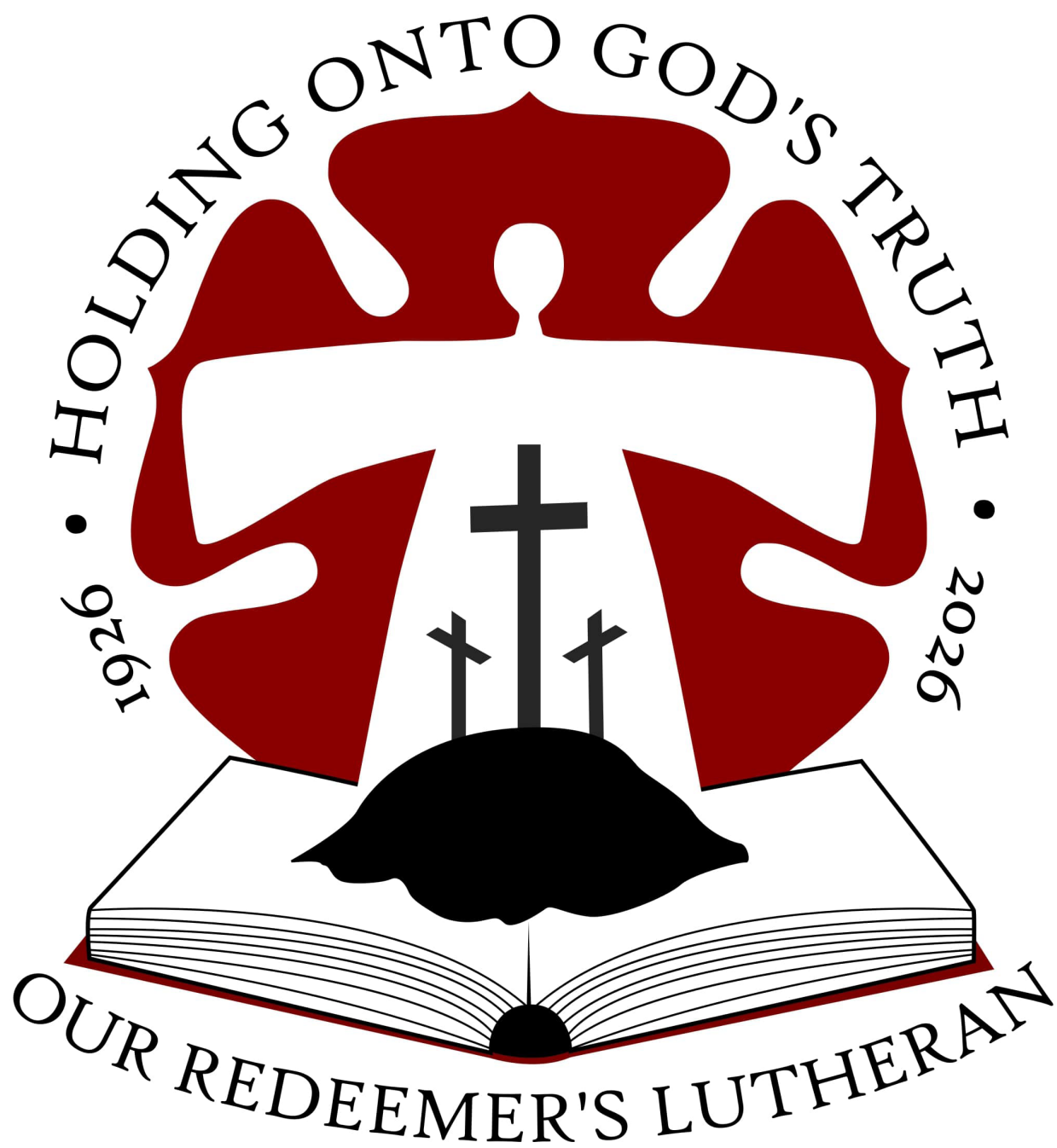




Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

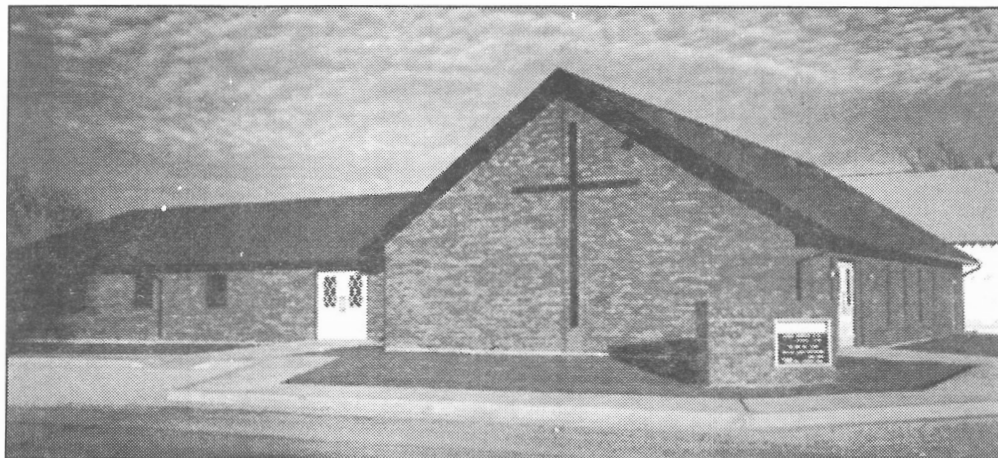
100th Anniversary

“Thus we informally, but prayerfully seal the corner stone to our new church this 19th day of November, 1926. We hope that very many will be led to the true light, to Jesus, our only Redeemer, within the walls of this edifice.”

– Pastor Belno Lange (First missionary in Martin)



An early picture of the church. Pastor Winter's Dodge on very cold mornings often was the only car to start



Our Redeemer's Church in 2001

A Snapshot of 100 Years Ago (1926)

The United States turns 150 years old. Calvin Coolidge occupies the White House and is a big proponent of ‘free enterprise,’ which sounds a lot like this: ‘Get out there and build your fortune. We, the government, won’t get in the way.’ As you have it, the town of Martin, SD has already become quite the “enterprising community in a surprisingly short amount of time.” Many families have moved in “seeking their fortune” due to “fertile soil and abundant rainfall.”

One more snapshot as we look back 100 years:

Pastor Belno Lange of White River is commissioned to explore the Martin area in spring of 1926, later bringing on Pastor V.H. Winter, who is called by a mission board to pastor the Martin community. Rev. Winter enters upon quite the enterprise, learning to become self-sufficient. For example: How to build a new church with no “congregation” to rely on; how to faithfully gather and shepherd a community of believers to go with that building; how to make Martin home and find fulfilment when the future is so uncertain.

By God’s grace, Our Redeemer’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, an initiative to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ, is established. The cornerstone of this enterprise is Jesus, our Redeemer, who teaches us to be faithful unto him, and he will give us the crown of life. (Revelation 2:10)

100 Years Later – The Initiative Continues

As Pastors, we learn that our duty – in ministry – is to be faithful unto the cause of the Gospel. Our duty is not to prove ourselves with results; rather, to be caretakers of one’s soul, shepherding that soul to Jesus, who will seal his gracious promises and give that person the crown of life. Congregations are called upon to support this initiative by their faithful efforts as well – they are the universal priesthood, offering to God their meaningful service in the freedom of the Gospel.

It’s simple on paper, yet it seems a difficult enterprise at times in the realm of human experience. Pastors are sinful human beings who don’t always see the initiative of the Gospel clearly. Churches sometimes run more like businesses, for good reasons but also in ways that don’t help the mission. Congregations are comprised of complicated sinners who don’t always recognize the bonds of unity that call us to worship, live and work together. It’s a sort of functional amnesia – we don’t necessarily forget who we are – but we forget what we do because of who we believe we are.

So we return, in repentance, to God. To His Word. It’s what has held us together for these last 100 years. From the pioneer Christians who first filled the pews to believers today- the internal testimony of this Bible we hold onto has authenticated itself and convinced us that it is no plain or profane writing of literature... that it is both God’s Word and truly makes us WISE for salvation.

Thus we appropriate this Word of God for our daily lives – grounded in the Gospel, we are freed to live the Word, speak the Word, share the Word; to correct, rebuke, teach and train using this Word.

We owe so much to this Word of God: Thus we seek to honor the Word that has kept us a Church these last 100 years. As we take pause to celebrate our Centennial Anniversary, our theme shall be: 100 years of **HOLDING ON TO THE TRUTH OF GOD’S WORD**.

In conclusion: I am privileged to lead this congregation for such a time as this, in 2026, as we faithfully rededicate ourselves to this enterprise of the Gospel; through the stead of our Redeemer, who freed us not only from sin but for a life of meaningful service.

In his name,
Pastor Young



A Brief History of Our Redeemer's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Our Redeemer's Evangelical Lutheran Church was founded in 1926. Pastor Belno Lange came to canvass the area round Martin in the spring of that year. Due to the distance involved, intensive mission work could not be done. Neither Pastor Lange nor the Nebraska Mission Board were discouraged nor dismayed. Trusting in the promise that God's Word shall not return to Him empty, the mission board called Pastor V.H. Winter of Norfolk, NE. He accepted and came to Martin to assume the duties of a missionary.

Pastor Winter preached his first sermon here on September 5, 1926. Regular services were held in the town theatre. But as time went on, the need for their own place of worship was keenly felt by the pastor and the other contingent of Lutherans. Also, the mission board realized that more effective work could be done by owning a church building. In October 1926, the first work on the house of worship began. It was dedicated on February 27, 1927.

