



Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church
St. Joseph, Michigan:
An Impressive Building Project

David Rosenau
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Senior Church History Paper

Almost every reflection on the history of Grace Lutheran Church in St. Joseph, Michigan that this writer has encountered in the course of researching this history has included a comment about the appropriateness of the name chosen for this remarkable gathering of believers. This brief history should be no different. As one looks through the window of time and sees the remarkable growth that followed the founding of this congregation, he or she can only marvel and give all credit and glory to the amazing grace of God for the great number of souls who have been brought to faith, confirmed in their faith, and strengthened and encouraged in their faith through the ministry of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, St. Joseph, Michigan. May God's name be praised once again for his goodness as this paper provides us with opportunity to recount the many blessings he has showered upon Grace and her members.

The earliest days of Grace congregation began just a few miles away from its founding location within the hearts and walls of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in Benton Harbor, Michigan. Pastor E. H. Wendland of St. Matthew's perceived of a need for an additional place of worship in this working class community that was welcoming many of its sons home from service in World War II. The Michigan District Mission Board had just the man in mind for this ambitious mission project.

Pastor Ehrenfried Berg, or as he is more commonly referred to, E. J. Berg was asked, and accepted the divine call to serve this mission project. The grace of God quickly became evident in the man he first sent to shepherd this endeavor. Pastor Berg had graduated in 1913 from the Evangelical Lutheran Seminary in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin. Upon graduation Pastor Berg was assigned to Mobridge, South Dakota to serve as a *Reiseprediger*, a traveling preacher. From his home base at Mobridge, E. J. Berg served outposts such as McIntosh, Timber Lake, Trail City, and Isabel, South Dakota.

E. J. Berg next served at Christ Lutheran in North St. Paul, Minnesota until accepting the call in 1920 to serve as a professor of English and mathematics at Michigan Lutheran Seminary in Saginaw, Michigan. After eighteen years at MLS, Berg accepted the call to serve as professor of religion and ^dDean of students at Northwestern College in Watertown, Wisconsin. Seven years later, at the tender age of 61, E. J. Berg accepted the call to serve the mission effort in Benton Harbor, Michigan.

The first service E. J. Berg conducted was in the borrowed building of the Berrien County Welfare Building at 860 East Main Street in Benton Harbor on May 20, 1945. Only three men remained after that initial service to discuss the mission work ahead, but apparently what they saw ahead of them was encouragement enough. Two months later the name "Grace" was chosen for this band of believers, and by August 27, 1945, twenty-five charter voting members organized as a congregation in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

It was in these early meetings that the land site at Territorial Road and Forest Avenue was chosen and purchased for the construction of a worship facility. By year's end, only seven months after that first meeting in a borrowed building, Grace's communicant membership was already at 125 with an average attendance over 100. Naturally, some of these members were people who had previously been members at St. Matthew's and agreed to help in this mission effort because of the geographical closeness to their own homes. But the grace of God working through the ^GGospel that was preached on Sunday mornings and at doorsteps in the community is the only explanation for the rapid growth that followed.

Kay Kuball remembers Pastor E. J. Berg fondly. Kay's father, Auggie Koern, was a founding member of Grace and would often go with Pastor Berg to make visits, both to members' homes and to visit new people in the neighborhood. Kay remembers that it was next

to impossible not to like Pastor Berg because of his kindly disposition and pleasant manner of speaking with people. Kay also remembers that it seemed as though there wasn't a single day that passed that Pastor Berg wasn't out visiting somebody. Kay's relationship with E. J. Berg is unique for another tragic reason. Kay was only about twenty six years old when her husband Wilbur was killed in an auto accident, the same year that E. J. Berg arrived in Benton Harbor. Kay believes this was Pastor Berg's first funeral that he conducted at Grace.

Yet, in spite of her loss, Kay Kuball is one more of so many examples of God's grace to Grace Lutheran. Kay states that the love of her life has always been the church, and there isn't a single nook or cranny or cubby hole at the church that she hasn't cleaned over the years. And considering that I was speaking with Kay on her 90th birthday, one recognizes many years of serving her Lord through humble yet ever so noble service.

In July of 1946, one year after the land site on Territorial was purchased; construction of the basement chapel began. On February 2, 1947, the basement chapel – the first phase of the building project – was completed and dedicated. Already at this time communicant membership had risen to two hundred and plans for adding the super-structure on top of the basement chapel were made. One history included in a service folder notes that the long awaited dedication of the completed addition took place on November 27, 1949, and Dorothy Conrad remembers how glad everyone was to have the church built.

Dorothy was a young child, but old enough at 8 or 9 years old to go along with her father and brother to check on the basement chapel, especially in wintertime. Dorothy's father, Adolph Lockmann and Auggie Koern would check the basement on Saturday night, and again early Sunday morning to see if any water had backed up into the basement. The sewer line that ran from the basement across the ravine was not buried underground and was prone to freezing in the

winter. Mr. Lockman and Mr. Koern would build a fire under the pipe on both sides of the ravine to thaw the pipe so that the people could use the facilities. Dorothy remembers times when the pipe froze and water backed up into the basement, and she and her brother would sweep the water toward the drains before Sunday school after her father thawed the pipe.

Dorothy Jackson also has fond memories of the early years in the basement chapel. Dorothy's daughter, Janelle Hamilton, was Pastor E. J. Berg's first baptism in the basement chapel in 1949. Dorothy remembers that the original church site was a beautiful setting on the ravine, and provided a place for them to gather during simpler times. Dorothy remembers the night that Mr. Duensing and Mr. Koerns organized a bridal fashion show as entertainment for the ladies' group. The show was entertaining alright, as the men dressed up as the models with Dorothy's own husband, Chester dressed as the bride!

In July of 1951 the congregation purchased the parsonage at 775 Territorial Road, and in March 1, 1952 the mission church of Grace became self-supporting. As the building up of the physical church buildings progressed, the Lord was continuing to build up the Christian Church gathering at Grace. In 1951 Edna and Roger Zindler were married at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church with both Pastor Wendland and Pastor Berg conducting the service. Edna's in-laws, Ted and Iola Zindler had already agreed by this time to be a part of the nucleus that would begin the new mission church at Grace so her husband thought it would be good for them to help out the new mission church too. Edna remembers that it was hard for her to leave St. Matthews because she dearly loved Pastor Wendland, but soon learned that Pastor Berg was also a faithful and loving shepherd. Edna states that it wasn't until a couple of years later that she learned Pastor's Wendland and Berg had a friendly wager on where this new couple would choose to establish their membership.

Edna states Pastor E. J. Berg was a most personable man, something like a kindly father. Pastor Berg and his family lived in a home that was recently vacated by Edna's uncle, Emil Meyer, who had right around this same time purchased a farm (which is now better known as the Sarrett Nature Center). Edna remembers that Pastor Berg was canvassing in the neighborhood almost every day. Edna also remembers that everyone was so sad when Pastor Berg was called home to heaven and thinking that no one would be quite like Pastor E. J. Berg.

