

Given by Beryl Lewis. on Gloria Dei Lutheran Church  
Butte, MT.

During the celebration of Gloria Dei's 25th anniversary, Beryl Lewis gave the following resume of the history of Gloria Dei from her personal viewpoint and she was asked to have it printed in the Light:

Does your ethnic heritage mean anything to you? My Swedish/English background does to me, so I guess that's why I volunteered to present a brief history of our church. There is just one big problem, the research and remembering got so fascinating, this could be anything but brief, and I hope you, too, will find it interesting.

Swedish Lutheran pastors first came to Montana in the 1880's and were from the Augustana Synod. The Swedish Lutheran Church Society was formed in Butte on Feb. 1, 1896. My grandparents, Amanda and John Sjoblom, who were also grandparents of my cousin, Theona Nygren Hasley, who came in from Polson to help us celebrate, were among the charter members. These were the parents of my mother, Judith Sjoblom/Toy/Keavney, who is now the oldest living continuous member of this congregation. Her sister, Olga, Theona's mother, was baptized and accepted as a child member of this Swedish Lutheran Church Society. In 1901, the Swedes applied to the Augustana Synod to charter a church, which was the Emanuel Lutheran Church, situated on the SE corner of Montana and Silver Streets. Ellen Johnson, who now lives in Minneapolis, and my mother were the first two infants baptized into this congregation. They continued on together through Sunday School, confirmation, adult life and friendship as continuous members of this church until a little over a year ago when Ellen moved to be near her family. Other members of that early church were Ed Bentley's mother, Agnes Lindquist, her mother and brothers; Helen Plate's parents, the Hasselblads; Norma Youngman's parents, Peter and Mathilda Enrooth; Ellen Johnson's parents; and in the early years of Emanuel came the Finnevids (Esther Corkish's parents) and Hannah Gustafson (Evie Witt's mother), just to name a few.

Another Lutheran church was built near the same time across the street on the NW corner of Montana and Silver Streets. This was St. Mark's Lutheran Church, of the Missouri Synod. As occurs in most organizations at one time or another, dissention arose in St. Mark's congregation, and a group of people resigned their membership and formed the United Lutheran Church. This occurred in 1940 or 1941, and first worship services were held at the YMCA, then the Oddfellows Hall on Broadway, and then the congregation was housed in a large, remodeled home on the NW corner of Broadway and Idaho Streets, until 25 years ago. The Rev. Overdier was the first pastor.

In the 1940's when Pastor Oliver Wilson was at Emanuel Lutheran Church, there was discussion with Gold Hill Lutheran Church to consider a merger. It never came about as so often happened in past years, the Swedes went one way and the Norwegians went another. Now, we may see this happen as a national merger in the next 5 years. As you can see, the early Lutheran Churches in Butte were almost strictly of ethnic background - Emanuel was Swedish, Gold Hill was Norwegian, St. Mark's and United Lutheran wer of German and Finnish descent. (Thank goodness, we've gotten over that.)

After Pastor Wilson left, Pastor Norman Carlson came; then a very vital student by the name of Ivar Pihl, who convinced Alvin Mattson to come to Emanuel to serve his internship in 1951, and he, in turn, convinced John Nasstrom to come to Butte. The following year, Al Mattson came to Anaconda to First Lutheran Church, after his ordination. The congregations grew and grew until both churches had to consider building. Emanuel purchased this triangle of land in hopes of building here someday and under the guidance of John Nasstrom, it came about. This part of the building (the social hall), down the hall past the kitchen and large classroom to the divider in the hall, was built in 1956. This room housed 5 of the Sunday



School classes every Sunday morning and in a matter of minutes was transformed by the children and teachers into the sanctuary for worship services. In 1958 John and Mary Nasstrom decided to go into missionary work and accepted a call to Brazil. Their last worship service was Christmas of 1958. They still come to visit every year.

At this time, the United Lutheran Church was in need of a new sanctuary and Emanuel was in need of a pastor; thus, the formation of a new church was begun. After many, many meetings of church councils, committees, and members in general, it was effected. Since Augustana Synod held a mortgage on this building, it was decided that the new church would be an Augustana congregation for the time being, but national merger plans were in the making which would united Augustana and the United Lutheran Synod in just 3 years in 1962, into the Lutheran Church in America. Pastor Marvin O. Lee was then serving the United Lutheran Church and was granted a dispensation by the United Lutheran Synod to serve an Augustana congregation, and took up residence in the Emanuel parsonage in the 600 block of Colorado Street (which, incidentally, had been Nelson Jones' home while his father, Rev. L.E. Jones was pastor of Emanuel for many years). Dozens of names were suggested by members of both congregations for the new church and when the final ballot was cast the name "Gloria Dei" meaning "To The Glory of God" was selected.

