-lutherische Immanuels-Gemeinde." The minutes taken at that meeting state,

In accord with the desire and agreement of the German Evangelical Lutheran Brethren in Faith and residence of Medford and Pastor Wilhelm C. Schilling of Stevens Point, who during the past year has served us so willingly and faithfully with the Gospel and Sacraments, and in accordance with the state law, the Brethren in Faith met on September 26, 1876 to organize and incorporate this Congregation.

Pastor Schilling was elected president and C. Faude was elected secretary by the assembly. Thereafter Mr. A. Donner and Mr. C. Rabenau were elected as elders, and Mr. Rabenau agreed to assume the office of "Reader" in the absence of the pastor. He also served at funerals and baptisms in emergencies.

On the next day the congregation was registered with the help

of G. W. Adams, the court commissioner of Taylor County. On October 6, 1876, the group appointed a committee to find a site for a contemplated church. A very favorable plot of land was donated to the congregation by the Wisconsin Central Railroad Company.

The deed specifies that the land was to be used to build a substantial building for religious or charitable purposes within a reasonable time and that upon the violation of this condition the deed shall be void, etc. The deed was immediately recorded for \$1.50 in volume 1 of Deeds, on page 680, in the office of the Taylor County Register of Deeds [2].

The first regular meeting after incorporation took place on November 5, 1876 at the home of Carl Faude. At this meeting two new members were added to the rolls, bringing the total membership to eight. The next order of business was to settle accounts with Pastor Schilling, who had purchased a church agenda and Luther's Hauspostille, for use in Medford by the officiant of worship and funeral services. Each member paid \$1.00, which left a surplus of 5¢ in the treasury.

On December 2, 1876 a committee of three was appointed to formulate a church constitution. On January 7, 1877, it was presented and accepted by the congregation. On the 1st of April of the same year it was decided to collect contributions in order to purchase a cemetery and to construct a church. Considerable

time and effort was exhausted on the cemetery, but all the plans along those lines fell through.

It was decided on January 6, 1878 to conduct reading worship services every two weeks. The calling of a pastor was still three years in the future, and it is commendable that the members demonstrated their zeal for God's Word by this action. Six months later, on the 14th of July the congregation resolved to join the Wisconsin Synod. Pastor Hillemann, in his 35th anniversary booklet, states that this elicited some heated discussion: "Of course there were some dissensions, but the congregation stuck to its decision to become a member of the Wisconsin Synod. Now every six weeks a preacher from the Wisconsin Synod came to Medford. Among those who preached here we find the names of Pastors E. Mayerhoff, G. Denninger, Pankow, G. Thiele, and W. Bergholz [3].

In his History of the Wisconsin Synod Professor Koehler describes the manner in which Synod served its mission outposts to the northwest:

Since 1879 Synod's frontier in the northwestern part of the state had moved to Marshfield and Medford. . . The system at this time was that a number of pastors, under the direction of Pastor Mayerhoff, devoted several weeks each to traveling missionary work; but since that proved to be too haphazard, it was decided to appoint a special synodical missionary again. It took some time before the office was filled. Pastor Thiele became the first incumbent in October 1880 and

founded twelve preaching stations in northern Michigan, supplied the three Marshfield stations, and helped Pastor Bergholz in Marathon county. But the strenuousness of three years of such work prompted his resignation in October 1883. His successor Monhardt confined himself to the Michigan peninsula, while Pastor Jenny supplied the Wood county stations from Iron Creek. [4].

It appears that Medford almost missed out on membership in the WELS. The Wisconsin Synod, after all, provided traveling missionaries to the three Marshfield stations only from 1879 until 1883. Had a pastor not accepted the call to Immanuel when he did, it would seem likely that the congregation would have been forced to join the ALC. That is what St. Paul's Lutheran of Medford did just three years later. Its membership consisted largely of former Immanuel members who became disgruntled for any number of reasons.

