

History
of
Luther Memorial Church
1891 - 1991



A
HISTORY
OF
LUTHER MEMORIAL
CHURCH

By
Larry Wimberley

1891-1991

A Century of Witness and Service

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A PREFACE

Writing a history spanning 100 years of service to our Lord, Jesus, is not easy. The following pages reflect the efforts of many to whom the church is indebted.

A congregation's history is the cumulative endeavors of many responding to the call of our God, the One whom we proclaim as Lord of all. Though some names are mentioned, let it be remembered the smallest of gifts and ministries are both cherished by Christ, and needed by a vital, ongoing ministry. Miracles and ministries can not be empowered and blessed by the Holy Spirit if people are not willing to give of themselves to God.

As Luther Memorial Church celebrates its centennial, it is a ministry challenged by a changing neighborhood. However, as this history demonstrates, Luther Memorial's past contains a congregational merger and mission adjustments due to changing environments in which it was called to serve by God. Thus, the congregation of today can both celebrate and learn from the accomplishments of the past preparing for the future.

A congregational history should not only chronicle events, but also serve to remind people of the vision which created and sustained the congregation. Hopefully, this history does.

It is also our prayer that the centennial festivities and observance give praise to Christ and to the faithfulness of many who willingly served Christ. May we, the present congregation, continue to serve Christ faithfully that others will gather to celebrate and give thanks for years to come. Amen.



Roger Dennis, Pastor
For the People of Luther Memorial

INTRODUCTION

The year 1991 marks the one hundredth anniversary of Luther Memorial Church. As part of the celebration of his anniversary, the Centennial Committee requested that the history be updated. I say updated because a history of our first 50 years was written by Carl F. Wolf in 1941, and in 1971 in celebration of our 80th anniversary the history was rewritten by Carl Brynestad, Sig Evjen, Emilie Pedersen, and Al Wolland.

Using the histories previously written, I have tried to combine the two in a condensed form, adding some thoughts of my own. I then have written that which has taken place in the last twenty years.

I do not expect everyone to be in full agreement with what I have written because it is a fact that no two people have the same thoughts and see things in the same light. As you read the following pages bear in mind that it is my perception of things that have happened and not, necessarily, that of all the members of the congregation.

For a number of reasons limitations had to be put on the contents of our history, particularly in regard to names. I cannot mention the names of all the dedicated men and women who have been a part of our history and have given so much of their time in various capacities, their talents, and last, but not least, their financial resources. Without dedicated people, no congregation can exist. We have been blessed through the years with many faithful souls, and to those remaining in our midst, I say "Thank You."

Larry Wimberley

LUTHER MEMORIAL CHURCH

100 Years 1891 - 1991

“A Century of Witness and Service”

In 1888 at the request of several English speaking Lutheran families who had come to Tacoma, Rev. F.N. Wolf, pastor of the German Trinity Lutheran Church, wrote Rev. Dr. W.A. Passavant, president of the General Synod in Pennsylvania, requesting him to send someone to Tacoma to make a survey of the Puget Sound Country and organize English speaking congregations in this new and growing territory. Early in February, 1889, Rev. G.H. Gerberding of Fargo, North Dakota, was ordered to the west coast to examine the territory and make a report. He spent two months in preaching and exploring Washington and Oregon and was followed by Prof. W.K. Frick from the College of St. Peter who spent July and August in an effort to organize the work.

In May, 1889, Dr. W.A. Passavant also visited this territory. As a result of this visit, Holy Trinity congregation was organized in Seattle in 1890, and in January, 1891, the Rev. E.G. Lund from Pennsylvania was called to take charge for six months and organize a congregation in Tacoma. He arrived February 13, 1891, and held the first service in a dance hall, for the want of a better place, on March 29, 1891, with seventeen at the morning service. Shortly thereafter he secured the Women's Christian Temperance Union hall, where on June 7, 1891, the congregation was organized with twenty-four members under the name of Zion's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tacoma.

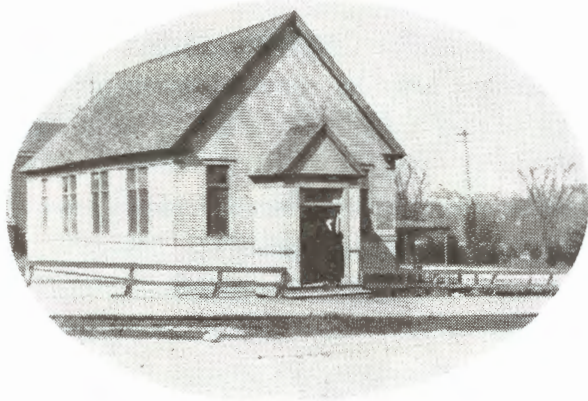
The first council was installed on June 28, 1891, and the first communion administered July 5th with 35 persons attending. Rev. Lund took his departure August 10, 1891, the vacancy being supplied by Rev. Edward F. Keever from Seattle until December 10, 1891, when Rev. A.G. Loder arrived to take charge of the field.

In 1892 the present site 50 x 100 foot site was purchased for \$3,500.00. At that time, Wright Park was “logged off land,” the streets roughly graded and there were wooden sidewalks. The area was sparsely settled and all the other denominations were located on Broadway and St. Helens Avenues. We were pioneers in the area.

THE FIRST CHAPEL

In December, 1892, a modest building 24 x 40 was erected at a cost of \$1,000.00. The money was raised in Tacoma by the efforts of Rev. Loder and his faithful few. Much of the work was done by members. On August 6, 1893, the building was dedicated.

In September, 1893, Rev. Loder resigned. The vacancy of over one year was most trying for this young mission. There was a vacancy in Seattle so no help could be secured from that source. Dr. W.A. Passavant arrived from the East and supplied both Seattle and Tacoma. In December, 1894, Rev. A.C. Anda arrived and served until 1898.



