

# ARCHIVES

## IOWA DISTRICT EAST

From June 1954 to January 1955, *The Lutheran Witness* carried a series in the *Iowa District East Edition* on the history of the work of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in Iowa. This history was published in Volume 73, No. 13-26 and Volume 74, No. 1. The material which follows has been typed out and put into digital format by IDE Archivist Allen E. Konrad in December of 2007.

### History of Iowa District East 1877-1952

(On the 27<sup>th</sup> of June the congregations of our District will observe the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of organization of the Iowa District as an integral part of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. In connection with this observance the undersigned has been asked to present a historical sketch which is to bring to our attention the early efforts of our pioneer fathers in establishing Lutheran congregations in Iowa. In this presentation, we shall confine our efforts to the events leading up to the organization of the District and the part that our Iowa East congregations played in the building of God's kingdom in Iowa. Since another writer will cover the story of the Iowa District in a more comprehensive manner, we shall limit ourselves to the part the individual congregations of our District had in the establishment of our Church. We have found the history of these congregations highly interesting, and it is our hope that we can present these historical sketches which are to appear in this and subsequent issues of our District Edition of the **Lutheran Witness** in such a manner that they will be of value and interest to our readers.) – Rev. Walter S. Wendt

"From stumpland to blooming fields" can well be said of the change that has taken place in the State of Iowa since its founding many years ago. This is also typical of the change that has taken place in the appearance of our beloved District since it was founded in Iowa some 75 years ago. At the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Iowa District of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, a sermon appeared in the August issue of the *District News* which described this changed condition in the following manner: "We were poor people 50 years ago. There was little power and strength in us. We were scattered over a wide area, and the cares for our daily bread haunted us by day and by night. Because the temporal needs were so pressing, little thought was given to our spiritual needs. But God sent us messengers to supply us with the manna of His Word. He revived our weakening faith. He gathered us into congregations and gave us good shepherds. In all these years we have had no political aspirations; we have not sought glory and honor before the world; but our only aim has been to bring Christ to men and men to Christ."

The two pictures you see portrayed in this issue quite vividly present to us the change that has taken place in the physical well-being of our Church. The older building is the first house of

worship of St. John's Lutheran Church in Marengo. It was originally a Presbyterian church, which was later bought by the members of St. John's. It has stood there for more than 75 years, and now that it has outlived its usefulness, it can be looked upon as a reminder of the early beginnings of our Church in Iowa. The other picture is that of the new and modern church in which members of St. John's in Marengo now worship. These two pictures reveal a manifestation of the bountiful manner in which God has blessed our Iowa churches in a physical way that we may observe this 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary with thankfulness of heart for the manner in which He has blessed us in this State, located between the two mightiest rivers of the land.

The people who cut down the trees and farmed amidst the stumps that were left, who endured the hardships of famine and disease, are no longer with us. But the foundations they laid in the sweat of their brow, with the prayer that God would bless their efforts, have not been laid in vain. This has been true especially of the spiritual foundations upon which our Christian forefathers built when they organized Christian congregations and later banded together as members of one District in membership with The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.

### **The Missouri Synod Is Organized**

The Missouri Synod was organized in Chicago 'way back in 1847. At that occasion 12 congregations joined the Synod. There were 21 pastors in attendance, four of whom lived in Missouri, six in Ohio, five in Indiana, three in Illinois, two in Michigan, and one in New York. The constitution adopted at that time (still in force today) provided that the Missouri Synod in its convention has no right to make any laws for the congregations, but that the latter are to administer their own affairs. On the other hand, the congregations recognized that those who have the same faith ought to meet and work together. The declared reasons for the organization of the Missouri Synod were: To secure unity in doctrine; to extend the kingdom of God; to train ministers and teachers, and to publish sound Lutheran books and papers. As early as 1885 the Missouri Synod was divided into Districts or geographical territories. These grew in number as the Synod increased and grew in size. In 1879 the State of Iowa officially became one of these Districts. It grew so rapidly that in 1936 the State was divided into two Districts, Iowa East and Iowa West. The story we shall now present is the part that the congregations of our Iowa District East played in these historic 75 years.

### **First Iowa Pastor in the Missouri Synod**

Many years prior to the organization of the Iowa District, congregations had already been established. A congregation in Maxfield, Iowa, in Bremer County near present-day Denver, is the first one that comes to our attention. At the synodical convention in Fort Wayne in 1857 a Pastor Henry Graetzel was listed as a member of the Western District and as being in attendance at that convention. Iowa congregations were members of the Western District at that time. Pastor Graetzel remained at Maxfield for about six months and then was transferred to Maryland. He is the first pastor recorded in the Missouri Synod *Proceedings* as having come from Iowa. Nothing more is heard of this congregation after that.

We must keep in mind that Missouri Synod congregations were not the first Lutheran churches to appear in Iowa. There were Lutheran churches of other synods earlier than some of ours, some of them joining our Synod later on.

### **First Exploratory Trip into Iowa**

In 1848, the Rev. Friedrich Lochner, then pastor at Collinsville, Ill., was sent to explore the eastern part of Iowa along the Mississippi. He went as far north as Dubuque. He also visited in Davenport, where on November 19, 1848, he conducted services for Lutherans in a Presbyterian church. He also visited and conducted services in Iowa City, Burlington, and Keokuk. This exploratory trip laid the foundation work of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod in Iowa. Why this was not immediately followed up is hard to say; it may have been due to the shortage of pastors.

Ten years later, in 1858, the Rev. C.A.T. Selle of Rock Island, Ill., began to preach in Iowa City, Luzerne, and Wellman at regular intervals. The first resident pastor in Iowa City was the Rev. J.F. Doescher, who was ordained and installed in that city. As missionary-at-large he had his headquarters at Iowa City, which was also the capital of Iowa at that time. He served 18 preaching stations, traveling 325 miles a month to serve them. In 1863 he moved to Marshalltown. From here he continued as a circuit-riding pastor to serve the people in that area with the Bread of Life.

### **The First Lutheran Congregation Is Organized**

The distinction of being the first Lutheran congregation to organize as a member of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod in Iowa goes to St. Paul's Church at Luzerne. Luzerne is located some thirty miles west of Cedar Rapids. We are told that the congregation had a cemetery before it had a pastor. Luzerne was settled at the edge of a timber with the woodland located to the south and the tillable land to the north. The congregation was organized on May 22, 1859, with nineteen voting members. It was then being served by Pastor Selle of Rock Island and other pastors. In 1865 Mr. Ph. Studt, a student of theology, came to do supply work in the Luzerne field. Although he stated that in God-forsaken Iowa he did not care to be and in the area around Luzerne he did not care to stay, he nevertheless was prevailed upon to remain there. In 1866 he accepted the call to Luzerne, where he served a number of congregations, traveling upon an Indian pony on his mission travels. He received an annual salary of \$300 when he began and was receiving \$500 when he ended his ministry. Luzerne, which now numbers about 100, at one time had a population of 300 and was known as a wild and woolly town. In the 1850's Iowa City was the nearest shopping center. When Pastor Studt entered the estate of matrimony, he and his bride traveled to Homestead on a lumber wagon for the ceremony. In his ministry at Luzerne Pastor Studt made frequent attempts to begin a Sunday school. He began a parish school and taught it for a time. The first resident teacher in Luzerne came in 1878. The cornerstone of the present church was laid in 1868, and the church was dedicated in 1872. An addition to the church was built in 1891, when the church was enlarged to its present proportions. The school was built in 1879, and in 1898 it was enlarged. There have been renovations in both the church and the school since that time. Pastor Studt was one of the District Presidents. He was instrumental in founding St. Martin's Church north of Marengo, Trinity Congregation near

Dillon. St. Stephen's near Atkins, St. John's in Eldorado Township near Newhall, St. John's at Keystone, and Trinity at Cedar Rapids. Belle Plaine was founded in later years by a pastor at Luzerne. Luzerne has a flourishing school. The present pastor is Pastor Fred Voigtmann. Teachers in the school are Mr. Arno Winterstein and Mrs. E. Koehn. Membership of the congregation on January 1, 1953: 295 baptized, 172 communicants.

### **1860 – Wellman**

People in those early days were so poor that they could hardly provide sufficient clothes to cover their bodies. It was common practice when strangers approached, for the youngest three or four children to be sent into the woods because of the lack of garments for all. This did not keep the pastors from preaching in the various stations, although they did so under many a hardship.

Thus we find Pastor Selle of Rock Island coming to Wellman in 1859 to conduct services. In 1860 regular services were held in a schoolhouse at Daytonville, a small community northwest of Wellman. Services were held once a month. For the first 42 years this congregation was served by neighboring pastors. In 1875 the congregation acquired a small building in Wellman's business section. This building was sold in 1897, and a new church was built at the present location of the church. The first resident pastor was Pastor O.E. Mueller, who accepted the call to this congregation in 1914. He conducted a Christian parish school from 1915 to 1918. Wellman has had a resident pastor for only 22 years of its 94 years of existence. The congregation has been served by pastors from Iowa City, mainly from What Cheer and Washington. This congregation has a beautiful chapel built of native white-oak timber furnished by members, who also did most of the work of building. This house of worship was dedicated in 1938. Pastor W.C. Johannes of Washington is serving Wellman at present. On January 1, 1953, the congregation numbered 84 souls and 47 communicants.

In 1863 the Missouri Synod had only two resident pastors in the entire State of Iowa. But the efforts of these circuit-riding preachers were beginning to bear fruit, so that in the year 1865 we read of two more congregations being organized.

### **1865 – State Center**

The first of these two congregations referred to above was St. John's Church of State Center. This congregation was organized by Missionary Doescher on April 17, 1865, who worked out of Fort Dodge to serve this congregation. This newly formed congregation was then worshipping in the Old Center School House. That fall a five-acre tract of land was bought at a cost of \$100. A church building with an annex for a school was built on this tract. Pastor F. Doescher later became the first resident pastor of St. John's. During one of the vacancies in later years a layman volunteered his services to be the pastor because he was well versed in the Scriptures. His term of office was brief and came to an end when Pastor Studt was asked to serve as vacancy pastor until another minister could be obtained. In 1874 a second and larger house of worship was erected. The members were charged 12 per cent interest on the money they borrowed to build this structure. In 1880 the present school building was erected. Under the pastorate of Pastor A.J. Boehm the lodge question had to be settled. In the heat of the controversy the prediction was made that if lodge members were not permitted to commune at the Lord's altar in this

church, the pastor soon would not have enough members to fill the front pews of the church. But the pastor and the congregation stood firm, and in spite of the prediction the congregation continued to grow. On January 1, 1945, the church was destroyed by fire. It was replaced by one of the most beautiful rural churches in the entire State of Iowa in 1950. The Rev. George Perlich, First Vice-President of the Iowa District East, is the present pastor. Mr. E.T. Mueller is the teacher of the school. Membership January 1, 1953: 513 baptized and 373 communicants.

### **Dubuque**

During the month of July, 1865, several families belonging to the Iowa Synod severed their connection with their congregation because of doctrinal differences. They appealed to Dr. Walther in St. Louis to send a pastor from the Missouri Synod to serve them. Pastor Mennicke, then of Rock Island, Ill., was sent to investigate. After several visits he reported that a congregation could be organized there. Since it was easier to get to Dubuque from Chicago than from Rock Island, these families were served from the Chicago area. This congregation, upon being organized, made application for membership in the Missouri Synod and was received in that same year. At first the services were conducted in the homes of members. In 1866 Pastor W.J. Wehrs became the first resident pastor of St. Paul's in Dubuque. Services at that time were held in a Methodist church, where Pastor Wehrs also conducted a school. In that same year a lot was bought at 2026 Jackson, and a new church was dedicated before Christmas. Under its second pastor, the Rev. C. Riedel, the first Sunday school in a Missouri Synod Lutheran church was organized at Dubuque. In 1878 the present location of 20<sup>th</sup> and Jackson was purchased and the old church moved there. A school was built on to the rear of the church. The present brick church was built during the pastorate of Pastor F. Brust in 1890. Pastor Brust also served the District as one of its Presidents. The present school was built in 1925 but no longer served that purpose. For many years this congregation and its pastors have been active in radio broadcasting. One of its pastors, Pastor Martin Russert, was instrumental in laying the groundwork for the founding of churches at Guttenberg, McGregor, and Elkader. The present pastor of St. Paul's is the Rev. Frank Schultz. Membership on January 1, 1953, was 610 baptized and 410 communicants.

### **1867**

In these early days of Iowa's history, \$400 would start a couple in a home of their own. This included 80 acres of land for \$100, a double cabin for \$70, and a good yoke of oxen, a horse, cow, 12 sheep, poultry, pigs, etc., a farm wagon, plough, and farming utensils with 30 weeks' provision laid in until a crop could be raised. This, however, did not include a wedding gown and veil.

### **Clinton St. John's of Lyons Organized**

St. John's dates back to the year 1855 for its origin. The first pastor of the congregation, the Rev. B. Oswald, belonged to the General Synod of the Lutheran Church. His successor was of the Iowa Synod. He left in 1867. From 1868 the congregation was served by Missouri Synod pastors. Evidently a split took place in the congregation in 1867, so that on Jan. 1, 1868, Rev. Claus Seuel of the Missouri Synod began preaching to this congregation. During these early

years services were also conducted at Sterling, Ill. Where later a congregation was founded, at Fulton, and at Round Grove, Ill., by pastors of St. John's. Pastor Seuel started a school in 1868. Twenty-two years later the first resident teacher was called. He was Mr. H.D. Rosenberg. In 1939 this congregation's church burned to the ground. It was replaced by the present beautiful structure, which was dedicated in 1940. This congregation has in the past years been active in presenting regularly the Clinton Lutheran Hour over their local station. Teach in the school is Emma Thyssen. The present pastor is the Rev. Paul Burgdorf. Membership January 1, 1953: 1,005 baptized souls; 670 communicants.

### **1868. St. Martin's North of Marengo Organizes**

The year 1868 saw St. Martin's Lutheran Church in St. Clair Township in Benton County organize as a congregation. Preaching had been begun there in 1866 by the Rev. Phillip Studt of Luzerne. Services during the first ten years were conducted in schools of the St. Clair Township area. Their church was built in 1876 at a cost of \$1,310.26. A parsonage was erected in 1880. Both buildings have been modernized, and the church now has a fellowship hall in the basement. A Christian day school was conducted by the pastors. A brick school was erected in 1922. There is no evidence that this congregation ever had a resident teacher. In the years since 1943 this congregation was served by neighboring pastors. Since 1952 it again has a resident pastor, the Rev. William Schreiber. The congregation was at one time about ready to amalgamate with neighboring parishes, but it has shown new life in the last few years. On January 1, 1953, it numbered 80 souls, 60 communicants. Its school is no longer in operation.

### **St. Martin's of What Cheer**

In the year 1854 German Lutherans began settling in the vicinity of What Cheer, Guernsey, and Millersburg. Rev. John Doescher as a traveling missionary served these people with services in their homes. In 1868 a congregation was organized. This congregation together with that of Guernsey called the Rev. J.P. Oetjen as pastor. When their first church was built, the 11 members pledged \$100 each toward a new church. At the time none of them had the slightest idea where they would obtain the money, but when the time came to build the church, the money was there. The land was donated, limestone was quarried nearby for the foundation, and trees were cut into lumber for the church. Finishing lumber had to be hauled from Washington by team and wagon 40 miles away. This church was built three miles east of What Cheer.

From 1868 to 1883 all their pastors lived at St. John's, Guernsey. Rev. C. Wuensch was the first resident pastor. The congregation moved into What Cheer in 1916, at which time a church was built there. During the first fifty years of its existence the congregation conducted a church school. For the first 20 years, when the pastor lived at St. John's, they had the arrangement that one year the pastor would teach school at St. John's, and the next year the pastor would teach in What Cheer. The children from What Cheer stayed with members of St. John's when it was held there, and in the following year it was reversed. The distance between these two congregations was 18 miles. Later on the congregation at What Cheer engaged theological students to teach the school. Although the congregation for many years had a resident pastor, at the present time it is again being served by a neighboring pastor. He is the Rev. Wilbert Bok of Deep River. Membership January 1, 1953: 74 souls; 55 communicants.

## **St. John's (Guernsey) South of Victor**

St. John's of Lincoln Township came into being at Millersburg, where Pastor Doescher began conducting services in 1860 in the home of one of the Lutheran families. A Brethren church was used until 1869, when the congregation was moved to Lincoln Township. In 1868 St. John's was officially organized. Rev. J.J. Oetjen was the first resident pastor. The first man to be buried in St. John's Cemetery lost his life in a runaway accident in 1873.

The first parsonage was built in 1869. For 31 years it served as a home for the pastor. Then it became a school for 15 years, and after that it was remodeled and served as a teacherage. The present parsonage was erected in 1900. Their first church was built in 1876. This congregation was one of the five charter members of the Iowa District. The second church was dedicated in 1895. A scarlet-fever epidemic took 18 lives out of this congregation during the year 1904. This congregation began holding English services very early in 1908.

During the early ministry of Missionary Doescher the mothers would take it upon themselves to instruct their children, and they also taught them to read and write. When Pastor Oetjen came, the congregation asked him to teach their children. The arrangement of his teaching school one year at St. John's and the next at What Cheer is verified in the history of this congregation. The first resident school teacher was George Gelmjesaski. The teacher of the school at the present time is Fred H. Hellberg. Plans are under way at present to build a new school.

St. James at Victor as well as Millersburg and Deep River are daughters of St. John's. Attempts were also made by Pastor Rufus Young to begin a church at Guernsey, but this group was joined with the congregation at Deep River. The present pastor is Rev. Edmund Weiss. Membership January 1, 1953: 350 souls, 247 communicants.

## **1869. St. Stephen's at Atkins**

Another congregation begun by Pastor Studt of Luzerne was that of Robbins, now known as St. Stephen's at Atkins. He began work there in 1866. The congregation was organized in 1869; Rev. G. Horn became the first resident pastor in 1870. Its first church was built in 1872, about one and one-fourth miles Southwest of Atkins. This building remained their house of worship until 1891, when a second building was erected. A school was also built about this time. This was replaced with a better building in 1907. School was taught by the pastor until the early years of 1900, when J. Plischke became the first resident teacher. In 1941 a new church was constructed in the town of Atkins. It is probably one of the most reasonably priced edifices erected in our District in recent years. The actual cost was \$27,800, the membership donating over 600 days of labor. The school and teacherage was moved into town at this time. A new school building has recently been erected. A fine modern parsonage also graces the property of St. Stephen's. Principal of the school is Mr. Henry W. Albrecht, who has served this school since 1910. The present pastor is the Rev. Julius Koch. Membership on January 1, 1953: 552 souls, 394 communicants.

## **1870. Trinity at Davenport**

The first service in Davenport was held in 1848, in a Presbyterian church and was conducted by Pastor Friedrich Loehner. In 1859 Rev. Selle of Rock Island began conducting services in

Davenport every two weeks. In 1868 a Pastor Ritter left Zion Lutheran Church, and the Rev. C.A. Mennicke of Rock Island was invited to serve as vacancy pastor. Rev. Wm. Vomhof was then called. He taught school in the basement of the church. The first school teacher in Davenport, Prof. F. Rechlin, came in 1869. Zion Lutheran Church at the time did not belong to any synod, however, a paragraph in the constitution stated that the pastor should be held to join some Lutheran synod, it being left to him which synod he would join. In 1870 Pastor Vomhof made use of this privilege and joined the Missouri Synod. A break came in the congregation when a dispute arose over this affiliation. As a result twelve members together with the pastor severed their connection with the congregation and founded Trinity Congregation. Teacher Rechlin also left Zion to help found Trinity. No salary was stipulated for the pastor for the first year, the pastor being willing to get along on what was contributed. He received \$160 for the first year.

This newly formed congregation not being able to support a teacher at this time, the pastor took over the duties of teaching the school. The teacher accepted a call to Albany, N.Y.

The first services of this congregation were held in a feed store, where also the school was located. A church belonging to the "Evangelische Gemeinschaft" was then rented for several months. The congregation built its own church the same year of its organization. The early days of Trinity Congregation were trying ones financially. Neighboring congregations in Iowa and Illinois helped them out so they could weather these lean years. Under the pastorate of Rev. A.D. Greif, Trinity's second house of worship was dedicated in 1883. When there was need for a missionary at large for Davenport and vicinity, Rev. Herman Greif, son of Rev. A.D. Greif, was called. As a result of this work Holy Cross was organized. In 1902 a missionary society was organized in Trinity Congregation, which purchased three lots for a mission in West Davenport. A chapel was erected on this site. Pastor C. Zollman was called as its first pastor. When he left, Rev. Herman Greif served this congregation again until 1912 or 13, when this project was abandoned.

The school which still serves the congregation at the present time was dedicated in 1913. In 1925 three families were released from Trinity so that they might help organize Immanuel Lutheran Church in West Davenport. The present church, located at 15<sup>th</sup> and Marquette, was dedicated on December 12, 1926. Pastor Herman Harms, one of its pastors, served the Iowa District as President for many years and is now First Vice-President of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. The congregation has purchased property on North Marquette St. and is at the present time considering the possibility of building a combination church and school at this site. Principal of the school at present is Walter Paul. The present pastor is Rev. Fred Ilten, Second Vice-President of our Iowa District East. Membership on January 1, 1953: 1,120 souls, 750 communicants.

### **Trinity, Marshalltown (Dillon), Organizes**

This is another of the congregations which the tireless missionary Rev. John Doescher visited on his mission journeys. When he left this locality for other fields of labor, pastors from St. John's near State Center served the people here for a number of years. Organization of the congregation took place under the first resident pastor, the Rev. E. Heinicke, in 1870. For over twenty years



services were held in a school building. The first church building was erected in 1901. Thirty years later it was remodeled and enlarged. The parsonage was built sometime between 1870 and 1880, and the schoolhouse dates back to 1905. The congregation joined the Missouri Synod in 1930. Of this congregation the present pastor writes: "It is situated a good distance away from the highways of the world, untouched by controversies, calamities, and disasters. The work of the Lord for over 80 years now has been quietly pursued. The roots of the flock are deeply imbedded in the rich soil of God's earth, and God's Word has mellowed and comforted the hearts of the laborers one and all." Present pastor is the Rev. N.M. Hasz. Membership January 1, 1953: 216 souls; 160 communicants.