Professor Koehler goes on to state that in the extreme north there were few Germans: "The settlers and workers were chiefly Scandinavians, Finns, Poles, and also Bohemians, outside of the adventurers of all descriptions that were attracted by the lumber camps and mining life." Koehler maintains that Mayerhoff's policy as superintendent did not embrace mission work among this population. Mayerhoff took Matthew 10:5-6 to mean that Synod's immediate mission call was to concern itself with "the scattered sheep of the German Lutheran household of faith." He points out that "there was little attraction for the German farmer in a section where the timber was wantonly slashed by the lumber

barons and the brush left as fuel for annual forest fires that burned over the whole country and burnt out the settlers who were there. It was no uncommon sight to see abandoned churches, with the settlers gone" [5]. Fortunately for Immanuel, Medford lies just to the south of Wisconsin's north woods.

Almost from the very start, various proposals were drawn up concerning the construction of a church building. It was even attempted to build a church together with the Scandinavians in the area. In the meeting of August 5, 1877, a representative of a group of Scandinavian Lutherans assured Immanuel's members that they would be willing to join them in constructing a church building. They also agreed that another meeting be held the next Sunday for further discussion. Sunday came, but Immanuel members didn't. Since there weren't enough members present for a quorum, nothing came of the meeting.

A year later the congregation decided to construct a small church with dimensions of 30' x 22' x 12', with a small addition of 6' x 10' for the pulpit and altar. Again another year passed without results. Finally, in a meeting of July 6, 1879, it was decided to begin construction at once. Members of the congregation volunteered to provide stone, sand, and labor without charge. A few weeks later the cornerstone was set in place. But apparently there were further delays, for mention is not made of completion until the minutes of April 4, 1880, where

it is stated that President Bading would be notified that the dedication would take place on Pentecost.

Approximately one year later, on June 12, 1881 the congregation voted to call a pastor. The church council agreed to extend the call to Pastor Bernard Ungrodt. Somewhat later the secretary wrote another letter to WELS asking for the name of another pastor. Apparently Pastor Ungrodt did not accept the call the first time he received it. While the minutes don't state exactly why he did not accept the call, it is likely that his reason had to do with housing problems. Pastor Mrs. Ungrodt had eight children at the time--and the congregation had no parsonage. Already on July 10 they voted to construct a parsonage. Three months later the minutes of October 2 state that Pastor Ungrodt opened the meeting with prayer.

Later, it would take considerable time and effort on the pastor's part to convince the members to bring construction of the parsonage to completion. Congregational minutes reveal that on September 13, 1883, Pastor Ungrodt asked for permission to install siding on the parsonage at his own expense, which was granted. In 1892, eleven years after the Ungrodt family had taken up residence, a stair railing was built, the dining room was plastered and a hardwood floor was installed in the kitchen. In 1893, other rooms were also plastered.

For those of us who take running water, central heating and

plastered walls for granted, Pastor Ungrodt's ability to be content with such rugged conditions seems almost incredible. Then again, living conditions for his parishioners probably weren't much better during those early years in Medford. As this paper is being written it is expected that a call will be extended to a seminarian to Columbia--where the standard of living will no doubt be lower than that to which we are accustomed. That prospect of culture shock tends to intimidate many future pastors. But if we need a more recent example of being able to adjust than that of Paul's, Pastor Ungrodt's certainly fits the bill. What follows are excerpts from Pastor Ungrodt's autobiography as translated in Immanuel's centennial booklet:

My increasing physical weakness and frequent attacks of illness make me think that my last hour is approaching any day. Therefore with the Lord's help, I want to leave a brief report of my life for possible future use. With a deep feeling of unworthiness, I want to give it the title: I AND MY LIFE ARE WORTH NOTHING; ONLY WHAT CHRIST HAS GIVEN ME IS WORTHY OF LOVE."

My father was a gardener, Peter Ungrodt and my mother was Margaretha Hoekel. I remember my mother vividly only on her death bed, for I was three years old when she died. Two years later, my sister, who was two years old, and I received a stepmother. We were very poor. Unfortunately there was no Christian spirit in my parent's home, nor in the village school which I attended. My teacher, Mr. Thon, was a wonderful teacher and a model in moral character, but as far as religion was concerned, he was an acknowledged rationalist. The confirmation class taught by old Pastor Trostdorf was very meager. I cannot remember

that he ever got beyond the first article of the Evangelical Lutheran Catechism. In short, I did not get acquainted with our Lord Jesus at home, in school, nor in my catechism class.

