

1880

2000



May 19-21, 2000

Rev. Lawrence James Clark, Pastor

Lest We Forget

One Hundred and Twenty years of Ministry

1880

2000

Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church

Charter Members

1880

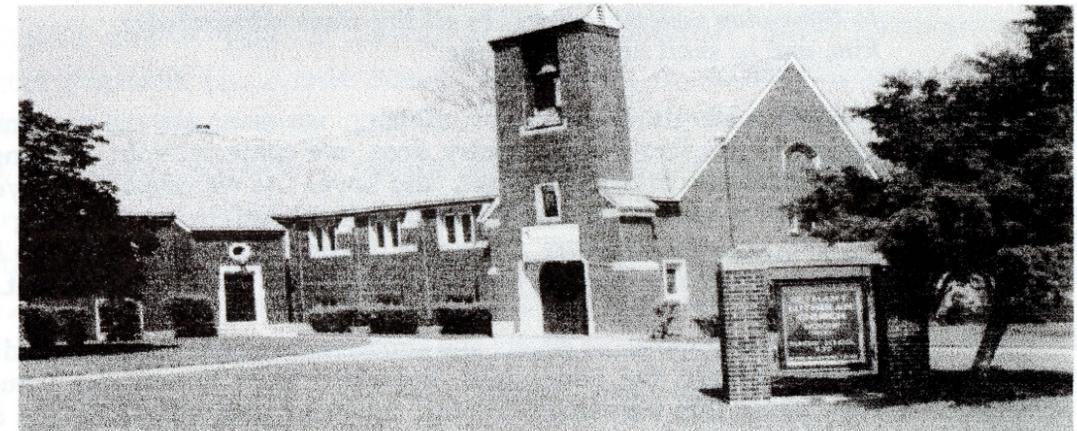
- Mr. & Mrs. Ola Person
- Mr. & Mrs. Nils Monson
- Mr. & Mrs. Hans Wickenberg
- Mr. & Mrs. Nils Olson
- Mr. & Mrs. Nils Polson
- Mr. & Mrs. Magnus Johnson
- Mr. & Mrs. A.P. Sjoquist
- Mr. & Mrs. John Peterson
- Mr. & Mrs. Nels Hanson
- Mr. & Mrs. Carl Bengtson
- Mr. & Mrs. Wilhelm LARGERGREN
- Mr. J.P. Peterson
- Mr. Henry E. Linman
- Mr. John A. Johnson
- Mrs. Christina Widelius

BETHANY 2000

Honoring God by Raising the Standard

*"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to your own understanding.
In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy path."*

Proverbs 3:5-6



120th YEAR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

May 19-21, 2000

*Bethany Lutheran Church
9147 South Jeffery Boulevard*

Chicago, IL 60617

Phone: 773-721-2393

Fax: 773-221-4779

**Rev. Lawrence James Clark, Pastor
Sem. Beth Ann Lechtenberger, Intern
All Baptized Members, Ministers**

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I bring you greetings in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church family and friends, the Lord has brought us from a mighty long way. I can truly say that we have come this far by faith, and it was the Grace of God that brought us. We are a people of history, and we know that God has acted in the past, and is always good for a repeat performance. Cause God is good all the time, and all the time, God is Good! It is in joyful thanksgiving that we celebrate in this year of our Lord, 2000, our **120th year Church Anniversary**. I am excited because of what God has done and what God continues to do. I invite you to take a few moments to reflect!

First let us remember the words of our 2000 Church Theme: **HONOR GOD**, taken from Proverbs 3:5-6

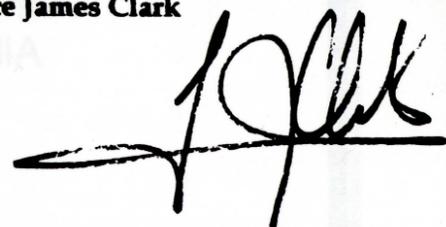
"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

In this new century as we celebrate 120 years of ministry, we must always remember, otherwise we will forget. We know that ministry does not come without challenges, frustrations, and the like, but it also brings Joy, Hope, and Love. As we celebrate 120 years of ministry, we look back in gratitude, but we also look ahead in confronting the challenges of service during the next 120 years. We give thanks to God for those who laid the foundation, and remember what a blessing their faith has been to us in the present.

