

KARL F. KRAUSS

A PERSONIFICATION OF THE TRUE  
"MICHIGAN SPIRIT"

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## DEDICATION

I would like to take this opportunity to dedicate this paper to Mrs. Karl F. Krauss, the widow of its subject. As I was growing up, I looked on the Krausses as the grandparents who were closest to my home--in fact, they were right next door for about seven years. As a result I have many fine memories of this Christian couple and of my growing up at Emanuel First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lansing, Michigan.

I would also like to dedicate this paper to the many members of the parish ministry of the WELS and to those studying for such a goal. It is my prayer that all ministers, both present and future, would learn from the example of this fine man, The Reverend Karl Frederick Krauss.

KARL F. KRAUSS: A PERSONIFICATION OF THE  
TRUE "MICHIGAN SPIRIT"

Within the Wisconsin Synod, there exists something that might be called the "Michigan spirit." Almost anyone who has been associated in any way with WELS people from Michigan would certainly know what this "Michigan spirit" is.

The history of the [Michigan] district is intimately bound up with Michigan Lutheran Seminary at Saginaw. This imparted to the district a unique character which has always been referred to as "the Michigan spirit." It is not easy to define; it is something that needs to be experienced. For those of us who grew up in the district it is even more than an experience; it is a "flesh and blood thing." We are a part of it and it is a part of us. It was stamped indelibly upon our lives and being. As I see it, "the Michigan Spirit" was characterized by an almost fierce loyalty, a burning zeal and a congenial camaraderie.<sup>1</sup>

It is this spirit that the subject of this paper, Pastor Karl F. Krauss, personified. Anyone who knew Pastor Krauss would certainly agree with this assessment.

Perhaps more than any other Michigander Karl Krauss was a very embodiment of that happy, congenial and enterprising attitude which prevailed during his many years as pastor and leader of the district. His genial talent and congenial disposition exerted a great influence on his fellow pastors and all the members of the district...Although he would hardly have laid claim to this himself, it was Karl Krauss who placed the mark of good fellowship and cooperative endeavor on the Michigan District."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Karl F. Krauss, *Michigan District History 1833-1970*, 1972, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup>Edgar H. Hoenecke, "The Michigan Spirit," in *Michigan Memories*, published by the Michigan District of the WELS, 1985, pp. 266-268.

In this paper we want to consider the life of pastor Karl F. Krauss and the way in which he exemplified the "Michigan spirit." We will see that he was indeed a very fine pastor, one who might well be placed in a list of the best pastors the members of the Wisconsin Synod have ever known. This is a difficult thing to determine, and it is likely that if two members of the Synod were to sit down and compile lists such as this, each person's list would be totally different. Each individual has a different perception of what makes a pastor great. And there have been many excellent pastors in our Synod. Nevertheless, many people who knew the man would probably agree that he was a fine pastor.

Before we talk about Pastor Krauss' life, we must first consider three things that made him unique among the pastors of the Wisconsin Synod. First of all, he returned to the congregation, Emanuel First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lansing, Michigan, where he had spent much of his boyhood, in order to be its pastor. Secondly he was the associate of his father, Frederick M. Krauss, from 1921-1941, the final twenty years of his father's ministry at Emanuel. Finally he spent the entire 58 years of his ministry at Emanuel. All of these things were significant factors in the way in which Pastor Karl Krauss spent his life on this earth.

Karl Frederick Krauss was born on March 5, 1898, at Sturgis, Michigan, where his father was pastor of St. John Lutheran Church. Two years later his parents moved to the little town of Riga, south of Adrian, where his father became the first pas-

tor of the newly organized St. John Lutheran Church. In April of 1909, his father accepted the call to become pastor of Emanuel. This began Pastor Krauss' life-long association with the city of Lansing and with Emanuel congregation. He attended Walnut Street School, one block away from the church [and the same grade school the author attended], and in April of 1911 he was confirmed in a class of fifty confirmands.

The following September brought a great change into young Karl's life. He entered Michigan Lutheran Seminary at Saginaw in order to prepare to follow in his father's footsteps. He was graduated there in June of 1915 as a member of the second class to enter the new MLS which had been reopened in 1910 after its closing as a Seminary. After his graduation from high school, he enrolled at Northwestern College in Watertown, Wisconsin, in order to continue his ministerial training. He received his diploma in June of 1918 and the following autumn he entered the Theological Seminary of our Synod, then located in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.