This was indeed a time of continued challenge and change for Grace. According to their hopes, but contrary to their expectations, Pastor Berg's son, Norman Berg accepted the call to serve as Grace's next shepherd and arrived in the summer of 1954. Edna Zindler remembers that so many of the members were excited that Norman accepted the call. As faced his father upon arriving, so also Norman arrived at a time of a major decision.

Up to this time, the members of Grace who had children and a desire to provide them with Christian education simply continued to send them to St. Matthew's school. Pastor E. H. Wendland encouraged Grace to take the next logical step and consider building a school of its own. In September of 1955 Grace opened its own Christian Day School. Miss Elizabeth Sitz was called to teach the 29 pupils that made up kindergarten through fourth grade. God continued to bless Grace and this education effort and Grace added an additional grade each year until the eighth grade was added.

The remarkable growth continued and only one year after establishing the Christian Day School the construction of the "Wing For the Lord" expansion began. This addition added classrooms, church offices, and overflow seating for the future growth of the church. As was noted before, this was a time of great change. Pastor Norman Berg accepted a call to serve another congregation in Plymouth, Michigan, in January of 1960. Again, the grace of God

outshined the challenges that were in front of Grace and on May 15, 1960 the young Pastor Ronald Freier was installed as the new shepherd to lead God's flock.

It seems that at this point the congregation was faced once again with some major decisions. The facilities were not well suited for much continued expansion. Additionally, the city of Benton Harbor advised the school that the walls of the school were not well suited for classrooms. (Although one member notes that it was interesting to learn that after Grace vacated the building Benton Harbor schools began using the very same building for classes.) These were not the only realities to consider.

Dorothy Jackson remembers that for some reason Emma Belter needed to leave a Ladies' Aid meeting early one evening. As Emma walked to her car a man approached and grabbed hold of Emma's purse and ran off. This was added to the thoughts that were quietly circulating among some of the members that maybe it was time to consider where the best place to continue Grace's ministry might be. Dorothy also remembers a time after this, on a foggy morning her own daughter, Janelle was walking to Sunday school when a young boy ran up to her and grabbed her purse. Janelle was holding on to her purse for dear life and at just that moment a man walked out of the church and yelled at the boy. Janelle held on to her purse, but both she and many members were shaken.

On January 15, 1962 a planning committee was formed to discuss and chart the best possible course for Grace. The committee determined and the congregation agreed on May 5, 1963 that a new site should be sought for the construction of an entirely new church and school. On April 24, 1964, after considering various locations, fifteen acres of property on Glenlord Road in St. Joseph, Michigan were purchased for the new start. On July 29, 1964 Grace hired Wayne Hatfield and Associates as the architect, along with Trend Associates, Engineers, out of

Kalamazoo, Michigan. On December 6, 1965 Carroll Ott builders was hired to construct the parsonage. February 17, 1966 bids were opened for the construction of the church and school and on March 6, 1966 construction began.

As one reads these dates one can almost see the flurry of activity and excitement during this time. On October 10, 1966 the old cornerstone was removed from the church on Territorial and 13 days later was laid at the new church. That same day, October 23, 1966, the congregation held an open house at the new parsonage on Glenlord Road. On November 7, 1966 the old parsonage was sold, and on March 8, 1967 Grace held its final service at the Territorial Road property.

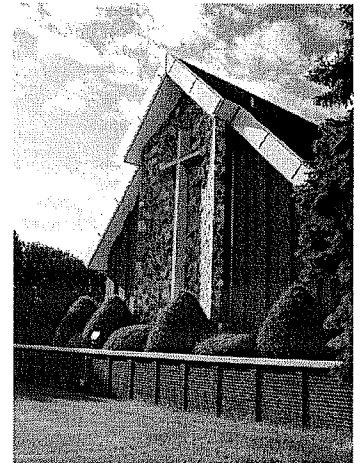
What a day March 12, 1967 must have been! At 10 A.M. Grace held a church dedication service in which Pastor Freier reminded all those in attendance to "Give Unto the Lord the Glory." At 3 P.M. that same afternoon Pastor Norman Berg (who was at this time president of the Michigan District and 1st vice-president of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod) returned to preach for the service of dedication of the new Christian day school. Pastor Berg preached a sermon with the topic, "Truly Christian Progressive Education" based on Hebrews 13:8.

But sense the excitement of the day, as the congregation continued their praise and thanksgiving with a service of self-dedication at 7:30 P.M. that same evening. Pastor Milton Weishan of Des Moines, Iowa, Pastor W. J. Zarling of Benton Harbor, Michigan, and Pastor W. W. Westendorf of South Haven, Michigan served as liturgists. Pastor Oscar J. Naumann, the president of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod preached a sermon with the theme: "Victorious Through Christ, Let Us Serve Him Confidently." Mr. Arvon Peter, principal of Grace Lutheran School, Franklin Zabell of Gethsemane Lutheran School in Milwaukee and

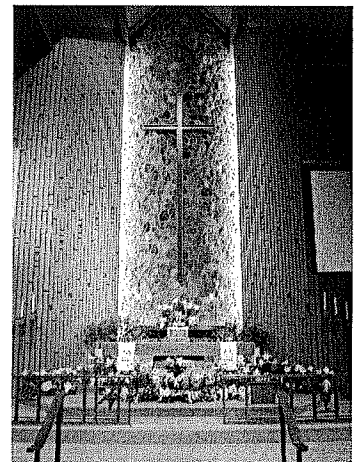
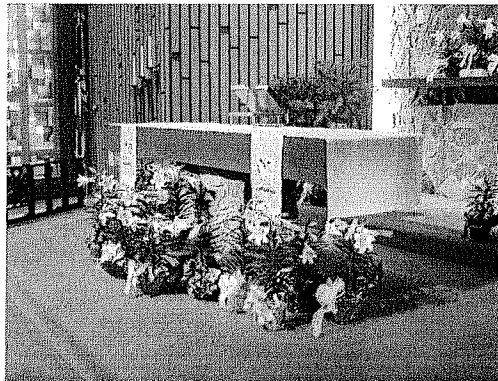
former principal at Grace, and Miss Janice Weishan, teacher of grades kindergarten through second grade at Grace served as organists for the services, and many choirs added to each service.

The joy and thanks and praise to God filled the new building which seated 575 in the nave and 80 in the choir loft. The narthex allowed for overflow seating of 150. The school included 5 classrooms, a Christian center for various groups to meet, and other offices and facilities. Six symbols were removed from the former church and installed as the narthex windows in the new church: Luther's Coat of Arms, St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, St. John, and the Ten Commandments.