We look back with thankful hearts to those sisters and brothers that have gone on, and we thank God for those that fought the good fight, but now have joined the Church Triumphantly. We are proud that they stood on faith, took risk, and trusted in God and that Bethany was able to flourish and prosper. Bethany is a birthing church, providing four (4) new mission and ministry opportunities and possibilities. We may be 120 years old now but I would challenge the current membership to see that new birth is still possible.

We thank God for the new life that we have seen, moving from the church with the five (5) cars in the parking lot and inquiries as to whether or not we want to sell the building, to newspaper articles that said we were closing. But we know that Bethany is alive and well. We are proud of our Internship program, our Drama Ministry, the Ministry of the Word, Bethany Choir, the Circle of Love, Youth, Bethany Homework Center, and so much more. We are excited and prepared to pass on the Torch of Faith to the younger generation, the God Squad, God's Property and we pray that their lights of compassion and service may shine even brighter than ours. I really don't know what the future holds for Bethany, but I know that God Almighty holds the future, and so I have put my trust in him, and will continue to **HONOR GOD**. In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths. Bethany I've kept my fork, cause I know what's to come is better than what's been, and the **Best is yet to Come!**

Peace and Love from your Pastor,
Rev. Lawrence James Clark



Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Bethany 2000, 120th year Church Anniversary / Souvenir Book Committee would like to thank you, our Bethany family members, and our many friends and business associates for your support during this year.

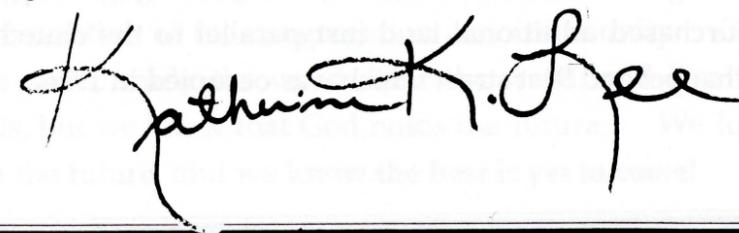
My heartfelt appreciation to everyone who put forth their all in making this book become a reality.

A special thank you to Lorraine Rice (Souvenir Book Chairperson), Loretta Maxwell (Souvenir Book), and Mary Jo Milner (Souvenir Book) for the many hours they sacrificed in gathering and accounting for the souvenir book contents. Thank you to Jackie Crawford for the many hours she spent putting the souvenir contents together. Thank you to Pastor Clark for the church history, encouragement, and leadership. Thank you to Zerrie Campbell (Gospel Brunch Chairperson) for her ideas, time, and extra effort that made this book and weekend a success. Thank you to Darlene Clark, (Friday Night Chairperson), Paulette Corley, (Artistic Director), Ray Crawford (Finance Committee), Diane Dorsey (Finance Chairperson and Gospel Brunch), Patricia Gordon (Banners and Gift Coordinator), Sharon Johnson (Candy Coordinator), Yvette Newberry (Sunday Events Chairperson), Richard Stewart (Banners and what ever was needed).

Thank you is not adequate to express my appreciation for your time, commitment, and ideas, opinions, and actions that made the Bethany 2000 Committee a success. You have been the "Wind Beneath My Wings".

Bethany, we hope that you will enjoy what has been prepared, and we hope you find this book educational and enjoyable. May God continue to richly bless each and every one of you as we continue to "Honor God by Raising the Standard."

Katherine Lee, Chairperson



Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church Church History

1880

2000

Bethany's History is a very special one, which began with the arrival of many Swedish and Scandinavian immigrants coming to America in the early 1870's. They arrived and established their homes, reared their families and became a part of the new American context. They came with letters of transfer from the Lutheran Church of Sweden, but there were no Lutheran churches in the Calumet area of Chicago. Sensing the need, the Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church sent a lay preacher, Mr. C.A. Lansfors to survey the area with the view of establishing a new church. Many meetings were held by a small group at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Ola Person at 9124 S. Houston. It didn't take very long before these stalwart souls were ready to organize a new church. **On May 30, 1880**, Bethany was organized as the first member of the Illinois Conference of the Augustana Church in the City of Chicago, with 26 charter members. On July 21, 1880, the first formal congregational meeting of **Betania Evangliska Lutenska Fosamling (Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church)** was called to order.

