

St. Mark's Church Observes Centennial Month Of October

One hundred years of Lutheran church organization in Monroeville is being celebrated this month by St. Mark's church, the Rev. B. J. Somers reported today.

William and James Black, supposedly brothers, and Joseph Rabbit, their friend, were the first three individuals of the white race known to settle in Monroe Township, Allen county, arriving in the autumn of 1839. Evidently others came with these three individuals, but they were the leaders of the group.

The first religious meeting in the township was held at the home of John Friedline in 1845 by a horseback-riding pastor and native of Liberty Center, Ohio, whose name was Valentine Exline. Pastor Exline was not ordained at the time, and according to records he graduated from Wittenberg College, Springfield, Ohio, in the class of 1847.

Pastor Exline held and taught the Lutheran doctrines to the people in the surrounding areas, which included the western part of Ohio. Pastor Exline served the churches in the area of Western Ohio and Eastern Indiana with marked success and became known through his peculiarities and personality as "Father" Exline. He evidently was a man of great wisdom and of kind heart. His memories to St. Mark's Lutheran church members and their descendants should be precious, as it was through his efforts that the Lutheran church was later established in Monroe township, Monroeville, Allen county, Indiana.

First Lutheran Society
"Father" Exline evidently ministered to the people in the area from 1845 to 1866, and it was through his efforts that the first Lutheran society was founded in 1864. Until the first church was built in 1867 on the southeast corner lot of Elm and Mill streets in southeast Monroeville, this society worshipped in Sam Poole's hall. The cost of the 35 by 60 foot frame church was \$2,250. The church was built on a lot donated by Alpheus Swift.

After Pastor Exline left the area some time in 1866 or 1867, the Rev. E. W. Erick became the pastor of the new church and congregation which consisted of 42 members. Because of the small membership, and in order to afford the service of a pastor, the St. Mark's congregation formed "The Evangelical Lutheran Council Association" when they also included five other congregations as a part of a newly formed parish. They consisted of Old Flat Rock, southeast of Monroeville, Sugar Grove on route 30, Convoys, Tully Union and Mencer Station, Ohio.

In 1877 the Ohio and Indiana churches were separated and then consisted of Sugar Grove, Old Flat Rock and St. Mark's. In 1889 the parish was again rearranged when Marquardt, Flat Rock and Monroeville church formed the Monroeville parish.

In 1925 the Old Flat Rock Church was disbanded and the congregation joined St. Mark's under the direction of the Rev. Mr. Bartholomew. During the interim of 1870 to 1914, 17 pastors had served the St. Mark's congregation and the parish. Outside of the pastors listed, there is scant history of what took place within the parish and the congregation.

Move Up Town

However, in 1911 the Rev. E. E. Campbell was called to the pastorate and encouraged the congregation to build a new church building and to locate it "up town." The congregation voted to purchase a lot known as Redelshiemer's lot, and an additional lot was purchased from Nathan Mull. These are the present lots upon which the St. Mark's church and parish hall now stands. Through the efforts of Pastor Campbell, a sum of \$6,000 was raised and the present brick church was built and dedicated on June 14, 1914. The members of the building committee for that occasion are all deceased but will be remembered by many of the members today. They are the Rev. Mr. Campbell, N. H. Whittier, L. E. Wright, C. Youse, M. A. Smith and G. E. Spake.

The interior of the church was constructed in a semi-circular design with a sloping floor toward the front with the chancel and altar area in the northeast corner of the present church building. This design, known as the "Akron plan" was very common throughout the early 20th century.

The church from the period of 1914 to 1949 has been redecorated periodically and changed in appearance to a small degree. On June 25, 1939, the Rev. Lewis Westenberg and St. Mark's congregation celebrated the 25th anniversary of the building of the present church.

From several copies that the church has in its archives of "The Monroeville Lutheran" it is evident that this church paper was brought into existence in December, 1925, and from it we gain tidbits of information.