First Chapel — 1892

The congregation was admitted to the Evangelical Synod of the Northwest in 1894. Since there was a Zion's German Church in Tacoma, at the suggestion of Rev. Passavant, the name of the church was changed to St. John's English Lutheran Church. A call was issued to Rev. William F. Holl, who arrived in 1899. These were depression years and work continued under many handicaps. At this time there were 46 communicant members and 73 Sunday School pupils and teachers. In 1901 Rev. Holl resigned but continued to serve for sometime thereafter. At a special meeting September 1, 1901, the congregation withdrew its membership from the Synod of the Northwest in order to help form the Pacific Synod.

On March 8, 1902, the Rev. J.A. Leas, president of the Pacific Synod, residing in Portland, called a special congregational meeting in order to call a pastor. The Rev. C.F.W. Stoever was tendered a call which he accepted.

At a council meeting January 12, 1903, the matter of building a parsonage was discussed and \$125.00 was subscribed to the building fund. The cooperation of the

Ladies Aid was solicited and in September, 1903, a building committee was appointed and plans ordered. The following week the plans were accepted and the committee was authorized to go ahead with construction, the building not to cost more than \$1,200.00



The parsonage as it appeared in 1955 before being moved from the site.

The growth in the following years was discouraging, but in 1905 the pastor reported twenty-nine new members. At the annual meeting a sinking fund was established to build a new church. On October 28, 1906, plans drawn by Architect Bergfelt were submitted, the cost of the building to be about \$7,000.00 The plans were accepted and solicitation for funds was begun. Contributions were slow and in February, 1908, the treasurer reported \$700.00 in the fund. In the meantime, new plans were submitted by architects E.J. Breseman and Durfee which were accepted. These were the plans for our present church building. In May, 1908, the chapel was sold to Mr. Paddock for \$100.00 and was moved off of the property. Additional funds were borrowed from the Church Extension Society of the U.L.C.A. and construction of the basement started. In December, 1908, a contract was entered into for concrete block and carpenter work, amounting to \$3,256.00.

During the construction of the church, Sunday School and church services were held in the basement of the parsonage. In April, 1909, the cornerstone of the church was laid. From that time on the construction work lagged and in September the contractors were discharged. A new contract was entered into with C. Oscar Storli.

The church was finally completed and dedicated on November 6, 1910. It was a day of rejoicing for both the pastor and congregation. Rev. M.E. Boulton, president of the Pacific Synod and pastor of Zion's Lutheran Church of The Dalles, Oregon, led the procession. Rev. E.G. Lund, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Seattle, who had organized the congregation, preached the dedicatory sermon. Music at the service was furnished by the choirs of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Seattle, and by St. John's English Lutheran Church.



St. John's English Lutheran Church under construction
1908



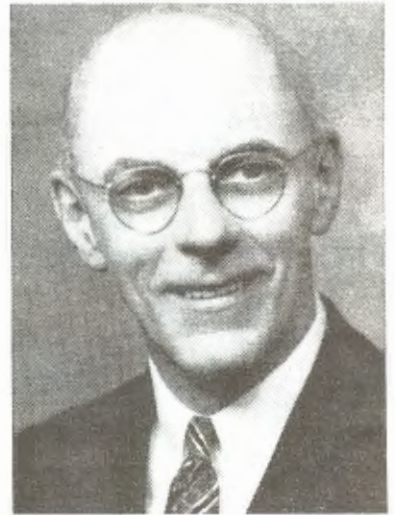
St. John's English Lutheran Church
1910

THE ORGAN

During the construction period, Mr. A. Beckley learned that his old home church in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, had been presented with a new pipe organ. He wrote and asked that their old organ be given to St. John's. This was agreed to, providing that St. John's pay the freight. When it arrived, it was found to be a single-manual hand-pumped organ. An organ builder set up the organ and added pedal bass. This organ was used until 1932 when pipes from the original organ were built into our present organ. The old manual was presented to the State Historical Society. It was retrieved in 1987 and now is stored in one of the classrooms in the Educational Building. In March, 1933, a contract was entered into for rebuilding and electrifying the organ — total price \$1,800.00. It was at that time converted into a two-manual organ.

After 14 years of service, Rev. Stoever handed in his resignation on October 31, 1915. The congregation was without a pastor until June, 1916, when a call was sent to Rev. D.W. Michael, who arrived in August, 1916. Rev. Michael served the congregation until his death in December, 1921. During these years, the King's Daughters were formed with their primary goal to purchase altar furniture. Rev. Michael was the father of Vida Wolland, who is still an active member.

Funeral services for Pastor Michael were conducted in the church with Rev. F.S. Beistel of Seattle officiating and Rev. E.C. Bloomquist of the First Lutheran Church speaking for the Lutheran Ministerial Association of Tacoma. Members of the church council acted as pallbearers and the Lutheran ministers of Tacoma acted as honorary pallbearers.



Pastor Paul L. Kunzman
1923 - 1926

The church council requested Prof. Frederickks, Dean of Men at the Lutheran Seminary of Seattle, to serve the congregation until a pastor was called. At a special congregational meeting held September 19, 1922, a call was sent to Rev. Paul L. Kunzman of Lansford, Pennsylvania, and on November 12, 1922, a letter of acceptance was received. Rev. Kunzman and his family arrived in the latter part of January, 1923, and was installed by his father, Dr. J.C. Kunzman, and Rev. Kretschmann

of Seattle. During his pastorate, he was instrumental in the congregation purchasing the chancel furniture and the baptismal font and encouraged the Laides Aid and Kings Daughters to make altar cloths. On November 1, 1926, Rev. Kunzman handed in his resignation, which was accepted with regrets.

On May 22, 1927, a call was extended to Rev. Mark Heller of Montreal, Quebec. He accepted the call and served the congregation until January 26, 1930, at which time he tendered his resignation and moved to California. The congregation was without a pastor for some time. Dr. J.H. Groth, a professor at the University of Washington, served as a supply pastor.

MERGER MEETINGS

Until 1918 this church was the only English Lutheran Church in Tacoma. During the War other Lutheran churches dropped their native languages and adopted English services. Believing there were too many Lutheran churches in the neighborhood, our congregation started negotiations for a merger with Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, which was also organized in 1891. This merger was completed on October 16, 1932. Rev. Mikkel Lono, pastor of Our Saviour's, was retained as pastor of the new congregation, and at his suggestion the name Luther Memorial Church was adopted. Carl F. Wolf was the first president of the merged church. Since the merging congregations had belonged to different synods, it was decided to remain independent.