These early years were years in which he developed his interests in both music and athletics. He learned to play by ear music for his own diversion and enjoyment. At NWC he sang in the male chorus and was a percussionist in the band and orchestra. He also earned letters in both baseball and football. In fact, he was an outfielder on the baseball team which defeated the University of Wisconsin at Madison. During these years also, he exhibited the intelligence and skill that earned him the nickname "Soc," short for Socrates. He excelled in lan-

guages and in fact in most, if not all, of the subjects he took.

Upon his graduation from the Seminary in 1921, he was assigned to Emanuel as associate pastor with his father. When we look at the pages of our Synod's history, we see that *The Northwestern Lutheran* records every spring how the candidates to the ministry are assigned to their respective churches. With Pastor Krauss this was no different. Yet it is interesting to note the specific issue in which his assignment is recorded. "After a careful consideration the committee assigned the calls as follows: [then there is a list of Pastor Krauss' Seminary classmates, and then this entry] Candidate Carl [sic] Krauss, Lansing, MI."<sup>3</sup> What a commentary this is that one of our Synod's publications should misprint the name of one of its pastors!

At Emanuel he was ordained and installed on June 19, 1921, and the following week he conducted the first Sunday morning English service ever held there [the church still holds a weekly German service, whose average attendance is now down to about 20].

August 16, 1922 was a banner day for the young pastor at Emanuel. He was united in marriage with Elsa nee Bartz, who until the time of his retirement and gave so much time and effort in the service of God and of his congregation in Lansing. Often she is said to have given Karl a gentle word of encouragement to go out and make calls after a long day spent in preparing his sermons and discharging the other facets of the ministry. In-

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<sup>3</sup>*The Northwestern Lutheran*, 12 June 1921, 8, No. 12, p.188.

deed, she was a faithful help meet to him as he carried out his many years of service to the Lord.<sup>4</sup>

This service to God's church included many offices which Pastor Krauss held at one time or another. In 1931 and 1932 he was the visiting elder of the Michigan District. This meant that he was in charge of doctrine and practice in the district. This seems to be along the lines of our present circuit pastor arrangement. As this visiting elder, he was also a synodical trend setter in that he was in charge of cultivating stewardship follow-up among the congregations of the district. This was such a part of this office that Professor James Tiefel of the Seminary writes,

Having seen how successful this follow-up system worked in his own district, Krauss memorialized the 1961 synod convention to implement a similar plan. His intricate system was never fully adopted, but this author is convinced that the role of the circuit pastor as we know it today evolved directly out of the memorial which Krauss based on his Michigan experiences.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to being the visiting elder of the Michigan District, Pastor Krauss also held the offices of secretary of the District from 1932-1936 and president of the District from 1936-1950. His elections to these various positions of responsibility indicate also the high esteem which he had among his

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<sup>4</sup>Most of this biographical information has been gleaned from a booklet which commemorated his retirement, printed by a committee at Emanuel in charge of the event.

<sup>5</sup>James P. Tiefel, "A Few Faithful Men," in *Michigan Memories*, p. 313.

colleagues and in fact contributed also to his being a man who carried on the "Michigan spirit."

In addition to these District offices, he also was named the secretary of the Synod from 1933-1945. During these years he was a busy man because the general editor of *The Northwestern Lutheran* had appointed him as assistant editor from 1933-1936. This tenure came to an end when his work proved to be too much for him when he was also elected Michigan District president. His association with the magazine did not end at this time, however. He was named associate editor of the Synod magazine again from 1950 until 1957. During this second period of editorship, he wrote a series of articles called "Guidance in Godliness," which appeared in nearly every bi-weekly issue. These appear in the periodical from November of 1950 until January of 1955.