God blessed the work of his church. At one point, the resident pastor served Batesland, Pine Ridge, Wounded Knee, Long Valley, Patricia, and Swett. In 1934, the Nebraska District Mission Board divided the field into two: Martin, Long Valley and Patricia were one field of ministry; Batesland, Pine Ridge and Wounded Knee the other. In 1937, however, the field was once again amalgamated. In 1944, the pastor would reside in Batesland, serving St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church, and continue to serve Our Redeemer's from there.

The Word was proclaimed and the sacraments were administered over the next 32 years, which brought Our Redeemer's to its 50th anniversary in 1976. Pastor Winter came and preached the golden anniversary sermon on the same day as his installation in 1926 [August 22nd]. The first three pastors and the three most recent pastors were in attendance.

In the next period of years, beginning in 1980, the resident pastor began serving a third group in Gordon, NE, which in 1987 organized as Rock of Ages Evangelical Lutheran Church.

In 1990, the congregation in Martin built a new house of worship at the same site, moving the old church intact out of town to a local family. The new church was an effort of the whole congregation, with many volunteer hours put into the designing, planning, construction, and decorating of a house of worship to meet oncoming needs for the many years to come.

Pastor Tod Vertz (serving 1993-1998) had the privilege of presiding over the mortgage burning service in November of 1993. The new worship facility, built by many members' hands, now fully belonged to them.

In 2001, Our Redeemer's celebrated its diamond anniversary - 75 years of God's grace. Pastor Rausch, the resident pastor at the time, concluded in his sermon: Many of Our Redeemer's members and pastors have come and gone. It has seen its share of construction projects and ministry programs. Yet, through it all, one thing has remained constant – God's redemption found in Christ Jesus.

After 82 years, the congregation and church buildings in Batesland closed, and members joined either of the remaining two congregations. Today, Our Redeemer's and Rock of Ages, combined, serve over 130 souls while continuing to seek opportunities to reach out to the people of Bennett and Sheridan counties.



History of Our Redeemer's Evangelical Lutheran Church Martin, SD

(This Account Written By Pastor Belno Lange Of White River, South Dakota And Was Placed In The Cornerstone Of The First Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church)

The history of this congregation is very recent and well within the memory of you all. Hearing that Martin had become an enterprising community in a surprisingly short period of time and that many families had journeyed there to seek their fortune, the mission board of the Nebraska District of the Wisconsin Synod deemed it advisable to send a missionary to the above named town to canvas the county and to gather the Lutherans in a congregation, so that regular services could be held at one or more places in this fertile land.

The work of looking up the Lutheran families was entrusted to Pastor Lange of White River, SD. He began preaching in the Lessert School 15 miles west of Martin in the spring of this year, 1926. The attendance was small. Five children and three adults were present. The distance from White River, however, made it impossible to do intensive mission work around Martin.

Verily, it was a small humble beginning for a Lutheran church in Bennett County. But neither Pastor Lange nor the mission board were discouraged nor dismayed. Trusting in the promise that God's Word shall not return unto him void, the mission board called a pastor to Martin, who should make the town his permanent place of abode, so that he could from that point of vantage serve the surrounding country. Pastor Winter of Norfolk, Nebraska was then called to Martin to assume the difficult duties of a missionary in a county where three other churches had already done active work.

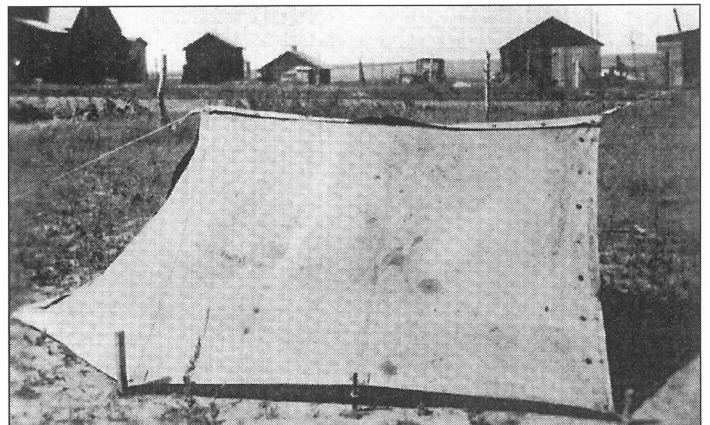
Knowing in advance that his work would be a disheartening and discouraging task, Pastor Winter accepted the call. He was installed by Pastor Lange on August 22, 1926 in the town theatre in Martin. That was the only available place of worship in the town at that time. At the installation service twelve souls were present. They were Mr. and Mrs. Peter Bendtsen, Mr. and Mrs. John Kurvink and son, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Henschel, Mrs. Swanson, Mrs. Bickford and daughter, Jessie, and Mr. and Mrs. Byrd.

Pastor Winter preached his initial sermon out here on

September 5, 1926. At this service were ten persons, namely Mr. and Mrs. Peter Bendtsen, Mrs. Martin, Mrs. Swanson, Mrs. Weldey, Mrs. Bickford, and Jessie, Helen Weldey, Dolores Wordeman, and Dorothy Johnstone.

Pastor Winter held services regularly in the aforementioned place of worship. But as time went on, the need of their own place of worship was keenly felt by the pastor and his handful of Lutheran Christians. Also the mission board realized that more effective work may be done with a chapel of our own. The members of the board considered the expense of thirty to forty dollars a month for rent a waste of money. And particularly Pastor William Schaefer of Colome, South Dakota advocated the plan that we borrow \$2,000.00 for the erection of a chapel in Martin. We would use the forty dollars a month allowed us for rent for paying off this loan. Mr. Charles Dittmer of Crookston, Nebraska consented to lend us \$2,000 on this plan.

So on October 27, 1926 the first work, the excavation of the basement, was begun on our house of worship. The site chosen lay in the southwest part of the town. The property adjoins Highway 50. Here the basement, 36x24, was dug and the concrete foundation laid for our house of worship, which was to serve both as a church and a parsonage. To Mr. John Gretschnann of White



Truly the first Lutheran parsonage in Bennett County, on an open block east of the old Court House. There was no room in any inn and I lived here a number of weeks.

River was entrusted the construction of the edifice.

The altar and pulpit are the handiwork of the contractor, Mr. Gretschnann. The huge White cross graces the front wall above the altar. The baptismal font is a gift of St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Norfolk, Nebraska. The organ is a gift of Miss Filter of Norfolk. The Communion set is a gift of Immanuel Congregation of Hadar, Nebraska.

Possibly 120 people can crowd into the church auditorium. The interior woodwork presents a neat appearance and is finished in golden oak. The space in the rear of the church provides for two neatly constructed rooms, which will serve as a parsonage.

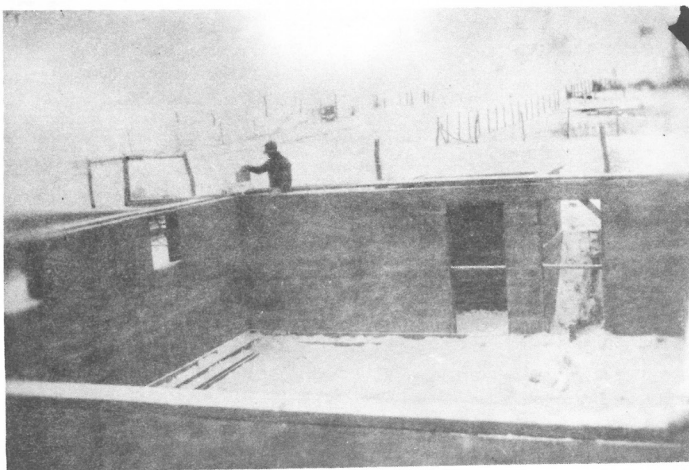
The building was constructed at a cost of approximately \$3,000. An A-1 grade of material was furnished throughout by Walrath Sherwood Lumber Company of Merriman, Nebraska.

Services will be held in the new house of worship every Sunday morning at 10:30. Those having no church home are cordially invited to attend.

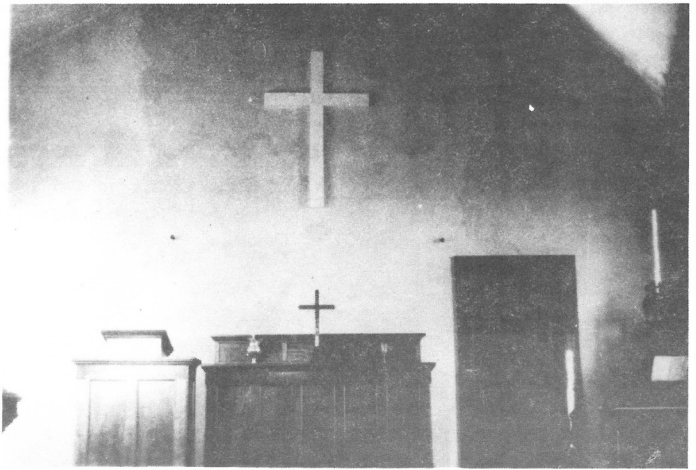
In Addition to his work in Martin proper, Pastor Winter at the present time conducts services every other Sunday afternoon near Masopia, about twenty miles northeast of Martin. At the last service there, on November 14, there were in attendance twenty four souls. The pastor at this writing has preached in Merriman, Nebraska once, nineteen miles South of Martin.

We have in Martin a confirmation class of three: Robert Martin, Dolores Wordemann, and Helen Weldey. We have a Sunday School of two children, Pearl Cook and Leonard Cook. At Masopia, we have a Sunday School of eight children.

