



# Foreward

## GOD'S WORD IS OUR GREAT HERITAGE . . .

The Word of God was the great heritage of the early settlers in Traill County. It had guided them safely in their Christian trek and had provided light for their path. As they built new homes in a new land a century ago, a foremost concern was the establishment of a ministry of Word and Sacrament among themselves. This they did as they gathered into Christian congregations and called faithful pastors to serve them.

This little history provides a testimony to God's grace and a tribute to His people in this place who struggled through good and bad years to remain faithful to His Word. They heard the voice of our gracious Father through the prophet Isaiah:

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven,  
and do not return to it without watering the earth  
and making it bud and flourish,  
so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,  
so is my Word that goes out from my mouth:  
it will not return to me empty,  
but will accomplish what I desire  
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

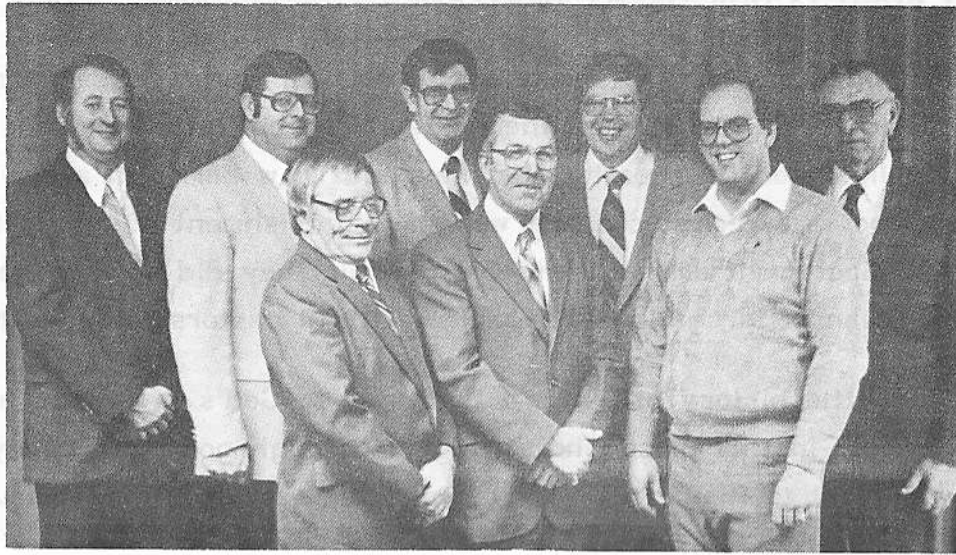
The faith of the pioneers was not misdirected. The list of souls brought into the Kingdom through Holy Baptism, of Confirmations and weddings, and of burials of saints, bear witness to the working of the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacrament to create and sustain trust in Christ alone for forgiveness, life and salvation.

Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift! May His grace continue to be upon us in the years ahead as we strive to carry out our Lord's Great Commission, bringing the Gospel to those near and those far away.

God's Word is our great heritage  
And shall be ours forever;  
To spread its light from age to age  
Shall be our chief endeavor.  
Through life it guides our way,  
In death it is our stay.  
Lord, grant, while worlds endure,  
We keep its teachings pure  
Throughout all generations.

Curtis A. Olimb  
Pastor

### THE CHURCH COUNCIL



**Back Row:** Eugene Oelrich, Trustee; Rodney Meyer, Elder; Ralph Meyer, Trustee; Richard Schlichtmann, Elder; William Meyer, Trustee  
**Front Row:** Harold Rachow, President; Paul Ponto, Elder; Randal Rust, Secretary

### THE CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE



**Back Row:** Harold Rachow, President; Donald Hanson, Jr., Eugene Oelrich, William Meyer, Erwin Bohnsack, Wallace Hertwig  
**Front Row:** Shirley Schultz, Ruth Rust, Ruth Johnson

# Our Centennial Celebration

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1985

New Year's Eve Service 7:00 p.m.  
The Rev. Richard Biberdorf  
Rolla, ND, preacher

Potluck supper and fellowship ushering in the  
"Year of the Centennial"

FRIDAY, MAY 9, 1986

Mother - Daughter Banquet 6:30 p.m.  
Karen Knudsvig, Buxton, speaker

FRIDAY, JUNE 20, 1986

Father - Son Banquet 6:30 p.m.  
Ralph Schuricht, Berea, OH, speaker

SATURDAY, JUNE 21, 1986

Open House at the Parsonage 2:00-5:00 p.m.