Outside of the church an 18 feet tall cross cut from Indiana Limestone stands out from the front of the building as a proclamation of a simple and sure foundation. On the other side of that same wall, mounted on the front wall of the church is a 17 ½ feet high cross made of walnut. The altar is also constructed in the same simple manner of a nine feet long mensa made of walnut, resting atop a base of 12 field stones which was patterned after the altar of the twelve tribes of Israel



after their journey through the Red Sea. The two sets of three candlesticks represent the Holy Trinity, the communion rail contains symbols which highlight important aspects of



the Christian's life, the baptismal font rests under a 30 inch dove depicting the role of the Holy

Spirit, and the symbolism continues. What is evident to every observer is that the intention of those who designed this beautiful worship space was to give all glory to God for every good thing he had done and prayed he would continue to do at this new location for the ministry of Grace Lutheran Church.

The new facility exceeded all expectations for providing opportunities to expand the sharing of the gospel. Families were attracted to the new church with the Christian Day school, such as Bruno and Edith Nickel who moved into a nearby neighborhood just a couple of years after Grace had been built. The Nickels had two boys who attended Grace Lutheran School and were also interested in playing sports. Edith remembers Principal Ken Nolte shuttling the boys to any available gym to practice and play games. While the congregation had voted to remove the construction of the gym from the original building plans because of cost concerns, it soon became clear that this project needed to be re-considered.

In June of 1974 the congregation voted to proceed with a fund drive, seeking donations and pledges of donations for the addition of a gymnasium. While that fund drive was underway the congregation also discussed the purchase of a new organ and in June of 1976 a contract for a new organ was signed. About one year later, on September 18, 1977 the newly installed, 23 rank Schantz pipe organ (purchased for \$57,800) was dedicated. Rev. Mark Bitter and Mr. Gary Heckman were the recitalists for the service.

As the growth of the ministry and the facilities continued a group of people was assembled to form a Planning Committee in October of 1977 to discuss and study the future needs of Grace congregation. The planning committee first met in January of 1978 and more changes and additions quickly followed. In May of 1978 the congregation voted to call a second pastor. The Wisconsin Synod's Assignment Committee blessed Grace with Pastor Mark Braun,

a graduate of the Seminary. Just a few months after this exciting addition, the congregation voted on January 22, 1979 to proceed with an ambitious building project which would add the long awaited gymnasium and four additional classrooms and offices to the school wing.

On September 9, 1979 groundbreaking took place for the additions and just shy of one year later, Pearson Construction of Benton Harbor, Michigan had finished another impressive building project. But on September 7, 1980 the members gathered once again to make sure everyone knew the reason for their thanksgiving and praise as Grace celebrated their 25th anniversary and the dedication of the classroom and gymnasium additions with a special service with the theme “Praising His Grace.”

Pastor Carl Mischke, the president of the Wisconsin Synod spoke to the congregation at the 3 P.M. service on the basis of Exodus 33:5. As Pastor Mark Braun noted in the November, 1980 issue of the *Northwestern Lutheran*, President Mischke reminded the congregation that while the school is a tremendous blessing in the education of the children, the primary responsibility rests with the parents to bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

As one reads about all of the exciting building projects that accompanied Grace’s growth from a tiny gathering in a basement chapel with a school of one teacher and 29 students, to a 47,000 square feet facility with 1,150 communicants and nearly 1,600 souls – not to mention the school that now was staffed by 8 teachers and enrolled 174 students – only 35 years after its founding, one may be tempted to question what put the brakes on the rapid growth. While this reflection on the history of Grace is not intended to explore that valid inquiry, this brief review of the past history does provide beneficial insight to this question.

Dorothy Conrad remembers Pastor E. J. Berg as a caring minister who would often stop by their home on Saturday morning to share a cup of coffee and a cigarette with her father, Adolph Lockman. Pastor Berg could spend two hours, or three if needed on a visit. All who remembered E. J. Berg spoke of his laid back, personal relationships that he fostered among the newly formed flock and lamented the fact that Pastors today have an entirely different kind of schedule that does not allow the same kind of home-going pastor as they once knew.

Marion Case remembers the time a man came to her door for trick or treating, bent over using a cane and covered in tattered clothing, only to learn later that her own pastor had taken the time to play a practical joke on one of his beloved members. (Marion states they did get Pastor back many times over, including the year they snuck into the parsonage and filled the house with orange helium balloons – even putting one in the toilet!) Yet Marion joins so many others who commented on the impression Pastor Freier made when he would routinely come downstairs to eat lunch with the ladies “Lunch Bunch” who prepared a hot lunch for the children at the day school every Thursday.

Stories could go on for pages and pages, highlighting Ken Nolte’s selfless service to his church and school, demonstrating by example that nothing was beneath him when he considered all he was privileged to do was a service to his Lord – and stories of all the other Pastors God has given Grace since this time of rapid expansion reached what appeared to be a plateau. This writer intends to revisit this history at a later date and fill in with more entertaining stories and first hand accounts of the ministries of E. J. Berg, Ronald Freier, and the others. But as one reviews the history interwoven in this growth, one sees humble servants: pastors, plumbers, teachers and technicians, repeatedly lifting their voices to praise God’s grace for his goodness and rich blessings.

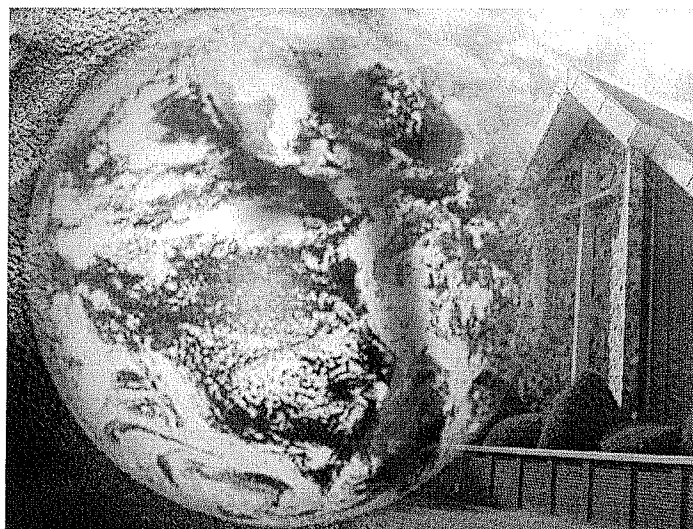
To focus on the building projects and their impact on the ministry of Grace would be a temptation to “pretend” to be working on something while ignoring simple truths. The building projects always followed demonstrations of God’s grace; they did not cause God’s grace to shower down. Each pastor was blessed by God with varied gifts of abilities and personalities, but each faithful pastor shared the same powerful Gospel message of sins forgiven through Jesus. That message worked a faith in hearts that wanted to be strengthened by further contact with God’s Word and to be encouraged by gathering with others to build personal relationships – at church. One simply cannot ignore that the activities that happened at church or through the church once occupied a place of much higher importance for so many.