May the Lord give success to Pastor Winter's work and to the labors of his congregation and prosper the work of their lives and hearts.



Contractor J. Gretschnann informally lays the cornerstone of Our Redeemer's. You are looking toward the northwest.



Interior of the Church on Dedication Day, February 25, 1927.

At the time of this cornerstone laying the president of the Synodical conference of the Lutheran Church of North America is Pastor Gausevitz of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The president of our Wisconsin Synod is Pastor Bergemann of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. The president of the Nebraska District of the Wisconsin Synod is Pastor John Witt of Norfolk, Nebraska. The vice president of this district is Pastor Monhardt of Clatonia, Nebraska. The secretary of our district is Pastor Korn, of Ulysses, Nebraska. The district treasurer is Dr. W. H. Saeger, Norfolk, Nebraska.

Calvin Coolidge occupies the White House at this time. John Gunderson is the governor of our state. Mr. Bulow being the governor-elect.

Herewith we enclose Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism and a Bible History, both of which books are now in use in our parochial schools and in our instruction class here in Martin. We add the Wisconsin Synod English Hymnal and the Northwestern Sunday School Book, which we use in our Sunday school.

The two chief church periodicals of our Synod are the Gemeindeblatt and the Northwestern Lutheran, the last editions of both being among this collection. We also include two public newspapers. Here is the last publication of the Martin Messenger, our weekly paper, which contains an article on the building of our church. And we add the last number of the Norfolk Daily News, Norfolk, Nebraska.

Thus we informally, but prayerfully, seal the cornerstone to our new church this 19th day of November, 1926. We hope that very many will be led to the true light, to Jesus, our only Redeemer, within the walls of this edifice.

First Lutheran Church Dedicated Sunday (This Is The Newspaper Account Of Our Dedication. Date Of The Newspaper Was March 3, 1927)

On February 27 the Lutherans of Martin South Dakota dedicated to the Lord their new church, which is henceforth to be known as Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church.

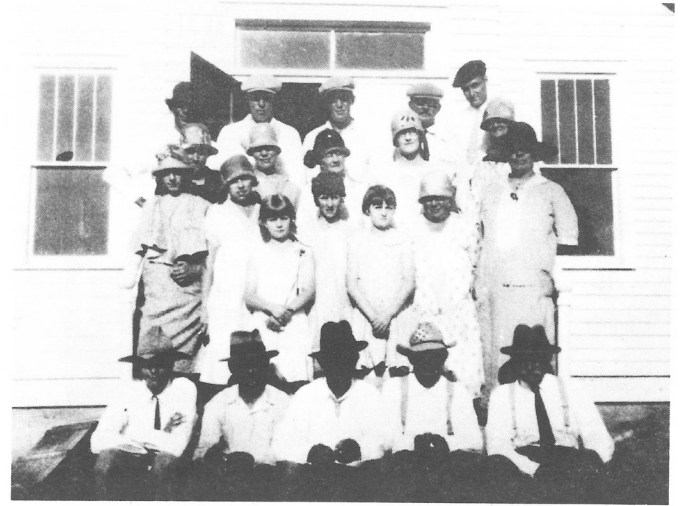
In keeping with the occasion appropriate services were held. A fitting ceremony outside the church preceded the service proper. In this ceremony Mr. John Gretschnann of White River, South Dakota, contractor and builder, presented the key of the new church to the Rev. V. Winter, the resident pastor. The doors were then flung wide by Mr. Peter Bendtsen of Martin, South Dakota, while Rev. Winter read from the 100th Psalm. Then, led by Rev. J. Witt of Norfolk, Nebraska, the president of the Nebraska District of the Wisconsin Synod of the Lutheran Church, the entire congregation slowly marched in the new church.

The dedicatory service was rendered by the Rev. Winter at the altar. The outstanding feature of the morning service was an impressive sermon by Rev. J. Witt. Choosing Psalm 87, verses 1-3 as his text, the speaker clearly and in a concise manner set forth the

following: 'Dedication Day is day of rejoicing. First, this preaching in our church is glorious as to its contents. Secondly, this preaching is glorious as to its effects.'

Lutherans and friends of the church took care of the guests and visitors at noon by providing them with a sumptuous repast at their homes.

The afternoon service began at 2:30. The Rev. B Lange of White River, South Dakota preached at this service. He used Psalm 26, verse 8 as his text. He said: 'This song of praise spoken in the long ago contains for us today words of joy and then words of hope.' After this sermon the



A Sunday attendance at the church in 1928. There are the Roxbergs, the Kruegers, the Bendtsens, the Bickfords, the Kaufmanns, Mrs. Martin, Mr. Arndt, and the pastor in the rear, right end.

Rev. J. Witt briefly addressed the congregation in the German language, speaking on 1 Corinthians 1:23-24. He said: 'Today is a day of thanksgiving, because the congregation now has a home where Christ crucified will be preached.'

Many friends of the congregation from Martin, and also those from points of greater distances, Batesland, White River, Mission, and Crookston, Nebraska showed their interest in the new church by attending the dedication services. The Lutheran people of Martin desire to express their appreciation of the presence of so many friends who had come to worship with them.

After the close of the afternoon service a delicious lunch was served to the guests in the church basement by the ladies of the church.

The history of our Redeemer's Lutheran church is very recent. Mission work was begun by the Lutherans in Martin in the spring of 1926, by the Rev. B. Lange of White River. Because Bennett County had acquired widespread fame due to its fertile soil and abundant rainfall the mission board of the Wisconsin Synod deemed it advisable to carry the work of the Lutheran Church into that county and endeavour to establish here a permanent place of worship.



Mrs. Lydia Winter on June 10, 1927, just a week before she was married and moved into the two-room parsonage under the church roof, where we lived six years.

50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



From left: Rev. Winter, Rev. Eberhardt, Rev. Zarling, Rev. Kuckhahn, Rev. Sievert, Rev. Agenten.

First Lutheran Pastor Here For Anniversary Observance (Taken From Bennett County Booster, 1976)

Our Redeemer's Evangelical Lutheran Church 50th anniversary was observed Sunday, August 22, 1976, with special guests including the first three ministers who served the church and the last three who were assigned here.

The first minister, Rev. V. H. Winter, was installed as pastor of the church on August 22, 1926, in the old Allen theatre, which was made available by Charles Allen for use by the Lutheran congregation for Sunday Services.

In an anniversary booklet prepared for the occasion, Pastor Winter, now of Tucson, AZ, relates that when he first arrived from Norfolk, Ne, 'the county fair was in progress. There was no hotel in Martin, and because of the fair, all the rooming houses were filled. So I had to get out my pup-tent from the car trunk, and that was my parsonage for many weeks. It was erected on an open block east of the court house (where the Booster building now stands). There I slept, ate, made my sermons, and received company.

'When the West Hotel opened, I was their first

customer. Later it was cheaper to live in the Martin 'motel' on the west outskirts of town. I was their first customer, too.'

Rev. Richard Kuckhahn, Sioux City, IA, who was pastor of Our Redeemer's from 1964-1971, was the guest speaker at 2:30 p.m. Anniversary service. He told about happenings and memories of his stay in this area.

After the service a fellowship hour was spent, followed by a 5:30 dinner served to most of the people who had attended the service.

A 7:30 p.m. Service featured Rev. Winter (1926-1933) as the speaker. About 100 people were present, about the same as the attendance at the afternoon program. Rev. Winter gave a short sermon and also reminisced on his years as the first pastor of the church. He talked about the hardships during the late 20s and early 30s and commented on the rarity of the first pastor of a church being able to physically preach the golden anniversary sermon 50 years later and on the same date (August 22) which was the exact date 50 years previously when he was installed as pastor.

Our Redeemer's congregation presented Rev. Winter a Black Hills Gold tie tac to commemorate the 50th anniversary of his installation.

Following the evening service, Rev. A. Eberhardt, who succeeded Rev. Winter, serving from 1933-1935. Rev. Frederick Zarling, who succeeded Rev. Eberhardt, serving in 1935 and 1936, and Rev. Louis Sievert, who served 1971-1975, gave short talks.

Another rarity noted by these former pastors was the fact that the first three pastors and the last three pastors were in attendance. Rev. Kuckhahn, Rev. Sievert, and the present pastor, Rev. Richard Agenten, were present.

Letters from other pastors who were unable to attend were read. This included Rev. Henry Ellwein (1941-1944); Rev. Donald Grummert (1944-1947); Rev. Karl

Neumann (1947-1949); Rev. Robert Kleist (1949-1955); Rev. Wayne Bartelt (1955-1960); and Rev. Allen Werre (1961-1964). Six of the 12 pastors who served during the 50 year period were in attendance.

At the close of the evening, coffee and cake were served.

Visiting pastors other than those who formerly served the church included Rev. Roger Wahl, Mission; Rev. Richard Kugler, Valentine, NE; Rev. William Leerssen, Winner; and Rev. August K. Ristow, Brewer, NE.

Visitors from a distance include Jon Bucklez of Nogales, AZ, grandson of Rev. V. H. Winter, Mr and Mrs. Ferdinand Agenten of Malvern, AK, parents of Rev. Richard Agenten, and guests from Kyle, Long Valley, Batesland, Interior, Vetla, Rapid City and



Our Redeemer's church in 1976.

New Church
Groundbreaking Held Sunday
For New Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church
(As taken from the Bennett County Booster, Feb. 18, 1990)

Gordon, NE.

A ground breaking ceremony was held Sunday, Feb. 18, at the site of the new Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church in Martin.