Vesper Service 7:30 p.m.  
The Rev. Richard Biberdorf  
Rolla, ND, preacher

Refreshments, reunion and style show

SUNDAY, JUNE 22, 1986

Festival Service 10:30 a.m.  
The Rev. Terrill Bramstedt  
Peoria, IL, preacher

Fellowship Dinner

Festival Service 2:00 p.m.  
The Rev. Elmer Steenbock  
Coos Bay, OR, preacher

Refreshments

# Evangelical Immanuel Church

## St. John Lutheran Church

The history of our congregation is inseparably entwined with the Immanuel congregation of rural Hillsboro. In the year of 1871, the families of Carl Mergenthal, Carl Hausman, Heinrich Groehnke and Frederick Kuhlman first gathered together in their homes for devotions, readings of Scripture and prayers. They were occasionally served by Pastor Harstad, a Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Pastor. This continued until 1875 when this group organized under the name of Evangelical Immanuel Church U.A.C. (Unaltered Augsburg Confession). They were still served by Pastor Harstad and in the coming years served by Vicar Hink and traveling pastors Krueger and Engel.

Pastor Engel then began serving a group of Christians in the vicinity of the homestead of John Bohnsack who arrived in 1879. This continued until 1882 when this group of pioneers joined with Immanuel Congregation in extending a call to Candidate J. Frick, who served as pastor to both groups. He received a call to another congregation and a vacancy occurred which lasted about a year. We can relate to the feelings of these people as we are in the midst of a vacancy and hoping prayerfully that by the time these words are in print that we shall once again have a resident pastor.

In 1886, a call was issued to Rev. E. Stroelin for the same duties as were required of Pastor Frick. It is difficult for us to imagine the hardships these first shepherds had to endure in those primitive conditions. My father used to show me where they had built a sod barn to protect the cattle and horses in the winter. It was a far cry from our oil and electrically heated homes and buildings of the present day.

Pastor Stroelin served us until the spring of 1888. At this time, there were 9 voting members in the congregation. At this time, a

constitution was drawn up and Pastor Potratz was called to serve the two congregations. Then followed years of steady growth as Pastor Potratz served us for fourteen years.

At the beginning of Pastor Potratz's ministry, August Ponto and Herman Ponto were chairmen. My uncle, Charles Bohnsack, was secretary, Christ Lindemann was treasurer, and the building committee consisted of Charles Bohnsack, Christ Lindemann and William Hausmann. The congregation grew to nineteen voting members.

In 1889, the congregation applied for, and was received into, membership with the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other states. At that time it numbered eighteen voting members and their families. Services were held in the local school.

Soon the congregation laid plans to build a church on a corner of the Bohnsack homestead. This was accomplished in the year of 1890, on May 11th. This was rogate Sunday. It was a rather impressive ceremony and the words of an original document describe it in this manner, "Under the wall of the altar we are burying this short history of our congregation, its constitution, as well as several religious and political tracts from this present period of time with the hope that if the walls of our church should fall before the great day of our Lord has come, our children and our children's children may recognize from documents such as these what their forefathers believed in, that God's Word was proclaimed loudly and clearly in this place, and the Holy Sacraments, as set forth by Christ, were duly performed here." This is surely a firm and uncompromising statement from the founders of our local congregation.

The church at this location continued to serve us until the year of 1930. During the period of time between Reverend Potratz's death in October, 1902, and the afore-mentioned date of 1930, we were served by the following pastors: 1903-1908 G. Sebald (Mt. Clemens, Michigan), 1908-1911 C. H. Burmaster, 1911-1912 E. Riess, 1912-1918 W. C. Hitze-mann, 1918-1920 F. H. Rotermund, 1920-1924 P. T. Schumm (served Sabin, Minnesota, after leaving here) 1925-1929 M. T. Jank (served Fredericksburg, Iowa, after leaving here).



During the time these pastors served us was a period of calm and relatively slow growth.

Pastor R. T. Schuricht was installed by C. Ed Mix of Hope, on November 17, 1929. This marks the beginning of change in the makeup of St. John and Immanuel congregations. As many of us know, it marked the beginning of economic stress among the members of both congregations. Upon Pastor Schuricht's arrival, both German and English services were held in both congregations on alternate Sundays, but in January of the following year a schedule of double service on each Sunday in each congregation was begun.