My father let me take music lessons, but beyond that, there was no money for an education. After I begged him to let me learn a trade, he sent me to a master shoemaker. Toward the end of my apprenticeship in October 1847, I was drafted into the army service, the 31st infantry Regiment located in Weissenfels. I was hardly through basic training, when the battalion was ordered to Berlin in March of 1848 to quell a revolution. However, I remained behind because I had a painful infection of a finger and was hospitalized. Meanwhile the revolt ended on March 18th. After some transfers from one location to another, our battalion was ordered to Schleswig-Holstein and fought the Danes. On Easterday, I was in a battle at Schleswig and on June 5th a Danish bullet tore my helmet from my head, but did not injure me and I barely missed being taken as a prisoner.

My father had sent a prayer book to me in Schleswig, with which I often retired into solitude and prayer. From youth on I often sought solitude and prayer to God to free me from a weakness I had from childhood on, that caused me great embarrassment in my environment, or to take me into his heaven. In the dangers of war, in which I always stood face to face with death, I also at times became aware of my sins, and my prayers became more serious, although I still lacked a complete realization of my sinfulness and of the Savior of sinners. In the fall, general Wrangel and the Prussians left without having aided the people of Schleswig to any extent and in November of 1848, we were sent to Berlin to put down a revolutionary movement. After a short time in Brandenburg, we were ordered to Erfurt and stationed there during the winter of 1848-49 and where we we equipped and trained in the use of the flintlock gun.

In the spring of 1849, an army corps was formed with which the Prince of Prussia, who later became Kaiser Wilhelm, moved to Baden to put down a revolt which had broken out there. I participated in the siege of Fastatt, and again with God's help, I stayed unwounded. While stationed at Karlsruhe, I received a New Testament from the daughter of the house in which we stayed. When she gave it to me, she made me promise that I would read a chapter or several verses every day

if possible. Hesitantly I gave my promise! On the very day after I was settled into my new quarters, I began to read a few chapters in my testament and the Spirit of God began to make his word strong and alive in my heart and from then on, the word of God became more dearly to me, so that I had no trouble at all to keep the promise I gave. Instead it became a joy to me.

In the fall of 1849 we were transferred from Karlsruhe am Main, where we stayed for more than a year and where I filled a vacancy in the band of the battalion. There I became acquainted with a number of dear Christian people, whose meetings I attended as often as possible, and thereby furthered my inner life, and my love for our Savior increased. There were especially in the hours on various evenings a week, in which pious pastors, including the chaplain of our division, Dr. Wahls, also actively participated, as well as the private Christian meetings, which the heaven-inspired shoemaker Zimmerman held, were a real blessing to me. At that time the desire arose within me to serve the Lord, and if it be His desire, to become a missionary to pagans. I explained this to the chaplain in our division, who from that time on, gave me religious instructions twice a week. He turned this matter over to Inspector Wahlmann in Barmen, where the theological seminary was located.

Late in fall, it looked as if there might be a war with Austria and the battalion was transferred to Eisenach and we stayed in various villages near Eisenach. However, the differences between Austria and Prussia were settled because of the willingness to give in on the part of Prussia. We were then transferred to Halle an der Saale, where I became acquainted with Pastor Ahlfeld and others. There I once more met Dr. Kahle, who spent the night in Halle on his way to Berlin, and who informed me that Inspector Wahlmann asked me to send in my autobiography. I wrote it and sent it to Barmen, whereupon I started corresponding with Inspector Wahlmann.

