

King of Kings
Evangelical Lutheran Church
Clifton Park, New York

A History of God's Grace:
1967-1995

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Preface

This paper will deal with the history of King of Kings Evangelical Lutheran Church, in Clifton Park, New York. The research was done while I Vicared there in the 94-95 school year. All of the information found in this paper was a result of personal interviews that I conducted with charter members of the congregation or from the church minutes, unless otherwise stated. The documentation will be done internally, and when the information is taken from an interview, I will just be listing the people's names at that point, as the complete interview details will be found in the Bibliography.

I would like to thank the members of King of Kings for their help with this historical summary, as well as Pastors Erich Waldek (Syracuse, New York) and Richard Schleicher. And most of all, our Triune God, who is responsible for establishing and protecting King of Kings, as He does with all in His little flock.

When people in the Midwest hear "New York" mentioned, many thoughts probably run through their mind. Liberalism, crime, and rude people who talk strange might be at the top of the list, but Confessional Lutheranism is one that might be conspicuous by its absence. But the history of the Wisconsin Synod, one of the most Confessional Lutheran bodies in America, includes a page dedicated to New York State. Three of the founding fathers of the WELS, were connected in New York back in the 1840's. Pastor John Muehlhauser was serving German immigrants in New York City, and later in Rochester, New York, having been sent there by the Langenberger Mission Society. "While he was in New York City, he made contact with two other Mission Society missionaries, William Wrede and John Weinman. These three men worked together in New York until 1848, when God called them separately to Wisconsin. There, each man became identified with congregations in the Milwaukee area. In 1850, these men and their congregations joined together and founded our Wisconsin Synod" (Waldek, "Excelsior: Ever Upward," p. 300). Nearly 125 years after these three men were in New York, the Wisconsin Synod made its presence felt again, proclaiming the Gospel message of grace alone in Christ, through a newly established mission in the Albany area of New York state. From this little mission at the center of the state, the Gospel was planted throughout New York, and God granted the increase. Today, there are five WELS congregations in New York. Besides King of Kings in the Albany area, there are churches in the Buffalo area (Springville, NY), Rochester, Syracuse (Liverpool, NY), and the mission on Long Island (Dix Hills, NY). But that is getting ahead of the story.

The roots of that first tiny mission in upstate New York reach back to Balaton, Minnesota. There, in 1966, Rodger Anderson and Marlys Schneider were married. Marlys was a life long member of St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Balaton, the WELS church in her area. Rodger was from a Methodist background, but was taking instruction at St. Peter's to become a member when in 1967 a job opportunity called them

out of the Midwest before Rodger could be officially accepted as a member of the WELS. Rodger graduated from University of Minnesota with an engineering degree, and in July of 1967, he accepted a job offer from General Electric which meant a move to the state of New York, to the Sch^henectady area which is where GE's plant is located. In 1967, the closest WELS congregation to Sch^henectady, New York, was Our Savior's Evangelical Lutheran Church in East Brunswick, New Jersey, over five hours away.

The Andersons' first home was in Galway, New York. They attended Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Scotia, NY, the local Missouri Synod church. Although they never became members, they attended this Missouri Synod church because there were no WELS congregations near by, and the Missouri Synod was the closest Confessional Lutheran group who had a church in the area. In August of 1968, the Andersons bought a home in Schenectady, New York, and there they attended Immanuel Lutheran Church, a member of the Missouri Synod as well. But their new church in Schenectady was a much more "liberal" congregation than they were used to, and the Andersons recall having a real problem with Immanuel's "open communion" practices, allowing anyone who wanted to come forward and take the Lord's Supper. Recognizing that this practice was against the Scriptural concept of fellowship, the Andersons began seeking other alternatives for the spiritual feeding of their souls. By God's grace and direction, one soon presented itself.

Before the Andersons left Minnesota, Marlys' mother Mrs. Roy Schneider wrote the New Jersey congregation's Pastor Gary Baumler a letter, telling him that her daughter and son-in-law were moving into his area, and asking him to please contact them when they got settled. Her concern was for their spiritual care, and Pastor Baumler did respond to her letter, with two letters to the Andersons in late 1967. The first of these letters dated August 15, 1967, informed the Andersons of the worship schedule in New Jersey, and invited them to come down and join the members of Our Savior whenever they could. Pastor Baumler recognized that the large distance was going to make it hard for the young couple to come to New Jersey on a regular basis, and he held out hope in that

first letter that a new mission would be starting in the Hartford, Connecticut area soon (Hartford is about 3 hours away from Sch^enectady). The second letter from Pastor Baumler dated December 14, 1967, (cf. Appendix A) gave more information about the Connecticut mission. He informed them that "he serves there (Hartford, CT) every second week (of the month) for an evening service at 7:00 o'clock." He also informed them that the mission had turned up some good prospects and was flourishing, so they had started having a communion service once a month, and that they hoped to soon call a full-time man. Again, he encouraged the Andersons to join either the group in New Jersey or Connecticut for worship as they could, and to let him know if he could be of service to them.

The Andersons continued attending the Missouri Synod church in their area, although not totally satisfied with it. But in the summer of 1968, new hope was given to them for a WELS church in their area. That summer, the Connecticut mission received their first full-time Pastor. Seminary graduate Karl Gurgel was assigned to the Connecticut mission, and he wrote the Andersons a letter dated August 29, 1968,(cf. Appendix B). In that letter, Pastor Gurgel informed them that the Connecticut mission was meeting at a school in South Windsor, CT, and they would be having weekly services there at 11:00 A.M., and communion on the last Sunday of the month. He also informed them that his call included exploratory responsibilities in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, and potential services once per month in Pittsfield to be started by November of the same year. Pastor Gurgel put it this way in his letter, "In a way, your prayer is being answered, we are moving closer to Sch^enectady I am sure the day is not far off when Pittsfield will have its own Pastor, and then perhaps he can begin work in your area" (Ibid.). That news was very exciting for the Andersons. Marlys was already pregnant with the first of the Anderson's children by that point, and the long three hour trip to Connecticut was hard for her. But the trip to Pittsfield, MA, was only about an hour, and that seemed more possible and probable, especially since they were growing more and more upset over the liberal tendencies at Immanuel. Pastor Gurgel concluded

his letter with the note that the Andersons should let him know when their baby was born, and he would make arrangements to come to see them in Schnectady for the baptism. On December 1, 1968, on his way back from vacation in Wisconsin, Pastor Gurgel baptized Kristin Anderson in the Anderson home (Anderson interview, Aug. 3, 1995).

The first half of 1969 showed growth in the Pittsfield mission. Services were held in the Girl's Club in downtown Pittsfield about every other Sunday with Pastor Gurgel officiating. On August 24, 1969, the Andersons attended the first service with the Pittsfield group. There were about 25 people there, they recalled. That day, Marlys was received as a member of the mission by transfer from her Balaton, MN, congregation, and Rodger was received by adult confirmation. The Andersons began going to the Pittsfield mission about once a month from then on.

In the summer of 1970, the Pittsfield mission received its first full-time Pastor. Seminary graduate Paul Kelm was assigned to the mission, and once he was installed, the mission began meeting every week, and the Andersons began going over for the services twice per month.

The Andersons were still hopeful of having a church in their area of New York. Pastor Kelm was very encouraging to them in this area, and around Easter time of 1971 he suggested that they run a newspaper ad in their local paper, to seek out "those interested in confessional Lutheran worship, where the Bible is taught in purity and in truth" ("Chronological History of King of Kings Ev. Lutheran Church, Clifton Park, New York", p.1, cf. Appendix C). The Andersons ran an ad in the personal section of the Schnectady Gazette the week of Easter, April 11, 1971. All parties interested were to contact Rodger Anderson, and their home phone was listed. That week, Janet Brown called concerning the ad, and on April 18, 1971, she joined the Andersons for the trip to Pittsfield for worship. Encouraged by the response, the Andersons continued to run similar ads during the summer of 1971. Through these ads, God led four other families to get in contact with the Andersons and Mrs. Brown. They were Robert and Ginny Delf,

Art and Judy Harris, Paul York, and Victor and Harriet Leitzke, former WELS members from Wisconsin now living in Scotia.

The history of King of Kings Lutheran Church, from its earliest days was marked by Christian people who did exactly what our God directs His people to do in 2 Corinthians 6:14, 17, and 21, namely "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers ... 'Come out from them and be separate,' says the Lord ... Let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God." The nucleus of the congregation in Clifton Park, New York, is very different ^{From} than many of the other missions outside of the midwest heartland of our Synod, in that it is not made up of a majority of WELS people who have moved out of the midwest and started another WELS church where they end up. There were some of those ex-WELS people as we have already mentioned, but once the Andersons arrived in New York and the process was begun by the Lord for a church there, most of the families involved were families who were fleeing other church bodies for doctrinal concerns of one kind or another. Three of those original four families, who responded to the ad in the paper, demonstrate this point quite well.