Pastor Mikkel Lono
1931 - 1937

In 1937 the lot to the north was added to our property for a contract price of \$1,000.00, \$50.00 down and \$10.00 a month. The house on the property was removed for salvage.

The congregation prospered under the leadership of Rev. Lono. On August 22, 1937, Rev. Lono resigned in order to accept the Vice-Presidency at Pacific Lutheran College in Parkland.

PASTOR A.R.M. KETTNER

After Pastor Lono's resignation it was then necessary to affiliate with a synod, and we decided to join the Northwest District of the American Lutheran Church. A call was issued to Rev. A.R.M. Kettner who accepted and was installed March 6, 1938. Pastor Kettner served Luther Memorial for nearly nine years from March 1, 1938 to February 25, 1947. He attracted many new members, partly because he had a very warm and outgoing personality. In the early years of Pastor Kettner's ministry there was an economic recession in our country. Then came the war years with the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.



Pastor A.R.M. Kettner
1938 - 1947

PASTOR F.J. MOLTER

Pastor F.J. Molter served our congregation over nine years, from June 15, 1947, to November 1, 1956. Luther Memorial greatly benefited from his previous ministerial experience. He proved to be a capable and careful administrator.

During the ministry of Pastor Molter, important decisions were made in regard to our church property. Shortly after his arrival, there were compelling reasons for looking for a new parsonage. The old parsonage, which stood where our educational building now stands, was beginning to be in need of extensive repairs. At the same time we had an expanding Sunday school and we thought that the old parsonage could be used for some of the Sunday school classes until such time as it could be replaced by a new educational building. As Pastor Molter expressed a desire to purchase his own home, the congregation agreed to pay him a monthly amount of \$50.00, plus the cost of fuel and utilities, in lieu of providing a parsonage.

In many respects our church building was no longer modern. In April, 1948, the congregation agreed to let the Board of Trustees make plans for major repairs. The next



Luther Memorial Church — 1951

month we decided to mortgage our church property in the amount of \$10,000.00 in order to renovate the church basement. In July blue prints were drawn up and the contract was given to Steiro and Hansen. The men of the church agreed to do the preliminary work and volunteers came to the basement to remove partitions, flooring, and door joists. The work was tedious and dirty, but the crew was jovial and they had a good time working together. After this work was done, the contractors went to work, adding new partitions and a concrete

floor, which was covered with asphalt tile. Some of the tile pieces were imprinted with numbers for two shuffleboard courts. On numerous occasions later on, shuffleboard was to give pleasure to men attending Brotherhood meetings. The fellowship hall was enlarged and the kitchen was moved from the west end to the east. New kitchen cabinets were built and modern plumbing was installed. Better lighting was provided as well as improved distribution of heat. The ceiling of the basement was lowered and covered with acoustical tile. The renovation included replacement of the old front steps. A new basement entrance and stairway were also built at the northeast corner of the church.

As the older members well know, Luther Memorial had had very persistent and troublesome problems with the church tower. In 1949 and 1950 we were very much concerned, not only with leakage in the tower, but with damage done by the earthquake in 1949. As the city engineer had condemned the upper part of the tower as unsafe, it was decided to remove the spire and build a lower tower. The contract was given to Mr. Hawkins, and in October, 1950, removal of the blocks was begun. Unfortunately, the old blocks could not be reused as they were porous, and blocks similar to the old ones could not be obtained. New blocks were installed, and by the end of November, 1950, the job was done. Moisture problems were solved for awhile but were destined to return. Many efforts were made to correct the problem through the years but it was not corrected until 1981 when the church once again had to be re-roofed.

Certain improvements within the church basement took place in September, 1951, when old wooden chairs were replaced with new folding chairs. In August, 1952, we installed file and storage cabinets in the choir room. In September of that year the sanctuary was improved when the Torgeson family donated a communion rail.

For some time, certain members of our congregation questioned the wisdom of staying where we were because of the physical condition of our church property, the church's downtown location, and its proximity to First Lutheran Church, even though First Lutheran belonged to another synod. The prediction was made that our congregation could not hope to grow in membership if it stayed where it was. These members strongly advocated that we move, and studies were made for a good place to relocate. The matter came to a head in September, 1953, when the congregation, after considering the subject, decided to remain at the present site. At this same meeting it was decided that we should get specifications and cost estimates for a new parish hall.

Plans for the new educational building proceeded rapidly. The old parish house was to be sold and moved away, and this was later done. In November, 1953, the congregation gave the Board of Trustees authority to select a financing plan for the new building. In January, 1954, after considering three plans, the Trustees agreed to recommend the Wells Organization Plan for soliciting contributions and pledges, and in the same month the congregation voted to accept the Wells Plan. Many of our older members will remember the big kick-off dinner at the Top of the Ocean and the canvass that followed, and the numerous meetings that the canvass workers had with the Wells Organization representatives to insure the success of the drive.

In July, 1954, members of the building committee for the new educational unit were selected. The committee went to various churches to look at their educational facilities prior to making recommendations for our own building. In August of that year the Board of Trustees decided that the firm of Jensen and Mills should be the architects, and in December it was agreed that this firm should supervise the construction. The next month at a special meeting we agreed to accept the bid of Lauren Shafer for construction of the building and passed a resolution to borrow thirty-five thousand dollars from the Puget Sound National Bank.



Ground breaking for Educational Building

As of May 1, 1954, pledges toward the building fund totalled \$55,116.50. By April 30, 1955, over \$21,000.00 was collected, and the congregation was well on its way toward successfully financing the big project.



Cornerstone Laying, Educational Building
June 14, 1955

The laying of the cornerstone took place June 14, 1955, and the dedication was held three months later on September 18, 1955. The building cost \$57,920.87, the architects fees were \$3,516.38, and the modernfold doors \$2,217.32, or a total of \$61,654.57. The Wells fee came to \$3,850.00



Shortly before Pastor Molter left we carried out his recommendation to place a neon cross on the top of the building. This was purchased with "In Memoriam Funds."

