

Christianity Marks County's March Of Progress

A Century Of Lutheranism In Adams County Detailed

(By The Rev. W. H. Werning, pastor of Zion Lutheran Church, Decatur (Friedheim), Ind.)

Writes History



Rev. W. H. Werning

Rev. Werning, pastor of the Zion Lutheran church at Friedheim, has written a comprehensive history of the Lutheran churches in Decatur and vicinity.

Westward bound, without the convenience of distance-eliminating trains, efficient bus lines, fast-moving vans and automobiles on hard-surfaced roads, the early settlers pushed forward to the frontiers of civilization and entered the forests primeval of Indiana a century ago. Leaving their homelands, relatives, and friends in Europe, they came to the "new world" to seek their future homes. Among these early settlers we find also a large number of immigrants from the Land of the Reformation.

The Lutherans were among the pioneers in New England. When William Penn came to America in 1682 and founded the City of Brotherly Love, Philadelphia, he chose a spot not far from the place where a Swedish village and a Lutheran Church stood. The Swedes had been there for 44 years, settling there 18 years after the arrival of the Mayflower.

As those early Lutherans experienced the hardships and suffered the privations in a pioneer country and their descendants helped write history in the days of the Revolution and the establishment of the Thirteen Colonies, so also the followers of the Great Reformation were to contribute their part in building and developing this "western" country.