Art and Judy Harris came from diverse backgrounds. Judy had grown up in the Buffalo area of New York, and had been a member of "a progressive LCA church of about 1200 members" (Harris' interview. Aug. 13, 1995). Art was born in Maine, and was involved in the Advent Christian Church, a conservative offshoot of the Baptist Church, where his grandfather was pastor. He and some of his friends became involved in the local Luther League, "as a way to meet girls" (Ibid.) he recalls. Judy was also involved with the Luther League in Buffalo. The two met at a Luther League Rally, and they were married in 1964. They settled in the Capital District after that, since Art got a job at GE, and they were looking for a church that "would meet both of their needs" (Ibid.). They ended up joining Our Redeemer in Scotia, and were active members for about six years including being members of the congregation's home Bible study group. After they had become involved there, the ^fPastor and some of the key members of the

church got caught up in the Charismatic Movement, and things became more and more emotional and emotion-based, rather than ^scripturally sound. The big question was raised over some Vacation Bible School material the church had proposed to use, which involved using cartoons to teach lessons. The Harrises and others questioned using such tactics, and had concerns over "what would happen when the kids grew up and realized cartoons weren't real? Would they then begin to question the ^biblical truths they were taught using cartoons?" (Ibid.). While Art stayed at Our Redeemer, because he was on the church council, Judy and their two sons joined Zion Lutheran Church in Schenectady, in 1971. Zion had far worse problems, they soon learned, since the ^pastor there was a proponent of the historical-critical method of Bible interpretation, which explains parts of Scripture, like the flood and the virgin birth of Christ, as mere parables. The Harrises had heard of the WELS before, but their initial impression of the WELS was not favorable. They saw WELS as the separatist group who refused to pray with anyone else. But when they saw the advertisement in the Schenectady Gazette in 1971, they were so upset with their church that they talked it over with Delfs, who were also members of Our Redeemer, and they called Rodger Anderson for more information.

Bob and Ginny Delf had been members of a WELS church in California from 1964 until they moved to Kansas in 1967. There they became members of a Missouri Synod church, since there was no WELS congregation in their area of Kansas. In 1971 they moved to Scotia, and joined Our Redeemer. There they became good friends of the Harrises, and shared the Harrises' concerns over the use of "Zog and the Willy Wogs" in the VBS material. Brian Delf was in VBS during those years, and he recalls that "in their attempt to make God more understandable to kids, they really lost the true Triune nature of the Godhead" (interview with Brian Delf, Aug. 4, 1995). So when they saw the ad in the paper, the Delfs joined the Harrises in contacting the Andersons and leaving Our Savior's in Scotia.

The York family came to this country in the early 1900's from Czechoslovakia. The oldest of their children, Paul, was born in this country, and was so bright that he

became the translator for the whole village where they settled in Victory, New York, at a young age. Paul had three brothers, Andrew, Martin, and John, and two sisters, Anna and Susan. Anna married Stanley Tomaski, Sr. and had four boys. Of the four children, Stan, Jr. and Jim became members of King of Kings. Both the York family and the Tomaski family were committed members of Bethany Lutheran Church, the Missouri Synod church in their town. In fact Sue recalls that church was at the center of their life from little on. "Often Paul and Stan Tomaski would come home from working a full shift in the steel mills and go right to church without sleep, in case there was something the Pastor might need or something they could help with.¹⁴ That is just the way life was," Sue explained, "since they were taught that all they had was God's and they should use all that He has given them to support His work in the world" (interview with Sue York and Stan Tomaski Jr., Aug. 8, 1995). So when these dedicated families saw liberal, anti-scriptural tendencies making their way into their church, they began looking for a group holding to the truth. Having seen the ad the Andersons ran in the paper, they thought maybe they had found one. That led Paul York to call Rodger Anderson, in hopes that he could meet with Rodger and find out more about this group.

On October 21, 1971, Pastor Kelm came over from Pittsfield on a terribly foggy Thursday evening and met with Rodger Anderson. Then the two of them traveled on to the Delf home to meet with the group present, including Delfs, HARRISES, LEITZKES, and Paul York. There the group committed themselves to a schedule of worship by which the group would drive over to Pittsfield for worship one Sunday, and the next Sunday Pastor Kelm would drive to Schenectady for a service in one of the member's home. That Sunday, October 24, the Andersons, Delfs, and HARRISES went to Pittsfield for church for their Mission Sunday service at the Pittsfield Girl's Club. The following Sunday, "The first recorded WELS worship service in New York State was held, October 31, 1971 (Halloween) at the Leitzke home in Scotia, amid interruptions by telephone and trick or treaters. There were 19 present at the first service" ("Chronological History", p. 1, cf. Appendix C). The group continued meeting according to the above mentioned schedule

through the rest of 1971. On Tuesday, November 9 of that year, Pastor Kelm and the New York group held a meeting in the Delf home, which was attended by Norman Berg, the WELS District Board for Home Mission ^{General} Chairman, who was on the east coast ^{Executive Secretary} visiting the new WELS missions. Pastor Berg encouraged the New York group to begin looking for a permanent place to hold worship services. Rodger Anderson and Art Harris were put in charge of doing just that.

The year 1972 was a year of great blessings from the Lord on the New York group. Art and Rodger's search for a permanent meeting place for public worship was fruitful, as the Holiday Inn of Albany was willing to rent out one of their meeting rooms for the group to worship in (cf. Appendix D). Having found a spot to gather for worship, the group began running newspaper ads again (cf. Appendix E), explaining what the WELS is and inviting people to the first public worship service of the WELS in New York, to be held on January 23, 1972, at the Holiday Inn in Albany. The schedule included Bible Class and Sunday School at 6 P.M. and the service at 7 P.M. That first service on January 23 was conducted by Pastor Kelm with 24 present, and the Sunday School began with two levels, and 6 students: Lisa and Kristin Anderson, John and James Harris, and Brian and Andrea Delf. Interestingly enough, right next door to the Holiday Inn was King and King's Chinese Restaurant, although Rodger Anderson assured me that was not the reason the group would later choose King of Kings as their churches name. That was mere coincidence!

After the initial service was held on January 23, the group continued to meet at the Holiday Inn on the first and third Sundays of the month. So that they wouldn't confuse or offend any visitors, the group would not have communion in the public service. Instead, once a month the group would proceed to the Anderson home after the service and commune there. All during this time, Pastor Kelm was working through Oswald Riess' Bible Information Class entitled "What Does the Bible Say?" with the ex-Missouri Synod people, preparing to take them into membership at Pittsfield (since this group was still not an independent congregation, only an extension of the Pittsfield mission).

The Holiday Inn location was settled on, despite the fact that it was about 25 miles from Schenectady (the homes of most of the members), in the hope that it would draw people from Troy and Albany. That really never happened, and that coupled with the fact that the Holiday Inn was ^{rather} kind-of expensive, led to the congregation searching for another place to worship. But during those months at the Holiday Inn, a few new faces were seen in the group. Sue York began joining her brother Paul at the services, and Ralph and Donna Schumacher began joining the group for worship. All along, they continued to run ads twice per month in the paper, telling about the ^PPastor and the Synod.

The next home of the New York group was in Schenectady. They rented the Schenectady Women's Club, and continued having services every other Sunday at 7 P.M., with Bible Class and Sunday School before. The first service in their new facility was on March 29, 1972. In May of the same year, the congregation got together for their first congregational dinner. It was held in honor of the Leitzkes, who became the first people affiliated ^{with} ~~to~~ the group to move away. The Leitzkes moved to Virginia because of a job transfer, and later that same year the Schumachers moved to Pennsylvania. But despite the loss of two of their families, the group remained upbeat. That summer, Vicar Karl Kuenzel lived with the Andersons for 12 days, and he helped the group canvass the area and follow up on prospects. In the fall of that year, God replaced the two families that the group had lost earlier in the year with four new families who started coming regularly to the services. They were the Radtkes, the Nitchmans, the Monties, and the Sabeans.

Bill and Eleanor Radtke were former members of the Missouri Synod. In 1970, the Radtkes moved to Schenectady and joined Zion Lutheran Church. There they became active members, with Bill teaching Sunday School regularly. Soon they became upset over the ^lLiberal tendencies in the congregation, finally coming to a head when the ^PPastor began openly questioning Scripture. The Radtkes left Zion late in 1971, and began going to St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Saratoga (Missouri Synod). By the fall of 1972, they had also stopped going to St. Paul's because the Sunday School material was

beginning to deny creation as a historical fact. The members of St. Paul's were talking about the new group that was meeting in Schenectady who "claimed to teach the true Word of God", and when the Radtkes saw the newspaper ad for the Schenectady mission, they decided to come and see what it was all about. August 3, 1972, was their first Sunday worshipping with the group at the Women's Club (interview with Radtkes, Aug. 3, 1995).