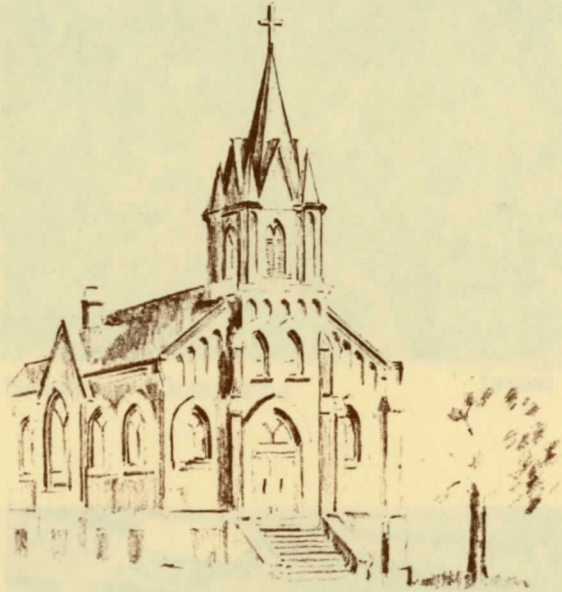
Our pastors over the years have come from both synods by their ordination, Pastor Lee by United Lutheran Synod; Pastor Nels Norbeck, by Augustana; Pastor Karl Schmidt by United Lutheran<sup>LCA</sup>; Pastor Warren Pechman by ~~Augustana~~<sup>UNITED LCA</sup>, and Pastor Rodin by Augustana<sup>LCA</sup>. The present sanctuary was built by the Bentley Construction Co. during the ministry of Karl Schmidt. The architect was Harold Godtland, a member of Gold Hill congregation.

Through the years, we have had several who have become part of the clergy of the Lutheran Church - Ronald Hasley, who is now head Chaplain of the Lutheran Hospital in Moline, Ill.; Bud and Amy Onsted, who both went into the ministry after years of marriage and now serve in South Carolina; and into missionary field are Bina Boyd's daughter, Judy and her husband Jerry Aaker, who most of you know; Fred and Sherrie Kraepelin, who are now serving in Liberia, Africa; and Charles and Gail Hanson and their 3 children also went to Africa.

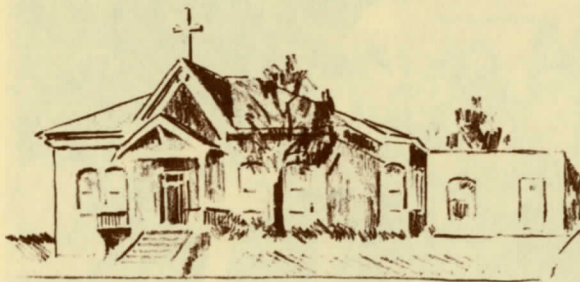
We still have many active members who came from both parent churches. (At this point those present from each of the parent churches stood up and the numbers were about the same from each.) Now, when you add to these groups the many Lutherans who have become part of this congregation from other cities, churches, and by transfer, etc., you have a wonderful blend of Lutheran Christians. I'm sure those of us who came from the parent churches still look about us and see items that still tie us to our former church homes - the statue of Christ in the narthex, the picture of Christ here in the social hall, the old organ (which was bought by proceeds from the Smorgasbord cookbook), the baptismal font in the small chapel and the communion trays, all of which came from Emanuel; the beautiful altar, pulpit and chancel chairs in the small chapel, the cross here in the social hall, altar vases, and other items, all of which came from United Lutheran. The altar and chancel furniture in the small chapel were first used here in this room, before our beautiful present sanctuary was built. And, to tie our ancestral heritage to the present, there is the silver chalice and communion tray which are used for each communion service. They are both inscribed "Swedish Lutheran Church - March 12, 1899".



# OUR FAMILY HISTORY



1917



1942

1958—A new building at 2300 Florence Avenue was dedicated following the ground breaking and erection under the direction of Pastor John A. Nasstrom.

1959—Gloria Dei Lutheran Church was organized as a result of merging the Emmanuel Lutheran Church (300 South Montana) and the United Lutheran Church (303 West Broadway). Pastor Marvin Lee served as the first pastor from June 1959 to February 1962.

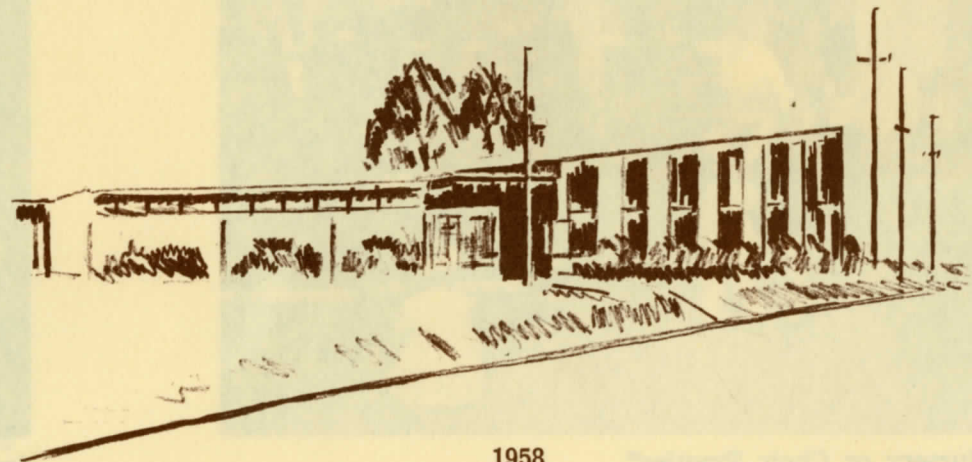
1962—The congregation called Rev. Nels H. Norbeck to serve as pastor from March 1962 to May 1963.

1963—Pastor Karl A. Schmidt began serving the congregation on August 1.

1964—At the annual congregational meeting in January, authorization was given for hiring an architect to draw plans for a new sanctuary.

1965—In September the preliminary drawings of Architect Harold O. Godtland were presented to and accepted by the congregation.

1965—In October the Fund Raising Counsellor, Fred P. Huehnergath, from the Lutheran Layman's Movement for Stewardship, 231 Madison Avenue, New York City, began the direction of a campaign for Building Funds.



1958