From the years 1950-1962, he was elected as vice president of the Synodical Conference. During these turbulent years he was a voice of calmness and patience as Wisconsin and Missouri tried to repair their rending relationship. He realized that there were significant problems with our sister Synod. Along with Irwin Habeck he wrote these words,

One thing that struck us is that the resolutions of the floor committee at our last year's conventions, which we made our own, hit the nail on the head when they call "unionism" the root of all of the tensions which have arisen between the Missouri Synod and us. And another thing that we realized during the days of our conference is that we are far apart in many matters, that there had indeed in these last years developed a "break in rela-



tions," as we call it in our 1953 resolution.<sup>6</sup>

But this realization was tempered by a loving attitude. In reference to a meeting of the Synodical Conference Doctrinal Committee he wrote "Let us pray that the Lord may let His truth prevail, and for our own representatives ask single-hearted loyalty to His Word and a rich measure of Christian love and patience."<sup>7</sup> Though some people may call the position which he adopted in this regard naive, optimistic and overly trusting, it is clear that Krauss wanted to speak the truth in love. He wanted patience and prayers from the constituents of our Synod as his committee endeavored to make progress with the Missouri Synod Doctrinal Committee. Despite his efforts, however, the Synodical Conference was doomed to dissolve. This occurred in 1963.

This Synodical Conference involvement did not keep him from serving his Synod in other ways. He was elected vice president of the Synod in 1953 and held that office until 1961. The following year he was named chairman of the Executive Committee of our Synod's Germany Mission, the *Bekennniskirche*. This association continued until 1976. From 1967-1976 he was also the vice-chairman of the Board for World Missions. This work in the

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<sup>6</sup>Irwin Habeck and Krauss, *The Northwestern Lutheran*, 7 Feb. 1954, 41, No. 3, p. 42.

<sup>7</sup>Krauss, *The Northwestern Lutheran*, 21 Dec. 1958, 45, No. 26, p. 410.

world field he often called dearest to his heart.<sup>8</sup> And it was also indicative of the strong mission mindset that the Michigan District had. Once again in this we see the "Michigan spirit" come into play.

His World Board work also led to his appointment as chairman of the Committee on Relief. After World War II, Pastor Krauss was in charge of "synodical efforts to help displaced and disabled Lutherans in Germany."<sup>9</sup> The same ministry that he rendered there was typical of work he did for this committee. He served in this position from 1946 until 1979. The "Michigan spirit" again is evident from the fact that even today this Synodical board is manned by Michigan men.

The author remembers several milestones in Karl's ministry. He was present at the fiftieth, the fifty-fifth, and the fifty-eighth year celebrations, the last of which occurred when Pastor Krauss retired. For his fiftieth anniversary, the mayor of Lansing even dedicated the date, June 20, 1971 as "Pastor Karl Krauss Day." His fifty-fifth anniversary was celebrated September 19, 1976. As these years came to an end, the many dedicated years of service began to take their toll on Pastor Krauss. As a result of advancing age he gave up some of the positions that he had held. Finally, it got to the point that he was in the hospital for the first time in his life.<sup>10</sup> This led to his re-

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<sup>8</sup>Hoenecke, *Michigan Memories*, p. 266.

<sup>9</sup>Tiefel, *Michigan Memories*, p. 308.

<sup>10</sup>At least this is what the author remembers.

tirement from the ministry of Emanuel First Lutheran Church in 1979.

April 8, 1979, was the date in which he gave his farewell sermon, a duplicate of which appears in Appendix A, to his beloved congregation. Two weeks later,

On Sunday, April 22, 1979, Emanuel First Ev. Lutheran Church of Lansing, Michigan, commemorated the 58 years of faithful service which Pastor Karl F. Krauss had given to the congregation. He had officially retired on April 8. His retirement was to be very brief, for the Lord graciously called him to the heavenly home on May 12 at the age of 81 years. His longtime friend, the late President Oscar J. Naumann, preached for the April 22 service and was present for his funeral.<sup>11</sup>

And what an emotional celebration it was! Perhaps the relationship that Pastor Krauss had with his congregation can be illustrated best by a poem that was written by one of its members to commemorate his retirement.

#### The Faithful One

The seminary trained him well--  
His ardent record bore it out,  
And skill for preaching would excel  
When call to duty came about.  
He took the post of his high calling,  
And at the ritual of installing  
Made solemn vow  
His sacred knowledge to endow.

Beset with years, he must retire,  
And as the destined deadline nears,  
His faithful record we admire  
Discharged through eight and fifty years.  
Now, him from duty we're releasing,

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<sup>11</sup>*The Northwestern Lutheran*, 22 July 1979, 66, No. 14, p. 237.