Robert and Helen Nitchmann began worshipping with the mission on October 15, 1972. They had been members of Zion in Schenectady. They also had become frustrated with the liberal material being taught in their Missouri Synod church, and seeing the newspaper ad, were led by God to the mission.

Gordon and Lois Montie were originally from Michigan. Lois was raised in a conservative Missouri Synod church, while Gordon was raised Catholic. Lois attended Doctor Martin Luther College in New Ulm, to become a teacher, but she discontinued her studies after two years, and married Gordon in 1954. In 1969 the Monties moved to Hershey, Pennsylvania where they lived for three years and attended Calvary Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod). In September of 1972, the Monties moved to Glenville, New York and started attending Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Scotia. They also were upset with the liberal tendencies there, so they never officially joined. Again, God used loving parents concerned with their children's spiritual care to draw this family to the Schenectady mission. Lois' mom, Ida Ruedéger, had heard about the tiny mission in New York. She contacted her Pastor, who in turn contacted the Synod, who in turn contacted Rodger Anderson, who then called the Monties and invited them to join the mission at worship late in October of 1972. The Monties and their 4 daughters visited the mission for the first time on November 5, 1972 (interview with Monties, Aug. 10, 1995).

The group was up to 31 people on December 3, 1972. That was also the first Sunday that Brian and Marlene Sabean, former members of Zion joined the group for worship.

November 9, 1972, was a big day for the tiny group that was affiliated with Pittsfield, but worshipped 70 miles away in New York. On that day, a letter was sent from the Board for Home Missions Office of the Synod to Pastor Paul Kelm. In the letter, Pastor Norman Berg informed Pastor Kelm that the New York group's prayers had been answered, and the group had received mission status in the WELS. As the letter explained, that meant that "the members are to organize formally and look forward to the day of acquisition of a church site and a chapel. The General BHM also has granted the new mission the right to call a pastor and has approved a tentative annual subsidy of \$3917 for all operating expenses (salary, car allowance, parsonage rent, etc.)" (letter enclosed as Appendix F). The members received the good news that Sunday, on November 12. On November 26, 1972, the new mission began having weekly services at 4:30 P.M., with Bible Class and Sunday School at 3:15. In December, the mission called Pastor Erich Waldek, then serving in Sterling Heights, Michigan, to be their first full-time resident Pastor. This man, who eventually became the groups' first resident Pastor, already had something in common with many of his first members in New York before he ever accepted the call - he also came to the WELS from a church body that was straying from God's Word.

Erich Waldek was born on Long Island, New York in 1929. Erich was raised in a Missouri Synod church in his early days, but later his family joined the United Lutheran Church. Erich became interested in the ministry in High School. He went to college at Hofstra, and then he enrolled at the ^{United} Lutheran Church of America's ⁱⁿ Philadelphia Seminary. He graduated from the Seminary in 1954, after marrying his wife Jean in 1952. He was ordained as an LCA minister, and was allowed to choose what sort of service he would like to give to his Lord. He could either choose to work in an already established congregation, or he could choose mission work. Pastor Waldek chose the mission work, and he was assigned as a "mission developer" and began working with a ^ULCA mission on Long Island. Later he worked with missions in Rome, NY, and finally in Mechanichsville, VA. During his time in Virginia, Waldek began to become more and

more unsatisfied with the ⁱⁿLCA material that he was receiving, especially the LCA - LCA
after 1966
Sunday School material. He was forced by the congregation and the Synod to allow women on the church council, as well as many other things that he knew were unscriptural. Pastor Waldek began looking for a more conservative Lutheran church to serve in after that. He thought of joining the Missouri Synod, but his colleagues advised him to "wait until the dust settled", since this was the time of the split between Wisconsin and Missouri. Waldek got to know Pastor Berg, and Pastor Walter Beckman of the WELS at the free conferences that were held in Illinois, and that led him to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, WI, for colloquy in the WELS in the 1969-70 school year. After that, the Waldeks and their 4 boys moved to Sterling Heights, MI, where Waldek had been assigned to St. Mark's Lutheran Church (WELS) (interview with Waldeks, Aug. 19, 1995).

On January 30, 1973, the new WELS mission in New York received word that Pastor Erich Waldek had been led by the Holy Spirit to accept their call to him, and that he would be joining the group as soon as they found housing for him and his family. So the next order of business for the group was finding a home which would house their new Pastor and his family. But while they were busy looking for a house, the group was growing. Because of the new families and the increase of children to the mission, the Women's Club was quickly becoming too small to serve adequately. So on February 4, 1973, the mission moved down the street in Schenectady to the YWCA for their services. On February 20, the mission sought and purchased a home on Onderdank Road in Scotia, and on March 6, the deal was closed and the mission had their first parsonage. On March 18, 1973 Pastor Erich Waldek was installed as the first resident Pastor in a 7 P.M. service at the YWCA. Pastor Walter Beckman of Falls Church, VA, preached, and Pastor Paul Kelm conducted the liturgy. The group had run ads in the paper about the special installation service inviting the public to join them for the service, which was to be followed by a buffet supper. Many attended the joyous event.

The first days with Pastor Waldek on staff were a busy time for the new mission. Ten days after the installation, the first midweek Lenten service was held in the parsonage, with 36 in attendance. On April 1, the first young people's society meeting was held. The group was open to young people in junior and senior high school. This group eventually was named the K.E.Y.S., King's Evangelical Youth Society. On April 8, a newspaper article was run that revealed the new mission's name to the community, King of Kings Evangelical Lutheran Church. The article "also revealed plans for the new congregation to purchase a church site somewhere in the area which would be centrally located to serve both present members and those seeking Bible-based, conservative, and evangelistic church" (quoted from article in the Schenectady Gazette on April 8, 1973, cf. Appendix G). A few weeks later on April 21, an article was run in the paper saying that King of Kings was busy working on its first constitution. The article listed the constitution committee members as Art Harris, Rodger Anderson, Paul York, and Brian Sabeau. The next day, Sunday, April 22, was Easter, the first Easter service that King of Kings officially had with its own resident pastor.

Between the time of Pastor Waldek's installation in March, and the end of the year in 1973, God caused the new mission to grow rapidly. In that time, eight new families became affiliated with King of Kings Lutheran Church. The first family of those was the Cooks. Andrew and Dorothy Cook both grew up in Central New York, and were raised in the Methodist Church. They were married in New York, and then Andy accepted a job that forced them to move to California. While they were in California, the Cooks tried a Baptist Church, a Church of Christ, and the Methodist Church nearby, but they never joined any church. They recall that the churches on the coast were too liberal for them. In 1967, Andy accepted a position with GE that would bring the family back to Pennsylvania where their kids could be closer to their grandparents. There in Pennsylvania, the Cooks frequented a Methodist church in their neighborhood, though they never joined. They recalled on Sunday that an old pastor was a guest preacher in the church. After the service was over, the members of that Methodist church were all upset

over the older pastor's sermon. Why? What had he done? He had preached an old fashioned law/gospel sermon, that was Scripturally sound! The members couldn't tolerate this. The Cooks said the average sermon in that church was "all love and feel good about yourself, and no sin and grace."

In 1971, Andy accepted a transfer from GE that would move the Cooks back to their home state of New York. At GE in Schenectady, Andy remembers visiting with his new colleagues in the break room. He remembers having conversations about church with one man in particular, and this man was telling him about the new young Bible-based mission that he was part of. That man was Rodger Anderson. The church was King of Kings. Andy recalls that after talking with Rodger and hearing all about the new mission, he was ready to come and see for himself. So on April 15, 1973, the Cooks visited the mission at the YWCA. Dottie recalled their first experience in a WELS church fondly. "It had a format that we liked," she said. "The Pastor preached on the Bible readings for the day. It had a liturgical format to the services, and the atmosphere was a warm, loving, Christian group" (interview with the Cooks, Aug. 8, 1995). After visiting the mission for a few weeks, the Cooks began meeting with Pastor Waldek in their home for instruction to become members.

The next group of three families who became involved in the mission were a group of people who lived in Voorheesville, NY, and attended Bethlehem Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod) in Delmar, NY. The Czirrs, Howards, and Beckers were all active members at Bethlehem, and even were involved in home group Bible study with the church. The families began to become more and more upset with the liberal push in their church, especially in the Sunday school materials. Roger Becker was teaching teen Bible class at that time, and he was appalled at the material he was being given to teach. Charlie Czirr was on the church council at that time, and he couldn't believe this new JEPD theory that he was seeing in the material, that questioned whether Moses really wrote the first five books of the Bible. Those things were very different from what they had learned as youngsters from God's Word.