Church Changes

The following appears in the October, 1937, issue. It is by the Pastor, P. W. Hanshaw, who was observing his 10 years of pastoring the St. Mark's people. January 1, 1928 — Monroeville Lutheran published monthly. January 2, 1929 — Adopted model constitution of the United Lutheran Church for the congregation.

Modern Etiquette
By Roberta Lee

Q. My fiancé is to be best man at a wedding. I have been invited to the wedding and reception, but am not a member of the wedding party. The maid-of-honor is an unmarried sister of the bride. Is my fiancé supposed to be her escort at the reception? A. Certainly not. He is engaged to YOU, and his first duty is to YOU.

Q. I have just been presented with a 25-year "service pin" by the company where I am employed. When is such a pin correctly worn?

A. At any company reunion or party. As to the wearing of such a pin at the office, it might be better to abide by what other employees with such pins do.

Q. What is the proper salutation to an informal letter written to a college professor?

A. If he holds a doctor's degree, it is "Dear Dr. Morris." If not, then it is "Dear Professor Morris."

Q. When one has finished eating cereal, should the spoon be left in the cereal bowl?

A. No; place it on the saucer under the bowl.

Easter, 1930

A gift of 75 parish hymnals presented to the Sunday School and new edition of the Common Service Book was purchased for the choir.

January 1, 1931 — General treasurer instituted for the congregation, necessitated, by new bank rulings.

Spring, 1931 — Church basement redecorated. Exterior of church caulked and parsonage redecorated.

1932 — Church wiring inspected. Larger fuse box installed, more circuits provided.

July 9, 1933 — Dedication of altar, missal stand, candle holders, presented by Pastor Weber.

September, 1934 — Church and parsonage painted, furnace and chimney repaired. Apportioned benevolence for the year — \$738.05.

1935 — Green altar and pulpit hangings, violet and white altar superfrontals, new cupboard for literature purchased by Sunday School, additional tray of 36 glasses for communion set.

1936 — Doors and windows installed in church basement. Narthex linoleum and stair treads installed, railing for front steps of church installed. Choir robes purchased.

1936 — 25th wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Ward Bower.

Ferris Bower re-elected vice president and Virginia Bower elected secretary of the district league.

New sidewalks installed as a gift of Ladies Aid.

December 6 — Gayle Edward Ainsworth, son of Mr. and Mrs. Verne Ainsworth, baptized.

However, one of the major steps toward an extensive remodeling was the gift of a two-manual Wurlitzer organ given to the church by Dr. Lloyd C. Douglas, in loving memory of his father and mother, the Rev. and Mrs. A. J. Douglas, who served the church at three different periods, 1872-1873, 1883-1887, and 1900-1902. The congregation purchased Deagan chimes and dedicated the organ and the chimes on Sunday, September 28, 1947. In the same year the Rev. George Volkmar was called to serve the congregation, and on the same date that the organ was dedicated Pastor Volkmar was installed.

Church Remodeled

On February 10, 1948, a contract was given to Chalmers Barkley, of Decatur, to completely remodel the interior of St. Mark's church. The remodeling included the removal of the chimney and the partition separating the nave from the Sunday School room; the construction of a new ceiling; complete rewiring; construction of a chancel, study and choir room in the North end of the church; and the building of a basement entranceway to the church kitchen. At the same time the congregation remodeled and redecorated the church basement and new pavement was laid on the west side of the church. Chancel furniture and pews of white oak were installed during the week of May 2, 1949, and carpeting was installed May 11, 1949. The dedication of this extensive renovation was held June 19, 1949, marking the 85th year of the organization of the congregation and 35 years of the present church building. During Pastor Volkmar's tenure of nine years the congregation grew in numbers and in spiritual stature.

Pastor Clifford Schreck was called in June of 1955. It was during Pastor Schreck's short ministry in the parish that the seeds were sown to build an educational unit which would eliminate the congestion and the crowded conditions of the Sunday school. It was also under Pastor Schreck that the 90th anniversary of the building of the first church was celebrated, and a concerted study was made of the membership and of the per capita giving of the membership.