### **St. Peter's of Riceville Is Organized**

On January 1, 1870, a constitution of 27 paragraphs was adopted by St. Peter's Ev. Lutheran Church near Riceville to mark its beginning as a Lutheran congregation. The Rev. C.M. Sehr was pastor at the time. Neither his place of residence nor his synodical affiliation at that time is known, nor is there a record as to where the congregation worshiped at that time. First contact with the Missouri Synod was made in the early 1870's, when Pastors Mertens and Doescher canvassed this area out of Fort Dodge. After 1874 Pastor Edward Wiegner of St. Ansgar served this congregation together with his other 10 preaching stations. There is no record as to how long he served here. In 1877 a minister of the Iowa Synod of the Lutheran Church was installed as pastor. A succession of pastors is listed after that, but none of them lived there until Rev. Henry Stuer came in 1884. The first church was built 3 miles south of Riceville; it was built on the northeast corner of the cemetery. No date as to when it was built. In 1889 this congregation together with the Elma parish called a Missouri Synod candidate named Karl Schmidt to be their pastor. He and the four pastors following him lived in Elma. The second house of worship was dedicated in 1899. In 1890 this congregation celebrated a mission festival, to which the congregation at Elma was invited. This practice has continued for over 75 years. It had a Christian day school in its first years. In 1907 the congregation called its own pastor. He was the Rev. Henry Kettler. He continued to teach school there. A schoolhouse was built in 1913. It was discontinued sometime after 1920. The congregation became a member of the Missouri Synod in 1921. In 1946 the church and the parsonage were moved to Riceville. Present pastor is the Rev. Walter Schroeder. Membership January 1, 1953: 370 souls; 250 communicants.

### **1871. St. John's, Newhall**

Among the congregations first served by Pastor Studt of Luzerne was also that of St. John's Congregation in Eldorado Township, 4 miles northwest of Newhall. This congregation was organized February 28, 1871. The first resident pastor was Rev. F.A. Reinhardt, who came in 1877. A house of worship, a parsonage, and a barn were built in that same year. Additional rooms were built to the parsonage in 1886, 1890, and 1900. In 1883 St. John's became a voting member of the then 4-year-old Iowa District and of the Missouri Synod. Pastor Reinhardt began a school in 1877. The first schoolhouse was built in 1879. In 1903 a second house of worship was erected. The first called teacher to accept was O.E. Bertram. The change from German to English in this congregation was a slow and drawn-out process, which lasted from 1918 to 1940, when German services were dropped entirely. A second parsonage was built in 1921.

Concordia Lutheran Church in Newhall proper was organized under Rev. Ph. Dornseif in 1916. Services had been held in town as early as 1887 by Rev. John Aron of Atkins. But no organization was effected until 1916. Concordia joined the Missouri Synod in 1928. This congregation was served by pastors from St. John's as long as it existed.

In the year 1944 an amalgamation of St. John's and Concordia took place, so that since that time it has been known as St. John's Lutheran Church, the church being located in Newhall. This merger was brought about during the vacancy which existed between the pastorates of Rev. Otto Nieting and that of the present pastor, Rev. Otto Schreiber. In the merger the school was maintained and moved into the old Concordia Church building, which was remodeled for that purpose in 1949, some months after their fine new church edifice had been dedicated. Earlier construction of the new church was delayed because of war conditions. Newly installed principal of the school is Gerhardt C. Mader. Present pastor: Rev. Otto Schreiber. Membership January 1, 1953: 550 souls, 377 communicants.

### **Immanuel and Trinity Lutheran, Grand Mound**

The history of Immanuel Congregation begins in the year 1863, when Lutheran families from Hampton Bluffs, Ill., moved to this part of the State. They were soon contacted by our traveling missionary Pastor Doescher, who began serving them. Apparently his visits were somewhat sporadic, and so we find that in the next 6 years services were usually conducted by two public school teachers, who read the sermons to the people. Some sort of congregational organization must have been effected by 1868, since baptisms for that year are recorded in the official records of the congregation. Under the guidance of Rev. C. Seuel of Lyons the congregation was formally organized in 1871. Pastor Seuel, having just recently organized the Lowden congregation, suggested that these two parishes unite in calling a pastor. This they did by calling Rev. H. Engelbrecht. At the time of its organization an acre of land was purchased 6 miles southeast of Calamus. There a church was dedicated in 1873. A cemetery was also purchased at this time. In 1875 the congregation called its own pastor. Rev. W.W. Malon became the first resident pastor. In 1879 the congregation joined the Missouri Synod at the occasion of the first convention of the Iowa District. In the years after 1882 financial difficulties pressed hard upon the congregation, with interest on its church indebtedness running as high as 15 per-cent. Internal dissension also developed, and a number of families moved away. In 1886 this congregation once more joined with the Lowden congregation under one pastor. During the next ten years, under Pastor Brammer of Lowden, unity was once more restored in the congregation.

In the meantime Rev. Herman Greif, missionary at large out of Davenport, came to the Town of Grand Mound to begin services there. After 1892 Rev. H. Niemand of Charlotte began conducting services there.

When in 1896 it seemed wise to have a resident pastor in Grand Mound, this congregation joined with Immanuel in calling a pastor. The first pastor to serve these two congregations was Rev. C. Broecker. English services and instructions were introduced during his ministry. Up to 1905 services in Grand Mound had been held in private homes in a school, and in the Methodist church. On December 15, 1905, Trinity Congregation in Grand Mound dedicated its house of worship. The official minutes of Rev. F.O. Lothringer were stolen when he was taking them to a

District convention, at which the congregation was to be accepted as a member of the Missouri Synod after 1905. In 1911 the present parsonage was erected.

In 1945 Immanuel and Trinity were officially amalgamated into one congregation to be known as Immanuel Lutheran Congregation in Grand Mound. The present church was remodeled and enlarged in 1950.

When Pastor Malon came to Immanuel, he conducted a school there. A room was added to his house, which served as the school. Succeeding pastors continued to teach the school. A school was also opened in Grand Mound under Pastor Lothringer. In the course of time both of these schools were discontinued.

The present pastor is the Rev. George Koch. Membership on January 1, 1953: 437 souls; 281 communicants.

## 1871

When the French did not want anyone to come to the territory of Iowa, the publicity on this State read something like this: "It is a state which has a river filled with horrible monsters which devour men and canoes together. There is a demon there which can be heard from a great distance; it bars the way and swallows all who venture to approach him. If anyone escapes this demon, he will perish in the country through which the river flows."

But the publicity and the reports on Iowa by people who had been there and wanted to encourage others to settle in the State read something like this: "Iowa is one grand rolling prairie, along one side of which flows the mightiest river of the world. Rivers, lakes, and woods are desirably distributed. The white-topped, blue wagons of the pioneers can be seen moving slowly over the prairies. They are like boats at sea, a sea of grass over which the wind rolls on billows. The yellow-flowered honeysuckle, the crimson wild rose, and the blue violet bloom everywhere. In the fall nuts can be seen dropping from the trees like manna from heaven. Deer and antelope graze in herds, and honey drips from the hollow trees. Men can be heard whistling behind their plows, and women are heard singing happily in their kitchens."

### **Trinity Lutheran Organizes at Lowden**

Perhaps some of the Lutheran Christians living in Du Paige County, Ill., heard or read this enticing description as they decided to move to the vicinity of Lowden in 1865. As they settled in this vicinity, they found an Evangelical and Reformed church in existence there. They joined this congregation. The minister's name was Off. In the year 1869 others came from Illinois. These people were referred to our church at Buena Vista, then being served by pastor Seuel of Lyons. This congregation was 15 miles away. In the winter of 1870 these people prevailed upon Pastor Seuel to preach in Lowden also. This was done in the home of one of the members.

Since the Reformed church was 2 ½ miles south of Lowden, those living north of the village demanded that a school be built in a central location. As a result, school was conducted in a home in Lowden, and a teacher was engaged. This teacher, recognizing that the Catechism he

was to use was not a Lutheran one, refused to teach it. This incident brought about a division in the congregation. Many members joined Trinity of Lowden, so that in January, 1871, Trinity in Lowden was officially organized, with 45 members signing the articles of organization.

In the same year, Rev. H. Engelbrecht became the first resident pastor of this congregation. Trinity's first church was finished in December of the same year. It is interesting to note that the first pipe organ to be installed in an Iowa District church was the one in Lowden at a cost of \$700. Twenty years later, in 1891, the church was enlarged. The cemetery belonging to the congregation was bought in 1888.

In Pastor J.H. Brammer, Lowden has the distinction of having one pastor serve the congregation for a very long period of time. He served the congregation 47 years as a pastor and six additional years as assistant pastor. Pastor Brammer also conducted services at Stanwood and Mechanicsville. In 1908 Stanwood called its own pastor, and Mechanicsville was united with Stanwood. He also preached for a time in Clarence. These people now hold membership in Lowden.

In 1879, at the organization of the Iowa District, Trinity Congregation joined the Missouri Synod. This congregation has been host to District conventions four different times. During World War I, because of the use of the German language, the members of this church had to suffer many indignities and were accused of disloyalty to the Government. The church, however, weathered this storm without any great harm. We are told that in years past this congregation had a statue of Jesus standing in its pulpit which would be swung out on hinges when the pastor came into the pulpit to preach the Sunday sermon. This statue is no longer in evidence. Lowden is one of the few congregations which has its pulpit located above the altar as a part of it.

A parsonage was erected at the time the church was built. The members also began erecting a school in 1871. The first resident teacher was Mr. F. Rassmussen, who came to Lowden in 1877. In 1920 the present fine school building was erected. Mr. G. Roggatz is the principal of the school as present. The pastor is Rev. Theodore Eichelberg. Former Pastor Herman Maas is living in retirement in Lowden. Membership as of January 1, 1953: 724 souls, 547 communicants.

### **St. Paul's Lutheran (Artesian) organizes**

Traveling Highway 63 north of Waterloo, one has occasion to pass one of our picturesque church properties known as St. Paul's of Artesian, about 10 miles northeast of Waverly. This congregation was organized on May 15, 1871, with 30 charter members, under the direction of Pastor H. Schmidt of Schaumburg, Ill. Sometime between 1884 and 1889 this congregation affiliated with The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. Its church was erected in 1885. In 1888 this congregation was host to a District convention. Its school, erected in 1871, also served as the church until the present structure was built. The first pastors were also the teachers of the school. Mr. Arthur Horn was the first called teacher to live there, coming in 1892. The Rev. L.J. Craemer was the first resident pastor, coming in 1871. In 1914 seven voters and their families were released to organize St. John's Congregation in Waverly, and in 1916 a number of voters and their families were released to organize Trinity at Bremer. The congregation has its own

cemetery. Teacher at the present time is Mr. Glenn Prange. Pastor is the Rev. Oscar Moll. Membership on January 1, 1953: 265 souls, 195 communicants.

### **1873. Emmanuel of Charlotte Organizes**

In the year 1863 the Rev. Stiegemeyer, then pastor of the German Lutheran Church of Center Grove, about ten miles East of Charlotte, first carried on mission work among the scattered German Lutherans in and around Charlotte. A Lutheran school was started under Prof. V. Koescielski in 1873, the same year Emmanuel Lutheran Church was organized. A suitable edifice was erected together with a small parsonage in the same year. This property was located in the east end of the village. The first resident pastor, Rev. C.R. Riedel, came to this congregation in 1875. A little schoolhouse was built in 1883. In later years the school was discontinued. The present parsonage was built in 1906. The latest enlargement and renovation of the present church edifice took place in 1943. During World War I this congregation also experienced some of the difficulties of some of our congregations because of the use of the German language. The present pastor is the Rev. Immanuel G. Kitzmann. Membership on January 1, 1953: 614 souls, 450 communicants.

### **Immanuel (Klinger) Organizes**

This congregation owes its origin to the work of Pastor L. Kramer of Artesian. In 1872 he conducted divine services in this community in various public schools of Maxfield Township until a number of families organized a congregation in 1873 and built a church sometime before that. The first resident pastor was Rev. W. Kanning, who was installed the same day the church was dedicated, the 8<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity in 1873. The congregation was incorporated under the name of Immanuel Church of the German Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession in Maxfield Township, Bremer County, Iowa. Today it is known as Immanuel Lutheran Church of Klinger. In 1879 the congregation affiliated with The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. The present church was dedicated in 1894 and has been renovated and redecored since that time. A new parsonage was erected in 1912. It was not until 1942 that the minutes of the congregational meeting were recorded in English. Until then they were written in German. The first English services were begun in 1922.

In 1910 a number of members were given their release so that they might organize a congregation in Readlyn. In 1921 a number of members were released to begin a new congregation in Denver, Iowa. In 1947 a vacation Bible school was begun in the Teisinger School, four miles south of Klinger. Since its early inception the congregation plotted a portion of its property to be used as a final resting place for its sainted members. Over 200 tombstones and grave markers can be seen at the heads of the graves of the departed resting there.

Coinciding with the establishment of the congregation was also the beginning of a Christian day school. In the congregation's first meeting the following resolution was adopted: "On the west end of the church a balcony (*Empore*) shall be built, which shall later be converted into a school." This room was nicknamed "the high school" because of its high place in the building. The first teacher was the pastor, Rev. Kanning. First resident teacher was Mr. George Deibel, who came in 1890. The first school building was erected in 1878, the second building being

built in 1901. An addition was built to this school in 1924. German reading was taught in this school as late as 1943. Principal of the school is Mr. Dennis Klug. Pastor is the Rev. William Reddel. Membership on January 1, 1953: 426 souls, 282 communicants.

### **1874. Immanuel of St. Ansgar Becomes a Congregation**

From the eastern end of the State we now take you northward toward the Minnesota border, where we find that men had also been at work planting the seed of the Word of God, which was beginning to bear fruit. The center of the activity in this area was St. Ansgar. From this town, Rev. Edward Wiegner was serving a network of congregations, which included Riceville, Northwood, Osage, Rock Creek, Rudd, Rockwell, Clear Lake, Garner, Ellington, Mason City, and Nashua.

First of all we take you to St. Ansgar, where in the early seventies a small handful of pioneering families, having come over from Europe, emigrated by way of Wisconsin to the vicinity of St. Ansgar. Their first contact with the Lutheran Church in Iowa was when Pastor Theo. Mertens in collaboration with Rev. Friedrich Doescher of Fort Dodge as traveling missionaries came to serve these people. Services were first held in the homes and then in the old stone schoolhouse in St. Ansgar. In July of 1874 Rev. E. Wiegner was called, and shortly thereafter in the month of August Immanuel Lutheran Congregation of St. Ansgar was organized.

As Pastor Wiegner served the various stations in the surrounding area, it was at times necessary that he be absent from St. Ansgar on Sunday morning to preach elsewhere. On these occasions consecrated and capable laymen would read a sermon and lead the congregation in singing. Pastor Wiegner preached the Word and administered the Sacraments in as many as ten or more stations. This continued for a period of about 25 years.

When in 1879 the Iowa District was formed at Fort Dodge, Immanuel's pastor and a lay delegate were present, who signed the constitution in behalf of the congregation. Busy as Pastor Wiegner was, he began a Christian day school in 1874 and taught it five days of the week. Evidently the strenuous schedule which Pastor Wiegner undertook in serving so many stations proved too much for him, so that in 1890 he contracted pneumonia, which proved fatal. He left a young widow with 6 children to survive his early departure. The congregation provided the widow with the use of the parsonage until she was able to purchase it, and then built a new parsonage for the succeeding pastor.

Altho the following pastors did not remain too long in this congregation, yet when the Rev. Paul Brammer became the pastor of the congregation, he remained there for 40 years.

Immanuel's present beautiful house of worship does not reflect its primitive beginning. Its first structure was a combination church, school, and parsonage, church and school being conducted downstairs and the pastor living in the second floor. In 1882 the congregation purchased a Baptist church, which had been built just four years before that, together with 4 lots, which comprise the present church property. They bought it at a cost of \$975. In 1884 a school building was erected. This building served in the capacity until 1924, when it was sold. It now houses a grocery store in the eastern part of the city. The present parsonage was built in 1890

and was remodeled and modernized in later years. In 1896 its church tower was struck by lightning and replaced with a new one. The present church was dedicated in 1924. Since 1876 this congregation has enjoyed the advantage of owning its own cemetery, which is located ¼ mile south of St. Ansgar. Recently the Lord deemed it wise to call its pastor, the Rev. Herman Wolters, to the Church Triumphant in the midst of an active ministry. He has now been succeeded by Rev. Carl Wuerffel, who was installed recently. Membership as of January 1, 1953: 575 souls, 418 communicants.

### **St. John's Near Osage**

In the same year that Pastor Wiegner began work in St. Ansgar he also served a group of Lutherans six miles southwest of Osage. Late in the fall of 1874 this group organized under the name of St. John's Lutheran Church. Services were first conducted in a schoolhouse until 1890, when a church was erected and dedicated to the service of the Lord. In 1898 the parsonage was built in anticipation of calling their first resident pastor. He was Rev. T. Stephan, who arrived in the following year. During his pastorate the congregation built a school, which he also taught. The present church was dedicated in 1913. For many years pastors of St. John's also conducted services in Osage. Since 1937 Trinity of Osage has had its own pastor. In 1935 Redeemer Congregation of Rudd was organized by Pastor F.A. Brauer of this congregation. It has been served by pastors of this congregation since that time. There is no evidence that Saint John's ever had a resident teacher of its school. In 1947 a new parsonage was constructed after the old one had been destroyed by fire. The pastor at present is Rev. Alfred R. Allmann. Membership as of January 1, 1953: 129 souls, 115 communicants.

### **1875. St. Paul's at Stanwood Organizes**

In the year 1875 the Rev. J.H. Brammer, then pastor at Trinity in Lowden, found a number of Lutherans in and around Mechanicsville and began services in rented churches and private homes. In that same year St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Congregation was organized, the German language being used. In the spring of 1892 this congregation moved to Stanwood, since there were more Lutheran families living there than around Mechanicsville. Services in Stanwood were first held in the public school. Ground for the present church site was bought in 1893, and a church edifice was erected. In 1908 Rev. William G. Nagler became the first resident pastor of this congregation. The parsonage was built in 1909. Pastor Nagler was instrumental in having a school built, which he taught for 9 years. In 1917 a lady teacher was engaged. No mention is made as to how long the school continued after that time. The congregation dedicated its present beautiful church structure in 1921. This congregation has the rare distinction of having had as its treasurer for 50 years, 1897 to 1947, Mr. C.H. Haesemeyer, a consecrated layman who has given much time and effort to the cause of the Kingdom. This congregation for many years has had its services beautified by the singing of a male chorus under the direction of one of its laymen. This chorus has made several television appearances. Present pastor is the Rev. Melvin R. Geffert. Membership as of January 1, 1953: 373 souls, 252 communicants.

### **St. John's of Sumner (Spring Fountain)**

Sometime in the year 1875 German Lutheran settlers in Leroy Township, Bremer County, about 5 miles southwest of Sumner, requested Pastor William Kanning of near Klinger to bring to them

the message of salvation. He found amongst these people a desire to form a congregation, and in the fall of that same year St. John's Ev. Lutheran Congregation was organized, with fourteen members signing the constitution. A student of theology served them the first year until Rev. Theodore Haenschke came to this congregation to become its first resident pastor in 1876.

Services were first held in the homes of members. In 1879 a church was built with a small schoolroom attached which served until 1914. This building was then moved to Sumner, where it continued to serve as a church. The second church building was dedicated in 1915. On two different occasions the church was severely damaged by storms, and somewhere around the year 1925 its parsonage was destroyed by fire. It was replaced in 1926. In 1934 the school house was moved from the north side of the church to the south side. Rev. Haenschke started this school and taught it himself. In the main the school has been taught by pastors, but in later years assistance was given by lady teachers and vicars from our seminaries and normal schools. Mr. J. O'Benar is the present teacher. The pastor is the Rev. M.H. Sonntag. Membership January 1, 1953: 180 souls, 115 communicants.

### **1876. Zion of Franklin County Begins**

When in the late sixties and early seventies a number of Lutherans came to Franklin County from Illinois and later from Wisconsin, they had Pastor Theo. Mertens, traveling missionary out of Fort Dodge, to minister to their spiritual needs. The first service in that county was held in the home of one of the members in old Chapin. By 1874 the number of people in this group had grown to 120. The first resident pastor was Rev. John Sessler. Under his leadership this congregation was organized as Zion Ev. Lutheran Congregation, Mott Township, Franklin County, Iowa, in January 1876. The first building owned by the congregation was a two-story dwelling, the lower story serving as the parsonage and the upper room as the school. Mention is made that Pastor Sessler also conducted services at Ackley and at Ottisville. Till 1883 the congregation conducted services in a school about two miles northeast of the parsonage. They dedicated their church in 1883. In 1894 we find that Pastor Diederich of this congregation conducted services in the Hopkey School, 3 miles northeast of Latimer. He also preached regularly in Wisner Township, in the northwest corner of the county. Since 1904, pastors from this congregation also went to Hampton to conduct services. Grant Center was also being served as a preaching place from Zion at that time. In 1910 this congregation was transferred to the Buckeye parish, because it was more than the Zion pastor could handle. When a new parsonage was erected in 1913, the old parsonage and school was remodeled into a school building. Zion was among the charter members present at the organization of the Iowa District. The school was evidently taught by the pastors, since no mention is made of any resident teacher. For many years Zion was numbered among the larger congregations of the District. The organization of three daughter congregations reduced its membership in the course of the years, so that after 57 years, on November 5, 1933, Zion of Franklin County officially disbanded, and the members joined Trinity of Hampton. The story of Zion is that of a congregation which became the victim of the movement toward town and although its membership was not lost to the kingdom of God, its termination as a congregation has made it a victim of time and circumstances in this changing world.



## **St. John's at Homestead Organizes**

The story of St. John's at Homestead is very closely linked together with the early history of our Synod in Iowa. The beginning of this congregation dates back to the 60's, when candlelight was commonly used to light the home at night, when mothers and grandmothers ground corn for bread and johnnycake, when sewing machines were a luxury and bathrooms were unheard of. It dates back to the days when the ax and the shovel were numbered among the most essential tools on the farm, and when covered wagons were the mode of travel. This settlement was another of those served by the untiring missionary Rev. F. Doescher. The Homestead historian says of him that he adapted himself admirably to the various situations of his day, becoming all things to all men that he might by all means bring salvation to some. He preached both in German and English.

The first German Lutheran settlers came to Iowa County in 1856. In 1859 Pastor Doescher made his first trip to visit this settlement. He arranged to come every four weeks; on the other three Sundays reading services were conducted in the homes. Doescher was succeeded by Pastor H. Wehrs, who as assistant to Doescher received some 72 dollars a year from the seven or eight stations he served. If Pastor Doescher had not boarded him free, he would not have been able to subsist during those Civil War days. St. John's became an organized congregation in 1864 with Rev. E.A. Schuermann as the pastor. He conducted services in two schoolhouses in the earlier days of his ministry here. The one was two miles from his farm home, and the other four miles away. One Sunday he preached in the one school, the next in the other, both groups making up on congregation. The first church was erected on the property where the pastor lived. In 1866 a tract of 15 acres was bought at \$10 an acre for the church property. An acre was set aside for a cemetery and the church was moved to this location. A parsonage then was built onto the church, all under one roof. In 1872 services were discontinued in the last of the schools, and the congregation worshiped in one common meeting place. This church soon became too small, and as a result a second church was dedicated in 1873. At the occasion of the dedication a pastoral conference also met, 17 pastors being in attendance. The celebration lasted two days. A mission festival was celebrated on Monday, the second day. Pastor Schuermann also began a Christian day school.

