Into the Second Hundred Years

Wartin Luther had written: "We cannot give God anything; for everything is already His, and all we have comes from Him. We can only give Him praise, thanks and honor." By God's grace, through times of war, depressions, or the abundant years, St. Martin's Lutheran Church continued to praise, thank, and honor God through proclaiming the Gospel by Word and Sacrament.

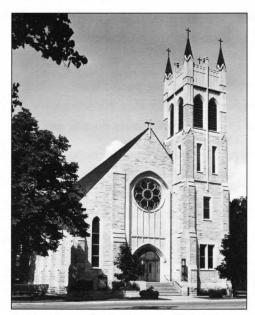


Rev. Emil Geistfeldt

In 1948, the Rev. Alfred von Rohr Sauer was called to serve as professor at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. Pastor Wilmer G. Hoffmann became Assistant Pastor in 1950. The Rev. Harold Backer was Senior Pastor at this time. In 1957, Rev. Hoffmann accepted a call to Illinois. By 1958, the position as assistant pastor

was filled by Rev. Emil Geistfeldt. Two years later, Pastor Backer died suddenly of a heart attack. Rev. Rudolph Korn then assisted in our need.

The physical appearance of St. Martin's Church was addressed in 1956/57. The steeple, which had been the highest in the city, was lowered by removing the spire. There had been fears as to the condition of the spire, but upon removal, it was found to be structurally sound. The red brick exterior of the church was faced with stone; the roof covered with red tiles, and a wall was built at the back of the nave to form a separate



St. Martin's was refaced with stone in 1956-1957.

narthex. With the installation of new stained glass windows, the entire project had a total cost of \$155,000; an awesome amount for those times.

Gay Frey, church and school custodian, began

recording church services using a large reel-to-reel recorder. These were then delivered to shut-in members. In 1955, a record enrollment of 285 students was set at St. Martin's Lutheran School, and students numbered 265 in 1956.

During this decade, as there existed a synodical turmoil regarding Lutheran doctrine in practice, St. Martin's congregation withdrew from the Wisconsin Synod and joined the Missouri Synod in 1961. That same year the Rev. A. U. Deye became Associate Pastor.



Rev. A.U. Deve







Rev. Ronald Jansen

In 1963, Rev. Geistfeldt accepted a call to serve parishes in the Vernon Center area of Minnesota. In 1964, after graduation from the seminary in St. Louis, The Rev. Merlin Wegener served as our Assistant Pastor until 1966. Then, an 1967 graduate, the Rev. Ronald Jansen took the Assistant Pastor position, which he held until he accepted a call to Zion Lutheran Church at Albert Lea in 1970.

In this interim, serving as assisting pastor was The Rev. C. F. Kursweg, and after Rev. Kursweg's death in August of 1970, the Rev. Louis Bittner assisted.

At this time, a group of members saw the need for a facility to care for the aged. As a result of their efforts, and with gifts in memory of Pastor Sauer a corporation was formed, which directed the establishment of the Sauer Memorial Home, dedicated April 2, 1966.

January 1966 saw the establishment of a memorial endowment fund whereby the principle of bequests and certain designated contributions would be kept intact, providing income every year to the congregation for

needed projects. The year 1968 marked the discontinuance of the German Worship Services, which had been conducted twice monthly for many years.

In 1971, The Rev. Kenneth Krueger was called as Assistant Pastor, ordained at St. Martin's June 27, 1971, and served until 1976. The Couples Club funded the first set of bells, and a newly formed bell choir enhanced services. At this time St. Martin's listed 2,720 baptized members and provided Christian education in the day school, kindergarten through grade nine.

The year 1978 included Pastor Deye's decision to terminate his position as Senior Pastor, with The Rev. Richard Krenzke accepting our call to become Head Pastor. The Rev. Walter Lieder assisted as Visitation Pastor.

With buildings under continual use, there are always maintenance requirements. It became necessary to insulate the church roof, repaint the interior, and have the organ renovated. This redecorating and restoring project was undertaken in 1979. The narthex wall was moved forward, expanding the narthex size.



Rev. Kenneth Krueger



Rev. Richard Krenzke

The Women In Mission organization was formed at St. Martin's with missions as its emphasis and it became the coordinating group for Lutheran Women's Mission League (LWML) activities.