Meanwhile the clouds of war had disappeared and our battalion was stationed in Erfurt. Here Rector Heintzler took charge of me and I had an opportunity to enrich myself in my mother-tongue and also to take lessons in the English language. In my free time, I found a kind reception at the home of the Dammann family, who belonged to the Moravian group. My military service was to end in October, my my Inspector

Wahlmann wrote that new students would be accepted in the beginning of October and that the students would first have to spend time in Wupperthal so that the directors would have an opportunity to learn to know the students personally. I was asked to request an early discharge if I wished to be accepted as a student in the fall. I wished that with all my heart and therefore made a request to get my discharge in July.

After a short visit with my relatives at home, I travelled in God's name to Barmen, where I had been expected for a long time already. Inspector Wahlmann, who had been in Erfurt and had hoped to find me in Barmen, upon his return, greeted me with the question: "Where have you been so long!" After I had visited the directors of the missionary society, it had to be decided what I would do during my waiting period. Then the Lord brought it about that I got a job as an assistant teacher in two schools until I was accepted as a student at the theological seminary in Barmen in October of 1851" [6].

It is of interest to learn that President Bading's and Pastor Ungrodt's stay at the seminary in Barmen overlapped. Pastor Ungrodt began his studies in 1851, while President Bading completed his studies in 1853.

Pastor Ungrodt completed his studies at Barmen in 1855 and was then sent by the Rhine Mission Society to South Africa, somewhere near Johannesburg. He served as a missionary there for twelve years. While there he married Johanna Schroeder, a missionary's daughter, and their marriage was blessed there with four children: Maria, Louie, Bernard, and Sophia.

The family moved to Wisconsin in 1867, where Pastor Ungrodt first served congregations in Algoma, Milwaukee, and Jefferson. He arrived in Medford in or around September of 1881, and served

several congregations in the area until his retirement sixteen years later in September of 1897. He continued to reside in Medford until the Lord called him home on September 28, 1900. Pastor Eikmann of Menomonie delivered the funeral sermon, based quite appropriately on Acts 14:22, "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God."

"Hardship" is a fitting word to describe Medford's first pastorate, for Pastor Ungrodt barely had a chance to unpack before dissensions arose in the midst of the congregation. Pastor Hillemann summarizes the problems in his thirty fifth anniversary booklet:

Wherever the Lord wants to build his kingdom, there the devil wants to tear down. So it was also here. In the year 1884 the quarrels began, which stunted the growth of the congregation very much. Even the legitimacy of Pastor Ungrodt's calling was attacked.

In the minutes of September 19, 1884, Pastor Ungrodt asked the congregation to advise him regarding C. Hamm, who had called the pastor "ein Luegner und Schwindler." He claimed that the pastor "nicht ordentlich berufen sei" but had cheated the congregation. The congregation resolved unanimously "Pastor Ungrodt is not a liar and swindler. He has a proper call and is a true pastor." The exact reason for these accusations is not explicitly stated, although later it becomes apparent that C. Hamm and others had recently been subject to disciplinary measures.

Unfortunately, the resolution of the congregation was not enough to satisfy those with dissentious attitudes. For we find that on October 5, 1884 more names are mentioned:

Since C. Faude, J. Breitzmann, and C. Hamm had appeared in the congregational meeting they were asked by President Ramm to leave the meeting. Since they however did not do this, the president repeated his request twice. These people, since they refused to leave the meeting were denied the right to vote.

They still did not leave, and Mr. Schebke supported the stubborn ones and said, "They're not going." C. Faude began to speak a number of times despite the fact that he was not given the privilege of the floor by the president. He insisted that he had been improperly put out of the congregation.

Note: Perhaps the underlying cause for controversy at this time might have been the fact that three of the four dissenters mentioned above had recently stepped down from the office of congregational president. Perhaps we have here yet another example of "too many cooks in the kitchen." (C. Faude had served as president from January 5, 1879 to January 4, 1880. Louis Schebke served from January 4, 1880 to February 5, 1882. And J. Breitzmann served as president from February 5, 1882 until sometime in 1883.) The minutes continue:

After a long pause during which the three men did not leave and the congregation wasn't able to conduct its business somebody told the three men that they really had no further dealings with the congregation, since

the congregation had excluded them. If Mr. Faude believed that with respect to his person injustice had been done he knew to whom to turn. Mr. Tappe pointed him to the Synod. Thereupon the three men left the meeting.