Young Dorothy Conrad was impressed by her father’s willing service to light a fire under a sewer pipe so that worshippers could use the facilities in winter! That impression was not lost. What personal experiences and memories prompted President Mischke to remind parents who had gathered at the beautiful new addition to the school, that the primary responsibility for bringing children up in the way of the Lord will always rest primarily with the parents, and secondarily with the Christian schools of education that he has blessed our synod with? Is it a coincidence that Tim Conrad, the youngest son of Glenn and Dorothy Conrad has taken the lead of the most recent building project at Grace, the \$150,000 new church roof project?

What we build with our hands reflects what God’s grace has built and maintains in our hearts. That is the most impressive building project ever undertaken! The grace that broke that stony ground is not more amazing in one generation than another, but is amazing in every generation. The building projects at Grace have not stopped, but continue in the most unlikely of hearts and the most amazing of ways. Consider the services of celebration the angels in heaven put together and the songs they sing as they rejoice over every sinner turning back to the Lord

because of the Word they heard through the ministry at Grace! Consider the services of celebration in heaven as another child is brought into the kingdom of his Savior through holy Baptism at a simple font with a powerful Word. Consider the celebration of the angles as another weary traveler stands in glory before the throne of the Lamb dressed in the white robe of righteousness that was promised to him and to her again and again from a wet basement or a cramped kitchen or noisy porch or a beautiful pulpit in the new church – kept simple so that the grace of God would be the center piece.

God's grace endures, as will his holy Christian Church, with or without a building. But it sure can be a whole lot easier – humanly speaking – to attract others to come and see this amazing grace when a church body has been blessed with the beautiful facilities like those at 404 E. Glenlord Road in St. Joseph, Michigan. At the time of this writing Grace wonders once again who the next man will be that God will send to shepherd them through life's joys and difficulties. The school struggles with new challenges of enrollment, discipline, and financial concerns. Being reminded of the foundation of God's Word that stood firm at the very beginnings of Grace Congregation – its strength and grace and power that has brought Christians to gather at the foot of the cross of Christ proclaimed at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church for the last 63 years – can't help but renew and strengthen and encourage another generation to continue in God's grace in the building up of his kingdom.



What follows is a sermon written by Ehrenfried Berg, dated June 13, 1913, and transposed here from Pastor Berg's original manuscript which is on file in the archives of the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. In the course of research for this brief history of Grace Lutheran Church, the people who had personal interaction with Pastor E.J. Berg noted his warm personality and kindly manner in dealing with the members of the church and with prospects in the neighborhood. For this reason, this writer has transcribed this sermon in the interest of an attempt to hear the "voice" of Pastor E.J. Berg. While it must be acknowledged that this sermon is written at the end of Pastor Berg's seminary training, and prior to more than thirty years of additional life experience that no doubt shaped Pastor Berg's interaction with people before he began his ministry in Benton Harbor, Michigan; one will note an uncommon insight into human nature for the relative youth of this sermon writer.

It is of additional interest to note that the original manuscript is ten pages long and is written in a beautiful, clear manuscript, virtually free from spelling error. And, as was noted earlier that Pastor Berg regularly preached in English early in his ministry, it is of some interest that this sermon is the sole manuscript in the papers of Pastor Berg's file that is written in English; all others (such as a Hebrew examination and a dogmatics paper) are written in German.

The reader is sure to be edified through the reading of this faithful exposition and practical application of God's Word, and also to be reminded of the timeless relevance of God's Word for his people.

Sermon: James 1, 16-21

This life is filled with trials and temptations, and there is not one among us who is free from them, who is not in danger of stumbling. You may be a Christian and be strong in the faith, and therefore entertain the confidence that you are able to check every evil thought in your heart, but mark the words of Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians: Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. The mere fact that you have confidence in yourself to endure temptations may go far to show that you have already fallen a prey to temptation – to the temptation of seeking support in your own abilities so that you can proudly boast of your personal strength and revel in your own deeds. Then let us bear in mind, when we are tempted, no one else is to blame save we ourselves. Many people are inclined to excuse their weakness toward temptation by laying the blame to others and to surroundings. They say, this or that person has led me into temptation, or, I would not have lied, would not have stolen, had the circumstances been different. Such excuses may at times induce your friends to have compassion with you and to accept your excuses as valid, but against such an error we read in the 14th verse of our chapter: Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lusts, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Our sinful nature is the root of all our temptations. Whom shall we therefore blame save

ourselves? Since it is we who frame our own temptations by our lusts, is it not ridiculous to say that we can at the same time muster strength of our own accord to withstand those temptations? Where shall we then seek strength? For blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life. Thanks be to God that He has given us the means that we may receive the crown of life thanks be to Him that He has given us His Word of Truth and with it the strength to endure all trials. Therefore James admonishes us in our text to treasure the Word of God. We shall therefore consider this admonition: Treasure the Word of God. First we shall see that we have good reasons to treasure the Word of God, and secondly we shall see how we truly treasure the Word of God.

We have good reasons to treasure the Word of God, for with His Word God has given us the greatest of all gifts. Our text says: Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights. From these words we can imply that God gives many gifts, that there is no good gift and no perfect gift existing which is not from God. Every Christian will admit that all good things are from God. He too will admit that God sends him many gifts. He considers his whole earthly treasure a gift from God. He considers the cross God sends him a good gift. In short, whatever his course may be in this life, be he a prominent man among his people or be he less acknowledged than a tramp on the street, he will comfort himself by his knowledge that his Lord is sending him good gifts. As far as he is concerned he knows that God can only deal graciously with him, and therefore he knows too that God cannot mean him any harm. We will therefore say: Whatever we receive from God, we receive it as a good gift, and this we say on the strength of the good gift, the perfect gift, the greatest of all gifts, which God has given us – on the strength of the gift mentioned in our text, on the strength of the gift which God has given us with His Word of Truth, which great gift should induce us to treasure the Word of God.

The mere fact that the gift we have received with the Word of God is the only gift mentioned in our text already shows that it is the greatest and most important. That but this one gift is mentioned in our text does not show that it is the only one God gives. It is the most precious, and for that reason James mentions it above all others.

