

REFLECTIONS

A group of 90 men and women met at the home of Christian Pooch, on April 10, 1908, to form a congregation, and one month later a Sunday School was organized. On June 17, 1908, the congregation was organized and named the "German Evangelical Lutheran St. Luke's Congregation" and met on the following Sundays in the old YMCA on East Fourth Street, the Jewish Synagogue on North Jefferson Street, and on the third floor of a building at Wayne Avenue and Pearl Street. The first year also saw the organization of a Ladies' Aid, Young People's League, and the call to the first Pastor, the Rev. F. A. Meusch, January 10, 1909.

On May 8, 1910, the double lot was purchased at the corner of McLain and Potomac Streets for \$6,500. The Rev. Carl Schaeffer began his pastorate on October 25, 1911, with the installation service in charge of the Rev. Fred Zimmerman, who had supplied our pulpit previously.

On November 17, 1912, the cornerstone was laid and the new building erected and by September 14, 1913, the new Sunday School part of the building was completed and dedicated. The Rev. Carl Bizer began his pastorate in June of 1919 and by September 9, 1923, the new sanctuary part of the building was completed and dedicated.

St. Lukans were indeed proud to learn that Hedwig and Paul Schaeffer, two of Rev. and Mrs. Carl Schaeffer's children, had entered into the service of the Lord. Miss Hedwig Schaeffer was commissioned as a missionary to India on October 4, 1925, and several years later the Rev. Paul Schaeffer was ordained into the Christian Ministry.

The Rev. George Sonneborn began his pastorate on November 23, 1924, and on October 18, 1925, the new parsonage at 409 Kenilworth was dedicated. In September of 1935 the Rev. Paul Schlueter began his ministry introducing the weekly bulletin, Vacation Bible School, directory of church members, and dedication of the Acousticon.

On December 3, 1941, the Rev. Friedrich Rest began his pastorate. A new constitution was approved, and a Men's Brotherhood was organized. A number of improvements were made which included redecoration of the entire building, with a new ceiling in the sanctuary, purchase and dedication of the Good Shepherd window, the lights in the sanctuary, mass chimes, new hymnals, and an all-directional speaker in the tower. With the liquidation of the building debt in 1945, the mortgage burning ceremonies were held on October 14, 1945.

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In March of 1949, the Rev. Paul L. Stange became Pastor. A major redecorating project was completed. The first son of the congregation to enter the Christian Ministry, the Rev. Donald W. Hafner, son of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Hafner, was ordained on June 28, 1953.

The Rev. Paul Bendit served the congregation as interim pastor during the summer of 1953, and on September 1, 1953, the Rev. Marion C. Harrison, Sr. became Pastor.

In September, 1954, a daughter of the congregation, Miss Ruth Sponsel, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Sponsel, was united in marriage to the Rev. Paul Bendit, a recent graduate from Eden Seminary.

On May 1, 1955, the congregation approved the plans of the firm Lagedrost and Walter for the remodeling of the sanctuary. A complete new chancel, including a new Kilgen Organ console, plus other organ improvements, new electrical service to and throughout the building, a recreational room, new gas furnaces and ducts, and a parking lot for 25 to 30 cars, were the items in the improvement program. During the period of the improvement planning, an Improvement Fund Crusade was conducted which resulted in subscriptions of \$42,078. At the end of June, 1958, \$36,661 had been paid on subscriptions and \$8,164 received from other sources - a total of \$44,825.

In 1958 it was decided that a sound system was needed for acoustical reasons in the sanctuary. Several members researched this problem and a very fine sound system was installed. Other improvements during the year included the installation of storm windows for the sanctuary, and new floral landscaping. The United Church Paper was sent into every home of the congregation.

On June 15, 1958, a second son of the congregation Marion C. Harrison, Jr., graduate of Eden Seminary, son of Rev. and Mrs. Marion C. Harrison, Sr., was ordained to the Christian Ministry and entered his work.

In October of 1958 we celebrated our 50th Anniversary with the Rev. Donald Hafner, a son of our church, presenting the message. Special

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gifts of recognition were presented to each of the 15 charter members. A booklet commemorating the occasion was compiled.

Down through the years as our denomination has struggled to meet the needs of modern society it has grown, and in 1958 St. Luke's along with our fellow Evangelical and Reformed Churches and the Congregation Christian Churches, became an active member congregation of the newly formed United Church of Christ.

