

The Life, Ministry, Stories and Insight of  
**Reverend Henry George Frank Meyer**

Stephen Meyer

In the ninety-fifth year of Henry's life on the third day of the fifth month

(April 23, 2002)

Senior Church History – 331

Professor Brenner

It's Christmas Day. The big meal is still slowly digesting in our stomachs. The presents have been opened. A few favorite Christmas hymns were sung and some were played on the piano. A few people are doing dishes in the kitchen. Two people have slipped into holiday naps. One or two of us are sitting by Grandpa Meyer as he tells us stories of the long, long ago. A few of the stories flow from telling us about the ancient relatives of some of our friends. Sometimes the stories compare our life in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century with Grandpa's early years. Some of the accounts are given just to teach us about our family and synod history. Stories sprout offshoot stories to properly tell the whole account. My Grandpa has been my storyteller for years. I hope the video interview serves to let him be your storyteller for a short time. The following is a quick summary of the life and ministry of Reverend Henry George Frank Meyer.

Henry Meyer's parents were Johannes Peter Karl Meyer (born to Johann Meyer and Anna Meta [nee: Behnken]) and Lydia Ida (nee: Reinke). The two became one in the holy state of matrimony on November 26, 1903. Henry was born in the evening of December 7, 1907 in New Ulm, Minnesota. He had an older brother, John/ Hans (June 21, 1906), a younger brother, Arnold (September 19, 1909) and a younger sister, Lydia (August 10, 1918).

Henry started school in New Ulm in the fall of 1914 when he was 6 and a half years old. Henry's father served Doctor Martin Luther College as professor from 1902-1915. When Professor Meyer took a call to be Pastor Meyer of Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, Henry relocated with the whole family. After three years as a pastor in Wisconsin, Pastor Meyer took a call to serve as a professor at DMLC. Henry spent 1918-1920 in New Ulm, Minnesota until his father took another call. This time, the Meyer family moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin after Professor Meyer received and accepted a call to serve Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary as a professor.

Henry attended school in Milwaukee through his seventh grade year. He joined his brother, Hans, in New Ulm for his eighth grade year. He finished his high school years and then graduated from the two-year college program in New Ulm in 1928. Henry continued his schooling at Northwestern College in Watertown, Wisconsin. After he studied from 1929-1932 at Watertown, he graduated from NWC. Henry decided not to continue his schooling at the Seminary, but instead submitted his name to be a candidate to receive a call to teach. He was called in August of 1932 to teach at Garden Homes Lutheran School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He taught there from 1932-1936. He enjoyed teaching.

In 1935, he had the privilege of serving his congregation and the Synod by being a delegate to the Synod convention in New Ulm, Minnesota. While there, Pastor Ben <sup>E. Benjamin</sup> ~~Schledder~~ <sup>Schlueter</sup> of Oshkosh, Wisconsin bent his ear long enough to impress upon Mr. Henry Meyer that he thought Mr. Meyer should study to become Pastor Meyer. On the long

ride home to Milwaukee with his father, Professor J.P. Meyer, Henry talked over the prospect of completing his training for the pastoral ministry. Father encouraged son to think about becoming a pastor. He told him to take some time for two reasons. Henry should be sure this is what he wanted to do. He could not leave Garden Homes in the lurch without a teacher, especially right before the school year was supposed to start.

Henry decided to study for the pastoral ministry at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. He was in a class that was six years younger than he was. He enjoyed his years at the Seminary. He was graduated in 1939, but no calls were given to any of the graduates at the time of their graduation. He filled some of spare time in that summer by attending the Synod convention in Watertown. Henry found himself surrounded by Pastors Fenske, Meier, Schlegel and a couple of others. Before he knew it, he was asked/ called to be a tutor at Northwestern Lutheran Academy in Mobridge, South Dakota. He served as a tutor with Dick Frey. When he arrived at Northwestern Lutheran Academy, there still were no paved roads to the school. There were 22 students.

On August 26, 1940, he was joined to Irene Ida Eichstadt (April 26, 1917 – April 28, 1985) in marriage. Because he was married, he could no longer serve as a tutor. NLA changed the scope of his call to make him a professor there. A process of elimination assigned his duties and the subjects he was to teach. Professors Fenske and Sievert fought over who got to teach history and a few other of their favorite subjects. They assigned Music, Algebra, English, German, Religion, and Drawing to the young Professor Meyer during his years at NLA. In addition to his teaching, Professor Meyer

directed the choir, started a band in 1941, helped students procure instruments and started getting the choir and band opportunities to play in congregations and the community.