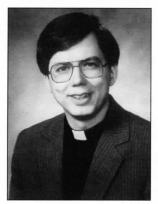
Special services were held May 2nd and 3rd, 1981, as the congregation celebrated its 125th anniversary. Former pastors were invited. Those who participated were Pastors Alfred von Rohr Sauer, Wilmer Hoffmann, Merlin Wegener, Ronald Jansen, Emil Geistfeldt, and at a later time, Kenneth Krueger. June



Sauer Memorial Home

28th of that year a farewell was held for Pastor Deye, who accepted a call to St. Mark's, Rushford.

In 1981, a pre-school program was added to St. Martin's



Rev. M. J. Fox



Mr. Robert Cloeter



Rev. Ronald Dommer

School, as well as various changes to provide offices and conference room space. This was the 115th anniversary of the school at which time student enrollment, kindergarten through grade nine, stood at 142 pupils.

Following the 125-year milestone, The Rev. M. J. Fox was installed Nov. 8, 1981, to fill the Associate Pastor vacancy. Borrowing from the Endowment Funds, a parsonage located at 3743 Ninth Street was purchased in 1982. The congregation acquired its first Director of Evangelism on Nov. 20, 1983, with the installation of Mr. Robert Cloeter, who at this writing has served us for twenty-four years in that capacity.

When Pastor R. L. Krenzke left in June of 1986 to become assistant director on the LCMS Social Ministry staff, Chaplain T. M. Schoewe served as interim pastor until Aug. 1987, when The Rev. Ronald Dommer was installed as our Senior Pastor.

An apartment house located at 305-308 E. Broadway was purchased with Endowment Fund money. The rental income was designated for maintenance and repayment to the Endowment Fund. The house on E. 5th Street, which had been church property since 1966, was taken down in 1986 to enlarge the parking lot, which then was blacktopped in 1987. In the same year, a school endowment fund and an Adopt-a-Child program were instituted.

On Aug. 28, 1988, The Rev. Jonathan Wessel, serving at

that time as Campus Pastor, was installed as our half-time Assistant Pastor. In this year also, a facilities committee began formulating plans for such improvements as handicapped access. Congregation and staff needs were surveyed and architects were interviewed.



Always in the interest of

proclaiming the Gospel beyond the local area, in addition to selected missionaries, support of Lutheran Bible Translators was begun in 1989. While at home, to provide spiritual nurture to local members physically unable to attend services, a Visitation Ministry was started with twenty-two members making regular home visits from 1989 until 1996.

In 1990, the apartment house at 309 East 5th Street

was purchased, and this rental income also intended to repay the Endowment Fund. In June of that year, The Rev. M.J. Fox left to accept a call to Ham Lake.

The vicarage call placed in July, 1991, was filled by Kenneth Tatkenhorst, a colloquy graduate with seventeen years teaching



Rev. Kenneth Tatkenhorst

experience. Later, Aug. 12, 1992, he was ordained and installed as Associate Pastor. Events this year also included re-roofing of the school and redecoration of the narthex. The month of October marked the 135th anniversary of the Congregation - the 125th

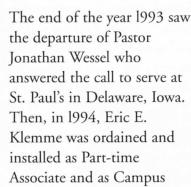


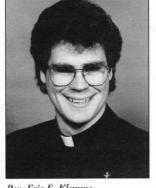
135th Anniversary, October 1992

anniversary of the School, and special services were held on the 5th and 6th. This year of 1991 also ushered in the technological age with the installation of two computers in the Church office. The confirmed membership listed then at 1,872.

The first worship service at Messiah, a mission congregation, was held at the Knights of Columbus basement in La Crescent, Minnesota on Jan. 10, 1993. Forty-eight worshippers attended. From this humble beginning, through the power of the Holy Spirit, this small group became a viable congregation, able to call

its first pastor, The Rev. Jose Flores.





Rev. Eric E. Klemme

Pastor. This year, beginning in July, individual cups for Holy Communion were used exclusively.

Initial plans for an addition to the church were presented at the 1994 August meeting. The vision included a new entrance, elevator, and handicap accessible restroom, the costs of which to be funded via a bank loan and the Endowment Fund. The need for future parsonage renovation was also addressed.