During 1961, a Teaching, Reaching and Preaching Mission was entered into by St. Luke's congregation, and a mission week, with the Rev. Harold Thiedt as guest minister, was the climax of several months of study and prayer.

In April, 1964, a questionnaire was sent to members concerning the future of our church. After eight months of studying the problems facing St. Luke's, it was recommended that St. Luke's should continue in its present status and place more emphasis on evangelism to gain new members and strengthen the church. The congregation accepted this recommendation.

The Rev. Dr. Grady Schoffner of Miamisburg, Ohio, served as our interim pastor until his sudden death in July of 1965. Mr. William Arthur then became our interim lay minister. On June 27, 1965, the Rev. Louis C. Speller was chosen by the congregation to be their new pastor.

During the week of April 24, 1966, St. Luke's participated in the "MORE" (Mission on Renewal and Evangelism) program, a discussion group met each evening in various member's homes. The first expanded Summer Program was undertaken by St. Luke's in cooperation with First United Presbyterian Church to involve community children and adults. Three Summer Service Students were brought in to assist in this program. The program for the children was continued into the fall.

The initial efforts in cooperation between St. Luke's and First United Presbyterian Church were continued with the appointment of a

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joint committee to study the community its needs, our service to the area, and the ways and means whereby our two congregations could work and grow together.

Once again, the Summer Program was renewed in 1967 for the community children, with two Summer Service Students assisting. In September, 1967, the Pastor and his family moved into a parsonage in the community, located at 276 McClure Street, in order to carry out the plans and ministeries of the congregation. In the fall a new acoustical ceiling was installed in our sanctuary and dedicated. During the fall quarter, a Nursery Class was conducted two mornings a week with 19 pre-school children from the community enrolled.

Our 60th year as a congregation, 1968, found us busily engaged in the continuing work of the Church. We started off by replacing the old, worn flooring in the Sunday School with oak. Then to graphically illustrate the results of our cooperative efforts with the First United Presbyterian Church there were 150 guests in attendance at the Mother and Daughter Banquet in May. It should also be noted that on several occasions the men of both Churches have met together.

The Summer Program of 1968 consisted of two three-week Vacation Church School sessions, plus special classes for girls and boys. It was felt that due to the Pastor living in the community, and the involvement of lay people from the congregation the Summer Service Students were no longer needed. This program was very well received by the community.

June 17 was the 60th anniversary of the organization of St. Luke's congregation, and the charter members were honored during the church service on June 23. Also, those persons having belonged to, or who have attended, St. Luke's for 50 years or more were recognized. The month of October has been declared "Anniversary Month," with four special worship services to be led by the four immediate past Ministers of St. Luke's.

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In writing the history of a congregation one only has space to list its Pastors. However, in attempting to look backwards through the years of our church's life we realize that it is impossible to record the countless thousands of contributions that came to St. Luke's from the efforts and graciousness of the hearts of its members. We are again and again reminded of the untold efforts of many of St. Luke's teachers, choir members, council members, innovators, workers, those who have served in organizations and on committees, members faithful in attendance, service, and the weekly contributions of the fine people that shared their time and wealth that has made our church possible. It has kept open our doors to the neighborhood as a mission of the church's work toward the world and as a witness to our God.

Again we say, these countless contributions will have to go unrecorded here, but we do know they are recorded in our fond memories and in the great "Book of Life."

60th ANNIVERSARY GUEST SPEAKERS

Sunday, October 6, 1968

THE REV. PAUL L. STANGE
(retired)
Bellville, Illinois

Sermon: *Why We Love The Church*

Sunday, October 13, 1968

THE REV. DR. PAUL J. SCHLUETER
Trinity United Church of Christ
Wooster, Ohio

Sermon: *To The Angel Of The Church In Dayton*

Sunday, October 20, 1968

THE REV. MARION C. HARRISON, SR.
Grandville-Jenison Congregational Church
(United Church of Christ)
Grandville, Michigan

Sermon: *Satisfying The Higher Hungers*
Matthew 5:6

Sunday, October 27, 1968

THE REV. DR. FRIEDRICH REST
Salem United Church of Christ
Rochester, New York

Sermon: *The Role Of The Local Church*