Upon the arrival of Pastor C.W. Baumhoefener a schoolteacher was called: Mr. J.W. Hild, who became the first resident schoolteacher of St. John's. Twice the Iowa District met for its convention in this congregation, the first time in 1883, and then again in 1895. An expense account of the 1895 convention reveals that there were 125 men attending who were served for six days at a total cost of \$48.42. Balance left over from contributions received was 33 cents. Odd as it may seem, this congregation did not affiliate with the Missouri Synod until 1886, although it had been host to a District convention before that time and had sent delegates to other District conventions. In 1885, at the plea of the pastor, all the old members of the congregation met for the purpose of relating about the first 21 years of this congregation so that a complete history might be obtained for posterity. Pastor Baumhoefener recorded this information, and it is still available in the historical papers of St. John's.

Some time before 1887 Pastor Baumhoefener began preaching in Williamsburg. In 1889 the members living in York Township to the south were granted permission to erect their own

school, which was supported by those who lived in this area, while the congregation was supported by both parish districts until 1898. At that time 23 members were released to organize Immanuel Congregation in York Township. Baumhoefener served as pastor of both congregations until a resident pastor arrived there later that same year. In 1903 the congregation at Marengo was permitted to gather funds from among the members of St. John's for the purchase of a church property. In 1905 the members living in and around Conroy were granted a release from the congregation there. Under Pastor Fred Wolter services were begun in Oxford in 1916. These were discontinued and then resumed in 1932 from Marengo. When the Oxford property was purchased, St. John's helped financially towards its purchase. On the occasion of Pastor Wolter's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the ministry in 1918 the congregation presented him with a new Oldsmobile.

During the early years of this congregation under Pastor Baumhoefener the members came together on Sunday evenings for singing lessons and to practice the hymns for the following Sunday. Rendering valuable service to the congregation on mission festivals, school picnics, and other occasions was an organization known as the Clear Creek Band under the direction of the teacher. Since 1924 the congregation has had a two-room school.

This congregation has had four resident pastors thus far and five resident teachers. Rev. F. Wolter served with all of the teachers except the present one. Not until 1918 were corpses taken into the church for funerals. In 1895 the congregation sent 400 bushels of oats and corn and \$32 to help the brethren in Kansas and Nebraska who had had a crop failure. In 1897 a carload of corn was sent to an orphanage in Wisconsin. A mutual insurance company was formed by members of St. John's in 1874. Now also members of neighboring congregations hold membership in this organization. St. John's Christian day school has made three public schools unnecessary in Iowa Township at quite a saving of taxes in that area. The congregation erected a new and very attractive church in 1951, built to a great extent by the labor of their own hands. Principal of the school is Mr. Werner Horn. The pastor is the Rev. Otto Beer. Membership, January 1, 1953: 276 souls; 203 communicants.

Retracing our steps for the moment, to give you first-hand information on several congregations having an earlier organization date than some already listed, we take you back several years so that no congregation in the District will be overlooked.

### **St. Matthew's at Sherrill's Mound Organizes**

According to Iowa Synod historians, the Missouri Synod in the early 50's is said to have claimed all the territory east of the Mississippi River so that the followers of Pastor Wilhelm Loehe moved across the Mississippi into Iowa to establish congregations where the Missouri Synod had as yet not founded churches. These people first settled in Dubuque and under extreme hardships began establishing themselves in that river city. From Dubuque pastors went out into surrounding territories to establish congregations. As a result of this expansion program a Pastor Grossmann of the Iowa Synod organized a Lutheran church at Sherrill's Mound on Easter Sunday, 1855. The Iowa Synod historian also mentions the Maxfield congregation, which was supposedly the first one to have a pastor from Iowa present at a convention of the Missouri Synod. In 1871 this congregation was being served by an Iowa Synod pastor. Thus we can

conclude that the first Missouri Synod congregation in Iowa was taken over by the Iowa Synod in later years. Sherrill's Mound was served by Iowa Synod pastors until 1873, when it suddenly became a member of the Missouri Synod. The Rev. W. Lessmann was the first pastor of our Synod to serve this congregation. Mention is made that he also conducted services at Lore, which was soon thereafter taken over by the Iowa Synod.

St. Matthew's at Sherrill has hanging in its belfry a historic bell. The information we have on this bell reads as follows: This bell was brought over from Germany by Pastor Loehe. It was first used in Saginaw, Mich. Later it called the boys together at the Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque. How it got out to Sherrill no one seems to know. Evidently there was no further use for it at the seminary, and so—this is the supposition—it was given to this small mission station. Thus in this little-known congregation of the District is to be found a bell of unusual historical value much of whose history lies hidden in the forgotten memories of the past.

St. Matthew's at one time also had a school as is evidenced by the presence of a school building. The present brick church was dedicated in 1903 and is located in the town of Sherrill. Present pastor is the Rev. Edward Felten. Membership, January 1, 1953: 88 souls; 51 communicants.

### **1878. Immanuel of Waterloo Organizes**

1878 marks the year that the congregations of Iowa, which at that time were members of the Western District of the Missouri Synod, made application to Synod to become a separate District. In that same year another congregation was being added to the ever-growing list of churches in the State. This time it was Immanuel in Waterloo which was coming to life. Seven men signed the constitution. Services at the time were conducted by neighboring pastors and students in a church of another denomination. The school was organized in 1879 and conducted in a rented house by Mr. A. Asmussen. The first church structure was dedicated on Water Street the same year. The Rev. George Mezger was the first resident pastor of the congregation; later he became a professor at our seminary in St. Louis. Immanuel joined the Iowa District in 1882. When the Illinois Central Railroad decided to move its station to Water Street, the congregation was forced to look for another location. As a result of this move a new church was dedicated at the corner of Walnut and Vine in 1891. This church building was enlarged in 1910. The present school building was dedicated in 1915. Immanuel has the distinction of having been host to the District convention at the occasion of the division of the Iowa District into Iowa East and Iowa West in 1936. The following daughter congregations were organized: Grace, Waterloo, in 1939; St. Paul's, Evansdale, in 1942; College Hill, Cedar Falls, in 1942; and Concordia, Waterloo, in 1946. Two pastors of Immanuel have served as District Presidents: Rev. Theodore Wolfram and the present pastor, Rev. Walter D. Oetting. The congregation dedicated its present modern and beautiful house of worship on Franklin Street on June 22, 1952. Plans for the future include the erection of a new educational building on a site just across the alley from the present church, also the construction of a new parsonage. This program is scheduled to get under way as soon as the present school property and parsonage can be sold. Immanuel is the largest congregation in the District. Principal of the school is Grayson Brottmiller. The pastors are Rev. Walter D. Oetting and Rev. F.H. Kretzschmar. Membership on January 1, 1953: 1,798 souls; 1,200 communicants.

## **Monticello Organizes**

The history of St. John's near Monticello is the story of early Lutheranism in that part of the State. The congregation was organized on January 12, 1864. German settlers began coming into this area in the late 50's. In 1861 a Rev. Robert Oswald of Marion made an exploratory trip into this area. From then on a degree of regularity was established in conducting services in this area. At the date of its organization in 1864 twenty members signed the constitution. During the year 1865 a building plan which brought church and parsonage under one roof was carried out, with the upper story serving as a place of worship. The Rev. G.H. Brecht became the first resident pastor in 1865. The first Missouri Synod pastor to serve this congregation was the Rev. Lorenz Traub. In 1872 this congregation split over the location of church property. As a result the members living toward the southwest organized a new congregation under the name of Zion Church and erected a church building of their own. When Rev. Traub shortly thereafter accepted a call elsewhere, the two congregations in harmony jointly called a pastor with the express understanding that he was to change his place of residence annually, living at Sand Hill in the midst of St. John's one year and at Wayne Center in the midst of Zion Congregation the next. The man thus doomed to perpetual moving was the Rev. J.J. Oetjen, who continued his work under these circumstances for six years. In 1878 this arrangement came to an end when Zion called a pastor from the Iowa Synod and Pastor Oetjen continued to serve St. John's. In 1877 St. John's erected a new church, and the upper story of the parsonage was then used for school purposes. The congregation voted to join the Missouri Synod in 1880. In 1884 a school was built, and the entire parsonage was then made available to the pastor. This parsonage was replaced in 1911 and has been modernized since then. In 1915 the congregation erected a church at Johnstown known as Trinity which was to serve as a branch of St. John's for the purpose of giving the members in that locality better church and school accommodations. According to the records of the congregation, schools were conducted in the Sand Hill district and the Johnstown district until 1917, when both schools were discontinued. There is no record of a called teacher having served either of these schools. St. John's recently experienced the sorrow of losing its beloved pastor, the Rev. R.P. Young, through death in the midst of an active ministry. The present pastor is the Rev. August K. Stenzel. Membership, January 1, 1953: 410 souls; 300 communicants.

## **Second Convention of the Iowa District**

In May of the year 1880 the Iowa District met for its second convention in Maxfield Township, Bremer County, 63 being in attendance. The topic of the essay presented on this occasion was: "The Difference Between Law and Gospel." The convention voted to pay its circuit-riding pastor, the Rev. P. Rupprecht, \$75 for the year. The 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the presentation of the Augsburg Confession was observed during this year. The convention authorized the establishing of a District seal, which is still in existence in the archives.

## **1879 St. John's of Hubbard Organizes**

The last congregation to come into being before the organization of the Iowa District was St. John's at Hubbard. During the 60's and 70's many Germans settled in Hardin County. They were contacted by Iowa's missionary at large, the Rev. F. Doescher, and his helper, the Rev.

Theo. Mertens, who served these people from Fort Dodge. Later, pastors at Webster City and Hampton served this congregation. The Rev. A.C. Doerffler became the first resident pastor of the congregation in 1882. The first church building was erected the same year, while the present attractive brick structure was completed in 1912. The congregation has owned three parsonages in succession since its organization. In 1907 the congregation had one of those rare surprises which happen occasionally in the life of a congregation. This surprise came when the congregation received a different pastor from the one they had in mind when they sent the call. The congregation in its meeting had decided to call Rev. H. Maas. The vacancy pastor in making out the call was unaware that there were two men who had the same name and initial: H. Maas. As a result the call was sent to Henry Maas instead of Herman Maas. The reception committee was quite surprised when they met their new pastor alighting from the train. But everything worked out satisfactorily to all concerned in spite of the error.

There is no evidence that Hubbard ever had a Christian day school. The present pastor is the Rev. Martin E. Pape. Membership, January 1, 1953: 527 souls; 332 communicants.

On August 20, 1879, the first meeting of the Iowa District of the Missouri Synod was held in St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Fort Dodge. Five congregations: Fort Dodge, Dubuque, Davenport, Robbins (Atkins), and Victor, are charter members of the District. Eighteen congregations: Lotts Creek (Algona), Buena Vista, Caloma, Colfax Township, Dayton, Denison, Hampton, Hanover Township, St. Ansgar, Spirit Lake, Sumner, and Webster City, were accepted into membership with the Missouri Synod at this convention. Twenty-one ministers, in addition to the pastors of the above mentioned congregations, attended this organization meeting. Only two Iowa pastors failed to appear. Three Lutheran day school teachers were present, the teachers from Waterloo, Fort Dodge, and Luzerne. 67 persons attended this convention. It is interesting to note that all these people met in a building 24 x 60 x 16 in Fort Dodge.

Dr. E.F.W. Walther appeared as the honored guest at this initial convention, presenting the essay: "Some of the Main Duties Incumbent upon a Synod That Would Rightly Bear the Name Evangelical Lutheran." In his essay he made the following pertinent points:

1. It must in word and deed be true to the Confessions.
2. It must in an evangelical manner take care of its members. (There was a reluctance on the part of some congregations to join a synod, because there were synods in existence in which men wanted to rule the congregations. This may explain why not all congregations having pastors present were ready to join at the organizational meeting of the District. In his essay Dr. Walther made it clear that members were bound together in love.)
3. It must support its pastors and teachers in the exercise of their duties.
4. It must strive to edify its members and aid them in their growth in the knowledge of the truth. (This was to be done through the teaching in the congregation, through pastoral and teachers' conferences, and through the publishing of sound literature.)
5. It must promote peace and unity in the truth.
6. It must in all things seek the glory of God.

Already at its first convention a collection was taken up for the support of retired pastors and their widows and orphans. It amounted to \$39.36. This convention also established a Northern

and a Southern Pastoral Conference. These conferences still meet every spring and fall in our District.

Officers elected at this first convention of the Iowa District: President, Rev. L.J. Craemer of Fort Dodge; Vice-President, Rev. Theodore Brauer of Maxfield Township; Secretary, Rev. J. Fackler of Lyons; Treasurer, Mr. J.P. Rademacher of Fort Dodge.

### **1880 Delaware Becomes a Congregation**

In 1879 the Rev. L. Dornseif of Dubuque first visited Lutherans in the vicinity of Delaware. In 1880 the Delaware congregation was organized under Rev. von Strobe. Services were first held in private homes, in the Long Schoolhouse and in the town hall of Delaware. First resident pastor was Rev. Gustav Claus, who came in 1891. Sometime before this a church building had been erected. This building became a school when another church was built in 1903. About in 1918 the English language was introduced in their services. Peosta, which for 35 years had been joined with the Delaware congregation, severed its connection with Delaware in 1929 to be served by pastors closer by. The school was taught by pastors and lady teachers; there is no evidence of a called teacher having taught there. The present pastor is Rev. Theodore Rottmann. Membership, January 1, 1953: 292 souls, 190 communicants.

### **In 1882 Zion at Wilton Junction Joins the District**

Here we have a congregation which dates back to the year 1853, but not as a member of our synod. In that year a Pastor Veitz came to the settlement around Wilton Junction from Muscatine to preach to a number of people professing to be Lutheran. Services were conducted in a school two miles south of Wilton. Later, Rev. Veitz joined the Congregationalist Church because he had too much work among the Lutherans. In the meantime Rev. J.G. Kiesel had been sent from Texas to help Pastor Veitz, and he now continued to preach in Muscatine and Wilton. In 1856 a congregation was organized at Wilton Junction. They built a church in 1857. In 1867 a brick structure was built to replace the first building. Five years later the tower of the church was struck by lightning and was badly damaged; it was soon rebuilt. In 1874 the entire church property burned in the big Wilton Fire, which destroyed the main part of town. In rebuilding after this disaster the congregation first built a parsonage and school and later a frame church. This church stood until 1945, when it was torn down, a year after the Iowa Synod congregation in Wilton disbanded.

The congregation in Wilton up till this time was a member of the Iowa Synod. However, under the pastorate of Rev. W.T. Strobel the congregation was divided. As a result, Zion Congregation was formed, which joined the Missouri Synod, while the other group, remaining with the Iowa Synod, went under the name of Salem. Zion first built a small church and a parsonage and then in 1892 erected a better church building, the old church then being remodeled into a school building. In 1929 this church was moved away from the street and converted into a two-room school and parish hall. On the site of the church the present fine brick structure was erected. The claim is made by the Wilton historian that the antique glass in its church windows is the only glass of its kind to be found in our circles.

Under the pastorate of Rev. Peter W. Happel in 1911 an attempt was made to found a congregation in Durant. The report on this venture states that in the first two years only women showed up. In the third year a man finally got up enough courage to come. People in Durant at that time considered the church an unnecessary institution, and connection with it, foolishness. The report also states that at funerals around Durant it was customary to have a layman speak instead of a pastor. Thoughts such as the following were expressed in these funeral orations: "There is no God; there is no heaven, no hell; the mourners will never see their loved ones again, etc." Such pronouncements soon became too much for the mourners so that gradually these lay speakers were replaced by parsons from neighboring towns. Pastor Happel in his efforts to found other congregation in this vicinity conducted Sunday school for some time in Sunburg and other neighboring towns. In Pastor Happel, Wilton Junction has a pastor who has been in the same congregation longer than any other minister in our Iowa District East at the present time. He came there in 1911, and is still there in active service, which make 43 years of service in the same parish. In 1947 the fine, modern brick parsonage, the residence of Pastor Happel and his wife, was built. Throughout the years Wilton has had, and still has, a flourishing Christian day school. Principal of the school is Herbert L. Waech. Membership January 1, 1953: 420 souls; 282 communicants.

### **Eldora Organizes**

Lutheranism in Eldora dates back to the year 1876, when Rev. Henry Tiemeyer began preaching in a log house. In the next years the congregation was served by students and neighboring pastors. When Candidate A. Doerffler became pastor at Hubbard in 1882, he also served Eldora. Under his guidance St. Paul's Congregation of Eldora was organized and incorporated. The congregation joined the Missouri Synod in 1883. The first resident pastor was Rev. C.G. Guenther, who served the congregation for 29 years. In 1928 the present beautiful house of worship was dedicated. One of its pastors, Rev. C. Hesse, served the Iowa District East as its President for several years. The present parsonage was built in 1931. There is no evidence that the congregation ever had a parochial school. Present pastor is the Rev. John Zimmermann. Membership January 1, 1953: 698 souls; 495 communicants.

### **1882 District Convention**

The third District convention saw the pastors, teachers, and delegates going to St. John's at State Center. There were 75 in attendance. The topic of the essay was: "What Should Induce a Congregation to Establish a Christian Day School?" Among the various resolutions was one which raised the salary of the circuit-riding Pastor P. Rupperecht from \$75 a year to \$500 a year. The authorized District seal which bore the figure of the Good Shepherd with the inscription "The Lord knoweth them that are His" was now in use.

### **1883 District Synod at Homestead**

Although Homestead was as yet not a member of Synod, it served as host to the District synod in 1883, which was attended by 69. Topic of the essay: "The Rights and Duties of the Spiritual Priesthood." The office of "Circuit Riding Pastor" in the District was terminated at this convention. This year also marked the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Luther. A special

offering was lifted during the year for the liquidation of the indebtedness of the seminary at St. Louis, Missouri.

### **In 1884 Trinity, Cedar Rapids, Organizes**

The year 1884 again brings to our attention the work of Rev. Philip Studt of Luzerne, who was now active in Cedar Rapids. In the year 1883 he had begun conducting services in the U.L.C.A. church and at a later date in an Evangelical church. Under his direction Trinity was organized in 1884 in the section west of the Cedar River known at that time as Kingston. Early means of crossing this river was by ferry. At that time steamboats plied up and down the river with passengers and freight. Early settlers spoke of this city as Rapid City. First location of Trinity's property was on Fourth Avenue and Sixth Street, S.W. The first church was dedicated in 1886. The first resident pastor was the Rev. Julius Deckmann, Sr., who remained in this congregation for 31 years. In the year 1928 the parsonage caught fire, and the flying firebrands ignited the church so that it, too, soon was ablaze. In rebuilding its lost church the congregation moved to its present location on First Avenue, S.W. Services in the meantime were conducted in the school hall. The present brick church was dedicated in 1929. During the pastorate of Rev. Paul Bornhoeft services were conducted on Good Friday in a downtown theater and now are conducted each year on that day over the noon hour in the Coliseum. This annual service is regularly attended by over a thousand people. The pastor's sermon each year is printed in the *Cedar Rapid's Gazette* and lately has also been carried over the radio. The Lighted Lantern broadcast was for many years conducted by Pastor Bornhoeft over Radio station WMT, which featured as soloist Eldred Gerhold. Daughter congregations of Trinity are St. Paul's at Marion and Bethany on the East Side of Cedar Rapids.

Trinity has always maintained a Christian day school since its origin in 1884. The first school building was erected in 1890, and the present two-story brick structure was built in 1910. The first called teacher was Mr. Kleme Kambeis, who came in 1885. Present principal of the school is Mr. C.W. Laabs. Present pastor is Rev. E.H. Widmann. Membership January 1, 1953: 859 souls; 536 communicants.

### **1885 St. Peter's at Westgate**

In the year 1882 Rev. Theo. Haendschke of Sumner (Spring Fountain) began holding services in a schoolhouse northwest of Westgate. A group of Lutherans who had previously held membership in the Missouri Synod together with members of the already organized Hope Lutheran Congregation of the Iowa Synod formally extended a call to Rev. Haendschke to come and preach to them. He accepted this call and began conducting services regularly for them every two weeks. Under his guidance a congregation was organized in 1885 under the name of St. Peter's Ev. Lutheran Congregation of Westgate. For three years Pastor Haendschke rode on his pony over roads which at times were beyond description, coming from Spring Fountain to serve these people. Occasionally the members were obliged to return home without having services because the high water made it impossible for the pastor to ford the little Wapsie. In 1886 a small chapel was built at the location about a mile and a half northwest of Westgate, and a small portion of land next to the church was set aside for a cemetery. St. Peter's joined the Missouri Synod in 1888 and resolved to call its own pastor. As a result, Rev. H.E. Jacobs



became the first resident pastor of this congregation. In 1891 the church was moved into the town of Westgate. Services were held in the Methodist church while this move was being made. In January, 1893, a resolution was passed to build a new church if \$1,000 could be raised. By January 18 \$1,001.50 had been pledged, so they went ahead with the project. By resolution of the congregation the altar was to be at the east end of the church and the entrance with its tower to the west. As they were about to get under way with the building, they found that this would not work since the entrance would come within six feet of the parsonage. A hurried meeting was called, and the offer of one of the members to donate two lots for a building site was accepted, and the church was erected at its present location.

From the minutes of this congregation we gleaned this interesting item in connection with this building project. This is an English version of the German minutes:

Motion made and seconded that a rooster be placed on the point of the church steeple. – Motion lost.

Motion made and seconded that a cross be placed on the point of the steeple. – Motion lost.

Motion made and seconded that nothing be placed on the point of the steeple. – Motion carried.

Motion made and seconded that the matter concerning the rooster and the cross be reconsidered. – Motion carried.

Motion made and seconded that a rooster be placed on the point of the steeple. – Motion carried.

A note appended to these minutes states that a rooster was placed on the steeple, but that in later year a storm came along and the rooster flew away, and since that time a cross has been gracing the steeple of St. Peter's.

The first school was taught in the church northwest of town and after 1892 in an old frame building on the property of the congregation. In 1904 a brick school was erected in town, and in 1916 an addition was built to the school. They now have a two-room school. It is worth noting that H.H. Suhr, who taught school in Westgate as a student in 1910-11, later, in 1922, returned as a called teacher and is still serving this school at the present time.

In 1952 the congregation enlarged its church building, and built a basement under it, the members donating some 9,000 hours of labor toward this project. The present pastor is the Rev. Otto Schultz, who has been our genial District Secretary for many years. Membership January 1, 1953: 512 souls; 362 communicants.