A 66 foot by 36 foot worship sanctuary and 50 foot by 64 foot fellowship hall will be built directly to the north of the current structure.

The two buildings will be of wood frame construction with a brick veneer on the church building. All entrances will be built at ground level with no steps or stairs to make access by handicapped or elderly people difficult. No basement is planned.

Members of the congregation, headed up by Kenny Boomer, will do the construction work.

Weather permitting, Rich Hildebrand of Kadoka was expected to begin the concrete work on Tuesday,

February 20, with exterior wall erection work targeted to begin on or about May 7.

Seating capacity of the worship chapel is anticipated to be about 140 with an overflow area of approximately 50.

The fellowship hall will contain Sunday School rooms, kitchen, rest rooms, and a central area capable of seating at tables about 120 people.

Completion date has not been set but church members are allowing one year with hopes of perhaps being in the facility by Christmas of this year.

Construction on the present church building was begun in the late 1926, with dedication ceremonies for the completed building on February 27, 1927. Plans are to tear the building down following completion of the new facilities.



Our Redeemer's building Committee at ground breaking ceremony. From left: John Sterkel, Matt Kratovil, Dale Pyle, Bill Kuxhaus, Kenny Boomer, Pastor Hartmann, Gary Schmidt, Harvey Lee Hahn, and Buddy Bolzer.



Volunteers and workmen are making progress on the building of the new Lutheran Church in Martin. According to Ken Boomer, the structure could be enclosed within the next few weeks. The top photo was taken Monday, May 7, 1990 and the bottom photo was taken this morning, Wednesday, May 9, 1990.



The church's fellowship hall, provides a place for members to gather, as well as overflow seating.



The old gives way to make room for the new... The original Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church building is being moved out of town while finishing touches are being put on the new church building.



The sanctuary where future generations of Our Redeemer's members will gather for worship.

Open House Planned Sunday Afternoon At New Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church (Taken from the Bennett County Booster, Nov. 14, 1990)

The original Our Redeemer's Evangelical Lutheran Church building, built in the fall of 1926, was moved off its foundation last weekend and hauled away intact on Tuesday, November 13, leaving behind it a brand new Our Redeemer's Church building.

The new building has been under construction since a ground breaking ceremony was held on February 18, and will be dedicated during special services scheduled for next Sunday, November 18.

Members of the congregation asked for everyone to be reminded that the public is invited to attend Sunday's activities.

There will be an open house at the new church building from 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. The open house will be followed by a special dedication service from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. after which supper will be served from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Among the speakers at the dedication service will be Pastor Mike Traudt of Zion Lutheran Church, Valentine, Neb., who is the circuit pastor for this area. There will be no Sunday School or morning worship service on November 18.

The old church building served the Lutherans in Bennett County and the surrounding area for 64 years.

The first Lutheran missionary work in the Bennett County area was assigned to Pastor Belno Lange, White River, who began preaching in the Lessert School 15 miles west of Martin in the spring of 1926. The initial attendance at the services was by three adults and five children. Pastor Lange's work was directed by the Nebraska District of the Wisconsin Synod.

Pastor V.H. Winter, Norfolk, Neb., was called to serve the church in Martin on a permanent basis and was installed by Pastor Lange on August 22, 1926. The 12 people who attended the installation service were Mr and Mrs. Peter Bendtsen, Mr and Mrs. John Kurvink and their son, Mr and Mrs. Harry Henschel, Mrs. Swanson, Mrs. Bickford, and her daughter, Jesse, and Mr. and Mrs. Byrd.

At the time, services in Martin were being held at the old Allen Theatre. Pastor Winter served the parishioners at Martin, as well as those at Long Valley, Batesland, Masopia, and Patricia.

The original Our Redeemer's building at Martin was partially financed by a loan of \$2,000 from Charles

Dittmer, Crookston, Neb., and was built for a total cost of about \$3,000. Work on the building began on October 27, 1926, with John Gretschrann, White River, in charge of construction.

The basement of the church was completed in November, and services were held there until the church was formally dedicated on February 27, 1927.

The original baptismal font at the old church was a gift from St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Norfolk, Neb. A Miss Filter of Norfolk donated the church's first organ, and the communion set was a gift of the Immanuel congregation, Hadar, Neb.

Pastor Winter served Our Redeemer's until 1933. He was followed by Pastor A. G. Eberhardt, 1933-1935; Pastor Fredric Zarling, 1935-1940; Pastor Henry Ellwein, 1941-1944; Pastor Donald Grummert, 1944-1947; Pastor Karl Neumann, 1947-1949; Pastor Robert Kleist, 1949-1955; Pastor Wayne Bartelt, 1955-1960; Pastor Alvin Werre, 1961-1964; Pastor Richard Kuckhahn, 1964-1971; Pastor Louis Sievert, 1971-1975; Pastor Wesley Bruss, 1975-1976; Pastor Richard Agenten, 1976-1980; and Pastor Donald Wichmann, 1980-1986.

Except for during the two-year tenure of Pastor Eberhardt, the Lutheran churches at Martin and at Batesland were assigned one pastor. Since 1986, the two churches have been served by Pastor John Hartmann.

One of the more interesting events surrounding the moving of the old church was the opening of a 'time capsule,' which was placed in the original church's cornerstone when the foundation was laid in the fall of 1926. The capsule, a metal box buried in concrete, was recovered undamaged last weekend after the church was moved off its foundation.

It contained a typewritten history of Lutherans in Bennett County and of the building of Our Redeemer's; early 20th century editions of Martin Luther's 'Small Catechism,' 'Northwestern Sunday School Lessons' and the Wisconsin Synod English edition of 'Book of Hymns'; copies of two newspapers, the November 19, 1926, 'Norfolk (Neb.) Daily News'; the November 14, 1926, edition of a church magazine, 'The Northwestern Lutheran,' which is still in publication; a copy of a German-language Lutheran newsletter; and a number of old coins.

The original church building is being relocated to the

New Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church

Dedicated Open House Held Sunday

(As taken from the Bennett County Booster Nov. 21, 1990)

Carl Johnson place South of Martin.

Nearly 400 people attended an open house for the new Our Redeemer's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Martin on Sunday afternoon, November 18. It's dedication came exactly nine months after the ground-breaking ceremony held February 18, 1990.

Those attending had the opportunity to tour the new building, view a photographic display of its construction, and see the contents of a 'time capsule' that had been placed in the corner stone of the original Our Redeemer's Church.

The ladies of the congregation provided several decorated cakes and other refreshments for the afternoon, as well as serving as hostesses at a community supper following Sunday's dedication service.

The original church, built in 1926 and dedicated February 27, 1927, was moved off its foundation the week-end before the dedication and moved south of town, Tuesday, November 13.

Following Sunday's open house, the new church was dedicated during a special service conducted by Pastor John Hartmann, who has served the Lutheran churches in Martin and in Batesland since 1986. The dedication service was attended by more than 250 people.

The special speaker at the dedication was Pastor Mike Traudt of Zion Lutheran Church, Valentine, Neb., who serves as circuit pastor for this area. Pastor Hartmann also read letters from several ministers who served Our Redeemer's in the past.

Pastor Donald Wichmann, North Platte, Neb., who led the local congregation from 1980 to 1986 was in attendance on Sunday. A Lutheran minister who grew up in Bennett County and now lives in Gillette, Wyo., Pastor Robert Weimer, also attended.

At the conclusion of the dedication service, the evening meal was served to the public in the church's fellowship hall.

The construction of the new church was initiated almost three years ago, in January 1988, when the voting members of the congregation organized a planning committee. The committee members, some charged with planning the building and other with fund-raising, included Pastor Hartmann, Bill Kuxhaus, Jack Jacobs, Buddy Bolzer, Matt Kratovil, Kenny Boomer, Dale Pyle, Glenn Shepardson, and Gary Schmidt.

The committee queried the congregation about the type of building needed and about the financial resources available to pay for a new church. Upon gathering information from the voting members of the local church (a process which continued throughout the planning stages), the committee members tackled the task of designing the building.

They decided to avoid the cost of hiring an architect and began to produce a design themselves. The main elements of the design included that the building would be located on the lot north of the original church, that it would be single-story without a basement, and that the exterior would be maintenance-free.

The final building plan took shape in November 1989, but was revised right up until the ground-breaking the following February.

The plan outlined a 36X66 south section to house the entrance and the worship area, and a 50X64 section to the north. The north section contains a large fellowship hall, a kitchen, a meeting room, four classrooms and a pastor's study. It originally called for a metal building, but a special donation permitted the exterior of the building to be built of brick. A unique feature of the design is a closed loop heating system, which makes use of constant, sub-surface ground temperature to both heat and cool the building's interior.

The church constructed by the local congregation- chiefly with their own labor. It was paid for by local parishioners' donations, as well as by contributions from several people outside the congregation.

Volunteers gathered during every phase of construction, from the initial pouring of concrete in late February through the hanging of the wooden cross on the exterior of the building on the eve of its dedication. The men, women, and even the children of the congregation-nearly everyone on the membership rolls who was physically able to do so-pitched in at one time or another to help with the construction of the church.

