

St. Paul's Lutheran

Twelve families at root of 125-year-old church

By Katy Galewski

Members of St. Paul's Evangelical Church, are celebrating their congregation's 125th anniversary.

During those years parishioners have seen over 3,000 baptisms, 2,581 confirmations, 911 marriages and the gradual emergence of their small country church to its present day stature.

It all started in 1857 when 12 German families and Rev. C. Koester, pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church, organized a mission church in Tess Corners.

Although Rev. Koester was a Lutheran minister, the church did not officially become Lutheran until 1878. This was reflected in the church's oldest document, a 1858 deed. In it, Jacob Tess donates two acres "to be used for the first Protestant Church of the area." Later, two more acres were purchased at \$100 for a cemetery.

Then in 1859 parishioners erected their first church. The building was a small frame structure. Inside there was an aisle down the center and pews on each side.

The division of pews was important, because men and women sat separately in German churches. The men sat on the right side and the women and children sat on the left. This tradition lasted for almost 100 years, until 1950, at St. Paul's.

The little church also was furnished with a reed organ and a potbelly stove. A story has been passed down that one Sunday, when the weather became very cold, the parishioners huddled around the stove and a child's clothing and hair caught fire. Fortunately, the child was saved from serious harm.

The young congregation got off to a shaky start, and its first itemized financial report in 1871 showed it was \$25 in the red. Of course, money was worth more in those days and salaries were much lower.

For instance, in 1882 the organist received \$25 per year for playing at every service, including weddings and funerals. And for \$4 a year the janitor was expected to start the fire at least two hours before services.

In 1877 an addition to the church was built and by 1890 the growing parish needed a full-time pastor. Parishioners erected their first parsonage at S6503 Tess Corners Rd. The building was sold in 1929 after a new parsonage was built.

Then in 1905 the 115 family congregation dedicated a brand new brick church, which they constructed for \$11,820. This building served them for the next 73 years and is still used on request for weddings and funerals.

Parishioners did not want their old frame church turned into a barn or corn crib, so they sold it to Ernest and



BUILT IN 1890, this little schoolhouse used to house the confirmation classes for St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Tess Corners. The building has been moved from its original site on Janesville Rd. (above) to the present church parking lot. The building's front door has been replaced with a garage door and the old school is now used for a shed. (Muskego Historical Society photo)

John Ludwig for \$700. The Ludwigs dismantled it and used the lumber to build a barn, which still stands behind the old Ludwig home at W14621 Janesville Rd.

The original pewter communion ware for the first church is in the display case at the congregation's new church. And its old marble baptismal font stands in the corner of the Elders' Room.

Going to St. Paul's Church is a tradition for many area families. Arnold Baas, W14681 Janesville Rd., grandparents and his parents went to church there. Now his children and grandchildren do too.

"I was born the same year the church was built," said Baas.

He recalls pumping the pipe organ as a boy. He and his cousin took turns on alternate Sundays. The old organ was pumped by a six foot bellows.

"The handle was really long and you had to stand off a bit," Baas explained.

The bellows was concealed in a small room behind the organ, but it was so large that the handle extended through the doorway into the choir loft. Baas pumped the bellows keeping a close watch on the pressure gauge.

In 1955 he became the church's caretaker, a position he held until the new church was built in 1978 and his son took over. Baas still cuts the grass and lays out the graves in the cemetery.

Some of his previous duties included ringing the bell, digging graves and winding the clock, in the church tower. (Although the clock has four faces, one on each side of the tower, there is only one clockworks).

At least two times a week Baas used to walk into the small room behind the organ, where the clock's four foot pendulum swings slowly through a hole in the ceiling. Then he climbed the ladder to the tower room above, where the clockworks are located.

Next he stuck the crank into the clock and commenced the long process of winding the 800 pound weights all the way up from the basement.

Herman Haut, S10021 Crowbar Dr., also is a lifetime member of St. Paul's and was baptized in 1901. Some of his fondest memories include attending German confirmation classes in the congregation's one room schule (German for school).

The little schoolhouse has been

moved from its former site, overlooking Janesville Rd., to the church parking lot. Although its entrance has been replaced with a garage door, the white shed proudly bears the inscription "Logl. Luth. St. Paul's, Schule, 18 Tess Corners 90."

According to Haut, farm children rarely went to high school. When they graduated from eighth grade, it was expected that they attend German confirmation classes daily for the next year.