Professor's house underwent some changes during his years at NLA. He and his wife were blessed with two children. On October 2, 1941 their first child, Henry John Frederick, was born. They added a daughter, Marie, in 1944.

Their house also doubled as the girls' dormitory. NLA used the Meyer residence to house girls during the school year. Most meals were provided by the school in the cafeteria. The extra bodies put a strain on the water heater when it came time for the weekly baths/ showers. Despite less than ideal (by our modern standards), the Meyers and the girls slept, ate, studied and even enjoyed life.

Because he had not yet served a congregation as a pastor, Professor Meyer had not yet been ordained. This presented a small problem during World War II. A Swede who was in charge of the draft in area and who strongly disliked Germans tried to draft Professor Meyer into the armed services. Fortunately, the mayor of Mobridge, Mayor Wiggly, exempted Professor Meyer (already in his thirties) from the draft. The Mayor declared that education of the youth was very important and Professor Meyer should not be taken away from serving his nation by teaching children. Professor Meyer was allowed to continue to wield the sword of the Spirit instead of the sword of the government.

In the fall of 1953, Professor Meyer received and accepted a call to serve as pastor of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in Elroy, Wisconsin. On February 7, 1954, Pastor Meyer was installed and ordained by Pastor Wilbur Schulz. His father, Professor J.P. Meyer, preached for the service. While at Elroy, Pastor Meyer started a choir. He helped the congregations around him by serving vacancies at several other churches. While at Elroy, on June 5, 1955 Pastor Henry G. Meyer's confirmed a class of one, Henry J. Meyer. Professor J.P. Meyer preached the sermon. Henry J. was sent to NLA for his first two years of high school.

1956 brought another change in ministry when Pastor Meyer accepted the call to pastor St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Millersville, Wisconsin. Pastor Meyer was able to serve St. Paul's from 1956 to 1962. Along with normal pastor duties (preaching, teaching, hospital and shut-in calls, meetings, etc.), he was again allowed to direct the choir. Throughout his years, he enjoyed working with music, and the training he acquired by being the music man at NLA paid off. Henry J. finished his high school career with two years at Winnebago Lutheran Academy. Marie attended all four years of high school at WLA. Both Henry J. and Marie attended DMLC, graduated and served the WELS as Lutheran grade school teachers.

Because he was in the area and because it was monumental, Pastor Meyer attended the WELS Convention of 1961 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He recalls his father, Professor J.P. Meyer, speaking to the convention. Professor Meyer quoted from a C.F.W. Walther sermon and its theme and parts to show that the WELS needed to announce a break in

fellowship with the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. Walther, a LCMS patriarch, was on the theological side of the WELS.

Another call was received and accepted by Pastor Meyer. In 1962, he and his wife moved west to shepherd WELS congregations in Fort Morgan, Colorado (80 miles north of Denver) and Hillrose, Colorado (17 miles north of Fort Morgan). Pastor Meyer began serving the dual parish when he was installed on Palm Sunday of 1962. Pastor Meyer served the area churches as the Colorado Conference Visiting Elder and later as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President of the Nebraska District. Along with the many joys of helping by serving the wider body of various congregations, Pastor Meyer's duties brought some tough tasks. While serving as Visiting Elder, he had to help deal with Pastor H. Schultz in Golden, Colorado and Pastor James Koch in Colorado Springs, Colorado. They were preaching, teaching and propagandizing false doctrine concerning the 3<sup>rd</sup> Use of the Law. Pastor Koch would not listen to Scripture and stole his congregation in Colorado Springs from the WELS. It was a difficult situation.

By 1972, Pastor Meyer's sight was quickly disappearing. Macular degeneration of the retina robbed him of his ability to see. He retired from the public, representative, pastoral ministry on July 2, 1972. With the help of Professor Armin Schuetze and Pastor Liesner, Pastor Meyer found a place to live in Milwaukee. His new home was three doors down from North Trinity Lutheran Church on North 37<sup>th</sup> Street. His wife, Irene, had developed multiple sclerosis. As the disease took more and more effect on Irene's control of her muscles and motor skills, Pastor Meyer began doing some of the things that Irene had so

faithful<sup>ly</sup> done throughout his life. She had served him and her family with her cooking, cleaning, frugal living and Christian faith. Her husband, children and people who knew her bear witness to this to this day. On April 28, 1985 the LORD brought Irene from this transient trail of tears to eternal rest and joy at her Savior's side. Well done, good and faithful servant!