Yet, it becomes more evident that it is the greatest of all gifts when we consider what this gift is, for no one can say that he would prefer a different gift in its stead, for by it we are made God's creatures, we are made Christians, who shall receive the crown of life which the Lord promises. We read in the 18th verse of our text: Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth. We are a sinful people. There are none that withstand the lusts of their flesh. Natural man can only crave to satisfy his desires. And when he cannot succeed in satisfying his

desires, he is dissatisfied. This sinful nature in man is universal. There are none that doeth good, they all have gone astray. There are none that seek God or that which is good. They are all conceived in sin, and therefore they can only bring forth sin. This is the natural state of man, and his due reward is therefore death, damnation, for sin when it is finished bringeth forth death, and there is no man, nor earthly power able to free us from that terrible end. There is nothing in this world save sin, and sin arouses the anger of God, it brings forth death. Every avenue of escape is cut off. Yet, there is a way to salvation from perdition, but it is not constructed according to the ways of man; it is from above, from the Father of lights. Not we, nothing in this world is active in effecting our salvation. Of his own will he begat us with the Word of Truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. Because it was his gracious will, He sent His only begotten Son Christ into the world that the sinner may be saved from damnation through His death on the cross, and with the Word of Truth, which tells us these glad tidings of our salvation, we are born a new generation. We are creatures of God, we are His children, brought to faith in Christ to our salvation, and with this shield of faith, we shall be able to quench all fiery darts of the wicked. With the strength we have by our faith in Christ, we shall be able to overcome all our temptations and receive the crown of life. My friends, can this faith you have with the Word of Truth be excelled? I feel safe in saying that you all treasure it beyond your expression, that you pray to God: Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven, thy gracious will prevail among us. Now, since we have this precious gift through the Word of God, we surely have good reasons to treasure the Word of God.

Our text, however, gives us another reason to induce us to treasure the Word of God. It tells us that this gift we have through the Word of God comes from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. In our association our fellow-men in this life we experience that one day your friend will be in a happy mood, the next in a sad mood. At times he will appear cold towards you, at times he will be your warmest friend. You may consider a person a friend today, and tomorrow he will be your enemy. Therefore we live in uncertainty. We know not what change will take place from day to day. We cannot accept the word of any person as a truth upon which we can base sure hope, for we cannot say that anything of this world will be the same tomorrow as it is today.

What comfort would we now have in the Word of God if God were such a person who at one time would be kind to us and send us good gifts and at another time refuse to help us? Thanks to Him, He is the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. We can place our surest hope in Him, for He changeth not and is ever with us with His own gracious will. We have experienced this, for none of us will say that we can mention a time where God has not dealt graciously with us. We all have sinned much in our life and know that we deserved punishment, but again and again God has offered us His mercy in Christ and comforted us with His Word: Thy sins are forgiven. And, my

friends, He is with us today with this message, and He will continue to offer us His mercy, for He is the Father of lights. His mercy is everlasting and His truth endureth to all generations. We find this everlasting mercy of our God in the Word of God. Whenever we read it or hear it, it tells us of the precious gift, salvation through Christ – a gift upon which we can with certainty base our hopes to our salvation, for it is a gift from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Ought not this certainty of our salvation which is revealed to us in [the] Word of God induce us to treasure the Word of God above all things? It especially ought to induce us to treasure the Word of God, when we consider that everything else we have and know besides that precious gift which God gives us in His Word is uncertain. We will say with the Psalmist: How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth. We have good reasons to treasure the Word of God.

We shall now take up the second part of our discourse and see how we truly treasure the Word of God.

We treasure the Word of God by being swift to hear it and by receiving it with meekness. Our text reads: Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. James warns us against two things in this passage by telling us to be slow to speak and slow to wrath. Be slow to speak. We are very much inclined to justify ourselves in all our actions in this life. None of us see much pleasure in the fact that someone calls our attention to our shortcomings. We are inclined to throw off all guilt and use arguments to that end which are of our own construction. For instance, when two parties are not at peace with each other, we often experience that peace cannot be made between them, because one or the other, or very often both parties involved insist upon justifying themselves in their action, that the pride they have in themselves may not be wounded. We are inclined to be ever ready with our tongue to give our own views as they agree with our reason. Against this use of our speech James wishes to warn us. He says: Be slow to speak.

Similarly James warns us: Be slow to wrath. As we are inclined to justify our actions by our speech, so too we are inclined to justify our actions by our wrath. It occurs very often, even among Christian, that they show their displeasure when their sins are revealed to them, and therefore become enraged to guard off every admonition. We can experience this almost daily. The warning in our text is: Be slow to such wrath. When you are inclined to become enraged, even when you think you have just reasons, subdue your inclinations, for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Our wrath is of no benefit to us, which we know from experience, for where is he that does not acknowledge the folly of his wrath after he has been brought to consider his actions, after he has been brought to consider that his wrath is not acceptable to God. Therefore, let us heed this warning: Be slow to wrath, and on the contrary accept the admonition in our text: Be swift to hear, be swift to hear the Word of Truth as

God has given it to us, and thereby we will truly treasure it. Instead of consulting our own reason, instead of consulting the literature of this world to guide us, let us consult the Scripture by reading it, by having it preached to us. If we earnestly do this, then it will be no burden to us to be slow to speak and slow to wrath. Then too we will with the help of God obtain strength to receive the Word of God as we are admonished to do in the next verse of our text. We will obtain strength to treasure the Word of God by receiving it with meekness.

It reads in the next verse of our text: Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness and receive with meekness the engrafted word. The Word of God is engrafted. By its preaching it has been planted into your heart and it has spread its roots. You have experienced its effects. It has made you a child of God. You know that this Word engrafted in your heart tells you that you are a child of God. It governs your heart. It has influenced you in such a way, has such a power over your heart that it is impossible for you to tear yourself away from it. In regard to this Word our text says: Receive it with meekness. We are very often tempted to do things which we know are not pleasing to God, because the engrafted Word in our heart tells us: Avoid sinning against God, and do His will. When we are tempted in that way to satisfy our lusts, let us, as our text means to admonish us, overpower this temptation by receiving the engrafted word with meekness, by following it as a guide, who leads us in a straight path to safety. Let us on the strength of this word lay apart all filthiness and superficiality of naughtiness. This world is filled with filthiness and naughtiness. We need but observe, we need but glance at worldly literature to notice how everyone is endeavoring to satisfy his desires. One kills his neighbor or does him bodily harm to satisfy his revengeful nature, another commits adultery to satisfy his lusts, another deceives his friend, another plays the part of a swindler to gain his neighbors property, others are busily gossiping about their neighbors, reveling in the fact that they can reveal the sins of other people. In this way we could continue to mention the filthiness and naughtiness of this world, for it is filled with sin. And now my friends, let us ask ourselves: Are we innocent in regard to the sins of the world? – We shall pray to God to forgive us the sins we have committed and henceforth strengthen us that we may with meekness receive the engrafted word and lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness. We shall pray to Him to give us strength to do His holy will, to enable us to truly treasure His Word by letting it be a lamp unto our foot and a light unto our path.

May God grant that we all treasure His Word by letting our heart be guided by it, for it is able to save our souls and through it we shall receive the crown of life. Amen!