Also, at this time, Pastor Schuricht once more began preaching in the Grandin Auditorium and on June 1, 1931, Grace Lutheran Church was formally organized. In accordance with the Words of Jesus "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them..." a small group, some of whom originally had their membership in St. John Congregation, gathered together at the home of August Grothmann, Sr. and established themselves as a Christian Congregation with the power of the office of the keys. Pastor Schuricht met with this group and counseled it into an orderly organization with the name, "Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church U.A.C."

On Thanksgiving Day, November 27, 1930, joint services of St. John and Immanuel congregations were begun. This continued until April, 1935. At this time plans were made to relocate St. John Church in the city of Hillsboro. In July of that same year, the first steps were taken to purchase the church building of the Lutheran Free Church in the city of Hillsboro.

In the following year, 1936, these negotiations were completed and October 4, 1936, the new church home was dedicated and the 50th anniversary of the congregation was celebrated. It was certainly a full-packed day with Pastor Schuricht dedicating the building. Following that, the congregation, led by Pastor Schuricht, entered the church for the English morning service, in which Pastor C. Seebald delivered the sermon. He had served as Pastor for both Immanuel and St. John

congregations in the years 1903-1908. In the afternoon service, Pastor P. T. Schumm (former pastor from 1929-1930) spoke in German and Pastor J. P. Klausler of Hankinson, who was president of the North Dakota-Montana District at that time, spoke in the English language. In the evening service, a program was presented by the organizations of the church -- the Walther League, the Men's Club and the Ladies Guild.

Now that a church home had been established, plans were made for a parsonage. In 1940, the congregation purchased a parsonage, the former residence of A. G. Foogman, a jeweler and owner of a drug store in downtown Hillsboro.

It does seem that under the leadership of Pastor Schuricht, continuous challenges were placed before the congregation to accomplish such as a blanket subscription to the Lutheran Witness, still a practice of the congregation today. In the same year, 1940, the new Lutheran Hymnal was introduced. In 1940, a Gulbranson organ was installed in the church and was replaced in January, 1957, with a two manual Allen organ.

In 1947, Immanuel Congregation on the Goose River east of Hillsboro was disbanded and its members received into St. John congregation by transfer. Immanuel's cemetery is still supported and maintained by our congregation.

In 1949, the congregation built a 22' x 28' addition to the church in which there was an office and meeting room on the main floor and rest rooms and an entry way into the basement. The kitchen was also remodeled.

The church floor was tiled and new lighting installed in the basement in 1956. Three years later the interior of the church was redecorated and a new lighting system installed. In 1961, the congregation celebrated its 75th anniversary, still under the leadership of Pastor R. T. Schuricht. The following year, 1962, he retired from the ministry and moved to Cleveland, Ohio, where his son Ralph lived. Recognition must be made of this talented man and of the many arduous years he served our congregations. He was tireless in his endeavors to help



us become good stewards of the blessings that God had bestowed upon us. He not only left his mark upon the congregation as a whole, but also upon many individuals. He will be long remembered by many of us.

Upon Pastor Schuricht's retirement in 1962, Pastor Biberdorf of Victor, Iowa, accepted a call to serve us. He was the first pastor to occupy our present parsonage at 322 Third Avenue Southeast. He served us faithfully and well until his death in October, 1969. His wife, Helen, and her children Ann, Richard, David and Nancy continued to make their home in Hillsboro for a number of years. Mrs. Biberdorf served in various capacities in the church in those years. She is especially remembered as director of the church choir. At present, she is serving as a secretary in the District Office in Fargo and is a member of Immanuel Congregation. One of her sons, Richard, entered the ministry and is presently serving as pastor at Immanuel congregation at Rolla, North Dakota.

Pastor Steenbock of Bottineau, North Dakota, was called and served until 1975. During his pastorate, long-time plans for a new church came to fruition. Beginning in January, 1972, planning for a new church began in earnest and a formal resolution to that end was passed by the voter's assembly in May. A building committee was formed with the following members: Mandley Johnson, Art Grothmann, Harold Meyer, Esther Ludwig, Donald Riemer and Walter Schlichtmann. Ground-breaking ceremonies were held on June 25, 1972. Foundation construction began in August and with the whole-hearted cooperation of Pastor Steenbock and the congregation, the building was completed in May, 1973.