Charles and Dorothy Czirr were former ALC members in Hudson, NY, where they were born and raised. They joined Bethlehem in Delmar when they moved to Voorheesville in 1958. Roger Becker was the son of a Missouri Synod minister in Kansas. Roger joined the army as a young man, and his travels brought him to New England where he met and married his wife Judy, in Boston, in 1956. Judy had been baptized in a congregational church in Boston, but recalls that her family hardly ever attended church. She had joined friends at Methodist services, and Catholic services as a teen, but never became a member anywhere. When the Beckers were married, they moved to California where Judy started instruction in the Lutheran church "to please his (Roger's) mother" (interview with Beckers, Aug. 12, 1995). When Roger got out of the service in 1958, the Beckers moved to Washington D.C., then to Richmond, VA, and finally to Voorheesville, NY, in October of 1966. In each of these places, they became members of the local Missouri Synod church.

The problems at Bethlehem in Delmar that these families saw in the late 1960's was not something unique to that one Missouri Synod congregation. Dorothy Czirr's home church in Hudson, NY (LCA) became independent about this same time, and that led to a series of talks about Lutheranism in this area of New York. The Reverend Herman Otten, who was raised in the Hudson area, was one of the presenters. These talks showed the people the growing problems in the Missouri Synod, especially in their open communion practices, and push for women's suffrage. Upset with similar practices in his Missouri Synod church in Hudson, Henry Koester, a cousin of Dottie Czirr, left his Missouri Synod church in 1972 and began going over to a small mission in Pittsfield, MA. The Pastor at that Pittsfield Church was Pastor Kelm, and he made Koester aware of the small group of Lutherans that were meeting in the Schenectady area. Koester in turn informed his cousin, Dottie of the group (interview with the Czirrs, Aug. 1, 1995).

The three families in Voorheesville were excited to hear about the Schenectady mission that was meeting about 25 miles north of them. They had just come out of a Lenten season that showed how fast their Missouri Synod church was falling into

liberalism. On Ash Wednesday, the Pastor at Bethlehem had brought out water from the Jordan River that he had collected from a recent trip to the Holy Land. He invited all of the members to come forward and re-baptize themselves with the "holy water" as they came forward to take communion. Upset by these tactics and having heard of the new mission early in the summer of 1972, the three families made plans to visit the new mission in July of that year. The Sunday that they had made plans to go up to Schenectady, there was a terrible thunderstorm, and all of the roads were washed out. Unfortunately, the families were unable to make plans to visit the new mission before the new school year started. By that time, the families were again so involved with their responsibilities at Bethlehem, that it was hard to get away (kids in Confirmation Class, Roger teaching, Dottie was Sunday School organist, etc.). So the families continued in their Delmar church through 1972, continuing to meet together in their home Bible study to have their faith strengthened by the Word, and to encourage each other against all of the problems going on around them.

The spring of 1973, brought news of a permanent pastor having been installed at the Schenectady mission, and that meant regular weekly services. The Czirrs, Beckers, and Howards decided that now was the time to investigate. Since it would have been impossible for all three families to pick up, Judy Becker made the trip to the mission by herself on May 20, 1973. After the service, Mrs. Becker recalls talking with Paul York about doctrine, and what the WELS stood for (the Beckers had heard of the WELS before, since Roger's uncle was a Missouri Synod pastor in a WELS church). After visiting the service and returning with a favorable report, the three Voorheesville families made plans to join the Schenectady Mission once Sunday school ended at Bethlehem. On June 17, 1973, the three families came up to King of Kings, never to return to Bethlehem again. By August, the group had sent a letter to Bethlehem laying out the problems they saw in the church on the basis of the Bible, and were granted a release. The group began instruction with Pastor Waldek in their homes, and became members by October.

That same summer, a young WELS member from Appleton, WI, began visiting the mission. Jackie Boldt had moved to Troy, NY, that summer and taken a job as an occupational therapist at Leonard Hospital in Troy. Before her move to New York, Jackie had heard about the mission through her home pastor. July 22, 1973, was the first time Jackie visited the mission. After visiting a few times, Jackie got to know the Radtkes quite well. One of the Radtkes daughters, Karen Radtke, was going to school in Troy at the time, so Jackie often gave her rides to church. Jackie recalls how nice the group was, and how much like a family they were to her. Later on, Jackie began dating Nick Oberle, who was a member of the Catholic church in Schenectady. Nick often joined Jackie at the mission services, although he never became a member until the mid 1980's. In May 1976, Nick and Jackie were married in Appleton, WI, and the two of them became involved with King of Kings from then on (interview with Oberles, Aug. 7, 1995).

There were a few more families that joined that year. In May, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Kaplin were received into the mission by profession of faith. The Kaplins were related to the Sabeans. In October, Mrs. Ann Floryan joined the mission. In November, the Evans family moved into the area from Independence, Missouri, and joined the mission. That December, King of Kings held its first Children's Christmas Program, worshipping the newborn Savior who had so richly blessed them.

With the nucleus in place, the time had come for organization. January of 1974 was the time set for that. On January 23, an organizational meeting was held. The object of the meeting was to set up a church council, adopt a budget, adopt the constitution, and fulfill all of the New York state regulations about incorporating. There were 13 men present at this meeting. That Sunday, January 27, 1974, was organizational Sunday for King of Kings Lutheran Church. During the service, the charter was signed and the members were officially put on the roles. They included 73 baptized members, of which 51 were confirmed, and 18 were voters. Also during the service, the Cook's children, Lora, Jodi, and Catherine, were baptized (cf. Appendix H for the complete list of

members on the roles). The first church council was also installed that day. Art Harris was elected as the first President. Rodger Anderson was Secretary. Robert Delf was Treasurer. Bill Radtke was Financial Secretary. Brian Sabeau was Evangelism Chairman. Charles Czirr Sr. was Stewardship Chairman. Roger Becker was Education Chairman. King of Kings was now officially a legal entity in the state of New York, and the group was poised and ready to do our Lord's work of proclaiming the Gospel to all the world. The many different backgrounds of the various members did at times cause some problems for the young group, but it also gave them something in common that bonded the group into a type of family, looking to their Heavenly Father for His guidance.

After incorporation, the next few months brought quite a few "firsts" for King of Kings. The first "first" was a funeral. Only 2 days after the charter had been signed, Robert Nitchman's funeral was held, making him the first member of King of Kings Lutheran Church taken to his eternal reward. At the February Council Meeting, the council decided that it was time to take a congregational survey about having an organized women's group in the congregation. They decided to run a bulletin insert questionnaire. The other major project that this first council had to undertake was finding a site for a permanent church and parsonage. So Rodger Anderson and Art Harris did a community profile survey of all of the churches in the Capital District, to see what area already had churches and what the denominations were. They found about 40 Lutheran churches, but few of them were in Saratoga County. None of these 40 were located around Exit 8 of the Northway, which is the major interstate that runs north and south through New York, and was built to connect Ontario and Albany during the time of the World's Fair in Toronto. This interstate is highly used, and a church off of this interstate would be easily accessible to all New Yorkers in the Capital District.

Another one of the "first" events the congregation was planning was a summer Vacation Bible School for the children. But at the April council meeting, it became evident that there was too much that needed to be done before summer, and that the VBS would have to be put off another year. On May 16, 1974, the ladies of King of Kings met

at the Delfs to discuss organizing officially. After some discussion, the women voted to organize 8-3. The ladies group held their first meeting on September 25, 1974, and became known as the Daughters of the King. Also on the agenda in these early months was Evangelism. Pastor Waldek began teaching a class on Evangelism techniques called "Talk about the Savior", and the plan was to have the training done and then to hold a canvass during the summer. June 2, 1974, was the day the first children's confirmation class was confirmed at King of Kings. On that day, Lisa Montie and Roxanne Radtke became confirmed members. A few days later, on June 6, the first canvass done by the members of King of Kings was held. They canvassed 350 homes that day. Also at the June Council Meeting, the council voted to organize the first nursery at the church, and Dottie Cook was put in charge of that.