### **St. John's, Marengo, Organizes**

In the early part of the year 1893 a group of Lutherans in and around Marengo requested Rev. George Bayer of St. Martin's in St. Clair Township to conduct services in Marengo. He complied by serving them several times a month. Under his leadership a congregation was organized in Marengo in 1885 under the name of St. John's Church. Services were then being

held in a Reformed church. In 1903 the congregation purchased the old Presbyterian church, which until 1952 served this congregation as its house of worship. This building was one of the oldest churches being used by one of our congregations in the State of Iowa. For 26 years Rev. Bayer served both St. Martin's and St. John's together, and then for ten years St. John's of Marengo alone. He retired in 1919. Upon the arrival of Rev. Victor Grimm as its pastor, St. John's, which had functioned more or less independently, joined the Missouri Synod. IN this same year a parsonage was built, and organizational life began to show itself. A Sunday school was organized. The congregation did not conduct a Christian day school. With the dedication of its beautiful stone structure in 1952 the use of Iowa's oldest Lutheran church building came to an end. Present pastor is the Rev. Robert Jaeger. Membership January 1, 1953: 416 souls, 281 communicants.

### **District Convention of 1885**

This convention took place in the month of June with Trinity of Lowden as host. There were 88 in attendance. Essay: "The Certainty of Salvation and Its Necessity Toward Christian Living." Mission work in Keokuk and Burlington had to be discontinued for the time being because attendance had dwindled to such an extent that it no longer was worth-while.

### **District Convention of 1886**

Boone was the host of the convention, which was held in September with 95 present. Essay: "Church Discipline." The mission report stated that opportunities for mission work were presenting themselves in the towns springing up along the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad, which was under construction at that time. Pastors were encouraged to explore these places.

The Missouri Synod general convention meeting in 1887, there was no District synod in that year.

### **District Convention in 1888**

This convention was held in Fort Dodge with 108 in attendance. Essay: "The Earnestness, Zeal, and Faithfulness with Which One Should Imitate Christ in These Last Days of the World." This convention authorized the calling of a circuit rider at a salary of \$450 a year to do mission work along the Milwaukee Road in the State of Iowa.

### **1889. St. Peter's at Elma**

Shortly after the first railroad was laid through Elma, missionaries and itinerant preachers made the rounds to call upon the early settlers of the Lutheran faith. One of the first to minister to these people was Rev. Edward Wachtel, who came from New Hampton to preach to the various settlements in Howard County. With the coming of the railroad, pastors were able to come from Sumner and Westgate to serve them. Prior to the year 1889 there was no organized Lutheran congregation in Elma, but sometime during the course of that year, under the guidance of Rev. Theo. Haendschke of Sumner, St. Peter's at Elma was officially organized. An offer was made

by two of the members to transport the Community Church at Busti to Elma if the members would help. This offer was accepted, and thus this congregation obtained its first house of worship. In May of this same year St. Peter's together with the congregation at Riceville called Rev. Karl E.J. Schmidt to serve them jointly. A parsonage was built in Elma for the pastor. In 1890 school sessions were begun. A second church was built in 1896, and the old church was converted into a school building. In 1907 Riceville became self-supporting and called its own pastor so that the local pastor had but one charge to serve. A new school building was erected in 1912. In 1932 lightning struck the church steeple, which was not rebuilt. No information was obtained as to when the school was discontinued.

From the minutes of this congregation we gathered the following items: In 1904 it was required that all pupils of non-members attending the school pay \$5.00 per term. Likewise, that a fee of \$5.00 be charged for marriages solemnized in the church, one half belonging to the congregation and one half being the pastor's fee.

An amendment reads: "All funerals should, if possible, be held at some other time than Sunday. (This is nerve-racking for the pastor and the organist and disrupts the services in our as well as in surrounding congregations.)"

The last resident pastor to serve this congregation was Rev. A. Michels. He has recently accepted a call to Ottumwa. Pastor William Hilst of Fayette has accepted the call to Elma and was installed on August 1. Membership January 1, 1953: 311 souls, 212 communicants.

### **District Synod of 1889**

This, the tenth-anniversary convention, met at Artesian near Waverly with 108 in attendance. Essay: "Directions for Congregational Living as Found in the Epistles to the Corinthians."

### **1890. St. Paul's, Buckeye**

On July 4, 1886, Rev. G. Haar of Hubbard gathered a number of German Lutherans for the first Lutheran service in Winterfeld's school near Buckeye. In August, 1890, a congregation was organized in Schwinger School, which was being used for worship at that time. The congregation worshiped in schoolhouses until 1898, when it dedicated its first church. In 1908 the church was moved into the town of Buckeye. The same year the congregation received its first resident pastor in the person of Rev. H.C. Koepke. A Sunday school was organized in 1897, and a parochial school was conducted during the pastorate of Rev. Koepke. The congregation became a member of Synod in 1912. The present brick church was erected in 1924. Present pastor is the Rev. A. Holm. Membership January 1, 1953: 235 souls; 160 communicants.

### **St. Paul's, Fredericksburg**

Services were first conducted in Fredericksburg by Rev. Theo. Haendschke of Sumner, in the town hall, and later in the public school. In 1890, under the guidance of Rev. H.E. Jacobs of Westgate, St. Paul's Congregation was officially organized. Shortly thereafter a church was built. During the first six years this congregation was served by seven different pastors,

congregations at Crane Creek and New Oregon, McIntyre and Cresco, sharing their pastors with St. Paul's during these six years. The congregation joined Synod in 1892. Rev. Daniel Kautz became the first resident pastor of the congregation in 1896. A parsonage and schoolhouse were built in 1915. School, however, was not opened until 1923, when Rev. Otto Duerr was pastor. No called teacher ever served this school, but it was taught at various times by lady teachers, students, or the pastor. In 1937 the present church structure was dedicated. No record of when the school was discontinued. Present pastor is the newly installed Rev. Henry W. Bieberdorf. Membership January 1, 1953: 252 souls, 177 communicants.

### **1891 District Synod Meets**

This convention was held in Caledonia Township in August with 141 in attendance. The Essay: "What the Bible Has to Say About Its Majesty and Origin." This convention established the District Church Extension Fund and also the regulations governing its administration.

### **1892 District Synod**

Charter Oak served as host for this convention in September with 147 in attendance. The essay was a continuation of the 1891 essay.

### **1893. St. John's at Lockridge**

One of the oldest congregations in southeastern Iowa was St. John's, Lockridge, now defunct. As early as 1890 pastors from Wilton Junction and What Cheer served these Lutherans. In 1893 Rev. F. Wolter was ordained and installed as pastor of this congregation, which he then organized. The church was built in the same year. In 1894 the congregation joined the Missouri Synod. Pastors served surrounding areas, such as Keosauqua, Cantril, Milton, during the course of the years in attempts to establish other congregations, but none of these attempts was successful for any length of time. At one time Lockridge was one parish with St. John's of Oskaloosa. It meant quite a journey back and forth for the pastor serving these two congregations. The church was located a few miles north of Lockridge at a place called Four Corners. Although it never was a large congregation, it did serve as a valuable outpost and center for Lutherans in that entire region. In 1950 the few remaining members decided to discontinue services at Lockridge and to attend at Mount Pleasant. Thus ended an era in Iowa District history in southeastern Iowa which leaves in its wake many pleasant memories of the days gone by.

### **St. John's, Fairbank**

Somewhere around the year 1854 the first Lutheran settlers came to the vicinity of Fairbank from around Independence, Iowa. Shortly thereafter Rev. Bredow began conducting services for these people three quarters of a mile south of town. Under Rev. Buehrer a congregation was organized in the town of Fairbank in 1868. A church was erected in the same year. Under the pastorate of Rev. Theodore Wolfram a second church was dedicated in 1891. In 1936 the church was remodeled. Ever since its organization St. John's has conducted a Christian day school, which at first was taught by the pastors. Lady teachers assisted at times with the school. The first called

teacher was John Weber, who was installed in 1936. Present teacher is Fern Lange. Rev. H.J. Heilmann has been pastor of this congregation for the past 24 years. Membership January 1, 1953: 514 souls; 369 communicants.

### **District Convention in 1894**

This synod met at Alta at the end of August with 157 in attendance. Essay: "The Seven Open Letters in Revelations."

### **1895. St. John's at Keystone**

Although the Federal Writers' Project, sponsored by the Iowa State Historical Society in 1938, states that the town of Keystone has no churches, we herewith contradict their findings by stating that there has been a church in this quiet and peaceful village along the Milwaukee Railroad since the year 1895. In that year Rev. Philip Studt of Luzerne came to this German settlement to conduct services. Shortly thereafter St. John's Congregation of Keystone was organized. In 1896 Rev. M.O. Burkhardt became the first resident pastor. For about four years church services were held in the public school. In 1899 the first church was erected. A Christian day school was opened under Rev. G. Franke in 1900. A parsonage was built in 1901 and a school in 1906. Lady teachers and students assisted the pastors until 1923, when the first teacher in the person of Walter Firnhaber was called. In 1924 Rev. A. Brauer came to Keystone, in the same year plans were under way to construct a new brick church, which was then dedicated in 1925. In the fall of 1924 one of the largest, if not the largest, adult membership classes ever to be confirmed in one of our Iowa Lutheran Churches was received into membership in Keystone. When this class of 93 members was received, of whom 16 were baptized, the number was so large that the regular members had to stay home because there was not enough room in the old church to seat the entire congregation for this eventful service. The old church was moved across the street and remodeled into a school. For a time the school flourished to such an extent that two teachers were necessary. Gradually the attendance dwindled, and in 1949 the school was closed because of the small number of pupils attending. Keystone has served as host to our district conventions at various times. At one of these a movie was taken of the occasion which we hope to show at our Waterloo convention in August. Present pastor is the Rev. A. Brauer, who is the third resident pastor of this congregation. He is now rounding out his thirtieth year as pastor of the congregation. Membership January 1, 1953: 616 souls; 414 communicants.

### **St. Andrew's at Van Horne**

St. Andrew's Church in Van Horne was organized in September, 1895, under the guidance of Rev. F.A. Reinhardt of Newhall. This group erected a frame structure to serve as a church in 1896. The first resident pastor was Rev. H.C. Reikowsky, who was known as Rev. Reik. A parsonage was built during his ministry at Van Horne. The present attractive brick church was dedicated in 1926. No evidence that this congregation ever had a parochial school. Pastor Norman Rothe recently accepted a call to another parish so that this congregation is vacant at the present time. Pastor Rothe, together with Pastor Brauer of Keystone, was instrumental in establishing the congregation at Garrison. Membership January 1, 1953: 384 souls; 245 communicants.

### **St. Paul's, Latimer**

St. Paul's of Latimer acknowledges the former church at Millpond (Beeds Lake near Hampton) as its mother church. First services were held three miles north of Latimer for the first time in 1894, by Rev. S.W. Dietrich of Millpond. In 1895 services were being held in a school in Latimer, where a congregation was organized in March of that year. This newly organized congregation was to form one parish with that of Millpond, but by September it already was a separate parish. By this time also a church had already been built, and in 1896 Rev. H. Westphal became the first resident pastor. A parsonage was erected in 1899. The congregation became a member of Synod about 1897. Under Rev. Hansen services were begun at Burdette, about 12 miles south of Latimer, but these efforts were not successful in establishing a permanent congregation. As early as 1896 permission was granted the pastor to begin a school. However, not until 1925 did a school finally become established. Mr. K.J. Traugott became the first resident teacher. A school building had been erected already in 1914 and had been used for religious instruction from time to time. The school proved so successful that in the second year another teacher was engaged. The school has flourished ever since. The bell which is still being used to call the people to church was purchased in 1902. The present fine church was dedicated in 1941. Mr. Herbert Einspahr of Freeman, S. Dak., has accepted the call as teacher and was installed on July 4. Present pastor is the Rev. Alvin Kellermann. Membership January 1, 1953: 595 souls; 435 communicants.

### **St. John's at Reinbeck**

Shortly after the founding of the village of Reinbeck in 1876 a Lutheran church building was erected in the town. When dissension arose among the membership in 1880, the church was abandoned. Then, during the year 1885 Schleswig-Holsteiners from Scott County, Iowa, and other people who had come over from Germany began settling in this neighborhood. Although there is evidence of efforts being made to serve these people, it was not until Rev. Theodore Wolfram came to Immanuel, Waterloo, that the work was earnestly pursued in Reinbeck. He began to hold Lutheran services in Reinbeck in 1889 every three weeks. Place of worship was the Congregational church. In 1891 a preliminary meeting was held to organize a congregation, and sometime before 1896 the congregation was organized. Incorporation took place in 1896. The same year the church was dedicated. In 1897 an endowment of \$5,000 was given by two friends of missions with the stipulation that the income from this money go to missions until such a time when a resident pastor would be called; then the income was to go toward the pastor's salary. No doubt this stipulation influenced the congregation to call a resident pastor sooner than they might have done otherwise. In 1934 this money was invested in a building, the rental flowing into the congregational treasury. The congregation joined the Missouri Synod in 1897. The first resident pastor was Rev. L. Traub, who came in 1898. In 1911 a parish school was opened, with Henry Bertram as the first resident teacher. In 1922 the congregation acquired a well-built rural school, which it moved into town and to which it added an assembly room. No record as to when the school was discontinued, but Mr. Bertram taught there until 1925, when he accepted a call to Lowden. Present pastor is Rev. Ewald Stuempfig. Membership January 1, 1953: 261 souls; 175 communicants.

## **District Synod Meets**

The 1895 District synod met at Homestead at the end of August with 163 in attendance. Essay: "True and False Miracles."

### **1896. St. John's at Oskaloosa**

The history of St. John's at Oskaloosa dates back to the year 1892, when a Pastor Hauser of the Iowa Synod began conducting services in the Court House. Oskaloosa's name appears very early in Iowa history, mention being made of the large number of covered wagons that could be seen stopping over and passing through Oskaloosa as the settlers pushed westward in Iowa. Oskaloosa was served by Iowa Synod pastors until 1913, when Rev. J. Duerr of Lockridge of the Missouri Synod began serving them. The congregation was officially organized in 1896. As a Missouri Synod congregation St. John's continued to worship in the church erected by the congregation when it was still a member of the Iowa Synod. In 1947 the present church was erected, improving the opportunity for this struggling congregation to grow and prosper. After being subsidized by the District for many years, this congregation has recently become self-supporting. Under Rev. F.J. Oetjen mission work was begun in Ottumwa, which later became an organized congregation. Present pastor is Rev. Clarence Rabe. Membership January 1, 1953: 160 souls, 96 communicants.

### **Some Facts About These Times**

It is interesting to note the prices prevalent in the year 1896. Lard sold at 8 cents a pound; butter at 12 cents; eggs at 14 cents a dozen; hogs for \$3.60 to \$4.00; corn at 49 cents a bushel. Early settlers of that day remarked about the virgin beauty of the countryside teeming with wild life, elk, buffalo, deer, and fowl. Waterloo in those days numbered 7,000 inhabitants, and electric streetcars were replacing the horse and mule cars.

The advent of the bicycle in those days also presented its problems to the church. For, when the preachers looked down from their pulpits and saw more and more empty seats, they were quite incensed because those who ought to have occupied them were seeking pleasure on their bicycles.

### **1897 District Synod Meets**

Sessions were held at Germantown at the end of August with 153 in attendance. Essay: "How Church and State Can Work Together." According to the mission report there were 15 subsidized congregations in the District.

### **1898. Immanuel, Williamsburg**

The story of Immanuel in York Township has its beginning in 1889, the year that its mother congregation at Homestead celebrated its silver anniversary. That year the members living in York Township requested permission to conduct their own school as a south district of the Homestead congregation. This new school was dedicated in 1889 at a place known as Imhoff's

Corner. The daughter of Pastor Baumhoefener was engaged to teach at \$20.00 a month for eight months. First permanent teacher called to serve the school was A.W. Meyer, who came in 1896. His salary was \$250.00 a year and feed for a horse. He paid \$1.50 a week for lodging, board, and laundry. This township received its name of York from the fact that the first white settlers (Irish), who came to this locality in 1840, had come from New York. This area was described by writers as a farmer's paradise. In 1898, when the people of the north district of St. John's, Homestead, refused to move the location of the church farther to the south and those of the south district refused to help build a larger church at the old location in the north, the people of York Township decided to organize their own congregation and build their own church. They asked Pastor Baumhoefener to continue to serve them, and under his guidance this newly organized congregation adopted its constitution and called Mr. Meyer as its own teacher. The congregation from its very beginning adopted the policy of having various treasurers. There was a main treasurer and the treasurer for the teachers' salary, and when a resident pastor was called, a treasurer was elected to collect for the pastor's salary. When the congregation called a second teacher, another treasurer was elected to collect for his salary. In fact, whenever the congregation undertook any special project, it always meant another treasurer to gather the necessary funds. At the cornerstone laying of the new church the Iowa County band played for the occasion to accompany the hymns. The organ purchased for this church cost \$72.00. ON the peak of the tower was placed a metal ball and a plain iron cross. The seating capacity of this church was 300 in the auditorium and 100 in the balcony. The pulpit was high up, a ten-step stairway ascending to it; it had an oak canopy over it. While the church was under construction, services were held in the town hall in Williamsburg. In October, 1898, the new church was dedicated. For the dedication everyone was encouraged to bring five or six hitching posts and asked to set them into the ground so that a sufficient number of them would be available for the horses of the members and visitors. The many horses, buggies, surreys, and wagons around the church on the day of dedication must have been a wonderful sight. At the beginning of the service the school bell was rung, the school being about a quarter mile away from the church, and then the church bell answered as if it were calling the people to come and open the church. The band then led the procession from the school with four vested clergymen following, and the school children behind them. It was customary in the early days of this congregation at funerals to have the committal in the cemetery first and the service in honor of the dead in the church afterwards. The cemetery was next to the church.

A news account of a wedding performed in this church had as its heading: "A Nice Wedding Without Dancing." In the article the writer states that a great many friends were present, among whom he saw the bankers of Williamsburg. The young folks amused themselves with singing and games, but no dancing. This was a Christian wedding. A collection was taken up for poor students at the reception." The church was built and dedicated during the Spanish-American War.

In 1899 the Rev. Fr. Bonovski became the first resident pastor of the congregation. The former teacherage thereupon became the parsonage. In winter, when it was difficult to heat the church properly, the rule was made that no windows in the balcony should be opened. Those who were to hot up there should sit downstairs. In 1904 the school was moved from Imhoff's Corner to the church property next to the teacherage. In this same year several members were released to begin a church in Williamsburg. When the singing in the services became too slow, hymn-



singing sessions were inaugurated. People coming to these sessions had to bring along their own lanterns and lamps for light. In 1908 Immanuel became a member of the Missouri Synod. In 1913 the congregation offered ten cents for every gopher caught on the cemetery and church grounds. In 1914 the collections were received in baskets, and the old-fashioned *Klingelbeutel* was discarded. In 1918 the earthly remains of the dead were first taken into the church for the funeral service and then given last rites in the cemetery. The present school was dedicated in 1938. For many years Immanuel's Walther League has had a band of its own, which was disbanded during World War II, but since that time has again shown some life. In 1942 Immanuel emancipated itself from its wide variety of treasurers by establishing a new financial system which from then on needed only one treasurer. Rev. Albert Bostelmann, who had served this congregation faithfully for many years, was released in 1943 to become an Army chaplain.

Immanuel Congregation has always had a strong local Walther League, at times having the largest membership of any society in the State of Iowa. In 1945 this congregation became a charter member of the Home for the Aged Association. Although an attempt was made shortly after World War II to erect a new house of worship, nothing came of this because building costs were found to be too high. Principal of the school at present is L.W. Fischer. The pastor is the Rev. Reginald Muhl. Membership January 1, 1953: 408 souls; 296 communicants.

### **District Convention Convenes in 1898**

This convention met in Charter Oak in the month of August with 145 in attendance. Essay: "Exegetical Study of Hebrews 11:1-22." The mission report stated that there were 21 subsidized congregations in the District and that four new missions had been added. Westgate and Latimer became self-supporting congregations. Mission work had been begun at Dixon and at Decorah.

### **1900. Grant Center Organized**

The Lutherans of the Grant Center area had already been served some 25 years before the turn of the century by pastors of Zion Lutheran Church (Beeds Lake), located west of Hampton. The first pastor to begin services was the Rev. John Sessler, who conducted them in the Grant Center school. In 1900 under the leadership of the Rev. John Burmeister, Immanuel Lutheran Congregation of Grant Center was organized. The congregation was privileged to dedicate a church later that same year. For the next 11 years after its organization Grant Center continued to be served from Beeds Lake. The Rev. E.F. Hempel became the first resident pastor of this congregation in 1911. In these early years Grant Center Church was a welcome landmark for the comparatively few people who drove their teams on roads that were made more or less impassable by mud and snowdrifts. Today this church is fronted by a busy highway, enlivened by a daily stream of cars, buses, and trucks. Although this congregation has not grown to large numerical strength, many of its sons and daughters have been trained here for membership in sister congregations. Though small in number, the congregation is very active in its congregational life. No evidence that a school was ever in operation in this congregation. Present pastor is the Rev. Wm. Ullerich. Membership January 1, 1953: 120 souls; 82 communicants.

## **District Synod Meets**

This synod met at Fort Dodge the third week in August with 182 in attendance. Essay: "Exegetical Study of Hebrews 11:23-40."

## **Home-Finding Society Is Organized**

A Home-Finding Society with headquarters in Fort Dodge was organized in 1901 for the purpose of finding homes for orphan children as well as others that might come under their care. In the first 20 years this society placed some 450 children. Membership in this organization is voluntary and much support is given this venture through Christmas Eve offerings. A contribution of \$1.00 a year for an adult and 25 cents a year for a child makes them members of the society. The present building used by the society was erected in 1928. The society meets once a year in Fort Dodge to elect officers and to conduct the business of the organization. The Rev. Walter Becker was superintendent for many years. The present superintendent is the Rev. Eugene W. Jobst.

### **1901. District Synod Meets**

Lowden served as host to this convention which met the third week in August with 179 in attendance. Essay: "Excerpts from the History of the Missouri Synod." Mission report showed Keystone as having become self-supporting. Lockridge and New London were being served as one parish. East Davenport was to buy a home which was to serve as a combination parsonage and school. This did not materialize. Iowa City was reported as being in danger of closing. The property of the congregation had been condemned and taken over for a high school. The convention went on record encouraging members of our congregations to have special offerings at weddings, baptism gatherings in the home, and similar occasions for worthy purposes.