Regretful that his tasks are ceasing  
But blessings send--  
To crown his days 'till journey's end.<sup>12</sup>

Indeed, it was a deep love that congregation and pastor felt for each other.

Over the years, Pastor Krauss was an associate much of his ministry. After he had been his father's associate from 1921-1941, he served the congregation alone until 1952. That year the congregation engaged the services of a vicar. Following this experience as a bishop, he welcomed an associate, Pastor Leonard Koeninger. Their relationship lasted until 1968, when Koeninger took a call to Plymouth, Michigan. In 1968, the congregation extended a call to Pastor Daniel Buske, who still is serving the congregation at the present time. Through the course of his ministry, then, he was joined with only three other pastors in an associate capacity, and one was his father. The men who served with him look back on those years with fondness, in view of the fact that they learned much from the years of experience which their associate had.

After his retirement he lived just over one month when the Lord called him home on May 12, 1979. On May 16 Koeninger preached the sermon at his funeral, and Buske served as worship leader. Many Synodical brethren were present, including Synod President Naumann. It was a beautiful service, made complete

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<sup>12</sup>Martha Horton, a member of Emanuel, composed this poem in commemoration of Pastor Krauss' retirement. It is found in the anniversary booklet. The poem won second honorable mention in a contest sponsored by Parnassus Magazine.

with the singing of "*Muede bin ich*" by his beloved pastors' chorus, which he had formed and directed.

Pastor Krauss was survived by his wife, who is still living, two children, five grandchildren, one great-grandchild, one sister and two brothers, at the time of his death. The author is not aware of how many of the survivors are still living, or if there are even great-great-grandchildren. The children are still living, but it is believed his sister has since died.

When we look at his life, we see an embodiment of the happy, genial "Michigan spirit." He welcomed nearly every opportunity for *Gemuetlichkeit*, and was blessed with a wonderful sense of humor. He had a knack for telling stories and a tremendous memory. The story is told of Pastor Krauss, when he was Synod secretary, not taking down minutes in a meeting, but still "reading" the morning session minutes to the assembly when it was requested. During the afternoon session he wrote them down. Because of his memory, he was also able to play a piece on the piano after hearing it only once, even though he had taken only beginner's lessons on the ivories.<sup>13</sup>

In view of what has been said about the offices he held and because of his personality, he was esteemed by all his colleagues and exerted a tremendous influence on his fellow pastors and members of the Michigan District. He was a true "Michigan spirit" man.

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<sup>13</sup>Hoenecke, *Michigan Memories*, p. 266-267. Synod President Brenner told the story of the "minutes."

Pastor Krauss had also an earnest, serious side. It is said that you can tell a great deal about a man from his writings. In addition to reams of sermons, many German, that this author's father still possesses, we have perused many of his Northwestern Lutheran articles, especially "Guidance in Godliness." The Seminary Library includes his essays, "Can a Christian Be a Mason?" and "The Ideal Congregation in the Light of the Holy Scriptures." He also wrote a memorable essay entitled, "Misfits in Ministry," with its subject being just that. In clear and concise style and logical, lively language, Krauss portrayed his thoughts. This can be seen by the reader from the references to Krauss' writings in this paper--*Michigan District History, 1833-1970* and his writings about the Synodical Conference.

He was very conscious about making calls and very diligent in his sermon preparation.

His long-time co-pastor Leonard Koeninger often spoke about the fact that Pastor Krauss worked on his sermons far in advance, carefully polishing every thought and expression so that they would be letter-perfect when he stood before his people. Church attendance was very good. The esteem of his congregation spread into the Lansing community.<sup>14</sup>

This point will allow me to make some personal memories and observations about Pastor Krauss. I remember many of his sermons--he was quite a powerful preacher. Especially I remember the way in which he would comfort us with the precious Gospel

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

message after making us feel like we were bound for damnation. This is shown in his farewell sermon in Appendix A. As a catechism student of his, I remember the vivid illustrations that he used in teaching his classes.