When the congregation met on November 16 the secretary informed the assembly that Mr. Faude had written a letter to be read in the meeting. The congregation resolved to hear the letter. Pastor Ungrodt informed the congregation that a copy of this writing [Bittschrift - a letter of request] had been sent to the president of the Synod. He had sent this together with several others. The secretary reported that President Bading had responded.

No copy of that letter could be found. However, it appears that President Bading's response must have been admonitory over against Mr. Faude, for the congregation resolved to draft the following letter to Mr. Faude:

Medford, Wisconsin, November 16 1884. To C. Faude.

Dear Mr. Faude: Your letter to the president and members of Immanuel Lutheran church was read in our midst and the congregation resolved to reply in the following way to you:

1 - As long as you believe that the congregation has acted rashly and not in accordance with the Holy Scriptures in excluding you from the congregation there can be no talk of reconciliation between you and the congregation.

2 - If, however, you were to recognize that your exclusion from the congregation was done properly--and once you recognize the wrongdoing which you have

committed against the pastor of the congregation--and if you confess and acknowledge this, take back, and are willing to retract the accusations, then your reentry into the congregation would once again stand open.

The letter closes with the wish that the Lord would endow his heart with uprightness and with feelings of reconciliation.

In the 35th anniversary booklet it is stated that financial support was the most serious issue. Pastor Hillemann states: "There were people in the area who wanted to have the services of the pastor, but who did not want to bear the financial burdens of the congregation. That is, they didn't want to become members. In order to stop this evil, the congregation decided on the 1st of February, 1885 that whoever wanted [what the church had to offer] . . . should not only give something to the pastor, but also to the congregation if he was not too poor. They also established the sums" [7].

Apparently Mr. Faude and company did not immediately recognize their wrongdoing, for three weeks later Pastor Popp, the visiting elder from the northwest district informed Pastor Ungrodt that several dissatisfied members had sent him a letter. In that letter they complained to him that they were improperly excluded from the congregation and requested that the matter be investigated. In response to this, Pastor Popp decided to make some sort of visitation and asked the congregation to call a meeting which could resolve this. The congregation agreed that the visitation at the request of Pastor Popp take place on

December 14, 1884.

Still further accusations were lodged against the congregation and Pastor Ungrodt, and on March 8, 1885 President Bading was called in for mediation in a subsequent meeting. In the Synod's Berichte from that year he lists visitations in eleven cities, and then makes the statement that "not many of the disputes required investigation by members of the Synod administration" [8]. Thus it would seem that the strife in Medford must have been of a rather serious nature.

In addition, the records show that membership was falling off rather rapidly. This forced Pastor Ungrodt to increase his workload in other congregations so as to support himself and his family. In this connection, Pastor Ungrodt made an appeal to other Wisconsin Synod congregations for assistance, collecting \$200 at a Synodical conference in Milwaukee.

After the year 1885 things seemed to settle down considerably. A period of quiet growth and development ensued. In the general meeting of 1887 Pastor Ungrodt pointed out the decrepit condition of the old church. He also made the suggestion that a new building would be unavoidable in the near future, so it would probably be best to make preparations. In the special meeting on the 5th of June, 1887, the building of a new church was decided upon. But because of the common poverty, it was decided that for the most part the members could make their contribution in work.

Thus the first church building had served the congregation only for a period of about six years before it was replaced.

On the 31st of July the laying of the cornerstone took place. Just as the skeleton of the church was set up and was almost finished, a rare thunderstorm broke down the entire building and made a significant part of the wood unusable. Luckily, no one was injured, since everyone had taken refuge in the old church. Without batting an eye, they started over on the next day. The construction was completed in time for dedication in November.

An old friend of Pastor Ungrodt from Jefferson presented a bell for the steeple. The records show that the cost of building this church was \$1500, of which \$400 was borrowed. This second building served the congregation as a place for worship for a period of eighty-one years. It was sold in 1967 to the United Pentecostal congregation for \$6000. It is significant to note that all eight of Immanuel's pastors have conducted services and administered the sacraments in the 1887 building.