### **1902. Holy Cross, Davenport**

In the year 1900 the Rev. Herman Greif, as missionary at large in Scott County, began conducting services in East Davenport. Time and again in those first days he was told, "You will never get a church started here." For a while it appeared as if this might be true, because for an entire month only three came to the services held in a chapel on Spring St. Gradually, however, the attendance began to increase. In the first two years this little flock had difficulty in finding places in which to worship. A vacant grocery store was first used until it was rented and then a dance hall on the third floor of a building. The many steps made it difficult for older people to attend. With Synod's help the congregation erected a church on Bell Ave. To help defray the costs of this building Pastor Greif was given permission to gather funds in Lowden, Wilton Junction, Homestead, and Trinity of Davenport. This effort netted \$1,500. Two Sundays after this church was dedicated the German Ev. Lutheran Cross Congregation of East Davenport was organized, in April, 1902. This new building proved to be an asset to the congregation so that by 1910 the congregation had grown to over 200 souls. When people would attend church from among the Holsteiners working in the factories, they would be kidded, "Are you so dumb that you would go to church?" This caused some of the more timid souls to quit going to church.

Street cars were then drawn by horses and steamboat traffic on the river was quite heavy. From East Davenport Pastor Greif served the West End church of Davenport, Buffalo, Blue Grass, Durant, Eldridge, and Pleasant Valley. Pastor Greif reports that some of these places were lost to our Church because of manpower shortage.

A parsonage was bought in 1910. In 1918 the congregation was divided into four districts, with collectors for each district to gather the envelopes once a month for the pastor's salary. After the pastorate of the Rev. Otto Geisler in 1920, the vacancy was quite lengthy and the congregation began to drop off so that there was talk of uniting it with the congregation in West Davenport. This was voted down. The next pastor only stayed three months, and the one following him did not stay much longer. Another man volunteered to serve as pastor and then suddenly disappeared. This nearly disastrous period came to a close with the arrival of Rev. Otto Nieting as pastor. Under his leadership the congregation began to revive again. In 1927 the present church building was dedicated under Pastor Oetting. The old church was sold to a negro Baptist church and is no longer in existence. The present parsonage was bought in 1928. Although Synod authorized the buying of a combination parsonage and school for this congregation in 1901, this congregation did not at any time have a school of its own. Some of their children have attended and some still attend the school of their sister congregation, Trinity. At present Holy Cross is in the process of enlarging its church and educational facilities to make room for double their present capacity. The present pastor is the Rev. Walter S. Wendt. Membership as of January 1, 1953: 407 souls; 264 communicants.

### **1903. District Synod Meets**

Clarinda was the host at the end of August with 164 in attendance. Essay: "The Lutheran Doctrine of Justification as Compared with Catholic and Reformed Teachings." Mission report stated that Fredericksburg and Westgate were united as one parish. Lone Tree, South Amana, and Windham were being served as one parish. The Board of Church Extension was incorporated with the State of Iowa. An opinion was given on labor unions.

### **1904. St. Paul's, Williamsburg**

The first pastor to conduct services in Williamsburg was the Rev. C.W. Baumhoefner of Homestead, who, prior to 1898, conducted services here once every four weeks. Services were first held in a Presbyterian church, then in a Methodist church, and later in the city hall. When Immanuel Congregation in York Township was organized, services were discontinued in Williamsburg for several years. When, in 1904, several families asked for release from Immanuel they did so for the purpose of organizing St. Paul's in Williamsburg under the guidance of the Rev. F. Bonovsky. Their first church building, measuring 30 by 44 feet, was erected the same year, with a vestry room large enough to serve as a school. In 1905, the Rev. C. Zollman became the first resident pastor of this congregation. He immediately opened a parochial school with six children attending. He remained here only a year. A school was built in 1907 and a parsonage in 1912. The congregation became self-supporting in 1909. The Rev. Herman Greif became the pastor in 1913. Shortly after his arrival English was introduced into the services. In 1917 a lady teacher was engaged to assist the pastor with the school. The present fine church edifice was dedicated in 1923. Pastor Greif, who served this congregation

for 20 years, has been living in retirement in Williamsburg these past years. The Sunday school was organized under the pastorate of the Rev. Tobias Joeckel in 1936. In 1953 the congregation dedicated its new modern school building. Principal of the school is E.R. Kiekhaefer. Present pastor is the Rev. George Schubarth. Membership, January 1, 1953: Souls, 792; Communicants, 520.

### **District Synod of 1904 Meets**

Synod met in Ogden at the end of August with 178 in attendance. Essay: A continuation of the essay of 1903 which dealt with a comparison of the doctrine of justification. This synod established regulations for the granting of subsidy to needy students willing to study for service in the Church. Regulations were established for conducting elections at District synods. Regulations were also established for the Board of Support. The answer to the question, "Is it wrong to belong to a labor union?" was answered at this convention as not being wrong in itself.

### **1905. Trinity, Conroy, Organizes**

In the fall of 1905, Trinity Lutheran Congregation of Conroy was organized as a daughter congregation of Saint John's at Homestead, with the Rev. C.W. Baumhoefner serving as pastor. For the first three years after its organization services were conducted on Sunday afternoons in a frame building which served as a Christian day school during the week. For a brief period in 1908 this congregation was served by the Rev. H. Koenig of Williamsburg until the Rev. A Wagner was installed as the first resident pastor in 1909. He remained one year. Sometime after 1910 the present parsonage was built. The present church was erected in 1915. The first person to teach school here was Anna Baumhoefner, daughter of the founding pastor. From 1909 to 1918 the school was taught by pastors of the congregation; after that, until 1924, by teacher students. Mr. A. Daenzer became the first called teacher in 1924. In 1946 a second room, which was taught by a lady teacher, was opened in the school. Mr. H.F. Stichweh is principal of the school. The Rev. Herman H. Kespohl is the pastor. Membership, January 1, 1953: 365 souls; 243 communicants.

### **District Synod of 1906**

Denison was host at the end of August, with 191 in attendance. Essay: "The Times and Miracles of the Prophet Elijah." There were 30 subsidized congregations in the District at that time, with five congregations having become self-supporting. Durant and Eldridge were reported as not very promising mission fields. Regulations for the handling of Church Extension funds were established.

### **District Synod of 1907**

This synod met in Lyons at the end of August, with 188 in attendance. Essay: "The Preaching and Work of Christ According to Mark 1 – 9." The mission report stated that Oxford was being served from Iowa City.

### **1908. St. Paul's, Alden**

St. Paul's Lutheran Congregation at Alden was organized early in the year 1908 by the Rev. H. Koepke. Services were at first conducted in a school about one mile west of Alden on what is now Highway 20. Later the Legion Hall in town was used; after that a lodge hall. After a few years the facilities of a German Methodist church were secured. This property was purchased from them in 1923. This building was moved to its present location that same year and was also enlarged and renovated. In 1921 St. Paul's joined the Missouri Synod. There is no evidence that a parochial school was ever opened in this congregation. In 1949 the congregation let contracts for its present fine church structure. Because of a shortage of steel there was quite a delay in construction so that the congregation was not able to dedicate until 1951. The Rev. B.W. Bruch is the pastor. Membership, January 1, 1953: 402 souls; 269 communicants.

### **District Synod of 1909**

This synod met in Boone at the end of August with 207 in attendance. Essay: Continuation of the "Time and Life and Miracles of the Prophet Elijah." South Amana was reported as no longer being served by us. Lockridge, Keokuk, and Alexandria were now being served as one parish.

### **1909. St. Paul's, Readlyn**

In the summer of 1908 the Rev. R. Piehler of Klinger began conducting services in the public school at Readlyn. Upon release of several families from the Klinger congregation, St. Paul's of Readlyn was organized in 1909. Neighboring congregations were asked to help this new congregation with funds to erect a church. The congregation at Klinger and Artesian responded to this appeal. The church was dedicated in 1910. Vicars served the congregation until 1912. The Rev. Herman Maas became the first resident pastor of the congregation in 1912. A parsonage was built that same year. The vicars as well as Rev. Maas conducted school in the basement of the church. A school was built in 1915. Pastor Maas continued to teach the school until 1922. The next three years it was taught by students. In 1925 Mr. Fred Torgler became the first called teacher of the congregation. In 1928 an addition was built to the church and a pipe organ was dedicated. Principal of the two-room school is E.G. Handrich. Pastor is the Rev. Julius Strelow. Membership, January 1, 1953: 380 souls; 270 communicants.

### **St. James, Victor**

Mission work in and around Victor was begun in 1907 by Rev. Otto Kitzmann of St. John's in Lincoln Township. First services were conducted in the Congregational church. Under the guidance of the above pastor, St. James Lutheran Congregation of Victor was organized in 1910. In 1910 the present church was dedicated. Rev. Wm. Ullerich became the first resident pastor of the congregation in 1916. In 1919 the parsonage was built. The congregation became self-supporting in 1923. In 1951 the congregation purchased property for a new church location. A house was purchased with this property which now serves as a parsonage. A new church edifice is at present under construction. For a time services were conducted in Brooklyn by Pastor Dohrman of this congregation. These were later discontinued and the members attended in

Victor. Pastor is the Rev. C. Schroeder. Membership, January 1, 1953: 290 souls; 226 communicants.

### **District Synod of 1910**

This synod met at Klinger at the end of August with 208 in attendance. Essay: "The Wandering of Israel in the Wilderness on the Way to the Promised Land." Mission work was begun at Teeds Grove out of Lyons. Work was begun at Pleasant Valley and a start was made again in Iowa City.

### **1912. District Synod**

This Synod met at Alta at the end of August with 225 in attendance. The essay on Israel's wandering in the wilderness was concluded. East and West Davenport congregations were reported as being self-supporting. Bradford was now being served. It was reported as doubtful that New London would become a permanent field. A protest was voiced by the convention to Iowa's senators and representatives against a bill pending in Washington which barred the shipment of communion wine into dry territories such as Iowa. The request was made that communion wines be made an exception to that regulation.

### **St. John's, Waverly**

St. John's of Waverly was founded by a group of families who had moved from neighboring rural homes into this community. Rather than make the trip back to their home congregations in the rural areas, they banded together and organized a congregation in Waverly in 1913 which other Lutherans of their Synod might also join. The church was dedicated in 194. The Rev. E.F. Melcher aided in the founding of this congregation. First resident pastor was the Rev. Otto Koch, who came to St. John's in 1914. A parochial school had been started in the earlier days of the congregation. During the late thirties the school was discontinued but was opened again in 1945. Present teacher is Margaret Schmidt. Pastor is the Rev. Harold Roschke. Membership, January 1, 1953: 337 souls; 241 communicants.

### **District Synod Meets**

Synod met in 1913 at St. John's in Germantown in August with 243 present. Essay on Israel's journey through the wilderness concluded. For once the Mission treasury of the District was able to show a balance.

### **1914. Grace Lutheran, Blairstown**

The history of Grace Lutheran Congregation dates back to the year 1911, when preaching services were begun by Rev. C.J. Pritz, then pastor of St. Martin's of St. Clair Township. After three years of services, a meeting was called in 1914 in the original church building to organize a congregation. During the course of the meeting, released for members from various neighboring congregations were read, a constitution was read and accepted, and a congregation was organized. Following the organization the members of Grace met with the members of St.

Martin's and jointly adopted the motion that St. Martin's pay the minister's salary and that Grace pay the teacher. A call was then sent to Rev. Pritz to serve both congregations. Grace became a member of the Missouri Synod in 1915. Toward the end of 1915 the congregation called Rev. Pritz to be its first resident pastor, which he accepted. The original church in which this congregation worshiped was built in 1879 by the Moravian Brethren. Later it became the property of the Evangelical Association and in 1914 it was bought by Grace Congregation. The congregation became self-supporting in 1917. The parsonage was built in 1915 and the school in 1917. After the closing of the school it was sold to the public school system. In 1947 the parsonage was moved to its present location. The church property was sold to the public school system and the church was moved to Traer, Iowa, where it is still in use. The present beautiful church was dedicated in the fall of 1949. By 1953 the congregation was able to pay off its indebtedness on this new structure. Pastor is the Rev. Walter Nierman. Membership, January 1, 1953: 303 souls; 207 communicants.

In checking the history of Blairstown we read about the Hickory Grove debating society which existed there many years ago. Among various propositions debated by this club was the question: "Be it resolved that timber stealing is morally right." During the course of the debate it was stated that in order to be a respectable citizen of Blairstown a man would have to have stolen some timber at one time or another; in fact, it was pointed out that everyone in town was guilty of having stolen some timber during his lifetime. The fact that our fellow members in Blairstown were so quick in paying off the indebtedness on this church would indicate that since the Lutheran Church has gotten a foothold there, things have changed for the better so that now in order to be respectable in Blairstown people no longer need to steal timber, but they just pay their debts and get the same results.

### **Hampton Hospital Society Organizes**

In a meeting held at Hampton in May, 1914, the Lutheran Hospital Association of Hampton was organized. Officers and a Board of Directors were elected. The hospital which this organization built was dedicated in 1915. Originally the building consisted of two stories. In 1917 a third story was added. The merchants of Hampton donated the site for this building. Cost of the building was defrayed by contributions of members from 36 congregations, interested doctors, and other individuals. First chaplain of the hospital was the Rev. Otto Von Gemmingen, then pastor at Zion west of Hampton. Since the organization of a congregation in Hampton, the pastors of that congregation have served as chaplains. President of the hospital board at the present time is the Rev. Alvin Kellermann of Latimer. Men who have given many years of service to the cause of this hospital are: Edward Dohrman of Hampton, who served the association as treasurer for 40 years, relinquishing his office in May, 1954; the Rev. Ed. Grummer, who served the institution as a board member for 23 years; and Miss Martha Hein, who served the hospital as superintendent, having resigned the superintendency effective July 1, 1954. Rev. Arthur Lindner is the present chaplain of the hospital.

### **1915. St. Paul's, Sumner**

St. Paul's Lutheran Congregation of Sumner was founded on July 10, 1915, under the guidance of Rev. H. Schaller of Spring Fountain. Services at first were held in private homes and later in

rented churches. To build its own church this congregation took down the old church at Spring Fountain and rebuilt it into their first church, which was dedicated in 1915. The first resident pastor of this congregation was the Rev. E.F. Hempel, who came in November of 1915. Pastor Hempel started a parochial school during his pastorate. At first the school was taught by pastors and later by theological students and about 1940 by a regular teacher. The church basement served as the school room. The school was discontinued in 1947. Pastor is the Rev. Wm. Nagler. Membership, January 1, 1953: 334 souls; 248 communicants.

### **District Synod Meets**

The district Synod of 1915 met at Fort Dodge in August with 249 present. Essay: "The Messianic Prophecies to Be Found in the First Five Books of the Bible." Regulations for the handling of legacies willed to the District were established.

### **1916. Trinity, Hampton**

Trinity in Hampton had its beginning as a preaching station served by the pastor of Zion Lutheran Church in Mott Township. The first of these pastors to serve Hampton was the Rev. G. Theiss, who began in 1904. His successors continued to preach there, until in 1916 a congregation was organized in Hampton under the leadership of the Rev. Otto Von Gemmingen. The pastor of Zion continued to serve Trinity until the Rev. H.F. Buetner became the first resident pastor in 1917. The present church was dedicated in 1918. No record of a parochial school. In 1933 Zion of Mott Township disbanded and the members joined together with Trinity in Hampton to form one congregation. Pastor is the Rev. Arthur Lindner. Membership, January 1, 1953: 651 souls; 462 communicants.

### **Trinity, Bremer**

Mother congregation of Trinity in Bremer is Artesian. Reason for organizing this congregation was that the distance for the school children to go to Artesian was too great. The congregation was organized under the guidance of the Rev. E.F. Melcher. Bremer members continued to worship in Artesian until their own church was finished in 1916. In 1932 the congregation dissolved by congregational resolution but was re-organized in 1933. The congregation has maintained a parochial school all these years in the church basement. In most instances pastors were the teachers of the school. First resident pastor was the Rev. C.E. Hesse. Teacher of the school is Mrs. B. Meyer. Present pastor is the Rev. Fred Starke. Membership, January 1, 1953: 127 souls; 76 communicants.

### **District Convention of 1916**

This convention met in Lowden in August with 266 in attendance. Essay: A continuation of "The Messianic Prophecies Found in the First Five Books of the Bible." This synod authorized the exploration of Mason City in the hope of founding a congregation there.

### **1917. National Lutheran Education Society Organized**

In the year 1917 members of our District Lutheran Church joined the National Lutheran Education Association, which had been organized to study the means at hand to educate, and to



promote schools and foster in our Lutheran people a desire to educate their children to the greatest possible extent. It was controlled by a board of twelve trustees. In 1920 it had a membership of 5,818 and a total of pledges and funds of \$151,380.83. This was received through enrollment fees. In 1923 the total assets of the organization had grown to \$300,000. Most of the members came from Iowa, Minnesota, South Dakota, and Nebraska. This organization had in mind the establishment of a school of higher learning in this area. They gave support to a Lutheran High School in Deshler, Nebr., and much thought was directed toward taking over Bethany College in Mankato, Minn. In 1924 this association in conjunction with the Iowa District proposed the purchase of a higher institution of learning in Iowa. In the next District convention the Iowa District set up rules and regulations to govern the establishment of such a school. Although much thought and effort was expended in this direction over the next several years, this desire of the association was not to be realized. In the course of the years the trustees continued to function and moneys collected were used for educational purposes. The funds were used to aid Valparaiso University, help finance the chapels and student centers at Iowa City, Cedar Falls, and Ames, and assist other synodical ventures connected with higher education. The funds have all now been distributed and the organization no longer exists. One can only surmise what such a college as this organization proposed to establish would have meant for our Church in the State of Iowa.

### **1919. District Synod Meets**

Because of World War I no District synod was held in 1918. The synod in 1919 met in Klinger with 279 present. In the opening address of the District President he stated the following: "During 1918 church services among our people have been hindered and disturbed, schools have been closed, school books were burned, and some of our teachers were chased out of town by mobs. The use of the German language in certain communities was forbidden. This persecution affected church and communion attendance, attendance at our schools, and the giving of our people. It was an eye-opener to many of our church members that the Church Triumphant is not here on earth." He closed by encouraging all assembled there to steadfastness on the basis of Psalm 46.

Essay: "The Jewish Church Festivals." Mission report stated that Keokuk had to be discontinued. A minimum annual salary of \$1,000 was set for pastors of subsidized congregations. Earlier that spring the Iowa legislature had enacted a law making it mandatory for the English language to be used in the teaching of all secular subjects. The Synod resolved to endeavor through special representatives to ask that this act be declared unconstitutional. The office of School Superintendent was established, the Rev. C.E. Seltz becoming the first District superintendent. Special conferences were held at this Synod to discuss the school crisis. This Synod divided the District into eight visiting circuits. The report on this Synod was the first to be published in both German and English; before this all reports had been printed in German.

### **1920. Iowa District Walther League Organizes**

Although there were young people's societies and Walther League societies in the various congregations before this time, the Iowa District of the Walther League was not organized until February 8, 1920, at Boone. We found no report on the number of societies joining at that time

and who they were, but in 1922 the district numbered 35 societies. Great emphasis was placed on the welcoming of strangers in the cities. As a result of this movement in the Walther League hospice homes were established, and hospice committees functioned to help the young people coming to the city to work to have a home away from home in Christian surroundings and atmosphere. Annual district dues in 1922 were 10 cents per member. In 1923 a Minnesota-Iowa Walther League rally lasting three days was held at Spirit Lake. Although it was hoped that this would continue, no mention is made of any other such gatherings. Highlights of the earlier district conventions were the oratorical contests that were held. With the dividing of the Iowa District into East and West, the Walther League followed suit by dividing along the same geographical lines. About 75 societies are affiliated with the Walther League in Iowa East. The district has a strong youth program for its young people in its camp program, winter conferences, talent festivals (the latter two being the largest in the entire Walther League), district conventions, zone rallies, and sports days. In 1956 Iowa East and West will join together to serve as hosts to the International Walther League convention on the Iowa State campus at Ames. This will mark the first time in the history of the League that the convention will come to Iowa. President of the district at present is Donald Hunzelman of St. John's, State Center.

### **1921. St. John's, Melcher**

St. John's of Melcher was founded in 1921 by the Rev. E.H. Felten, who was serving a group of Lutherans in Melcher at the time. This congregation is located in what was once a prosperous mining area. In the main, Melcher has been served by neighboring pastors. Its present church was built in 1949. The Revs. W.D. Oetting and W. Huchthausen were the only called pastors serving the congregation up until recent times. Present resident pastor is the Rev. Hugo Hein. Membership, January 1, 1953: 84 souls; 60 communicants.

### **St. John's, Denver**

A preaching station was begun in Denver in the fall of 1920 by Rev. L. Yockey, with services being held in a hall above a store. On April 10, 1921, St. John's of Denver was officially organized. From the fall of 1921 to 1930 this congregation was served by pastors from Waverly and Readlyn. A school was established at the time of the congregation's organization. In the first years it was taught by students, then by pastors, and now by a lady teacher. School is conducted in the basement of the church. The present church was dedicated in 1921. First resident pastor of the congregation was Rev. E.H. Beckman. Teacher of the school is Mrs. Ed. Eichelberg. Present pastor is the Rev. Albert Mette. Membership, January 1, 1953: 84 souls; 60 communicants.

### **District Synod Meets**

The synod of 1921 met at Newhall in August with 296 in attendance. Essay: "The Fourth Petition." The mission report showed that there were 33 counties in Iowa in which no church of our Synod had been established, twenty of these were in the southern part of the State. This convention authorized the publishing of a District newspaper to be known as the *Iowa District News*, to be published in both German and English.

## **The American Luther League Organized**

This organization was evidently a married couples' club organized on a District-wide basis. The membership in this organization was confined to men and women of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod in Iowa. It set up as its objects to promote, foster, and safeguard Christian education, especially our Christian day schools. In 1922 there were 60 local organizations belonging to the organization. Annual district conventions were held. They fought the proposed Iowa code revision which would compel all children up to 16 to attend the public school. They took up a collection to help fight antiparochial school legislation in Oregon. They started a movement to provide quarters at State schools where our Lutheran students could gather. They made Iowa City their first project in 1923. They toyed with the idea of starting a Lutheran university in Iowa, and spoke against a bill in the Iowa Legislature which advocated compulsory Bible reading in public schools. In 1925 they conducted a district-wide essay contest on the subject: "Why Do I Attend the Lutheran Day School?" for Grades Five to Eight. This essay could be written either in German or English, not over 500 words long. The organization disbanded some time after 1927.

### **1922. District Synod Meets**

This convention assembled at Lotts Creek in August with 301 present. Essay: "The Scriptural Teaching of the Call into the Ministry." *The Iowa District News* began on January 1, 1922. Editor of the *News* was Rev. H. Harms. He together with Rev. P.W. Happel were the only men to serve as editors during the years of its existence, from 1922 through 1934. A press committee was established at this convention which was to bring proceedings of the convention to the attention of the secular press. In the laymen's meeting at this convention the recommendation was made that greater use of the English language be made at District Synods. Two baseball games between the pastors and the Lotts Creek team and one between the pastors and the teachers netted \$75 for the River Forest College gym fund.