Pastor Meyer continued to live in Milwaukee after the death of his wife. He kept busy by attending RePast meetings. He has continued to enjoy the fellowship of pastors and the work that they do. From time to time, Pastor has had opportunity to get together with a group of former workers in the Dakota-Montana District. As much as he was able, he helped at North Trinity. Although his backyard was a rather small area, Pastor Meyer put his green thumb to work. He planted and groomed a fruitful vegetable garden. He grew raspberries, currants, tomatoes, carrots, beans, corn, peas, watermelons and other fruits and vegetables. A good amount of time was spent going through his "stuff." Pastor Meyer had developed a skill at keeping stuff. He had amassed papers, booklets, pamphlets, books, and all sorts of publications. The only downside to Pastor Meyer's vast collection was its lack of organization. Fortunately, he was able to spend a considerable amount of his spare time paging through box after box of his huge collection. Many of the publications, pamphlets and papers teach the history of the WELS and the conflict with LCMS. A good deal of his great collection passed to our Seminary's library or into my hands.



Eventually, Pastor Meyer's health began to deteriorate. By the time he had gotten into his nineties, mowing, shoveling, keeping the house, shopping, getting to the doctor and other tasks became to be a little too much. He decided to move to Lake Mills, Wisconsin where he could be closer to his daughter Marie. He found a good place to stay; a senior home called Rock Manor. He resides there to this day. He enjoyed his 94<sup>th</sup> birthday on December 21, 2001.

December 22

*Joshua 4:19-24*

19 On the tenth day of the first month the people went up from the Jordan and camped at Gilgal on the eastern border of Jericho. 20 And Joshua set up at Gilgal the twelve stones they had taken out of the Jordan. 21 He said to the Israelites, "In the future when your descendants ask their fathers, 'What do these stones mean?' 22 tell them, 'Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.' 23 For the LORD your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over. The LORD your God did to the Jordan just what he had done to the Red Sea when he dried it up before us until we had crossed over. 24 He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD is powerful and so that you might always fear the LORD your God." <sup>1</sup>

Joshua and the Israelites just made the incredible trip from Shittim to Gilgal while the Jordan River was in flood stage. Those Israelites would probably never forget the sight

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<sup>1</sup> The New International Version, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984.

of the dry riverbed because God had heaped up the waters. Would they tell their children? Would their children know, remember, take to heart the power and mercy of the LORD, and hand it on to their children? The LORD told the Israelites through Joshua that it was their duty to pass on the news of the great things the LORD had done for them.

God entrusts the same privilege to us. God lets us tell the great things that Scripture proclaims. Along with faithfully preaching, teaching and handing on the Bible to the generations that follow, God lets us tell the story of how he has worked all things for the good of those who love him. He lets us tell the tales of yesteryear to the next generation to show how God has been with, blessed and grown his Church.

My Grandpa Meyer, Pastor Meyer, did a good job of handing down his stories of the history he lived through, help make, had witnessed, and had received from his fathers. The Christmas Day story at the beginning of this essay is not some fuzzy-feeling, piously contrived story to revise truth and usher my Grandpa Meyer into some sort of special state of sainthood. He took time to tell the tales of the days of old.

As Grandpa Meyer would tell his stories, several facts would jump out. What people, schools, congregations, synods and nations do is rarely isolated. It affects many. The intertwining nature of people and groups' existence became apparent as one story naturally branched into many different stories. What neighbors do affects those living inside their circle of contact.

What was done years ago influences today. Why is my family like it is? Why does our synod do the things it does? Look back a few years and you might find all or a big part of your answer. What should we be wary of in the future? Look at what people used to struggle with. Look at their strengths. We might be and probably are like them. Hold on to the good. Flee the bad.

As he told his stories, I noticed his deep admiration for his father, Professor J.P. Meyer. He loved him as his father. He looked up to him as a theological role model and giant. Grandpa emphasized his father's diligence. Grandpa appreciated his constant desire to learn – from his language work at the University of Chicago to his undying zeal to study. Grandpa told of how his father read and spoke Latin in his leisure, daily poured over the Word, continued studying the subjects he had taught for decades, read a wide variety of literature and poured over dictionaries to increase his vocabulary. As an example of the studying of his father, you will find a few of Professor J.P. Meyer's documents from the University of Chicago.