At the Church Council meeting of July 20, 1994, an interest was expressed for the introduction of regular contemporary services at St. Martin's. Summer work that year included installation of new carpeting in the church and repainting of the school classrooms. Pastor Walter Lieder asked to be released from Visitation Pastor duties as of Aug. 1, 1994.

Building planning continued in 1995. In addition to previous elements, a parents' room, stairs, and expansion of the narthex requiring removal of sixteen pews, were listed.

During 1996, St. Martin's School became a part of the Virtual School of Winona, a World-Wide Web site. Teachers, students, and parents began communicating by electronic mail. This project was funded by a generous grant from the Hiawatha Education



Ground-level elevator entrance, 1996.

Foundation.

As a result of the vision, planning, and construction, the new church addition was dedicated June first and second of 1996, the 140th anniversary of the Congregation. St. Martin's now had a ground- level entrance, an elevator, enlarged narthex, parents' room, and a handicappedaccessible restroom on the main level. Also, a new public address

system, new heating and air conditioning systems were installed. The total cost was \$536,668. Thankful members continued to experience spiritual enrichment through such opportunities as Sunday Morning Adult Bible Classes, Tuesday Morning Ladies Bible Class, Men's Tuesday Morning Prayer Time, and Wednesday Morning Men's Bible Study Breakfast in addition to regular Saturday and Sunday worship services. Over the years, a Men's Club and a Couples' Club each held meetings for fellowship, and these also funded various church-related projects.

The sixth Annual Strawberry Festival on June 23, 1996, was the first fest wherein the wet weather forced the activities indoors on that day. This well-received community event helps in the funding of St. Martin's School. Also, as a note of interest, at one time during 1996, there were five Second Century Members. They were: Mr. Fred Schletter, Mrs. Adela Vick, Mrs. Elsie Sandvig, Mr. Ernest Tews, and Mr. William Koeller.

The 150th anniversary of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod was observed April 27, 1997. Our former pastor, Rev. Jonathan Wessel, was the guest speaker. Evangelist Robert Cloeter began monthly Monday evening prayer gatherings, and he also led yearly observances of the National Day of Prayer at St. Martin's. He organized the Neighborhood Story Time, a yearly event of Bible lessons, songs, and crafts for children at the Maplewood Townhouses and at the East Belleview Homes.

Concern over the deterioration of the parsonage and

the condition of the school windows prompted discussion on the need for renovation in the not too distant future. The summer of 1998 did see the subsequent repair and renovation of the school windows.



Mr. Philip Klemp



Miss Lois Stark

Since Luther's time, the Lutheran Church has been noted for its glorification of God by the use of sacred music, and discussion began on the establishment of a Director of Music position at St. Martin's. It was decided a church and school of our size with its strong desire for excellence in the music tradition, required the services of a trained music director. A call was extended to Mr. Philip Klemp in September 1999, and he was installed as St. Martin's Director of Music Jan. 16, 2000.

The year 1999 saw the inception of the AAL Matching Program for gifts to Lutheran Education Institutions, and also marked the 25th anniversary of

service by Lois Stark as church secretary.

The Board of Property, in its efforts to maintain and protect God's House, reported the existence of a serious oxidation and moisture problem with the stained glass windows of the church. Due to the aging and wear of the storm windows, the stained glass portions were not receiving the protection from the effects of weather/moisture. With later approval of the voters, and with bids reviewed, Cathedral Crafts of Goodview completed the work. This involved removing the stained glass windows to clean them, replace damaged glass, relead, caulk and replace. The east storms were replaced with Lexan. The west storms were to remain until the next church building phase would be initiated. The cost came to \$25,784. The condition of the rose window was such that it did not require work, so was not part of the project.

Pastor Tatkenhorst accepted a call to serve as Head Pastor at St. Paul's Lutheran Church and School,

Sedalia, MO. A farewell was held for the Tatkenhorst family on July 7, 1999. The Goodview parsonage was then sold; the \$90,000 from the sale returned to the Endowment Fund. Now, with the shortage of pastoral staff, in order to continue and expand the work of our commission to spread His Word, lay people were urged to assist. Lay members came forward to make hospital and shut-in visits, and in subsequent years, 2000-2003, helped in other areas. St. Martin's now also had its own WEB Page. A program called Dial-a-Devotion was also begun, allowing people to call in and be blessed by a daily serving of the Word on the telephone.