In this report Pastor Schreck showed that the baptized membership had increased 193, the confirmed members 93, and the communing members 127 over a period of 10 years (1947-1957). He also showed that two women served church agencies for a limited time, one youth, trained in our Sunday school, entered a mission field and one young man, adopted by our congregation, was at that time (1957) training for the ministry.

Pastor Schreck also took notice of the fact that our "per membership giving" increased from \$15.22 to \$35.51 over a 10 year period but noted that this was still less than \$1 a week.

Parsonage Relocated

In the fall of 1957, Rev. M. D. Kilver was called from St. Mark's Indianapolis, to serve the Monroeville parish. It was under his leadership that the old parsonage was sold and relocated, and the new parsonage was built at the corner of Summit and Elm streets and the groundbreaking for a new educational unit was held in July of 1960. The open house of the new parsonage was held in November, 1960.

Included in the building of an educational unit was the complete renovation of the church basement, the closing of the front side entrance to the educational unit to the church nave. The dedication of the above work was held on June 4, 1961.

Rev. Somers Arrives

In December, 1961, the Rev. B. J. Somers was called to serve the parish and began his duties as pastor on February 15, 1962.

Over the past two years the church has continued its progress with the installation of air conditioning for the church nave and for the church parlor; the installation of new steps and railing; an ar fountain between the educational unit and the church. A sacramental closet, a table and chairs for the primary department, wall-to-wall carpeting for the pastor's study, a white oak shelf and guest register, and alms basin were also given to the church as memorial gifts or gifts of love in 1962. The installation of floor tile in the nursery, kindergarten, primary and junior rooms as well as the basement and kitchen took place in the spring of 1963. In the summer and fall of 1963 the church was blessed with the gift of a white Austrian marble altar and the installation of polyethylene-filled Naugahyde covered pew cushions. Service books and hymnals, a projector table, a modern-fold door in the basement, and a duplicating machine were given to the church. In the fall of 1963 the council and the congregation approved the purchase of the Zwick property north of the church to be used as a parking lot. The money for the plot, the cost of which was \$6,500, was raised by the end of the year.

Thus far in 1964, the church has continued receiving gifts in the form of hymnals, adjustable floor vases, field tile for the parking lot, money to stone the parking lot, a humidifier, parsonage porch railings, a book of remembrance case, and many other items.

Over the last couple of years the congregation has been interested as well in its spiritual welfare in that it has increased its communing membership by 30% and has provided for its

youth by holding retreats for its young people and instituting only last month the new Lutheran Church in America parish education curriculum.

Separate Parish

During the first half of 1964 the council and the congregation were interested in and provided for the dividing of the two church parish consisting of the Marquardt congregation and St. Mark's. On May 31, 1964, the dissolution of the parish became effective. On June 1, 1964, St. Mark's for the first time in its history became "a parish on its own."

There are just a few of the highlights of the first 100 years in the history of St. Mark's. "We thank God for the faith and courage and the men, women and children, pastors and laymen alike, who have lived and worked these first hundred years. We believe that as we begin another hundred years in the service of Our Lord that this faith and courage will be sustained by our response to His will."



A REFUGEE IS LIFTED from her escape tunnel in West Berlin. The tunnel was dug under the border from East Berlin and 57 men, women and children used it over a three-day period. Border guards finally discovered the route and closed it. — (UPI Telephoto)

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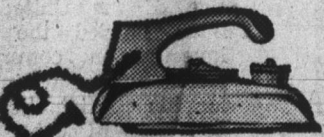
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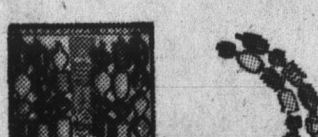
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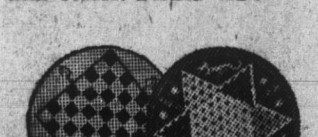
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