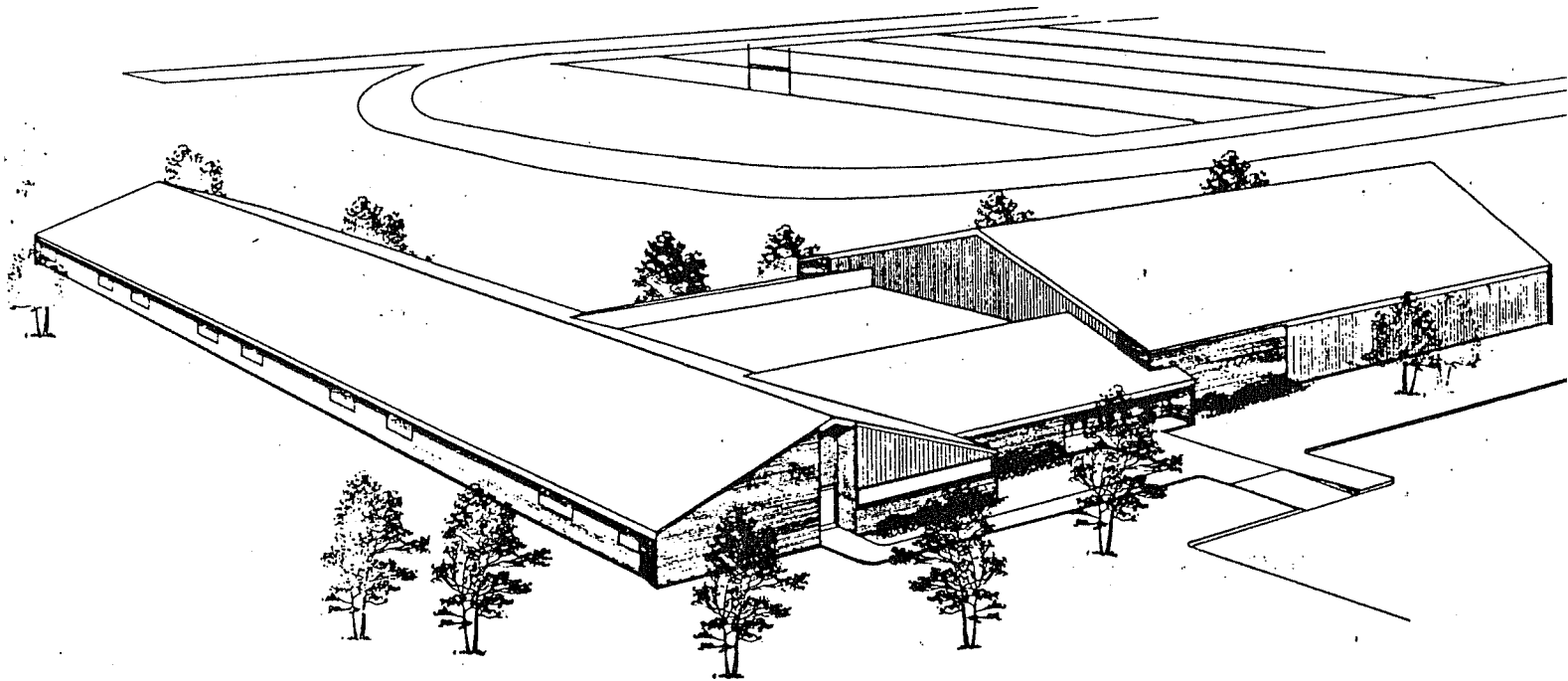


Shoreland Lutheran High School



A Ship of God in Today's World

by

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Trouble after Missouri

Shoreland Lutheran High School's (hereafter SLHS) origin really lies in the break between Wisconsin and Missouri in 1961. It isn't really quite that simple, of course, since Shoreland's doors didn't open until the fall of 1971, a full ten years after the synodical break.

A large part of the problem was the existence of Racine Lutheran High School, founded in 1941. Many area pastors had felt an immediate need for a WELS area Lutheran High School as soon as 1961. But the support simply wasn't there yet, because the Racine and Kenosha congregations felt that they had committed themselves to a building program at Racine Lutheran, and were financially obligated to see it through.