### **1924. St. Paul's, Marion**

First steps toward organizing a congregation in Marion were taken in 1923 when the District called Rev. Carl E. Krog to serve this area and also to investigate the possibilities at Vinton. Pastor Krog was installed at Trinity Lutheran Church in Cedar Rapids in August, 1923. For several months Pastor Krog did exploratory work in both Marion and Vinton. Early in 1924 the District Mission Board called a resident pastor to serve Vinton so that Rev. Krog could concentrate his efforts in the Marion community. On May 15, 1924, enough members had been gathered so that St. Paul's Lutheran of Marion was organized. It was received into membership of Synod the same year. For eight years the congregation gathered in the Marion Memorial Hall for worship. In 1932 it was able to dedicate its own house of worship in the form of a newly erected mission chapel. In 1944 the present parsonage was acquired, and in 1945 the congregation became self-supporting. In 1949 the church was enlarged to meet the ever-growing needs of the congregation. Since Rev. Carl Wuerffel recently accepted a call to another parish, the congregation is vacant at present. Membership, January 1, 1953: 423 souls; 278 communicants.

## **Trinity Lutheran, Vinton**

The founding of a Lutheran church in Vinton, the county seat of Benton County, was not seriously attempted until the summer of 1923. In that year the District Mission Board instructed Pastor Carl Krog, who had been called to Marion, to explore mission possibilities in Vinton. A downtown hall was the place of the first service conducted by Pastor Krog. Later, services were held in the United Brethren church on Sunday afternoons and in 1924 in the high school. On February 17, 1924, Rev. Theodore Schliepsiek was installed as the first resident pastor of Vinton. Under his guidance Trinity was organized in April, 1924. The present church was dedicated in 1925. Substantial financial assistance in this project was received from sister congregations on the South Slope of Benton County. The rest was borrowed from the Church extension Fund and raised by the members. In 1934 Trinity became a self-supporting congregation. The present fine parsonage was built in 1941.

In 1928 Trinity Congregation and pastor came in for State-wide and also some national attention because Pastor Schliepsiek refused to permit his church bell to be rung as a tribute to the occasion of the ninth anniversary of the enactment of the Volstead Act in 1919. Protestant churches expected all churches to comply with this request and to preach a special sermon on this subject. Because he refused to comply, Pastor Schliepsiek was taken to task in the local press by the Protestant clergy, and when the Des Moines paper heard of this incident a reporter was sent to interview Rev. Schliepsiek. He was given an opportunity to present his reasons for refusing, in which he stated that prohibition was a political issue and not a religious one; and therefore, the Church was to stay out of it; but the membership, as citizens, were in duty bound to obey the law. Later this incident was brought to national attention as it was censured at a convention of a large Protestant body by one of its bishops. In 1927 Pastor Schliepsiek began serving at the School for the Blind as opportunities presented themselves. This was continued by following pastors. In recent years the Virginia Gay Hospital, which was being abandoned for a new one, was bought by the Lutheran Home for the Aged Association to serve as the first home for aged people in our District. Trinity's Pastor Otto Nieting was given a peaceful release so that he could serve the institution as its superintendent. Present pastor is Rev. Raymond Fechner. Membership, January 1, 1953: 503 souls; 376 communicants.

## **District Synod Meets**

St. Paul's in Williamsburg was host to the District Synod in 1924, which met in the month of August with 307 in attendance. Essay: "The Bible, the Inspired Word of God." This convention authorized the calling of a student pastor at Iowa City. It was recommended at this convention that only sincere friends and workers for the cause of the Christian day school be nominated for the office of Circuit Visitor. Lady teachers were urged to attend the teachers' conferences. Four new circuits were created, bringing the number in the District up to 12. An overture to divide the District was first passed, then reconsidered and voted down. A board to control young people's work in the District was created.

## **1925. First Lutheran at Belle Plaine**

Lutheranism in Belle Plaine dates back to the time of the sainted Pastor Philip Studt of Luzerne, who made the first attempts to establish a church here. After conducting services in private

homes in Belle Plaine it was found expedient to discontinue services, and the few remaining members were invited to attend at Luzerne. During the pastorate of Rev. Gottlieb Schroeder at Luzerne another attempt was made to establish a Lutheran congregation in Belle Plaine. Although much time and effort was expended toward this venture, it again was found inadvisable to continue at that time. In 1924 another attempt was made from Luzerne by Rev. H. Bohnhoff. At first, services were held in the homes of members, after that in a local hall. Official organization of First Lutheran Congregation took place on July 26, 1925. The congregation first worshiped in a hall and later rented a funeral chapel. In 1928 the congregation purchased the old Catholic church and moved it to its present location. The first resident pastor was Rev. Lester Peter, who was installed at First Lutheran in 1937. The present parsonage was purchased in 1940 for \$2,200. In 1945 the congregation became self-supporting. In 1946 the congregation purchased a rural school, which the members razed and then used the salvaged lumber to build an addition to the church and a basement under the church structure. This construction was carried out under wartime restriction, and therefore salvaged lumber had to be used if any construction was to be undertaken. This remodeling program was completed in 1947. During the years 1946 to 1949 services were conducted for the deaf at Belle Plaine until the missionary from Sioux Falls accepted a call elsewhere. First Lutheran is one of our District congregations which has a tower chime system. Present pastor is Rev. Walter Schlie. Membership, January 1, 1953: 301 souls; 207 communicants.

### **Immanuel of Davenport Organizes**

Under the guidance of Rev. Herman Greif, then missionary at large in Scott County, a congregation was organized in West Davenport. This congregation, names St. John's Congregation, flourished for some time and then around 1912 was discontinued. In 1924 the District Mission Board called Rev. Albert Bostelman as missionary to southwest Davenport and surrounding territory. He was installed in the community church building in Dixon in September, 1924. Soon thereafter he began canvassing what was then known as the village of Rockingham, which later was incorporated into the city of Davenport. The first services, both English and German, were conducted in a theatre. In October, 1925, Immanuel Congregation was organized. In November, 1925, a house was obtained which served as a combination chapel and parsonage. The present church edifice was dedicated in 1926. This building was enlarged in 1939. A school was opened in 1926 which was taught by the pastor. It was first held in one of the rooms of the chapel-parsonage. From 1928 until 1931 students vicars and lady teachers taught the school. Mr. H.A. Stelhorn became the first called teacher of the congregation. The school was closed in 1946 and the school building which had been built onto the rear of the church is being used as a parish house. Children desiring the blessing of a parochial school education attend the school at Trinity Congregation (in Davenport). Present pastor is the Rev. Luther Sember. Membership, January 1, 1953: 478 souls; 255 communicants.

### **Grace Lutheran at De Witt**

In the year 1900 Rev. C.L. Broeker of Grand Mound explored the field around De Witt and arranged for occasional services. Pastors from Grand Mound continued to hold services at De Witt, though somewhat irregularly, until 1925, when under the guidance of Rev. L. Eschbach Grace Congregation was officially organized with 26 charter members. Rev. W.P. Schroeder

was thereupon called by the Mission Board to serve this field and became the first resident pastor. At first, services were held in a rented building. Shortly thereafter a church was purchased from the Christian congregation for \$3,500. In 1919 a basement was build under the church. The congregation became self-supporting in 1930. Under the guiding hand of God this congregation has grown faster in membership in the past 25 years than any congregation in the District, and it is continuing to grow at a steady pace. In 1950 the congregation dedicated its present beautiful church, which seats nearly 600 people. IN the tower of this church hangs a historic bell which at one time hung in the courthouse at Clinton. The De Witt parish also includes Welton just north of De Witt, where the pastor conducts services and a Sunday school regularly. Present pastor is the Rev. Theodore Hinck. Membership, January 1, 1953: 838 souls; 618 communicants.

### **District Synod Meets**

The 1925 convention was held in Hampton in August with an attendance of 314. The essays: "The Doctrine Concerning the Call" and "The First Synod at Jerusalem." This convention created a commission to establish rules which would bring the Sunday school under the direct supervision of Synod. A resolution giving support to a proposed institution of higher learning in Iowa under the auspices of the National Lutheran Education Association was voted. The Legacy Commission was disbanded. Twelve new electoral circuits were established. Historical archives and the office of Archivist were established. Iowa City was to be the repository, and Pastor Julius Friedrich became the first Archivist. Comprehensive finance regulations for the District were also adopted.

### **1926. Redeemer at Marshalltown**

According to historical records, work was begun in Marshalltown prior to and during the Civil War by Pastors Doescher, Lossener, and Tiemeyer. In 1879 Rev. Edward Heinicke of Dillon began conducting services in Marshalltown. These services were held in the old Swedish Lutheran church building. The pastors from Dillon traveled by horse and buggy, and when the roads were muddy, they could make faster time walking to Marshalltown along the railroad track than to drive there. Services were continued in Marshalltown by Dillon pastors until sometime during World War I, when work was discontinued there without a congregation having been founded. In 1926 Rev. H.C. Koepke of St. John's, State Center, came to serve the Lutherans living at Marshalltown. Services were held in the Legion Hall. This place was not too suitable, and the use of the Seventh-Day Adventist church was obtained. October 21, 1926, marks the date of the official organization of Redeemer Congregation of Marshalltown. Since the Seventh-Day Adventist would not permit the use of the church for Christmas and other special occasions and meetings, these had to be held in the homes during this period. Rev. Frederick Kreutz became the first resident pastor of this congregation in 1928. Growth during the first years was slow since the congregation owned neither church nor parsonage. In 1935 the present church was dedicated. The plans were drawn by one of the members, and the greater part of the work was done by the members of the congregation. Many of the members during those depression days, being out of work or having only part-time employment, gave of their time toward the erection of this church. Members of neighboring St. John's of State Center and of Dillon also helped. The church was built during the pastorate of Rev. Fred Ilten. In 1940 the congregation

purchased its present parsonage. Present pastor is the Rev. E.L. Runge. Membership, January 1, 1953: 485 souls; 330 communicants.

### **District Synod of 1927**

Charter Oak was the host congregation in August, with 321 attending. Essays: "The Heavenly Home and the Christian Home in This World." The resignation of Rev. C.H. Seltz as School Superintendent was accepted. It was resolved to continue this office. Mr. H.F.C. Mueller succeeded him as School Superintendent. A District-wide pastors' and teachers' conference was authorized at meet the year in which the general convention of Synod is held. Rev. Herman Harms was elected President.

### **1928. Messiah Lutheran at Keokuk**

Although efforts had been made ever since Missouri Synod pastors were present in Iowa to found a congregation in Keokuk, yet none of these efforts were permanently successful until 1928. In 1927 Pastor E.F. Schwidder, then at Lockridge, came to Keokuk to serve the new Lutheran families that had moved there. The Seventh-Day Adventist church was rented. In 1928 Messiah Congregation was organized. The first resident pastor was Rev. Alfred Faulstick, who came in the fall of 1928. In 1931, because of difficulty in coming to an agreement with the members of the Seventh-Day Adventist group over the rental price of the church, the congregation was forced to seek other quarters. A vacant church was rented, which, together with a parsonage was purchased on a three-year conditional contract. The congregation paid \$1 down and promised to pay \$175.00 a year interest, the congregation to be refunded the money spent for repairs and 75 per cent of the purchase price of the furnace for the parsonage, should the congregation decide not to purchase the property. In 1934 it was deemed wise not to purchase this property since it was not considered worth the price asked.

After a canvass the congregation purchased a block of ground in an area which gave promise of being a suitable location for a church. A basement church was built on this lot and dedicated in 1935. This was under the pastorate of Rev. George Perlich. During the early 1930's a branch Sunday school was begun by the pastor in another section of Keokuk. This had to be abandoned when the store building being used for that purpose was rented to someone else. Pastor Perlich also conducted services in Fort Madison and in Burlington. In Burlington a congregation was organized later. Pastor Perlich also began doing work among the prisoners at Fort Madison. This work was continued by succeeding pastor in Keokuk until Rev. Lester Peter, then pastor at Keokuk, was offered the full-time chaplaincy at Fort Madison, which he accepted. Since that time our church has conducted Lutheran services in the prison through our chaplain, who is supported in part by the State and in part by our District. This work is proving to be a wonderful blessing. Coming back to Keokuk, we note that the basement church was damaged by fire in 1944. Services were conducted in a chapel until repairs could be made. A parsonage was purchased in 1944. A frame structure was built on top of the basement church in 1953 to complete what was started in 1935. Present pastor is Rev. E.A. Breiholz. Membership, January 1, 1953: 161 souls; 88 communicants.

## **District Synod Meets**

The District Convention of 1928 was held in Germantown in August with 336 present. The essay: "History of the Iowa District" and "What Is God?" During the course of this year a committee was appointed in southeastern Iowa to investigate starting an old folks' home. Their report showed that there were 30 who were interested in entering such a home at that time.

### **1929**

Although the District did not meet in 1929 and no congregations were organized, this year was one of quite a bit of activity in Iowa. It was the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the organization of the Iowa District. A special anniversary booklet was printed to commemorate the occasion. Twelve thousand copies of this booklet were printed. The special offering in connection with this observance was designated for the District Church extension Fund. Circuit-wide mass celebrations were held in many parts of the District. An essay contest on the Catechism was sponsored on a national basis in our Synod. Three of the ten winners were from Iowa.

### **1930. District Synod Meets**

This convention was held at Fort Dodge in August with 331 present. Essays: "Continuation of the History of the Iowa District" and "The Triune God the Only True God." A committee was authorized to study the advisability of establishing a Board of Directors to administer the affairs of the District. A motion to call a full-time Mission Secretary was lost.

### **1931. Trinity at Washington Organizes**

Services were first begun here in 1930 by Rev. Robert Grote, then at Lockridge, and were held in a funeral home. Early in 1931, under his guidance, Trinity Congregation of Washington was organized. First resident pastor of the congregation was Rev. Theodore Meibohm, who came in 1931. A church was purchased from the Episcopalians which was remodeled and dedicated late in 1931. Growth of this congregation has been rather slow. At times the pastor of this congregation has also served the congregation at Wellman, as is the case now. There were also times when the pastor from Wellman served the congregation at Washington. Some of the members of this congregation seceded to organize a Wisconsin Synod congregation in Washington. This, too, impaired the growth of this parish. Present pastor is Rev. W.C. Johannes. Membership, January 1, 1953: 100 souls, 66 communicants.

### **Luther Day at Iowa Falls begins**

The Luther Day Festival of the Eldora Circuit was organized during the summer of 1931. Its chief purposes were to give prestige to the newly organized mission at Iowa Falls, to publicize The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod in general and in this area, and to provide an occasion of fellowship for the Lutheran Christians of the circuit. The observance of this festival in August of 1954 marked the 22d of its kind held in this area. Only in 1949 was it dropped because of a polio scare. The weather has always been favorable with one exception, which, oddly enough,



was the observance of the 13<sup>th</sup> festival, when it rained all day. The festival is always held on the fourth Sunday in August. It has attracted as many as 4,000 people for the day. In recent years the attendance has been slightly below 2,000. The offerings at the festival are never specially emphasized as an important item. Whatever funds remain after all expenses are paid are usually allocated for some charitable causes. Two hundred dollars are always kept in reserve for emergencies.

### **District Convention Meets**

The 1931 convention met in Lowden in August with 323 in attendance. Essays: "The First Psalm" and "Faith in God." The calling of the Superintendent of Missions was authorized, and the Mission Board was empowered to purchase portable chapels when needed. Eighty-two students were reported as receiving subsidy amounting to \$8,156.30. Regulations governing the District Church Extension Fund were adopted. The convention resolved to hold its convention hereafter from Monday through Friday so that the pastors need not be absent from home over a Sunday to attend, as had been the case up till then. The request to change the convention time from August to June was tabled. Synod was petitioned for permission to divide the Iowa District. It was resolved that the English language be the official language of the Iowa District.

### **1932. Bethany, Cedar Rapids Organized**

The year 1932 proved to be a good year for the Iowa District, six congregations being organized in Iowa East that year. The first one is Bethany on the east side of Cedar Rapids, which was organized August 29, 1932. The Rev. Mark Steege was the first resident pastor of the congregation. The first property purchased by this congregation was a house on First Avenue, N.E., which served as a combination chapel and parsonage. This was the church home of the congregation for six years until the present chapel was erected in 1938. The growth of this congregation has been such that the facilities are too small for its needs. The congregation is at the present time gathering funds to erect a new house of worship in the near future. Present pastor is the Rev. E.W. Wuggazer. Membership, January 1, 1953: 433 souls; 290 communicants.

### **Trinity at Clinton**

Trinity Congregation in Clinton was organized on December 11, 1932, after extensive mission work had been done by various pastors and assistants of St. John's, the sister congregation in Clinton. The first resident pastor was the Rev. F.H. Muenchow. Services were held in a home in the south end of Clinton. Later, services were conducted in the Camanche Community Club. In 1940 the ground for the present church location was purchased, and in 1941 the congregation dedicated a chapel. In 1947 the congregation purchased a parsonage. In 1950 the congregation dedicated a stone addition to the church which was to be the first unit of an all-stone structure for the future. Present pastor is Rev. William Ilten. Membership, January 1, 1953: 430 souls; 280 communicants.

### **Trinity Lutheran at Guttenberg**

As far back as 1869 we read that a pastor at Guttenberg joined the Missouri Synod, but no more is heard about him or any congregation after that for many years. Sometime during the year

1932 Rev. Martin Russert of Dubuque began conducting services in Guttenberg. Shortly thereafter Rev. Martin Peters was called as the first resident pastor. The present church structure was dedicated in 1937. Present pastor is the Rev. William Reitz. Membership, January 1, 1953: 169 souls; 115 communicants.

### **St. Paul's at McGregor Is Founded**

On May 30, 1864, the first Lutheran congregation of McGregor was founded, and a constitution was drawn and signed by ten voting members. Among those ten is the name of August Ringling, Sr., the father of the now famous Ringling Brothers of circus fame. Two sons were also members of this congregation. In 1871 the Rev. George Wiederanders of Prairie du Chien, Wis., served the congregation every other Sunday. The congregation was quite large because there was plenty of employment at a large sawmill there. This lasted until about 1881, when the membership began to scatter. In 1911 it was decided to have most of the services in the homes at North McGregor, now Marquette, since the majority of the members lived there. These services were conducted on Wednesday evenings. Around 1920 this congregation was abandoned for lack of membership. In 1928 Rev. Finck of Postville Lutheran Church started services. This lasted about a year, when Pastor Finck accepted a call to Baltimore, Md. In 1930 the Swedish Lutherans canvassed the town for Lutherans and held a few services, but prospects were not good. Then, in 1931, Rev. Keiper was sent by the District Mission Board to survey the field. He held three services there and then was called back to his former congregation. Rev. Fred Ilten, then assistant to Dr. H. Harms in Davenport, next served the group. Conditions now were found favorable for founding a church there. Rev. H.F. Glock was called and became the first resident pastor of this new congregation. May, 1932, St. Paul's Congregation was organized. In August of this same year a parsonage and two lots were purchased. The parsonage served as a combination church and living quarters for the pastor. A church was dedicated in 1935. This congregation is still being subsidized by the District, but lately has been making good strides forward. Present pastor is Rev. August Mommens. Membership, January 1, 1953: 237 souls; 135 communicants.

### **Immanuel, Iowa Falls, Organizes**

In the year 1908 Rev. H.C. Koepke of Buckeye came to Iowa Falls to preach there. After 1911 Rev. E.H. Hempel, then at Grant Center, took over the serving of this mission. Reaching was in German. Owing to the strong anti-German feeling existing then, preaching was dropped for a while during World War I. In the meantime the United Lutheran Church started a congregation in Iowa Falls. When Pastor E.H. Felten came to Alden, he served the people who remained loyal to our church in Iowa Falls in private homes and in the German language. A few years later Rev. John Schliepsiek, then at Hubbard, was requested to begin English services in Iowa Falls. He came on Sunday afternoons to serve the people there. In 1931 an Episcopalian church was rented. After a canvass of the town it was found advisable to call a resident pastor to serve this field. Rev. N.C. Ellermann was thereupon called to become the first resident pastor of the congregation. A congregation was organized in the fall of 1932. The parsonage which the Ellermanns used was a gift of Mrs. August Meyer of the Grant Center congregation in Iowa Falls. Two of Iowa Falls's pastors entered the chaplaincy; they were Rev. Victor Koepke and Rev. Erhard Harms. The congregation dedicated its present church edifice in 1944, which was

purchased from a congregation of another denomination. Present pastor is the Rev. Karl E. Schroeder. Membership, January 1, 1953: 320 souls; 232 communicants.

### **Trinity at Osage**

Trinity Congregation in Osage was begun by the Rev. J. Bertram of St. John's near Osage. From then on pastors of this congregation served here until a resident pastor was obtained. At first services were held in the homes of members. Later services were held in the basement of other churches. In 1930 an old school building was purchased for \$350 which was used as a place of worship. Trinity Congregation was organized in May, 1932. The first resident pastor was Rev. Elmer Yohr, who came to Osage in 1937. A fine ranch-style parsonage was completed in 1951. The school building is still serving as a place of worship although too small for the congregation's needs. The congregation intends to build a new church. Present pastor is the Rev. David P. Bergmann. Membership, January 1, 1953: 373 souls; 267 communicants.

### **1933. Zion at Oxford Organizes**

The town of Oxford, located just off Highway 6 some fifteen miles west of Iowa City, is one of our more difficult mission fields. In the early years of our church in Iowa, pastors from Homestead endeavored to start a congregation here, but this did not bring about a permanent organization, and so this work was dropped for a while. Then, sometime before 1933, under the guidance of Rev. Theodore Rottmann of Marengo, Student Victor Felten was sent into this town to explore this field. He was succeeded by several other students and candidates. The services were conducted in a hall downtown above a store. With the help of the neighboring congregations of Marengo, Conroy, Homestead, and Williamsburg, \$1,000 was raised for the purchase of a parsonage which could also be used as a chapel. The first two students to serve also taught school, and then it was discontinued. The congregation was organized in 1933, and in 1938 the school was reopened. In 1939 a church was purchased by the congregation which was renovated and, on February 12, dedicated to the service of the Triune God. Student Charles Wedig was serving the congregation at that time. A room for the school was built in the basement of the church. Zion at Oxford was the rare distinction of having called a former pastor to return to its parish after this pastor had left the congregation to accept a call elsewhere. He is the present pastor, the Rev. Ed. Grummer. He was the first resident pastor to serve this congregation. He accepted a call to Denver, Iowa, and after a few years the congregation at Oxford called him again, and he returned. The school was disbanded and has not been reopened up to the present time. Membership, January 1, 1953: 104 souls; 69 communicants.