Haut and his sister made the seven mile trek from their farm in a horse and buggy, or by cutter.

"The roads were pretty humpty dumpty," said Haut. "One winter the cutter overturned. But you know kids, we thought it was fun."

Confirmation classes were taught by the minister in German.

"He was pretty stern," recalled Haut.

Haut would drop his sister off at school and take the horse over to the Holz barn one block away. He remembers coming in late "after they were done singing." Haut knew that meant he was in trouble, but his feisty little

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Area Irishmen have their day

By Bruce Williams

"St. Patrick's Day isn't what it used to be," says Bob Hanley of New Berlin, one of the most visible Irishmen around Milwaukee.

Hanley is visible because so many people see him on TV. He's the announcer for the Gimbel's commercials.

"The day after St. Pat's Day is when the real Irishmen get together," according to Hanley. "But St. Patrick's Day is just a mob scene, and you can't even get into an Irish bar. And they serve beer in little plastic cups.

"In the old days, you could actually sit down at a bar," he recalls. "You'd start touring the pubs around noon and quit when you were finished. When you finish,



of course, depends on your pace. Some guys are finished by mid-afternoon, and others aren't."

Hanley probably isn't the only Irishman who wishes Wisconsin would raise the drinking age back to 21.

"Today, the age-of-majority makes St. Patrick's Day more trouble than it's worth," he complains. "The kids are testing their skills and finding them wanting."

If the skills are wanting, then you probably couldn't sing either, and Hanley's kind of Irishmen are famous for singing. In fact, he exceeded the Irish-

Scottish Sing-Off at last year's Summerfest in Milwaukee.

"Actually, the Scots sing beautifully," Hanley admits. "But the Scots sing like they're in church, and the Irish sing in volume. By the way, the Irish won."

But they didn't win because of "green beer," which Hanley says is made green with food coloring and is not consumed by Irishmen. "Let us hope there's no way to make real green beer," he declares. "That's why they make Stout."

"There's an Irish Mafia in New Berlin," says John Gavin, head Irishman at El Dorado Graphics in New Berlin Industrial Park. "We've got Mayor John Malone, Alderman Jim Sheahan, Police Chief Mike Hanrahan and Fire Chief Charles Conway."

"The mayor tells everybody I'm Irish, but I'm not," Chief Conway claims. "I'm Brooklynese."

"Conway says he's not Irish, but he is," Gavin retorts. "He has no choice."

"Everybody's Irish this week," according to Gavin. "Even Henry Ford was; his parents came from County Cork."

Which reminds Gavin of a story:

It seems Henry Ford went to visit the "Ald Sod" in County Cork, and immediately the locals asked him to donate for their new hospital. So Ford gave them a check for 5,000 pounds. However, the local newspaper reported the donation was 50,000 pounds. Embarrassed, the officials rushed back to Ford to apologize for the error and return his check. He tore it up and asked them how much the entire hospital was going to cost. They told him 50,000 pounds. So Ford wrote them a new check for the full 50,000 pounds, with the stipulation that the hospital's main doorway carry the inscription, "I came among you, and you took me in."

Anyone else who wants to be taken in might contact Ed Reidy of New Berlin. He's the past president of the 1,700-member Shamrock Club of Wisconsin, and he can

fly you to the "Ald Sod" for less than \$700, round trip.

"The Shamrock Club is the largest single ethnic club in the state," Reidy says. "We have an impact on the airfare market because of the numbers we can provide. Put 60 or 80 passengers on one flight, and you can negotiate with the airlines."

Reidy says a round-trip ticket to Ireland is \$619



through the Shamrock Club, versus about \$900 for normal first-class airfare.

The Shamrock Club's plane will leave Mitchell Field on June 19, and tickets have to be paid for by April 30. For details, write to Ed Reidy, Flight Chairman, Shamrock Club of Wisconsin, P.O. Box 08361, Milwaukee 53208.

St. Paul's celebrates 125th anniversary

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sister usually spoke up for him and got him off the hook.

The students sat two to a desk and stoked the wood burning stove in the winter. Mildred Boldt Martin, S6803 Gaulke Dr., remembers the children hiding the minister's switch to avoid getting "tapped on the head."

"He didn't hit too hard," she added.

The minister's correction stick, as thick as a broom handle, is preserved in the display case at the new church.