Trinity of Caledonia and St. John's of Burlington attempted once more to open a WELS Lutheran High School in 1964-65, but First Evangelical and Epiphany of Racine, as well as Bethany, St. Lukes, Friedens, and Mt. Zion of Kenosha were unwilling to join such a venture until "they met their financial obligation" to Racine Lutheran High School.¹ Burlington-St. John's and Trinity-Caledonia had withdrawn from the Racine High School Federation already in 1961; the last Kenosha congregation left by 1968, and the last Racine congregation left in 1974.

Trouble in Caledonia and Oak Creek

When Shoreland finally opened its doors on September 8, 1971, only four Kenosha congregations were members of the SLHS Federation; they were Bethany, St. Lukes, Friedens, and Mt. Zion. This is true despite the fact that Burlington and Caledonia were the first area congregations to push

for the formation of a WELS area Lutheran High School, when the Kenosha congregations were not interested. But much had happened in the period between 1961 and 1971. Although they both failed to immediately join the Shoreland Federation, their reasons were very much different for not doing so.

Those congregations that did leave the Racine Lutheran High School Federation (Burlington, Caledonia, and also, incidently, Oak Creek) were all faced with a common problem -- where to send their children to receive a Christian high school education. Their first choice was to start their own school, but no one else had appeared interested. The only other possibility seemed to be to look elsewhere. For Caledonia and Oak Creek, Wisconsin Lutheran High School (WLHS) was conveniently nearby, and they decided to affiliate themselves with that school for the meantime.

However, that affiliation provided them with a dilemma in 1971 when Shoreland became a reality: should they stay with Wisconsin Lutheran High School, or should they join the other WELS congregations in the Shoreland Federation? Adding to SLHS's problem was the fact that First Evangelical and Epiphany of Racine were hesitant to leave the Racine High School Federation and join Shoreland's instead. Hence, they did not immediately join Shoreland, but for a short time they were content to remain with WLHS; later on, they split their gifts between WLHS and SLHS, and finally withdrew from their association with WLHS for the purpose of becoming full members of Shoreland's Federation by the late 1970's.

Trouble in Burlington

Burlington was faced with the same problem as Caledonia and Oak Creek. But their location gave them another option: sending high school aged children to Northwestern Prep.²

Yet Burlington had a much bigger problem as well. It was bad enough that some Kenosha and Racine congregations refused to break off fellowship with a Missouri Synod high school. But the professors of that school -- whose salary was partly being paid by Wisconsin Synod congregations -- in 1961 set up on "opposition congregation" in Burlington, Our Savior's. St. John's--Burlington had no trouble with a Missouri District Mission Board setting up a mission church in town, but it was unthinkable that WELS congregations would, in effect, be responsible for setting it up.³

Eventually, the Burlington congregation would join their WELS brethren in Shoreland; however, if things had been better handled from 1961 to 1971, it just might have been sooner...

The Dream Becomes Reality

Beginning in 1968, a joint committee made up of^{of} pastors, teachers, and laymen from Bethany, Friedens, St. Lukes, and Mt. Zion (all Kenosha congregations), started conducting meetings to determine the feasibility of "consolidating their efforts in the area of elementary Christian education."⁴ Friedens, St. Lukes, and Bethany all had their own day schools, but the four congregations were interested in finding out if their needs couldn't be better met in a joint venture.

Yet in the course of their discussions, they realized they needed a high school more than they needed a unified grade school, "especially since the more pressing need was in the area of secondary education...[because] the fellowship question had made it impossible to continue sending their youth to Racine Lutheran High School."⁵

One sad note is that at one time the members of this committee felt compelled to justify their involvement with Racine Lutheran after 1961. Unable to abide by this decision, Pastor Enderle of Bethany felt it necess-

ary to resign from the committee, but when the offending resolution was later retracted, he returned to the committee.⁶

Ultimately, the decision was made to call two full-time workers, a pastor/principal and a teacher, to form the staff for the new school, which would be Shoreland Lutheran High School.

Pastor Edgar Greve was called as the new principal. Pastor Greve had prior experience in the field of education. He served as vice-principal at Fox Valley Lutheran High School from 1961-1971, and was a missionary-instructor in Nigeria for eight years previously. While in Africa he directed the local elementary school system, consisting of 92 schools, 500 teachers, and 15,000 students.⁷ He also served as a missionary in Rhodesia (Zambia) from 1958 to 1960. Principal Greve served as principal until failing health forced him to resign as acting principal in 1982, and eventually from teaching after the 1984-85 school year.

