

A BRIEF HISTORY OF IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL

Immanuel's Lutheran heritage can be traced back to the late 1800's when German immigrants gathered for Christian worship in private homes, These new immigrants commonly gathered without a special denominational affiliation. As a result of differing interpretations of the Bible, members with leanings toward the teachings of the Lutheran church expressed concern about the way their children were being raised.

At a meeting on April 21, 1862, nine charter members organized as the Evangelical Lutheran Immanuel Congregation, Unaltered Augsburg Confession. A short constitution was adopted. Pastor Matuschka was called as shepherd of the flock. Congregational members pledged \$70.00 for the pastor's annual salary for that first year, In addition, he received \$6.00 a month for teaching school. The new 50-member congregation held its first Sunday afternoon worship services at the Presbyterian Church. Later, services were held at the Methodist Church.

On January 18, 1863, a 24' x 40' brick church was dedicated to the glory of God. Soon after, a Christian day school opened with 15 students. Pastor Matuschka served as the sole teacher. The school was a rented house on Jefferson Street. The pastor lived upstairs. Classes were conducted on the first floor

As the congregation grew, a larger church building was needed. On October 16, 1881, a bid for the new church building (our present church building) was accepted. The amount of the bid was \$7,614. This did not include the steeple, dome, cross, or lightning rod. (The cross was not the present stainless steel cross. The present cross was installed in 1954.) A 1200-pound bell was purchased for \$360, with the help of the youth organization of the congregation. They collected \$150 for the bell. Estimated costs for the altar, pulpit, and vestry were about \$200.

On November 26, 1882, the new house of worship was dedicated to the service of the Triune God. (Note our present cornerstone, 'EV. LUTH. IMMANUEL KIRCHE U.A.C. 1882' on northeast corner of the church.) Vernon Schmidt, a member of Immanuel-loved to tell the story that his grandfather, Emil F. Schmidt, made and laid the bricks for this church building, The bricks were made near the present church site. Total cost for the new church building was approximately \$9,000. The old church building also served as the school. In the summer of 1894, a second story was added to the old church, now the school, to be used as a meeting place. Total cost--approximately \$800.

As the school continued to grow, Immanuel purchased more land adjoining the church property. In 1939, a parsonage was constructed. The present school building was begun that year. It was dedicated on

May 5, 1940. Dr. Walter A. Maier, Lutheran Hour speaker, preached the dedicatory sermon. (Note cornerstone—LUTHERAN SCHOOL A.D. 1939—as you go down the steps outside the 8th grade classroom.) Total cost for the parsonage and school was approximately \$19,500.

As the school's enrollment continued to grow, additional space was needed. On November 29, 1959, groundbreaking services were held for the new school addition. (Note cornerstone—SCHOOL AUDITORIUM A.D. 1959—as you go up the ramp to enter the gym from the north.) Dedication date was May 7, 1961. Cost was approximately \$229,000.

Our most recent addition was built in 1996 and dedicated in September, 1997, (Note cornerstone—IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL 1997 BUILT TO THE GLORY OF GOD-on the north side of the new addition,)

Before the newest addition was built in 1997, the church building went through many changes. In 1894, the Ladies Aid installed electric lights in the church. They also purchased new carpet in 1906, and again in 1963. In 1912, the altar and pulpit were replaced with the same altar and pulpit still in use today. The present Ascension scene above the altar is a repainting done in 1962 by Anton Jacobs, a now deceased member of Immanuel. The original painting was done sometime between 1912 and 1915. In 1963, the purchase and installation of the balcony and an addition of a new two-manual Wicks pipe organ were added.

In the 1800's and early 1900's, all worship services were conducted in German. In 1912, occasional English sermons began to appear. By 1922, German and English were used about equally. Early in 1944, English took over completely. At that time, English hymnals were purchased.

In 1979, major renovations were done to the church and school. A tunnel was dug connecting the two buildings underground. On the first floor above the basement, a pastor's office (presently the acolyte room) and the Altar Guild room were constructed. Air conditioning was also installed in 1979. Overall cost of this major renovation was \$158,000. The Ladies Aid paid \$10,000! A re dedication service was conducted on Thanksgiving Day, November 22, 1979.

Immanuel's kindergarten program began in the fall of 1958. The first classes were held in a building west of the church. Mrs. James Garrison taught the first year. Her husband was principal of Immanuel. The following year, Mrs. Jerene Lohmeyer—a current member of Immanuel—became the kindergarten teacher. When the new addition was added in 1959, Kindergarten was moved into what is now the computer room/library.

Jerene (Linhardt) Lohmeyer was first hired as teacher of grades 1 & 2 in 1949. Jerene was also the first teacher of our preschool which began in 1975. Mr. Wil Schumann, who was principal at that time, named the first preschool H.E.L.P., which stood for 'His/her Early Learning Program'. Kindergarten was taught in the mornings. Preschool classes were held in the same classroom on Monday, Wednesday & Friday afternoons. Angie Grellner was a member of the first preschool class!

Another former teacher that you might recognize is Miss Carol Erdmann. She was hired at the beginning of the 1960 school year to teach grades 3 & 4. She is now Carol Moritz-mother of Lisa Beckerman.