The next "first" the congregation undertook was its first building project. On June 16, 1974, the congregation received word that they had received initial Synod approval to buy a plot of land on Crescent Road, in Clifton Park, that it was considering for its chapel. This was really not the first site that the congregation was considering. There was a site on highway 146 that was in the center of where most of the members at that time lived. Negotiations for that plot of land were going on, but when they fell through, another site was needed. From the survey that Harris and Anderson had done, it became clear that the site off of the Northway at exit 8 would be a good site for the church. It was a growing neighborhood, with no church in the immediate area. It was also only one mile from one of the major transportation arteries of New York State. The site chosen was an overgrown apple orchard owned by the Sisson family. Since the Synod approved the site, the congregation set up their first building committee with Rodger Anderson as chairman. The rest of the members of the committee were Andy Cook, James Howard, Gordon Montie, and Paul York. A July 24 newspaper article said that at Wednesday night's meeting of the City Planning Board, Mr. Anderson had presented a plan for a church in the area. By the week of Christmas, the Sisson land was bought and officially became the future home of King of Kings Lutheran Church. A local architect, John

Kibbe was suggested by the Voorheesville group, since he had built the church they had attended in Delmar. Kibbe was hired to draw up the plans for the new church and parsonage soon after.

While all of the preparations were being made for a permanent church building in Clifton Park, the council in October of 1974, had authorized their Pastor to work with Pastor Kelm of Pittsfield in doing survey work in the Rochester, New York area. This was the first endeavor the congregation made to start a "daughter" congregation in the state. By December of that year after nothing really turned up in the Rochester area, Pastor Waldek began visiting 4 families in the Syracuse area. By January 12, 1975, the first exploratory service was held at Syracuse with 18 people in attendance. Every other Sunday after that, Pastor Waldek would fly over to Syracuse for an afternoon service and Bible classes. That continued until November of 1975, when Syracuse received mission status and the right to call a full-time man. During the time Pastor Waldek was working in Syracuse, he continued making contacts in the Rochester area, hoping that one day the Synod would be able to plant a church in that large city. Of course by 1980, Rochester was calling its first full-time man as well. God also used the Pastor at King of Kings to start the congregation in Barre, Vermont, in the late 1970's. Again, Waldek flew over to Vermont to serve the people there, until 1980 when they also received a full-time pastor. From the start in Clifton Park, New York, the Word of the Lord was carried from one side of the state to the other, and people were gathered around the same principle that King of Kings had been started around.

In March of 1975, the Voters of King of Kings passed a resolution approving Kibbe's plan for the new church. This first plan included a basement, but at Synod's request the plan was modified in April to exclude the basement. As it turns out, a basement probably would have been a bad idea, since the land was so swampy. Rodger Anderson pointed out that 1000 yards of fill was needed, just to be able to build on the site. A basement would have probably turned into a swimming pool, before too long! (Anderson interview)

The summer of 1975, was the first Vacation Bible School that the congregation held. It was held at the Radtke farm, from June 23-27. Mrs. Cook, Harris, Radtke, Anderson, and Mrs. Frank Palmer (a new family that had joined the congregation earlier in the year) served as teachers. Also that summer, the congregation was taking bids from the various construction firms in the area for the building project, and preparing for a special stewardship drive to collect the money for the project. At this time the Memorial and Special Gifts Committee was set up, consisting of Bill Radtke (chairman), Roger Becker, and Andy Cook. By September 28, Guyer Builders of Burnt Hills, NY, had been chosen as the contractor and the ground breaking was set for October 19, 1975. One week before the ground breaking, the congregation held its first Mission Festival Dinner.

Once the ground breaking ceremony had been held, it was time for the construction process to begin. By November 12, the foundations for the church and parsonage had been laid. In December, Kibbe's plans for the altar furnishings were approved. By January 28, 1976 the construction was half done, and it was a good thing. The church was growing, through the canvass calls that were being made, as well as through Friendship Evangelism. On February 1, a new high for worship was reached when 86 were present. Later that month, the resolution was passed to put the old parsonage (Onderdank location) up for sale. The Council finished the interior plans by deciding on the pews, and the carpet, and they also decided to set money aside for a full set of linens and altar paraments. In March, the congregation was able to purchase an organ that was available, which was then stored at the Andersons, until it could be installed in the new church building. One month later, the congregation set aside money to send Marlys Anderson and Dottie Czirr to organ lessons, so they would have someone that could accompany the members as they sang their praises to their Lord in their new church.

Plans were being made for the official dedication of the building during this time. The Dedication Committee, which consisted of Charlie Czirr Sr.(chairman), James Plautz (a new family who joined that year), and Stanley Tomaski, was put in charge of the details. It was decided that the dedication would be held on May 23, 1976. They

decided that two services would be held. The first would be the dedication service at 10 A.M., at which Pastor Paul Kelm would be the guest preacher. The second would be a service of thanksgiving to be held at 4:00 P.M., at which Pastor Norman Berg would preach. A congregational dinner was planned to follow the second service.

The members of the congregation really had a sense that the new structures that were going up were theirs. As already has been alluded to, many of the members of King of Kings have engineering backgrounds. They were in on the ground floor of all of the plans that the architect and contractor came up with, modifying them to fit their needs. The plan for the parsonage that was accepted was a revision of a plan that was drawn up by Gordon Montie. All of the finishing work on the parsonage and the church was done by the members themselves, including the staining, painting, and all of the landscaping. The portable Sunday School partitions that were decided on were built in the Montie's barn, from plywood from Gordon Montie's work place. The group was responsible for staining and finishing the altar, the altar furniture, the baptismal font, and the finished cross on the roof. They also built a tool shed for the church. By using the many gifts they had been given by their Lord, the cost of finishing the building was kept down. This also helped unify the congregation, as they toiled and sweat together.

Finally, on May 23, 1976, the new building and parsonage were dedicated. The two services were held, as outlined above, as was the meal afterwards. In July, the Buildings and Grounds Committee was formed to take care of the church property. In November, the Building Committee was disbanded and the rest of its duties were given to the Building and Grounds Committee. The service schedule that continued from the day of dedication was a 10:15 A.M. worship service, with Sunday School and Bible Class at 9:00. Now God's people had been given a permanent home in which to worship Him, and hold their meetings to do the Lord's work. And do it they did. At the start of 1979, there were 140 members of King of Kings Lutheran Church, of which 101 were communicants. By January 28, 1979, the mission was able to send a letter to the Synod

declaring that King of Kings Lutheran Church no longer needed Synod subsidy. From that time on they became a self supporting congregation of the WELS.

The next order of business for this now self-supporting congregation was to address the issue of having a parochial day school. In July of 1979, Art Harris and Andy Cook were put in charge of researching what would be needed to start a school at the church. At the January 1980 voter's meeting, an official motion was made to start a Christian day school at the church. The motion was tabled, and a committee was assigned to do more study on the issue. At the next voters meeting in April, the committee reported that more time would be needed to study the issue. A resolution was passed to begin setting aside funds for a school, but that the congregation wait to start it. Over the next 10+ years, the school issue would be discussed and talked about. Money would continue to be set aside for a school until 1990, when the \$13,000 in the fund was used to build the new education wing of the church, that was used for Sunday School classrooms. The idea of a parochial school was not seen as a pressing need to most of the members, since they had attended public school themselves, and the public school district which the church is in ^{was} is adequate.

Some of the children of the congregation have done work for their Lord that is worthy of special mention. In 1982, Andrea Delf and Colleen Radtke became the first two members of King of Kings to attend a Synodical school. They both enrolled at DMLC that fall, graduating in 1986. In June 1982, Ellen Radtke was appointed to the Synod's Youth Ministry Board for Parish Education, after serving as one of the leaders of the K.E.Y.S. She served on that Synodical Board for 3 years. In July of 1986, the congregation found out that Paul Waldek would be attending Bethany College in Minnesota to prepare for the ministry. Paul graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1992, and was assigned to Malawi, Africa as a missionary.

During the early 1980's, the congregation was busy carrying on the Lord's work in various ways. In the area of Evangelism, members were busy canvassing the neighborhoods around the church and passing out flyers and invitations to the special

services that were being held. They would turn the names of any prospects they found over to Pastor Waldek, who would follow up on these leads. The Stewardship Committee used many different methods to establish a tentative budget for the next year. Annual dinners, cottage meetings, and special presentations were often held prior to Commitment Sunday, where the members would turn in a pledge as to how much they would give the next year. These pledges made the budget work of the congregation much easier. Financially speaking, the church has always done quite well. The Lord has richly blessed the members of the congregation, and they in turn have always used those gifts for His work and glory.