Pastor Molter came to Luther Memorial at a time in history that America was changing: World War II had just ended, new automobiles were beginning to appear on the market again, and various new household appliances were available. Our servicemen had returned; many had seen parts of the world they had only read about before. People were beginning to move out, and with the automobile, they were no longer confined to one locality. They realized that we were all Americans, and it was the beginning of a time when we no longer were so conscious of our various backgrounds. We began to accept people for who they were, rather than their ethnic background.

PASTOR CARL H. MAU, JR.

Before Pastor Mau arrived, the Board of Trustees recommended to the congregation that we purchase a home for a parsonage. The recommendation was approved and after careful selection a committee of five appointed by the president of the congregation located a house at 4418 North 29th Street in Tacoma. In March, 1957, the congregation authorized the purchase of the property and the borrowing of \$17,000.00 to accomplish the purchase.

Pastor Carl H. Mau, Jr. was installed as pastor of Luther Memorial on June 7, 1957. He came to us with international experience with the Lutheran World Federation. He gave us a broad religious and cultural outlook based on this experience. During his ministry Luther Memorial made many contacts with persons who had quite different backgrounds from those of our own members. While he was with us, we were called upon to make a number of vital decisions affecting the future of our church.

Because of Pastor's Mau's experience in Germany, we entered into an intern training program with the Lutheran World Federation. Pastor Friederich Lueth, from Germany, was our intern for six months in 1959.

During Pastor Mau's pastorate, German hymnals were received as a gift from the church in Hanover, Germany, and German language services were provided for German refugees and other German speaking persons at Luther Memorial Church.

Also in Pastor Mau's ministry we piloted a unique project at McNeil Island Federal Penitentiary. During the period, the pastor and members of our congregation visited the institution and talked with the prisoners. For many months George Kittel went there regularly to conduct services. We even had meetings of ex-prisoners in our church basement. A number of the parolees became active in our church, one becoming Director of Evangelism, another a church secretary and, for a short time, a parish worker, a third, our janitor, and a fourth, a faithful and longtime member.

The exterior of our church needed further attention. In November, 1958, the congregation authorized a re-roofing job. As we still had a moisture problem in the tower and walls, the Board of Trustees decided to cover the church with a coat of plastic spray. The congregation approved the project in July, 1960, and the work was finished in October.

Under Pastor Mau's leadership everyone in the congregation became involved. Every member worked on a committee. The slogan was "When will we reach 300?" Before his departure we did have 300 for Sunday morning worship service. It was an exciting time for the congregation. For weeks the congregation watched the attendance figure grow.

Pastor Mau accepted a call to become Campus Pastor at the University in Madison, Wisconsin, and departed for the Midwest on June 15, 1960.

PASTOR ROBERT (BOB) WEINMAN

A call was issued to pastor Robert Weinman and he served the congregation for four years from June, 1960, to July 15, 1964. he was a friendly man who loved to engage young and old in conversation. He went out of his way to help people. On one occasion our local newspaper reported how he persuaded an armed and desperate man, who had barricaded himself in his home, to give himself up to the police.

For a time Pastor Weinman continued the ministry to the men at McNeil Island but there were problems that arose. One of the parolees took the church for a sizeable sum of money. Members and friends of the congregation were also relieved of a large amount of cash. The congregation was left stunned by his action.

As a result of our experiences with the men from McNeil Island, the ministry of Luther Memorial began to turn inward. We began thinking more about the needs of the congregation than outreach to others. This continued for a number of years, despite efforts by pastors who followed to turn us around once again.

OUR SYNODICAL BACKGROUND

In 1960 Luther Memorial became a part of The American Lutheran Church. The American Lutheran Church (TALC) came about as a result of a merger which ran across lines of national ancestry. After years of negotiations, the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Norwegian Ancestry), the American Lutheran Church (German), and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church (Danish) formed the new church at a constituting convention in April, 1960. The American Lutheran Church began its operation as an incorporated unit on January 1, 1961. In 1963 the Lutheran Free Church (Norwegian) also joined the merged body.

For years Luther Memorial had a Board of Trustees and a Board of Deacons. The Trustees had financial responsibilities and the Deacons had spiritual responsibilities. After the new national church (TALC) was formed, our congregation sent for and received a new model constitution. The affairs of the church, which were formerly allocated to two boards, where, in the model constitution, assigned to the church council. A revised constitution presented by a Constitutional Committee was adopted at a special meeting of the congregation in November, 1961. It went into effect January 1, 1962.

The new constitution gave the Church Council authority to appoint committees to help with the work of the church. The Board of Trustees ceased functioning after January, 1960. Its duties and responsibilities were assumed by the Church Council. The Board of Deacons also stopped meeting in 1960. The spiritual affairs that it had taken care of for so many years became the responsibility of the Church Council and its appointed committees.

Our present constitution requires that the congregation have annual meetings in January and allows it to hold special meetings under certain conditions. Quarterly meetings at Luther Memorial were discontinued in 1963. At one time we tried to change our fiscal year from May through April but it was changed back to the calendar year in 1981.

PASTOR R.F. WILSON

Pastor Wilson was installed on September 6, 1964. he came to us from Alaska where he had served as Superintendent of Eskimo Missions and pastor at Nome, Alaska, for two years. He was a man of faith and helped to instill faith in us and in our future after we were sorely divided on the question of merging with First Lutheran Church. Pastor Wilson's experience in Alaska helped us to gain a new perspective about mission work in the north. On March 1, 1968, Pastor Wilson accepted a call to serve as Chaplain for a retirement home in Spokane, Washington.

PASTOR ROBERT (BOB) QUELLO



Pastor Quello came to Luther Memorial April 21, 1968, from Vancouver, Washington, where he had been serving as an Associate Pastor. He was a zealous and innovative minister who felt that we should be challenged by the need of the church to participate in outreach activities. Because of this need and because of his interest in and knowledge of community problems, our congregation became a little more community minded and a little more involved in inter-city activities. It was a struggle for us, as we had become more self-centered, but we tried to please him. The beginning of each

Sunday morning worship service was different. He liked to pull some antic with members involved. The question was "What stunt is he going to do today?" Some members made a point to be at worship service just to see what he was up to this week. Some of the older members took exception to the clown acts, but they admitted that it livened up the service. Pastor Quello accepted a call to be Campus Pastor at Washington State University, Pullman, Washington, and departed in April, 1973.