He was an extremely friendly man and liked to call me "sport." I looked up to him as though he were my "grandfather from Lansing." I would venture to say that he was an important agent in making me want to become a pastor. I saw him and my father enjoying the many facets of the ministry, and I knew that I wanted to do this too. He emphasized to me that it was the "best work a person could do."

I, too, was saddened when he died. It happened at the end of my Sophomore year at Michigan Lutheran Seminary. At the time I was home with a case of chicken pox, and I remember how sad I was when I heard he died. But he is now in the Church Triumphant. And he left his mark on me. I can only hope that I learned from his example about how to serve God's people.

It is not easy to define; it is something that needs to be experienced. For those of us who grew up in the district it is even more than an experience; it is a flesh and blood thing. We are part of it, and it is part of us. It was stamped indelibly upon our life and being. As I see it, the "Michigan Spirit" was characterized by an almost fierce loyalty, a burning zeal, and a congenial camaraderie....I believe also that it was the "Michigan Spirit" that produced the aggressiveness and progressiveness which characterized our district through the years.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Krauss, *History*, pp. 10-11.

This is how Karl Krauss attempted to define the "Michigan spirit." He himself is an example of this spirit. We can only hope and pray that this attitude, this zeal, this fellowship, can be carried on through future years, not only in the Michigan District, but also in the entire Wisconsin Synod.

**SOLI DEO GLORIA!**



## APPENDIX A

The following is a reprint of the farewell sermon Pastor Krauss preached to the members of Emanuel on April 8, 1979, in addition to the service outline. It is reproduced exactly from the booklet which was printed at the time of his retirement in order to commemorate it. Please note the flair he had for the English language and imagine as though you are present, hearing the final sermon of a man who has been the pastor at your congregation for 58 years.

### FAREWELL SUNDAY

Palm Sunday  
April 8, 1979

#### THE HYMNS FOR THE DAY

Hymn 464 - "Blest Be The Tie That Binds"  
Hymn 37 - "Lord, 'Tis Not That I Did Choose Thee"  
Hymn 33 - "The Lord Hath Helped Me Hitherto"

THE EPISTLE FOR THE DAY - Psalm 103

THE GOSPEL FOR THE DAY - John 3:27-36

#### THE FAREWELL SERMON

Text: Acts 20:32

"And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

Dear Friends in Christ!

We are in a situation this morning similar to that of the apostle Paul and his beloved congregation at Ephesus. We are gathered together, you and I, for a farewell service. I say farewell to you, and you say farewell to me, as your pastor. For almost 58 years, my entire ministry, I have served you as your pastor. By the grace of God which was given me, I have preached the Word of God, even though in human weakness, yet in all its truth and purity. With many a soul among you, in fact, with all of you, I communicated through the saving and sanctifying Word of God. I thank God that through my weak and imperfect efforts many a soul was brought from spiritual death to spiritual life; many a weak and weary soul was comforted; many an erring soul was restored to the Way of Salvation; many a troubled heart was sustained; many an indifferent soul was warned, and many a dying saint helped to walk through the valley of the shadow of death to the mansions of God above.

All of this contributed to the close bond that existed between pastor and people; we loved one another. And now this precious bond is to be severed for this life. With a heavy heart I part from you. But I feel constrained to retire from a ministry which has been very dear to me, and I hope also to you. I can truly say that my long ministry among you was rarely marred by unpleasantness. It has been for the most part a ministry of joy which I shall treasure the rest of my days. And now, what Word of God shall I leave with you, as I retire from among you? I can think of none better than the Word of the apostle Paul as he parted from his congregation at Ephesus: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the Word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified."

I Commend You to God!

This is your greatest need; this is your fullest assurance.

Your Greatest Need

Needful, most needful for you, my dear friends, is that you be commended to God and the Word of His grace. After all, tell me, what are we without God and without His Word? Nothing but poor, lost, and condemned creatures! A man without God is a godless man--spiritually blind, estranged from the life that comes from God, and knowing neither God nor himself. A man without the Word of grace is a slave of sin, death, and hell. He sins without ceasing and has no idea into what wretchedness he plunges himself. He inflicts fatal wounds on his conscience and neglects and rejects the true, healing balm of God. His ways are false ways, his life a total loss. He is condemned by the Law of God and hasn't the faintest notion of a frightening doom and dungeon. He is crushed by distress and woe and has no consola-

tion. He finally dies without hope. Oh, my friends, to live without God and His Word of grace is a lamentable, accursed existence. It is my chief concern that you be spared this terrifying wretchedness; therefore I commend you, from the bottom of my heart, to God and His Word of grace.