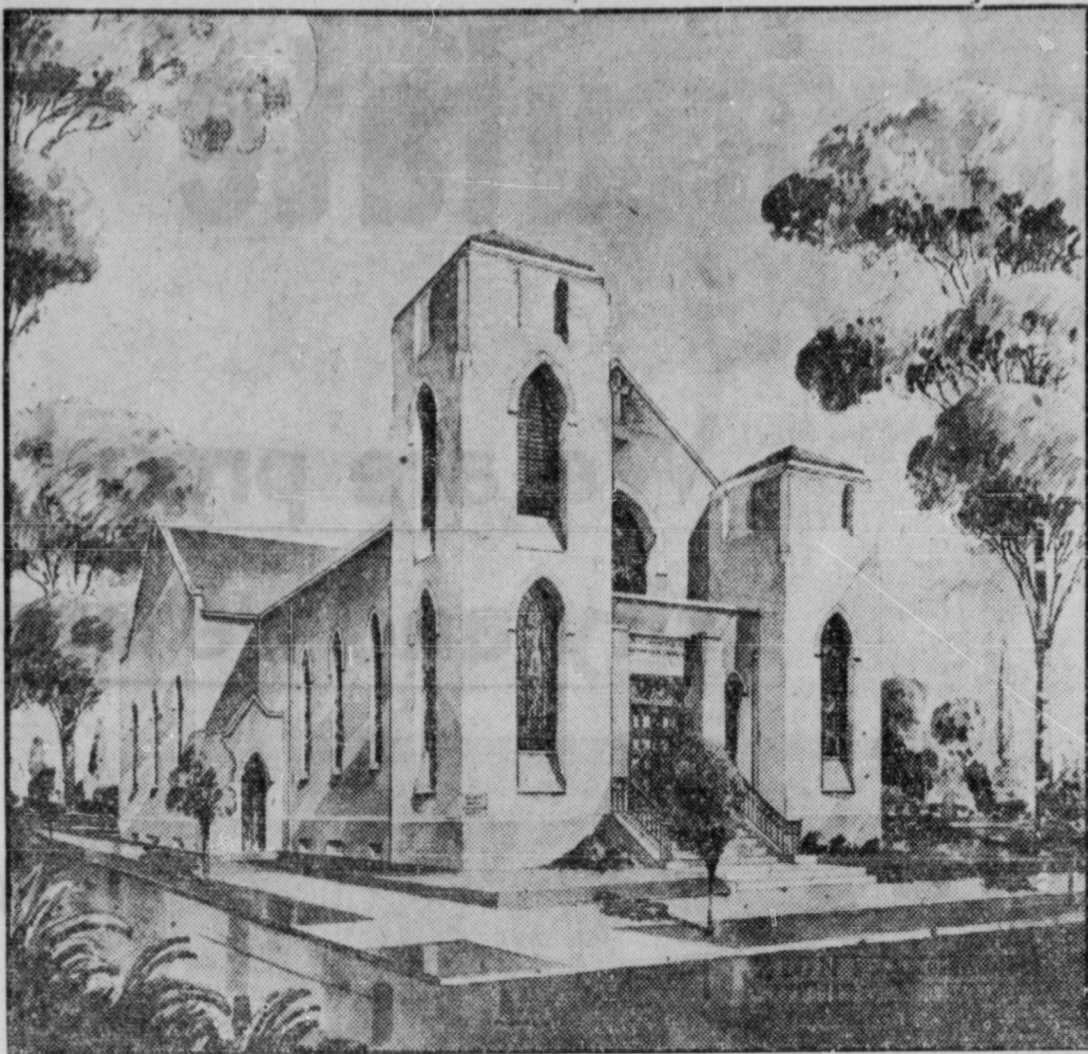
Zion Lutheran Church, Friedheim

In the year 1836 a man and his wife and four oldest children arrived in Ft. Wayne, which then was a village of 500 inhabitants; here they purchased a piece of land in the north-western part of Adams county, sight unseen, from a real-estate man, and then made their way through the dense forest to their future home. Here they first had to clear enough land to make room for their log cabin home. This humble building was to become the temporary home of many a new settler during the next few years, and this first settler, Mr. Frederick Buuck, and his family, were destined to play an

important part in the development of this section of the country, known as Friedheim, and in the establishment of a Lutheran Congregation in that district. About the same time two young men arrived: Mr. Ernst Bultemeier and Mr. Ernst Stoppenhagen, fathers of Wm. Bultemeier and Ernst Stoppenhagen, who are still faithful members of the Lutheran Church at Friedheim. It was difficult to make a living on their farms in those days. Those early settlers, therefore, spent a great deal of their time working on the canal, which at that time was being built between Fort Wayne and Toledo.

For this heavy work, however, they received only \$15 a month. It was not until June of the following year, 1837, that these new settlers had the pleasure of welcoming a pastor of their own faith in their midst and inviting him to preach the Gospel to them. This was the Rev. Jesse Hoover, who had arrived in Fort Wayne the previous year from Woodstock, Virginia, and organized St. Paul's

Zion Lutheran Church Being Remodeled



Pictured above is a view of the Zion Lutheran church of this city, as it will appear when remodeling is completed. A new section is being built in the rear of the building. A new tower is being erected. On the west side will be a new entrance and the entire building will be faced with a light colored brick.

Present Pastor



Rev. Paul W. Schultz

Rev. Schultz is pastor of the Decatur Zion Lutheran church, leader in the conference of Decatur and vicinity churches.

sometimes drenched to the skin, sometimes chilled to the bone, he always took care of his horse first, and then he went into the house and looked after his own needs.

Pioneer Hardships

"More than once he lost his way in the woods at night. Once he thought he would let his horse find the way out. Suddenly the faithful animal stood still and could not be urged to take another step. There must be something in the way," the rider said to himself and loudly began to call for help. Then he heard some one open a door not far away, and the light of a lantern which penetrated the darkness showed him why his horse would not move. It stood close to a mill-pond. The man with the light loosed a skiff, rowed across the pond, took the missionary into his skiff, and rowed back, the horse swimming alongside. Wyneken spent the night with the miller and in the morning continued his circuit.

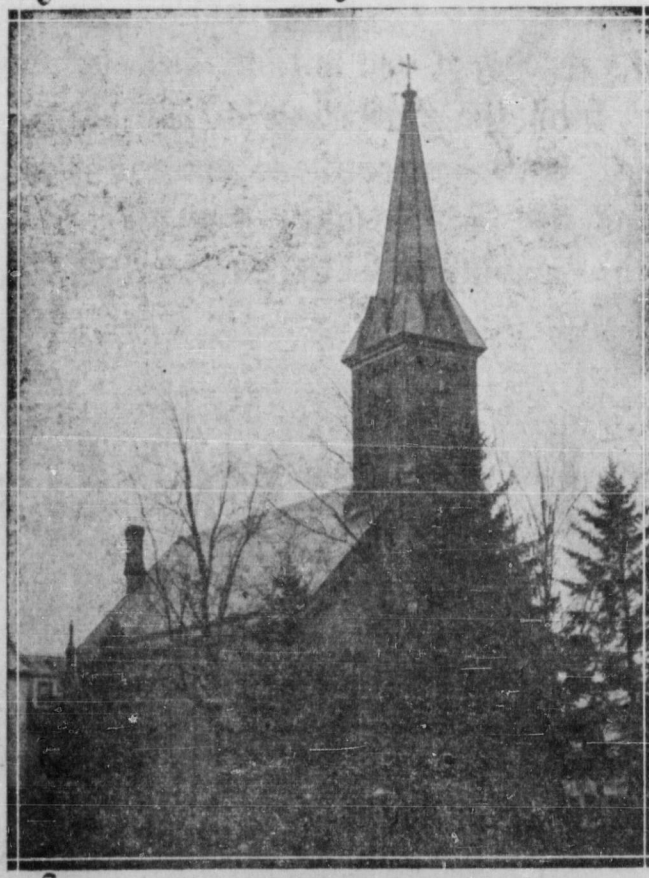
"Another time the missionary was travelling on foot and lost his way in the darkness. He wandered into a swamp and saved his life by lying down on his stomach lengthwise on a log and staying there until morning."