The dedication took place on May 27, 1973, with the president of the North Dakota District, Alvin M. Reimnitz, giving the morning address and Rev. Alfred E. Thiem giving the afternoon sermon. It was truly an auspicious event in the history of our church. The remaining debt on the church was quickly paid off and the church assumed a debt free position.

In 1975, Pastor Steenbock accepted a call to Coos Bay, Oregon, and Pastor Terrill Bramstedt assumed the pastoral care of our church and served us until Easter Sunday of the year 1985. At present we are with

out a resident pastor. Pastor Thiem of Immanuel, Fargo, serves as our vacancy pastor. He is assisted by Pastor Sincebaugh, the secretary of the North Dakota District.

In retrospect, let us not look back on our first hundred years of existence as an historical event but rather as a true account of God's care and love for His people. In our anxieties, He comforted us, in our perplexities, He guided us and our sins He has forgiven us for Jesus' sake.

Soli Deo Gloria!

William A. Meyer  
Erwin Bohnsack



1986

## Present Membership

330 Souls

243 Communicants

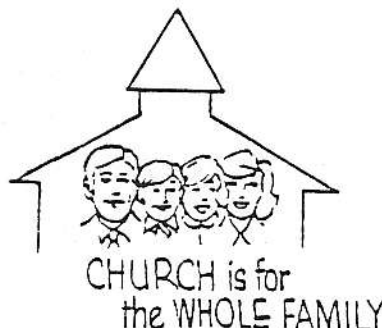
55 Voters

A history of the church is not only charters, and buildings, and called ministers of the Word. It is also the people of the church, and for this reason we are including a listing of the baptisms, confirmations, weddings and burials of Immanuel and St. John Congregations.

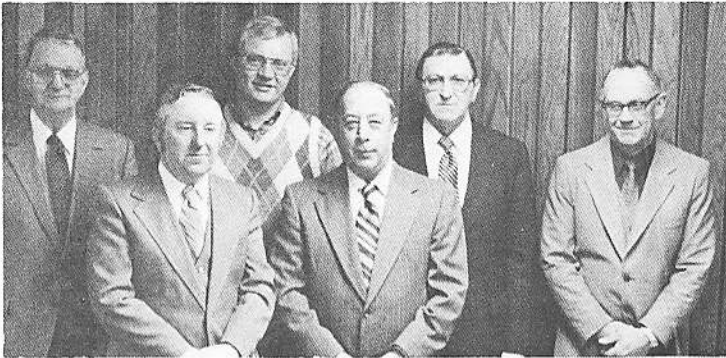
This information was taken from old church records and is as accurate as possible. There appears to be some duplication. Apparently, in some instances an event was entered in the records of both congregations but it is not for us to make changes in these records. Because of this apparent duplication we are unable to give an exact number of official acts performed in this congregation.

We also found several instances of different spellings of some surnames but have used the spelling as recorded. This was hampered to some extent by the difficulty we had in reading some of the records.

But whether or not there are errors in this list, our purpose is to include a history of the people who have brought us to this 100th anniversary. We find in it not only the grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other relative who have gone before us, but also those brothers and sisters in Christ who have moved from our midst. May it hold a special memory for each one of us.



#### FINANCE COMMITTEE



Back Row: Robert Kuhle, Wayne Dickhoff, Harold Meyer, James Johnson  
Front Row: Harold McDonald, Herbert Schlichtmann

#### BOARD OF EDUCATION



Darrell Rotvold, Jim Lilleberg, Robert Ludwig

#### LWML OFFICERS



Tracy Bohnsack, Bea Meyer, Ina Schlichtmann

#### SUNDAY SCHOOL STAFF

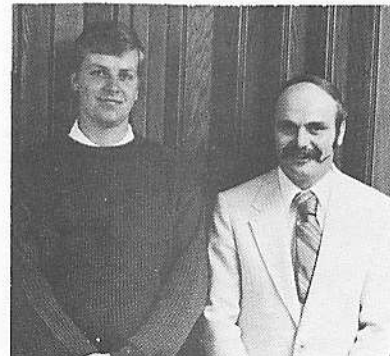


Back Row: Pat Ochsner, Linda Stevens, Jim Lilleberg, Brian Bohnsack, Dian Schlichtmann  
Front Row: Melissa Henn, James Johnson

#### FELLOWSHIP CLUB



Darrell Rotvold, Kay Rotvold, Richard Schlichtmann



William Christopher, Usher  
Brian Bohnsack, SS Supt.