St. Martin's now moved into an era of difficulty in that Pastor Klemme received a call to Messiah Lutheran Church, Moundsview, MN, leaving in Sept. 1999, and Pastor Dommer began experiencing diminishing health. Unable to perform his duties in a timely manner, he was given a time of sick leave until Jan. 8, 2000. Lay members stepped forward again. One example: the four teams of Caring Ministry, which started training in Sept., 1999, began serving 75 shut-in members with visits and Holy Communion.

Through God's bountiful grace, St. Martin's Lutheran Church entered the new millennium, and also by His grace continued to provide the Winona area, and even areas of the world, the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ. Extending from the solid base of worship, preaching, and teaching, the out-reach included the Day School, Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Campus Ministry under the direction of Dr. Ruth Badciong, Youth Program, Neighborhood Story Time, sermon tapes for shut-ins, radio broadcasts, Bible classes at church and members' homes, LCMS missions, support for missionaries in Korea, Russia and Mexico, a mission trip to Jamaica, new member classes, prison visits, Caring Ministry, and the ministry to the local Hmong and Sudanese émigrés. The willingness and energy of members and staff served and sustained such worthwhile activities as: voice and bell choirs, Altar Guild, Ladies Aid, Social Ministry, the live Nativity scenes at Fifth and Huff, Education and Mission Boards, and the formation of the "daughter" congregation, Messiah Lutheran Church of La Crescent. In this New Millennium, by prayer and trust in our Lord, St. Martin's strove to continue in His Commission.

To facilitate uninterrupted worship and other services

during the staff vacancies, an Administrative Committee was appointed. This committee met weekly to work out scheduling and to keep the communication lines open. A calendar of service was drawn up wherein various lay members were scheduled to lead worship and give the Message. In the case of funerals, area pastors conducted the services. Retired Pastor Armin Deye filled-in as visiting and communion pastor at the Sauer Memorial Home and the Watkin's Home. The "Called" staff at this time consisted of Robert Cloeter, Rev. Ronald Dommer, and school staff: Christopher Kamprath, Frank Martens, Roberta Schlesselman, and Annamary Seltz.

Frank Martens gave notice of his retirement as of June 2000, so a call to fill the position of school principal was extended to Igor Skrastins. He responded with acceptance April 2000, and was installed in July.

With the apparent necessity for major work on the parsonage, approval was given for renovation, including new roof, soffits, new windows, carpeting and interior decorating. This project was completed by the summer of 2001, at which time an open house was held to display the beauty of the restoration and a job well done.

Though various calls were extended for a Senior Pastor, each was declined. Pastor Dommer retired as of August 31, 2000. For some time, our Youth Program was directed under the leadership of Dianne Zeches with assistance from Steve and Diane Holmay. Stephanie Schauland began serving as interim, part-time Youth Director, then assumed the position full-time beginning June 3, 2000. That summer the successful Neighborhood Story Time commenced, with twenty members doing the teaching and craftwork.

A great manifestation of God's mercy and His love for His Church occurred the summer of 2000, at a time when we were in dire need of a pastor. The Rev. Timothy Dost of Portland, OR, phoned Pastor Dommer, saying that he was coming to Winona to teach at Winona State University, and adding that he would be available to perform pastoral work in our area. This was truly what is known as a "Godsend." This news was greeted with thankfulness and formal acceptance. Roger Papenfuss flew to Oregon to help the Dost family move to Winona, and Pastor Dost preached, taught classes, and made out-of-town

hospital visits. Mrs. Dost (Nanette) served us as teacher. We benefited from their stay in Winona until Pastor Dost accepted his call to a professorship at St. Louis Seminary.

Due to the dedication and teamwork of the laity and staff, programs were kept in force. Many gave of their time and talents – serving in such capacities as elder, board member, usher, greeter, Sunday School and Vacation Bible school superintendent, teacher, finance committee worker, Messenger assembler, volunteer carpenter, painter, gardener, deliverer of bulletins to shut-ins, choir member, nursery caregiver, and Children's Message presenter.

At the Elder's meeting of November 2000, discussion was held concerning the start of contemporary style worship services. It was decided to table a decision until St. Martin's would again have a Senior Pastor. Planning for Phase II building projects also began that month. This master plan included renovation of the church basement, offices, additions of an annex, a new school gymnasium, and remodeling of the school.