We gain a glimpse of the condition among the early settlers and of the spiritual destitution of the pioneers in the forests and upon the prairies from the pen of this great missionary himself, which reminds the writer of similar conditions found in Alberta and British Columbia, where he was active as a missionary for 11 years:

"Either singly or in small groups our brethren go into the forest with their women and children. In many cases they have no neighbors for miles around, and even if they have such near by, the dense forest so separates them that they live in ignorance of each other. Come now, dear reader, and enter the settlements and log-huts of your brethren! Behold, husband, wife and children must work hard to fell the giant trees, to clear the virgin forest, to plow, to sow, and to plant, for their pittance of money runs low or is already gone. Bread must be procured; but this can be gotten only from the ground which they till.

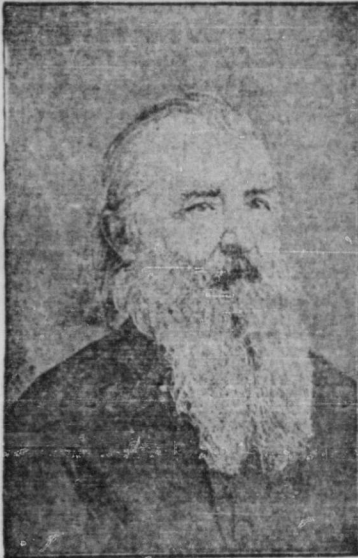
"Behold, also in their log-huts a strange sight meets the eyes; there almost everything is wanting that you would consider absolutely necessary in the line of furniture; everything is primitive.

St. Peter's Lutheran



The St. Peter's Lutheran church in Root township, (Fuelling settlement), was founded in 1838. The first missionary, Rev. F. Wyneken, appeared in this year, after about a dozen Lutheran families had taken up residence in this community.

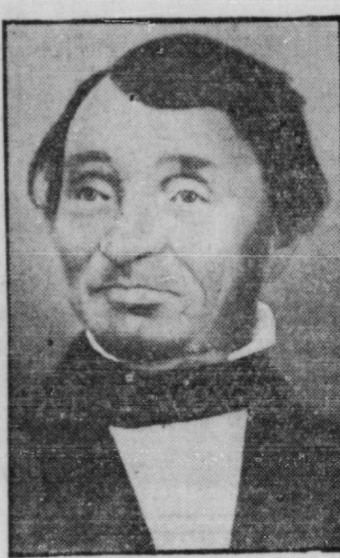
Pioneer Missionary



Rev. F. C. D. Wyneken

Lutheran Congregation in the village of Fort Wayne, the oldest Lutheran congregation in Indiana. Pastor Hoover now also served the little group at Friedheim, which had grown during the past months, as often as time permitted. It is to him that this district owes its name. On February 25, 1838, these pioneers organized Zion Lutheran Congregation. They adopted the "Formula for the Discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church" recommended by the General Synod, according to which the congregation was to be ruled and governed. On the same day six candidates were nominated for the offices of the congregation. Two weeks later the election took place, when Mr. Frederick Buuck was elected elder and Mr. Christian Fuhrman and Mr. Henry Doeffer deacons. The newly established congregation numbered 56 souls—26 adults and 30 children. After the organization was effected the young congregation immediately celebrated Holy Communion—the first Lutheran celebration of the Lord's Supper on record in Adams county. The services and also the instructions

First Settler



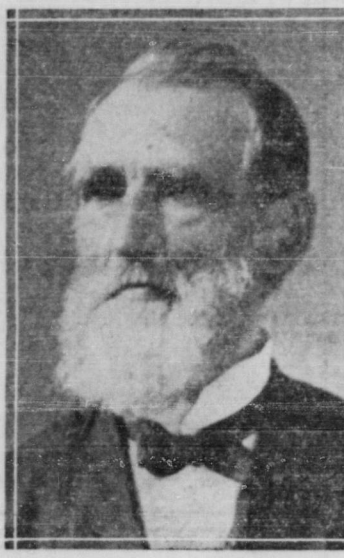
Frederick Buuck

for the children was held in the Frederick Buuck home, until the first small house of worship was built.