Eight years later, on April 7, 1895, Pastor Ungrodt's former congregation in Jefferson presented a pipe organ to the congregation at Medford. Later Immanuel would in turn donate this organ to its sister congregation in Lena, Wisconsin. It is very heartening to see donations of this nature taking place between congregations even today.

In the year 1897, at the age of 70, Pastor Ungrodt asked to be relieved of his active duties. Pastor Paul J. Burkholz, Sr. accepted the call to Immanuel on September 19, 1897. He served at Immanuel for almost ten years. He was born on January 26, 1867 in Bavaria, Germany, and immigrated to the United States alone to take up the ministry. He never saw any of his family again. In 1897 he accepted the pastorate in Medford, from where he also served the congregations in Rib Lake, Stetsonville, and Little Black. In 1907 he accepted a call from Trinity, South Mequon, where he served as pastor for over 25 years. He left passed away on May 13, 1952 [9].

Soon after Pastor Burkholz's arrival he tried to persuade the congregation to construct a building to provide adequate room for catechetical instructions. In the year 1901, taking their cue from his appeal, the Ladies Aid bought the church of the Evangelical Congregation, placed it on a large log sled, and brought the entire building to the church property, setting it on a prepared foundation between the church and the parsonage. For many years this served as a schoolroom and meeting room. This is a good example of the industriousness of the Ladies group. While the menfolk of the congregation were squabbling about dues and finances, the womenfolk were busy raising funds. From July 1885 through 1895 the Ladies Aid Society donated in excess of \$560 to the congregation's treasury. Pastor Burkholz was instrumental in the eventual establishment of a full-time Christian Day school.

In the course of time the congregation had grown so much that space in the church proved to be too small. Thus it comes as no surprise that in January of 1903 a committee was elected to make proposals for a church enlargement project. A sacristy and bathroom were added. New colored glass windows, donated by the members were installed, as were new pews, electrical lighting, a balcony, and a new pulpit and altar.

1907 was a landmark year for Immanuel congregation. First of all, it would experience a change of shepherding personnel. Pastor Burkholz accepted a call to Trinity, South Mequon. He was replaced by Pastor M. J. Hillemann--a man who proved very effective in moving the congregation forward.

Pastor Martin J. Hillemann was born on January 23, 1869 in Rochester, N. Y. He was the son of Pastor and Mrs. Martin Hillemann. In preparation for the ministry, he attended Northwestern College in Watertown and the Seminary located in Milwaukee, and graduated in 1893.

Prior to coming to Medford, he served congregations in Iron County, Minnesota, and Green Bay. He was installed as pastor of Immanuel's congregation on July 7, 1907, and served until January of 1926, at which time he accepted a call to the congregation in Marshall, Wisconsin. Pastor Hillemann passed away on August 20, 1965 after a long illness, at the age of 96 years [10].

The second major development in 1907 was the report of the congregational minutes that all debts had been retired. Thus as the congregation celebrated its 31st anniversary of existence a

new chapter in congregational history developed. What does a group of people do when it reaches such a turning point? The temptation must have been great to be satisfied with past accomplishments. Not the members of Immanuel! They used the impetus of the former years to propel them into the future with continued emphasis on expansion and growth.

This is demonstrated by the establishment of a Christian Day school in the year 1914. In Immanuel's 75th anniversary booklet, Mr. W. A. Pape, then principal of the Day School presents the following brief historical sketch of Immanuel Christian Day school:

On the fourth of April, 1914, the congregation, by a vote of 33 to 8, decided to open a Christian Day school. Mr. George F. Meyer was called and he began his duties in the fall of 1915. On September 21, 1917, he entered the service of his country in the First World War. Mr. Ernst Sperling and Mr. Arnold Wilbrecht taught the school until Mr. Meyer returned in the fall of 1919. A year later he resigned to engage in other activities. Teachers were scarce at that time, too, but the congregation did get Miss Lydia Winter to teach two years and Miss Erna Sitz and Miss H. Zinther to teach one year each. Another teacher was not available and the school was closed and remained so from 1924 to 1944.