Pastors and Vicars who have served Grace Lutheran Church, St. Joseph, Michigan

E.J. Berg

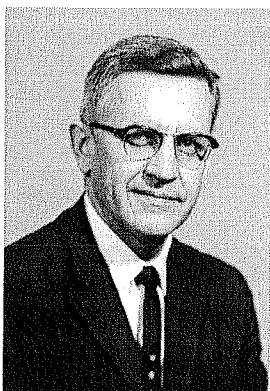


Pastor E. J. Berg was born on February 21, 1884 in Caledonia, Wisconsin and died February 16, 1954 in Benton Harbor, MI. Ehrenfried Berg graduated from the Evangelical Lutheran Seminary at Wauwatosa, WI in 1913 and was assigned to serve as a *Reiseprediger*, a traveling preacher for the Minnesota Synod. For two years Pastor Berg made Mobridge, South Dakota his home base and served outposts at McIntosh, Timber Lake, Trail City, and Isabel, South Dakota. An interesting note indicates that already in these early years Pastor Berg preached regularly in English.

Ehrenfried next accepted a call to serve at Christ Congregation in North St. Paul, Minnesota and served there until December of 1919. In February of 1920 he accepted a call to serve as professor of mathematics and English at Michigan Lutheran Seminary in Saginaw, Michigan. In this move Pastor Berg also transferred his membership from the newly organized Minnesota District to the Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, and other States.

In 1938 Pastor Berg accepted the call to serve as professor of religion and also to serve as dean at Northwestern College in Watertown, Wisconsin. In 1945, at the age of 61, Pastor Berg accepted a call to do mission work in the Benton Harbor, Michigan area and was involved in the very beginnings of Grace congregation. Pastor Berg served the rest of his ministry at Grace, right up until the Lord called him home to heaven on February 16, 1954. The Rev. W.W. Westendorf served as the liturgist and Rev. William Krueger officiated at the committal. Pastor E. H. Wendland who was serving at St. Matthew's in Benton Harbor at the time, preached the funeral sermon based on Ephesians 3:8, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." (Obituary information found in the *Northwestern Lutheran* Vol. 41, p. 94).

Norman W. Berg



Pastor Norman Berg, the son of Pastor E. J. Berg, was born March 29, 1920 in Saginaw, Michigan to E. J. Berg and Lydia nee Lehman. Pastor Berg attended St. Paul's Christian Day school and graduated from high school, Michigan Lutheran Seminary, in 1933. Pastor Berg graduated from Northwestern College in Watertown, Wisconsin in 1941. He graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1944 and like his father began his public ministry serving the Lord in Mobridge, South Dakota, as a tutor at Northwestern Lutheran Academy.

From 1946 to 1950 Pastor Berg served in Globe, Arizona, and it while there married Eleanor M. Martin on October 6, 1946. From 1950 to 1954 he served at Redeemer in Tuscon, AZ. In the summer of 1954 Pastor Berg accepted the call to serve the vacancy that had been created by his father's death at the mission church, Grace, Benton Harbor, Michigan. Pastor Berg served Grace through January 3, 1960 at which time he accepted the call to serve at St. Peter's in Plymouth, Michigan. In 1968 he accepted the call to serve as the executive secretary of the General Board for Home Missions for the Wisconsin Lutheran Synod.

A service booklet from the service celebrating Pastor Berg's 40 years in the ministry, which was held at Atonement Ev. Lutheran Church in Milwaukee on May 1, 1984 includes this testimony about Pastor Berg:

This anniversary booklet is dedicated, not to the Reverend Norman Berg, but – as stated on the cover – to the grace of our God, as exhibited in Pastor Berg's forty years of ministry and in his entire life. When asked if there was a passage that he felt characterized his ministry or his outlook concerning that ministry, he recited the words of St. Paul in the first half of 1 Corinthians 15:10, *By the grace of God I am what I am.*

For those who know Norm Berg – who have lived with him or worked with him – that choice of passage would probably be termed “expected.” If there is pride to be found in Norman Berg, it is found in the fact that God graciously leads and allows him to work in His church. If there is ambition, it is for the advancement of the Kingdom. If there is glory to be given or sought, it is demanded for and directed to the Lord of the Church, the Savior Jesus Christ. The words, *By the grace of God I am what I am*, are not a motto or a standard, they are a fact of the heart.

Pastor Berg passed away May 17, 2001. Pastor Berg's funeral bulletin included the following information highlighting many of the ways Pastor Berg served his Lord and the Wisconsin Synod throughout his ministry:

2nd Vice President, Arizona-California District (1954)
 Chairman, Board for Information and Stewardship (1955-62)
 Secretary, Wisconsin Synod (1961-62)
 President, Michigan District (1962-68)
 2nd Vice President, Wisconsin Synod (1965-68)
 1st Vice President, Wisconsin Synod (1966-68)
 Executive Committee, Missio Dei Offering (1965-67)
 Associate Chairman, Home Mission Division (1968)
 Moderator, Lutheran Free Conference (1964-71)
 Chairman, Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Forum (1968-71)

Pastor Berg and his wife Eleanor were blessed with five children: Rev Peter Berg, Florissant, MO; Mary Clemons, Milwaukee; Rev John Berg, Theresa WI; Margaret, (Mrs. Paul Wendland), Milwaukee; and Miriam.

An interesting note found during this research is a newspaper clipping from the August 17, 1995 edition of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, displaying a photograph of Pastor Berg dancing with his daughter Mary in a chicken dance contest. A caption reads “Mary Clemons of Milwaukee and her father, the Rev. Norman Berg, compete in a chicken dance contest. Hip replacements and heart bypass surgery failed to slow down Berg whose team took 2nd place.”

Another interesting observation this writer would like to return to as an interesting anecdote is to explore the interesting coincidence that Pastor Berg’s daughter Margaret eventually married Paul Wendland, the current President of the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. President Wendland’s father was the pastor at St. Matthew’s in Benton Harbor, MI during the time that Grace was started as a daughter congregation and mission opportunity.

Ronald F. Freier



Pastor Freier graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1957 and was assigned to Scottville, Custer, Michigan. Pastor Freier accepted the call to serve Grace Lutheran in May of 1960 and led the congregation as a faithful shepherd for the next 37 years before retiring August 31, 1997 from full time ministry.

Pastor Freier’s servant’s heart did not allow him to stay out of public ministry for very long, however, and in 2000 he accepted the call that he continues to serve today as the visitation pastor at St. Paul’s Lutheran in Stevensville, Michigan. More updates will be added after collecting information from Pastor Freier.