Mrs. Martin was confirmed in 1923, a year later than she could have been. She did not speak German, so she waited the extra year because classes were being changed to English.

"I wanted to understand what was going on," she explained.

It was about this time that English started creeping into the church and by 1949 all services were held in English.

Mrs. Martin was a member of the first Sunday School staff in 1925, and she remembers parading with the students to Kurth's woods for their annual picnic.

"We marched from the little German school to the woods and each child got a flag."

She also recalls riding to church in a surrey. Buggies were parked in an open shed next door to what is now Shaumberg's. That also is where a big natural spring was located, contained in a round cement tank.

"When we went to school we always stopped for a drink of water there."

"When you went to church you knew everybody," she concluded.

That is the way Ora Ruehle, 13838 College Ave., remembers it too.

"They always said you couldn't talk about anyone because they were all related," she reminisced.

By 1932 the congregation needed a bigger school and the basement under the church was excavated. Previously, the basement was little more than a coal bin with a small room for the church's two furnaces. The new basement was dug out with scoops pulled by horses.

In 1955 the congregation bought 10 more acres south of the church and three years later a youth center was dedicated on the site. A year later, the old school bell from the little German school was moved to the new building, signifying the end of an era. The Christian Day School opened in 1968 and an addition was built in 1972.

The present pastor, Robert Zink, came to St. Paul's in 1963, and it was under his direction that the 1905 church was remodeled and the old pews replaced.

The congregation was growing

rapidly at this time and by 1976 the church was holding three services on Sunday, plus one on Monday night. In spite of this, the church was overcrowded and it took Pastor Zink, visiting Pastor Gerhardt Albrecht and a vicar to serve the congregation.

The need for a bigger church was evident and on June 4, 1978 the bell tolled for the last regular service to be held at the old church. The new St. Paul's was dedicated last year. And this year members have begun work on a new parsonage for Associate Pastor Richard Lehmann, who was called in 1979.

Since its beginnings, the parishioners at St. Paul's have built three churches, two schools and three parsonages. Little did those 12 German farmers suspect what the seeds they sowed in 1857 would reap over the next 125 years.

Preschool open house planned March 19, 20

Young World Experience Center, a preschool for children ages 3 to 6, will hold open house Friday and Saturday, March 19 and 20.

The non-sectarian preschool is located in the St. Thomas of Canterbury Episcopal Church, 7255 W. Grange Ave., across from the Southridge Shopping Center in Greendale.

Open House hours will be from 12:15 to 1:30 p.m. on March 19 and 10 a.m. to noon on March 20.

Parents have their choice of two or three-day sessions.

Classes are held from 9:15 to 11:45 a.m., Mondays through Fridays. Tuesday and Thursday classes are available from 12:30

to 3 p.m. School is in session from September through May.

Curriculum provides a wide range of enriching experiences selected specifically for young children, according to Kathleen Wroblewski, director. Included are art, science, reading and math readiness skills, self-help skills, music, cooking, field trips, language and social relations as well as other areas.

Children have an opportunity to build peer relationships as well as work with the staff of trained teachers in large and small groups and individually. They are encouraged to try new activities and to build confidence and self-direction.

Questions may be directed to Ms. Wroblewski at 421-8383 or 327-4689.

Talent sought for April Follies

The Waukesha Symphony will hold "Meet the Director" on Tuesday, March 16, for persons interested in learning more about the group's "April Follies" production.

"Meet the Director," open to persons 16 years old and older, will take place at the Steeplechase Inn, Frontage Rd., Pewaukee, at 7:30 p.m.

For the Waukesha Symphony's "April Follies," singing, dancing, comedy skits

and other talents are needed. The show will be performed on April 1, 2, and 3 at the Waukesha South High School auditorium at 8 p.m.

The follies allows local talent to take part in a musical variety review staged by the Jerome Cargill Co. of New York.

Further information may be obtained by contacting Follies Talent Chairmen, Pat Bauer, 544-4637 or Elizabeth Salome, 548-0775.

Band leaves for midwest tour

Martin Luther High School's Symphonic Band left Wednesday for a four and a half day tour to Cincinnati, Ohio.

Activities will include two elementary school concerts, two church services, four public concerts and sightseeing, including

stops at Immanuel Lutheran Church and School, Des Plaines, Ill., and Wynken Memorial Lutheran School, Decatur, Ind.

Host congregations in Cincinnati are St. Paul Lutheran and Christ Lutheran Churches.