Esteemed friends, to whom else could I commend you? Of what value would it be if I would commend you to the god of mammon? All material riches of this earth, after all, are just so much dust and ashes; they run through your fingers like water. What good would it do you if I could commend you to the favor of the wise, the great, the mighty of this world? Is not all flesh as grass? Is not all favor of men as vapor and mist? "Surely, every man walketh in a vain show!" They love today; tomorrow they hate! Today they lift you up to the skies; tomorrow they trample you in the mud. What profit would there be for you, if I to commend you to all the theologians and Bible scholars? Without the grace of God they are nothing. "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man. Put not your trust in the sons of men, in whom there is no hope!"

Finally, should you expect that I commend you to your own wisdom and strength and ability? Indeed not! Our human reason is in darkness when it comes to spiritual things; our strength is weakness; our will is evil; we do not really have a free will since the fatal fall into sin. We are altogether dependent on our God and His Word of grace. Where this light is missing, there is only darkness. Where this divine hand does not hold us up, we fail and fall. Where this life is lacking, we lie in death. Where this grace does not work, all is lost. Without God and the Word of His grace, where would be repentance and blessedness? Tell me, to what could we poor sinners hold, if we would not rest in God and His Word of grace? Do you see now, my friends, how much all of you need God and His Word of grace?

Remember, we Christians live in this world, whose god is the devil. We are surrounded by worldlings who live in unbelief, without God, without His Word--in sin and evil. Whoever is not a Christian believer is a godless person. Added to this, we still carry the most dangerous foe, our Old Adam, within us. That's why our calling and career is afflicted by so much cross and loss. Yes, more or less, we all feel the woe of these last times.

Tell me, dear fellow redeemed, have you not met Satan, our arch-enemy, who "walketh about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour," even as an angel of light, seeking whom he may deceive? Are his crafty attacks on the holiness of God's Word and our faith unknown to us? Have you never felt one of his fiery darts in your conscience? Are you unaware of his temptations, deceptions, and snares, in which he wants to enmesh you? Good God, how would we sheep of our Good Shepherd be safe from the wolf of hell and his evil agents, if we were not commended to God and

the Word of His grace?

Furthermore, do you not know the devil's bride---the ungodly world---the world that lies in wickedness, separated from God, who entices us with hypocritical words and evil examples to let go of God's Word and faith, godliness and everything holy, to walk in the way of destruction? Young men, young women, boys and girls, what dangers confront you especially! The world calls to you with its deceptions: "Come with us!"; and this spirit, alas, is penetrating our churches. In effect, the world says: "This old-fashioned Christianity has no place in our enlightened, free, and progressive age. Let us no longer pay attention to the old gnarled branches, the hardheaded oldsters who want to cling to the old traditions and teachings, the old piety and practices. We want to shake off this burdensome yoke; we want to have a faith that fits our time. We want a Christianity that is more tolerant and permissive, so that we can think and speak and act as it pleases us. Away with this gloomy earnestness! Away with this exacting strictness of faith and conduct!"

My dear young friends, great dangers threaten you today. And how many have fallen victims to them! They openly despise God and His Word. They are less to be found in church than in the temples of the world. God and His Word are of little interest to them. And, you older folks, are you immune from these dangers? Do you not sometimes think: "Let's give up trying to swim against the current; let's strike the sails; all efforts, rebukes, pleas, and admonitions are in vain!" How much we need to be commended to God and His Word of grace!

Remember, we are living in the last times. There is a spirit abroad among all the peoples of the earth, that seeks to destroy everything godly and holy, that wants to root out Christian faith and bring all believers to naught. What only can sustain us in this last affliction but God and the Word of His grace? Indeed, all of you who are God's chosen and beloved children surely need the grace of God. To this alone I commend you, for then you will have full and blessed assurance.