The year 2001, along with all the previous years, was under the hand of our Lord. The St. Martin's staff took on greater workloads, and together with the officers, and volunteer lay members, the Gospel preaching, teaching, reaching, mission kept on a steady keel. Instead of floundering, the congregation sensed the blessings of members' participation and concern – a determination that when we would be granted a senior pastor, he would find our congregation in spiritual good health. The organization functioned well and every aspect went on, as the Lord was truly our Pilot.

In response to requests for contemporary-form services, the first of these was held in the school gymnasium in Aug. of 2002. Later, in June of 2003, contemporary services, known as "New Life" were moved to the nave and replaced the traditional 10:30 Sunday services. Traditional services, known as "Heartfelt" continued to be held at 5:30 p.m. Saturdays, and the 8:00 a.m. Sunday time.

A definite highlight of 2002 was the coming of the Rev. David Henslin as interim pastor on August 20th. Other events included repeat appearances of Missionary Gary Thies, a mission trip to an orphanage in Haiti, and the addition in the narthex of a counter-style welcome center. A new telephone system was installed at a cost

of \$13,089, and the school received lighting improvements. To help proclaim to our city the birth of our Savior, a series of Christmas card billboards were made and placed various places on Broadway.

The SOWING, GROWING, OVERFLOWING mission statement formulated by Mr. Klemp was adopted and manifested in many ways by many workers. Average weekly church attendance was 515, and in September of 2002, there were 97 students in K-grade 8, and 28 in pre-school.



Rev. Lyle Kath

Although at this time, forty congregations in the Minnesota South District were without a pastor, we were blessed in 2003, when The Rev. Lyle Kath accepted our call. We now had a Senior Pastor upon his installation Aug.17, 2003, and a pastor and family again residing in the parsonage.

Enabled by the power of the

Holy Spirit, the vision of a Lutheran High School in our area became a reality. A "High School Association" was formed, and the ad hoc committee laid out plans, prepared a mission statement, and contacted Synod churches in the area. September 2003 saw the opening of Hope Lutheran High School, beginning with grade nine. Classes met in the St. Martin's School basement, with a plan to continue there until a permanent location is found. Blessings of sowing and growing bestowed on this project had nurtured it to the point of opening the 2005-2006 season with three grades and four churches in the Association.

Pastor Kath began experiencing a medical problem in his throat in late 2003. However, in his dedication and fortitude, he did not allow this difficulty to interfere with his ministry among us for many months. However, to the regret of all, his recovery, so much prayed for, did not materialize. He expressed his feelings regarding his physical inability to serve as he would have wished, and announced his resignation in August 2005.

A Natural Church Development program was initiated in 2004 to address congregational relationships as expounded in the Books of Corinthians and I John.

Invitation weekends and classes were scheduled to aid in inter-personal relationships, dealing with conflict in a loving manner, and greater encouragement among staff and lay members.

The Phase II building committee that had spent years



2006

working on the expansion plans, presented their proposals. The illustrations of the annex and the floor plans were posted on the fellowship room walls for study. Decisions on procedure on the plan came later at the voters meetings. As tiles were found missing from church roof deterioration, repair was now imminent. A Sanctuary Project was offered to members for approval. It included three parts. The sanctuary walls were in need of repainting, with a price of \$20,500; the lighting was old and in dire need of attention, at a cost of \$42,524; and the roof repair at \$14,500. Contributions came in for the project; the work progressed, and was completed in early 2005. The painting turned out to be a delight to all, and the new and brighter lighting was greeted with appreciation.

A Hmong Outreach event was hosted April 6, 2004, and attended by 24 children and two mothers. The first Healing Service was held Feb. 29, 2004, in which ailing members were welcomed to come forward during a time in regular services to receive prayer and the laying on of hands.

To help evaluate, explore, and share our mission purpose, a very fine mission fair was held in the school auditorium the weekend of Oct. 16-17, 2004. Nearly all the various organizations manned booths displaying their mission focus, and Missionary Gary Thies encouraged us with his remarks at services.

The Rev. Greg Hovland accepted the part-time position as administrator of Hope Lutheran High School in addition to his ministry at Messiah, LaCrescent.