The Education Committee was busy coordinating the Sunday School and VBS efforts, as well as working on the idea of a parochial school. The Building and Grounds Committee spent its time faithfully taking care of the building and the land that God had given the group, and each spring and fall they planned a clean-up day to keep the grounds around God's house beautiful. The Elders Committee was involved in working with the Pastor, and helping him carry out the church's ministry. The Daughters of the King were involved in Bible Study as well as service projects such as visiting nursing homes, and making blankets for WELS Lutherans for Life. The K.E.Y.S. planned various outings, and tried to send some representatives each time the Synod's International Youth Rallies were held. A Fellowship Committee was formed, which planned various social outings for the members, so they could enjoy the Christian fellowship that the Bible encourages us to have with brothers and sisters in Christ. Each of these organizations had numerous leaders and coordinators who dedicated their time and talents in service of their Savior. Many of the members of King of Kings were also very involved in the annual Labor Day Retreat that was started in 1971 by Pastor Kelm, and carried on each year after that by the Pittsfield congregation. The families would go over to a camp that had cabins in the Berkshire Mountains, and would spend the long weekend together in fellowship, studying God's Word, and worshipping together.

In 1988, the congregation realized that more space was going to be needed for Sunday School. There were already Sunday school classes meeting in the tiny kitchen area, the narthex hallway, and in the Pastor's office, and things were just getting too congested for any learning to be done. So at the April voters meeting, a committee was set up to look into expanding the church. Art Harris served as the chairman. At the October voter's meeting, the voters passed a resolution to hire Duane Anderson, the Synod's architect, to draw up plans for the expansion. They also authorized the expansion committee to file for the building permits. At an emergency voters meeting held on March 16, 1989, the committee laid out what they felt the reasons to expand were. The reasons were as follows: 1) For education, since the noise in the church from the other Sunday School classes is distracting both to the other Sunday School classes, and to the adult Bible Class, 2) For worship, since currently the worship area is 80% full, and projections say that it will go up in 6-10 years to capacity, 3) For a nursery, since the office which had been used as the nursery is too small and too high traffic to keep the kids busy and quiet. After these were laid out, the voters discussed their options, and agreed to look into building the addition in phases, since they couldn't afford the whole project just then.

At the April 26, 1990, voters assembly, the members passed a resolution to start the expansion project. But the congregation decided that they were only going to do Phase One of the project, and that they were only going to contract out for specific things that they were unable to do themselves. Otherwise, the congregation was going to serve as its own general contractor. The members did all of the work on the new building themselves, except for laying the foundation, putting in the trusses, and the plumbing. Bill Radtke was made the foreman of the project, since he was retired at that time. Members would come in and do the work, mostly on Saturdays. "It was a good chance for the congregation to learn more about the people they were worshipping with on Sunday morning," Nick Oberle recalled (Oberle interview). Some of the ladies of the congregation would come along on those Saturdays, and as the men did their work, the

ladies made lunch for them. Many of the men made special mention of Dottie Cook's contributions in this area. It was hard work, and by the end, people were getting sick and tired of it, but that Phase One addition was dedicated on August 11, 1991, for use. It included 2 new offices, one for the pastor and the other for a potential church secretary. It included a big new classroom, that could eventually be subdivided to form two smaller classrooms if need be. It also included a nursery. The project cost about \$75,000, but with the work the congregation did themselves, they saved close to \$30,000! At the July voters assembly of 1992, the project officially came to an end. The expansion committee was disbanded, and its duties were given to the Building and Grounds Committee.

At the January 28, 1993, voter's meeting, King of Kings Lutheran Church had 170 members on the roles, of which 118 were communicants, and 41 were voters. At that meeting, Pastor Waldek informed the congregation that he had been led by God to accept the call that he had received to serve in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, and that he would like to start there by July 1 of that year. Pastor Waldek faithfully served King of Kings Lutheran Church for 20 years and by doing so, he served The King of Kings, Jesus Christ, to the best of his ability. He was well-respected by his colleagues as well as his members, which was evident in his colleagues electing him to the Board for Home Missions at the Michigan District Convention in 1980, a position which he continues to hold today.

On June 2, 1993, the voters held an emergency voter's meeting at church. District President Walter Beckman was on hand as well, and he conducted the call meeting as King of Kings called their second full-time resident pastor. Pastor Richard Schleicher, then serving the WELS congregation in Amherst, New Hampshire, was called. By the July voter's assembly, Pastor Schleicher had accepted the call, and his installation service was set for September 12, of that same year. Before the Schleicher's arrived, Charlie and Dottie Czirr re-painted the parsonage for their new Pastor and his family. There were 123 people in attendance at Pastor Schleicher's installation service.

No two men are alike. We all have different and varied gifts, given to us by our Creator. So, no two pastors are exactly alike. When Pastor Schleicher accepted the position of overseer of God's people in Clifton Park, some things were done differently from what had been done before. Pastor Schleicher held the position of Chairman of the Board for Home Missions in the North Atlantic District when he came to King of Kings. This position made him realize the importance of organization and goal-setting to help focus your efforts (interview with Pastor Schleicher, Aug. 26, 1995). This became a priority that King of Kings began to stress under the leadership of Pastor Schleicher. At the January 27, 1994, voter's meeting, the congregation began work on a Mission Statement, which would serve as a guide for everything that the congregation did in its work for the Lord. Each of the committees ^{were} given the task of drawing up its objectives and goals, to help carry out that Mission Statement that the congregation adopted.

Under Pastor Schleicher, there were a number of other "firsts" for the congregation. At the April 28, voter's meeting, the congregation got some good news. They found out that because Pastor Schleicher's BHM responsibilities would take him away from the congregation several times during the year for meetings, and would mean several hours per week dedicated to his BHM work and not the congregation's, the congregation would be receiving their first full-time Vicar at the expense of the District Mission Board. The ^vVicar would start at King of Kings in September of 1994, and arrangements were made for the ^vVicar to house with Curt Becker during his year of service to the congregation. On May 17, 1994, which was Call Day at the Seminary, Steven Neumann of Beaver Dam, WI, became the first called ^vVicar to King of Kings Lutheran Church. He was installed on September 11, 1995.

Another "first" for the congregation was its first Festival of Friendship service, which was held on April 30, 1995. Art Harris served as chairman of the Festival of Friendship, since he had been involved in planning a Festival of Friendship during his time in Washington D.C. The Festival of Friendship took months of planning on all

fronts. It was held to help the members learn how to share Christ with their Friends, Relatives, Associates, and Neighbors (FRAN), and to help identify the unchurched people that we all rub elbows with in our every day lives. In an attempt to identify the unchurched people in the community, the congregation held a Phone Bank Sunday earlier in the year on March 19. About 10 people traveled to one of the member's office building in Albany, and called people in the neighborhoods around the church. That day, 609 people were invited to join the members for worship, if they didn't already belong to a church in the area. In May of 1995, Joel Schultz was called to be the next Vicar at King of Kings Lutheran Church, and arrangements were made for him to house with the Smiths. The big project on the agenda during the summer of 1995 was a huge canvass done in connection with the VBS to be held in early August. The congregation contacted over 900 homes in this canvass, and identified more people who were not being fed on a regular basis with that life giving Gospel message.

Our Savior promises that "wherever two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am with them" (Mt. 18:20). In the history of King of Kings, that truth is clearly evident. In an area of the country where liberal ideas abound, and God's Word seems to be made relevant on what "I think it means," God preserved those few faithful followers that He had chosen. He called those people out of church bodies that were threatening their souls by teaching errors mixed with the truth, and united them together for the purpose of strengthening them in their faiths, encouraging them as they faced the tribulations that this wicked world has to offer, and to empower them to carry out that great commission that He gave His church "...to preach the Gospel to ALL creation" (Mk 16:15). And He, who promises that He "will be with us always, to the very end of the age" (Mt 28:20), will surely be with the members of King of King, as they continue to serve their God, until the day that we all worship our God together in Paradise.

In the beginning...

Gen. 1:1

OUR SAVIOR'S EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH
WISCONSIN SYNOD
MEMORIAL SCHOOL ON INNES RD.
EAST BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

GARY P. BAUMLER, PASTOR
155 MILLTOWN RD.
EAST BRUNSWICK, N. J. 08816
TEL. 201 - 254-8910

SUNDAY WORSHIP 11 A.M.
SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:45 A.M.

OUR SAVIOR'S EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

155 Milltown Road
East Brunswick, NJ 08816
December 14, 1967

Mr. & Mrs. Roger Anderson
Box 289A Routh #1
Galway, New York 12074

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Anderson,

Since my letter to you of August 15, 1967, inviting you to attend Communion at Our Savior's whenever possible, I have wondered how things are working out for you and whether we might have you visit our church sometime soon. I want you to know that you are certainly welcome, and that I will do everything I can to help serve your spiritual needs in spite of the distance.

In my previous letter I mentioned also that we are starting in Hartford, Connecticut. I serve there every second week for an evening service at 7:00 o'clock. The endeavor is blossoming into a good thing. We have started a once a month Communion service now and hope to be able to start calling a man soon to serve full-time. If you think you might get to Hartford some Sunday, let me know and I shall send you more detailed information.