Grandpa also spoke highly of his father's other interests. He was interested in the people around him. From little children to family to students, Professor Meyer took time with them. Professor Meyer enjoyed honing his skills in his garden and maintained a garden most of his years. Professor Meyer was frugal and would take the train or boxcars to save the synod a dollar or two. Henry G. Meyer admired his father for their personal relationship, his hard work, his attitude and his zeal and ability to learn.

Pastor Henry G. Meyer has been a blessing from God in many ways. Through him, God has blessed:

- us with a man who has handed on much of the history he has come into contact with,
- us with many of the paper publications that he saved and gave to the next generation,
- the Church, his synod, NLA and the various congregations he served with a faithful servant of his Word who served in the public ministry for 38 years,
- his wife, Irene, with a solid, God-fearing, husband who loved and served her until she left this veil of tears,
- his children, Henry and Marie, with a father who brought them up in the training and instruction of the Lord,
- his grandchildren, Amy, Stephen, Sarah, David and Rachel Meyer and Heidi Heckmann with a loving grandfather who gave his time and attention to their young lives and spiritual well being.

Along with this short recapitulation of the life and ministry of Reverend Henry George Frank Meyer, several photographs and documents have been attached. The video is an interview taken with Pastor Meyer on December 28, 2001. On the audio tape cassette are an Easter 1961 sermon by Professor J.P. Meyer and some comments by Pastor Henry G. Meyer.

The picture belong captured the image of Pastor Henry G. Meyer's Meyer grandparents (Johann and Meta) and his father (Johannes Peter Karl) as a baby. This picture is from the WELS Historical Institute Journal – Fall 1987.



Pastor Johann Meyer and his wife Meta,  
with son Johannes Peter Meyer  
who was the oldest of their seven children

This and the following three pages show some of the extra studies that Professor J. P. Meyer did at the University of Chicago. Pastor Meyer looked up to his father's dedication and ability to continually learn. These documents testify to a few small signs of that dedication and ability.

The Extension Division

THE CORRESPONDENCE-STUDY DEPT.  
HERVEY F. MALLORY, Secretary

The University of Chicago  
FOUNDED BY JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS Nov. 12 1913

Mr. Joh. Meyer

Let me call your attention to the paragraph *Fellow Professor,* RECOGNITION FOR WORK *Superintendent,* on the back of this card. If it is more convenient to take the examination there rather than at the University and you will make arrangements with your Superintendent of Instruction or High School Principal to supervise the test, and send his name to the Secretary, Mr. Mallory, I am quite sure that he will be accepted and the questions will be sent to him for you.

Very truly yours,

*I congratulate you heartily upon completing the course. Your grade is 98+ on scale of 100, the best mark attained by any student in this course.*

O. W. Tolson  
Instructor.

The University of Chicago

The Correspondence-Study Department

Chicago, Ill., January 22, 1915.

Mr. Joh. Meyer,

Your instructor reports that you have finished the recitation work in

--- "Jewish History in the Time of Jesus" ---

with the grade A-, and that you may be admitted to the final examination for credit for this course. Attention is called to the fact that the test must be taken before June 23, 1915,

Number 11,738

H. F. Mallory  
Secretary

# The University of Chicago

The University Extension Division

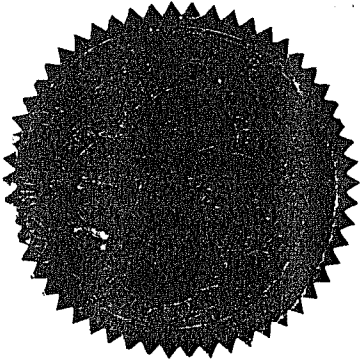
The Correspondence-Study Department

This is to Certify that . . . . . Joh Meyer . . . . .  
has satisfactorily completed the prescribed written work in the

. . . . . Major Course . . . . .

in the Department of . . . Semitic Languages and Literatures . . . entitled

. . . . . Elementary Hebrew . . . . .