Worship services were conducted in Swedish until language communication changed to English in 1922. One year after its inception, 1881, Bethany built its first church edifice on 91st and Houston (just east of its current location). As a result of hard work and dedication of the ministry and growth, Bethany became the mother of four (4) Lutheran Churches: Bethesda (105th and Ave. J), St. Lukes (77th and Constance Ave.), Tabor (79th and Escanaba), and Our Savior (Lansing, IL). The first two churches are now defunct.

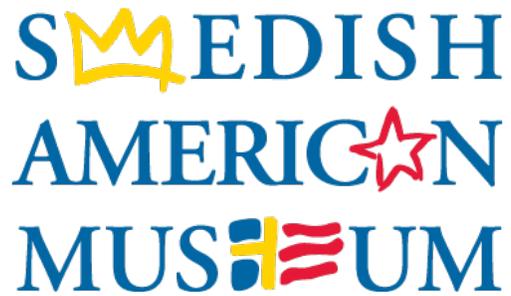
On June 15, 1948, Bethany sold its church building on 91st and Houston, and began plans to build a **new church** at 91st and Jeffery, its current location. Although they left the building, they took several items with them to the new building. They brought with them the altar, the pulpit, a lectern, pianos, the pipe organ, the Ascension Picture and the 2,270 lb bell with the inscription **"Come Redeemed Flock and Hear the Word!"** On September 10, 1950, Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church had its first worship service in the new location. They also purchased additional land just parallel to the church and built a parsonage at the corner of Chappel and 91st street which was occupied in 1956.

At moments in Bethany History, Bethany boasted of 300 children in its Sunday School (1894); 132 in its Vacation Bible School (1951); 561 total membership (1955); 409 confirmed members in good standing (1965); an African Dance Troupe - Susubiribi, and SPIRITS (1993); establishment of the Rev. Dr. Nelson W. Trout scholarship fund (1995); Supporting African American Lutheran ministries with benevolence dollars (1997); and many other ministries continue on today. There are also so many other accomplishments which could not be contained in these pages.

Bethany to its credit in its one hundred and twenty (120) year history, has only been served by thirteen (13) pastors, including its present one. There is something to be said about the high quality, longevity, and dedication of its pastors. Bethany's first 10 pastors were Swedish in descent, but as a sign of the changing times of Bethany's community and church, the most recent pastors have been pastors of color a Puerto Rican female, the Rev. Lydia Kalb, an African pastor from Ghana, Rev. Dr. Emmanuel FY Granston, and an African American pastor, the Rev. Lawrence J. Clark.

In the late 1960's as African American and those of the diaspora began moving into the Calumet Heights area, Bethany began reaching out into the neighborhood and surrounding areas, with new Pastoral and lay leadership, as they welcomed the new neighbors. Bethany stabilized but membership still declined, and Bethany became known as the church with the 5 cars in the parking lot. This would begin to change in the 1990's with the growth by the grace of God, the determination of Bethany's members and new Pastor, Rev. Dr. Emmanuel FY Granston as they were committed to the ministry, and a strong sense of African Culture and identity. The church grew and established a number of African cultural classes, the dance group Susubiribi, the S.P.I.R.I.T.S., and other programs.

In 1995 these efforts were continued under the leadership of Rev. Lawrence J. Clark. Bethany currently uses the Liturgy of Joy, written and scored by the Rev. Dr. James Caper, and recently purchased the new This Far by Faith Hymnal, an African American resource for worship. Bethany is a Black Lutheran Church which is unashamedly African in descent and unapologetically Lutheran with a dynamic past and an even more promising future. Some have described Bethany as a church that's growing, glowing and going. Our current aim is not just spirited worship, but a spiritual transformation of the congregation and community. God is empowering us to faithfully preach the word, study the word, hear the word, and live the word. We do know what the future holds, but we know that God holds the future. We look forward to what God has in store for us in the future, and we **know the best is yet to come!**



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