PASTOR MARVIN KNUTZEN

Pastor Marvin Knutzen was installed July 1, 1973, and served our congregation until January 31, 1977. He was a warm and friendly person. He always responded quickly when notified of an emergency and showed compassion to those in need. He was conscious of the needs of the church and its members and encouraged us to re-examine our stewardship of time, talent, and money.

PASTOR JAMES C. JAEGER

Pastor Jaeger was installed on Sunday, August 21, 1977, by Bishop Clarence Solberg of the North Pacific District of The American Lutheran Church. Pastor Jaeger came to us well recommended by Pastor Clifford Lunde, Assistant to the Bishop. He had served several congregations, performed much chaplaincy work, and was a Colonel in the U.S. Army reserves. When he first arrived he did an excellent job working with the youth, but when his son graduated from High School, he distanced himself from the Youth Group. We then entered into an agreement with First Lutheran Church to hire a Youth Director. Almost immediately after Pastor Jaeger's arrival controversy arose within the congregation and it was quite evident that the church and pastor were mismatched. As time passed things grew worse and he tendered his resignation effective June 8, 1983.

PASTOR DOUGLAS LINDSAY

A call was issued January 20, 1985, to Pastor Lindsay. He was ordained in First Lutheran Church of West Seattle in February and installed as pastor of Luther Memorial In March, 1985. He was a very warm and caring person. It was through his ministry that we became more involved in the community. He was active in

Nightwatch, a ministry to street people, which began in July, 1986. The congregation fully supported his efforts. He counseled and gave assistance to the people in need who stopped at the church office, many of whom had been referred to us by other churches in the area and/or other agencies. It soon became apparent to the street people that we were a caring congregation. Although Pastor Lindsay was quite involved in community affairs, he was always available for members of the congregation when they needed him. He faithfully visited all the shut-ins on a regular basis and spent hours at the hospital with families who had loved ones in surgery, whether members of the congregation or not. On many occasions, Tacoma General Hospital would call on him to give pastoral care to someone in the hospital. In November 1989, Pastor Lindsay accepted a call to Denny Park Lutheran Church in Seattle and departed on December 31, 1989.

DR. EUGENE WIEGMAN

Dr. Wiegman served us as a lay pastor after the departure of Pastor Jaeger until Pastor Lindsay was installed. He was authorized by the District Bishop to administer the sacraments and to carry on the functions of a regular pastor. It was a time of healing and in that capacity he did an excellent job. With the departure of Pastor Jaeger we lost a number of members, but under the guidance of Dr. Wiegman we began to feel that we still had a mission to fulfill. We became involved in feeding programs at the Nativity House and with Peace Lutheran Church. On November 15, 1987, he was called as a part-time Associate Pastor, co-terminus with Pastor Lindsay. He was ordained in December, 1987, and installed December 27, 1987. He served in this capacity until November, 1988, when he was assigned as Interim Pastor at All Saints Lutheran Church in Federal Way, Washington. He served All Saints until they called a regular pastor, returning to Luther Memorial in November, 1989. With the departure of Pastor Lindsay, and in compliance with the terms of his call, he tendered his resignation as a part-time Associate Pastor on December 31, 1989. He is currently serving as Interim Pastor at Gethsemane Lutheran Church, Tacoma, having been assigned there by the Synod on January 1, 1990, but retains his membership at Luther Memorial Church.

PASTOR CLARENCE STOMP

Pastor Larry, as he preferred to be called, was appointed by the Synod to serve as our Interim Pastor effective January 1, 1990, for a period of six months. He was a soft spoken man with deep conviction. During this period he fulfilled the role of Pastor and led us through a course of study, "Twelve Keys to an Effective Church." This course enabled us to prepare a mission statement that would show us the direction that the congregation should take. His services were extended three months and he departed the end of September, 1990.

PASTOR ROGER DENNIS

Pastor Dennis, our current pastor, came to Luther Memorial January 1, 1991, as a half-time pastor for 18 months. He is a very energetic, forthright man and has the determination to build our congregation up so that we may once again have a full-time pastor. While he has been with us only six weeks (as this is being written), we are showing signs that we are alive and well. In this period 13 new members have been added to our rolls. It is an exciting time for us, and we pray that in the months ahead we can lift our heads even higher knowing that we still have a mission to fulfill, and at the same time doing the work that will help us succeed.

As we look back over the years we can see that each one of the pastors that served our congregation had something distinctive to offer and each one made a lasting imprint on the history of our church. Each one was different but their ultimate goals were all the same.

Our history would not be complete if we did not mention some of the many supply pastors that conducted services several times. Many will remember Dr. J.P. Pflueger, Dr. E.C. Knorr, Dr. John A. Shiller, Pastor Harvey Neufeld, Pastor Hjalmar Storaasli, Pastor James Erickson, who served as interim pastor before Pastor Jaeger arrived, Pastor Robert Peterson, and Pastor Ken Smith, who served us for the months of November and December, 1990. We would like to make special mention of George Kittel who was a minister and a member of our church. For many years he taught the adult Bible class and for sixteen years was a member of our Board of Deacons. He acted as interim pastor and taught the confirmation class after Pastor Molter left. He was a devoted member of our congregation, and his memory will be cherished by those who knew him.

MERGER ATTEMPTS IN TACOMA

During the past thirty-five years there have been several local attempts to merge Luther Memorial with other Lutheran churches. A serious effort took place while Pastor Mau was with us. Pastor Carl E. Rydell of First Lutheran Church resigned in August, 1958. In November of that year First Lutheran Church approached Luther Memorial for a merger and our congregation responded by authorizing the setting up of a formal committee to enter into discussions with them. On May 5, 1959, Luther Memorial's two boards agreed to submit a resolution of consolidation to a special meeting of the congregation. This important meeting was held in the same month on May 26th. A debate took place and arguments for and against the merger verged on the acrimonious. In the balloting the majority were for merging, but the vote was so close it was not regarded as sufficiently decisive.