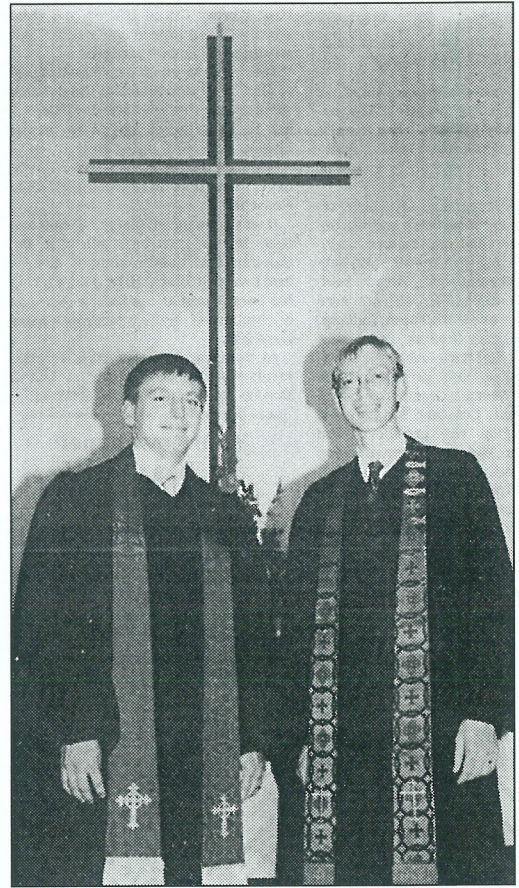
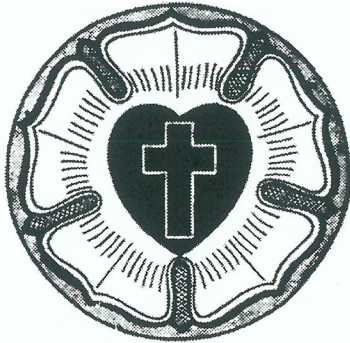
The members framed, shingled, dry-walled, painted, landscaped, and performed the dozen of odd tasks required to finish a large construction project. Members of the planning committee estimated that the cost of the building, which they figured to be approximately \$150,000, would have been twice as high without the

volunteer work.

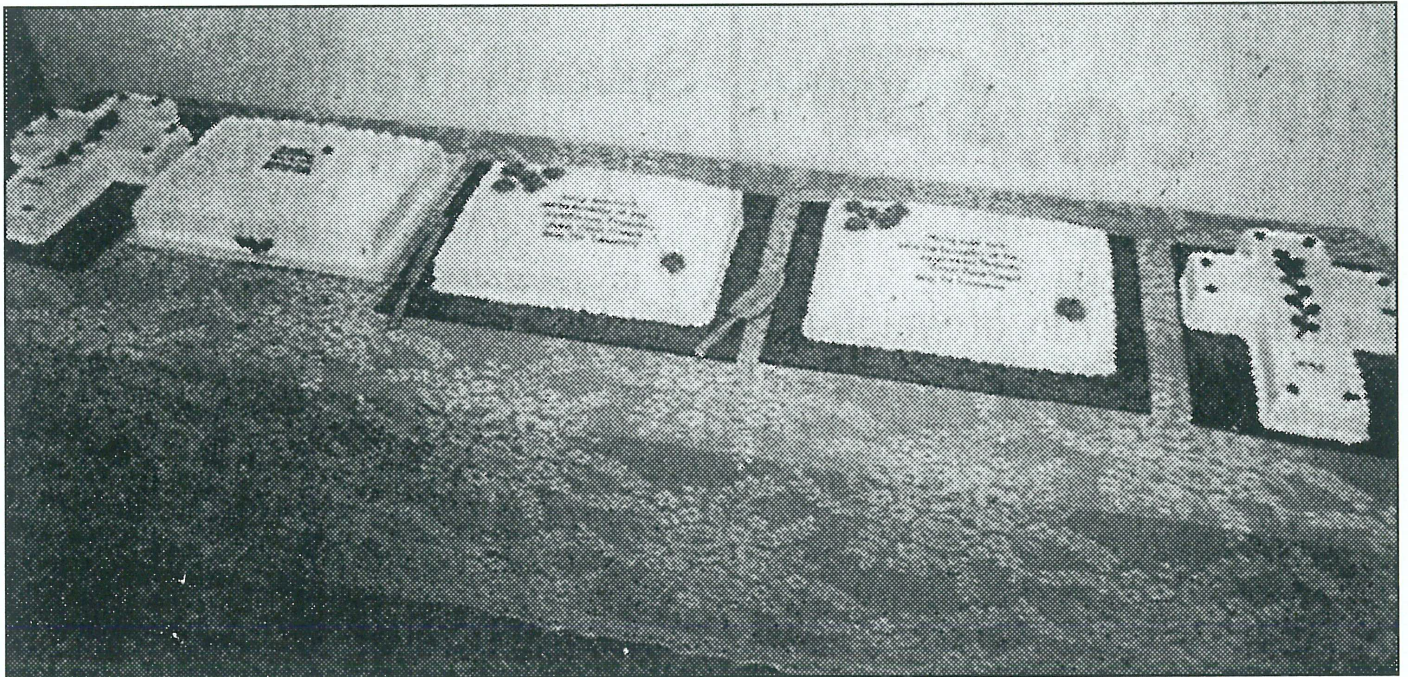
Special items provided were lights in the worship and greeting areas build by Pastor Hartmann and the pulpit and altar built by Matt Kratovil.

Tasks hired done included concrete work by Hildebrand Concrete of Kadoka and Rosane Cement, Martin; heating system installation by Vern Haffield, Winner; plumbing by Sod's Plumbing, Martin; electrical wiring by Kilowatt Electric, Rapid City; brick laying by Jesse Claussen, Martin; and some finish work done by local workmen Mark Cuny and Stuart Drobny.

Our Redeemer's Evangelical Lutheran Church has a membership of 80 communicants, with a total of approximately 120 parishioners. About 35 families are served by the church. It is part of the Wisconsin Synod of the Lutheran Church.



Pastor Mike Traudt, left, and Pastor John Hartmann.



In anticipation of a large crowd at the open house a number of beautiful cakes were provided.

Mortgage Burning

Lutherans Burn Church Mortgage

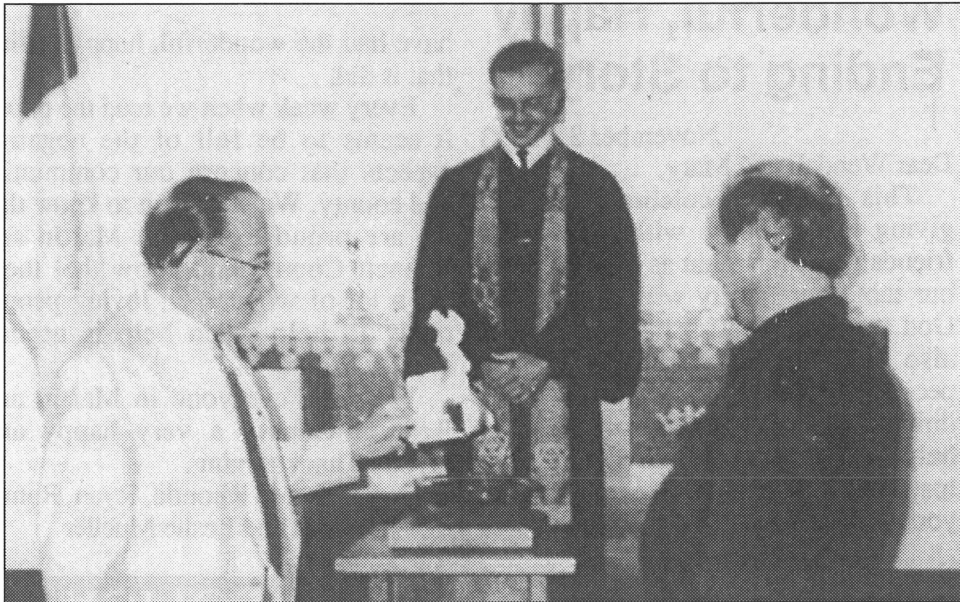
(As taken from Bennett County Booster, Nov. 93)

Members of the congregation of Our Redeemer's Evangelical Lutheran Church conducted a mortgage burning ceremony Sunday afternoon, November 21, at the church, following a special service.

The new structure was started with a ground breaking ceremony in February of 1990, and the building was basically completed for the dedication service in November of 1990.

Following the worship service conducted by Pastor Tod Vertz, the mortgage-burning was conducted by Glenn Shepardson, President of the congregation, and Bill Kuxhaus, who was church treasurer at the time of construction.

Shepardson held the mortgage while Kuxhaus torched the document. A potluck meal was served to conclude the special occasion.



Glenn Shepardson hold burning mortgage after Bill Kuxhaus, at right, has applied the torch. Pastor Tod Vertz oversees the ceremony.

Mother's Day Pancake Breakfast

In 1998, an annual celebration began at Our Redeemer's. Family and friends of the women in the church decided to fix a Mother's Day appreciation breakfast to celebrate the day. It has since become an annual event.



Left to right: Harvey Hahn, Harvey Lee Hahn and Rolf Kraft fixing pancakes and eggs.

10th Anniversary

Our Redeemer's Evangelical Lutheran Church celebrated the tenth anniversary of the new church building on November 19, 2000. At this time, memories of past anniversaries and other accomplishments held within the church were placed in a time capsule, to be left until the congregation's centennial celebration. Some items in the time capsule were from a time capsule taken out of the corner-stone of the old church building as well as several items from the building of the new church.