The school spirit was not dead. Time and again the problem arose. In 1927 it was decided to build a new school but not to begin the project until three-fourths of the money was available. The treasurer never had that much money in advance. Finally, on the 16th of April in 1944 the congregation decided to open a Christian Day school, beginning that same fall. Mr. W. A. Pape became its first teacher, beginning with grades 3, 4, and 5 and adding the fourth grade in 1945 and

including all eight grades in 1946. The enrollment began with 33, then 46, and since that time it ranged between 92 and 108. It was thought that this school would never grow beyond that of two room size, but in 1946, when 98 children enrolled, committees of volunteers worked diligently to put the basement of the school into classroom condition [11].

After the reopening of the Christian Day school in 1944 the enrollment continued to grow. In 1954 a new four-room school was built on a new site to the east, which was planned to be the future site of all buildings of the congregation, at a cost of about \$65,000. A gymnasium, kitchen and dining facilities were added in 1968. One final augment was made to the facilities in 1975, with the addition of two additional classrooms and a library. Presently the enrollment numbers 168 at Immanuel Christian Day school.

At the annual meeting in 1908 the congregation decided to construct a new parsonage at the suggestion of Pastor Hillemann. At this point they borrowed the largest amount of money to date--\$2000, a debt that was not retired for many years. The new parsonage was dedicated on September 27, 1908 and has been the home of all the pastors' families since that time. Next to the parsonage a new windmill was set up in order to provide water for the house.

Pastor Hillemann was also responsible for the founding of the Young People's Society in the winter of 1910-11. Regular meetings were devoted to Bible study, discussions of synodical and local

needs, missions, and topics bearing on youth problems.

Pastor Hillemann also saw to it that the congregation celebrated its 35th anniversary on August 13, 1911. He served Immanuel for another fifteen productive years before accepting the call to Marshall, Wisconsin. He was succeeded by Pastor Herbert Schaller.

Pastor Schaller was born at Cape Girado, Missouri, the son of Professor John Schaller on May 15, 1889. In his youth, he lived in New Ulm, Minnesota, where his father was the first Director of Dr. Martin Luther College. Later his father became president of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary at Wauwatosa. He attended the appropriate Synodical schools, and graduated from the Seminary in 1912. He served as pastor at in Medford from January 1926 until 1933. While at Medford one of his sons, John Irvin drowned in an accident at the Black River Dam on July 24, 1927, at the age of thirteen. Pastor Schaller's health began to fail in 1963, while serving in Eagleton, and after a lingering illness, he died at the age of 78 years on May 24, 1967. His body was laid to rest at the Medford Evergreen Cemetery.

No major building projects took place during Pastor Schaller's stay in Medford, which is not to say that he did not have a productive ministry there. The same holds true for Pastors Habeck and Mueller. However, the minutes do not report any earth-shaking controversies at this point, and so without further

elaboration we will proceed on to give brief biographies of the above-mentioned pastors and proceed from there.

Pastor Irvin J. Habeck was born in Winona, Minnesota on May 7, 1904. He graduated from Northwestern College in 1924 and from the Seminary, then in Wauwatosa in 1927. He was ordained and installed as pastor of the Minocqua-Woodruff parish on July 31, 1927. On August 1, 1931, Pastor Habeck was married to Dorothy B. Seefeldt of Marinette at Forestville, Wisconsin. The marriage was blessed with two sons, John and Daniel. In the fall of 1933 Pastor Habeck accepted a call as pastor to our congregation and served here until 1940. While here, he served briefly as visiting elder of the Wisconsin River Valley Conference.

He was the speaker on Centennial Sunday, September 26th, exactly 100 years to the day after Immanuel's organization of September 26, 1976. During Pastor Habeck's pastorate in Medford, plans for the re-establishing of the Christian Day school were begun in the construction of a new two-room school building in 1939 [12].