We must not lose sight of the forces that helped to precipitate this merger attempt. There was first of all the fact that First Lutheran Church, (then a member of the Augustana Synod, later a member of the Lutheran Church in America, and now a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in American), is only one block away. There was in 1959 the imminent merger of the three synods that were to make up The American Lutheran Church. This latter event was to leave three congregations of the new national body in the immediate vicinity of one another. Another factor should be recognized. At the time construction of new homes in the outlying areas of the city was progressing at a rapid pace. Some churches moved into the new developments and new congregations were also started. As members transferred to churches nearer their homes, it left the downtown and inter-city churches with a problem of decreasing membership.

Later merger overtures were made to Luther Memorial in January and February, 1963, by St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, and Central Lutheran Church. Because of these overtures we decided to ask members to participate in an every member poll. In this poll the majority were against merging with any congregation. When our Church Council met with Dr. H.L. Foss in June, 1964, in regard to calling a new minister it voted unanimously that it had no wish to merge. Dr. Foss was also advised that all the merger ideas had been thrust upon Luther Memorial by the other churches. The vote of the Council members, as well as subsequent history, indicated that our church had finally decided it could serve better in Kingdom work by remaining as a separate congregation.

In September, 1988, we were again approached by Gloria Dei Lutheran Church to consider a proposal that the two churches unite to form a new congregation at a new location. A Task Force was appointed by each congregation to make a study of the proposal. A joint meeting was held on October 4, 1988, with Pastor Lud Siqueland, Regional Office for Outreach, as facilitator. Pastor Siqueland explained the beginning steps of the process. Each Task Force was assigned specific duties to perform regarding its congregation and we were warned to take our time in accomplishing these tasks. Pastor Siqueland cautioned us that it could take up to two years to make a decision. It was agreed that we meet again on January 26, 1989, with Pastor Lud Siqueland and Pastor Steve Morrison, Assistant to the Bishop. The purpose of this meeting was to report what we had found out about our congregations and to compare our findings. Out of this meeting the majority seemed to be in favor of continuing the exploration of forming a new Lutheran Congregation using the facilities of Gloria Dei as the site of the new congregation. A planning committee was also to be established. Both congregations were to call a special meeting on Sunday March 5, 1989, to vote on the three proposals. Gloria Dei passed all three proposals but Luther Memorial passed only the first proposal, that is, that we continue to explore the possibility. After further study the Task Force brought the matter of the two proposals to the congregation at their annual meeting in January, 1990. Both proposals were voted down by Luther Memorial congregation. The congregation strongly felt that we still have a mission at the present location despite the fact that First Lutheran Church is only one block away and we are now a part of the same synod.

ORGANIZATIONS

Although the early records are no longer available, it is known that the Sunday School and other organizations for men, women, and youth have been a part of the church life of this congregation since its beginning. With periodic fluctuations in attendance, the Sunday School gradually increased in membership until the 1950's, when it became necessary to expand the Church facilities in order to accommodate all of the classes. During the last 30 years, however, attendance has declined for number of reasons, among them being the flight to the suburbs by many former members and the changing character of the neighborhood, which now has fewer children per household. In order to adapt our program to these changes we increased the number of adult classes. For a number of years the adult classes flourished but in the 1980's the number of adults in class began to drop, due largely to the decline in membership of the congregation. For a time we had no children in Sunday school but under Pastor Lindsay we began a one room school house.

Attendance was spasmodic; one Sunday we would have ten children, another Sunday morning no one would show up. In 1991 things are looking up. We now have more children in the congregation than we have had for some time.

As part of our educational program we have conducted a vacation Bible School for many summers. This at times had been staffed by our own members and at other times had been conducted in cooperation with other Lutheran churches in the vicinity. In addition to serving our own youth the Vacation Bible School provided a means of outreach and service to the community.

The women have always been active in the Church and over the years have been organized into a number of different groups, including the Ladies Aid, King's Daughters, and Missionary Society at St. John's English Lutheran Church and the Ladies Aid and Lutheran Daughters of the Reformation at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. At the time of the merger of these two congregations the groups were reorganized to form a Women's Society with several circles, which were more or less autonomous, and a Young Ladies Guild. Upon our affiliation with the ALC, the Women's Society and circles joined the Women's Missionary Federation and participated actively in the work of the national organization, as well as continuing an interest in serving the local congregation. With the mergers of the synods in 1960 and again in 1987, the women's groups were again reorganized, so that all became a part of the Luther Memorial Church Women, an affiliate of the ALCW in 1960, and in 1987, an affiliate of the Women of the ELCA. The LMCW have adopted the program of the national organization. In 1991 we have only three active circles; Aurora, Naomi, and the Altar Circle. The Aurora Circle for a number of years has been very active in making quilts and blankets which are sent to Lutheran World Federation for distribution to needy families throughout the world. Naomi Circle has supplied health kits to this project. The health kits consist of a towel, wash cloth, a tooth brush, nail file, comb, tooth paste, hand-aids and a bar of soap. The Altar Circle's duties consist of setting up for communion and taking care of the communion ware. The members also deliver flowers for the altar and take care of the altar linens and banners. Members of the circles are also active in supporting feeding programs at the Nativity House and Peace Lutheran Church, as well as providing dinners and coffee hours for the congregation.

For many years there was an active Brotherhood which provided many services to the congregation and took a special interest in the youth, particularly in sponsoring an athletic program for the young men. That they were very successful is attested to by the number of trophies which were won by our teams in the church league tournaments in

various sports. The Brotherhood also took on many other tasks relating to improvements of the church property. Unfortunately, the organization became inactive in 1964, and in spite of subsequent attempts to revive it, it remains dormant. Under Pastor Lindsay a men's breakfast group was started. At the beginning we had a good turnout but as time went by the number attending has decreased.