Mr. Gerald Mallman was called to teach in the fields of math and science. Mr. Mallman had taught at Fox Valley with Pastor Greve, but had previously had experience from the navy and the private sector. Mr. Mallman has faithfully served SLHS from its inception in 1971, but has announced he will retire after the current 1985-86 school year.

Like most area Lutheran high schools, Shoreland started with temporary facilities. It was housed at Friedens, which had available room. Enrollment was just twenty-seven students. Classes included only the freshmen and sophomore classes. The junior class was added the following year, the senior class, the year after that.

The opening service was held on September 12, 1971, at Mt. Zion in Kenosha. The sermon was delivered by Pastor Harry Wiedman of Burlington, and was based on Acts 10:33. Pastor Friedel Schulz of Mt. Zion served as liturgist; Pastor Greve and Mr. Mallman were installed into office.

The First Years

There were immediate advantages to Shoreland's temporary location at Friedens. For one, it was centrally located in Kenosha. For another, it allowed SLHS to benefit from part-time aid from four of Friedens own day school teachers: Mr. Fred Biedenbender, Mr. Robert Hill, Mr. Richard Waldschmidt, and Mr. William Zieger.

The students and faculty of SLHS were not daunted by their small size. Already in their very first year of existence, they chose a school nickname (the Sandpipers), started a school paper (the Navigator), a science club (the Maxwell Society), an annual (Reflections), and even a drama club, which presented one play ("Sleeping Beauty of Loreland"). The Maxwell Society wasted no time organizing the first annual Kenosha Lutheran science fair for elementary schools.

Even before the dream became real, the decision had been made to begin the 1972-73 school year at Mt. Zion, Kenosha. Part of this had to do with the addition of grade eleven, and a growing student body -- Shoreland had grown to almost 50 students!

The blessings God had bestowed on Shoreland meant a need for a larger faculty; four full-time teachers had been added to the staff. Miss. Bonnie Biesterfeld was called to teach in the areas of physical education and business; Miss. Nadine Harris, home economics; Mr. David Schumacher, mathematics and music; Richard Waldschmidt, English and social studies; and William Zieger, also English and social studies. Mt. Zion would be the home for the students of SLHS from 1972 until 1975, when it would move back to Friedens because of lack of room and the need for better athletic facilities.

The years spent at Mt. Zion were quite interesting. The rooms had been designed as Sunday School rooms, and were decorated as such: pink elephants and polka-dotted giraffes.

Due to lack of room, the sacristy was used as the school office; On Monday morning, everything would be brought in and set up; on Friday, everything would be packed away for the weekend.

The lights in many of the rooms had reflectors under them which had never been intended for long term use. This became apparent as the reflectors began to melt the ceiling...

Project "S"

The Kirschner family of Somers had graciously given the school 35 acres of land located behind Abiding Word in Somers. Project "S" was an ambitious program to raise \$500,000 for the purpose of building a new school on that property. Project "S" stood for "Strengthen our Savior's Servants."

The board of directors hired Havey Fund-Raising Management, Inc., of Milwaukee to help them in presenting their program to area congregations, at the considerable cost of \$40,000. At the time, the Shoreland Federation was made up of six congregations (Abiding Word of Somers and Our Savior's of Zion, Ill. had since joined) with 4000 communicant members, but a potential of 17 congregations and 8500 communicants. The program would take place over a three year period and raise a total of \$120,000 -- less than 25% of its original goal.

Another First!

It took awhile -- three years to be precise -- but Shoreland finally graduated its first class on May 24, 1974, at Bethany Lutheran Church of Kenosha, with ten graduates leaving the halls of Shoreland. Pastor Friedel Schulz, chairman of the board and pastor of Mt. Zion, performed the liturgy, while Pastor Greve delivered the sermon.

To say good-bye to their school-mates, the Junior Class started a new tradition: the Junior-Senior banquet, a tradition which is still kept.

Problems in Somers

After the 1974-75 school year, it was apparent Shoreland had out-grown the facilities at Mt. Zion and had to look elsewhere. One possibility considered was use of a wing of St. Joseph's High School. The Catholic school was not using a large portion of its facilities, and had expressed willingness to rent them to SLHS. Their board of control even ^{consented} to rent them, but it became apparent they weren't really interested when dollar amounts were discussed and their price was ridiculously high.⁸

With the summer coming to an end, and no place else to go, Shoreland moved back to where it first began, the halls of Friedens' day school for the 1975-76 year.