### **District Synod Convenes**

The 1933 convention was held in Eldora in August with 343 in attendance. English essay: "Why Do We Call the First Person of the Godhead the Father?" German essay: "Exposition of Romans 12:11,12." The motion to combine the office of the District President with that of the Mission Secretary was tabled. The Board of Directors form of government was adopted at this convention and put into action at once. Regulations governing this new form of government were also adopted. The vote on the division of the District was 141 for and 131 against. The President was authorized to appoint a committee which was to study the manner of division and

report to the next convention. A committee was appointed to study the advisability of securing congregation-wide subscriptions for the **Lutheran Witness** for all members of the District. Supply students at this time were being paid \$30.00 a month. Candidates were called at \$50.00 a month. Rev. Otto Schultz became Assistant District Secretary at this convention. Lodgism and unionism were cited as two great evils which threatened the church.

### **1934. Concordia at Burlington Organizes**

In the spring of 1934 a small group made arrangements for evening services to be conducted in West Burlington, the Rev. George Perlich of Keokuk serving as pastor. These services proved to be successful, and the District Mission Board authorized the calling of Candidate Theodore Bartell to serve this field. He conducted services in the Knights of Pythias Hall in West Burlington. Shortly afterwards the present church property on South Street was purchased, which consisted of two lots and a house. The house was to serve as a combination church and parsonage. Candidate Bartell was ordained and installed on November 25, 1934, as the first pastor of the congregation. Under the pastorate of Rev. Arnold Schmidt, who later entered the chaplaincy, the congregation purchased an Evangelical and Reformed church in Augusta, Iowa, which they intended to move to their church property. This was found inadvisable, and so the structure was torn down, and the congregation built its church with the salvaged materials. Dedication of this completed structure took place in November, 1940. The congregation was organized in August, 1934. Although this congregation was in the midst of a wartime boom area caused by the building of an ordinance plant near Burlington, yet it left few lasting effects upon our congregation in Burlington. The present facilities of the congregation have now become too small, and the congregation is studying plans for enlarging its church. Present pastor is Rev. Roland W. Going. Membership, January 1, 1953: 214 souls; 130 communicants.

### **Grace at Jesup**

In response to a request by Lutheran families of Jesup, our District Mission Board sent Candidate Edmund Frese to Jesup to make a survey of this area in January, 1934. Services were conducted in the Legion Hall. On May 21 Grace Congregation of Jesup was officially organized. Rev. R.E. Baldwin became the first resident pastor of the congregation in June, 1934. The present church was dedicated in 1935. Growth of the congregation has not been rapid because of a restricted field, the American Lutheran Church and the Catholic Church providing strong competition. Since the founding of the congregation the local pastor has been the chaplain for the Synodical Conference members at the Independence Mental Health Institution at Independence. Present pastor is the Rev. Walter Leckband. Membership, January 1, 1953: 134 souls; 83 communicants.

### **District Synod Meets**

The 1934 convention met at Keystone in August with 350 in attendance. Essayist was Dr. Walter A. Maier. He presented a discussion on Creation. Other essays were on the 23d Psalm and "The Missionary and Missionary Methods." The report of the Division Committee, which was accepted, divided the Iowa District into Iowa East and Iowa West. Division was to be at the east border of Winnebago, Hancock, Wright, Hamilton, Story, Polk, Warren, Clark and Decatur

counties. Assets were to be divided 60 per cent to Iowa West and 40 per cent to Iowa East in proportion to their membership. Work at Ames and Cedar Falls was to be carried on by the respective Districts. The property at Iowa City was to be administered by both Districts. The Home-Finding Society was to solicit funds in both Districts. The convention unanimously voted to adopt the congregation-wide subscription plan for the **Lutheran Witness**. The *Iowa District News* was to be discontinued on January 1, 1953, when this plan would go into effect. A film of the convention is still available. The Open Bible anniversary was observed.

### **1935. Our Redeemer at Elkader Organizes**

When Rev. Martin Russert at Dubuque heard that an opportunity was presenting itself at Elkader to open a mission church if immediate action were taken, he set out at once to investigate. He and Rev. Martin Peters at Guttenberg spend two days in making inquiries and contacts in Elkader. A canvass by Assistant Pastor E.L. Stuempfig of Davenport and Pastor Glock of McGregor showed that there was a field for us in this community. A church was found to be available for rent, and Rev. E.L. Stuempfig began to conduct services there on June 3, 1934. The congregation was organized on July 7, 1935, and Rev. E.L. Stuempfig was called to become the first resident pastor of the congregation. The present church building was dedicated in 1937. This congregation is located in a sparsely settled Lutheran area, and growth has been slow. Present pastor is the Rev. H. Frohn. Membership, January 1, 1953: 90 souls; 58 communicants.

### **1936. Ottumwa Organizes**

In this portion of southern Iowa, which has been sparsely settled by Lutheran people, it took until 1934 before efforts were made by Rev. F.J. Oetjen to survey this field as to possibilities of founding a church here. He found three interested families. The Seventh-Day Adventist church was rented, and Peter Oetjen began conducting regular services. At the request of the membership the District Mission Board sent a man to serve this field, namely, Rev. F.W. Bruch, in 1935, who served this congregation for six months. After this, Pastor Oetjen again took over the work until another missionary could be obtained. This time a candidate was sent from the Seminary, Walter S. Wendt, who arrived on January 2, 1936. There were 24 present at the first service he conducted. On April 5, 1936, Candidate Wendt was ordained and installed as the first called pastor of the congregation. Later that month Trinity Congregation was organized and applied for membership in Synod. On July 1, 1941, the congregation purchased two lots in a new residential section of South Ottumwa. On October 19 that same year the congregation was privileged to dedicate its own chapel, which would seat 150 people, at a cost of about \$5,000. In 1944 the congregation purchased a large home to serve as parsonage. In 1949 this home was sold, and the present parsonage was built next to the church. In 1951 the church was enlarged to its present size. This congregation is self-supporting and is one of the few in the extreme southern portion of our District to become self-supporting. The present pastor is the Rev. W.H. Michel. Membership, January 1, 1953: 259 souls; 178 communicants.

### **St. Paul's at Bennett**

In the early twenties the Rev. P.W. Happel of Wilton Junction began mission work in the Sunbury community. A Sunday school was conducted there regularly by Teacher Waech and

some consecrated ladies of the Wilton congregation. Early in 1935 the Wilton congregation agreed to employ a student of theology for a period of six months to do more intensive work in this field. He was to be paid \$25.00 a month and board and room. Candidate Julius Koch was employed to serve this field. He began this work in the fall of 1935. In 1936 the missionary was requested to go to Bennett and vicinity. Several Lutheran families were found in this area who were interested in being served at Bennett. A hall above the post office was rented, and the first Lutheran service in Bennett was held on July 26, 1936. A Sunday school was organized. The work progressed nicely so that in October of 1936 a congregation was organized under the supervision of Rev. Herman Maas, then Visitor of the Davenport Circuit. In November of the same year Rev. Julius Koch was installed as the first resident pastor of this congregation. In 1937 the congregation was received into Synod. In 1939 six lots were purchased in the northeast section of Bennett. In 1941 the first house of worship was dedicated. In 1943 the congregation purchased a house to serve as parsonage. The present parsonage was built in 1946, the members donating several thousand hours of labor. The church was remodeled and enlarged in 1952. Present pastor is the Rev. E.H. Beckmann. Membership, January 1, 1953: 298 souls; 173 communicants.

### **District Synod Meets**

Immanuel Church of Waterloo served as host to 398 in attendance. The essay: "The Providence of God." This was the convention at which the Iowa District was divided into Iowa District East and Iowa District West. Part of the sessions were held jointly, and separate sessions were held to effect the organization of each District. First President of Iowa West was Rev. Adolf Schwidder. President of Iowa East was Rev. Herman Harms. Vice-Presidents of Iowa East were Rev. Carl Hesse and Rev. Paul Brammer. The financial assets of the Iowa District were divided 60 per cent for Iowa West and 40 per cent for Iowa East in accordance with their respective memberships. The institutional and student work at Iowa City was to be administered jointly by both Districts. H.F.C. Mueller was to serve both District as Superintendent of Christian Education. The year 1936 in Iowa was a time of grasshoppers and drought. There were those who looked upon this division with misgivings, and there were those who were very optimistic. But the decision had been made, and when the convention came to a close, there were now two Districts instead of one. The **Lutheran Witness Edition** continued as a joint venture until the end of the year. Thus the year 1936 proved to be a historic year in the annals of Missouri Synod Lutheranism in Iowa.

### **1937 District Synod Meets**

This synod met at Cedar Rapids in August, with 157 attending. Essay: "The Person of Christ." There were 27 mission stations subsidized by the District together with three schools. This taxed the finances of the District quite heavily so that the starting of new mission fields was dependent upon consolidating congregations or having one go self-supporting. At District expense, students at Cedar Falls were transported by bus to Waterloo to attend services. Five regional school areas were established in the District consisting of the Williamsburg, Dubuque, Waterloo, Cedar Rapids, and Davenport regions. The District Church extension Fund contained \$65,000 at this time. This convention authorized the exploration of the use of radio on a District-wide basis over Station WMT at Cedar Rapids. Synod's Pension Plan went into effect.

### **Grace Lutheran at Waterloo in 1938**

In the spring of 1937 a movement was started to organize a new Lutheran congregation on the west side of Waterloo, which adopted the name of Grace Lutheran. In 1938 the congregation made a declaration of intention to join The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. The Rev. A.E. Krause was installed as the first resident pastor in June, 1938. In November of this same year the congregation was officially organized. In the following year the congregation was received into membership with Synod. In the fall of 1939 two lots were purchased at the present location of West Seventh and Allen. On January 7, 1940, a new chapel was dedicated. Cost, about \$5,000. In 1941 the present parsonage was completed. In 1946 the congregation became self-supporting. In 1947 the church was sold to Concordia Church and moved off the premises. In the meantime the congregation worshiped in Irving School while the basement for the new church was built. First service in the basement church was held on December 14, 1947. In 1951 the superstructure of the church was completed. Although the congregation has no school, provisions are made for children desiring a Lutheran school training to receive it at the school of Immanuel Congregation. Present pastor is the Rev. Wilbur Becker. Membership, January 1, 1953: 395 souls; 249 communicants.

### **1939. Zion Lutheran, Shellsburg, Organized**

Shellsburg is a village of about 600 inhabitants situated in the northeast section of Benton County. For several years some of the Lutheran families in this area felt the need of a Lutheran church in this vicinity; it was not until 1938, however, that steps were taken to begin filling this need. An energetic Lutheran layman by the name of John C. Warner of Shellsburg visited the surrounding Lutheran pastors and requested them to petition the District to do exploratory work in Shellsburg. As a result of this request Student William Ilten was sent by the Board to explore this field under the supervision of Pastor G. Rickles of Atkins. The first service was held in Shellsburg on September 4 in the local high school. A room above a grocery store was thereupon obtained for future services. Before this congregation was organized, it had an organized ladies' aid, a men's club, and a Sunday school. On February 1, 1939, Zion Congregation of Shellsburg was organized. In this same meeting the purchase of four lots with a dwelling was authorized. The first floor of this dwelling was remodeled to serve as a place of worship, with the upstairs being used for Sunday school purposes. The congregation continued to be served by student vicars until 1942, when Rev. Edmund Frese was installed as the first resident pastor of the congregation. Pastor Frese and his wife took up their residence in a house near Parker's Grove while the house on the church property continued to serve as a house of worship. In 1946 the house was renovated so that the basement was used for church purposes and the rest of the house served as the parsonage. On June 13, 1948, the congregation was privileged to dedicate its present fine house of worship. A daughter congregation of Zion is that of Center Point, which is still being served by the Shellsburg pastor. Shellsburg has become a self-supporting congregation in recent years. Present pastor is the Rev. A.R. Aschbrenner. Membership, January 1, 1953: 187 souls; 123 communicants.

### **District Synod of 1939 Meets**

This convention met at Immanuel Church in Waterloo in August and was attended by 185.  
Essay: "The Three Last Theses of Walther's '*Kirche und Amt*.'" Plight of the District Church

extension Fund was reported as pitiful: not enough funds available to grant a much-needed loan of \$7,500. As a result the convention rejected overtures to use these funds for the financing of parsonages and teacherages. It was also voted to abolish student subsidy. There were 6,000 receiving the **Lutheran Witness** in the District at this time. The office of Secretary of Stewardship was established. He was not to be a member of the Board of Directors. The formation of the District seal was authorized. Iowa City was to be administered by Iowa East alone after this.

During the course of this year the District congregations observed the Centennial of the Missouri Synod. Intersynodical conferences were held with pastors of the American Lutheran Church in the eastern half of Iowa.

### **1940. District Synod Meets**

Cedar Rapids served as host to the District convention in the month of August with 178 in attendance. Essay: "The Person of Christ." The motion to call a superintendent of missions and education was rescinded. An opinion on the status of women teachers was given.

### **1941. Faith Church at Mount Pleasant**

The first service in Mount Pleasant by one of our pastors was held on July 23, 1939, by Rev. Alton Koch. Services were held in the city hall. In 1942 the congregation purchased a home with an additional lot to be used for a church. At first the home was used as a combination parsonage and church. In 1949 a prefabricated chapel was purchased from Minnesota. This house of worship was dedicated in October, 1949. The congregation was officially organized on January 21, 1941. The pastor also serves the patients at the State Hospital in Mount Pleasant regularly with services and personal calls. This congregation is located in one of the difficult fields in southern Iowa, and growth has been somewhat slow. Yet our congregation in Mount Pleasant is serving a wonderful purpose in this more or less isolated area of Lutheranism. Present pastor is the Rev. Alton Koch, who also served a daughter congregation at Wapello. When the congregation at Lockridge disbanded, its members were received by our Mount Pleasant congregation. Membership, January 1, 1953: 155 souls; 100 communicants.

### **1942. College Hill Lutheran Chapel at Cedar Falls**

For many years the Lutheran students at Iowa State Teachers College in Cedar Falls were served by being transported to Waterloo for church services. But in 1941 it was decided to establish a student center and chapel near the college campus. A call was issued in 1941 by the District to Rev. Edgar Brammer to serve this field. A large home was bought at the corner of Seerley Blvd. And Walnut Street which was to serve as a temporary chapel and parsonage. An appropriation of \$25,000 was made available to the Iowa District East to purchase this property, which at a later date was to apply on the erection of a suitable chapel. Four months thereafter, at the beginning of 1942, a congregation was organized. The work at Cedar Falls consisted of a full program of parish activities in addition to the student work. The 1945 District convention at Keystone appropriated \$50,000 toward the erection of a chapel at Cedar Falls. An additional appropriation was made for the purchase of a parsonage. This figure included the balance of the



national Lutheran Education Association appropriation referred to above. Because of rising costs the ceiling of \$50,000 had to be raised to make possible the erection of this chapel. This chapel was dedicated in 1952. It is now serving as a combination chapel and student center. Present pastor is the Rev. Edgar Brammer. Membership of the congregation, January 1, 1953: 218 souls; 124 communicants.

### **St. John's, Wellsburg**

In the year 1941 the presence of Lutherans in and around Wellsburg that were not being served by their former synod, the Wartburg Synod, was brought to the attention of Rev. Carl Hesse at Eldora. He immediately made arrangements with them to conduct services in a vacant building in Wellsburg. Early in 1942 St. John's Church of Wellsburg was officially organized. Candidate Alfred Ernst, who was then serving as assistant to Pastor Hesse, began serving this congregation. In the fall of 1942 he took up residence in Wellsburg. In 1943 he was installed as the first resident pastor of the congregation. A property was purchased in the summer of 1942 in the southern part of Wellsburg, upon which a small chapel was erected. The first parsonage was a Quonset hut which provided four rooms and a bath. In 1950 a second parsonage was completed. The pastor of this congregation also serves the congregation at Gladbrook. As a result of combining these two parishes, Wellsburg is at present not supported by the District. The present pastor is the Rev. Dean Kasischke. Membership, January 1, 1953: 110 souls; 81 communicants.

### **St. Paul's, Iowa City**

Lutheranism in Iowa City dates back many years before the organization of the present congregation in this city. Iowa City was the place where in 1859 Pastor J.F. Doescher was installed as the first resident minister. Thus Iowa City became the headquarters for his work as missionary at large in the state of Iowa. He was followed by Herman Lossner, who came to Iowa City as the assistant to Pastor Doescher. With the transfer of these two men to different locations the historical pages of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod in Iowa City were blank for many years. Not until 1924 did Iowa City come back into the picture again. At that time Rev. Julius A Friedrich, past sixty, somewhat broken in health, was called to Iowa City to do the work of three men by serving as institutional chaplain, missionary for the city, and student pastor. Rev. Friedrich was installed in the commercial club room of the old Garden Theatre. In his diary, Pastor Friedrich wrote of this incident: "The night was dark and dreary, a heavy rain was falling, and it was very cold. Our first home in Iowa City was a dilapidated shack at 823 N. Bowery St."

When the National Lutheran Education Association disbanded around that time, it diverted a large portion of its funds to student service work. Aided by this source of income, the Iowa District was able to purchase a fine building site at 404 E. Jefferson for \$10,000. After a few years a combination chapel, lounge, and pastor's dwelling was erected at the cost of \$35,000. This chapel was dedicated on January 9, 1927. In March of that year a church council was elected to direct the affairs of the students and residents who attended the church. After the resignation of Pastor Friedrich as pastor of St. Paul's Congregation because of failing health in 1936, Rev. Leonard Wuerffel was called to take over the pastoral and student work of this parish, while Rev. Friedrich continued with the institutional work in the hospitals. In 1938 Pastor

Friedrich retired from active work and moved to St. Louis. Pastor John Bertram was then called to succeed him in the institutional work at Iowa City. When Rev. L. Wuerffel accepted a call to Seward in 1945, he was succeeded by Rev. John Choitz as congregational and student pastor. Rev. John Bertram was succeeded by the present institutional missionary, Rev. John Schliepsiek, in 1948. He is assisted part time in this work by Rev. Ed. Grummer of Oxford. Sometime during the year 1942 St. Paul's Congregation of Iowa City was officially organized. Since 1952 the congregation has been self-supporting, while the District assumes all financial obligations for the maintenance and repair of the building. This policy is in effect at the present time. Present student pastor is Rev. Elmer Yohr. Membership, January 1, 1953: 231 souls; 159 communicants.

### **Deep River Organizes**

Calvary Lutheran Church of Deep River was incorporated on July 12, 1942. The founding pastor was Rev. Rufus Young, then pastor at St. John's near Guernsey. Worship services at first were conducted in Memorial Hall. Later a house was purchased on the north side of town. This house was remodeled into a chapel-parsonage combination. Pastor Young served this congregation for nearly three years. Then Rev. Wenzel Tolson of Millersburg served the congregation for two years. In 1947 Rev. Ewald Becks became the first resident pastor of Calvary Congregation. He opened a mission in Montezuma and served both of these places until he accepted a call in 1949. In 1953 a lot for a new church edifice was given the congregation by Mrs. John Schlesselman. Early in 1954 ground was broken for a new church structure, which was dedicated on July 11, 1954. Assisting the congregation in the financing of this building project is the Lutheran Woman's Missionary League, which has underwritten the raising of \$5,000 toward this chapel. Present pastor is the Rev. Wilbert Bok. Membership January 1, 1953: 70 souls and 50 communicants.

### **St. Paul's (Evansdale) of Waterloo Is Organized**

In August of 1941 Candidate C.J. Sangers began work in a community southeast of Waterloo known as Home Acres. Sunday school and services were conducted in the basement of a schoolhouse in that area. In April of 1942 the group of people worshipping here organized themselves into St. Paul's Lutheran Congregation of Evansdale. In July of the same year ground was broken for the erection of a new church. In August Candidate Sangers was installed as the first resident pastor of this congregation. A Christian day school was established with the beginning of the new school term in September, with the pastor teaching. Enrollment was 25. The following year a lady teacher, Miss Ruth Young, was engaged to teach the school. While the church was under construction, school and church services were held in the basement of the church. Because of wartime labor and material shortages the church was not ready for dedication until October of 1943. Nearly all of the work on the church was done by the members, so that only \$300 was paid out in labor costs on the entire structure. In 1946 the congregation was granted \$6,000 for the construction of a two-room school. Assistance was given the project by the Lutheran Women's Missionary League in the financing of this building. The school was completed in November, 1953, under Rev. E.H. Heinicke. In 1954 a new parsonage was constructed. The congregation is vacant at the present time. Membership January 1, 1953: 394 souls; 187 communicants.

## **Grace Lutheran at Fayette**

In the year 1938 Pastor H.J. Heilman of Fairbank was asked to conduct services in a community church south of Fayette, known as Centenary by some of his parishioners living in this area. This he consented to do. During the summer of 1939 student Meseke served this charge. This venture, however, did not prove too successful. Then, after a canvass of the town of Fayette by neighboring pastors, it was decided to conduct services in Fayette, and the members still attending the Centenary services were asked to attend at Fayette, which they consented to do. Services were held in the Legion Hall. In 1941 student W. Tensmeyer worked in this field during the summer months. A house had in the meantime been procured, which served as a chapel-and-parsonage combination. In the month of September of this same year Candidate K. Richard Schliepsiek arrived to serve in Fayette. In 1942 he was installed as the first resident pastor of Grace Lutheran Church, which had recently been organized. Shortly thereafter the present church property was purchased. An abandoned church near Strawberry Point was purchased and dismantled. During the summer of 1942 building operations were begun under wartime shortages, which slowed up the project considerably. Although the church itself was not completed until August of 1943, the basement was used for Sunday school and services before that time. The congregation became self-sustaining in 1952. A parsonage was purchased in 1949. The pastor of Grace Lutheran Church is also the chaplain of the County Home, where he conducts services regularly. He is also student pastor for the Lutheran students attending Upper Iowa University. The congregation is vacant at the present time. Membership January 1, 1953: 311 souls; 198 communicants.

## **District Synod of 1942 Meets**

This synod met at Keystone, with 189 present. Essay: "The Kingly Office of Christ and Its Significance for the Present Time." Twenty congregations were reported as being subsidized by the District at this time. Missionaries' salaries were raised to \$100 a month. The student subsidy fund was re-established. The Iowa District East was in 18<sup>th</sup> place in its giving to the synodical budget. Student work was begun in Cedar Falls, and a combination chapel-parsonage was purchased by the District for this work. The office of secretary of Student Work and Institutional Word was established at this synod, said officer to be a member of the Board of Directors of the District. Radio devotions sponsored by the District were to be broadcast over Radio Station WMT of Cedar Rapids. These devotions were to last 15 minutes and presented weekly. Approval was given for the formation of the district Lutheran Women's Missionary League. A committee was appointed to study the request for the establishment of an Old People's Home in the District, this committee was to report to the next convention. The establishment of a Board of Appeals in accordance with Synod's recommendation was authorized. The entire District was redivided into 9 visiting circuits. Burlington was in the throes of a wartime boom.