Another of the more durable organizations was the Luther League, which provided many opportunities for fellowship, study, worship, and service to our young people. From time to time, in the past, the group had been organized into junior and senior leagues. At other times there was only one group, which was combined for a number of years with First Lutheran Church. This was stopped in 1987 when the last of our high school students left for college. At the present time we have no youth in that age group. During the decade following World War II there was a third unit, the Young Adult Fellowship Union, or YAFU's, which was made up of "graduates" of the regular Luther League program. It was affiliated with the International Luther League of the ALC, but, as its name implied, it placed more emphasis on fellowship, than on the other phases of the program.

Our participation in the work of the church auxiliaries did not stop with the local organizations but extended to the conference, district, and national organizations. We have regularly sent delegates to the various conventions, workshops, and leadership training schools. A number of our members have filled larger offices, including the district presidency of the Women's Group, the Brotherhood, and the Luther League. We now have one individual serving on the Synod Committee on Inclusively and the Women's Decade of the ELCA. Other members of the congregation are also involved with the work of the Synod in various capacities.

SEMINARIANS

Four young men from our congregation have entered into the Christian ministry. First among them was Anton Johnson, son of Mr. and Mrs. K. Arvid Johnson, who was graduated from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn. He was ordained at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Tacoma, on June 7, 1959. This event followed three weeks later by the ordination of Floyd Ohman in our church on June 28, 1959. Floyd graduated from Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa. On May 30, 1963, Thomas Unmacht, son of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Unmacht, was graduated from Pacific Lutheran Seminary in Berkeley, California, and subsequently ordained in California. The following year Ronald Kittel was graduated from the same school and was ordained in our Church on August 23, 1964.

Following his ordination, Ron served a congregation in Everett, Michigan, for two years, returning to Oakland, California, where he served as an Associate Pastor while furthering his studies. He received a Ph.D. in Theology in 1977 from the Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, California. He is presently serving as an interim pastor for the United Church of Christ in Hamden, Connecticut.

Two former young women from our congregation have also entered into the Christian ministry. One is Joan Mau, daughter of Dr. Carl Mau, former pastor of Luther Memorial. Joan graduated from St. Olaf College and then entered Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa. Joan is now serving as an Associate Pastor for a congregation in Iowa. Laura Giddings, daughter of Dr. William Giddings, a former organist, also graduated from St. Olaf College. After graduation she worked for a couple of years before entering Harvard Divinity School. She will graduate with a Master of Divinity Degree in June, 1991.

Along with these full-time servants of the church should be mentioned Dr. Frederick Holmes, who grew up as a member of Luther Memorial Church. He devoted a number of years in the medical mission field.

BEQUESTS

Over the years many gifts have been made to the Church in the form of bequests and memorials. Many of the furnishings in the church and educational building have been purchased with these funds. Plaques on many of the items and entries in a Memorials Book indicate the names of persons so memorialized. In 1946 a bequest of about \$2,300.00 was received from the A.O. Peterson estate. This was used to landscape the yard to the north of the church, which was dedicated in memory of the donor and his wife.

In 1962 a bequest of approximately \$70,000.00 was received from the estate of Miss Louise Schreiber, who had been a long-time member of Trinity Lutheran Church, Tacoma. When that congregation disbanded a number of years ago she transferred her membership to Luther Memorial and was a faithful member here until her death. A large part of this bequest (\$20,000.00) was used to set up a scholarship fund for members of the congregation who chose to attend Lutheran Colleges and Seminaries. This was later changed so that funds are now available to members attending any educational institution beyond high school. To date some 66 individuals have benefited from this fund. Only the

interest has been used to award scholarships and still there remains approximately \$20,000.00 in the fund. Funds from this bequest were used to purchase the church bus. The Lutheran Welfare Society, the Lutheran Bible Institute, and the ALC Alaska Indian Missions were each given \$5,000.00. The balance of the bequest was invested in the ALC Investment Fund. This was later withdrawn to make needed improvements to the church building.

In 1969 Mr. Herbert Kuhn, who had been a member of this congregation some years before, left approximately \$6,500.00 to the church. Five percent of this amount was given to the ALC Benevolence Fund, five percent to the Lutheran Welfare Society, and \$2,000.00 to Holden Village. The balance was used for making needed improvements to the church plant, particularly for improving the wiring and installing additional lighting in the sanctuary.

In 1979 a stair-glide was installed to assist people who could not climb the steps to reach the church sanctuary. This was given by the son and daughter of Carl and Peggy Brynestad in memory of their parents. The stair-glide has been used a great deal but members of the church will still use the stairs as long as they are able to do so. The Brynestad's also provided funds to purchase office furniture for the Church secretary's office.

We are thankful for these former members and for their love for God and His Church which prompted these gifts.

CHANGES IN OUR CHURCH PROPERTY

The upkeep of the church property and improvements thereto are always on the agenda of the Building Committee. It is a job that is never finished and year after year many new projects are undertaken.

The Church sacristy was not to be neglected. In May, 1961, the Executive Council approved plans for installing cabinets and sink facilities. In the spring of 1971 additional cabinets were installed.

In the rear of our church auditorium (the narthex), we always had a problem of too much noise, drafts, and insufficient room for people to congregate before and after services. In the spring of 1964 a partition was installed separating the narthex from the nave. In order to make room in the narthex, two rows of pews from each side were moved to the balcony, which some years before had had its floors stepped. When the partition

was put in, we laid carpeting and tile and installed shelves on each side of the partition and wardrobe fixtures on the walls. When the congregation authorized the narthex job, it elected to support an L.I.D. for cement paving in the alley between South I and J Streets.

In the southeast corner of the church auditorium we had a storage room with musty walls and rough flooring. This room was converted into a library, which was later furnished with card filing cabinets, tack board, table and chair. Books old and new came from members and many new ones were purchased with In Memoriam money.

In 1970 recessed lighting was installed in the church auditorium. This greatly benefited the choir, as they always had difficulty in seeing the music. It also provided additional lighting for the congregation. Kuhn estate funds were used to pay for the installation.