But that wasn't Shoreland's only problem; its site located in Somers wasn't working out. The state had taken soil samples and core samples and determined that the site had improper drainage. The board of control decided to look for a site elsewhere.

When looking for a new site, the natural question of where was the big question. Building in either Racine or Kenosha would be prohibitively high, whereas a site out in the county would not only be cheaper, but also more centrally located for everybody.

Mr. Larry Marquardt, chairman of the board of control, became aware of the availability of 17 acres in Somers, at the intersection of highways E and H. After his lawyers took care of some red-tape, Shoreland was able to acquire the land for only \$50,000. This is the site that the high school was eventually built on.

An interesting note is that connecting up to the city sewer on the new property ended up costing about the same as it would have cost to simply install a holding tank on the Kirschner property in the first place.⁹

Embarrassment in Libertyville

St. John's-Libertyville was the home congregation of Mr. Larry Marquardt, chairman of the board during a vital time in Shoreland's building program. ^{But he} would nevertheless, because of internal problems in that congregation, ~~we~~ be forced to resign his position.

St. John's was a Wisconsin Synod congregation that went over to Missouri after the break up of the Synodical Conference. Eventually, it joined FAL, and later joined Wisconsin. It was a congregation that still had many ties to the Missouri Synod. Little did it realize two of its teachers were secretly on the Missouri Synod's teaching roster. It would ^{be} sorry it didn't,

In late 1978 and early 1979, these two teachers began an underground movement (i.e., without Pastor Voss' knowledge) to have ^{it} withdraw from the Shoreland Federation. Convinced they had the majority they needed, these two men and their followers forced a surprise vote in a voters' assembly, and won. Libertyville withdrew (temporarily) from its sister congregations in Shoreland Lutheran High School.

Sadly, this also meant that Mr. Marquardt had to resign his position as chairman, since Shoreland's constitution demands that its officers be members of a Federation congregation -- which Libertyville no longer was.

About the only good thing to come out of this whole sad affair was these men's secret affiliation with Missouri came to light, and eventually resulted in their removal.

A Permanent Home

Many prayers were answered when on January 5, 1978, ground was broken in the town of Somers for the new high school, and ^{the new building} on August 19, 1979, was dedicated in a service of praise to a gracious and generous Lord.

Shoreland's permanent home was built with the prayers of its people,

with a total financial cost of \$1.3 million dollars. The school was built with a capacity of 350 students in mind (although the student body at that time numbered only 208), had 11 classrooms,^{and} a spacious gymnasium. Pastor Reinhart Pope of First Evangelical-Racine dedicated the cornerstone, and Pastor Gerald Meyer of St. John's-Oak Creek dedicated the building. Pastor Robert Voss, Executive Secretary for the Commission on Higher Education, delivered the sermon. His text was Genesis 6:11-22, in which he compared Shoreland to Noah's Ark -- a ship of God. As Noah built his ark to keep God's people alive when God's will was violated, so Shoreland was built to keep the faith of our young people alive.

In the seven years since Shoreland became a reality, God had richly blessed her. Her student body had increased by about 700%; its faculty had increased from 2 to 11, and it had gone from rather humble beginnings to a beautiful new school of 44,000 square feet. Its association of members had also grown to include 14 member congregations from the towns of Kenosha, Racine, Burlington, Caledonia, Oak Creek in Wisconsin, and Zion and Waukegan, Illinois.

But the purpose of Shoreland was never to build a beautiful new high school -- although that is a blessing for which we certainly thank God. No, the real purpose of Shoreland was accomplished long before Shoreland had a permanent home, and will, by God's grace, keep on being accomplished -- the training of God's children regarding His Will for their lives, teaching them about the Savior, and preparing them both for this life, and for the life to come!

Thanks be to God!

Endnotes

- 1) quote from Pastor George Enderle
- 2) from interview with Pastor Harry Wiedman
- 3) ibid.
- 4) "Shoreland Lutheran High School", The Northwestern Lutheran. (January 2, 1972), pp. 7.
- 5) ibid., p. 7.
- 6) quote from Pastor George Enderle
- 7) Greve scrapbook
- 8) quote from Pastor Edgar Greve
- 9) ibid.

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