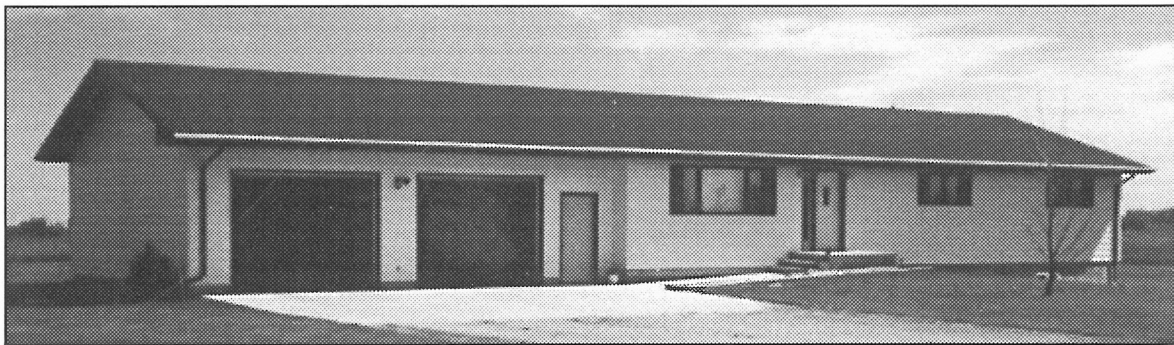


Buddy Bolzer (left and Pastor) look and discuss items to go into the "time capsule."





Building Committee and Pastor Tod Vertz at ground breaking. Back row from left: Curtis Schwarting, Gary Schmidt, Mike Hein, John Sterkel, and Buddy Bolzer. Front Row from left: Pastor Tod Vertz, Norman Drobny, John Novotny, Ellis Rae Hicks, Harvey Hahn, Harvey Lee Hahn, Wynn Saxton and Bill Kuxhaus.



Parsonage

The ground breaking and building of the new parsonage was a joint effort by Our Redeemer's, St. Paul's and Rock of Ages Ev. Lutheran Churches.

A committee was formed consisting of members from all three congregations. Members of the Congregations performed the construction. The ground breaking, building and completion of the parsonage was done in 1996.

Comments From The Pastors

Following are comments of the pastors of our church during the last 100 years – 1926-2026.

V.H. WINTER (1926-1933)

In our early services there we had four faithful families. Two of the people now live here in Tuscon. They do not come to our services, as I preach in Spanish, but I stop at their home to visit from time to time. At Christmas time our young people stopped at their house to carol. One of the children who went with us to carol was my grandson. Who'd ever imagine that some of those people that struggled along with us in Martin would, fifty years later, be living near me in far away Arizona! The names of the two people are Mrs. Geo. Kaufmann and daughter Edith. Edith was confirmed by me in Batesland.

Nor did I dream at that time that some day I'd be using an IBM typewriter and that somebody in Martin would be writing to me on a machine that produces such beautiful print as does yours. Nor did I dream that some day, many miles from South Dakota, I'd be preaching the gospel to Mexicans in their tongue. I had hardly planned it that way, but then man often proposes, but God disposes, although at Martin I was already interested in the Spanish language and often listened to radio broadcasts from Mexico.

In my first sermon in Martin, on September 5, 1926 I had the text: 'We are perplexed, but not in despair' (2 Corinthians 4:8). But I really was not quite honest that day, for, with only those ten people before me, and the unknown future ahead, I really was quite in despair. I never preached that text again. When we had services in the town theatre, we always had people there, for people would come there from the hotel and from the street. But after we had our own building, and out of town a ways, I'd stand at the window so many a Sunday waiting for somebody to come to church, and nobody came.

When I came to Martin, all alone with my Dodge car, the county fair was on. There still was no hotel in Martin, and because of the fair, all rooming houses were filled. So I had to get out my puptent from the car trunk and that was my parsonage for many weeks. There I slept, ate, made my sermons, and received company. When that West Hotel opened, I was their first customer. Later, it was cheaper to live in the Martin 'motel' on the west outskirts of town. I was their first customer too. At that time they were not weatherproofed well and when it rained at night my bed was soaked. You can imagine

how happy I was to have the church, with those two little rooms for my own parsonage. In those two little rooms we later had a happy family life, my wife, two boys, and I. One of the boys was born in there one cold April evening, when we were out of coal.

Incidentally, since we didn't have a congregation to depend on, the carpenter, Mr Gretschrnann, and I built that church. My father came up from Nebraska to help us haul rocks for those basement walls. To think that those walls are still there after fifty years, and that I'm still alive and still active!

As for the Allen Hall, the town theatre, where we had our first services, I once received company from Norfolk. They told me that the evening before they had attended a show in a 'barn,' which the people called a movie theatre. So that's what they thought of Allen Hall. It was cold there in winter, but at least we had a place to worship.

And Mrs. Lange, the wife of the minister that installed me at Martin, is still around. I stopped at her home in Stockton, California about two years ago. Her husband, who was so athletic, is gone many years. I also became part of Martin activity by playing ball with Martin and pitching too. Some of you may remember. The first time I went to the county fair up there, the Presbyterian



Pastors Lange (right) and Winter on a call at the Krueger home along the highway about 13 miles east of Martin, early in August, 1926.

minister was selling tickets, and the Roman Catholic priest was taking them. I thought: 'How wordly can the clergy get around here?' and the next year I was worse than any of them. I played ball at the county fair, with the Martin baseball team. I still play ball, softball that is, at every opportunity.

Pastor Winter passed away March 24, 1988.

A.G. EBERHARDT (1933-1935)

The first call issued by the Martin congregation was lost in the mail. I received a second call on December 28, 1932, I had to borrow money to buy a stamp to answer-that was my condition. Since several months had elapsed, I hurried to get to Martin. I was ordained in my home congregation-St. Paul's of Brownsville, Wisc., the morning of January 15th. I was married in the afternoon of the same day to Carola Peltz of Cedarburg, Wisc. On Wednesday of that week we left for Martin, reaching there on Saturday. We stayed in the West Hotel since the household goods were coming by freight. On January 22, 1933, I was installed in Martin in the afternoon and in the evening at Batesland by the pastor of Mission.

It took two weeks before we were able to settle in the two rooms in the rear of the church. We were soon initiated into conditions as the existed at the time. We used corn cobs for fuel in a laundry stove. We carried water from the well at Palmers'. We stopped to eat at Roxberg's each time we went to or returned from Batesland. We experienced our first dust storm. We saw our first coyote and jack rabbit on the way to Merriman, Nebr. We noticed the lack of trees. We experienced cold weather-thirty three degrees below zero. Spring came with the planting of grain fields, but there was no harvest. People were helped greatly by the WPA. With a thirty dollar loan we were able to put a room in the church basement. From Martin I served Batesland,



Pastor and Mrs. Eberhardt and son, Paul,
Taken while at Martin.

Long Valley, Patricia School, Swett School, Wounded Knee, and Iron Ridge.

I have kept a lively interest in the Martin-Batesland field all through the years.

Pastor Eberhardt passed away May 16, 1979.

FREDERIC ZARLING (1935-1936)

It may be of interest to know that my annual financial support while serving the Martin-Batesland-Long Valley-Patricia parishes was \$784.20 a year without allowance for car, car expenses, or insurance. I'm truly grateful that today we as a Synod are able to support our pastors and missionaries more adequately.



Fredric Zarling

Pastor Zarling passed away February 22, 1983.

VACANCY (1936-1941)

HENRY ELLWEIN (1941-1944)

At the time of the fiftieth anniversary, he was serving at Tappen, North Dakota.

Pastor Ellwein passed away November 6, 1998.



Henry Ellwein

DONALD GRUMMERT (1944-1947)

At the time of 50th anniversary, he was serving in Minneapolis, MN.

Pastor Grummert, at the time of the 75th anniversary is retired and living in Minneapolis, MN.



Donald Grummert

KARL NEUMANN (1947-1949)

The one thing I recall from my two year brief ministry there was January 1, 1949. Shortly after I got the word fire started at the Martin church, Mrs. Rooney came over and practically chased me home to Batesland because I didn't read the weather signs correctly. According to her instructions I left at once, and before I arrived home the terrible 3-day snowstorm had begun. And so my wife, our 3 children, and my Dad and Mother lived in our small house without getting outside for three days. I'm sure we'll never forget the fury of that storm and how we existed with a minimal amount of water, which in those days we carried from the pump to the house in pails. I also recall driving my old 1933 Plymouth out into the prairies for 6 weeks that one summer to instruct the future Mrs. Robert Weimer. Seems it was about 33 miles to the ranch where she lived with her folks. I can also recall getting lost in the prairies several times searching for the various members, and perhaps you were one of them, if you are the Mrs. Hahn that used to live east of Martin! On one of those trips I recall coming onto a place where the couple was mixed, he white and she an Indian, which had a corral of sorts, in which there were all kinds of fat dogs, and I wondered until Fred Peil explained about the dogs.

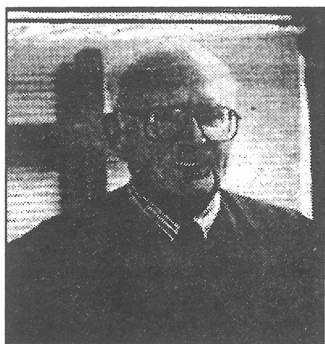
Pastor Neumann is, at the time of the 75th anniversary, at Kimball, MN.

ROBERT KLIEST (1949-1955)

Our oldest son, Jim, born while we were living in Batesland-Martin, graduated this week from our Seminary and will be serving a congregation in Beaver Dam, Wisc. A classmate of his has been assigned to your



The Robert Kleist family.



Karl Neumann

congregation, June 7 of 1976.

Pastor Kliest passed away in February 7, 1986.