Mark Braun



Pastor Braun graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1978 and was assigned as the first assistant pastor at Grace, St. Joseph, Michigan. In 1987 Pastor Braun accepted a call to serve as a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Professor Braun has continued to serve in a variety of ways since that time as noted in the following biographical information obtained from Wisconsin Lutheran College:

Education:

- B.A., Northwestern College, Watertown, Wis., 1974
- M.Div., Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., 1978
- S.T.M., Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., 1992
- Ph.D., Historical theology, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., 2000

Personal

Married to Sue; four grown children in a blended family

Service

- Vicar, Faith Lutheran Church, Anchorage, Alaska, 1975
- Peace Lutheran Church, Eagle River, Alaska, 1976-77
- Associate pastor, Grace Lutheran Church, St. Joseph, Mich., 1978-83
- Pastor, St. John Lutheran Church, Sparta, Wis., 1983-87
- Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, Wis., 1987-present

Courses Taught

- THE 101 The Old Testament. A study of the history of God's people before the time of Christ by means of a thorough investigation of the historical books of the Old Testament, together with an introductory overview of other types of Old Testament literature.
- THE 102 The New Testament. A study of the life and work of Jesus Christ as well as the development of the early New Testament church. Representative readings in the Gospels, the New Testament letters and the Revelation to John provide a framework for understanding God's New Testament message.
- THE 301 The Book of Genesis. An in-depth study of the first book of the Bible as a foundation for Old Testament history and biblical theology. Primary emphasis on God's saving activity on behalf of the primeval human race. Patriarchal personalities will be examined, theological themes explored, and comparative ancient history and culture discussed.
- THE 302 History of Israel. A study of the historical books of the Old Testament, with special attention to the formation of the nation of Israel. Major Old Testament themes will be explored and examined, particularly the development of Israel's Messianic expectations.
- THE 305 The Literature of the Intertestamental Period. Selected readings in non-canonical Jewish literature during the so-called "silent years" between the end of the Old Testament and the birth of Jesus Christ. Attention will be given to global history during this period, the development of first century Judaism, and Messianic expectations in Israel up to the time of Christ.
- THE 351 Topics: Biblical Hebrew. An introduction to Hebrew vocabulary, grammatical forms, and syntax, in preparation for reading the Hebrew Old Testament.
- THE 351 Modern American Religion. A study of events, movements and personalities in American religious life since World War II. The course will feature the reading primary texts, in-class conversations, and writing reflective essays.
- THE 421 Religion in America. An examination of the major Christian denominations, religious movements and non-Christian beliefs in the United States. Subject material will be studied for its historical development, distinctive doctrinal characteristics, and impact on American history and culture. Contemporary religious issues will be analyzed and evaluated from a confessional Lutheran perspective.
- THE 431 Introduction to World Religions. Historical background on the life and teachings of the founders, major beliefs, and ritual practices of the major world religions, as well as critical religious and ethical issues facing each religious system at

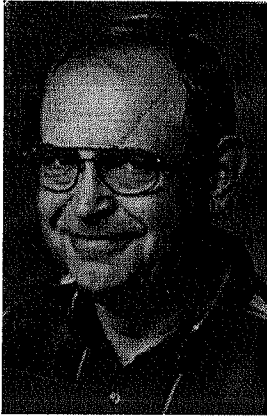
the present. Material will be analyzed and evaluated from a confessional Lutheran perspective.

Research and Service

- Host of the weakly syndicated radio broadcast, A Music for the Master
- Author, The People's Bible Commentary on Deuteronomy, Northwestern Publishing House.
- Author, A Tale of Two Synods, Northwestern Publishing House.
- Author, articles about the YMCA, Adventists, Seventh Day Adventism, and Twentieth Century Christianity for The Encyclopedia of Christian Civilization forthcoming from Blackwell Publishers, London
- Author of study notes for Deuteronomy and Judges for the The Lutheran Study Bible, forthcoming from Concordia Publishing House
- Writing the Concordia Commentary volume on Judges for Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis
- Contributing author to The Northwestern Lutheran, Forward in Christ, Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, WELS Historical Institute Journal, Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly, Logia, the CHARIS journal, and other publications
- Pulpit assistant, Grace Lutheran Church, Waukesha, Wis.
- Christian Life Resources, vice president of the National Board
- President, WELS Historical Institute board
- Past president, Lutheran Historical Conference
- Member, Concordia Historical Institute
- Member, Evangelical Theological Society
- Member, American Society of Church History

Hans Zietlow

Hans graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1987 and was assigned to Grace, St. Joseph as an associate pastor. In 1991 Pastor Zietlow accepted a call to return to his home state and serve a mission congregation, Christ Lutheran in Juneau, Alaska. Pastor Zietlow's service in Alaska is an amazing story in itself, working with a handful of people who met for years in a room at an airport before walking onto a piece of property with chainsaws in hand and clearing the land themselves to build a church that grew to 140 communicants and 250 souls as of May 1999 when an article appeared in the May, 1999 issue of the Northwestern Lutheran that documented this interesting ministry. Pastor Zietlow resigned from the public ministry August 1, 1999 to pursue another career.

David L. Rosenau

David L. Rosenau worked for a number of years as an insurance agent with Aid Association for Lutherans in Minnesota before deciding to pursue studies for the pastoral ministry in the Wisconsin Synod. David attended Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, MN in preparation for studies at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. David graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1983 and was assigned to Grace, St. Joseph, MI as associate. In 1987 he accepted the call to serve as pastor at Zion in Toledo, Ohio. On August 23, 1998 he accepted the call to serve as missionary to the Apache at Gethsemane in Cibecue, AZ and Shepherd of the Mountain in Cedar Creek, AZ. Pastor Rosenau retired from ministry in 2005 due to health problems. Pastor Rosenau died July 13, 2008 in Show Low, Arizona.

An interesting anecdote is that Pastor Rosenau died the morning his son, David R. Rosenau conducted his farewell service at the congregation he had been serving for the prior year during his vicar year in Roscoe, Illinois. Of some interest is the fact that his son, David R. Rosenau also pursued studies in the ministry a little later in life, having worked for four years as an apprentice mortician at a funeral home in St. Joseph, MI and then for twelve years at the Berrien County Sheriff's Department in St. Joseph, MI. David R. Rosenau resigned as a Sergeant having served most of his career as a detective. As he conducted that final service in Illinois, shortly after learning of his father's death, David R. Rosenau was convinced there is no greater calling than the opportunity to share Jesus' amazing grace with others so that in their lifetime they might know the hope and the joy of the room prepared for them and all believers in heaven, and the great comfort of that certainty at the moment of their death.

Richard Waldschmidt

Graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in May of 1990 and was assigned as a Graduate assistant to the President of the Western Wisconsin District at St. Paul's in Lake Mills, Wisconsin. In May of 1992 Waldshmidt was assigned to Grace Lutheran in St. Joseph, MI as an associate pastor. In May of 1996 he accepted a call to serve as an associate pastor at St. Paul's in Tomah, WI. And in April of 2001 he accepted a call to serve as associate pastor at St. Jacobi in Greenfield, WI.