With the sesquicentennial approaching in 2006, a committee was formed to draft celebration events. Some projected plans include publication of a cookbook, ornaments featuring the church building, services with former pastors as speakers, and an anniversary dinner. Dianne Zeches and Diane Holmay co-chaired this committee.

The year 2005 was met with continued dedication to our ministry; however, financial support was not keeping up with costs. To move forward in faith a Sustained Giving Stewardship Emphasis was begun. Larry Solberg served as the consultant. Joan and Don Roessler and Dave and Margaret Hohenstein were Co-Emphasis Directors of this extensive project. The goals emphasized were our obligation to the future generations to have available to them facilities and programs proclaiming God's Word, the elimination of the deficit, and promotion of unity in purpose – opportunity for ALL in sacrificial support. Every member was contacted and invited to make a three-year commitment above and beyond his or her regular tithing/giving.

Beginning with the services of July 2005, the contemporary worship style at the 10:30 services was eliminated. This complied with the decision of the Board of Elders, June 15th meeting, which recommended that the three services for a given weekend be the same format as determined by the staff with blended services included.

Due to the deterioration of Pastor Lyle Kath's health, he was given a peaceful release at the Voters' meeting Sept. 9th, and approval was given to proceed in calling a senior pastor. Almost concomitantly, we lost the ministerial services of Rev. David Henslin, also due to

health issues. We were fortunate that retired Rev. Vern Kettner was willing to assume the interim administrative and pastoral duties. Area pastors at this time, latter part of 2005 and much of 2006, assisted in preaching and performing other pastoral duties. Then, the call voters extended to The Rev. Richard A. Moore, pastor at Immanuel Lutheran Chapel, St. Louis, was accepted. Pastor and wife, Laurie, with daughters Rachael and Johanna, moved from St. Louis to Winona. On Sunday, August 13, 2006, Pastor Moore was installed as our Pastor at a thankful and joyous, sacred, service. The Rev. Dr. Larry Griffin, MN So. Dist. First Vice-Pres., presided.

At the time of printing, baptized members were numbered at 1,732. The school enrollment, preschool-3 through grade 8 was at 124 students. Hope Lutheran High School, now grades 9 through 12, with 39 students. The 2006 summer Vacation Bible School was attended by 91 students.

By the grace of God, St. Martin's very existence rested on the faith and duty to reach the unsaved and nurture the saved. After over a hundred years, as we sing in the old hymn, those "bells still are chiming and calling." Thousands, over the years, have welcomed the ringing of those bells. Dr. Martin Luther made this foundational statement: "Now the article of justification, which is our soul defense, not only against all the force and craft of man, but also against the gates of hell, is this: that by faith only in Christ, and without works, we are pronounced righteous and saved." God has charged our pastors and elders to maintain the purity of our church. We have been faithfully shepherded by our leaders, and together with the spiritual gifts of serving, offered by countless members, St. Martin's has been blessed. By the grace of God, may we remain committed to serve Him.

[Compiled and Submitted by Dolores (Lorie) Steber]

St. Martin's Listing of Pastors Who Served St. Martin's Congregation

Rev. L. F. E. Krause
Rev. Philip von Rohr
Rev. Alfred Sauer
Rev. Alfred von Rohr Sauer, assistant
Rev. Wilmer G. Hoffmann
Rev. Harold Backer
Rev. Emil Geistfeldt
Rev. A. U. Deye
Rev. Merlin Wegener, Assistant Pastor
Rev. Ronald Jansen, Assistant Pastor
Rev. Kenneth Krueger
Rev. Richard Krenzke, Head Pastor
Rev. M. J. Fox, Associate Pastor, installed Nov. 8, 1981
Rev. Ronald Dommer
Rev. Jonathan Wessel, District Campus Pastor & St. Martin's half-time Assistant Pastor
Kenneth Tatkenhorst, Associate Pastor
Rev. Eric E. Klemme, part-time Associate and Campus Pastor
Rev. Lyle Kath, Senior Pastor
Rev. Richard A. Moore, Senior Pastor

We gratefully acknowledge the many hours Lorie Steber dedicated to writing the second hundred years of this history book and the editing by Lois Stark. This book would not have been possible without their dedication.



St. Martin's Lutheran Church Winona, Minnesota