WAYNE BARTLET (1955-1960)

In the years that I served Martin many repairs were needed in the church. We definitely needed a new stove, as one had to leave on over-shoes to keep your feet from freezing. After the 8th call the council gave me a release. Pastor Bartelt, at the time of the 75th anniversary, is retired and living in Milwaukee Wisc.

ALVIN WERRE (1961-1964)

Being assured by his physicians that the tropical disease which forced his return from the African field had cleared up, accepted a call and was commissioned in the special service on this day, 3-31-1964.

Pastor Werre passed away January 31, 2000.



Alvin Werre

RICHARD KUCKHAHN (1964-1971)

A memorable milestone during our ministry in Martin was the paying off of the old church Extension Fund loan, which I believe occurred in 1969 or 1970. The congregation itself became a self-supporting member of the Wisconsin Evang. Lutheran Synod just before I came. I remember receiving the incorporation document and hanging it in the Sacristy there. That would have been in 1964.

Pastor Kuckhahn, at the time of the 75th anniversary, is in Gibbon, Minn.

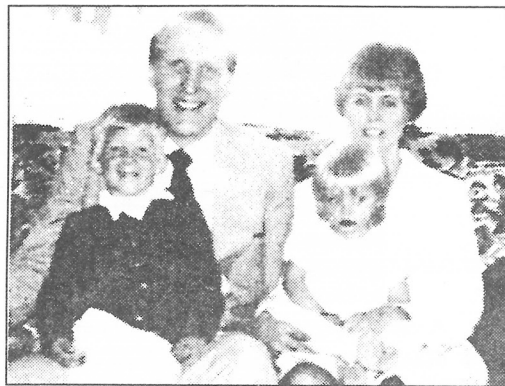


The Richard Kuckhahn family.

LOUIS SIEVERT (1971-1975)

Easter 1975, was exciting, for on that day, in an attempt to get to Martin by plane, since the roads were closed because of a bad snow storm, we had an accident. We could not get off the ground and went through a fence.

Pastor Sievert, at the time of the 75th anniversary, is at Two Rivers, Wisc.

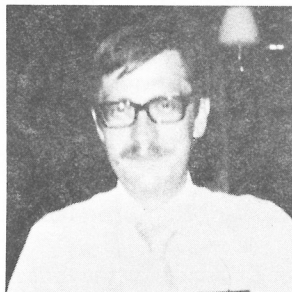


The Louis Sievert family.

WESLEY BRUSS (1975-1976)

Vacancy pastor from Mission for six months was the first pastor to have a CB radio in his car. He was known as the Roving Rev. This was a helpful device at times, as members could be contacted while traveling to and from Mission and Martin and then Batesland. Confirmed 5 children, baptized 2, and confirmed 2 adults.

Pastor Bruss, at the time of the 75th anniversary, is at Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

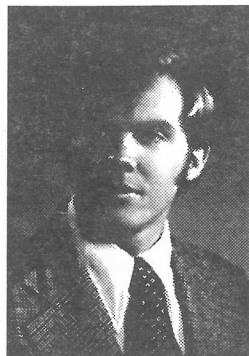


Wesley Bruss

RICHARD AGENTEN (1976-1980)

Pastor Agenten was born November 10, 1950, at West Bend Wisconsin. After attending public elementary school in Kewaskum, Wisc., he attended Northwestern Prep and College at Watertown, Wisc., in preparation for Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary at Mequon, Wisc. Pastor Agenten was married to Beverly Nee Foelkse on June 30, 1973. He was ordained and installed on June 20, 1976 at Our Redeemer's in Martin.

Some memories of Pastor



Richard Agenten

Agenten include the following:

It is a pleasure to be able to join in this celebration of the Lord's grace to Our Redeemer's. It is indeed an exciting event as I was present at the celebration of the 50th. In fact not only was I present, but that was the year that I graduated and was ordained and installed into the ministry and as pastor of Our Redeemer's and St. Paul's so I too am celebrating a milestone in the ministry, 25 years.

Perhaps the most significant memory that I could share was the late fall of 1978. The old church was in deep need of some brightening. It had not been done since day one. It was very dark with a center pole that blocked the chancel area and had old windows that never opened. The congregation got to work and for a very small amount of which I am not certain, refurbished the entire interior. All of the pews and altar furniture were painted white with gold trim and the back wall was given a new covering of light birch paneling as well as getting rid of the beam that blocked everyone's view. New wall to wall carpet was installed and thermopane windows put in as they were never opened anyway. A green bottle glass pattern covering was installed over the windows to give it more of a finished look. The end results were quite striking and beautiful but all was not a happy ending. The carpet was laid a few days before the Christmas Eve service. It had been glued down to the floor by the installers. Well since it was the middle of winter and the only ventilation was the front door, the fumes of the carpet and all never had a chance to escape and so very long Christmas Eve service, I think we all about gassed ourselves. The majority of the congregation matched the color of the green windows before we were done.

Pastor Agenten, at the time of the 75th anniversary, is in Hill Point, Wisc.

DONALD P. WICHMANN (1980-1986)

Memories Pastor Wichmann wanted to share are in the following paragraphs.

Steve and Vicki Stanec gave me a puppy shortly after I moved to Batesland. I thought it was a male. I was wrong. But she had already been named 'Fred', so she was Fred her whole life...the phone right on the other side of the door at the pulpit ringing right in the middle



Donald P. Whichmann

of a sermon...during another sermon, seeing someone come up to Margaret Hahn's pickup and opening the door. It stopped me in mid-sentence and I couldn't say anything, thinking someone was doing something they shouldn't. All I could do was point to the front door. He was just leaving something for her. I had to remember where I was in the sermon.

It was a joy, at one baptism, to catch out of the corner of my eye, the mother shed a few tears of joy as her first child was baptized. I won't say who that was.

It was also a privilege to baptize the first child of Matt and Judy Kratovil in the hospital only a few hours after birth.

While I was there, we had the first meeting to consider an addition or a new church. We drew up primitive plans ourselves. After a while, the efforts ended. But the vision and desire didn't, for you now have a wonderful house in which to praise our Savior, learn of him, and enjoy our Christian fellowship.

Pastor Wichmann, at the time of the 75th anniversary, is serving in Salina, Kansas.

JOHN C. HARTMANN (1986-1993)

Pastor John Hartmann was serving Our Redeemer's at the time when construction of the new church began. He helped with construction and also made the light covers in the entrance and the chapel.

He always wanted to go to Africa, so when a call came for him to be a missionary in Africa, he answered that call. He and his family are currently still in Zambia.



John C. Hartman

TOD A. VERTZ (1993-1998)

I arrived in Martin, a big city kid, and at first it was culture shock. But in no time I learned how loving the people in this congregation (as well as St. Paul's and Rock of Ages) really were. We were welcomed with open arms.

The first privilege I had was the special mortgage burning service in November of 1993. What an honor for me to lead a service of thanks to the Lord for our beautiful worship facility, especially because I had served in the ministry for only a few months.

I will always remember the close bond my family and I had with many of you. This is something you don't

find just anywhere. This will be one of the things that will always remain in our hearts. There were many friendly visits and wonderful times at church and in your homes. We also shared some tears of sorrow. But even then, they were turned to tears of joy as we had the opportunity to look to our Lord for comfort and strength.



Tod A. Vertz

You also made me into a carpenter when you decided to provide a beautiful parsonage. That was another project that drew many of us closer.

But finally, the greatest memory we will have is you, the people. The Lord certainly blessed us with the privilege of living in Martin and serving you for a memorable five and one half years.

I praise our Lord that you have had this opportunity to celebrate and give Him thanks, and I ask His continued blessings on your congregation as we all continue to work together to serve our Lord and share the gospel of Christ.

Just remember a great blessing you have, the many stars you see in the night sky. I truly miss seeing God's awesome wonder in full view. Why do I mention this? Because God told Abraham, as many stars that are in the sky, so will your descendants be. Through faith in Christ Jesus, we are some of those descendants, heirs of everlasting life.

Pastor Vertz, at the time of the 75th anniversary, is in Reedsburg, Wisc.

MICHAEL NEUMANN (1998-1999)

Pastor Neumann was born in Elgin, North Dakota on May 27, 1970. He attended public grade school in Livingston, Mont. He was confirmed at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Livingston on May 20, 1984. He attended Martin Luther Prep School and graduated in 1988, and attended Northwestern College and graduated in 1993. He attended Wisconsin Lutheran Synod and graduated in 1997. He vicared in Anchorage, Alaska.

Pastor Neumann served the tri-parish of Isabel, Timber Lake and Dupree, South Dakota for one year following graduation and then was reassigned to the dual parish of Mission and Witten, South Dakota. He is currently in Mission, South Dakota and is the circuit pastor of the Rosebud Conference.

When asked for a memory of his time as vacancy pastor here, recalls he was always well fed while serving the vacancy, that some of the ladies in Bible Study never ran out of difficult questions to ask the pastor.

DAVID NEUMANN (1998-1999)

Memory: My service to Our Redeemer's was as a mere assistant to the vacancy pastor. Circumstances found me in your pulpit about every other Sunday during the vacancy. Since I was approaching senior citizenship I remember appreciatively the features of the church and congregation that made it easy for me to preach and happy to do so. The lighting is excellent. The acoustics are very good. It was not difficult to maintain eye contact with the worshippers. Attendance was always good. The congregation always gave me a warm welcome. I always went on my way with the feeling that feeding your members with God's Word was greatly appreciated.