At our services in East Brunswick, New Jersey, Communion is celebrated on the second Sunday of each month. Come if you can. Let me hear how things are working out for you and whether or not we can expect to see you some Sunday.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Gary Baumlér

Pastor Gary Baumlér

Please
return as I
need the
information

(Appendix B)

August 29, 1968
28 Casabella Circle
East Hartford, Conn. 06108
203-289-5318

Dear Mr . Anderson,

Pastor Baumler gave me your name and address. He also explained your situation to me. My call assigned me to both Hartford and Pittsfield, with the understanding that first before I go on to Pittsfield, the mission in Hartford should be well established. The way it looks now we will begin services in Pittsfield ^{50-60 miles from us.} in October or November of this year.

In a way then your prayer is being answered, we are moving closer to Schenectady. For the first months we will probably hold services every other Sunday. They will have to be in the evening so that we can also have services here. I'm sure the day is not too far off when Pittsfield will have its own Pastor, and then perhaps he can begin work in your area.

We have changed the time of our services in Hartford. We now meet at 11:00 A.M. at the Pleasant Valley School in South Windsor. I will enclose a map with directions for finding this school, although I understand you are expecting a child in October and so you might not be able to come this far. We will have communion the last Sunday of each month.

I would be most happy to make arrangements to have your baby baptized. If it would suit you it could be arranged to go together with one of my trips to Pittsfield. From Pittsfield I could very easily come to Schenectady.

I checked the location of your home town in Minnesota. My home town was Caledonia, Minn., a small town in Southeastern Minn.

If i can be of help in any way, let me know.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Karl R. Gurgel

Pastor Karl R. Gurgel

Appendix C V

Chronological History
of
King of Kings Ev. Lutheran Church
Clifton Park, New York

1. The Andersons - Rodger, Marlys, Lisa, and Kristin - drive to services in Pittsfield, MA in August 1969 after being in contact with Pastor Gary Baumler (NJ 1967) and Pastor Karl Gurgel (CT), who had baptized Kristin here in Schenectady in 1968.
2. Mrs. Janet Brown joined them in April 19671 in their drives to Pittsfield for services led by Pastor Paul Kelm.
3. The Andersons and Mrs. Brown placed ads in local papers to contact "those interested in confessional Lutheran worship, where the Bible is taught in purity and in truth". Their ads were answered by the Delfs, Leitzkes, Harrises, and Paul York, who met with Pastor Paul Kelm at the Delfs in Glenville on a very foggy Thursday night, October 21, 1971.
4. We all went over to Pittsfield for an impressive mission Sunday service in the Pittsfield Girls Club October 24 and planned a first service in Schenectady for the next Sunday evening.
5. The first recorded WELS worship service in New York State was held October 31, 1971 (Halloween) at the Leitzke home in Scotia amid interruptions by telephones and trick or treaters. There were 19 present at the first service.
6. Pastor Kelm and Pastor Berg (Home Mission Board Secretary) met with the core group at the Delfs November 9, 1971.
7. The group continued alternate Sunday evening services at the Leitzke home and traveling to Faith in Pittsfield until January 23, 1972, when the first public service was held at the Holiday Inn in Colonie - 24 people were present, including some from Pittsfield.
8. Moved to the Scenectady Womens club on Washington Ave. in Schenectady, March 26, 1972. First Congregational meeting at the Delfs May 1972 to honor the Leitzkes as they became our first fellow congregants to move on.
9. Received word that we had been granted mission status, with man-calling permission on November 12, 1972.
10. Started every Sunday services at the YWCA just two doors up the block from the Womens Club on
11. Received word at end of January 1973 that Pastor Erich Waldek of Detroit, MI area had accepted the call and will come as soon as we find housing.

Appendix C 2

12. We close the deal on the Onderdonk Road parsonage in Glenville on March 6, 1973.

13. Pastor Erich Waldek was installed by Pastor Walter Beckman at an evening service at the Y followed by a joyous dinner on March 18, 1973.

14. Word came in June 1973 that we could start looking for land to build a church and parsonage on.

15. The official organizational meeting of the King of Kings Evangelical Lutheran Church, Schenectady, New York was held on January 23, 1974 at which the incorporation papers were approved and a church council elected.



Appendix D

TELEPHONE 869-0281

Holiday Inn® OF ALBANY

1614 CENTRAL AVENUE
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12205

January 20, 1972

Mr. Roger Anderson
2553 Putnam
Schenectady, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Anderson:

This letter will serve to confirm the meeting room reserved for the Wisconsin Senate Lutheran Mission. The dates are as follows:

January 23, 1972
January 30, 1972
February 13, 1972
February 27, 1972
March 5, 1972
March 19, 1972
April 2, 1972
April 9, 1972

The rate per day on this room is \$35.00 plus 7% tax. Of course if your organization is tax exempt, we will need your tax exemption certificate.

The above dates are firm. The Village Room is reserved from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Coffee is to be served at 8:00 p.m. for approximately 40 persons, price being \$8.50 which includes the gratuity.

If you should have any further questions, please do not hesitate to call. We look forward to having your group with us and we thank you for thinking of Holiday Inns.

Very truly yours,

Dolores Greth
Assistant Innkeeper

DG

★ YOUR HOST FROM COAST TO COAST ★

It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth:

Mark 5:31

Appendix
E

The Church Direct

The Church

By
WALT PEARR
Gazette Church Editor

WISCONSIN SYNOD LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sunday Service
APRIL 9, 7:00 P.M.
Sunday School — 5:45 p.m.
Schenectady Women's Club
56 Washington Ave., Sch'dy
for information call:
393-2413 or
399-4604

talk. May, 1972

Wisconsin Synod Comes To State, Area

The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, which has been in existence for some 120 years, has begun exploratory mission work for the first time in the state, with temporary headquarters in the Schenectady Women's Club, 56 Washington Ave.

For now, Rev. Paul Kelm of Pittsfield, Mass., will conduct the Sunday services at 6 p.m., until a full-time pastor has been installed. The congregation then intends to move to the north Latham area, midway between the three population centers:

Rev. Kelm Lists Synod Sermon Text

"Put on the Whole Armor of God" will be the sermon of the Rev. Paul Kelm at the 7 p.m. Wisconsin Lutheran Synod mission worship tomorrow in Schenectady Women's Club, Washington Avenue.

* * *
A Bible study at 6 p.m. will precede the service. Local mission coordinator is Rodger Anderson, 2553 Putnam Drive.

Lutheran

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, 35 Furman Street. Rev. Arthur H. Howlcheck, pastor. Sunday services, 8:30 and 11 a.m. Sunday school and adult Bible study, 9:45 a.m.

Our Redeemer Lutheran, Glen Ave. at Reynolds St., Scotia. Rev. Otto Spurgat, pastor. Sunday worship and instruction, 9:45 a.m. Nursery care, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. worship.

Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, 547 Saratoga Road. Rev. Paul Joslyn, pastor. Sunday, worship, 8:45, 11:15 a.m.; church school, 10, 11:15 a.m.; and 7 p.m. Nursery provided.

Zion Lutheran, 153 Nott Terrace. Rev. Robert C. Albohm, pastor. Sunday, worship services, 9 and 11 a.m. Sunday school and nursery, 9, 10 and 11 a.m.

St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Guilford Center. Rev. David L. Scribner, pastor. Sunday service, 11 a.m.; church school, 9:45 a.m.

Grace Lutheran Church, 1930 Hillside avenue. Rev. William M. Clasen, pastor. Sunday services, 11 a.m. Nursery care provided. Church school and adult class, 9:30 a.m.

Immanuel Lutheran, 1850 Union St. The Rev. George Finsterle, pastor. Services, 8:30 and 11 a.m. Sunday school, 9:45 a.m.

Our Saviour's Evangelical Lutheran Church, I.C.A. 2739 Hamburg street. Rev. Kenneth O. Latal, pastor. Sunday service, 10:30 a.m.; church school, 9. Communion first Sunday.

St. John's Lutheran Church, Altamont. Rev. James K. Hilton, pastor. Sunday service and nursery, 11 a.m.

First English Lutheran Church, L.C.A. 327 Summit Ave. Rev. Leland Elfert, pastor; Rev. David Zimmer, associate pastor. Sunday service, 11 a.m.; church school, 9:30 a.m.

Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church, 35 Furman street, Rev. K. Valters, pastor. Service, third Sunday, 3 p.m.

Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Messiah, L.C.A. 2850 Guilfordland avenue. The Rev. William F. Howard, pastor. Sunday services 8:15 and 11 a.m. Sunday school, 9:30 a.m. Nursery care, 9:30 and 11 a.m.