In 1972 the building committee was authorized to proceed with an improvement and repair program, costing some \$40,000.00. Under this program the church tower was removed, a new entrance built on the northeast side of the building, repairs made to the stained glass windows and frames, exterior texture coating to the church and new addition, revamping of the rear entrance to the church basement, installing new carpeting in the church auditorium, painting and other repairs as needed. The project was financed using \$20,000.00 from the Schreiber estate funds and \$20,000.00 raised from contributions from members.

A stair-glide was installed in 1979, which has been a big help for those who are unable to climb stairs.

In 1981 we were faced with the necessity of re-roofing the educational building. Pledges were slow in coming in at first, and it was thought that we would need to borrow money to pay for the job. Before we knew what was happening, we had more than sufficient funds to pay for re-roofing of the educational building as well as the church, and enough funds to insulate the church ceiling.

Paint jobs have always been on the building committee's agenda. All the paint jobs have been financed entirely by contributions from members of the congregation. Men and women have given much of their time helping paint. In 1987 the upper floor of the educational building was painted and new blinds installed. In 1990 the narthex was painted. An AAL grant for this purpose was received in 1990. Painting of the church sanctuary was done professionally in January, 1991.

NEW VENTURES

The history of our church would not be complete without mentioning some of the new things the congregation tried that were different from, or in addition to, the traditional and regular functions in our church. There were times when we did not hesitate to experiment, and times when one could say we were dynamic.

We previously stated that we cooperated with other Lutheran churches in sponsoring Vacation Church School. We have also participated with other churches in joint Lenten services. This has largely been with First Lutheran and Gloria Dei Lutheran Church.

Our church has also been involved in surveys. The most notable one was in 1964 under the guidance of Miss Tollefson from Minneapolis. Volunteers from Luther Memorial and First Lutheran at that time took part in an area canvass for potential members. Three thousand calls were made. Unfortunately, Pastor Weinman had accepted a call to a church in Oregon and left about the time the survey was completed. As a result, no follow-up was made on the survey. The survey revealed many interesting things. Many couples with children were sharing the same apartment with barely enough food to feed them. Both children and adults were in need of clothing; yet with needs in evidence, they seemed content.

During Pastor Wilson's ministry, we hired a Parish Worker. Miss Inez Hushagen was installed as our first trained and experienced parish worker on January 17, 1965. She was a very capable and dedicated worker and served our congregation for several years. She accepted a call to Denny Park Lutheran Church in Seattle and has remained there to this date.

In 1972 we entered into a Cluster Intern Program with Mt. Zion Lutheran Church and the Good Samaritan Hospital. Stephen Gutzman was our first intern, who arrived September 1, 1972. He was followed by Paul Meiderding, Stephen Ellerbush, and Darcy Jensen. In 1974 the intern program became a joint participation with the Lutheran Home and Lutheran Community Services. Under this program we had James Winjum, James Wilson, and Sam Torvend. Our last intern bid us farewell on August 24, 1977. Each of these young men was different, but each had something to give us. They were all loved by the congregation. We were very fortunate to have such a delightful group of young men.

In September, 1977, we hired Annaluise Albrecht as a part-time Parish Assistant. She came to us from Central Lutheran church, where she had been employed full-time for a number of years. Her primary responsibility was working with the senior citizens. She also assisted in Bible studies. She was a very dedicated worker and remained with us until her death.

In June, 1980, an agreement was entered into to allow Covenant of Peace Church the use of our church and educational facilities. They began using our facilities on August 3, 1980, and remained with us until January 1, 1986. During this period, parking was always a problem and there were other problems that arose from time to time, as might be expected when two churches share the same facilities.

Various outside groups have used our church through the years. Whenever there has been a need, we have always responded favorably.

CONCLUSION

A Century of Witness and Service (1891-1991) draws to a close, a new day dawns, and we look forward to a new beginning. With determination we will face new challenges as they appear, and pray that the Almighty will help us overcome any obstacles that loom in the horizon.



Luther Memorial Church
1991



Luther Memorial Church
1991

LUTHER MEMORIAL CHURCH, TACOMA, WASHINGTON CENTENNIAL 1891-1991

Rev. E.G. Lund	1891	Organized as Zion's Lutheran Evangelical Church of Tacoma on June 7
Rev. A.G. Loder	1891	
	1892	A 50' x 100' lot, site of present church, purchased for \$3,500.00
Rev. A.C. Anda	1894	Church renamed St. John's English Lutheran Church
Rev. William C. Holl	1899	
Rev. C.F.W. Stoever	1902	
	1903	Parsonage built on site, west of church building
	1908	Construction begun on present church building
Rev. D.W. Michael	1910	Church building dedicated, organ installed
	1916	
Rev. Paul L. Kunzman	1923	
Rev. Mark Heller	1927	
Rev. Mikkel Lono	1932	Merged with Our Saviour's Lutheran Church and renamed Luther Memorial Church
	1932	New organ installed with pipes from old organ
	1937	Lot purchased north of church site for \$1,000.00
Rev. A.R.M. Kettner	1938	
Rev. F.J. Molter	1947	
	1948	Renovated church basement
	1949	Earthquake caused major damage to church tower
	1950	Tower remodeled with lower height
	1955	Educational building dedicated; built on site of old parsonage
Rev. Carl H. Mau, Jr.	1957	Parsonage purchased on North 29th Street
Rev. Robert Weinman	1960	Church reroofed and exterior walls sprayed with coating
Rev. R.F. Wilson	1964	Added wall to separate narthex from sanctuary
Rev. Robert Quello	1968	
	1970	Installed recessed lights in front part of sanctuary
	1971	Remodeled sacristy
	1972	Added new entry at northeast corner of church; added library in old entry area
Rev. Marvin Knutzen	1973	
Rev. James C. Jaeger	1977	
	1978	Lift added from entry up to narthex
	1981	Educational building and church reroofed; insulated church ceiling roof
Rev. Douglas Lindsay	1985	
Dr. Eugene Wiegman	1987	Part-time associate with Pastor Lindsay
	1990	Centennial celebration begun in July with reunion picnic
Rev. Roger Dennis	1991	Centennial celebration ends with June 8 Banquet and June 9 Festival Worship

by Russ Ziegler