Certificate 10,202

October 3, 1913

*Harry Pratt Judson*  
PRESIDENT,

*Robert Mallory*  
SECRETARY, CORRESPONDENCE-STUDY DEPARTMENT

# THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

The University Extension Division

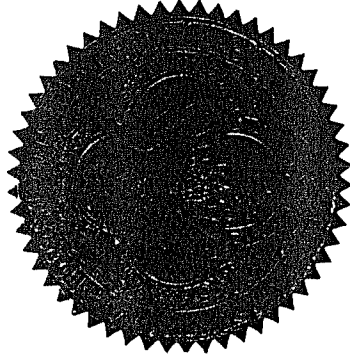
The Correspondence-Study Department

This is to Certify that - - - - - Joh Meyer - - - - -  
has satisfactorily completed the prescribed written work in the

- - - - - M a j o r C o u r s e - - - - -

in the Department of - - Biblical and Patristic Greek - - entitled

- - - The Greek of the New Testament - - -



Certificate 10,358

November 28, 1913

*Harry Pratt Johnson*  
PRESIDENT

*H. J. Mallory*  
SECRETARY, CORRESPONDENCE-STUDY DEPARTMENT

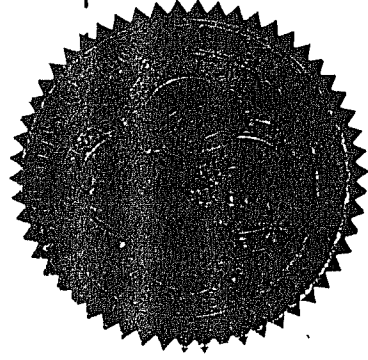


# THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

The University Extension Division

The Correspondence-Study Department

This is to Certify that - - - - - Joh Meyer - - - - -  
has satisfactorily completed the prescribed written work in the  
- - - - - Major Course - - - - -  
in the Department of - Semitic Languages and Literatures - entitled



- - - - - Intermediate Hebrew - - - - -

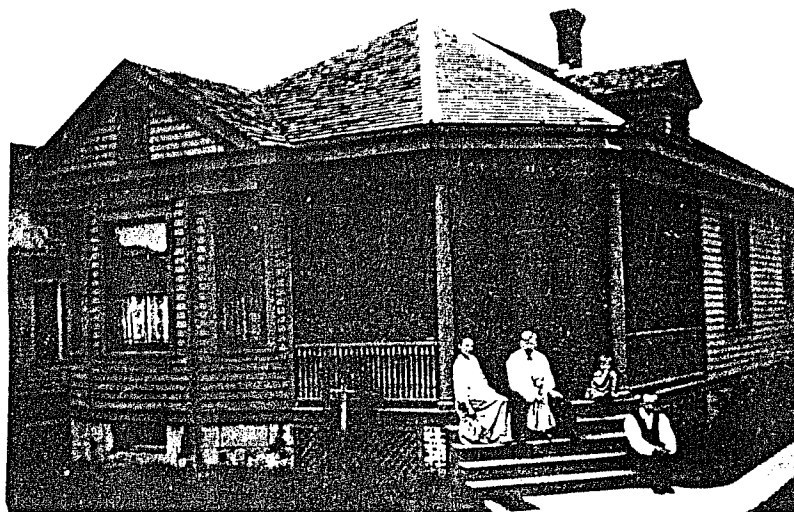
Certificate 10,673

March 12, 1914

*Harry Pratt Judson*  
PRESIDENT

*R. J. Maloney*  
SECRETARY, CORRESPONDENCE-STUDY DEPARTMENT

This is the New Ulm home of the Meyers. They lived at 14 N. Payne St. Professor Meyer turned an old, trodden and hard dirt path/ road in the back of his house into his personal garden. Pictured: sitting on the top step - Pastor's mother and father (Lydia and J.P.), leaning against the post - Hans, standing between father's legs - Henry George.



14 N Payne St., New Ulm, Minn.

First occupants of newly built:

Mother: Lydia, nee Ranke

Father: Prof. Joh. P. Meyer

Son: (between Father's knees)