Pastor Richard W. Mueller was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, on April 30, 1903. After graduating from Luther College in St. Paul with a B. A. Degree, he enrolled in the Seminary. On June 27, 1928, he was united in marriage with Mrs. Helen Laech of Milwaukee. The marriage was blessed with two children, Richard, who later served as missionary in Zambia, Africa, and Helen.

His first call into the ministry was to Rice Lake, Wisconsin, where he was ordained and installed on July 15, 1928. From 1940 to 1948 he served as pastor of Immanuel. On October 10, 1940, Pastor Mueller was installed as pastor of St. John's in

Jefferson, Wisconsin, where he served until the time of his death on Saturday, September 6, 1969, which occurred in the sacristy of his church while preparing for the Sunday service.

Pastor Alphonse Engel was born near Montrose, Minnesota, on April 14, 1901. He was the son of Pastor and Mrs. Julius Engel. He attended Northwestern and the Seminary. He was ordained on July 8, 1928 at St. Mark's Lutheran church in Lebanon township and served there until 1929. He served at Medford from 1948 until 1963, when he accepted the call from Immanuel's congregation in Waupaca, serving until his retirement in late 1970. He died on August 7, 1971. During his pastorate in Medford the congregation began purchasing the properties on which stand the present church-school complex. In 1959 the first phase of the school was begun. In addition, a new Wicks pipe organ was purchased during his stay at Medford. It was dedicated on January 23, 1951. Professor Albrecht, then of Dr. Martin Luther College, preached the dedicatory sermon.

Pastor Marvin W. Zank was born in rural Waterloo, Wisconsin, on December 8, 1928. He attended high school and college at Northwestern in Watertown. Upon graduation from the Seminary in 1953 he accepted a call to Grace Lutheran Church in Ford Madison, Iowa. Pastor and Mrs. Zank, the former Miss Joanne Dermody, were married in Milwaukee on July 4, 1953. This union has been blessed with a family of seven children. In the fall of 1963 he began

serving at Medford, and still remains at Immanuel to this day. During his pastorate there Immanuel experienced its largest and most aggressive building campaign.

In the annual meeting in January 1965, Immanuel's congregation moved to build a new church building, along with all the other necessary facilities to serve both the congregation and school. Groundbreaking services were held following services on Sunday, October 2, 1966. Dedication services were conducted on April 17, 1968. The total cost of this building project amounted to \$306,329. Last year a sloped roof was added over the school's formerly flat roof and over the church offices, at a cost in excess of \$60,000.

One last historical development may be included in the record of this paper. That is the decision of a congregational meeting conducted just one week prior to the writing of this paper. On May 10, 1987 the voter's assembly voted 27-7 in favor of calling an associate pastor. With a membership of 1054 souls, the services of Immanuel's ninth pastor no doubt will prove beneficial for the congregation's continued growth--numerical as well as spiritual--in future years.

1. George F. Meyer, Centennial Booklet, (Medford: Immanuel Lutheran Church, 1976), p 3.

2. George Meyer, Centennial Booklet, p. 4
3. Martin J. Hilleman, Fuenfunddreissigjaehrigen Jubilaeum der Deutschen Evan.-Lutherischen Immanuel-Gemeinde zu Medford, Wisconsin, (Medford: Immanuel Lutheran Church, July 1911), p. 2.
4. J. P. Koehler, The History of the Wisconsin Synod, (Sauk Rapids, MN: Sentinel Printing Company, 1981,) p. 195.
5. Koehler, The History of the Wisconsin Synod, p. 195.
6. George F. Meyer, Centennial Booklet, p. 14.
7. Martin J. Hillemann, Fuenfunddreissigjaehrigen Jubilaeum, p. 4.
8. Berichte der Wisconsin-Synode, 1885-91, (Milwaukee: Druck der Germania Publ Co., 1891), p. 16.
9. George F. Meyer, Centennial Booklet, p. 16.
10. George F. Meyer, Centennial Booklet, p. 18.
11. A. J. Engel, Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of Immanuel Ev. Lutheran Church, (Medford, Immanuel Lutheran Church, 1951), p. 10.
12. George F. Meyer, Centennial Booklet, p. 29.

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