## **Lutheran Women's Missionary League Organizes**

The Lutheran Women's Missionary League of the Iowa District East was organized on May 20, 1942, when more than 200 women representing the women's organizations of approximately forty-nine congregations met at Trinity Lutheran Church at Vinton. A Constitution was adopted, and temporary officers were elected. Rev. Paul Brammer, Rev. Otto Nieting, and President Carl

Hesse were appointed to serve as counselors for this organization. All societies joining the League before the first convention were to be considered charter members of the League. The first convention was held at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Waterloo. Roll call showed 42 societies represented by 70 delegates and approximately 100 guests. The first project of the district League was to assist in financing a mission chapel at Knoxville. Officers elected for a one-year term were the following: President: Mrs. Walter Widman, Waterloo; vice-president: Mrs. Harold Grovert of Newhall; secretary, Mrs. Ed. Stebe of Eldora; corresponding secretary, Mrs. Wm. Krueger of Vinton; treasurer, Mrs. Walter Guenther of Eldora. Board members were Mrs. L. Fairbanks of Waterloo and Mrs. Theo. Schulz of Davenport. Projects supported by the district League since its organization, besides the Knoxville mission, were an orphanage in Europe; the school at Evansdale near Waterloo; a chapel at Wapello; and the project at the present time is to provide \$5,000 for the chapel at Deep River and \$2,500 for the purchase of a portable chapel. The district has been divided into seven regions, most of which conduct spring and fall rallies. A district convention is held every other year. These conventions have been regularly attended by about 600 women. Members are kept informed within the district through the publishing of a quarterly newsletter and through the pages of the Iowa District East Edition of the **Lutheran Witness**. Funds for their projects are gathered through the use of mite boxes distributed to the various members in their local societies. Present membership totals 4,070 from 104 societies in 94 congregations. This organization has been the fastest-growing of all within the district. The main interest of the women of the League is missions, and the work they have been doing in the interest of missions has been effective in many parts of the world. Present officers are: President, Mrs. Elmer Tiedeman of Cedar Rapids; vice-president, Mrs. Theodore Eichelberg of Lowden; recording secretary, Mrs. Walter Granner of Eldora; corresponding secretary, Mrs. R.R. Schroeder of Merengo; treasurer, Mrs. Donald Newton of Blairstown. Counselors are Rev. Otto Schultz of Westgate and Rev. John Zimmermann of Eldora.

### **1943. District Synod Meets**

St. John's of Clinton served as hosts to this convention, with 195 in attendance. Essay: "The Prophetic Office of Christ." Rev. Albert Bostelman and Rev. Arnold Schmidt entered the Army chaplaincy from this District. The convention encouraged congregations to establish central schools wherever possible. The Circuit Visitors of the District were authorized to serve as official advisers for youth work in their respective circuits. 89 per cent of the workers of the District were reported as having enrolled in Synod's Pension Plan, and 74 per cent of the congregations were participating. The District was now conducting half-hour devotions over Radio Station KXEL of Waterloo. A District missionaries conference was held for the first time in 1943 at Bethany Lutheran Church in Cedar Rapids. Permission was granted the Lutheran Laymen's League to organize as a District organization.

### **Lutheran Laymen's League Is Organized**

The district Lutheran Laymen's League was organized at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Waterloo, with about 200 in attendance. This organization has not enjoyed the rapid rise in membership of some of the other organizations of the District. As a result its activities and accomplishments have been somewhat limited. It has, however, been quite active in conducting Laymen's League seminars in various sections of the district. These have proved to be quite

successful. The district convention is a one-day affair, being held on a Sunday afternoon and evening. Attendance, as a rule, is a little better than 200 at these conventions. At the present time efforts are being made to organize the district into zones or regions. All member societies and individuals of the district help support the various projects of the national organization, such as sponsoring the Lutheran Hour, the Family Worship Hour, "This Is the Life," the Valparaiso Scholarship Fund, and other projects. Determined efforts are also being made to gain more societies for the district and more members for the local organizations. First president of the district was Walter Vieth of Davenport, President at the present time is Ferdinand Dietz of Davenport.

### **1945. Trinity at State Center Organizes**

Shortly after the time that St. John's Lutheran Church north of State Center was destroyed by fire, members of this congregation living in and around State Center asked for a peaceful release so that they could formulate a congregation of their own in the town of State Center. This was granted them, and as a result Trinity Lutheran Church of State Center came into being in the year 1945. Rev. Fred Ilten, then pastor at Marshalltown, was asked to serve this congregation until they could obtain a pastor of their own. In June of 1945 Rev. K.J. Baumgart arrived in State Center to become the first resident pastor of this congregation. Services were at first held in the Methodist church, which was rented for that purpose until the present beautiful church was completed in June of 1949. The congregation also own its parsonage. Present pastor is the Rev. K.J. Baumgart. Membership January 1, 1953: 365 souls; 238 communicants.

### **District Synod of 1945 Meets**

Atkins served as host to this convention, with 172 present. Essay: "The Lutheran Pastor." The District convention authorized the employment of seven supply seminarians to survey and canvass the larger cities of the District. The suggestion that all debts of subsidized congregations be canceled so that they could become self-supporting, with new stations starting debt free, was tabled for further study. The limit of \$4,000 to one congregation from the Church Extension Fund was lifted. The Stewardship Secretary was made an advisory member of the Board of Directors. The District authorized the purchase of a home for our institutional missionary in Iowa City. Student subsidy was also now made available for lady teachers. The Board of Directors was encouraged to establish directives for better co-operative efforts between the District Young People's Board and the district Walther League board. The Secretary of Young People's Work was asked to acquaint himself with Boy Scout work. The office of Secretary of Christian Education was established, and this officer was to be added to the membership of the Board of Directors. Remuneration for District officials was to be studied, and the Treasurer was authorized to list the amounts paid these officers in the Treasurer's reports. District board members were from this time forward to be elected for the office they were to hold, rather than being elected to the Board and then the Board organizing itself. The radio devotional program sponsored by the District was discontinued. During the course of the convention V.J. Day arrived, and many pastors went to their home congregations to conduct pre-arranged services of thanksgiving to God for having brought the war to an end. Most of them returned again to conclude the business of the convention. Out of thankfulness to God for having brought World

War II to a conclusion, the District voted to take part in a Synod-wide Peace Thank-offering, which was to be used for postwar expansion both at home and abroad.

### **1946. Albia Organizes**

First services in Albia were conducted by Pastors Walter Wendt, then of Ottumwa, Theodore Gutknecht at Oskaloosa, and R.P. Young, District Mission Secretary of Guernsey during Lent of 1943. In the fall of this year Student Dean Kasischke was placed in Albia by the District Mission Board. Up to this time services had been conducted in various halls and the homes of members. Upon the arrival of Student Kasischke, the Episcopal church was rented. Student E. Breiholz served the congregation the next year. Thereupon Candidate Kasischke returned to Albia to become the first resident pastor of the congregation. In October, 1945, St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Albia was organized. In the spring of 1946 the United Presbyterian church was purchased, remodeled, and reconditioned. The parsonage was erected and ready for occupancy in September of 1946. In 1948 Pastor Kasischke accepted a call elsewhere. He was succeeded by Pastor A.H. Mette, who remained there until April 1949. After this the congregation was served by neighboring pastors. In 1953 the mission was disbanded and the property of the congregation sold because of the lack of sufficient interest to make it worthwhile to continue having a congregation there.

### **1946. Trinity of Knoxville**

Work in Knoxville began when pastors of the neighboring congregations of Melcher and Lacona served patients at the U.S. Veterans Hospital and together with this work also conducted services in the city. Rev. Walter Huchthausen of Melcher conducted Sunday afternoon services for a short season in 1934. Then, in 1943, Rev. Fred Boelter of Lacona began conducting services in Knoxville in Lent and during the summer months. Beginning with September of 1943, services were held regularly in the rented Seventh-Day Adventist church. The first resident pastor of this congregation was Rev. Theodore Eichelberg, who was installed in September of 1943. In August of 1946 Trinity Lutheran of Knoxville was officially organized under the pastorate of Rev. Arnold Schmidt. In this same year the Iowa District East purchased the present parsonage and building site. When Pastor Schmidt accepted the full-time chaplaincy at the Veterans Hospital in Knoxville, Rev. Lothar Braeunig was called to serve this congregation. In 1949 the building of its present chapel was begun. It was completed in 1950. The Lutheran Women's Missionary League assisted the congregation in the building of its chapel. The congregation is at the present time still being subsidized by the District. Present pastor is the Rev. Norman Rothe. Membership January 1, 1953: 204 souls; 106 communicants.

### **District Synod Meets**

The District convention of 1946 met at Immanuel Lutheran Church at Waterloo, with 187 in attendance. Essay: "The Lutheran Congregation." This convention appointed a committee to set up regulations for subsidizing schools. The matter of a full-time secretary of education and also combined mission and education secretary was given to a committee for restudy. A Committee of Public Relations, to consist of the District President, the Secretary of Institutional Missions, and a layman, was established. All were to serve for a period of three years; were to

meet twice a year together with a Public Relations Committee of Iowa West for a better relations between the two Districts of the state.

### **1947. St. John's of Center Point**

Lutheran services were begun in the Center Point field by Rev. Edmund Frese, then pastor at Shellsburg. First services were conducted in a home. During the next four years services were conducted in the various homes of the members and at times in some of the churches of the community. On May 18, 1947, St. John's Lutheran Congregation of Center Point was organized. In July of that same year Pastor Frese was officially called and installed as pastor of this congregation. He continued to live in Shellsburg, serving both congregations as one parish. The present house of worship was dedicated in June of 1947. To obtain this building, an Army barracks was purchased from Fort Blanding, Fla., and shipped to Center Point, where it was erected at a total cost of \$3,000. The following years were very trying for the congregation, and it seemed as if the work would have to be abandoned, but gradually the congregation began to grow and take on new life. The congregation has recently purchased a lot for the building of a future church and parsonage and is now anticipating plans for a new house of worship. Present pastor serving the congregation from Shellsburg is Rev. A. Aschbrenner. Membership January 1, 1954 {sic}: 68 souls; 43 communicants.

### **Our Savior at Bettendorf**

In 1947 the Board of Directors of the District called a Pastor E.A. Breiholz to be a missionary in Bettendorf for the purpose of founding a new Lutheran congregation in this community. Pastor Breiholz was commissioned for this work in Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Davenport. After a preliminary canvass and survey, services were begun on October 5, 1947, in the Washington Schoolhouse. A congregation had previously been organized under the supervision of the District Vice-President, Rev. W.D. Oetting of Waterloo, in June of 1947. Pastor Breiholz was officially called in this same meeting. The present property on Central Ave. was purchased during the year 1948. An aluminum chapel was dedicated on one corner of this property on June 12, 1949. In 1948 the congregation became a member of the Mo. Synod. When the aluminum chapel became too small, especially for the Sunday school, a second house of worship was built and dedicated in 1953. The congregation has under the guiding hand of God enjoyed good progress, so that before the dedication of its present house of worship the congregation was able to become self-supporting. The church is located in a rapidly growing portion of Bettendorf, so that prospects for further growth and progress are very good. Present pastor is the Rev. Otto Schumacher. Membership January 1, 1953: 200 souls; 100 communicants.

### **Redeemer Lutheran Church of Ventura**

On July 14, 1946, a resolution was adopted in St. John's Lutheran Congregation of near Garner, Iowa, which read: "Motion made and seconded to give Rev. Walter Wolfram permission to start a mission station in Ventura." This is the historical beginning of Redeemer Lutheran Congregation of Ventura. The first service was conducted in Ventura in October of 1946, in the consolidated school building, after a canvass had been made of the town. Eighty-three worshipers gathered in this school building at this first worship service. Four months later Redeemer Congregation was officially organized. Rev. Otto Erbe, then living in retirement in

Mexico City, Mexico, was asked to serve this mission during the spring and summer of 1947, until definite arrangements could be made to secure a supply pastor. This he consented to do. The present property upon which the church has been built, together with a strip of land on the lake shore, was the gift of Theodore Wolfram, Jr. The congregation accepted this gift and immediately made plans for the construction of a house of worship on this site. The beautiful and imposing stone structure overlooking Clear Lake was dedicated in May of 1948. On May 21, 1947, Rev. Walter T. Wolfram was installed as the first resident pastor of this congregation. This congregation has enjoyed a steady growth, so that in a very brief period of time this congregation also became self-supporting. Present pastor is the Rev. Walter T. Wolfram. Membership January 1, 1953: 242 souls; 179 communicants.

### **Concordia Lutheran Church at Waterloo**

The first service in the community where this congregation was to be established in Waterloo was held on June 2, 1946, in the gym of the Lincoln School, by Chaplain Ralph Radtke. Concordia Lutheran Congregation was officially organized on August 8, 1946. Pastor Radtke was installed as the first resident pastor of this congregation. In 1947 the chapel of Grace Lutheran Congregation in Waterloo was purchased and moved to its present location. In 1947 the present parsonage was purchased. The congregation joined Synod in 1948. In 1952 the congregation became self-supporting. Present pastor is the Rev. Wm. Stoll. Membership January 1, 1953: 260 souls; 160 communicants.

### **Redeemer Lutheran at Rudd Organizes**

Redeemer Lutheran Church at Rudd was organized in 1933 as a preaching station by Candidate Ed. Frese. He conducted services in a privately owned church building in Rudd. This building was purchased in 1934 by Grace Congregation, which had just before that been organized. From the year 1934-1941 Rudd was served by student vicars and candidates. Since 1941 the pastor of St. John's, Osage, has served this congregation. Membership as of January 1, 1953: 28 souls and 19 communicants. The congregation is at present being served by Rev. A.R. Allmann of St. John's, Osage.

### **Grace Lutheran at Montezuma Organizes**

In the year 1947, after Pastor Ewald Recks had begun his pastorate at Deep River, he also began conducting services in Montezuma. In 1948 Grace Lutheran Church of Montezuma was organized. A modest chapel was erected and dedicated there in 1948. This mission is found in a sparsely settled area of Lutheranism, and progress has been slow. It is still being served from Deep River, and these two parishes since June of 1954 have become a self-sustaining unit in the District. Present pastor serving the congregation from Deep River is Rev. Wilbur Bok. Membership as of January 1, 1954: 46 souls, 23 communicants.

### **District Synod of 1948 Meets**

This convention was held in St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Williamsburg with 198 in attendance. Essay: "The High-Priestly Office of Christ." Mission report showed 23 subsidized congregations in the District. Regulations governing this subsidizing of schools were



established. Smaller congregations were urged to consolidate so as to conserve valuable manpower in the church. The Walther League donated \$661, to assist the District in furnishing the lounge in the student center at Iowa City. A joint Public Relations Committee to meet with a similar committee from Iowa West was established. The memorial to establish a full-time Superintendent of Missions and Christian Education was found to be impractical and therefore rejected. Instead, a full-time executive Superintendent of Missions and Stewardship was authorized, and a committee was appointed to study the matter and report back to the next convention. The Williamsburg and the Victor circuits were redistricted to make up the present Mount Pleasant, Williamsburg, and Oskaloosa circuits. The November 1947 issue of the *Iowa Historical Society Palimpsest* contained a historical sketch of our church in Iowa, which was written by Rev. Leonhard Wuerffel, then student pastor at Iowa City. The convention also authorized the sending of the minutes of the Board of Directors to all pastors of the District.

### **1949 St. Paul's at Wapello Organizes**

The first service in Wapello was held on May 28, 1939, in the American Legion Hall, with Rev. Alton Koch in charge. This service was held after a canvass had been made of this area, which revealed many unchurched people living in and around Wapello. After a while services were held in the GAR hall—and then back to the Legion Hall again until 1944. From 1944 to 1952 services were held in a small store building. St. Paul's Lutheran Congregation was officially organized on July 12, 1949. A lot was purchased in 1950 which was to serve as the location of their future church. In that same year the Lutheran Women's Missionary League of the District voted to provide \$8,000 toward the erection of a chapel at Wapello. On the lot which was purchased there stood the first courthouse of Louisa County. This was razed to make way for the church construction. The chapel was dedicated in October of 1952. Total cost was \$9,500. One of the first fruits of the new chapel was the organizing of a good-sized Sunday school and increased church attendance. This church at Wapello is the only Lutheran church in the county and is serving as an outpost for Lutheranism in this area. Rev. Alton Koch serves this parish from Mount Pleasant. Membership on January 1, 1953: 45 souls, 31 communicants.

### **Peace Lutheran Church, Shell Rock**

In the year 1937 Rev. Edmund Frese began conducting services in an upstairs hall in Shell Rock. Pastor Frese at that time was serving as pastor of the Finchford congregation. He continued serving these two parishes until 1943. In 1943 Rev. Richard Gutknecht was installed as pastor of the congregation at Finchford and also as pastor of the congregation at Shell Rock. In October of 1943 a congregation was organized in Shell Rock, with Rev. Richard Gutknecht becoming the first resident pastor of the congregation. In 1944 the business building in which the congregation had been worshipping was purchased. In 1945 the congregation purchased its present parsonage. The present fine church edifice was dedicated in February, 1950. Noteworthy of this dedication is that the *Shell Rock News* devoted nearly its entire paper to stories and ads about The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod in connection with the completion of the church. There was very little news in the entire edition which did not have something to say about the big event at Peace Lutheran Church in Shell Rock. Sometime during the year it was found inadvisable to continue services at Finchford. In May, 1953, Peace Lutheran Congregation became self-supporting.

Present pastor is the Rev. Wm. Weber. Membership on January 1, 1953: 158 souls, 113 communicants.

### **District Synod of 1949 Meets**

This convention was held in Keystone, with 201 in attendance. Essay: "The Savior in the State of Humiliation." A Sunday School by Mail director was appointed in the person of Pastor E.H. Beckman. A house-to-house canvass in connection with a special offering to bring the Extension Fund up to \$200,000 was authorized for the month of October, 1949. This convention also established a District Department of Public Relations. First chairman of Public relations to be elected was the Rev. Walter S. Wendt. The Public Relations Committee was to continue functioning as heretofore, and the District chairman was to meet with this committee. The matter of a full-time Mission and Stewardship Secretary was tabled. Listing and publishing of District rules and regulations was authorized, these to be ready by the time of the 1951 convention. An overture to reorganize the entire District administrative system was given to a committee for further study and presentation to the 1951 convention. The convention also went on record, authorizing hotel conventions whenever no host congregation could be found to house the convention.

### **Christ Lutheran Church, Gladbrook, Organizes**

Worship services in and around Gladbrook were first held in a Methodist structure in 1948 by the Rev. K. Richard Schliepsiek, then at Reinbeck. In March of 1950 the congregation organized as Christ Lutheran Congregation, with about 12 voting members present. In 1952 lots were purchased for a building site for the congregation. Since 1952 the congregation has become one parish with that of Wellsburg, which is self-supporting. According to latest reports, the congregation is still worshipping in the Methodist church. Present pastor serving the congregation from Wellsburg is the Rev. Dean Kasischke. Membership on January 1, 1953: 76 souls, 45 communicants.

### **District Synod of 1951 Meets**

Cedar Rapids served as host to this convention with 207 in attendance. Essay: "The Atonement." In the interim, when President Carl Hesse left the District, Rev. W.D. Oetting succeeded him to the presidency of the District. Rev. Lester Peter was reported as having become a full-time chaplain at the State Prison at Fort Madison. This convention established the office of Secretary of Adult Education in addition to that of the Secretary of Preconfirmation Education. First secretary of Adult Education was the Rev. Peter Happel of Wilton Junction. A committee was authorized to study missions, finance, and Church Extension. The overture on this publishing of District regulations was tabled until the 1952 convention. The District Secretary was requested to serve also as archivist. Changes in teachers conference regulations were adopted. The installation of the elected members of the Board of Directors was authorized. The District voted to take part in the "Conquest for Christ" drive of the general Synod. At future conventions laymen may also partake of Holy Communion. A Rural Life Commission of three was authorized.

## **1952 St. Mark's of Garrison Organized**

In June of 1951 the boards of elders of the congregations of Keystone, Vinton, and Van Horne held a meeting to discuss the possibilities of starting a mission at Garrison. After several more such meetings these boards recommended three trial months to their congregations, which were accepted. Services were begun in September, 1951, and held in the firemen's hall. There were 77 people present. Average attendance for the three trial months was 70. These services were conducted by Pastors Albert Brauer and Norman Rothe. Sunday school during this trial period had an enrollment of 31. In November it was decided to continue these services, and Pastor Rothe was asked to serve the group. On February 3, 1952, St. Marks's Lutheran Congregation of Garrison as organized, with 18 charter members. In 1953 the congregation bought two lots in the east end of Garrison. On November 15, 1953, the present church was dedicated. Over-all cost was \$12,000. When Pastor Rothe accepted a call elsewhere, this work was taken over by Pastor Albert Brauer of Keystone, who is serving the congregation at the present time. The congregation is in the process of calling a resident pastor to serve them. Membership: 135 souls, 78 communicants.

## **District Synod of 1952 Meets**

St. Ansgar served as host to the convention, with 209 in attendance. Essay: "The Comfort of Christ's Exaltation, with Special Reference to Pertinent Passages of the Old Testament." Iowa East was reported as being the first District to register 100-per-cent co-operation in the "Conquest for Christ" offering. Rules for the establishment of new missions were accepted. A working policy on student service work at Iowa City was adopted. Trustees for the Iowa City and the Cedar Falls property were established. A committee was appointed to make changes in the administration of Church extension funds. The Board of Directors was authorized to put these into operation as soon as the committee could make a final report. Ninety-seven per cent of the District's workers and congregations were reported as taking part in Synod's Pension Fund. A study of taking pictures for slides and tape recordings at District synods was authorized.

At the present time a congregation has just been recently organized at Hiawatha, a suburb of Cedar Rapids, on Highway 150. Some years ago a rural school was purchased and moved to its present location and renovated into a church. The congregation has been served by student vicars. As more building takes place in the new subdivisions surrounding this church, under the guiding hand of God, this congregation should also continue to grow and prosper. At the same time Mount Vernon is being served by the student vicar from Hiawatha. This is as yet not an organized congregation. With the continuous growth in some of our larger cities of the District, new congregations can be expected to spring up.

For the privilege of membership in such a glorious Gospel-preaching church as ours, we as Christian members owe praise and thanks to God, from whom cometh down every good gift and every perfect gift. As we bring these brief historical sketches of our Lutheran Church in Iowa East to a close, we commend you, the members of these churches, as well as your pastors and teachers, to the keeping of our heavenly Father, asking that He may continue to prosper the preaching of the Word in our midst so that all of us may meet in heaven someday.

[End of document]