Rev. Wyneken Serves Zion

This young pastor, however, was permitted to serve the congregation but a short time, since he was called out of this world as early as May 23, 1838. About this same time a young candidate for the ministry arrived in Baltimore. After a brief stay in the East he was sent out as a missionary among the Lutherans in Northern Indiana and became the successor to Pastor Hoover. This was the Rev. Frederick Conrad Dietrich Wyneken. His principal congregations were St. Paul's in Fort Wayne and Zion at Friedheim. Railroads and good highways were unknown in those days and therefore he made his journeys in Indiana, Ohio and Michigan on foot and on horseback, by day or night, in summer and in winter. We gain a picture of the zeal, courage, and self-sacrificing spirit which was required of a missionary in those pioneer days (as on the northern and western frontiers and South America even today) from the following words:

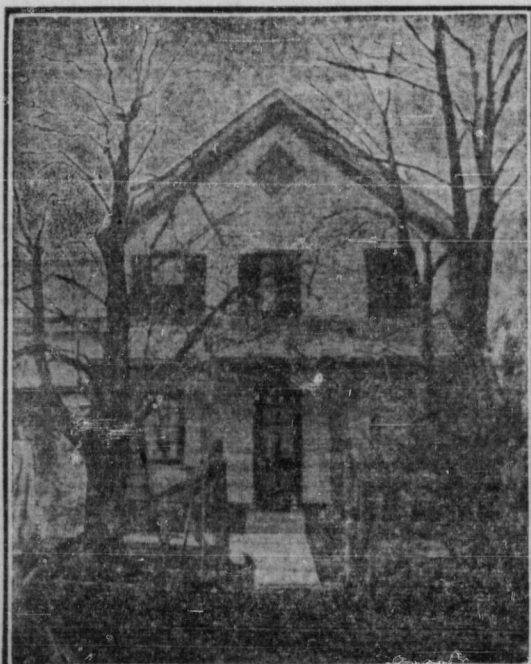
First Pastor



Rev. F. W. Husmann

"Day by day and month after month this zealous servant of Jesus Christ labored in his field of missions. Wherever he went, he preached, baptized, instructed, and confirmed. Many times he was rejected by those whom he came to help; at other places, again, he was received with open arms. But in spite of the primitive conditions and the many hardships and difficulties he counted those days as the happiest of his life. He was very poor, and most of what he received for his own living he gave away to such as needed it more than he. He ate whatever the poor settlers placed before him; he slept when they made a resting place for him, on hay or straw or in a bed—it made no difference to him. When he came home from these journeys, worn and spent,

Wyneken's Home



Pictured above is the home of Rev. F. C. D. Wyneken at Friedheim, while he was president of the Missouri synod from 1850 to 1864.

Marching Along With Decatur

We heard many splendid words about Decatur before we came and during the short span of time we have been here, we find they are all true.

We are glad to be here—the fine community spirit so characteristic of Decatur citizens is bound to build for a greater city during the next one hundred years.

Every good wish for the success of the Centennial, August 2 to 8.

CENTENNIAL WEEK SPECIAL

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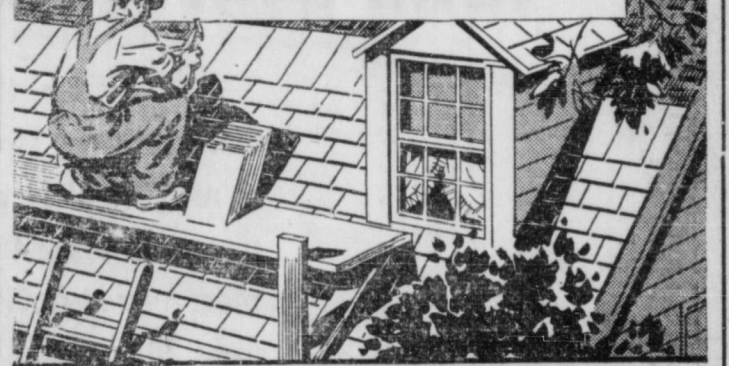
BEST WISHES for the Success of the CENTENNIAL

We're glad to take part in the Celebration of Decatur's 100th Birthday.

We know of no finer tribute to the founders of our city.

A cordial welcome to the many visitors who will be in our city August 2 to 8.

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