My years of service to our Savior began in 1967. I was assigned out of our Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary to serve the tri-parish of Elgin, Burt & Leith in Southwest North Dakota. It was from the Elgin congregation that our Lord made me a whole man. He blessed me with a wife from the Elgin membership. In 1971 we moved to Livingston, Montana to serve the congregation there and oversee the start of a congregation in neighboring Boleman. In 1984 he called me to serve the congregation in Willmar, Minnesota. In 1992 I accepted his call to serve congregations in Melstone and Winnett, Montana. In 1998 the Lord moved us to Valentine Nebraska to serve as missionary to the Lakota on the Rosebud Reservation.

The Lord has blessed us with five children. Michael is pastor of WELS congregations in Mission and Witten, South Dakota. Jessica is an elementary school teacher for the WELS congregation in Plymouth, Nebraska. Charissa is an elementary school teacher for the WELS congregation in Bylas, Arizona on the San Carlos Apache Reservation. Joel is about to start his second year at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Jonathan is about to enter the second grade.

Pastor Neumann is currently in Valentine, Nebr. serving as a missionary to the Lakota Indian Tribe.

TODD A. RAUSCH (1999-2004)

Our pastor of four years was born November 10, 1972 at Benton Harbor Mich., and was baptized nine days later. He attended elementary school at his home church, Good Shepard Ev. Lutheran Church in Benton Harbor, and later was confirmed there on May 17, 1987. His next four years of schooling took him to Michigan Lutheran High School in St. Joseph, Mich.

In preparation for the pastoral ministry, Pastor Rausch attended Northwestern College and then went to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, Wisc. After graduating from the seminary, he was installed at Our Redeemer's on July 25, 1999. Pastor Rausch is married, being wed to Dorene Siverly of Waukesha, Wisc., on August 16, 1998.



Pastor Todd & Dorene Rausch

MICHAEL KILLINGER (2005-2014)

When I consider the time the Lord of the Church allowed me to serve the people of Our Redeemer's, I think of the regular winds that blow across the plains. They change the weather from day to day, season to season, and even if it is calm for a day or two, eventually they resume and change comes once again.

The winds of change arrived a number of times during our years together. We welcomed new faces and said goodbye to some. We added to our physical footprint when we acquired the Seventh Day Adventist property on our east side and moved their building. We enhanced our building with a sound system and laid the foundation for spreading the Word to the world through streaming worship services. We began broadcasting on KSDZ. Of course, the biggest change was saying goodbye to our dear sister congregation of Saint Paul's in Batesland after 82 years of partnership in the Gospel.

At the same time, the more things change, the more they stay the same. God's call to faith in his Word remains the same. The Lord's encouragement for his people to love each other and work together remains

the same. Jesus' promise to be with his people until the end of the age to lead and guide them remains as true today as the day he spoke them. As sure as the return of the wind are God's assurances to his people, the foundation of your faith and the ministry of Our Redeemer's for the past 100 years.



Michael Killinger

I fondly remember being invited pheasant hunting and going to brandings. We still have pictures of our children in the stick horse rodeo at the Bennett County Fair. We remember with thanks all the times someone sat in the pew so that our children couldn't make the dash for freedom. And even though we are not there in person, even if we haven't spoken since we moved to another ministry in 2014, we join our voices with you in prayer and praise for all the grace our Lord has poured out on Our Redeemer's during its first 100 years and all that he may do among you and through you in the days to come. Happy anniversary!

Pastor & Jessica Killinger
Isaiah, Silas, Ella, Lucas

SAMUEL PAPPENFUSS (2014-2018)

While I was serving as pastor, we approached our 90th anniversary at Our Redeemer's and there was a little bit of talk about whether we ought to put together a celebration, but we wanted to aim for something bigger: not 90 years, but 100 years. By the grace of God, he has blessed Our Redeemer's to reach that milestone with the horizon wide open to continue ministry into the future.

It is a blessing to be a part of that ministry story! Looking back, it is wonderful how people accept a new pastor. They don't know him when he first arrives, but they know what God has called him to do, and a congregation and their new pastor learn about each other as they work side-by-side in ministry.

It's pleasant to think of instances where things worked the way we had hoped. I think of the Trunk-or-Treat events and VBS events that were well-attended and Sunday Bible Studies with lots of opportunities to answer questions and learn more about God's truth. It's less pleasant, but still beneficial, to think of rookie mistakes and growing pains as a first-time pastor. And yet, through skill and through trial-and-error, God blessed our time together and blessed the ministry of

Our Redeemer's.

My two older sons were born West River, and Karis and I are eager to show them (and their younger brothers) their roots and their history. "This is where you were born. This is where you were baptized. This is the house you first lived in. This is where you can see until your eyes just can't see any further, this is where the Badlands are, this is where you can see a rainbow every time it rains, this is where you can drive by a sunflower field in full bloom on a sunny, blue-sky September day. This is a good place to be."

An anniversary is an opportunity to remember and appreciate God's earthly and spiritual blessings of the past, and to continue laboring in the present confident that God's presence and blessings will carry on from now to eternity. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good!



THAD FLITTER (2018, 2022-2023)

I can honestly say that there are times when I miss the drive. I don't know if I will get used to how close the churches are where I currently serve. Yes, I miss the drive, partially because I liked driving that stretch between Valentine and Martin, just getting in the car cruising with nothing but my thoughts. Part of it was the rush of once a month trying to make the 45-mile drive from Gordon to Martin in between services when the service and checking-in with members in Gordon inevitably took longer than anticipated. (I'm pretty sure that the only time I did actually leave "on time" I hit a deer on the way which meant I was much later than usual, to which Mr. Kuxhaus wisely asked me, "Why'd you do that for?")

But most of all I miss the drive because of what was at the end of it: a group of God's people who actually wanted to be there to hear God's Word. Whether that was a Sunday afternoon or it was Thursday evenings the second time around, God's people were always there when I showed up. It most certainly was not because of my orator skills or I somehow could bedazzle with my brilliance. No, it was God's people wanting to hear Jesus'

promises, to be brought back to those baptismal waters to die and rise again, to be fed with Jesus' body and blood in bread and wine to forgive sins and strengthen faith. And then they were there the next week too.

I often think that every called worker should spend a part of their ministry in your neck of the woods. There is just nothing like it and the perspective God gives with it. As I said at the end of my time with you I still say, it was a pure joy and privilege to serve as your pastor. Thank you for your love and support, patience and understanding. Thank you for the drive. Thank you for the memories I have. As God has blessed you in the past, my prayer is that Jesus continues to work in you a desire to gather around his Word and Sacrament and share it in your corner of His kingdom.

God's blessings on your celebration!
Pastor Thad Flitter



Thad Flitter

JOSH HILLMANN (2019-2022)

"3 I thank my God every time I remember you. 4 Every time I pray for all of you, I always pray with joy, 5 because of your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now. 6 I am convinced of this very thing: that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. 7 I am equally convinced that it is right for me to think this way about all of you, because I have you in my heart." (Phil. 1:3-7a)



Josh Hillmann

These words are an excellent start in expressing my feelings about the Lord's people in Martin, SD, which I was blessed to serve. To say that Jessica and I and our family felt loved falls short in describing the warmth, thoughtfulness, good nature and hard-working folks at Our Redeemer's. Not that I have trouble getting to know people and developing relationships; but the love of the Lord and His precious Gospel, and the down home, welcoming, family orientation of folks, was truly comforting on a day to day basis.

It is with a smile on my face, warmth in my heart and tear in my eye that I remember the time at Our Redeemer's. The genuine love for God's Word, desire to share it with others, meeting folks where they're at; was and still is an inspiration to me.

May God continue to bless Our Redeemer's-Martin work in spreading the Gospel until our Savior-God returns. To Him be the glory both now and forever.

"Indeed, how can we (I) thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you?" (1 Thessalonians 3:9)

God Bless! Luv Ya!! Pastor Josh Hillmann

A Snapshot of Today

The United States of America celebrates 250 years. The nation is blessed by the freedom and rights endowed upon them. Churches are blessed to worship and gather liberally without interference. This “experiment”, born 250 years ago, only continues to work with the constant vigilance and participation of its citizens against tyranny and aristocracy.

God has steadily kept his hand on His Church as we join in to celebrate a wholly different freedom altogether. We celebrate the freedom of the Gospel, namely, that salvation is by grace through faith in Christ’s finished work (1 Timothy 1:15–16). This freedom is only relevant when we know the Gospel truth; when members participate and stay vigilant in congregational life. So we maintain that it is important to continue to grow in the Gospel truth for this freedom to be experienced for the generations to come.

Today, our church seeks to participate in this Gospel freedom through various channels: Weekly Worship, Adult Instruction courses, Adult Bible Study, Wednesday Bible School, Confirmation, Youth Group, and Summer Bible School.

There are currently 134 members appointed to God’s service. May God drive our hearts to view each member of the body as vitally important for the strengthening of our church.

To God alone be the glory.

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me trustworthy, appointing me to his service. (1 Timothy 1:12)

GENERAL INFORMATION

FIRST MISSION FESTIVAL AT MARTIN
(OLD CHURCH)
October 9, 1927
Attendance – Morning, 70 – Afternoon 76
Collection \$60
Speakers: W.J. Schaefer and Theodore Bauer

FIRST BAPTISM
OLD CHURCH
Claude David Kamerzell-April 8, 1928
NEW CHURCH
Jamie Albert Saxton-December 16, 1990

We formally, and prayerfully, rededicate ourselves – this 14th day of June, 2026 – to the initiative of our gospel enterprise, which is to hold on to the truth of the inspired

Word of God, the Bible, which is useful for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be complete. Jesus, our only Redeemer, is the cornerstone of our enterprise.

2 Timothy 3: 15-17 “and that from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, and for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, well equipped for every good work.”