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Rev. William E. Kurschinski, pastor. Sunday worship at 10:15 a.m. Meet at the Clifton Knolls clubhouse. Locust Lane, Elman, off Clifton Park Center Rd.

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod Mission. Local coordinator, Rodger Anderson, 2553 Putnam St. Services, 7 p.m. alternate Sundays at Schenectady Women's Club, 56 Washington Ave. Bible study, 6 p.m.

Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Messiah, L.C.A. 2850 Guilfordland avenue. The Rev. William F. Howard, pastor. Sunday services 8:15 and 11 a.m. Sunday school, 9:30 a.m. Nursery care, 9:30 and 11 a.m.

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To many, WELS is just another mystery in the alphabet game people play. In essence, it is the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

* * *
Coming into existence in 1850 with three congregations, the synod today is the smallest of four major Lutheran bodies in America.

Its membership is 400,000-plus and 950 congregations. In addition, there are nearly 250 Christian day schools and high schools.

WELS has nine districts composed of congregations in a geographically compatible area. Districts are broken down into conferences and circuits.

Like each district, the synod has officers and boards elected to direct the various areas. It meets in convention biennially, as do the districts.

There are five divisions of responsibility in the synod today: worker training, home missions, world missions, benevolences and administration and services.

Denoting a rock-ribbed, confessional theology, WELS is expected to expand its membership in the Schenectady area beginning next Sunday.

* * *
A recently-established mission of the Wisconsin body will hold its initial public service. Bible study for children and adults will begin at 6 p.m. with worship at 7. Temporary home of the congregation will be the Holiday Inn, 1614 Central Ave.

During initial stages of the mission's development, worship will be conducted on alternate Sundays by the Rev. Paul Kelm of Pittsfield, Mass. Plans are to relocate in the Latham-Colonie area.

Visitors have been invited to services and additional information may be obtained from Rodger Anderson, local coordinator, at 2553 Putnam St.

The mission beginning in this area is the Synod's first within the state, Anderson noted. Formulation of plans for the area mission began last year.

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod Mission. Local coordinator, Rodger Anderson, 2553 Putnam St. Services, 7 p.m. alternate Sundays at Holiday Inn, 1614 Central Ave. Bible study 6 p.m.

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Mission
Initial Services
Starting Sunday
January 23rd
AT
Holiday Inn
1614 Central Avenue
Colonie, New York
Rev. Paul Kelm, Pastor
Bible Class—6 p.m.
Worship Service—7 p.m.
For Information Call
393-2413

Appendix
F

GOOD NEWS FOR SCHENECTADY
MISSION

Wisconsin EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN Synod



GENERAL BOARD FOR HOME MISSIONS
Office of the Executive Secretary
Rev. Norman W. Berg

572 W. North Ave.
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53208
Tel: (414) 445-4030 Ext. 28

Residence: 2774 N. Grant Blvd.
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 532
Tel: (414) 871-7561

November 9, 1972

Albany/Schenectady/Troy, New York
c/o Rev. P. Kelm
618 East New Lenox Road
Pittsfield, Mass. 01201

Dear Brethren,

Please inform the group being served on an exploratory basis at Albany/Schenectady/Troy, New York that the General Board for Home Missions has granted it mission status. This means that the members are free to organize formally and to look forward to the day of acquisition of a church site and a chapel. The General Board for Home Missions also has granted the new mission the right to call a pastor and has approved a tentative '72-73 annual subsidy of \$3,917 for all operating expenses (salary, car allowance, parsonage rent, etc.).

Please contact your district mission board chairman regarding procedures to implement the calling of a pastor.

We rejoice with the new mission congregation and pledge our continuing cooperation in our joint evangelistic work with the Lord!

Sincerely,

Norman W. Berg
Executive Secretary, GBHM

NWB/jmg

cc: Rev. Gieschen
Rev. Boldt

New Lutheran Mission Named King of Kings

4/8/73

King of Kings Evangelical Lutheran Church is the name selected by voters of the new mission of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, the Rev. Erich W. Waldek, recently installed pastor of the congregation, announced.

Pastor Waldek is the first resident pastor of the mission, which began holding services a year ago and now meets for Sunday school at 9:45 a.m. and church services at 11 a.m. Sundays at the YWCA, 44 Washington Ave.

King of Kings Church is a member of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, so called because the synod began its work in Wisconsin. Composed of 400,000 members, the synod is supporting the local mission as its first in New York State.

Roger Anderson, local coordinator, also revealed plans for the new congregation to purchase a church site somewhere in the area "which would be centrally located to serve both present members and those seeking a Bible-based, conservative and evangelistic church."

A parsonage has been purchased at 37 Onderdonk Road, Scotia, where Lenten services are held at 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays.

KING OF KINGS LUTHERAN CHURCH

WISCONSIN SYNOD

Where the Bible Is Taught in Truth and Purity

SUNDAY SERVICE — 11 A.M.

SUNDAY SCHOOL — 9:45 A.M.

SCHENECTADY YWCA

44 Washington Ave.

REV. ERICH W. WALDECK — 399-3046

King of Kings Lists Service

4/19/73

A Maundy Thursday communion service will be held at 7:30 tonight at King of Kings Lutheran Church, presently meeting at the YWCA on Washington Avenue.

The Rev. Erich W. Waldek, pastor, will speak on "The Passover Lamb Offers Us His Own Body and Blood." A solemn Good Friday liturgy will be held at 7:30 p.m. at the YWCA. Pastor Waldek will discuss "Why Do Men Call It Good Friday?"

Appendix G

King of Kings Plans Special YW Service

April 21, 1973

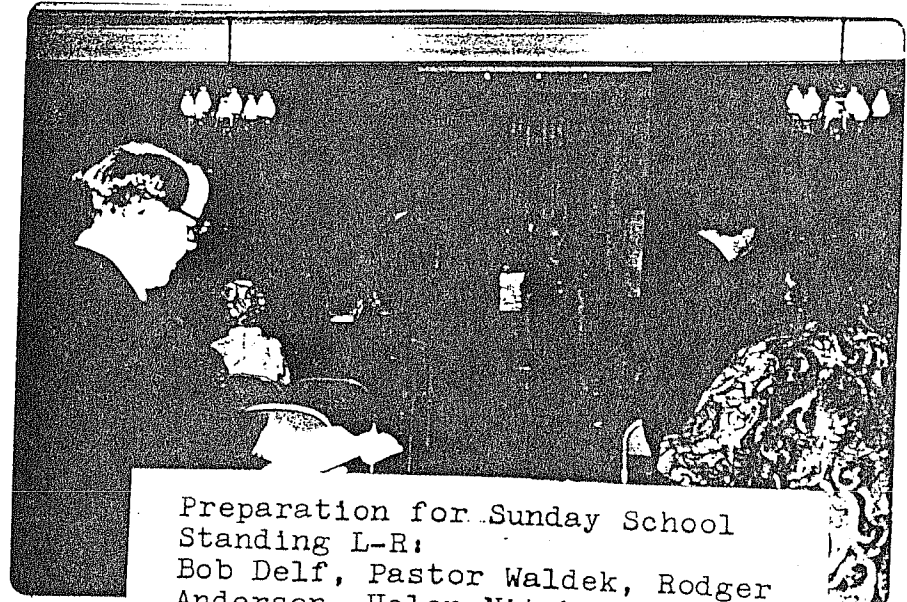
King of Kings Lutheran Church, a new mission to be affiliated with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, will celebrate Easter with a special 11 a.m. worship tomorrow at the Schenectady YWCA, 44 Washington Ave.

The Rev. Erich W. Waldek, pastor, will speak on "The Greatest Event in Your Life." Special music will be provided. Sunday adult Bible class and Sunday School will meet at 9:45 a.m.

New officers of the church are Arthur W. Harris of Alplaus, president; William H. Radtke of Scotia, vice president; Rodger O. Anderson of Schenectady, secretary, and Robert Delf, Glenville, treasurer. They also will serve as trustees of the new congregation when it is formally incorporated and organized.

Pastor Waldek said a special committee to develop a church constitution has been named. Serving on the committee are Harris, Anderson, Paul York of Elnora and Brian Sabean, Mechanicville.

The arrival of Pastor Waldek signalled much activity. The first Wednesday evening Lenten services began, the first meeting for young people in junior and senior high schools was held on April 1, a committee set to work on a constitution, and a name was adopted: King of Kings Evangelical Lutheran Church.



Preparation for Sunday School
Standing L-R:
Bob Delf, Pastor Waldek, Rodger Anderson, Helen Nitchman, Marlys Anderson, Gordon Montie, and Sue York. Seated are Janet and Harmon Brown and Johnny Harris.

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