It is a testimony to Pastor Waldschmidt's pastoral heart that during the course of research for this history many mentioned how dearly they loved Pastor Waldshmidt and his family. This writer personally testifies to Pastor Waldschmidt's sense of humor and sincere heart as he visited this writer more than once at the hospital after various injuries prior to the career change.

Martin Bentz

Graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1988 and was assigned to Grace, St. Joseph, MI. On November 11, 1998 he accepted the call to serve Christ Lutheran in Cambridge, MN.

An interesting anecdote regarding Pastor Bentz: This writer's two oldest children attended Grace Lutheran's grade school for their first few years together with Pastor Bentz's two children. Just a few years later this writer ended up working together with Pastor Bentz's brother, Ron, who was a deputy at the Brown County Sheriff's Department in New Ulm, MN – where this writer worked part time to support his family while attending Martin Luther College in the Seminary Certification program for second career men! This writer has a pair of mallards stuffed and on top of his book shelves that he harvested on a memorable duck hunting expedition with Ron Bentz, leaving after work at 3 a.m. and driving through the night to hunt at day break near the border of South Dakota, and then studying for a Greek exam on the drive home!

Thomas Naumann

Tom Naumann worked for a time at IBM before pursuing studies for the ministry in the Wisconsin Synod. Naumann graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1989 and was assigned to Our Savior in Hart, MI. On September 30, 1996 he accepted the call to serve as associate pastor at Grace, St Joseph, MI. The church council asked Pastor Naumann to consider accepting a call to serve another parish, and in May of 2005 he accepted the call to serve the dual parishes of Grace, San Carlos, AZ and Peridot, AZ.

Carl Pagel

Carl E. Pagel was born in 1940 near Denmark, Wisconsin. His father was a truck salesman, and his mother a homemaker in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Carl graduated from Fox Valley Lutheran High School in 1958, and from Northwestern College in Watertown, Wisconsin in 1962. He graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1967. He was married in the same year to Louise Bode, the daughter of his grade school principal. Lou is trained as a teacher, and teaches women's Bible classes and junior hand bells at Grace. They have been blessed with four children and nine grandchildren.

It is interesting to note that along with the first two Pastor Bergs, Pastor Pagel also began his ministry in South Dakota, having served as a tutor at Mobridge Academy in South Dakota and served as a vicar in Plymouth Michigan. Pastor Pagel was assigned to start a mission congregation in Baltimore, Maryland. He served Bethlehem in Hortonville, Wisconsin, and St. Paul's in Livonia, Michigan, before coming to Grace in 1997, where he served as Administrative and Outreach Pastor until his retirement June 30, 2008. Pastor Pagel served as a faithful fisher of men and as an enthusiastic and optimistic fisherman in the St. Joseph River and Lake Michigan.

This writer received a priceless example of a pastor's heart while serving on various boards at Grace Lutheran, St. Joseph, and as much or even more so through many memorable trips out on Lake Michigan with Pastor Pagel in a small boat with big stories.

Glenn Rosenbaum



Glenn Thomas Rosenbaum was born and raised in Saginaw, Michigan. He attended Northwestern College, Watertown, Wisconsin (1984-1988) where he received his Bachelor of Arts Degree and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, Wisconsin (1988-1992) where he received his Master of Divinity Degree. Included in his Seminary training was one year of parish vicarship, accomplished at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, Delano, Minnesota.

Pastor Rosenbaum's first permanent assignment was to Resurrection Lutheran Church, Rochester, Minnesota in August of 1992, where he served for seven and one-half years. In February of 2000, he and his family moved to St. Joseph, Michigan, accepting a divine call to serve as Youth and Family Pastor at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Pastor Rosenbaum married Renee Kloehn in August 1993. They have six children: Nathaniel (b. 1994), Elise (b. 1995), Kayla (b. 1997), Erika (b. 1999), Matthew (b. 2001), and Adam (b. 2003). Renee passed away unexpectedly, and entered her eternal home in Heaven on January 23, 2004.

Principal and Staff Minister Kenneth Nolte



Ken Nolte is included in this list of servants due to his long relationship and service at Grace Lutheran. Ken Nolte was born and raised in New Ulm, Minnesota. He graduated from Martin Luther High School in 1957 and Dr. Martin Luther College in 1963 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Education. He graduated from Michigan State University in 1976 with a Master of Arts Degree. He served five years as principal and upper grade teacher from 1963-1968 in Gibbon, Minnesota. In 1968 he accepted a call to Grace Lutheran School in St. Joseph to serve as principal, upper grade teacher, organist and choir director.

In the summer of 2000, he became Staff Minister. As Staff Minister he is in charge of the Board of Property, head of church music and organ, directs the adult bell choir, supervises adult sports activities, supervises and schedules all gym use and other building uses and visits many of the sick and shut-in. He and his wife, Carol, have five children and nine grandchildren.

Vicars

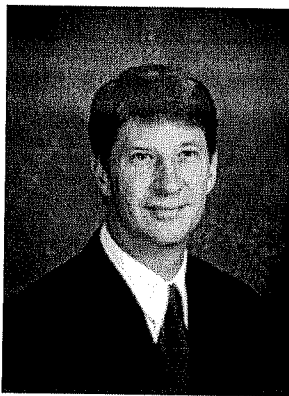
Fred Adrian served as vicar from January to September of 1974. Fred graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1975 and was assigned to Living Word in Mobile, Alabama.

James Schmidt served as vicar 1974 to 1975. James graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1976 and was assigned to Zion, Morgan, MN

Walter Davidson served as vicar 1976 to 1977. Walter graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1978 and was assigned to Grace in Oskaloosa, IA.

Stephen Otto served as vicar 1977 to 1978. Stephen graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1979 and was assigned to St. Peter in Dorr, MI.

Thomas Westra served as vicar 1983 to 1984.



Pastor Westra graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1985 and was assigned to the congregation he has faithfully served ever since, Beautiful Savior in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Richard Gurgel served as vicar 1984 to 1985.



Richard Gurgel graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1986 and was assigned to Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Oklahoma City, OK where he served until 1992. Pastor Gurgel served at David's Star in Jackson, WI from 1992 to 1998 and accepted a call to serve as a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary where he has served from 1998 to the present.

(This writer remembers Pastors Westra and Gurgel as dearly loved by the congregation during their vicar years at Grace. This sentiment was repeated in interviews with members who fondly remembered their service at Grace.)

Alan Horn served as vicar 1986 to 1987 and graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1988. The graduation records indicate that Alan would be assigned at a later date. Pastor Horn currently serves at St. John in Mazeppa, Minnesota.