Steinrich, born 12-21-07

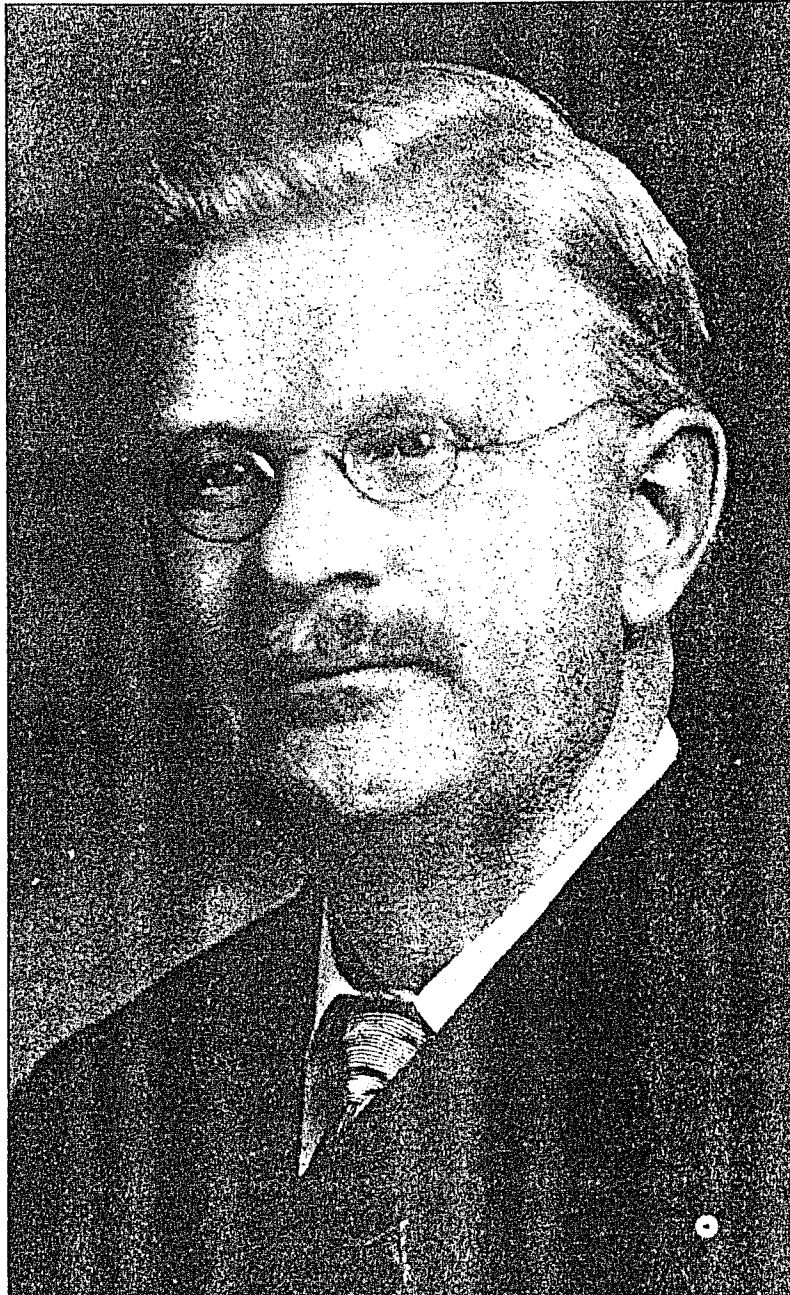
(sing)

Son (leaning against the post)

Starr (Johnnie) Jr. 6-17-06

John

This is Professor J.P. Meyer during his second years of service at DMLC (1918-1920). This photograph is from A Time to Remember by Morton Schroeder. Dr. Martin Luther College; New Ulm, MN. 1984.



*Director John Meyer*

Professor J.P. Meyer, Pastor Henry G. Meyer and Henry J. Meyer line up the three generations of Meyers at Henry J.'s confirmation on June 5, 1955. J.P. and Henry J. shared the same nickname - "Nixie" (from the Latin "nix" - snow, white). J.P.'s hair turned very white at a young age and picked up the name from his students. Henry J. had very blonde hair, almost white, at a very young age.



*Nixie Meyer*

*Trinity Lutheran Church*

*Elroy, Wis.*

*June 5, 1955 - Trinity Sunday*

*Prof. John P. Meyer (preached the sermon on John 6: 60-69; grandfather of Nixie)*

*Pastor Henry G. Meyer (did the examining of the rite of confirmation; father of Nixie)*

*Henry John Meyer (Nixie; the one & only member of the "class" of 1955)*

Professor Joh. P. Meyer looks directly at the camera as he poses for a picture. This is from later in his life and career. This picture was copied from the WELS Historical Institute Journal – Fall 1987.



*Joh. P. Meyer*

Forward in Christ included this is a fairly recent picture of Pastor Meyer from July 15, 2001.

### Northern Wisconsin



On July 15, 2001, members of St. Peter, Fond du Lac, Wis., sponsored the celebration of Henry Juroff's (center) 50th year in the pastoral ministry. Also present were James Rath (left), who was ordained by Juroff, and Henry G. Meyer (right), who ordained Juroff 50 years ago at St. Paul, Mound City, S.D.