#### Your Fullest Assurance

When a shepherd says farewell to his flock, he can be replaced. Have no concern about that! Our God who knows the heart knows that my person counts as nothing before Him, and I know that I am speaking for you, too. Perhaps you may think: "Our pastor has long preached to us the whole counsel of God in all its truth and purity. We have been edified in our lives, strengthened in our faith, refreshed in times of distress and need. Shall this continue? Will the future assure us of an evangelical care and cure of souls? Will we be warned, admonished, instructed, encouraged, comforted, cheered, and strengthened through the Word of God?" I'm sure you will be, if you sincerely and earnestly desire to be, if you hold fast to God and the

Word of His grace.

"Cast all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." There alone is your assurance and confidence. Remember who this God is. He is able, that means, almighty. He is the almighty Creator and Ruler of heaven and earth; the good and evil angels, the believers and the ungodly--all are under His sovereign power. What are all adversaries before Him? Whatever His will is, that is done in heaven, on earth, in the sea, and in all the universe. If He is for us--and He is--who can be against us? He has loved us with an everlasting love in Christ before the foundations of the earth were laid--and He still loves us and always will. He has inscribed our names in the Book of Life before we ever had life and breath. His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, He sent as our Redeemer and Savior; all our sins and guilt He laid on Him. In all our righteousness is fulfilled. Indeed, this God has given us His Holy Spirit, who has called us by the Gospel, enlightened us with His gifts, and sanctified and kept us in the true faith. Truly, where is there such a God as He is? Whoever is commended to Him and belongs to Him can be composed, fully assured and confident as far as the future is concerned.

Is there a greater, more precious treasure than the Word of His grace? This is the light that illumines and fills us with the blessed knowledge of salvation; this is the priceless Gospel, the glad tidings of the forgiveness of sin, the power of God unto salvation to all who believe. The Gospel never comes to us empty; it brings the Holy Spirit and saving faith, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit. Are we weak, it strengthens us, that we may soar with wings like the eagle, that we may run and not be weary, that we may walk and not faint. With wooing, winsome power He calls into our hearts: "Be of good cheer! You are reconciled to God. He will not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax. He will never leave you nor forsake you!"

No, if we are surrounded by false and evil spirits, if we are hated by hypocrites and self-righteous people, let them be. The Word of grace is our Refuge and Strength. This is our Guide in word and example. Your lot is what all people of God had at all times. The hypocrites and self-righteous must hate and persecute you. Woe to you if they wish you well, for your Lord and Master says, "If they hated Me, they will also hate you; if they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." In this world you are probably afraid; but "be of good cheer," says your Lord, "I have overcome the world!" It is as God promises in Psalm 112: "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness; the generation of the upright shall be blessed. All our foes shall stand in slippery places, and the Lord will bring them to naught."

And if you suffer other needs and afflictions, what of it! All

things must work together to them that love God, who are the called according to His purpose. And at the end you shall be able to sing and say: "Misfortune is my good fortune; the night is my ray of sunshine." Only then will you be fully redeemed and enter into eternal rest. All this is yours through His Word of grace. If you are commended to this, all will be well; this gives us full assurance and confidence. Therefore, I say again with Paul: "I commend you to God and to the Word of His grace, which alone can give you full assurance." Our faithful God and Savior abide with you, keep, and care for you by His Word of grace, till we see Him face to face, with all crosses and afflictions removed forever! God be with you till we meet again--- if not here, then in heaven! Amen!

APPENDIX B

The following is a copy of the letter which at the time of his retirement Pastor Krauss received from the President of the United States, Jimmy Carter. This writer thought that this was a very unique document, something which probably not too many other Wisconsin Synod pastors have received. As a result it is included here.

THE WHITE HOUSE

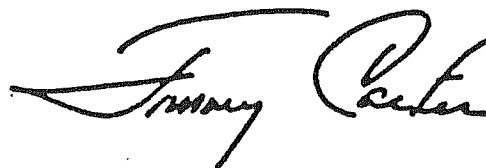
WASHINGTON

March 29, 1979

To the Reverend Karl Krauss

As you celebrate this milestone of religious service, it is a pleasure for me to send my warmest congratulations. You have my very best wishes as you continue to serve God and your fellowman.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jimmy Carter". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

The Reverend Karl F. Krauss  
First Emanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church  
222 West Kilborn Street  
Lansing, Michigan 48906

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